

International Relations Outputs: October 2017 - March 2018

China/Shenyang Activities and Outputs to date 2017/18

Chinese Consulate:

- Belfast City Council continued to advise the Chinese Consulate with regards to the establishment of the Belfast/NI Consulate namely by way of planning and contractor sourcing advice.

Political/Civic:

- Belfast City Council hosted its Sister City Shenyang on 3 December 2017, during the prestigious UK China Leaders' Regional Summit, which was held in NI for the first time. This has led to further engagement as follows;
 - Work is underway at a planning stage for Belfast City Council and Shenyang to engage in a Smart Cities cooperation project.
 - Belfast City Council will attend the Shenyang Winter Cities Summit in Shenyang in September 2018 (pending approval).
 - The Belfast Marketplace held in the City Hall on Sunday 3 December 2017 created a vibrant collaborative atmosphere among local stakeholders who are working in China, which has strengthened even further the China Stakeholders group, which has since received four new membership requests (a Belfast jewellery company, a Venture Capital company, a tourism partner and a legal company).
- Belfast City Council supported the Chinese New Year Programme 2018 - The Year of the Dog through:
 - Financial support for the famous Little Red Flower Dance Troupe cultural event held in the Waterfront on 2 March 2018
 - Coordinating a Light Bridge programme to mark the EU China 2018 Year of Tourism. This involved the coordination and marketing of lighting iconic buildings on 2 – 3 March 2018 including the City Hall, Titanic Belfast, Belfast Waterfront and Victoria Square dome.

Tourism:

- Belfast City Council supported Visit Belfast to gain accredited training for frontline staff through the UK China Ready language and cultural training programme. This programme has also been rolled out to Stena Line and Hastings Hotels, and is being supported throughout the tourism industry in 2018 by Tourism NI. Visit Belfast now has China Ready tourism collateral by way of a Belfast City map in Mandarin.
- Belfast City Council has established Belfast firmly in the network of EU and China cities who are engaging in mutual tourism promotion through the EU China 2018 Year of Tourism, to increase two-way tourist numbers.
- Belfast City Council, through the Lord Mayor's office, continues to support any China related familiarisation visits, through a meet and greet service, to promote the city as a leisure and business tourism destination to Chinese tour operators.

Business and Investment:

- Belfast City Council secured a fully paid opportunity for Digital Catapult NI/Kainos to attend a Smart Cities conference in Shenyang in September 2017, which led to connections to build future collaboration with Shenyang to the new Belfast Immersive Technology Hub.
- Belfast City Council hosted Shenyang China Medical University and Smart Cities delegates during the Summit in December 2017 at the new Immersive Technologies Hub. Work is underway to identify a collaborative project.
- Belfast City Council provided a contact service for an inward visit in December 2017 of a

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communications company from the city of Chengdu (representing 100 retail stores in China in the area of mobile communications) to source import export contacts.

- Belfast City Council hosted a group of Chinese Smart Cities academics and businesses during a fact finding visit organised by QUB and the British Consulate in January 2018 from the city of Guangzhou. Discussion is underway to pursue joint Smart Cities collaboration.
- Belfast City Council has made an Investment Pitch to Chinese Investors located in Birmingham in February 2018, with a cross sectoral real estate interest in Belfast. Discussions are ongoing.
- Belfast City Council promoted an export/import trade show opportunity to Belfast businesses taking place later in 2018 in Beijing, open to any sector in Belfast/NI seeking to export products or services to China.
- Belfast City Council has developed a series of promotional collateral in Mandarin.

Education:

- Belfast City Council continues to support the China engagement work of both universities and Belfast Metropolitan College.
- Belfast City Council hosted and promoted the outgoing Ulster University-led Sports delegation to China in October 2017 to develop sport, education and study abroad linkages.
- Belfast City Council has engaged with Campbell College, Victoria College, Stranmillis and St Mary's College to provide contacts and city promotional material to support their ongoing work to attract Chinese students.
- Belfast City Council produced a promotional video in Mandarin promoting education opportunities in Belfast including testimonies from existing Chinese students.
- Belfast City Council has contributed to and is listed as a key partner in the newly launched NI Education Strategy. This was developed by Invest NI to promote education internationally for students abroad or research partnership opportunities.
- Belfast City Council is now a member of a NI-wide International Education Steering Group to promote the region as an education destination.
- Belfast City Council supported the promotion of the HSBC/British Council Mandarin Speaking Competition and held a meet and greet send off for the three schools who succeeded to the UK National finals.
- Belfast City Council hosted the first of a three year robotics conference and competition to be held in NI involving 60 local students and 30 visiting Chinese students studying science and robotics.
- Belfast City Council assisted Invest NI and Ulster University by providing city marketing material to promote Belfast as a study and research destination at Festival of Innovation event being held in Hong Kong in March 2018.

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Boston Activities and Outputs to date 2017/18

Political/Civic:

- Belfast City Council hosted a multi sectoral mission from Boston in October 2017. Further relationships were built in the areas of judiciary, education, business and regeneration, and importantly provided an opportunity to enter into dialogue with Mayor Walsh's Head of International Relations. Mayor Walsh was re-elected in November 2017 and immediately re-affirmed his commitments to the Sister City agreement and building on the concrete outputs to date.
- Belfast City Council led a small mission to Boston in late October 2017. This resulted in;
 - o Further developments to agree a pilot accelerator programme with Mass Challenge
 - o Introductions to new business members
 - o Introductions to help a local social enterprise to establish a philanthropic fund
 - o Connected Belfast City Council with the Boston Resilience Commissioner leading to opportunities to exchange staff and best practice and undertake a joint pilot project.
- Belfast City Council engaged in a world network of organ donor promotion and gifted the city of Boston with an organ donor physical sculpture reflecting the one gifted to Belfast by Galway.

Business/Investment:

- Belfast City Council directly connected four companies to Boston business opportunities:
 - o A food and drinks company who is seeking to create a manufacturing base in Boston
 - o A sports equipment company who have made connections to produce for a major US sport
 - o A skills development company, providing migrant skills validation programmes
 - o A management training company working in life and health sciences wishing to break into this sector in Boston.

Tourism/Culture/Sport:

- Belfast City Council and Visit Belfast held a promotional showcase in Boston during their outward mission in October 2017, promoting the new Norwegian flight connection and new hotel and tourism products to Boston/ Massachusetts tour operators.

Education:

- Belfast City Council supported the third annual Friendship Four Ice Hockey Tournament in partnership with the SSE Arena, with the following outputs:
 - o 21,727 in attendance
 - o 278 schools and youth groups provided with 13,200 complimentary tickets
 - o Live broadcast to a worldwide TV audience of 20 million households and over 100 million viewers
 - o Inaugural trip of the Boston Youth Empowerment Programme – eight young people and five leaders from disadvantaged Boston communities to look at identity, community development and self-expression with Belfast communities.
- Belfast City Council was civic partner in the inaugural Basketball Hall of Fame Belfast Classic Tournament in December 2017, leading to the following outputs:
 - o Two days of live US college Basketball broadcast internationally through the CBS sports network
 - o 9,837 in attendance with 3,731 tickets provided for schools and community organisations
 - o International broadcast to 60 million households in the USA
 - o NI Belfast exposure on Aer Lingus website for a 6-week period valued at £1.2 million
- Belfast City Council connected the Belfast sector to an opportunity for a fully funded one-year

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programme of study at Boston University through the Shannon Fellowship Programme.

- Belfast City Council connected the MAC Theatre with Professor Robert Scanlon, an expert on Beckett, which subsequently led to a week's programme of Beckett theatre and discussions held in the MAC in November 2017.

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Nashville Activities and Outputs to date 2017/18

Political/Civic:

- Belfast City Council hosted a multi-sectoral annual inward mission from Nashville in October 2017. This has led to concrete plans to:
 - o Hold a multi-faceted 'Nashville in Belfast' week in May 2018 showcasing culture, music, sport, food, drink, business and education opportunities to Belfast and the wider NI audience
 - o Host a US State Department business mission in Belfast in 2018.
- Hosted an inward visit from Nashville chef Michael King who, following his bespoke itinerary is undertaking to co-finance and organise a 3-day series of events in Belfast as part of the Nashville in Belfast programme.

Business/Investment:

- Belfast City Council made introductions for a Belfast law firm who are now taking the lead in pursuing formal links with the Belfast Law Society and the Nashville Bar Association. This will develop into an agreed Action Plan of activity in 2018/2019.

Education/Sport:

- Links are still in place with both Belfast universities and the Belmont and Vanderbilt universities of Nashville with various student and staff exchanges underway regularly
- Belfast City Council in partnership with Strathearn College Belfast, hosted the second annual student placement programme hosting five female students from Harpeth Hall Nashville for a week long work placement opportunity within Belfast City Council and host family placements in Belfast.

The Council regularly provides introductions to local stakeholders and Sister City stakeholders seeking mutual contacts in various sectors. These include Catalyst Inc, CSIT, both universities, social enterprises and individuals.