



Subject:	International Relations Update October 2018
Date:	10 October 2018
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update Members on the delivery of the International Relations Framework, focusing on activity over the last six months since March 2018• Seek approval to engage in early planning activity for a potential second Nashville in Belfast programme to take place in June 2019, subject to financial resources and partner buy-in• Seek the approval for the attendance of the Chair of the Committee and the Director of Economic Development (or their nominees) as well as the Lord Mayor (who has been officially invited by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh), at the EUROCITIES AGM in Edinburgh on 28-30 November 2018.

2.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the range of activities and outputs associated with the International Relations Action Plan for the current financial year, covering the period April 2018 to September 2018 • Approve officer engagement in the early planning activity for a potential second Nashville in Belfast programme to take place in June 2019, subject to approval of financial resources as part of the 2019/20 estimates process, and subject to partner buy-in and collective agreement on objectives and outcomes • Approve the attendance of the Chair of Committee and the Director of Economic Development (or their nominees) at the EUROCITIES AGM in Edinburgh on 28-30 November 2018 • Note that the Lord Mayor has also been invited to attend the event by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and agree that the Lord Mayor attends as part of the Belfast delegation • Note that the costs associated with attendance at the event will not exceed £1,500.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>In March 2018, the City Growth and Regeneration Committee approved the International Relations Action Plan for the financial year 2018/19. This report provides an update on the high-level outputs over the last six months, focusing on activity with our Sister Cities of Shenyang, Boston and Nashville.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Shenyang</u></p> <p>Key activities with the Sister City of Shenyang in China include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a tourism showcase in Shenyang in early September 2018. This was the first time that the city had undertaken in-market tourism promotion activity in the city. The Council was supported by our partner Visit Belfast who had organised the event in conjunction with a local partner on the ground. A full report on the outcomes from the event including leads and key opportunities is currently being compiled and will be shared with the Committee at future date, as part of the future planning work. • The city recently hosted two Summer Schools connected to the Belfast-Shenyang Sister City arrangement. The China Medical University-Queen's University of Belfast Joint College and Ulster University welcomed 14 students into its Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition, the Lord Mayor of Belfast sent a congratulatory message to the first cohort of graduates from the China Medical University which is a QUB campus, based in Shenyang.

Boston

- The first ever Belfast – Mass Challenge pilot programme took place in Spring 2018. Ten companies in the fields of analytics, life sciences and the creative and digital sectors participated. For many of the businesses, this was their first entry into the US market and they all benefitted from significant insights into both trade and export development opportunities. In addition to the three-day intensive programme based in Mass Challenge, companies learned from experts about how they would need to tailor their products to the US market. They also met with representatives of the Mayor's office in Boston. These companies now have access to business networks and contacts across the global network of Mass Challenge locations. The Council is currently working with Catalyst Inc and Invest NI to consider the next steps for participating companies and, based on the evaluations from the participating businesses, is considering the merits of engagement in the programme for additional businesses
- In May 2018, Belfast hosted an inward business mission from Boston which has led to strong investment interest (still in the pipeline but confidential at this stage). During the visit, the British American Business Council of New England announced their intention to bring a business mission to Belfast in April 2019. Belfast City Council will work with Invest NI to support this visit and organise a range of business-to-business meetings as well as briefings with city leaders
- Belfast City Council led a delegation to Boston in April 2018, which included representatives from Ulster University, QUB, real estate investment companies and a number third sector organisations. This mission led to the endorsement of the Sister City relationship by the British Consul General. The programme also included the launch of the inaugural Women's Friendship Four tournament which will come to Belfast in January 2019 and there were additional meetings to explore the potential of developing a Boston-Belfast Sister City philanthropic fund.
- Plans are at an early stage of development with a view to connecting the city's two teacher training institutions with schools in Boston, focusing on the teaching STEM subjects in the primary school curriculum.

3.4

Nashville

- A special deputation to Belfast by elected representatives and representatives from academia and the business community in Nashville took place in May 2018. The inward delegation at this time was the biggest to date with 44 participants. The focal point of the activity was the “Nashville in Belfast” programme. The purpose of this activity was to promote the city’s longest standing Sister City relationship. Sister Cities Nashville invested \$60,000 in the project and Belfast City Council also allocated £20,000 towards the programme. A full Return on Investment report has been compiled on the project but key outputs are noted below:
- 18 public events across a number of cultural disciplines (film, music, food, art and heritage) developed and delivered by city stakeholders
- Extensive media coverage through Radio Ulster (including 5 live broadcastings) and pre-event publicity through interviews with Nashville delegates.
- Delivery of Study Abroad seminar in partnership with all main tertiary education providers to an audience of 70 young people from across the region informing them of financial support available to enable studying in the United States
- Delivery of “Doing Business in the US” seminar by Invest NI to promote and provide information as to how local businesses can access and export to the American market.
- Side programmes developed for the Nashville delegation with representatives from the business, tourism and education sectors
- Development of a chef bursary scheme with direct financial intervention from Nashville chef Michael King, being administered through Food NI.

3.5

Based on the success of the initial event, partner organisations have expressed a willingness to work with the Council in a follow-up event. Plans are at a very early stage, with additional work required in order to be clear about the objectives of the event and the expected outcomes. However it is expected that, where possible, the Council will encourage partners to fund activities within their own resources where it meets their objectives, with the Council funding focusing on the promotion and marketing of the activities in order to drive footfall and maximise PR coverage for the city. Given that the budgets for the next financial year have not been approved, there has been no financial commitment to this work by the Council at present but it will be considered as part of the estimates process. An indicative date of June 2019 is being considered, as this ties in with music convention which a Nashville-based promoter is planning for Belfast at that time. Additional information on these proposals will be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee for information and approval.

3.6	<p>One other area of collaboration between organisations in Belfast and Nashville is in the field of legal services. Work continues in establishing formal links between the Law Society and the Nashville Bar Association and both associations are keen to progress educational exchanges for legal sector representatives.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Proposed attendance at EUROCITIES AGM (28-30 November 2018)</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been a very proactive member of the EUROCITIES network for over 15 years. This network comprises over 140 cities across the European Union and has good access to the European Institutions. It offers member cities the opportunity to benefit from those connections in order to understand and influence policy, and can help identify transnational partners for engagement on areas of mutual interest.</p>
3.8	<p>Although our direct engagement in the network has reduced as the interest in international relations has expanded, the network remains a useful mechanism for maintaining a watching brief on key European urban policy developments.</p>
3.9	<p>EUROCITIES hosts its AGM in one of the member cities each year. The 2018 event takes place in Edinburgh on 28-30 November 2018. The theme for the event is “Creative Competitive Cities”. City representation and network voting rights at this event are restricted to senior elected officials. It is proposed that the Chair of Committee and the Director of Economic Development (or nominees) attend the AGM. The Committee is asked to note that the Lord Mayor has also been invited to attend this event by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh. The Lord Mayor has indicated that she would be available to attend the event. The costs associated with attendance for three delegates will not exceed £1,500 and this has been accounted for in the current International Relations budget.</p>
3.10	<p>With regard to priority activities for the coming six months, the key activities in the diary to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in progressing the delivery of the fourth Friendship Four ice hockey tournament (incorporating a business and education showcase). This event will take place on 23 and 24 November 2018 and will attract an estimated 1,000 visitors travelling to Belfast from America, Canada and the rest of UK. The event typically generates 4,000 bed nights in the city – made up principally of the teams and officials. • Support in progressing the delivery of the second Basketball Hall of Fame competition. This event will take place on 29 November – 1 December 2018. With 8 teams participating in this year’s event, there will be 210 players and officials with an

	<p>estimated 5,000 out of state visitors anticipated. In addition to event participants and supporters, there will be an inward delegation from Boston. Details of those participating are currently being finalised but they are likely to include legal, government and business representation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council engagement in the fourth UK-China Regional Leaders Summit. This will take place in Dalian in mid-October 2018. Dalian is a city in Liaoning Province – the same province that Belfast’s Sister City of Shenyang is located. Derry City and Strabane District Council will sign a Sister City Agreement with Dalian at this time. The purpose of this event is to further cement economic, academic, tourism and cultural links between NI and the Liaoning Province under the MOU signed by First Minister Foster in December 2016.
3.11	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Costs associated with attendance of the Chair and the Director of Economic Development (or their nominees) as well as the Lord Mayor are contained within the existing International Relations budget. Costs associated with the 2019 Nashville in Belfast programme and other future activities will be built to the 2019/2020 estimates, and will be considered as part of the estimates process.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The International Relations Framework 2016-2021 has been equality screened. Activity undertaken by the International Relations Unit does not have a direct rural impact and activity within Nashville in Belfast 2019 will take into consideration accessibility of and promotion to the city’s urban and rural populations.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	None