

Appendix 1

International Relations Activities and Outputs

September 2018-March 2019

China/Shenyang

Political/Civic

- Belfast City Council won the Chinese Government Certificate of Honour for Sister City work and cooperation with China 2018
- Belfast City Council's Lord Mayor and senior staff attended the 2018 Chinese National Day celebration
- The Lord Mayor hosted a farewell lunch for Madam Wang, departing Consul General and a welcome event for incoming Consul General Madam Zhang
- Belfast City Council supported the varied programme of Chinese New Year events 2019, and in particular the 3rd Spring Festival international performance in City Hall and financial support for the highlight celebration event at the Waterfront Hall.

Tourism

- Belfast City Council supported Visit Belfast to deliver a highly successful Belfast Tourism showcase in Shenyang in September 2018. Follow up activity has continued since this event
- Visit Belfast will host two familiarisation visits from the Shenyang and the wider China tourism industry in 2019
- Visit Belfast hosted a follow up visit from Shenyang's biggest tour operator, Golden Bridge Tours, and is working to develop a tailored product at the request of the company to promote to their clients
- Visit Belfast has developed three bespoke itineraries aimed at the Chinese tourism market
- Visit Belfast continues to build on its "China Ready" accreditation and is delivering more training to its frontline staff
- Visit Belfast and Belfast City Council are participating in a Task and Finish Working Group known as the NI China Tourism Cluster. This group will develop a NI China Tourism and Strategy to ensure coordination throughout the industry and to ensure Belfast and NI are preparing for the increase in Chinese visitors, in light of the two new direct flights from Dublin and anticipated additional flights.

Business and Investment

- Belfast City Council worked in partnership with Invest NI and the NI Executive Office hosted small focused business delegations from Tinjan in China and Hong Kong, who were here to explore market opportunities
- Belfast City Council continues to produce business and investment information in Mandarin for incoming and indeed outgoing business delegates.
- Belfast City Council connected a number of local businesses with Chinese contacts in the course of the year

Education

- Belfast City Council continues to support the China engagement work of both universities and Belfast Metropolitan College and to work with the schools and teacher training colleges involved in international activity. The 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 2nd 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 second 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.

Boston

Business

- Following the Council, Invest NI and Catalyst Inc. led programme to Mass Challenge in 2018, the partnership engaged in phase II of the programme facilitating a week-long mentorship and coaching programme at MIT for ten Belfast growth tech companies, along with 90 other USA and globally located companies. This will be followed up by a return visit to Boston in March 2019 to allow the companies to undertake targeted business plan pitches to future investors and to enter into the US market
- In October 2018, Belfast hosted an inward business, government and education mission from Boston, coinciding with the annual International Homecoming Conference and the 2nd Belfast Invitational Basketball tournament. This mission led to the following activities:
 - Linkages made with New England Revolution soccer and the IFA to explore a young people's tournament in 2019/20 – work ongoing
 - Linkages made with Short Strand youth football team who will travel to Boston (self-financed) in Spring 2019. Their programme has been widened to incorporate the Sister City related activity with Boston communities.
- Linkages made with the Active Communities Network in Belfast to make new connections for their new annual youth exchange with the Boston Youth Empowerment programme
- Plans now in place for Belfast to host an incoming business mission from the British American Business Council of New England in partnership with Create Boston, Chamber of Commerce and the Boston Mayor's office for Economic Development as well as an inward mission from the Boston Irish Business Association in December 2019
- Ongoing support to Belfast-based businesses and social enterprises to build partnerships and business linkages in Boston (at least four live projects ongoing).

Tourism/Culture/Arts

- BCC connections led to a 6 month US Fulbright Scholarship in Belfast, January – July 2019. Professor Bob Scanlan from Harvard University is currently:
 - Teaching at QUB Seamus Heaney Centre
 - Co-producing with the MAC theatre and working with Mayor Walsh's office to replicate the MAC model in Boston

- Seeking to make new Sister City connections to Belfast communities.
- Cinemagic produced a first film with Belfast and Boston youth in November 2018, making connections and raising finance through Boston Sister Cities.

Education

- Belfast City Council continues to support Boston/Belfast university summer school exchanges and university linkages where requested e.g. Lord Mayor meet and greet events
- Belfast City Council financially supported and helped coordinate the 4th annual Friendship Four ice hockey tournament in November 2018. Belfast City Council in partnership with Invest NI and Food NI held the first annual Business-Education Showcase in City Hall. Plans are ongoing through the Ice Hockey Commission to include a cohort of sports data technology companies to present at a major spring conference in Philadelphia
- Following the Friendship Four tournament, Stranmillis College is progressing an educational partnership with a visiting Bostonian college – Lasell
- Belfast City Council financially supported and helped coordinate the 2nd Belfast Hall of Fame Basketball tournament in December 2018.

Nashville

Business

- Discussions underway to explore potential of a business mission to Nashville in 2019, in partnership with Invest NI
- Facilitated connections for Food NI with relevant Nashville players
- Hosted three inward visits from Nashville-based tourism and cultural contacts, all of whom are exploring future opportunities for engagement with Belfast-based partners.

Education and Culture

- Supported the third annual intake of Harpeth Hall students exchange with Strathearn College in January 2019
- Facilitated the connections between Cinemagic and relevant sectoral players in Nashville in advance of their Youth Film Making project
- Facilitation of connections for Queen's University in advance of their March visit to refine key linkages
- Further programme of Nashville-Belfast Youth discussions on prominent issues affecting youth in both cities.
- Ongoing work to prepare an inaugural joint legal summer school between Queen's University, Ulster University and in partnership with Invest NI to provide industry placements. A second element of this legal cooperation strand will be to encourage the exchange of both Bar Associations.