



Subject:	Belfast-Boston Sister City Visit – Invitation to Lord Mayor
Date:	7th August, 2019
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard, International Relations Manager

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	To seek Committee approval, following an invitation from the Mayor of Boston, for the Lord Mayor to participate in the Belfast-Boston Sister City visit being organised for 22nd till 26th September.
2.0	Recommendation
	The Committee is requested to approve the participation of the Lord Mayor in the outward visit to Boston, planned for 22nd - 26th September 2019. The costs associated with the visit will be met through the existing budget heading of the International Relations Unit 2019/2020.

3.0	Main Report
	<p data-bbox="272 226 421 255"><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p data-bbox="165 275 1469 405">3.1 Members may be aware that the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, on 5th June, approved the participation of the Committee Chair, the Director of Economic Development (or their nominees) and one officer in the upcoming Boston outward visit.</p> <p data-bbox="165 472 1469 607">3.2 The Mayor of Boston, Martin Walsh, has recently extended a personal invite to the Lord Mayor to join the visit to mark the Sister City agreement's fifth anniversary and explore, in partnership, further measures to strengthen the partnership.</p> <p data-bbox="165 674 1469 857">3.3 Members will also be aware that the Belfast-Boston Sister City agreement was the first such international partnership signed by Mayor Walsh when he took up office in 2014. The purpose of the agreement is to develop mutual collaborations in the fields of economic development, tourism, education and culture.</p> <p data-bbox="165 925 1469 1211">3.4 Over the past 5 years, this partnership has resulted in tangible benefits for the city of Belfast. For example, each year Belfast welcomes an inward Boston delegation which aligns with the Friendship Four ice hockey held in the SSE Arena over Thanksgiving and attracts over 1000 international visitors over a five day period. This initiative was the initial output of the Sister City agreement and continues to grow in reach each year. Additional inward visits may also take place to coincide with the International Homecoming conference.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1279 1469 1664">3.5 In terms of annual outward visits, the organisation and development of the itinerary is developed by the International Relations Unit in conjunction with both local stakeholders (in order to promote a Team Belfast approach) and the Office of the Mayor in Boston. Officers are completing this process at present, building on the success of prior missions which have led to specialised business mentoring programmes, awards by the Irish American Partnership to support the purchase of educational resources for Belfast primary schools, the scoping of the potential for the development of a Sister City philanthropic fund and youth exchanges.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1731 1469 1816">3.6 Inclusion of the Lord Mayor in the pending outward delegation would demonstrate the level of support which Council allows to the Sister City agreement.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1883 1469 1968">3.7 The budget for this mission has previously been agreed by City Growth and Regeneration Committee and will be met by the existing International Relations Unit allocation for this</p>

	<p>activity. A report on the visit outcomes will be detailed within the upcoming International Unit update report.</p> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>There are no direct Equality or Good Relations implications associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.9	<p>The City Growth and Regeneration Committee approved the International Relations Unit 2019/20 budget on 6th March 2019. This included an allocation of £10,000 for the Boston outward visit. There are no additional financial implications to this budget, should Members agree to the participation of the Lord Mayor in the visit.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	<p>Invitation from Mayor Walsh</p>