

Media release on behalf of Belfast City Council

**14 September 2010**

For immediate use

### **Benefiting from the BITES for business**

A number of businesses from Belfast are taking steps to ensure they are boosting profits and helping the environment too!

Representatives from 12 companies across the city have completed the BITES (Business Improvement through Environmental Solutions) programme which is funded by Belfast City Council with support from the European Regional Development Fund.



*The 12 BITES Participant Companies*

The one-year programme looked at environmental management and resource efficiency in the workplace, assisting the participant companies through a structured workshop and mentoring programme, to identify cost savings in purchasing, transport, energy and water costs. The workshop aspect of the course was complemented with site visits to companies' IKEA and Wastebeater to enable the participants to understand how IKEA has addressed sustainability and environmental issues and how recycling companies like Wastebeater can help businesses increase their recycling and divert waste to landfill.

All of the participants who completed BITES received certificates at a special reception in the City Hall last Wednesday (8 September). A special award was also presented by the programme delivery team, Mabbett & Associates Ltd, to the 'Most Improved' company to have taken part in the initiative this year. This award was won by Tommy Harbinson from the Odyssey Arena.

Derek McNab, Director at Mabbett & Associates, said: "There were several front-runners for this prize as the course participants had really engaged with the programme and delivered improvements for their organisations but the Odyssey in particular, impressed us with their commitment to environmental solutions and their staff engagement and identified cost savings of £59,000 per annum."

Councillor Conor Maskey, Chairman of the Belfast City Council's Development Committee, said: "I want to commend all those who took part in the BITES programme. It is designed to help businesses assess their environmental performance and identify cost savings in the workplace so that they can remain competitive and reduce their impact on the environment."

Most Improved award winner, Tommy Harbinson, Building Services Manager with the Odyssey Arena in Belfast, said the programme represented excellent value for money.

“The classroom sessions covered all the key environmental topics and issues and offered guidance and assistance on the structure and implementation of environmental procedures and policies while encouraging participants to consider and adapt the structures to fit their individual circumstances and ensure legal compliance,” he said.

“They also showed how to monitor, collate and disseminate the information available and coupled with a strong back-up regime, participants not only received the help required but the practical steps to take to identify the potential cost savings of reducing waste and lowering energy consumption in the workplace.”

Jackie Wilson from Extern said: “The BITES programme has assisted in progressing Extern’s environmental awareness and meeting our corporate objectives. It has helped towards reducing our carbon footprint by identifying real cost savings that can be made in relation to waste and energy. It is also hoped by having an Environmental Management System initiative in place, it will appeal to our funders’ specifications when submitting tenders.”

For more information on the BITES programme, contact Belfast City Council’s Economic Development Unit on 028 9091 8771 or go to [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/businessprogrammes/bitesprogramme.asp](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/businessprogrammes/bitesprogramme.asp)

BITES is accredited by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) which promotes best practice standards in environmental management, auditing and assessment. The programme is part financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme for Northern Ireland.

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