

Ref: FOI / 6370

28th May 2026

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request - Request for Records Relating to Services Provided by Aisling Events Limited

I refer to your FOI request and respond as follows:

1. All contracts and awards documents:

Final signed contracts, framework agreements, letters of awards, signed variations, signed extensions, renewals and termination notices between DSDC and Aisling Events limited, including all schedules and annexes and signature pages.

Council was a co-sponsor of the Golden Bridges Conference between 2015-2025, hosted by Aisling Events. As this was a sponsorship Council does not hold this information. The Golden Bridges conference is the only event that is solely focussed on the NW City Region (Derry, Strabane and County Donegal) in the United States. It enjoys support from all of the NW City Stakeholders including both Councils, UU, NWRC, ATU, Donegal ETB, Invest NI, Udaras NaGaeltachta, and the NI Bureau.

2. Procurement route and Justification

All documents explaining the procurement route taken (competitive tender, single source / direct award, negotiated procedure, emergency procurement etc.) including written justification for any noncompetitive award or exemption relied upon.

As above.

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98 Strand Road
Derry
BT48 7NN

Strabane

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47 Derry Road
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info@derrystrabane.com
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f Derry City & Strabane District Council
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3. Tender and procurement documentation

Tender notices, procurement strategies, procurement plans, tender documents, specifications, supplier submissions, clarifications, and any published procurement advertisements or notices. Details of the number of companies who tendered for the contract(s) or were approached to submit an application. Details of any contact with Aisling Events Limited ahead of contracts being agreed or applications submitted.

As above.

4. Evaluation and awards records:

Evaluation criteria, scoring matrices, evaluation reports, tender evaluation minutes, panel membership lists, conflict of interest declarations for decision makers and elected representatives and the award decision record.

As above.

5. Decision and approval trail

Minutes, decision memos, delegated authority forms, approval emails and records identifying the individual committee or elected members who authorised the original award and each renewal, variation or extension. Minutes, decision memos, delegated authority forms, approval emails and records identifying the individual(s), committee or elected members who authorised DCSDC staff or elected representatives' attendance at overseas conferences relating to the contract with Aisling Events Limited.

Council's sponsorship of Golden Bridges forms part of its wider Investment Strategy delivered by the Business & Culture Department. All decisions and updates in relation to Golden Bridges were taken, approved or noted by the Business & Culture Committee. Attached are reports in relation to Golden

Bridges. Council's participation and sponsorship of the Golden Bridges Conference was one element of an overall trade and investment mission programme that has evolved over the period from 2015-2025. This mission is central to the NW City Region Investment Strategy. Attached are various reports submitted to the NW Development Group.

In addition, to access information from meetings, minutes and agendas from Council meetings and Committees, I refer you to the Business & Culture meetings page on Council's website.

<https://meetings.derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=186&Year=0>

6. Publication and Transparency Records

Records showing whether the contract award(s), and contract details were published publicly or in any open data procurement dataset, and any reason for non-publication.

As above (Q1).

7. Procurement legal and technical advice

Internal and external legal opinions, procurement advice, risk assessments and contemporaneous advice about the procurement route, exemptions, confidentiality or publication obligations.

As above (Q1).

8. Travel expense totals

Aggregated table showing year by year totals for travel, accommodation, subsistence, and any other related costs paid in relation to the contract or commercial relationship with Aisling Events Limited (or any associated trading name) by DCSDC. To include claims, receipts and approvals for all

council officers or elected representatives who may have travelled at public expense. Please also include the detail separately how many DCSDC staff and elected representatives attended Golden Bridges Conferences or other overseas conferences as part of the relationship with Aisling Events Limited from 2013.

Council's participation and sponsorship of the Golden Bridges Conference is one element of an extensive programme during its annual US Trade and Investment Mission. This mission involves three pathways: Civic, Academic and Business. The focus of engagement takes in the wider East Coast of the US. Focussing on Philadelphia, Boston, Worcester, Springfield and New York. Generally, the programme culminates with the Golden Bridges Conference. As the mission is multi-location based, involving over a week of engagement it is not possible to determine travel, accommodation, subsistence specifically related to participation and attendance at the Golden Bridges Conference.

In terms of sponsorship, see table of sponsorship fees apportioned by year from 2015 and 2025.

Year	Amount	Funder
2015	£6400	Council
2016	£8,020	Council
2017	£6,700	Council
2018	£6,000	Council
2019	£6,000	Council
2020	£4,000	NW
2021	£6,000	NW
2022	£9,000	NW
2023	£9,000	NW
2024	£9,000	NW
2025	£10,000	Council

Total number of DCSDC staff and elected members from 2015-2025 attending NW Trade and Investment Mission

Year	No. of DCSDC staff who attended	No. of elected representatives who attended
2015	3	1
2016	4	1
2017	3	1
2018	3	1
2019	2	1
2020	0	0
2021	0	0
2022	1	0
2023	1	0
2024	4	1
2025	4	1

9. Declarations of interest and hospitality

All recorded declarations of interest, gifts and hospitality relating to Aisling Events Limited or related trading names, with date, name of declarant and brief description. Please include declarations by DCSDC Staff and any declarations made by elected representatives to DCSDC.

There were no recorded declarations of interest and hospitality. Therefore, Council does not hold this information.

10. Cost Control and Value for Money

Cost benefit analyses, business cases, service level agreements, financial appraisals, KPI's and whether or not these were met or otherwise, procurement impact assessments, evidence of tangible reviews assessing the value for money of the contracts. Details or estimates of the number of jobs created for the DCSDC area as a direct result of any contract with Aisling Events Limited or associated trading name.

The Sponsorship of the Golden Bridges conference is a one element of the overall annual US Trade and Investment Mission. The Golden Bridges conference showcases the NW Investment Proposition to a high-profile audience of invited guests from the Boston/Massachusetts region across Industry, Venture Capital, Academia, Political representatives including the Mayor of the City of Boston, members of the Irish Diaspora and potential investors. Since 2015, the US Trade and Investment Mission have generated multiple inward trade delegations from Boston/Mass into the NW City Region (DCSDC/Donegal) focussing on trade development. In 2016, the Mayor of Boston was hosted in the Guildhall as a direct result of the US Trade and Investment Mission and engagement. In 2019, the US Congress led a delegation to the NW following extensive engagement during the 2018 trade and investment mission. This mission was led by then speaker, Nancy Pelosi.

In terms of Business, sponsorship of the Golden Bridges conference facilitates the platforming of the trade mission participants. Since 2016, in excess of 60 companies from across the NW have participated in the programme and been platformed at various trade and investment events, including Golden Bridges. Anchor NW based Foreign Direct Investors have addressed the Golden Bridges or participated in Panel Discussions during this period:

- Seagate
- All State
- Optum
- O'Neills
- One Source Virtual
- Terrex
- Metaverse Modsquad
- Neuroconcise
- CTRIC
- Modern Democracy
- Wild Atlantic Distillery
- Fleming Agri

Included are reports, updates and papers outlining the mission objectives, company participation and benefits of a range of missions from 2015-2025.

11. History of Relationship Aisling Events Limited

How many years has DCSDC had a commercial, contractual or relationship with Aisling Events Limited or with any associated trading names. This information should include relationships with any predecessor bodies i.e. prior to the merger of Derry and Strabane district councils.

Derry City & Strabane District Council has been a co-sponsor of the Golden Bridges Conference from 2015-2025. Golden Bridges is the only annual conference/event showcasing the NW City Region in the US. The event has been running since 2008 and is a key focus for investors, influencers and the Irish Diaspora in the Boston/Massachusetts region.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you have rights of review and appeal; these rights consist of two review processes.

Firstly our internal review procedure is available by contacting:

John Kelpie
Chief Executive
Derry City and Strabane District Council
98 Strand Road
Derry BT48 7NN
Tel: 028 71253253 or email john.kelpie@derrystrabane.com

Secondly, you can appeal directly by contacting the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
CHESHIRE SK9 5AF
Tel: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or email: casework@ico.org.uk

I would advise however, the Information Commissioner has indicated that a review will not be undertaken unless the Council has first had an opportunity to re-consider its decision.

Yours sincerely

Kevin O'Connor
Head of Business