



Subject:	Attendance at Horizon 2020 UPSURGE in person meeting in Maribor Slovenia, 28 th – 29 th March 2023
Date:	24 th March 2023
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director, City & Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Alan Wardle – Project Support Officer (Climate Team)

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	Members are asked to note the Council's intention to send an officer to the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE Project Group Meeting taking place on 28 th -29 th March in Maribor, Slovenia which the Council is required to attend as a project partner.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: I. Note that, as the project lead for the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project, Alan Wardle will be attending the Project Group meeting in 28 th – 29 th March in Maribor, Slovenia. II. Note that all costs associated with the attendance at the event are covered within the EU Horizon 2020 UPSURGE grant funding.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will recall that in August 2020 Belfast City Council agreed to take part in the 'Upsurge Project' which focuses on testing nature-based solutions in partnership with four

other EU cities, with the aim of sharing learning and good practice. The site selected as the demonstrator for Belfast is the open ground at Lower Botanic Gardens, beside the Queen's PEC. Belfast City Council was subsequently awarded € 660,375 funding through Horizon Europe to deliver the demonstrator project which will include opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing across the city.

3.2 The UPSURGE project presents an innovative opportunity to develop an underused area of land within Belfast City Council's ownership, through a partnership with QUB, EU partners, and local community organisations. A project team has been established which includes Belfast City Council's Climate Team, Innovation Unit, City and Neighbourhood Services, Physical Programmes, City Regeneration, and Planning in addition to QUB representatives. The project will act as a hub, with the potential to support rewilding, enhanced local food production, stimulation of local circular economy, and will develop community education programmes in relation to climate, digital innovation, and community resilience.

3.3 As part of the delivery of the project, a number of Project Group Meetings are taking place at different host cities, where updates on the project will be provided, an opportunity to share learning and expertise on the effective delivery of the project is able to occur, and each of the 5 partner cities (Belfast, Breda, Budapest, Maribor, and Katowice) are asked to report on progress towards the delivery of their demonstrator project. At least one representative from each partner city is required to attend as per the funding agreement.

3.4 Belfast City Council has previously taken part in these meetings, with one previously taking place in Prato in October 2022. The benefits to the project from this meeting included building of relationships across project partners, learning on the various work packages, specifications and scope of works for the demonstrator development. It also created opportunities to identify risks, concerns and challenges between the 5 cities and communicate these to the other project partners so that the project can further support the cities to maximise the opportunities to deliver well on each of their demonstrator sites.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.5 There are no financial implications for Belfast City Council. All travel costs can be met within the EU Horizon 2020 funding of € 660,375.

3.6	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Link to the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project page here .