



Subject:	Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership Event
Date:	18th August, 2023
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officers:	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner

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"/>
Sometime 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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To inform the Committee of a proposal by the non-profit Management and Leadership Network (MLN) to host a prominent climate leadership event 'Sustain Exchange', with up to 300 decision-makers.
1.2	To request approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between the Council and the event organiser to the value of £6,950 +vat.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to support the Sustain Exchange climate leadership conference by granting approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between the Council and the event organiser to the value of £6,950 +vat.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Background
3.1	The Sustain Exchange event is organised by the non-profit Management and Leadership Network (MLN) and has run annually for several years, acting as a mechanism for learning

and collaboration across business organisations in Belfast in relation to climate and sustainability issues.

3.2 The aim of the event is to support organisations of all shapes, sizes and sectors to radically reduce their environmental impact both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. The Sustain Exchange event recognises that the sectors (private, public and third) need to come together to provide the inspiration, insights and impetus for their leaders to act meaningfully.

3.3 It is a transformative time for organisations as they address climate risks and identify new opportunities in the green economy. The transition is not straightforward. Organisations need help in developing planet positive practices, for example securing cleaner power, heat and transport solutions. They need help in navigating new markets to find more environmentally sustainable solutions in their supply chain. There has never been a more important time to find specialist help to navigate the transition, and to educate, inform and engage by sharing the existing knowledge and exemplar experience of those at the forefront of the transition.

Purpose and Format of Event

3.4 The Sustain Exchange Summit will deliver on the objectives above and will connect local decision-makers with international thought leaders as well as those at the forefront of the transition locally. The event is expected to attract some 300 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB, social enterprise and third sectors) and will either be delivered as an in-person-only event or a hybrid event which would see 120 leaders gather in-person with some additional 200 leaders attending the event via a live stream. Both delivery models will ensure the messages, around the need and importance of positive climate action, have reach and that sponsoring partners get a level of profile, amongst the NI leadership community, to justify their investment.

Content

3.5 Previous speakers at this event have included the eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator Sir Jonathan Porritt CBE and Norman Crowley (global entrepreneur and founder of CoolPlanet). The 2023 Sustain Exchange Summit will again be delivered to a world-class standard and will feature a globally renowned speaker as well as a carefully selected line-up of local leaders who will be challenged to share their story (exemplar), insights (expert) or support offering (stakeholder). As exemplars these leaders will share their story and associated lessons in an engaging, informative, and entertaining manner. The speakers will encourage and empower attending organisations to consider their own climate impact and take the first (or next) steps in their quest to become 'planet positive'. Previous local speakers at this event have demonstrated how leaders from Belfast have become planet game-

changers on a global scale in their respective fields. These include the likes of Dr Andrew Woods from Catagen (Sustain Exchange 2022) and Eddie McGoldrick from The Electric Storage Company (Sustain Exchange 2021). The 2023 event will once again showcase how leaders from Belfast are leading the charge when it comes to the quest to avoid what is now a 'code red for humanity'. In doing this MLN plans to inspire the next cohort of planet positive pioneers to emerge from our city.

- 3.6 The event will also provide the opportunity to make the broader leadership community in NI aware of the proactive work of the Council when it comes to the climate emergency.

Management and Leadership Network Experience

- 3.7 The Management and Leadership Network (MLN) is a non-profit which exists to connect decision-makers in NI with the insights of thought-leaders and world-class performers. The rationale is that by enhancing our leadership competence MLN will empower local organisations, strengthen the economy, enrich our society and ultimately improve lives.

- 3.8 MLN has worked with some of the most respected leaders on the planet and is very experienced in creating and delivering truly world-class events that engage, enrich and elevate attendees. As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. Belfast City Council would once again be invited to participate and profile its extensive climate work such as the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Report, Belfast Resilience Strategy, Belfast Climate Commission, Belfast One Million Trees etc.

Date, Venue and Contingence

- 3.9 The Sustain Exchange Summit will take place in October 2023. The total cost of the conference will be in excess of £60k. The Council has been a key partner in the Sustain Exchange Summit since its inception in 2021 and its support has been crucial in the creation and subsequent growth of the initiative and its impact. In order to reduce the financial cost to the Council and increase cross-sectoral collaboration, MLN will seek financial support from additional sources to include the private sector (most likely two planet-friendly organisations in Mills Selig Solicitors and Danske Bank) as well as local government through Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (with the Theatre at the Mill being the likely venue for a hybrid event). As well as demonstrating real collaboration, these partnerships have allowed MLN to reduce the Council's financial contribution from £10,000+vat to £6,950+vat. It is important to note that this financial contribution will be crucial in making this event a reality.

	Partner Contribution and Profile Benefits
3.10	The Council will be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners. The Council brand would be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as 'at-event'. A Council representative will be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN will arrange for the Council to deliver a presentation. The Council is requested to promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.11	The Council is being asked to contribute £6,950+vat to support this initiative. This amount has been allocated from within the existing City and Organisational Strategy budget.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications
3.12	There are no direct equality and good relations implications.
4.0	Documents Attached
	None.