



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor</b>
<b>Date:</b>	18th August, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Cathy Keenan, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a progress update on the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) partnership and seek nominations for Council representatives to the Political Advisory Group of the partnership.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. note the contents of this report and progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor partnership; and</li><li>ii. nominate three representatives to the DBEC Political Advisory Group by 15th September 2023.</li></ul>

3.0	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p data-bbox="272 210 437 241"><i>Background</i></p> <p data-bbox="272 257 1474 591">Eight councils along the Dublin - Belfast Economic Corridor form a partnership to develop a regional proposition for economic growth. The eight councils are Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Belfast City Council; Dublin City Council; Fingal County Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council; Louth County Council; Meath County Council; and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. The partnership also includes representation from Dublin City University and Ulster University. The corridor initiative was officially launched in March 2021.</p>
3.2	<p data-bbox="272 665 1474 840">The purpose of the partnership is to improve competitiveness and support economic growth across the region. This ambition has been reflected by governments North and South of the border who have made a commitment to support greater cooperation, connectivity, and opportunity North/ South on the island.</p>
3.3	<p data-bbox="272 920 1474 1050">The partnership aims to leverage the existing local government network and resources of the participating partners to identify areas where we can exert a significant positive impact and add value to the economic development of the corridor.</p>
3.4	<p data-bbox="272 1122 1474 1252">The partnership aims to leverage the existing local government network and resources of the participating partners to identify areas where we can exert a significant positive impact and add value to the economic development of the corridor.</p>
3.5	<p data-bbox="272 1323 1474 1453">In 2022 the Development, Strategy and Action Plan for the Partnership was completed and agreed by DBEC Chief Executives. The strategy articulates a number of strategic objectives for the partnership, including;</p> <ul data-bbox="323 1520 1474 1912" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="323 1520 1474 1608">• Increase skills and training to meet the labour requirements of the region, building on and expanding the existing workforce</li> <li data-bbox="323 1626 1474 1713">• Advocate for cross border infrastructure to strengthen connectivity and access to markets and labour</li> <li data-bbox="323 1731 1474 1818">• Enhance cross border collaboration in R&amp;D and Innovation, targeting investment in high growth sectors and the green economy</li> <li data-bbox="323 1836 1474 1924">• Promote sustainable and climate conscious growth along the corridor, aligned with councils' development plans and wider policy objectives</li> </ul>

- Align with and support economic development partners to increase trade and investment along corridor
- Market the region and elevate the DBEC brand so that the region becomes globally renowned as an attractive place to live and do business

3.6

Based on these objectives DBEC's core focus for enabling growth is based on improving skills, infrastructure and R&D. The action plan includes priority actions to deliver on these objectives and guide a work programme. These actions are now being brought forward through dedicated resources for the partnership based at Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and include:

- Governance - Agreeing a new collaboration agreement between partnership setting out a clear framework for collaboration.
- Communications - Developing and implementing a PR and Marketing strategy that will build the brand and profile of DBEC showcasing strengths and key business sectors along the corridor. Evaluation and development of event options based on thematic areas, such as investment, skills, R&D.
- Engagement – Development of a stakeholder engagement framework that will facilitate deeper internal collaboration as well as forging relationships with external stakeholders aligned to priority business sectors.
- Research - Review of existing skills strategies, identifying gaps, barriers and learning. Feasibility study on Regional Innovation Hubs – to be completed by end of September 2023. Feasibility study on Connected Circular Economy – to be completed by end of September 2023.
- Funding – Continued engagement with Shared Island Unit and identify any relevant funding opportunities, including funds to support the next steps of the current feasibility study work. Identify opportunities to access funding through Peace Plus including potential to partner under Theme 2.3 to bid for an area-based skills initiative and explore opportunities within Peace Plus Theme 6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement.

*Governance*

3.7

Newry Mourne and Down District Council currently holds the role of chair and secretariat for the partnership. As part of the Governance structure of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor, three elected members from each council are nominated to serve on a political advisory board. This board provides an advisory and consultative forum, supporting the Directors

	<p>Group and CEO group in the governance of the partnership. Councillor Pete Byrne (SDLP) from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is the current chair of the political advisory group and Councillor Seána Ó Rodaigh (Labour) of Fingal County Council as deputy chair.</p>
3.8	<p>This group last met in January 2023. Following the local elections in Northern Ireland, there have been changes among the makeup of councils and elected representatives. Therefore, as a result of this all councils have been asked to provide an update on membership to the DBEC political advisory board. Nominees are appointed for a two-year period, with a view to participating in quarterly meetings.</p>
3.9	<p>The previous Council representatives were Cllr. Ciaran Beattie, (SF), Cllr. Eric Harvey (Alliance Party) and Alderman George Dorrian (DUP). These representatives were previously nominated via the Councils City Growth and Regeneration Committee as DBEC updates are provided to that committee.</p>
3.10	<p>The SP and R Committee is requested to nominate new representatives to participate on the DBEC Political Advisory Board following consideration by the party group leaders by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023.</p>
3.11	<p>A list of meeting dates is provided below.</p>
	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.12	<p>N/A</p>
	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.13	<p>Given the nature of this initiative as a multiparty, cross border partnership equality and good relation impacts will be assessed throughout delivery within the overall governance framework.</p>

4.0

**DBEC Meeting Schedule.**

	<b>Directors</b>	<b>CEOs</b>	<b>Political Advisory</b>
	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Bimonthly</b>	<b>Quarterly</b>
<b>2023</b>			
<b>September</b>	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> @ 2pm	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am
<b>October</b>	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am		
<b>November</b>	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> @ 10am	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> @ 2pm	
<b>December</b>	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am		Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am
<b>2024</b>			
<b>January</b>	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am	Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> @ 2pm	
<b>February</b>	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> @ 10am		
<b>March</b>	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am	Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> @ 2pm	Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am
<b>April</b>	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am		
<b>May</b>	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> @ 10am	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> @ 2pm	
<b>June</b>	Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am		Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am
<b>July</b>	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am	Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> @ 2pm	
<b>August</b>	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> @ 10am		
<b>September</b>	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am	Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> @ 2pm	Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> @ 10am
<b>Schedule</b>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Thursday in month @ 10am</i>	<i>3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in month @ 2pm</i>	<i>4<sup>th</sup> Thursday in month @ 10am</i>
<b>Format</b>	<i>In person Or alternating in person / online</i>	<i>In person</i>	<i>In Person</i>