



<b>Subject:</b>	Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor activity
<b>Date:</b>	12 October 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Cathy Keenan, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

**Insert number**

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<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 and the draft action plan for the second half of this financial year.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the update on the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor workplan.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Committee will be aware that the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor Partnership was formed in 2021. It comprises eight councils along the corridor along with two partner universities – namely Dublin City University and Ulster University. 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.
3.2	The current secretariat of the partnership is managed by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. A dedicated management team for the partnership was established in Summer 2023 and that small team of two officers has taken on the responsibility of supporting the various governance structures to ensure delivery of the strategy and associated action plans. As part of the governance structure for the partnership, there are 24 councillors who make up a Political Advisory Group (3 nominees from each council area). This group provides an advisory and consultative forum, supporting the Directors Group and CEO group in the governance of the partnership.
3.3	Following the local elections in May 2023, new nominees were sought to represent Belfast. The Belfast City Council nominees are Cllr Ronan McLaughlan, Cllr Sarah Bunting and Cllr Eric Hanvey. Nominees are appointed for a two-year period and are invited to participate in quarterly meetings. The most recent meeting of the group took place in September 2023 hosted by Dublin City University. The next meeting is expected to take place at the Ulster University Belfast Campus in December.
3.4	Members will be aware that the strategy for the corridor is based around an ambition of creating a leading axis of development and achieving sustainable growth through collaborative R&D, a highly skilled workforce and enabling infrastructure. This includes an ambition to be globally recognised as a major international centre in growth sectors such as Professional Services, Advanced Manufacturing, ICT and Life and Health Sciences.

3.5	<p>Current working priorities within the action plan for this year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research: Review of existing skills strategies, identifying gaps, barriers and learning. A feasibility study on Regional Innovation Hubs (supported through the Shared Island Unit (SIU) Fund) is to be completed by early November 2023. An additional feasibility study on Connected Circular Economy (also SIU funded) will also be completed by the start of November 2023</li> <li>• Funding: Continued engagement with Shared Island Unit to explore additional funding opportunities, including support for the next steps of the current feasibility studies. In addition, engagement is under way with SEUPB to identify opportunities to access funding through Peace Plus. These include a partnership project under Theme 2.3 for an area-based skills initiative as well as funding under Theme 6.1 – Strategic Planning and Engagement – to support the ongoing operation of the Corridor team</li> <li>• Ways of working: Dates have been agreed out to summer 2024 for regular meetings of the partnership governance structure, including monthly meetings at Economic Director level, bi-monthly among CEOs and quarterly meetings for elected representatives. A draft partnership agreement has been prepared to further clarify areas of co-operation and partnership working.</li> <li>• Communications: Development of a coherent marketing and communications strategy in line with the strategic objectives. As part of this work, partners are exploring the potential to hold a significant economic conference in early 2024.</li> </ul>
3.6	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>The Belfast City Council contribution to the work of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor was approved by the City and Growth Regeneration Committee in March 2023.</p>
3.7	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Given the nature of this initiative as a multi-party, cross border partnership equality and good relations impacts will be assessed throughout delivery within the overall governance framework.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None</p>