



Belfast City Council

Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Climate Change Conference

Date: ~~0910~~ March 2010

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Relevant Background Information

In 2009 The European Unit recognised the need to develop a series of ~~key~~ seminars reflecting key issues ~~in Europe that~~ affecting European cities. ~~Under this action,~~ climate change was deemed to be one of the most important issues both in terms of the environment and economics affecting cities across Europe.

From an EU Member State perspective, the 2006 Stern Review concluded that the scientific evidence for climate change is now overwhelming and ~~that~~ climate change should be regarded as a serious global threat demanding urgent global action. Lord Stern's views have been echoed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) whose Fourth Assessment Report concluded that global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have increased markedly as a result of human activities and now far exceed pre-industrial values.

Recognising the Stern Review's call for prompt action, ~~Belfast City the~~ Council's 2008-2011 Corporate Plan has identified reducing the City's impact on climate change as a key priority within the strategic theme of 'Better care for Belfast's environment - a clean, green city now and for the future'. Moreover, the Council has as a key performance indicator also adopted the tonnage tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emitted from its premises as a key performance indicator.

In terms of indicative actions supporting this key priority, the Council committed to the adoption of a European Declaration on Climate Change for the City and to the subsequent development of a prioritised action plan to address the causes and consequences of climate change within Belfast in collaboration with outside bodies and local communities.

The Council formally subscribed to the Eurocities' Declaration on Climate Change (~~-see Appendix 1~~) at the Eurocities' Annual General Meeting in Stockholm on 28th November, 2009.

On 22nd January 2010, the Strategic ~~and~~ Policy ~~and~~ Resources ~~a~~ Committee endorsed ~~the a~~ proposal to establish an inter-agency group working group on ~~C~~limate ~~C~~hange ~~for the C~~ity. This group will seek to address key climate change issues currently affecting ~~the city~~ Belfast, ~~thus via the development of a~~ Climate Change Action Plan ~~for the city~~.

~~In order to develop an effective prioritised Climate Change Action Plan for the city it would have to demonstrate civic leadership by developing actions to minimise greenhouse gas emissions associated with its own activities. Council would also have to identify how its Departments could contribute individually towards the Action Plan through their everyday business activities. Departmental awareness raising regarding the Eurocities Declaration on Climate Change has already commenced via the recent Thematic workshops and associated briefing materials. The Council should also consider how its services and functions can be adapted to account for the predicted future impacts of climate change within Northern Ireland.~~

The Council's anticipated role in the development of a Climate Change Action Plan would will be to act initially as a convening body and to then function ~~then~~ as a co-ordinating and managing organisation for ~~the its~~ implementation and monitoring. Accordingly, it is considered that a climate change educational event could serve as a suitable formal launch for the wWorking gGroup and help to prioritise its work programme.

Key Issues

~~I~~With this in mind, it is proposed that the Council agree to hostorganise a Climate Change Conference ~~in Belfast for the city~~. ~~The conference would is would be to~~ address political objectives agreed by the Council around the climate change agenda and ~~to~~ inform on the key objectives of the Eurocities Declaration on Climate Change. It is proposed that the conference will take place ~~in A~~autumn ~~in the autumn~~ 2010, probably September. The ~~programme~~agenda is yet to be finalised due to the necessity ~~to~~of the involvement of the inter-agency working group on Climate Change. There will however be a European element to the programme as well as central and local government ~~involvement~~.

It is ~~anticipated~~expected that approximately 100 delegates will attend the conference.

Resource Implications

Financial implicationsFinance:

The conference will cost approximately £10,000. This is included in the European Unit's 2009-2010 budget.

Human Resources:

The European Officer for Health and Environmental Services – Sarah Jayne Smith and the Sustainable Development Manager – Alastair Curran, will organise the conference.

Recommendations

~~It is recommended that Members agree to host~~~~The Committee is asked to agree~~ the City Conference on Climate Change at a cost of approximately £10,000.

Decision Tracking

Following approval and subsequent ratification, ~~the~~ planning for the proposed conference will proceed.

Timeline: April 2010

Reporting Officer: Laura Leonard

Key Abbreviations

Documents Attached

Appendix 1: Eurocities' Declaration on Climate Change