



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Eurocities AGM 2010
Date:	13 October 2010
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Relevant Background Information

Members will be familiar that the European Unit makes regular progress reports to the Development Committee. The October 2010 report will provide details and seek approval with regards to the following:

Eurocities AGM 2010

Eurocities is a network of over 140 of Europe's major cities in over 30 countries. The organisation influences and works with the EU Institutions to respond to common issues that impact the day to day lives of Europeans. The network aims to share the opinions of stakeholders in Brussels to ultimately shift legislation in a way that helps city governments address the EU's strategic challenges at the local level. Eurocities also aims to assist local authorities in maximising European funding, networking and project opportunities.

Currently based on Europe's three key challenges the Eurocities policy priorities are:

- Climate
- Economic Recovery
- Inclusion

Eurocities provides a platform for its member cities to share knowledge and ideas, to exchange experiences, to analyse common problems and develop innovative solutions, through a wide range of forums, working groups, projects, activities and events.

The Eurocities network is structured around six thematic fora chaired by elected cities, namely:

- Economic Development
- Social Affairs
- Environment
- Knowledge Society

- Culture
- Mobility

The secretariat for the network is based in Brussels with a staff and Executive Board of elected members from cities throughout Europe.

Fora meetings are held three times per year in rotated venues around Europe and each forum has a maximum of eight working groups or projects.

Belfast City Council has been an active member of the Eurocities network since the mid 1990's. Currently the city, through officers and elected members, is active in the following fora:

1. Economic development
2. Social Affairs
3. Environment
4. Knowledge Society (more recent)
5. Culture (tentative)

A workplan for 2010 is attached as Appendix 1 of this report outlining where BCC is currently involved in leading or working on Eurocities led policy, funding or project issues.

Key Issues

AGM 2010

Each year BCC attends the Eurocities AGM represented by the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or nominees the Director of Development, the Head of Economic Initiatives and the European Manager or their nominees.

The 2010 AGM will be held in the city of Zaragoza, Spain from 3–6 November. The event hosted by the city council is entitled "Successful cities: Vision and Identity". The theme chosen for Eurocities 2010 Zaragoza focuses on the analysis of **how cities develop innovative tools to create a strong identity and to promote themselves at different levels, both nationally and internationally.**

Cities are in competition to attract investments, art, culture, tourism and citizens. To become a strong city it is essential to create or consolidate a city brand within the framework of a comprehensive economic development strategy.

In Zaragoza, particularly aware of this, since, during the last months, it has gone through the creation and launching process of its own city brand and wishes to share its recent experience with others. As Members will be aware, BCC and its stakeholders have already undertaken this with the "B brand".

A programme for the AGM and conference is attached as Appendix 2 of this report. Members are asked to note that the role of BCC at the AGM is to participate in the Executive Bureau and Forum elections and also to help showcase the work that the city has been involved in during the past year.

BCC along with the British Council will host a speed networking event at the AGM to present the work of the Belfast led open cities project. This project involving nine European cities and the British Council is funded under the Urbact II European

Programme. It looks at barriers to economic migration in cities. The project is not in its final year and has a special Fast Track commission label. This means that the European Commission is folding the project to consider potential policy influences and future funding programmes to continue to address the effect of economic migration in cities.

Members should note that Belfast City Council submitted two applications for Eurocities awards but unfortunately were not short-listed.

The Committee is asked to approve the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or nominee along with the Director of Development and the European Manager or nominees at the Eurocities AGM in Zaragoza from 3rd – 6th November 2010. Members should note that other Eurocities Members have also reduced the size of their city delegations due to the difficult economic climate.

Resource Implications

Financial Implications

It is estimated that the attendance of one elected Member and two officers at the Eurocities AGM 2010 will not exceed £3072. This has been budgeted for within the European Unit annual budget. This may be broken down as follows:

Travel	4 x £365 = £1460
Accommodation	4 x 3 nights @ £389 = £1556
Subsistence	4 x £270 = £1080
TOTAL	£4096.00

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to approve the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development, the Director of Development and the European Manager or their nominees at the 2010 Eurocities AGM, 3–6 November 2010 at a maximum cost of £3072.

Decision Tracking

Upon approval officers will arrange to attend the AGM of Eurocities in November.

Key Abbreviations

BCC – Belfast City Council
AGM – Annual General Meeting
NI – Northern Ireland

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – BCC's Eurocities Workplan 2010
Appendix 2 – Eurocities AGM Programme