

ask



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Consultation: DRD Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland
Date:	13 April 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development ext. 3470
Contact Officer:	Barbary Cook, Policy & Business Development Manager, ext 3620

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Council has been asked to respond to DRD's proposed framework for Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland. This framework addresses the key planning challenges faced by both parts of the Island and the potential for collaboration in spatial planning.
1.2	The Framework is a non-statutory approach to providing advice and guidance at relevant spatial or geographical scales. It should encourage policy makers in the public sector to take account of the wider impact of their work, to recognise and exploit opportunities for a wider perspective and to avoid "back to back" planning. The benefits from this can be at the local border area level and at the larger Island level.
1.3	The document states that co-operation between regions for territorial development is accepted as good practice within the European Union and that it can:
1.4	- solve cross boundary issues that cannot be dealt with by regions on their own;
1.5	- provide policy support for action or fiscal measures needed to achieve co-operation;
1.6	- help ensure consistency of policy at different levels ; and
1.7	- foster networking on decisions about cross boundary issues and projects.
1.8	The consultation document makes reference to other initiatives we are involved with or have consulted on such as Interred IV and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS). Committee considered a response to the RDS Consultation at a special meeting on the 24 March 2011.

1.9	<u>SUMMARY of the framework</u> There are four key aspects to the framework:
1.10	1. Equipping the Island - deals with major infrastructure such as energy and communications networks, the ports and airports.
1.11	2. Competitive Places - deals with the linking and coordination between key locations (the larger cities).
1.12	3. Environmental Quality - the careful conservation and enhancement of shared natural and cultural heritage assets, especially in relation to water quality, habitats, archaeology and architectural heritage.
1.13	4. Spatial Analysis - Gathering data and information on common trends, harmonising and integrating key datasets such as population, employment, transportation, housing, retailing and environmental indicators.
1.14	The Framework discusses collaboration at two different levels. Firstly at the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government level and secondly between Local Authorities in the North and South.
1.15	There are no specific questions for the consultation.
1.16	The Full proposal is available online and is attached as an appendix: http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=6831
1.17	The consultation document has been passed to all Departments within Council as well as to the Development Department Management Team to gather feedback.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The framework has no statutory authority though it is likely that its use would heavily influence future planning and investment decisions by DRD and the Executive.
2.2	The framework document does not contain much specific guidance. At the moment it seems to be more of a commitment to the principle of coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Of the 28 pages, 24 are devoted to an introduction, a summary of the current situation, and statistical results relating to key economic indicators. Only 4 pages are used to discuss the framework itself. Hence it is difficult to provide a detailed consultation response.
2.3	The framework document, its analysis and resulting conclusions are almost entirely based on the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for the Belfast area. Members will be aware that the RDS has only recently been out for consultation and hence can not yet have been finalised. We do not think it appropriate to base this framework on a significant but unfinished strategy document. For more information on the RDS please refer to the Development Committee Report "RDS 10 Year Review Consultation" 24 March 2011 from Keith Sutherland Planning and Transport Policy Manager.

2.4	The deadline for responses was the 12 April but we have agreed an extension to the 14.
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no additional resource implications for Belfast City Council.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	It is unlikely that the framework would have an adverse impact on equality or good relations issues.

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the attached draft consultation response; and 2. To raise any issues about the consultation document that they wish to be included.

6	Decision Tracking
<p>Timeframe: April 2011 Reporting Officer: Barbary Cook</p>	

7	Key to Abbreviations
<p>DRD – Department for Regional Development RDS - Regional Development Strategy</p>	

8	Documents Attached
<p>Appendix 1: Department for Regional Development “Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland Framework for Collaboration: Consultation Document” February 2011.</p> <p>Appendix 2: DRD Regional Spatial Strategies Draft Consultation Response</p>	