



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	COMET SLA
<b>Date:</b>	25 October 2011
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Laura Leonard, European Manager, ext 3577

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that the European Unit is Secretariat to the Councils of the Metropolitan Area (COMET) Network. This partnership, established in 2002 is a collaborative of the 6 local economic development units within the Greater Belfast Metropolitan Area. In June 2011 Development Committee approved the COMET Action Plan for the period 2011-2015.
1.2	The network is funded by way of a Service Level Agreement with each Council contributing £5,000 per annum. This is used to offset operational and project related costs. In light of this new Action Plan it was necessary to update the COMET Service Level Agreement (SLA) which is attached as Appendix one.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	The new Service Level Agreement is a refinement of the previous SLA and is reflective of the strategic orientation of the COMET Partnership for the period 2011-2015. It reminds the network of its core ethos and sets out its operational and financial structures.
2.2	Upon ratification by each COMET Council's committee with a remit for economic development, the SLA will be signed off by its respective Director.
2.3	Members will be aware of the importance and value of the COMET partnership. These include success in attracting European funding, establishment of the COMET Interreg partnership, undertaking joint trade missions and business events and formulating joint lobbying responses in the fields of economic development and urban regeneration. Officers and elected members from the six Councils also undertook a bespoke Economic Development European Awareness visit to

	Brussels. Whilst COMET recognises the individuality of each member and respects the flexibility of partners to participate only in actions which meet the strategic needs of their specific Councils its success makes it a recognised entity by external agencies for consultation regarding economic affairs in the metropolitan area.
2.4	Members are asked to note the contents of the report and approve the COMET SLA 2011-2015.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	There are no additional financial implications for Belfast City Council in approving this Service Level Agreement. Actions will either be funded from within the Partnership's Service Level Agreement or external funding sought.

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
5.1	That Members approve the contents of this report and the associated COMET Service Level Agreement

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
6.1	<p>Actions implemented and finance spent by the COMET partnership are reviewed annually by the partnership members and reported to Council Chief Executive Officers.</p> <p>Timeline: End of December 2011                      Reporting Officer: Laura Leonard</p>

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
<p>COMET - Councils of the Metropolitan Area  SLA - Service Level Agreement</p>	

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
<p>Appendix One - COMET Service Level Agreement 2011 - 2015</p>	