

DATED THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2011

710-944-1-LA

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL (1)

CARRICKFERGUS BOROUGH COUNCIL (2)

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL (3)

LISBURN CITY COUNCIL (4)

NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL (5)

NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL (6)

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

COMT (Councils of the Metropolitan Region)

Ciaran Quigley
Assistant Chief Executive
& Town Solicitor
City Hall
Belfast
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SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT COMT

1. Background

1.1 The origins of COMET can be traced back to the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP). The BMAP issues paper required the 6 local authorities within the BMAP region to respond individually to the outline policy framework. In addition the six local authorities collaborated in order to provide a collective response to the issues paper. The process established a precedent for collaborative working, which has been built upon.

1.2 Since the network's inception COMET has undertaken a number of joint initiatives- trade missions, project delivery, an economic development European scoping exercise, lobbying activity and consultation responses. COMET has evolved to become a recognised collaborative model on economic development within the Province. Its operational method is to recognise the individuality of each member but the benefits of partnership working which result in efficiencies, enhancing impact, exchange of expertise and a stronger voice in lobbying exercises.

1.3 Key initiatives delivered by COMET include:

- Delivery of the Peace II Connect project linking the metropolitan area to Valencia (Spain), Stockholm (Sweden), Vilnius (Lithuania) and Rybnik (Poland).
- Establishment of a COMET Interreg Partnership to address the lack of geographical representation in the Programme eligible area. This Partnership has worked towards raising awareness of the European Programme in the metropolitan area and supporting applications under the Enterprise, Tourism and Collaboration themes.
- Business mentoring programme tailored for the manufacturing sector

- Agreement of a 5 year Action Plan

1.4 The Parties have agreed to enter into this new Service Level Agreement to replace the previous Service Level Agreement and to outline their responsibilities to each other in respect of COMET. Each party hereto agrees that they have full legal power and authority to enter into this agreement.

2. Meetings

2.1 Belfast City Council's European Unit will act as secretariat for the COMET network which will meet on the first Tuesday of each month. Thematic sub-groups will be established on an as needs basis and will report back to the full board on a regular basis.

2.2 In addition, once per annum a meeting will be held to brief the Chief Executives and/or Directors of member's Councils regarding the implementation of the Action Plan and financial spend.

3. Financial Procedures

3.1 Each member of COMET will contribute up to £5000 per annum for the period 2011-2015. This is subject to full Council approval of each network member and based on the strategic need for such level of intervention.

3.2 The COMET budget will be used to fund

- agreed actions, projects and initiatives;
- secretariat time; and
- hospitality at meetings

3.3 Belfast City Council's EU Unit will manage the annual financial expenditure of the COMET Network and invoice each Council appropriately. An analysis of expenditure will be presented annually to Chief Executives and Directors of the participating Councils. Should COMET wish to participate in activity over and above the agreed £30,000 annual budget, each Economic Development Unit will source additional funding from within their individual unit budgets.

4. Action Plan Implementation

The COMET Action Plan 2011-2015 (appended hereto at Appendix 1 and which forms part of this agreement) is designed to reflect the individuality of COMET's members. Not all 6 Councils are required to participate in an action within the plan but each local authority will participate where the initiative meets the strategic need of that particular area. Leadership of initiatives has been identified and reflects the desire of the partnership, to share responsibility amongst partners. Agreement by consensus will determine which actions will be addressed during the lifespan of the Plan.

The Plan has also been designed to reflect the potential for changes in economic and political conditions for its implementation.

5. Individual Roles and Responsibilities

The Parties agree to:

- Contribute to decision making and to share responsibility for those decisions;
- Input into collective urban and European issue papers and consultations;
- Attend board meetings on a regular basis and to be well prepared by reading relevant papers in advance;
- Attend COMET events and keep up to date with subjects relevant to the work of the organisation;

- Report to their respective Committees as and when required on COMET activity and to obtain any necessary approvals
- Contribute to the content of the Annual Meeting
- Represent COMET at events when required; and
- Act at all times with propriety, declaring any interests that may conflict with your responsibilities as a COMET member.

6. Indemnity

Each of the parties agree to indemnify and keep indemnified the other Parties and each of them from and against all losses, actions, proceedings, claims, demands and expenses suffered by the other Parties or any of them as a result directly or indirectly of any unlawful act by the Indemnifying Party in connection with this Agreement.

7. Dispute Resolution

In the Event of any disagreement between the Parties the matter may be referred by any of the Parties to a suitable independent person to be agreed by the Parties for determination.

8. Relationship of the Parties

For the avoidance of doubt this Agreement shall not be construed as a Partnership Agreement within the meaning of Section 1 of the Partnership Act 1980 nor is there any intention on the part of the Parties for form a Partnership.

9. Variation

Any variation to this agreement shall be in writing and signed by all Parties.

10. Law

The Agreement shall be construed and applied in accordance with the Laws of Northern Ireland and the Courts of Northern Ireland shall have exclusive jurisdiction thereto.

IN WITNESS whereof this Agreement has been executed by Belfast City Council, in the manner hereinafter appearing, and the Chief Executives of Carrickfergus Borough Council and Castlereagh Borough Council, Lisburn City Council, Newtownabbey Borough Council and North Down Borough Council have attested this Agreement on behalf of their Councils by subscribing their signatures hereto in the manner hereinafter appearing.

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

DIRECTOR OF

DEVELOPMENT

CARRICKFERGUS BOROUGH COUNCIL

DIRECTOR OF

DEVELOPMENT

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

LISBURN CITY COUNCIL

DIRECTOR OF

ENVIRONMENTAL

SERVICES

NEWTOWNABBEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT

DIRECTOR OF

SERVICES

NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT