

EUROCITIES OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2012-2013

Forum Name: Economic Development

BCC EU Officer: Laura Leonard

Department(s) linked to/supported by work of Forum:

The Development Department via the Economic Development and European Units are linked to and supported by this forum. There are also evolving links and relevance for the Northern Ireland European Regional Forum.

Outputs and Achievements for 2011:

Attended three forum meetings.

- Input into the consultations on future cohesion policy and EU Funding post 2013.
- Input into the consultations on the EU legislative package and regulations post 2013.
- Input into the metropolitan areas study

Forum Priorities for 2012:

1. EU funding to support cities' integrated development:

Lobbying on EU budget 2014-2020, cohesion policy, competitiveness and innovation programmes, Horizon 2020, other relevant programmes and policies, and on financial instruments.

2. Economic recovery, long term economic development, and employment:

Demonstrating that cities are the engines of growth in Europe for instance through their support to entrepreneurship, employment and lifelong learning schemes. Exploring ways to foster innovation in cities and thereby boost the local economy.

3. Integrated development of functional urban areas:

Promoting integrated approaches in urban planning and urban regeneration schemes. Advocating the place-based approach in different EU policies. Outlining the importance of metropolitan areas in today's urbanised societies.

Forum Working Groups for 2012

The Integrated Urban Development Working Group
The Entrepreneurship Working Group
The Cohesion Policy Working Group
The Metropolitan Areas Working Group
The Innovation Working Group

Areas of Work to be Undertaken with Departmental Director approval in 2012

Attend three forum meetings and engage in;

1. Entrepreneurship Working Group

Promoting entrepreneurship, especially in target to increase the number of entrepreneurs, to achieve more growth companies in EU, to contribute to the European economical growth and Lisbon objectives and to increase the cooperation of the cities to improve competitiveness.

2. Integrated Urban Development Group

The WG will improve integrated planning through peer reviews exchanges.

3. Metropolitan Areas Working Group

The working group focuses on the city in relation to its surroundings and the governance of functional urban areas. The work of the group feeds into the EU debates about delivering Europe 2020 and Structural Funds 2014 - 2020.

4. Future Cohesion Policy Working Group

The working group coordinates EUROCITIES lobbying vis-à-vis the EU institutions and Member States on EU Cohesion Policy and Structural Funds to ensure a sufficient urban focus in regulatory frameworks.

5. Innovation Working Group

This working group will exchange on innovation systems and to influence the new research programmes, e.g. Horizon 2020.

Expected Results:

- Belfast City Council through the Director of Property and Projects will engage in the Integrated Urban Development Working Group to see how other cities involve the private sector in urban regeneration and encourage joint investment.
- Belfast City Council through the Director of Property and Projects will engage in the metropolitan working group to look at best practise approaches to metropolitan governance and city regional working.
- High level engagement in Eurocities post 2013 structural funds lobby to ensure an urban dimension for cities
- The officer will also engage in the UK Eurocities campaign to lobby Whitehall to maximise opportunities for local government and this will feed into the local lobby led by Belfast City Council in 2012/13.

Forum Name: Environment Forum

BCC EU Officer: Sarah Jayne Smith

Department(s) linked to/supported by work of Forum:

Health and Environmental Services, Belfast Health Development Unit (made up of BCC and external partners).
Property and Projects(Energy)

A) Outputs and Achievements for 2011

- Attended two Forum meetings

Key outputs:

- Statements of every EEF meeting that are used to lobby the European Commission on policies affecting cities
- Stockholm appeal on Climate Change
- Inclusion in the S Cube Smart Cities project.
- Crisis Recovery paper (economic)
- Green Digital Charter
- Position on Noise directive
- Evaluation on 6th Environmental Action Programme
- Questionnaire on Green Procurement
- Overview of environmental priorities
- An overview of waste collecting practices in Europe
- Position papers on noise and silent tyres
- 7 Environmental Action Plan development
- Energy 2020 Policy Paper/consultation
- A Road map(timeframe) for a low carbon economy consultation with cities.

- EU air quality policy review: participation and contribution to Commission stakeholder expert group (lead: WG Air Quality Climate Change Energy Efficiency)
- Energy Efficiency Directive: position paper.
- Climate adaptation: Contribution to the Commission Adaptation Steering Group.
- Exchange of best practices between cities on issues such as: climate adaptation, air quality measures, greening the local economy/ green growth, climate mitigation/SEAPs/Covenant of Mayors

B) Forum Priorities for 2012

In 2012, the forum will focus on 3 thematic priorities:

- Environment and economy
- Environment and health
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Within these priorities, the forum follows several objectives:

- Addressing the challenges associated with global climate change, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and anticipating the potential consequences and developing effective adaptation measures
- Providing input to the review of EU air quality policy, in particular with regards to the specific needs of cities
- The follow-up to the European Union's Sixth Environmental Action Programme (with the likely development of a 7th Environmental Action Programme), including the development of strategies on urban environment, including issues such as urban transport, reduction of toxic substances in the environment, air quality, and the prevention and recycling of waste
- Promoting the use of sustainable energy in cities (raising awareness and energy efficiency, while decreasing the production of CO₂)
- Promoting and fostering green growth as economic engine for city development

Addressing the challenges associated with other issues affecting the urban environment and quality of life, such as noise, water, waste, green areas, cleanliness and more.

Forum Working Groups for 2012(groups with asterisk are those with Director approval to attend):

1. Air quality/climate change/energy efficiency, chaired by Birmingham*

The working group addresses air quality and climate change issues affecting cities in Europe.

2. Waste, chaired by Genoa

Addressing the issues of waste recycling, bio waste and sludge. Contributing from the city perspective to European policy initiatives on prevention and recycling of waste.

3. Water, chaired by Eindhoven and The Hague

The EU framework guidelines on water, climate change and air quality demand new ways to tackle challenges in urban water management. The primary objective of the working group is to collect and exchange good, innovative and sustainable solutions on surface and ground water problems (for both water quality and water quantity aspects) with a view to stimulating the implementation of these innovative solutions.

4. Noise, chaired by Rotterdam

Supporting members in the implementation of European directives relating to the assessment and management of urban noise.

5. Greening the local economy, chaired by Zurich (co-chair tbc)*

Supporting the preservation and development of parks and gardens that often characterise the cultural heritage of European cities. The group strives to increase the contribution of green areas to a better quality of life and improved air quality as well as to cultural and recreation activities. We are also focused on increasing citizens' involvement in the management and recovery of green areas.

6. Clean cities, chaired by Copenhagen*

Promoting clean and attractive cities and changing behaviour on illegal depositing of litter and waste and other activities which have a negative impact on the urban environment and citizens' quality of life.

7. Green areas, chaired by Genoa

Supporting the preservation and development of parks and gardens that often characterise the cultural heritage of European cities. The group strives to increase the contribution of green areas to a better quality of life and improved air quality as well as to cultural and recreation activities. We are also focused on increasing citizens' involvement in the management and recovery of green areas.

These seven working groups contribute to the overall EUROCITIES work programme through different actions: contribution to various position papers, workshops, joint meetings, joint initiatives and participation in other forum WGs meetings mainly

Areas of Work to be Undertaken with Departmental Director approval in 2012

Attendance at three full Environment Forum meetings

Attendance at three Clean Cities Working Group meetings

Work with all relevant departments and units and in particular with Health and Environmental Services, Property and Projects on relevant projects and policy work.

(D) Expected Results:

To optimum would be funding to support corporate plan objectives, policy influencing and awareness and creating profile for Belfast internationally.

Forum Name: Knowledge Society Forum

BCC EU Officer: Deirdre Ferguson

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Department(s) linked to/supported by work of Forum:

ISB is the key area of BCC linked to this forum. As ISB provides a support service for all of Council, the work undertaken by this forum impacts on and benefits all BCC departments.

A) Outputs and Achievements for 2011:

Belfast City Council staff sit on 3 working groups of the KSF, these are Services Directive, Open Data, Smart Cities and we have a watching brief on the e-Inclusion group. We have attended 3 meetings in 2011 and reports on learning, links and contacts made at all meetings have been shared with colleagues and BCC stakeholder organisations.

Services Directive: Other EU cities are using the Services Directive as a means of achieving economic growth by simplifying processes involved in business start up. We have looked at our approach to the Services Directive and how useful this has been and contributed to a Eurocities led review of the Service Directive. The findings from this informed a review carried out by the Commission at the end of the year.

Open Data: We have also benefited from the work of the Open Data group and learned from the experiences of different cities. As a result ISB have considered data sets suitable for open data publication and gained approval to publish these. Links have been made with DETI to support this work. Publication of open data is a means of making BCC information more transparent and easily available to the public. It can help to reduce the number of freedom of information requests received and information can be re-purposed to create new business opportunities. This work also ties in with the new Digital Strategy that is being developed for the city.

Links with DETI have also enabled us to access information on pre-commercial procurement which we have shared with economic development and procurement.

Smart Cities: As members of the Smart Cities working group we have had the opportunity to learn from other cities and have passed this information to relevant staff in Council who are involved in developing our own Smart City Strategy.

We also made a proposal to the KSF forum for Belfast to host one of its conferences in 2012 and gained approval to host the 2012 summer conference in Belfast on the theme of cyber security.

Information on 23 project opportunities have been shared so far this year with BCC colleagues and with Northern Ireland Regional Forum members. PSNI have been following up project opportunities and BCC will be involved in 2 projects which have been successful in being awarded funding. The first project Networking for Intelligent Cities (NICE), funded through the ICT Policy Support Programme began in September. This funds technical expertise to help us improve our work in reducing ICT emissions. The second project ILLUMINATE funded by FP7 will allow us to refit the outside of the City Hall with energy efficient lighting. It is estimated that this project has the potential to reduce electricity usage in the City Hall by approximately £13,000 per annum.

Three Knowledge Society Events have been attended, these are as follows:

1) **Ghent April 2011:** The theme of the conference was 'involvement and engagement of citizens and cities through ICT'. Key learning points were:

- Well established partnerships exist among European cities who constantly work with each other to develop and implement new projects. Cities see usage of the Eurocities partner search facility as a last resort and prefer to invite partners based on the relationships they have developed. It is therefore extremely important for Belfast to be seen as a credible partner, to find out what other cities are developing and to try to engage at the earliest stage possible rather than waiting for partner invitations.
- Although Belfast has not signed up to projects as a partner there are learning opportunities to be gained through dissemination of results.
- Belfast needs to consider the project opportunities we have been invited to join and respond quickly to establish credibility.
- Potential opportunities and efficiencies can be gained from re-use of public sector information. ISB to consider this for publishing data sets.

2) **Dresden June 2011:** The theme of this event was the hidden profits associated with the implementation of the EU Services Directive. Key learning points were:

- Other cities see implementation of the Services Directive as a means of achieving competitive advantage. By simplifying processes associated with business registration and start up they are making their cities more attractive for companies to set up.

- We need to understand how the Services Directive has been implemented in our region and City Council's role. Our experiences and recommendations can feed into the Commission's review taking place at the end of this year.
- The 'picture' method will be used to compare city processes for implementation of the Services Directive. It can also be used for streamlining processes to create greater effectiveness and efficiencies and is worth considering to support integrated working and changes required for RPA.
- D115 is an excellent example of a transformed telephone system where citizens access all public services by using one easy to remember telephone number - 115.

3) **Eindhoven October 2011:** The theme of this event was open innovation. Key learning points were:

- Eindhoven is a top European technology region where a triple helix of business, education/knowledge institutions work together with government to boost the competitiveness of the region. Philips light bulbs and DAF trucks were two pioneering industries which put the area on the map early last century.
- Eindhoven Brainport creates industries for the future which are developed 'for and by the market'. It spends 8% of the gross regional produce on R&D and has the largest share of profit in total Dutch private R&D expenditure. Brainport's work is based on thinking globally and acting locally in cooperation with others across functional networks. Collaboration is key to the success of Eindhoven Brainport which won Intelligent city of the year award. The proximity of campus provides easy access to technical facilities and services which has helped to create a vibrant research community.
- The FP7 programme will become Horizon 2020 post 2013. The scheme will integrate the current framework programme for research (FP&) the competitiveness and innovation programme (CIP) and funding for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

B) Forum Priorities for 2012:

The connectivity of communities is key to developing creativity and social know how to form vibrant knowledge-based economies. This is the overarching theme for the work of the Knowledge Society Forum in 2012 and will shape the working groups:

1. Smart Cities
2. E-inclusion
3. Open data
4. Services Directive

Four meetings will take place throughout the year:

January 26th Brussels
March 20th and 22nd Berlin
June 20th and 21st Belfast
October Vienna, date to be agreed

Participation in working groups and expected results will be as follows:

1. **Smart Cities:** In 2012 the final report of the road map for Smart Cities will be produced by the working group. This draws together learning from other EU cities leading in this area. The report will provide valuable insights and learning for Belfast and other cities who have yet to develop a smart city strategy. Future opportunities for funding will also be explored.
2. **E-inclusion:** In 2012 the e-inclusion working group will ensure that this theme is included in the Smart Cities roadmap. The group will signpost members to funding opportunities which will link with our Investment Strategy.
3. **Open Data:** In 2012 the open data group will produce a guide book which will provide technical and legal guidance on the publication of data sets. The working group will focus on the practicalities of opening access to data to make it re-usable as well as identifying potential for joint initiatives at EU level. ISB will contribute to the guide book and have access to it and the ongoing support from group members when publishing data sets for BCC.
4. **Services Directive:** The focus of the work for 2012 will be a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of the single point of contact and a position paper on the contribution of the Directive as an economic driver. We will bring learning from this group back to council.

Forum Name: Culture Forum

BCC EU Officer: Frances Murray

Department(s) linked to/supported by work of Forum:

This Forum links to and supports work in the Development Department and in particular the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit. In addition there is also benefit for Parks and Leisure as this Department controls some tourism facilities including the Zoo and Parks including Botanic Park. It also links to the work of Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau and Belfast City Centre Management.

(A) Outputs and Achievements for 2011

BCC actively re-engaged with the Forum in 2011, attending the autumn meeting in Antwerp. A BCC response was also provided to the EUROCIITIES consultation with regard to the proposed Creative Europe Funding Programme. This €1billion Programme will be the main funding stream for cultural, arts and audiovisual activity for the period 2014-2020. The resulting draft EUROCIITIES statement is presently being agreed at Executive level and will be followed by meetings between EUROCIITIES staff and Commission representatives. BCC also participated in the Forum's Working Group on Young People and Culture.

(B) Forum Priorities for 2012:

Priorities for 2012:

Having taken into consideration members' perspectives and the European agenda, the following are the Culture Forum priorities for this year:

1. Creative partnerships

The economic crisis has had diverse consequences on cultural budgets in cities, but also on working methods. In most cities new partnerships involving cultural actors and other stakeholders have developed. They are now resulting in new ways for local cultural actors to work together for example between culture, knowledge institutions and innovation.

In 2012 the culture forum will explore those new alliances set up in cities. What are their objectives? Which actors do they involve? How are they managed?

2. Access to culture

Culture is for all to share, at all ages. It contributes to the wellbeing and entitlement of citizens and to social cohesion and inclusion. In 2012 the culture forum will continue acting as a platform for cities to share views and policies on local strategies to encourage access to culture for all citizens. Particular attention will be given to two groups: young people, and 'senior' citizens, thus marking a clear link with the 2012 European Year of active ageing and solidarity between generations.

3. European funding for culture

In addition to continuing to lobby for the proposed Creative Europe Programme to reflect the needs and concerns of cities, the Forum will also closely monitor other programmes that can be used to co finance cultural or creative projects. These include cohesion policy, and the new competitiveness and SMEs programme. The culture forum will also react to the European Commission's proposal for a new regulation on the European Capital of Culture after 2019 (expected mid 2012).

Two forum meetings are scheduled in 2012:

18-21 April in Utrecht which will focus on creative partnerships for culture.

24-27 October in Munich which will discuss how cities deal with their past

Forum Working Groups for 2012:

The culture forum is currently composed of 5 working groups

1. Resources for Culture (chaired by Bologna)

The working group examines the different types of financial resources that are available in cities to help sustain and develop their cultural activities and infrastructure in the long term.

In 2012 the group will continue exchanging experiences and information on how to strengthen resources for culture, and how to deal with the shrinking budgets in the post crisis years. It will also contribute to the development of a EUROCITIES position on the future Creative Europe programme and will input the network's position on the future cohesion policy.

The group will also broaden the concept of resources for culture and go beyond strictly financial resources, including for examples human resources for culture.

BCC has engaged in this working group in the past and will re-evaluate its position at the April meeting

2. Creative Industries (chaired by Ghent)

This joint WG of the EUROCIITIES culture forum and the EUROCIITIES economic development forum promotes cross-fertilization of ideas/projects/public policies related to cultural and creative industries and shares best practices targeting in particular measures to support and promote new forms of access to financial resources, to business support and to appropriate training. In 2012 members will focus on the follow-up of the European Commission's Green paper on cultural and creative industries and will contribute to our position on the future Creative Europe programme. The brand new European Creative Industries Alliance will also be a key European initiative to be followed closely by the group, several members cities being leaders on different parts of the alliance. Lastly, the group will reflect on 'creative industries and culture' in close collaboration with the culture forum: (How) do creative industries change the (traditional) content and perception of culture and/or the role/the relevance of culture in urban society? BCC participates on a virtual basis.

3. Access to Culture (chaired by Riga)

The working group's aim is to identify, define and compare policies and action plans implemented by European cities regarding accessibility of cultural spaces and services. All aspects of accessibility (social, cultural, intellectual, physical and financial) are taken into account. In 2012 the group will go on presenting and discussing concrete examples of policies and activities aiming to foster access to culture for all. Cities hosting working group meetings will play a key role by arranging meetings with key local practitioners. The working group is willing to contribute to the 2012 European Year of active ageing and solidarity between generations. Good practices to be shared will focus on senior citizens' access to culture.

4. Young People and Culture (chaired by Rotterdam)

The working group shares best practices about young people, culture and inclusion through cultural activities. Culture reinforces society's commitment, the development of young people in our neighbourhoods and the climate of learning in schools. Young people must also have the opportunity to develop culturally. It begins at schools in cooperation with artists, art institutions, art education centres and libraries as well as colleges of art for the further education of conspicuous creative talent. In our forum various cities have already implemented wonderful initiatives that deserve to be pursued or taken further in Europe. In 2012 the young people and culture working group will continue to monitor all these trends to gain recognition for a fitting approach that can also be supported by the EU. It will draw on the elaboration of 'Start them young', a paper on education and culture, as well as on youth cities in cities. A third focus point will be young people and heritage as an instrument for democracy, identity and mutual understanding. BCC is actively engaged in this Working Group as it links across a number of Council strategies and corporate objectives

5. Mobility of artists and cultural professionals (chaired by Nantes)

Mobility is a professional and artistic necessity for artists in order to export their work, perform, learn, create, cooperate and discover new ways

of expression. In 2012 the group will continue exchanging good practices on support provided by cities to the mobility of artists and culture professionals.

Interested members will also contribute to the writing of a Responsible and sustainable cultural and artistic mobility Charter, an initiative by On the move, a European cultural mobility information network.

(C) Areas of Work to be Undertaken with Departmental Director approval in 2012:

Attendance at the 2012 forum meetings

To continue BCC's contribution to the European policy process through participation in relevant consultations.

BCC will use the Culture Forum to identify best practice and benchmarking to assist in the delivery of the Council's Integrated Tourism Strategy. The areas to be included in learning, benchmarking and sharing knowledge include cultural infrastructure, use of new technology, heritage issues, development of Belfast Story, maximising Titanic and maritime heritage particularly for 2012, extending benefits of tourism across the city.

BCC will use the Forum to identify funding opportunities to support corporate plan objectives and in particular tourism, culture and arts.

(D) Expected Results:

The optimum results would be funding to support corporate plan objectives, policy influencing and awareness and creating profile for Belfast internationally.

Forum Name: Social Affairs Forum

BCC EU Officer: Frances Murray

Department(s) linked to/supported by work of Forum:

This Forum links to and supports work in the Development Department and in particular the Community Services Unit, Policy Unit given the development of the Poverty Framework; and the Economic Development Unit. In addition links to and supports the work of BCC's Good Relations Unit and links to the Northern Ireland European Regional Forum given members have the remit for many areas of work that BCC does not have a remit for.

(A) Outputs and Achievements for 2011:

BCC participated in the spring Forum meeting which discussed social inclusion through inclusive and integrated employment practices. This meeting allowed contact to be made with the Commission's representative of the new Social Innovation Unit. This is important in terms of the new proposed funding programme for Europe in 2014-2020, the Programme for Social Innovation and Change, which has an emphasis on social innovation.

BCC also contributed to the EUROCITIES consultation on The Social Dimension of the National Reform Programmes- key documents in relation to Member States' targets in respect to reducing poverty and social exclusion.

BCC signed the Integrating Cities Charter in 2011

Through the PROGRESS funded Taskforce on Roma, Belfast is also participating in identifying new ways to promote the integration and inclusion of ethnic communities.

(B) Forum Priorities for 2012

Following a members' survey, the overarching priority themes for the Social Affairs Forum in 2012 are:

- Active Inclusion
- Employment
- Demographic Change

The forum will hold 2 meetings in 2012 and at the March meeting, Belfast will present its Grundtvig Senior Volunteers Project as well as its Older People's Panel.

In terms of lobbying activity, the Social Affairs Forum will contribute to the EU policy process in the following ways:

Engagement with the EU institutions:

- Continue to strengthen the relationships with DG Employment through:
 - Maximising the links between member cities and key officials in DG Employment.
 - Responding to the encouragement of DG Employment to show how cities can bring together researchers and practitioners to pilot new initiatives and test methods of evaluation.
- Be more proactive in seeking political dialogue not only with the Commission but with the European Parliament and CoR.
- Develop a lobbying and advocacy strategy to lobby for the EUROCITIES position on the future of ESF / structural funds particularly targeting MEPs and national authorities.
- Develop closer links with EU institutions and stakeholders on the European Year for Active Ageing.

Resources:

- Continue to work on influencing the final shape of the future ESF regulations to ensure that the recommendations of the Eurocities Position Paper are taken on board and that there will be a greater role for cities in the design and implementation of national and regional ESF programmes.
- Identify early, and take advantage of, funding calls which could facilitate joint city working on projects which support the aims and objectives of SAF e.g. calls under the PROGRESS and FP7 Social Science and Humanities Programmes.

Innovation:

- Ensure that the role of cities as catalysts for innovation is more widely recognised within the European Commission and other EU institutions, so that they are seen as key partners in the development of innovative solutions particularly to the social challenges facing Europe and thus essential to the delivery of the goals of Europe 2020.
- Continue to explore social innovation initiatives in our member cities and encourage peer reviews and mutual learning around them. Cities working smartly are the best places, the best players and, in fact, the best placed to build the kind of creative cross-sectoral, cross-cultural partnerships needed to achieve a socially cohesive Europe.

Active Inclusion:

Ensure that Active Inclusion remains a key priority on the EU agenda by demonstrating the effectiveness of city governments to deliver timely, flexible and innovative responses to the needs of those most at risk in today's society.

- Support the Working Groups in their key role of facilitating the sharing of innovative and best practice of members re: the skills agenda, improving the employability and life chances of those furthest from the labour market and integrating those marginalised by society by reason of age, health or ethnicity.

- Participate in and contribute to the EU Year of Active Ageing 2012.

Forum Working Groups for 2012:

- **ESF Task Force (Chair: Birmingham)**

This group will be working closely with the Economic Development Forum's Cohesion Policy Working Group. Its work will focus on lobbying for the interests of cities to be strongly reflected in the 2014-2020 European Social Fund Programme. It will develop a response to the proposed ESF regulation, respond to the structural funds Common Strategic Framework when it is published, and develop and execute a lobbying and advocacy strategy to influence MEPs and national governments on these proposals as they pass through the legislative process throughout 2012. BCC participates on a remote basis in this working group

- **Education (Chair: Nantes)**

The overall objective of the Working Group is to prevent social exclusion through the education of young people up to 27 years of age. In its work, the WG aims to treat education in a broad sense, including education for democratic citizenship, and going beyond an understanding of education as an instrument of labour market policy. The WG is divided into three subgroups which reflect its priorities: Early childhood education and care, early school leaving, and labour market and vocational education and training (VET).

- **Migration & integration (Chair: Barcelona)**

The Working Group's objectives are to: Raise awareness at all levels of governance of the importance of involving cities when developing policies for migration, integration and non-discrimination; Influence EU policy making on migration and integration; And to encourage innovation in cities' policies on integration and non-discrimination through exchange of best practice.

Expected outputs and actions include: The development of three MIXITIES toolkits, holding an Integrating Cities conference in Amsterdam, a report monitoring the development of the Integrating Cities Charter, consolidation of the Integrating Cities Partnership with European Commission, intensified dialogue with National contact points on Integration, the European Migration Network and other city networks, responding to the Green paper on family reunification (tbc), and the identification of further signatories to the Integrating Cities Charter.

BCC is involved in the MIXITIES project through the Good Relations Unit

- **Housing & homelessness (Chair: Vienna)**

The Working Group's objectives are to: Exchange best practice and contribute to the policy debate on Roma inclusion and how housing issues relate to this; Contribute to the ongoing discussion on the relationship between EU competition rules and social housing policies; And examine and exchange best practice on social mixing, demographic change and energy efficiency and how they each impact housing policy.

The WG's expected outputs include: A series of best practice exchanges, a peer review on energy efficiency in housing, and discussions with MEPs on EU competition rules and social housing policies.

○ **Employment (Chair: Rotterdam)**

The Working Group intends to conclude a number of pieces of work from 2011. It will: Update the report on the comparison of job centre services and undertake follow-up activities on this; Finish the action plan on the Fit4Work initiative led by the four major Dutch cities and will ask WG members to be involved in its validation; And continue to work closely with the ESF Task Force on the future of ESF.

In addition the WG will contribute to EUROCITIES' activities on the European Year for Active Ageing and will contribute to the preparation of an FP7 bid on 'Social innovation against inequalities' led by Birmingham.

○ **Health inequalities (Chair: Amsterdam)**

The main priority for the Health Inequalities Working Group in 2012 will be contributing to the European Year for Active Ageing.

The WG will contribute to the spring SAF on active ageing. It also intends to host a joint meeting with the Employment WG on active ageing and is also exploring the possibility of a joint meeting with the innovation platform on Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) hosted by Eindhoven.

BCC participation in this working group is interdepartmental as its themes relate to a number of work areas

○ **Roma Inclusion Task Force (Ghent)**

The group's objectives are to: Exchange of good practice on Roma inclusion through peer reviews; Influence EU policy with regard to non-discrimination (in countries of origin) and management of intra-EU migration; Build partnerships with regions of origin for better migration management; Secure funding for cities for Roma inclusion and helping cities to prepare future proposals; Raise awareness with the EU institutions of the city perspective on EU mobility and Roma inclusion; Address the exploitative and security dimension of Roma exclusion; And to continue the partnership with the EFC Forum on Roma inclusion. BCC is represented on this Taskforce through the agreed nomination of the South Belfast Roundtable on Racism

(C) Areas of Work to be Undertaken with Departmental Director approval in 2012

Attendance at two full SAF meetings

Engagement in the Migration and Integration working group through the Good Relations Unit's participation in the MIXITIES project.

Participation in the PROGRESS Funded Roma Taskforce through The South Belfast Roundtable on Racism.

Work with all relevant departments and units and in particular with Community Services, Tourism, Culture and Arts and Events on relevant projects or profiling work in Belfast linked to the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity Between the Generations.

(D) Expected Results:

To optimum would be funding to support corporate plan objectives, policy influencing and awareness and creating profile for Belfast internationally.