



**Report to:** Development Committee

**Subject:** INTERREG V Model

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> June 2012

**Reporting Officer:** John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

**Contact Officers:** Laura Leonard, European Manager, ext 3577

| <b>1</b> | <b>Relevant Background Information</b>   |
|----------|--|
| 1.1      | The five Local Authority Led Cross Border Groups are made up of thirty three local authorities and cover the Ireland/N Ireland INTERREG IVA eligible area. These partnerships are COMET INTERREG Partnership, East Border Region, Irish Central Border Area Network (ICBAN), North East Partnership and North West Region Cross Border Group.  |
| 1.2      | A working group consisting of one County Manager, one Chief Executive Officer, the Chair and Manager of each local authority led cross border group or partnership has been established. The COMET INTERREG Partnership is represented on this group by the Chair of the Board, Councillor Jenny Palmer, Sheila McClelland, Chief Executive of Carrickfergus Borough Council, Belfast City Council's European Unit Manager and the COMET INTERREG Partnership Manager.   |
| 1.3      | The role of this group is to define and lobby for the future roles of the Local Authority Led Cross Border Groups in the context of the new round of EU Structural Funds 2014-2020, in particular the INTERREG V Programme, and to propose an appropriate model which will achieve the effective implementation of those roles.  |
| 1.4      | The scope of the work of the Working Group was to consider how best the Local Authority Led Cross Border Groups can contribute to the implementation of the INTERREG V Programme in the eligible area.   |
| 1.5      | <p>In this context the working group considered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maximising the role of Local Authorities through the Cross Border Groups in the INTERREG VA programme, to bring practical benefits to the communities on both sides of the border and consequently ensuring that Local Authorities in the eligible area are at the forefront of cross border economic development.</li> <li>- Advocating for the fair and equitable allocation of INTERREG V funds to</li> </ul> |

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1.6 | <p>Local Authorities through the Cross Border Groups in relation to cross border activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The preferred model to implement these funds, giving consideration to other best practice examples in Europe.</li> <li>- Ensure complementarity with existing and changing structures, policies and procedures, impacting on Local Government, North and South, e.g. local government reform in Northern Ireland</li> <li>- Complementarity and additionality of actions across related expenditure programmes, both EU and National.</li> </ul> <p>The following factors were also considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The legal, operational competences and future remit of local authorities, North and South (including the Review of Public Administration in NI) ;</li> <li>- EU Structural Funds Regulations;</li> <li>- The role of the Member States, Government Departments, Special EU Programmes Body and other delivery agents;</li> <li>- Accountability</li> <li>- Efficiency and Effectiveness; and</li> <li>- Transparency and Inclusiveness in EU funds management and delivery.</li> </ul> |
|-----|---|

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>2</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>  |
| 2.1      | <p>Following two months of work by the working group the attached paper ( Appendix 1) has been produced as the lobby position paper for both Finance Departments and other agencies that will shape the programme. The focus of this paper is on the principles and role that should govern the role of the Local Authority Led Cross Border Groups in the INTERREG V Programme. Further work will be required on the implementation of those principles as the shape of the INTERREG V Programme becomes clearer.</p> |
| 2.2      | <p>The final report will be strategic in nature and must be agreed and ratified by the Boards of the Cross Border Groups; after approval by the individual local authorities. It will set out a proposed model and options for the involvement of the Local Authority Led Cross Border Groups which will provide a framework for the accountable, effective and efficient delivery of the relevant parts of the INTERREG V Programme.</p>  |
| 2.3      | <p>This paper will be used to lobby the Department of Finance and Personnel, Department of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and Special European Programmes Board (SEUPB) as authors of the next programme, as well as the North South Ministerial Council to ensure an enhanced and significant role for the local authority led cross border partnerships. This paper will be used to feed into the Special European Programmes Board autumn consultation.</p>                                     |
| 2.4      | <p>It essentially calls for a return to a similar delivery model that local government led partnerships implemented through partnership in INTERREG IIIA and to avoid the mistakes of INTERREG IVA. The model will adhere to the Community led Local Development model as outlined in Article 28 of the General Regulation of the European Union.</p>  |
| 2.5      | <p>It entails a predefined strategic plan and a sub-delegated budget to deliver it by the cross border partnerships. The strategic plans will mirror the selected</p>  |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
|     | themes and investment priorities and proposed impacts will be tied to the EU2020 priorities and targets. It will also reflect the national and local strategies and priorities of both jurisdictions.  |
| 2.6 | In addition to this collective lobby, the Councils of the COMET INTERREG Partnership would recommend lobbying to extend the INTERREG V zone to include Dublin. There are greater synergies with Dublin and opportunities for significant projects to be delivered along the Belfast Dublin corridor rather than as at present with rural border partners. A formal request for this extension will be taken to Department of Finance and Personnel, Department of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), the Special European Programmes Board (SEUPB) and the North South Ministerial Council. |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>3</b> | <b>Resource Implications</b>   |
| 3.1      | There is no financial cost for involvement and officer time will be as part of the work of the European Unit |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <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>Recommendations</b>  |
| 5.1      | Members are asked to approve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proposed INTERREG V model on behalf of Belfast City Council as a partner of the COMET INTERREG Partnership</li> <li>- That Belfast City Council's European Unit takes the lead in liaising with Dublin and other partners to work to extend the INTERREG V zone to include Dublin</li> </ul> |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>6</b> | <b>Decision Tracking</b>  |
|          | Following approval by Committee the European Unit will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through the INTERREG partnerships working group meet the relevant people to work on ensuring there is an enhanced and significant role for the partnerships in the new INTERREG V programme</li> <li>- Take the lead in working to extend the INTERREG V Zone to include Dublin</li> </ul> |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| <b>7</b> | <b>Documents Attached</b>   |
|          | Appendix 1: Position Paper presented to Minister Sammy Wilson (DFP) on the proposed role of the Local Authority Led Cross Border Groups in the INTERREG VA Programme. |