Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Health Hack NI Event
Date:	18 September 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1	**Relevant Background Information**
1.1	Members are advised that on 21 February 2012 it was revealed Belfast was one of ten UK cities to successfully bid for funding, made available by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to become a "super-connected city" with ultrafast fixed broadband access and large areas of public wireless connectivity throughout the city.
1.2	A full business case and application for the funding was submitted in early August 2012 and it is expected that an announcement on the final amount to be allocated to each city will be made on 14 September 2012.
1.3	The broadband and wireless technology infrastructure that will be installed as a result of this investment will underpin the further development of a range of economic sectors that are reliant on these new technologies. One such sector is Connected Health. Northern Ireland is emerging as an important region within the Connected Health sector in Europe. The region has a number of large connected health projects ongoing, principally within the field of research and development.
1.4	The Super-connected Belfast initiative is therefore emerging at an opportune time with the convergence of a number of areas including: – Alignment of NI Government initiatives such as the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)between DHSS and DETI; – The launch of the Health Strategy (Compton Report),setting a very clear agenda of moving health care into the community; – Invest NI funding is targeting Connected Health as a key business growth area and this commitment is outlined in both the Regional Economic Strategy and the Programme for Government.

2	Key Issues
2.1	In support of the Super-connected Belfast initiative, Belfast City Council, University of Ulster and the NI Connected Health Innovation Centre (CHIC) have been looking at how the multi-million pound investment in ultrafast broadband infrastructure can support the further development of the sector in the city.
2.2	One such initiative is a "Health Hack NI" project – a business event which seeks to bring together clinicians, developers, designers, business people and other interested parties to devise useful apps to improve health care issues.
2.3	Healthcare is one of the areas of life that is most in need of the support of modern technologies, yet is one of the areas that is remains relatively unexploited. Aside from a lack of awareness of the possibilities and benefits of new and emerging technologies, there is a lack of engagement between the NHS and talented and enthusiastic technologists and entrepreneurs.
2.4	The Health Hack NI event will therefore focus on an NI audience and solving problems that are specific to the NHS in Northern Ireland. The proposed event will engage with clinicians (including consultants, GPs, Nursing Staff and NHS managers), technologists, students and entrepreneurs to use high speed internet technology to help expand access and quality of care to the local community.
2.5	Clinicians will be encouraged to bring forward problems and ideas while technologists will be encouraged to apply their skills to help solve these challenges. In advance of the event, these ideas and problems will be captured, discussed and prioritised using online collaborative tools. Developers may form teams in advance to address a selected problem or they may be matched with an appropriate clinician on the day. All software will be produced using freely available technologies and will be released to the clinical community on a flexible Open Source license.
2.6	Health Hack NI will be hosted in Belfast City Hall and will run over a weekend in December (Saturday 8 – Sunday 9) in order to facilitate clinical involvement. It will be based on a series of successful NHS Hack Days which have already been hosted in other UK cities such as London, Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester.
2.7	To ensure involvement of the optimum number of interested parties (approx 40 clinicians and developers) and to allow a critical mass of ideas and suggestions to be developed, the initiative will be officially launched early October, leaving two months between the date of the launch and the event itself.
2.8	Kainos Software Ltd has been involved in other NHS Health Hack events and is keen to promote this Health Hack NI event in partnership with Belfast City Council and its Super-connected Belfast initiative. The event will be organised and hosted by the Northern Ireland Connected Heath Innovation Centre (CHIC) and Invest NI.
2.9	The benefits of hosting such an event include: – Increased engagement between NHS, industry and universities – Exposure of the NHS to applications of modern and emerging technologies – Exposure of industry/students to the real challenges of the NHS – Clear alignment with Health/Wealth MoU – Good PR for Belfast City Council and the Super-connected Belfast project – Creation of reusable technology components for Healthcare.

3	**Resource Implications**
3.1	<u>Financial</u> Up to £2,000 is required to cover the costs associated with providing wireless connectivity in the Reception Room, City Hall as well as light refreshments throughout the duration of the event.
3.2	<u>Human Resources</u> The work required will be undertaken by existing staff resources.

4	**Equality and Good Relations Considerations**
4.1	There are no specific equality or good relations implications attached to this report.

5	**Recommendations**
5.1	Members are asked to: − Approve the proposal for the Council to support Kainos Software Ltd, ECH Alliance and CHIC/Invest NI in the delivery of the Health Hack NI event; and − Approve the allocation of up to £2,000 towards the provision of appropriate wireless connectivity and hospitality.

6	**Decision Tracking**
There is no decision tracking attached to this report.	

7	**Key to Abbreviations**
CHIC – NI Connected Health Innovation Centre ECH Alliance – European Connected Health Alliance GPs – General Practitioners NHS – National Health Service	