



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Eurocities Engagement
Date:	18 September 2012
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>Members will recall their decision on 20 March 2012, to continue Belfast City Council (BCC) engagement in the Eurocities network. This network brings together over 140 of Europe's largest local authorities and BCC has been an active member since the 1990's. Through relevant Council officer engagement, BCC has participated regularly in the following thematic fora around which Eurocities is structured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Social Affairs- Economic Development- Environment- Culture- Knowledge Society <p>Members agreed the work plan for engagement in these fora for 2012 in March of this year.</p>
1.2	<p>Each year BCC experiences very positive gains from participation in the Eurocities network and importantly the Council contributes policy influencing at the EU commission and Parliament. Officers are currently heavily engaged in ensuring a maximum level of EU funding is directed to cities and an enhanced delivery role is secured for local government with respect to the EU structural funds spend post 2013</p>
1.3	<p>The Council engages in EU projects within the network and to date this year has secured engagement for 4 BCC projects namely,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Illuminate- NICE- Sport I- Sport II

1.4	Critically the Council works with Eurocities to track EU legislation and lobby heavily to influence this and ultimately create savings for the city, e.g. EU Services Directive.
1.5	Profiling best practice is also a key objective to our engagement in Eurocities. Members will recall a highly successful cyber security conference hosted by BCC on 19-21 June this year in partnership with Eurocities Knowledge Society Forum. A report on the conference and the very positive PR generated will be brought to members in the near future.
1.6	Members will be aware that BCC engages in Eurocities meetings and events at both officer and member levels. Indeed on 12 June 2012, Members agreed to the establishment of a Members EU Working Group with a view to up skilling Councillors on EU affairs and ensuring consistency with regard to Members engagement in Europe. This working group will meet for the first time in October 2012 and will report regularly to the Development Committee.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Each year BCC participates in the Eurocities annual conference. Traditionally attendance has been through the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or their nominees, as well as the Director of Development and the EU Manager.
2.2	The 2012 annual conference will take place in Nantes, France from 7-10 November 2012. The theme of the conference is "A New City Politics" focusing at how cities are turning to innovative ways of engaging citizens in local politics. The conference will be structured around keynote speakers sessions, workshops, speed networking and the annual City awards ceremony, as well as the Mayor's debate. This session is only attended by BCC members and not officers. This year, the Mayor's debate will focus on sharing experiences of political renewal in cities.
2.3	Over 400 delegates are expected to attend the event and the focus of many of the sessions will be to look at new EU policies and funding opportunities coming down the line for local authorities.
2.4	Members should note that BCC submitted the MTV awards and Peace Plan under the themes of participation and cooperation. Regrettably they were not shortlisted.
2.5	A copy of the full conference programme is attached as an appendix to this report.
2.6	Members are asked to approve the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or their nominees as well as the Director of Development and the European Manager.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The estimated cost of attendance at the Eurocities AGM is £3840.00

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no equality and good relations considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to approve the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of Development or their nominees, as well as the Director of Development and the European Manager at the Eurocities Annual Conference in Nantes from 7-10 November 2012

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

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1 – Draft Eurocities Nantes Conference Programme	