



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Erasmus for Elected Members
Date:	2 October 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>Members will be aware that the current European Funding period will end in 2013 and that a new 7 year funding period will begin in 2014. As a result, the European Commission issued a call in June 2012 to implement a pilot project for elected members across the European Union. The purpose of this project, entitled Erasmus for Elected Members, is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increase the knowledge of local and regional representatives regarding strategic planning within the EU- Encourage cooperation and discussion among 100 elected representatives- Enable the sharing of best practice. <p>Applications for this training programme had to be made within a short timeframe, within less than 3 weeks.</p>
1.2	<p>Belfast City Council submitted two applications, of which one was successful, that of Councillor Andrew Webb. This will enable Councillor Webb to participate in the 3 obligatory components of this training programme.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Funding through the Erasmus for All programme will enable Councillor Andrew Webb to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Participate in the Brussels Open Days in October 2012. This event is a very important date in the EU calendar whereby workshops are held to outline and discuss the critical themes of the current EU Strategy, Europe 2020. These are attended by a wide range of EU stakeholders and involve speeches and debates by high level European officials.- Undertake a site visit to another EU city/region- Attend a 2 day closing seminar in Brussels in spring 2013. <p>Co-ordination of this activity is undertaken by The Committee of the Regions staff.</p>

2.2	<p>The European grant will cover Councillor Webb's travel, accommodation and a per diem allowance.</p> <p>It should however be noted that due to Belfast's peripherality and the fact that there is no direct flight to Brussels, it may be necessary to top up the EU grant.</p> <p>This will be made available through the European Unit's budget.</p>
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff time to support Councillor Webb in his participation in the Programme - Financial contributions when necessary, to enable Councillor Webb's full participation in the Programme.

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

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are requested to note the content of the report and agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Councillor Webb's participation in the Erasmus for Elected Representatives programme; and - Additional financial input into the Programme where the EU grant does not cover the full costs of programme participation.

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

7	Key to Abbreviations
EU- European Union	