



Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Elected Member Attendance at Eurocities Social Affairs Forum 24-25 April 2013; Katowice
Date:	19 March 2013
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that the Eurocities annual work plan was presented to the Development Committee in February 2013. This outlined the Council's plans for engagement across the organisation in this major network of European cities. Since this report was presented, the European Unit has been approached with regard to the Social Forum meeting to be held in Katowice (Poland) in April 2013.
1.2	The theme of this meeting will be "Neighbourhood approaches to promoting social inclusion, local activation and local initiatives". A draft agenda is attached in Appendix 1. Following an opening keynote address there will be a panel session involving local representatives. Belfast City Council has been invited to partake in this element. This will enable the Council to profile initiatives it has undertaken to enable local communities to effect social change and inclusion.
1.3	Members will also be aware that a Council EU Members' Working Group has been operational since December 2012. This comprises representatives from five political parties and seeks to increase Members' understanding and engagement of European Affairs. Meeting on a quarterly basis, this Working Group exposes elected Members to European terminology, policy developments, project activity, funding information and opportunities for direct engagement, such as this.

2	Key Issues
2.1	As a region of Europe, we are now at an important stage in the calendar for the emerging EU Budget and priorities for the period 2014-2020. Continued and proactive engagement in the Eurocities network is crucial for Council in order to position itself to maximise the opportunities that this new round of funding will bring. This is also imperative activity in order to deliver the Investment Plan objective of securing European funding.
2.2	The opportunity to profile Belfast's experiences in delivering social change at the local level will assist to disseminate and showcase city projects and initiatives to over 50 cities. This is timely given that contacts across Europe will be crucial in developing the partnerships required to apply for the major European funding streams which will open in just over a year's time.
2.3	In view of the fact that Council has the Members' EU Working Group and they are developing knowledge, skills and experience in European matters, it would be appropriate if a Councillor from within this Sub Group was to attend the Social Affairs meeting in April 2013.
2.4	Eurocities will provide financial support to enable an elected Member to travel and participate in this Forum meeting. This will support travel and accommodation costs.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	Travel and accommodation costs associated with the elected Member's participation in the panel discussion on 24 April 2013 in Katowice will be subsidised by the Eurocities network.

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

5	Recommendations
5.1	That Members note the opportunity for an elected member to participate in the Spring 2013 Eurocities Social Affairs Forum in Poland.
5.2	That Members agree that a Councillor from the EU Members' Working Group represents the Council at this platform, with prioritisation based on attendance at said Working Group meetings held to date.
5.3	That should none of the above Members be available to attend, the Chair, or the Deputy Chair or their nominee be invited to attend.

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

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1- draft Eurocities Social Affairs agenda	