Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	NI Connected Health Alliance meeting
Date:	15 April 2014
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officers:	Lisa Toland, Economic Development Manager, ext 3427

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members may be aware of work ongoing around the development and promotion of connected health opportunities. "Connected health" is a term used to denote a model of healthcare delivery that uses technology to provide services remotely. It aims to increase flexibility in service provision and enable patients to manage their care using new technologies and mobile applications.
1.2	Northern Ireland is a growing centre of expertise in this field. In recognition of the inter-related nature of the sector, the Northern Ireland Connected Health Ecosystem (NICH Ecosystem) was launched in September 2012, following the development of the Connected Health and Prosperity Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreed in December 2011 by the Health and Economy Ministers. One of the priorities of the MOU was the development of a Connected Health Ecosystem in Northern Ireland, which would bring together the public, independent and private sectors, research bodies and patients and families to share good practice, learn from experiences and help to prioritise and develop connected health solutions. The purpose of the NICH Ecosystem is two-fold: to improve citizens' health and wellbeing and to create economic growth.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The NICH Ecosystem is a 'collaboration of the willing'. It is governed by a working group and reports to the NI Connected Health and Prosperity Board which is chaired by the Permanent Secretaries for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI).
2.2	The working group includes representatives from the European Connected Health Alliance, DHSSPS, Health and Social Care Board, Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care Trusts, Invest NI, Queen's University, Department of Employment and Learning, University of Ulster, Belfast Metropolitan College and two industry representatives. It is chaired and facilitated by the European Connected Health Alliance, which is based at Northern Ireland Science Park.

2.3	The work of the NICH Ecosystem is based around quarterly meetings, which bring stakeholders together to network and share initiatives, opportunities and challenges. Typically around 150 stakeholders attend the Ecosystem meetings from across industry, academia and health and social care.
2.4	Each meeting is based around a theme or themes and is hosted and supported by a different partner. To date, a number of councils have hosted events in their area, including Craigavon Borough Council and Derry City Council. As a partner in the Ecosystem, Belfast City Council has been asked to host an upcoming meeting of the group. It is proposed that this event will take place in Belfast City Hall on 23 September 2014 (date to be confirmed).
2.5	The event will cover a range of topics including: - Using technology to promote public health and wellbeing - Transforming care in the home - Wealth creation in health and social care - EU funding opportunities.
2.6	The event is likely to attract up to 150 attendees – both local and European network members. There is an opportunity to use the event to scope out a local health-related challenge and to get attendees to generate and develop possible solutions. These could potentially be further progressed through involvement in future "health hack" events, similar to those that the Council has previously supported. Development Committee Members will be invited to attend.

3	**Resource Implications**
3.1	The costs associated with hosting the event will not exceed £3,000.

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	It is recommended that Members: - Note the upcoming meeting of the NICH Ecosystem in September 2014 - Agree to host the meeting in Belfast City Hall and cover the costs associated with hosting the event, up to a value of £3,000.

6	**Decision Tracking**
A follow-up report from the event will be presented to the November 2014 meeting of Development Committee. Timeline: November 2014 Reporting Officer: Lisa Toland	

7	**Key to Abbreviations**
DETI – Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment DHSSPS – Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	