



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	NILGA European Conference: 27 October 2010
Date:	25 TH September
Reporting Officer:	Peter McNaney, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard, European Manager (Ext 3577)

Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that since 2005 the NI Local Government Association of NI has in post a full time European Officer. This post is funded on a fixed term basis by the Department of Finance and Personnel to support local government in NI with regard to European funding and policy issues.

Members will be aware that Belfast City Council contributes to NILGA's European agenda by participation on the European affairs working group of NILGA. The council is represented by councillors Tim Attwood and Cathal Mullaghan as well as Laura Leonard, European Manager for Belfast City Council.

Laura Leonard also represents Belfast City Council on NILGA's newly launched NI European officers network which is comprised mostly of economic development representatives of the 26 councils.

The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) seeks to ensure that councils continue to benefit from EU money, particularly during the current economic climate when local government have to deliver more with less money and resources. In such a financial environment any additional funding support for local government service delivery from the EU is particularly welcomed. What is the true additional value of EU funds to Northern Ireland's councils, where are the opportunities for local government and how can obstacles be removed in order to energise economic and community growth?

On 27 October 2010 NILGA will facilitate a seminar in the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick. The title of this event is "Maximising the Impact of EU Funds - Energising Growth".

A copy of the full agenda for this event is attached as **Appendix I** of this report.

The purpose of this event is to explore not only current EU funding opportunities but also to start discussion on future European programmes post 2013. Importance will be placed on identifying those funding areas within the current round of EU funding Programmes that are under represented by local government and to encourage councils to draw down these monies while the opportunity still exists. There will be a number of practical workshops on dealing with funding obstacles and the benefits of working in partnership.

Belfast City Council through the Chief Executive has been asked to nominate five council representatives to attend this event. Members are asked to confirm the attendance of Belfast City Council party leaders or their nominees along with the European Manager.

Members should note that the council's European unit is currently developing a preliminary think piece to be taken to committee outlining thoughts and considerations for council with respect to maximising the lobby for Belfast/NI regarding structural funds post 2013.

Recommendations

Members are asked to approve the attendance of a representative of each of the Party Groupings, together with the European Manager, at the NILGA EU Conference at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick on 27 October, 2010.

Financial Implications

None