



Subject:	Eastern Economic Corridor – update
Date:	12 September 2018
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on progress to date on work to support the development of the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor, including engagement with the other seven other councils along the corridor.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the progress to date on this work, including the proposed conference to be held at the end of March 2019, which members will be invited to attend

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to receive a future report in advance of the conference to update on both conference plans and emerging research outcomes.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Members will recall that, at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 7 March 2018, Members approved a series of activities to support Belfast’s engagement with its key partner cities and Sister Cities. These include Boston and Nashville in USA and Shenyang in China. Belfast also has a MoU for collaboration with Dublin and there has been growing interest in opportunities to support economic cooperation and engagement between the cities and along with Belfast-Dublin corridor. One of the priority activities identified in the report was the potential for a conference to highlight cooperation opportunities along this corridor and Belfast City Council has been working with the other seven Councils along the corridor to develop this concept further. The eight councils are Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Belfast City Council; Dublin City Council; Fingal County Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council; Louth County Council; Meath County Council; and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.</p>
3.2	<p>In order to shape the conference and ensure that all partners are content with the content and approach, a steering group of senior council officials has been established. The steering group has recently commissioned the local universities (a collaboration between Ulster University and Dublin City University) to carry out further research to articulate the economic opportunities along the corridor. This will form the basis of the conference proceedings and will provide a useful platform from which to scope additional opportunities for ongoing engagement with partners, in order to exploit the economic potential of this 100-mile corridor.</p>
3.3	<p>While the main focus of engagement at present is on the conference and the research work, the group has developed a broader terms of reference for the collaboration. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and develop collaborative projects which have economic and strategic merit for the eight local authorities of the eastern corridor; • To articulate the economic and social benefits along the length of eastern corridor between Belfast and Dublin; • To drive buy-in and engagement with the private sector on the future development of the eastern economic corridor.

3.4	A key agreed outcome of the steering group meetings to date has been the aspiration to deliver a Memorandum of Understanding between the eight local authorities. This MoU will set out the scope of the joint areas of working across the corridor on infrastructure, attracting investment and jobs. This MoU will be brought back to the Council for information and endorsement.
3.5	Details of the conference are still being finalised but it is likely to take place towards the end of March 2019 (date tbc) in Belfast Waterfront. Members will be invited to attend the conference and there is likely to be public and private sector representation from all eight council areas as well as attendance by senior government representatives from both sides of the border. A further update on both the research and the conference arrangements will be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee, in advance of the event.
3.6	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2018/19 Economic Development budget previously agreed by this Committee.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure that consideration is given to equality and good relations impacts throughout the development and delivery of this project. Both urban and rural areas are involved in this work.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None