



Subject:	Update on Brussels visit
Date:	14 February 2019
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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
	The purpose of this report is to provide a summary update to Members on the recent visit to Brussels.
2.0	Recommendations
	Members are asked to note the update provided.

3.0	Main report
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members are reminded that, it was agreed that an all-Party delegation from the Council undertake a visit to Brussels to engage with EU officials to represent the views of the Council in relation to Special Designated Status, remaining in the single market and the Council's position on the Backstop, and to engage with EU funding bodies about our future participation in EU funding programmes.</p>
	<p>The visit took place on Tuesday 29th and Wednesday 30th January and the delegation consisted of the Lord Mayor, Councillors Walsh and Lyons and two officers.</p> <p>Over the course of the visits the delegation met with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Elliot, Head of Office, NI Executive Office in Brussels • Nina Obermaier, Adviser to Taskforce 50 • Hermione Gough, Director for UK-EU Partnership at the UK's Permanent Representation to the European Union • Mr. Dieter Cavalleri Minister in charge of Parliamentary Affairs and Brexit at the Mission of Switzerland to the EU • Micheal Ó Conchuir, Secretary General European Alliance Group - European Committee of the Regions • David Brück & Amal Kaoua Deputy Directors Brexit Unit, Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU • The 3 Northern Ireland MEPs - Diane Dodds MEP, Martina Anderson MEP and Jim Nicholson MEP • Mairead McGuinness MEP, Vice President of the European Parliament and an Irish MEP from Midlands-North-West Constituency • Matt Carthy MEP, Irish MEP from Midlands-North-West Constituency • Gabriele Zimmer MEP who sits on the European Parliament's Brexit Steering Group <p>A meeting had been arranged with Elmar Brok MEP who also sits on the European Parliament's Brexit Steering Group but unfortunately this had to be cancelled on the Wednesday due his attendance at an unscheduled plenary session. We also had requests to meet with Luke "Ming" Flanagan MEP and Marian Harkin MEP, the 2 remaining Irish</p>

	<p>MEPs from the Midlands-North-West Constituency but unfortunately were unable to facilitate these within our schedule.</p>
	<p>A key theme within all the discussions was that it was important that views from all the different perspectives in Belfast and the wider region were presented in Brussels and that ongoing engagement would be welcomed. Key points to come out from the various meetings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross border bodies will continue to operate and even under a ‘no deal’ scenario, Peace and Interreg funding has been agreed to the end of 2020 • A case will have to be made in relation to accessing future EU funding programmes and this is likely to be based on what is available for 3rd party countries – there are current examples of non-EU countries accessing funding programmes but this will be subject to UK government’s agreement to make the relevant levels of financial contributions to the relevant programmes • Whilst there is a desire for an orderly exit and the avoidance of a ‘no deal’ scenario, ‘no deal’ planning needs to be taking place – and has increased over recent weeks • Visits are important as they help inform both officials and MEPs in Brussels of what is happening on the ground – there was positive feedback about previous engagement with a range of political representatives and civic society in NI • Switzerland’s relationship with the EU has been ongoing for 40 years and is constantly evolving – although Switzerland was obviously never a member of the EU to begin with. <p>Several requests were made for further information on Belfast City Council’s position in relation to Brexit and a copy of the agreed Council motions have been forwarded to these individuals.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>A budget of up to £9,000 was approved by the SP&R Committee to enable the visit to take place, which would be covered from the existing Place and Economy departmental budget.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no implications relating to this report.</p>
	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>None</p>