



Subject:	UKRI - Strength in Places Funding
Date:	12 th August 2020
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"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

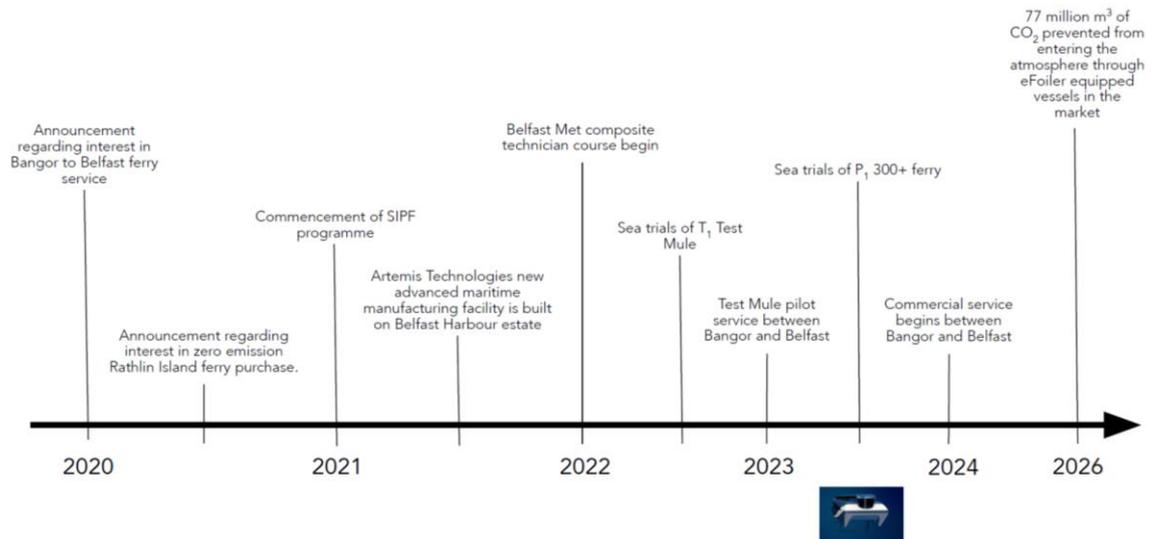
Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

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 a successful collaborative bid by the Belfast Maritime Consortium which has been awarded £33m from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under their "Strength in Places" funding initiative. The report seeks approval for Belfast City Council to formally engage in the consortium to bring the project to fruition.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the work undertaken to date as part of the Belfast Maritime Consortium to secure £33m from UKRI's Strength in Places Funding and the potential impact the project will have in the Belfast City Council area • Note Belfast City Council's engagement on the project to date as part of the consortium and agree to the commitment required to support the delivery of the project to bring it to fruition.
3.0	Main report
3.1	UK Research and Innovation's Strength in Places Fund is a competitive funding scheme that takes a place-based approach to research and innovation funding to support significant regional growth. It works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish. Since 2017, Belfast City Council has been engaging with Artemis Technologies on their work to bring forward a funding proposal to UKRI. This support has included providing a letter of support for a NI consortium bid (Belfast Maritime Consortium) to develop zero emission maritime transport in Belfast.
3.2	The Belfast Maritime Consortium, which is led by Artemis Technologies (ATL), consists of a number of industry, academia and local government members including Bombardier, Stena Line, Harland and Wolff, Belfast Harbour, Creative Composites, Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University, NIACE, Belfast Metropolitan College, Belfast City Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council, Catalyst Inc and Invest NI.
3.3	The project has successfully secured £33m from UKRI for development and delivery work over the next 4 years. It aims to exploit and develop Belfast's expertise in advanced composites to help reinvigorate past maritime leadership in innovative shipbuilding technologies. It will develop an education programme and a route to highly skilled jobs in the Belfast area and will enhance Belfast's environmental credentials with developing niche specialisms in zero carbon maritime transport. The project will ultimately deliver a new class of zero emission maritime transport vessel design and build capability that has numerous commercial applications. All of this work will combine to establish, in Belfast, a world class maritime capability and deliver a high value product for export.
3.4	The Belfast Maritime Consortium will work with the local supply chain to produce the world's first autonomously controlled 'fully submerged' electric hydrofoiling vessel, and develop the technical and operational requirements for a maritime transport system of the future. The project will not only create new commercial opportunities, but also help tackle major

environmental challenges in line with wider government policy, which calls for all new vessels to be designed with zero-emissions capable technologies by 2025.

3.5 The key stages project milestones are as follows:



3.6 To enable the project to commence, Belfast City Council along with each of the other consortium members, is required to enter into a formal collaboration agreement. This agreement outlines the commitment of each of the parties to the project and the terms of engagement. For the council, this includes:

- Contributing to the project working groups when they are established to inform and shape the project
- Supporting the development of a pilot scheme between Belfast and Bangor by establishing, upgrading and otherwise ensuring that all or any infrastructure owned or controlled by the council is available for use. This element of the project may require a financial commitment from the council of up to £250,000. However this will be subject to future scoping of the requirement, availability of funding and approval from this committee at a later date and will be a commitment in principle only at this point
- Providing marketing support for the pilot scheme when it is live including engaging with customers to undertake research and insights into customer preferences.

3.7 This project has the potential to realise a range of economic benefits across the city including the creation of one of the UK's most advanced composite design and manufacturing facilities, in the heart of Belfast Harbour. The project will also have a significant impact on achieving

	<p>the council's inclusive growth ambitions by undertaking school engagement projects, delivering apprenticeship schemes, and implementing new courses in advanced composites at Belfast Metropolitan College as well as creating employment opportunities in the city, estimated at 165 highly skilled jobs initially, increasing to 400 as it develops.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>At this stage of the project, Belfast City Council is not required to make a financial contribution. As the project develops any funding requirements will subject to approval of this Committee and available budget.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Equality and good relations implications will be considered as the project progresses. Partners beyond the Belfast City Council area are involved in the project.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.