



Subject:	Economic recovery work – collaboration with other local authorities
Date:	12 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 the report is to update members on the recent establishment of a working group to support economic recovery, involving partners from all councils, and to set out the high level work programme for the group.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the establishment of the SOLACE District/Regional Recovery Group• Note the key areas of collaborative work as agreed with all council partners.

3.0	Main report
3.1	As part of the local government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly its impact on local economies, SOLACE agreed to establish a number of working groups to take forward collaborative thinking and actions on areas of mutual and collective interest.
3.2	<p>It was agreed that two working groups would be established to focus on distinct areas of work, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Recovery (internal) • Regional Recovery (external) <p>It was agreed that the Regional Recovery working group would be chaired by Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive, Belfast City Council. It comprises economic development representatives from across the 11 Councils.</p>
3.3	<p>The purpose of the group and the work that it will undertake is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build an understanding of the scale of the recovery challenge in local council areas across Northern Ireland as well as the impact of global economic changes, including the impact of the EU's exit from the European Union • Identify a series of key short, medium and long term interventions that can contribute to economic and social recovery, thereby stabilising local economies and building local resilience • Act as a conduit for engagement with relevant statutory agencies and key decision-makers within relevant government departments in order to ensure a collaborative approach to working and to secure additional support for relevant interventions • Further the position of local government as a key delivery partner and support the ongoing dialogue around further devolution of powers to local level and the need for place-based responses to support inclusive and sustainable economic growth. • Position Local Government as a key player in co-design of a new economic strategy for NI where placed based approaches and sub-regional economies are recognised
3.4	<p>Since its establishment in May 2020, the group has met on a number of occasions. The work to date has focused on a number of key issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing information on town and city centre re-opening and recovery plans • Identifying key tactical and strategic engagement opportunities to ensure that local government is represented in and able to influence significant investment decisions relating to economic recovery

3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with Invest NI to explore opportunities for accessing additional ERDF resources to support business recovery. <p>Some of the emerging priority areas of work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing council-level input into regional recovery plans • Leveraging access to additional government resources to support recovery work • Building a case to argue for additional ED and regeneration powers for councils – with associated core funding models (evolving from the City Deal approach).
3.6	<p>As these work packages emerge, officers will report back to this Committee as appropriate, identifying the specific impact and opportunity for Belfast City Council.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Financial and resource implications</u></p> <p>No specific financial implications. Staff from the Economic Development team will provide secretariat and management support to the group.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Equality, good relations and rural needs implications will be considered as part of any emerging work plans. All councils across Northern Ireland are involved in this work.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.