



Subject:	Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor
Date:	7 October 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Cathy Keenan, Economic Development Manager

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 the Committee with an update on progress to date on work to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and to set out the governance structure and next steps in progressing this piece of work.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Note the contents of this report and progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor- Endorse the governance structure and propose member representation to participate on the political advisory group
3.0	Main report

3.1	<p>At its meeting on 6 November 2019 members were provided with an update on progress to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. At the meeting members noted the outcomes from the research paper undertaken by UU Economic Policy and endorsed the emerging plans for the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.</p>
3.2	<p>The research paper highlighted the key success factors for economic corridors in other locations as having clear articulation of the benefit that will accrue from enhanced levels of engagement over and above what can be expected if partners are to continue to maintain the status quo and pursue their individual economic agendas. The report also detailed the current economic performance of the Corridor and the future prospects for the region based on current trends and highlighted potential areas for cooperation which could create a stronger trajectory for growth. These included sectoral development, research & innovation supports, enterprise supports, environmental resilience and infrastructure.</p>
3.3	<p>Since this initial research was undertaken the global economy has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in monumental declines in levels of economic activity across the board. It is clear that the pandemic will impact the partnerships plans to support economic regeneration across the corridor area, and has caused some delays in work progressing, however it highlights the interdependencies across the area and reinforces the need for a coordinated commitment to enhancing the future economic potential of the area.</p>
3.4	<p>Officers continue to work in partnership to progress with the recommendations of the research and have been engaging with councils along the economic corridor on a monthly basis.</p>
3.5	<p>Since the update brought to this committee in November 2019 there has been agreement by the partnership that now is not the time to proceed with the detailed economic modelling exercise that was previously proposed. However there is recognition that as a partnership we need to begin to progress this and as a first step in the process UU and DCU are working to build upon the initial piece of research that was completed and are developing the CReSS: Corridor Research Seminar Series. By assisting in growing the knowledge base necessary amongst partners, the aim of CReSS is to enhance the potential of the corridor.</p>
3.6	<p>In light of the work done to date on the report on The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor: Current Profile, Potential in Recovery & Opportunities for Cooperation (June 2020) and the</p>

	<p>COVID-19 pandemic there is significant scope and impetus to grow the knowledge base by exploring: the existing and future research priorities in the context of the shifting pace of previously accepted/understood trends; the importance and role of places and regions; and the role of local government. Growing this knowledge will contribute to the overall aim of enhancing the potentiality of the corridor.</p>
3.7	<p>The series will provide a platform for regional, national and international sharing of ideas and initiatives designed to maximise the assets of corridors. The series will support the core priorities of the partnership and provides an opportunity for stakeholders in the network to showcase progress on these objectives with an audience of public officials, academics and the private sector. The out workings of the series will enable the partnership to further develop collaborative opportunities and build these into a future programme of work. Further detail on the series will be shared with the committee when it is finalised.</p>
3.8	<p>Work has also been progressing in other areas, since the last update on the corridor work Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have taken the lead in developing the branding and suite of marketing material for the partnership. This is now complete and work is underway to develop a website showcasing the partnership, key projects, linking to the work in each of the council areas.</p>
3.9	<p>On 23 June the partnership wrote to the North South Ministerial Council to draw their attention to the important and ongoing work of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor Network and its efforts at promoting cross-border economic development. Highlighting the importance of our collaborative endeavours in maximising the potential of the network to kick-start the economic recovery in each of our respective areas. This correspondence was met with a positive response and an invite for the Dublin Belfast Partnership to meet with representatives from the NSMC in September. Chief Officers from each of the eight councils and the Pro-Vice Chancellors of University College Dublin and the University of Ulster attended the meeting. At that meeting the research was discussed, potential areas of future co-operation and the need for local authorities and NSMC and relevant accountable departments to work together on emerging areas of cooperation.</p>
3.10	<p>The governance structure, including roles and responsibilities for the partnership at an advisory, strategic and operational level were discussed and agreed at the last meeting of the chief executives 27th July 2020. The governance structure agreed is included in Appendix</p>

	<p>1. The structure includes a Political Advisory Group which will include representation from elected members from each of the partner areas.</p>
3.11	<p>This group will provide advice and opportunities to discuss strategic issues in a political context. The role of this group is not to make decisions, but to provide input and direction to achieve the ambitions of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. All council decisions will be taken by councils through their own formal decision making processes, with progress reports being brought to this committee on a regular basis with an outline of actions, next steps and to approve any key decisions.</p>
3.12	<p>Based on this members are now required to nominate three representatives to participate on the advisory group. Meetings of the group will take place quarterly, taking place in each council area on a rotational basis. The group will be supported by the Chief Executive and Director working groups. The chair of the group will be on a rotational basis for a period of one year and agreed by members of the advisory group.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The activities outlined within this report will be resourced from the 2020/21 Economic Development budget agreed by this Committee on 4 March 2020.</p>
3.14	<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 consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of this project.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – Dublin- Belfast Economic Corridor Governance Structure