



Subject:	COP 26 Climate Business Conference Funding Agreement
Date:	24th September, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner Clare McKeown, Sustainable 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"/>
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
1.1	This report is to inform the Committee of a proposal by the Management and Leadership Network (MLN) to host a prominent climate business conference 'Sustain Exchange' in Belfast, with up to 400 business leaders, ahead of the COP 26 conference. The report also requests retrospective approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between the Council and the event organiser, with the value of £10,000. The event will be planned to coincide with the arrival of BEIS -sponsored Planetmark's Carbon Battle Bus. Both events will simultaneously promote the <i>Road to Zero</i> and <i>Together for the Planet</i> campaigns.

1.2	<p>Furthermore, in relation to the COP26 programme, which runs from 1st to 12th November in Glasgow, permission is being sought for the Chair of the All Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis (Councillor Smyth), and the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Councillor Groogan) to attend events should the opportunity for a delegation to attend arise.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to support this business focused climate conference by retrospectively approving a funding agreement to the value of £10,000 be entered into with the event organiser, a report having previously been submitted to and approved by CMT and Party Group Leaders.</p>
2.2	<p>The Committee is also asked to approve the attendance of the Chair of the All Party Working Group on the Climate Crisis (Councillor Smyth) and the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Councillor Groogan) at events during COP26 in Glasgow, should the opportunity for a delegation to attend arise.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Background
	<p>The United Nations COP 26 Climate Summit in Glasgow in November will bring a sharp focus on the role of the business community on delivering on global net zero GHG emissions by 2050. It will also challenge business to radically reduce their environmental impact both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. It is a truly transformative time for businesses as they address climate risks and identify new opportunities in the green economy. The transition is not straightforward. Businesses need help in securing cleaner power, heat and transport solutions. They need help in navigating new markets to find more environmentally sustainable solutions in their supply chain, and they need to do it fast. There has never been a more important time to find specialist help to navigate the transition, and to educate inform and engage by sharing the existing knowledge and exemplar experience of those at the forefront of the transition.</p>
	Purpose and Format of Event
3.2	<p>The event will be planned to deliver on the objectives above and will connect local business leaders with international thought leaders with those at the forefront of the transition locally.</p> <p>The event will ideally take place as a hybrid event with the Carbon Bus campaign that will bring 100 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB and third sectors) together in-person for a half day with some or all of the event streamed live to a mass (400+) virtual audience of additional local leaders, thus ensuring the message has reach and that partners get a level of profile, amongst the NI business / leadership community, to justify their investment.</p>

Opening Address and format

3.3 The opening keynote address will be delivered by an authoritative political or business leader who will focus on the business threat of the climate crisis, the legacy of COP 26 and the imperative of business to act fast, within the next decade to take advantage of the new global and local business opportunities. The keynote speaker will be followed by a carefully selected line-up of local leaders who will be challenged to share their story (exemplar), insights (expert) or support offering (stakeholder).

As exemplars these businesses will share their story and associated lessons in an engaging, informative, and entertaining manner. The speakers will encourage and empower other sectoral representative bodies (insurance, banking, hospitality transport and logistics etc) to consider their own climate impact and take the first steps on their 'Race To Zero'.

Management and Leadership Network Experience

3.4 Management and Leadership Network (MLN) have previous experience in hosting several large events with 500 + attendees.

Virtual summits organised by Management and Leadership Network include:

Galvanise NI May 2020 - 1400 Business leaders

Re- launch July 2020- 900 business leaders

Unlearn 2021 December 2020- 700 business leaders

WELL – February 2021 – 1000 business leaders

Leadership SuMMit - February 2020 Prior to first lockdown MLN hosted 500 paying business leaders at Titanic Belfast. BCC was a partner on this event which featured world class speakers including Lord David Puttnam at Titanic Belfast. Podiem and MLN's virtual events have been created and delivered in a 3–4-week lead time (and have consistently attracted business leader audiences of 500+).

As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. This format can be flipped to 100% virtual at short notice should restrictions command.

Council will be invited to participate and profile their extensive climate work i.e Mini – Stern Report, and associated Housing and Transport Readiness Assessments, Climate Ambitions Report, Reset Agenda, internal climate mitigation and adaptation plans and /or the work of the Belfast Climate Commission, Resilience and Sustainability Board etc.

Legacy Platform and Annual Event

3.5 The conference is an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the activity that is already underway in NI. It is intended that this will become an annual event which positions Belfast as a centre of excellence and activity when it comes to businesses and the Race to Zero. It is the intention of the

organisers to establish an online platform to share the case studies profiled and others available. The climate challenge will inevitably move further up the political and business agenda as we move through the decade and the pace of change on this issue is fast, so there is a need for annual event for the NI business/leadership community to share knowledge, experience and progress and supporting platforms available all year round to share resources.

'Lifting the Rock' - Branding

- 3.6 The conference will be branded with the theme of 'Lifting the Rock'. It is designed to speak to and encourage participation from those businesses well on their way and those just starting their zero-carbon pathway. It acknowledges the challenges involved in committing to take meaningful action. This 'planet – saving' rock will be heavy for most organisations, and there may well be “creepy crawlies” underneath, but better to honestly assess the realities and create a realistic and robust strategy rather than set the rock back down and opt for greenwashing. Podiem will complete a comprehensive evaluation report on the conference.

Date, Venue and Contingence

- 3.7 The total cost of the conference will be £60k. Podiem have already secured some corporate sponsorship for the event from Danske bank and are in advanced conversations with Belfast Harbour along with other corporate partners of MLN (energy companies etc).

Venue

- 3.8 The event will be hosted in a City Centre location (to encourage use of public transport and cycle networks) and this will also allow for the Carbon Bus to be on show at the venue. Should Covid restrictions (due to 3rd wave or variant) rule out any form of in-person gathering then all elements of the event will switch to 100% virtual. This includes profiling and involving the Carbon Bus.

Partner Contribution and Profile Benefits

- 3.9 If the Council chooses to support the conference it would be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners. The Council brand would be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as 'at-event'. A Council representative would be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN would be delighted for the Council to deliver a presentation. Council would also promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 £10,000 to support this initiative has been allocated from within the existing City and Organisational Strategy budget.

3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	None