



Subject:	Attendance at Horizon 2020 UPSURGE Final Conference in Katowice, Poland and Pathways2Resilience Launch Summit in Budapest, Hungary in February, 2026
Date:	19 th December 2025
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director, City & Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner, City & Organisational Strategy

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

No

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	Members are asked to note the Council's intention to send two officers to the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE Project Final Conference taking place on 10 th – 11 th February 2026 in Katowice, Poland which the Council is required to attend as a project partner.

1.2	Members are asked to note the Council's intention to send one officer to the Pathways2Resilience Launch Summit taking place on 10 th – 12 th February 2026 in Budapest, Hungary which the Council is required to attend as a project partner.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note that two BCC Officers will be attending the UPSURGE Final Conference on 10th - 11th February 2026 in Katowice, Poland. II. Note that one BCC Officer will be attending the Pathways2Resilience Launch Summit on 10th – 12th February 2026 in Budapest, Hungary. III. Note that all costs associated with the attendance at the above events are covered within the grant funding.
3.0	Main report
	<i>UPSURGE Project</i>
3.1	<p>Members will recall that in August 2020 Belfast City Council agreed to take part in the 'Upsurge Project' which focuses on testing nature-based solutions in partnership with four other EU cities, with the aim of sharing learning and good practice. The site selected as the demonstrator for Belfast is the open ground at Lower Botanic Gardens, beside the Queen's PEC. Belfast City Council was subsequently awarded € 660,375 funding through Horizon Europe to deliver the demonstrator project which will include opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing across the city.</p>
3.2	<p>The UPSURGE project presented an innovative opportunity to develop an underused area of land within Belfast City Council's ownership, through a partnership with QUB, EU partners, and local community organisations. A project team has been established which includes Belfast City Council's Climate Team, Innovation Unit, City and Neighbourhood Services, Physical Programmes, City Regeneration, and Planning in addition to QUB representatives. The project acts as a hub, supporting rewilding, enhanced local food production, stimulation of local circular economy, and the development of community education programmes in relation to climate, digital innovation, and community resilience.</p>
3.3	<p>As part of the delivery of the project, a number of Project Group Meetings are taking place at different host cities, where updates on the project will be provided, an opportunity to share learning and expertise on the effective delivery of the project is able to occur, and each of the 5 partner cities (Belfast, Breda, Budapest, Maribor, and Katowice) are asked to report on progress towards the delivery of their demonstrator project. At least one representative from each partner city is required to attend as per the funding agreement.</p>
3.4	<p>Belfast City Council has previously taken part in meetings in Breda in September 2025, Maribor in March 2023 and in Prato in October 2022. The benefits to the project from these</p>

	<p>meetings included building of relationships across project partners, learning on the various work packages, specifications and scope of works for the demonstrator development. It also created opportunities to identify risks, concerns and challenges between the 5 cities and communicate these to the other project partners so that the project can further support the cities to maximise the opportunities to deliver well on each of their demonstrator sites.</p> <p><i>Pathways2Resilience Project</i></p> <p>3.5 The Pathways2Resilience Project is an EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change flagship initiative supporting over 100 regions across Europe to guide participants through transformative framework like the Regional Resilience Journey and the Adaptation Investment Cycle and helps regions co-design their own climate resilience strategies, action plans and investment plans with expert guidance and capacity building support.</p> <p>3.6 Belfast City Council, in partnership with Northern Ireland Environment Link, has been successful in securing €198,000 in funding as part of this project. This funding will cover the commitment of one BCC officer to engage with the programme for the duration of the project and to develop a Belfast Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan over the 18 months.</p> <p>3.7 The Pathways2Resilience Project officially launches with a Summit event to be held from 10-12th February 2026 in Budapest, Hungary. At least one representative from each project partner is required to attend as per the funding agreement.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.8 There are no financial implications for Belfast City Council. All travel costs can be met within the grant funding for both projects.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.9 None</p> <p>4.0 Appendices – Document Attached</p> <p>Link to the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project page here.</p> <p>Link to the Pathways2Resilience project page here.</p>
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