



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	New Dynamics of Learning and Ageing conference: Research, Policy and Practice: 20-22 March 2012
Date:	January 2012
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Northern Ireland, like many other European Countries, has an increasing number of older people. The demographic structure has changed from a population largely under 50 to one where people over 50 account for around a third of the population and where it is estimated that people over 60 will outnumber people under 16 within the next few years.
1.2	In Belfast, 19.65% of the population is over 60. With life expectancy rising dramatically in the last 50 years, annual improvements in survival rates and falling levels of fertility it is estimated that by 2030 25% of people in Belfast will be over 65 years of age. As a City we must address this and be prepared for an increasingly ageing society and plan for how this will affect our City economically, socially and culturally e.g. the number of retired people will increase and therefore tax payers decrease; the costs of pensions, benefits and health care will also increase significantly.
1.3	The "GIVE" (Grundtvig Initiative on Volunteering in Europe for Seniors) is a European initiative which was introduced in 2009. It consists of a scheme of grants to support senior volunteering projects between local organisations located in two countries participating in the European Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP).
1.4	The initiative is a new form of co-operation within the Grundtvig Programme, fostering collaboration between the organisations sending and hosting volunteers. It allows organisations which join the programme to enrich their work through the exchange of good practice and create sustainable European collaboration between them.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Belfast and Madrid were successful as partners in applying for this European funding and are currently over half way through the exchange programme (8 of the 12 volunteers have been on an exchange).
2.2	The project objectives include the development of lifelong skills, enabling local communities to draw on the potential of senior citizens as a source of knowledge,

	competence and experience, to learn other cultures and to build the volunteer's confidence and self belief.
2.3	An abstract of the Grundtvig project was submitted to the conference call for papers and was accepted by the panel. It is anticipated that the abstract will be presented by an elected member and one of the senior volunteers who have travelled on the exchange. An officer will also attend to support the elected member and older person.
2.4	The conference will aim to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify new areas of teaching and learning, especially through arts and creativity ▪ Share good practice about older adults' learning and educational opportunities ▪ Include the voice of the older learner ▪ Highlight the EU year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity (2012) ▪ Showcase the work of the conference partners and other contributors

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The cost for attending the 3 day conference in Dublin including delegate fees, travel and accommodation is approximately €400 per delegate. Alternatively, a day rate is also available which will cost €150 per delegate. Costs for the attendance for the councillor and older volunteer will come from the EU supported Grundtvig project. If an officer attends it will be funded via the revenue estimates.</p>

4	Recommendations
4.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the chair of the All Party Reference Group on Older People (or her nominee) speaks at the conference 2. an older volunteer speaks at the conference 3. A Council officer attends the conference to support the Elected Representative and the older volunteer

Key to Abbreviations
LLP – Life Long Learning programme
EU – European Union

Documents Attached
None