



Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Lobby for future European Structural Funds 2014-2020
Date:	23 rd November 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1.0 Background	
<p>1.1 Members may be aware that the EU Unit has been leading on an Urban Lobby on behalf of Belfast and the other surrounding Councils known as Comet, (Lisburn, Castlereagh, Newtownabbey, North Down and Carrickfergus), with a view to securing an enhanced role with respect to the design and delivery of EU Structural Funds Programmes 2014-2020. To this end, the Unit commissioned external consultants Colin Stutt, Ciaran Boylan and Neil Gibson in February 2012 to consult with Council and City Regional Stakeholders with regard to the emerging EU programme regulations and priorities.</p> <p>1.2 Outputs of the work by the consultants included a report outlining challenges facing the Greater Belfast urban region post 2013, implications and opportunities for the region aligned to the emerging EU Structural Funds Programmes, an analysis of the Comet strategies and plans and recommendations for an EU plan and delivery for the Comet region post 2013.</p> <p>1.3 On 20th June 2012, Chief Officers considered the consultant's report and on 31st October 2012, the Lord Mayor hosted a breakfast meeting with the Mayors and Chairs of Development and Chief Executives of the Comet Councils. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the consultant's paper and reach consensus on the way forward with respect to the EU Urban Lobby post 2013.</p>	
2.0 Key Issues	
<p>2.1 The Comet grouping of Senior Officers and Members at the breakfast meeting, discussed at length, the need to lobby Central Government to maximise and devolve EU funding to capacity Councils for the period 2014-2020.</p> <p>2.2 They reached agreement to submit a lobby position to relevant Central Government Departments and Assembly Committees, to ask that EU funding is devolved to the Comet region, through the use of the new proposed Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) model. This is a new Eu model whereby European funding can be devolved to local authorities to deliver a pre determined Integrated urban strategy for a defined economic, urban area.</p> <p>2.3 They also agreed to reconvene in the New Year to discuss the appropriate geographical boundary for an ITI, and to do this in the context of Review of Public Administration (RPA) and in conjunction with the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) and Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), as authors of the future EU programmes for NI.</p>	

3.0 Recommendations
3.1 Members are asked to give approval that Belfast City Council prepares and submits a lobby position to NI and UK Government, on behalf of the Comet Councils, to seek to maximise the role of Eu funds delivery for the Greater Belfast urban area, through the devolved use of European funding for the period 2014- 2020.
4.0 Resource Implications
There are no resource implications attached to this report.
5.0 Equality and Good Relations
There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached to this report.
6.0 Documents attached
None