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| Subject: | EU World Cities Project |
| Date: | 11 th April 2018 |
| Reporting Officer: | Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department |
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| 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"/> |

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| Call-in | |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-in? | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

| 1.0 | Purpose of Report |
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| 1.1 | To update Committee on the progress of the EU World Cities project. This is an international urban sustainable development exchange project between the cities of Durban (eThekweni Municipality) and Belfast, with the ultimate aim of developing closer international relations and fostering trade. |
| 1.2 | The paper summarises the success of the exchange of learning to date and proposes areas of possible future collaboration which could be considered within a draft Memorandum of Understanding to be discussed at the final project meeting in May 2018 (the MOU was a project commitment agreed in March 2017). |
| 1.3 | The partnership and collaboration to date has been highlighted by DG REGIO as exemplary and was presented at the UN Habitat World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in February |

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| 1.4 | <p>2018. This was a unique opportunity to raise the international profile of Belfast City Council on the global stage. As a result of the success of this project both cities have been invited to apply for further funding to continue the successful collaboration for next 12-18 months from the EU South Africa Policy Dialogue.</p> <p>Invest NI have worked closely with the Council on this project. One of the outcomes of the Belfast Durban collaboration is the identification of new NI export business opportunities and knowledge transfer emerging in the renewable energy, waste management and smart technology sectors in the cities of Johannesburg / Durban and Cape Town.</p> |
| 2.0 | Recommendations |
| 2.1 | <p>The Committee is asked to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Note the success of the collaboration between Durban and Belfast to date and, in particular that it was invited to present to the World Urban Forum UN Habitat in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on 16 February 2018. ▪ Agree the areas of mutual collaboration on urban sustainability challenges which will inform the draft Memorandum of Understanding (a commitment in the initial project). ▪ Note that Officers were invited to apply for further funding to the EU South Africa Policy Dialogue to further foster business and government links on smart sustainable technology for mutual benefit (closing date 28th March 2018) ▪ Consider the makeup of the outward delegation of 3 people to Durban and Cape Town on 13-17th May for the final conference. |
| 3.0 | Main Report |
| 3.1 | <p>Background</p> <p>World Cities (www.world-cities.eu) is a project of the European Union managed and 100% funded by the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO). The project supports the exchange of information, experience and best practice on smart urban sustainability challenges and was initiated by the council's Smart CityTeam.</p> |
| 3.2 | <p>There is a particular focus on developing the green economy, sharing expertise on energy security, sustainable mobility, circular economy and associated smart city solutions that stimulate innovation, and new business starts up etc. These areas are at the heart of the</p> |

Belfast Agenda and are key to economic progress as we open up new opportunities for smart sustainable growth in the city. Given the common legacy of post conflict societies there is also a specific focus on sharing workable solutions to related legacy issues of unemployment, deprivation and segregation through innovative urban planning and progressive community development strategies.

3.3 **Triple Helix Model**

Uniquely the World Cites project encourages cities to foster collaboration amongst and between local and international triple helix partners i.e. research institutions, innovation clusters, academia and public sector. To this end the City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreed the involvement of the Strategic Investment Board (circular economy), the Centre of Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE) at QUB as strategic partners.

3.4 Representatives from these bodies comprised the delegation to Durban in April 2017 along with Cllr George Dorrian and the Sustainable Development Manager. There was strong support for this project from DfE, OFMdfM, the NI Executive Office in Brussels and Invest NI given that Invest NI planned to open its first office in South Africa this year. The initial conference with all 8 cities in Johannesburg in March 2017 was attended by the EU Ambassador to South Africa, Dr Marco Cornaro, the British High Commissioner to South Africa, Mr Peter Boxer the Strategic Director of DG REGIO Dr Ronnie Hall.

3.5 The overriding impression from the Durban and EU delegations was that Belfast is a transformed City with a new energy, enthusiasm and ambition to compete on the world stage. It has a growing reputation as a centre for excellence in renewable energy, energy storage, cybersecurity, smart technology and sustainable transport, all topics at the heart of global urban sustainability challenges. There was also a general impression that the city had moved faster than South African cities to overcome the legacy of the past conflict and to deal with associated issues of segregation, deprivation and unemployment. It was acknowledged that collaborative city branding was successful and with the assistance of Visit Belfast, the city was now positioning itself successfully on the global tourism trail.

3.6 **Collaboration presented at UN World Urban Forum**

It was on the basis of exemplary work and ongoing collaboration that the Belfast Durban partnership was invited to be presented at The UN Habitat World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. This international conference brings together the best global examples of urban sustainability challenges and opportunities which contribute to the UN's New Urban Agenda objective and progress on agreed international Sustainable Development Goals.

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| | The presentation was delivered by Puven Akkiah from Durban. |
| 3.7 | City challenges, potential themes for collaboration and associated funding. |
| 3.8 | <p>Urban sustainability challenges are wide ranging in their nature, and following deliberation between the cities it was agreed to narrow the focus to 4 possible theme areas for collaboration. (These themes are described below). Over the year of collaboration a significant amount of information has already been shared, especially during the two visits, and collaboration is ongoing with Durban and the Belfast's triple helix partners. The Council have received offers from the triple helix partners to take the lead where appropriate. For example Catalyst INC and CSIT are keen to lead on smart, digital partnership with Durban Smart Xchange similarly CASE and UU have taken the lead on renewable energy deployment with Durban City Council.</p> <p>EU Urban Innovation Action Fund</p> <p>A 0.3bn European Fund for Urban Innovation Actions, available annually to cities until 2020 is heavily promoted to cities in the EU World Cities programme. The fund provides for up to 80% co –financing on relevant projects. This year themes includes Local Job and Skills, and Climate Adaptation next year themes include Digital transition, Urban poverty, Sustainable Land Use and Urban security. Applications open in December and close the following April, up to 5million euros are available. No EU partner cities are required for application. The council's Development Department have been examining this fund with a view to application in 2019.</p> |
| 3.9 | <p>Theme 1 Post Conflict Urban and City Planning (learning form Belfast)</p> <p>South African cities are inherently unsustainable from a planning perspective. The legacy of apartheid means that many poorer people are still forced to live outside the city centres, yet forced to travel daily, at considerable expense to the city centre for work, with significant transport, congestion and pollution impacts. In addition there is a legacy of underinvestment in the city centre. The general observation is that Belfast has moved faster to address post conflict issues with priority given to physical and social connectivity in planning .Durban is keen to learn more from the successful experience of Belfast in urban planning, city centre regeneration and investment and city branding. Durban and Cape Town are also members of the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities programme, so there is an opportunity to share experience and outcomes of this international resilience programme.</p> |
| 3.10 | Theme 2 Smart City Innovation, entrepreneurship and business incubation |

(learning from Durban)

Johannesburg and Durban have a global reputation for entrepreneurship and smart digital innovation. The Belfast delegation noted how the City Councils in both cities are closely linked to all the major academic, technical and research clusters through detailed Memorandum of Understanding. This means that City challenges can be shared with the educational and technical institutions, who in turn have access to international best practice. This close 'town and gown' arrangement fosters innovation and lends itself to faster incubation and in turn faster new business spin out.

3.11 Site visits to Catalyst INC and CSIT afforded the opportunity for the Durban delegation to connect to the Belfast business incubation hub and state of the art cyber security innovation. Both Catalyst INC and CSIT view South Africa as a priority market and have expressed interest in collaborating with the Durban Smart Xchange and The Resolution Circle for mutual collaboration and international business development.

3.12 **Theme 3 Energy security, renewable energy and energy storage**

At present South Africa is 100% dependant on coal fired power stations for primary energy production. This will change dramatically as South Africa has committed to the international COP21 agreement and associated carbon reduction targets. Durban is keen to develop a collaborative partnership with Centre of Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE) to avail of best practice in the deployment of solar, wind, wave, tidal biogas and biomass energy. Since November, the City of Durban plans to work with CASE and UU to deploy a NI designed off grid solar powered ecosystem ideal for the townships outside Durban.

3.13 The export of NI knowledge, skills and product development is clearly a win-win business opportunity for CASE, University of Ulster and Durban City which Invest NI is keen to support.

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Theme 4 Waste Management Recycling, Circular Economy

The recycling industry is in its infancy in South Africa: circa 90% of waste is still landfilled. This is set to change dramatically when the first Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) will be built in South Africa outside the City of Durban. The MRF is a partnership between Durban City Council and USE-IT. Durban is keen to learn from the experience of the SIB and Belfast City Council in waste management policies, recycling collection service, and efforts to encourage behavioural change.

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The development of MRF facilities will employ the same screening, shifting, washing and conveyor belt technology used in the mining sector currently the main export to South Africa

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| 3.16 | <p>from NI. Again Invest NI is keen to support this new potential business opportunity in the Durban area.</p> <p>Committee is asked to discuss and agree these themes as ongoing areas of work with Durban, acknowledging that we have been given an undertaken by all triple helix partners with an international remit, i.e. CASE, Catalyst INC and SIB to work collaboratively to continue the dialogue.</p> |
| 3.17 | <p>Further Funding Opportunity</p> <p>Given the success of the collaboration to date both cities were invited to apply to the EU South Africa Policy Dialogue Fund to extend the collaboration for another 12-18months. Given that building strong international relations is now more important than ever to secure investment, trade, tourism and knowledge exchange and we have laid good foundations with this project (which is recognised internationally) this fund should be examined to help extend that opportunity to further the public and private sector business links. Officers have submitted an application for this funding and a future report will be brought to Committee to update Members on its progress.</p> |
| 3.18 | <p>Make up of May delegation</p> <p>As part of the original project commitment DG REGIO will provide finance for a delegation of 3 from Belfast to return to South Africa on 14-17th May. One and a half days will be spent in Durban for the final partnership meetings followed by a final World Cities conference in Cape Town on 15th May with all 8 city delegates from the World Cities projects.</p> <p>3.19 It is proposed the Belfast delegation of 3 (which is funded by EU World Cities) includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A representative from BCC Urban planning / City Centre Regeneration - A representative of the Catalyst INC or the digital community - The Sustainable Development Manager / International Relations led. <p>3.20 The urban planning representative would manage the development of collaboration on urban planning as outlined in Theme 1.</p> <p>3.21 The representative from the Digital Community will bring forward closer collaboration between the digital communities in both cities as outlined in Theme 2, and both will be involved if the future funding application is successful.</p> <p>3.22 It would be possible to include others in the delegation but costs would not be covered by DG REGIO.</p> |

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| 3.23 | Names must be submitted before 15 th April 2018. Following this funding application and the outward study visit, a comprehensive report will be brought back to committee for further consideration. |
| 3.24 | Committee is asked to consider the make-up of the proposed delegation. |
| 3.25 | <p><u>Finance and Resources Implications</u></p> <p>EU World cities will cover full financial and content support for 3 people to participate in the final stage of this programme i.e the outward visit to Durban and Cape Town on 14-17th May 2018. The work has been managed to date by the Sustainable Development Manager and is included in her work programme with support from the Development Department International Relations Team.</p> |
| 3.26 | <p><u>Equality and Good Relations</u></p> <p>The project has been screened for equality and good relations impacts. There are no equality and good relations impacts at this stage. It should be recognised that this international project provides the opportunity to highlight the role of the Council as a body which is committed to building a peaceful and prosperous city and sharing its expertise internationally.</p> |
| 4.0 | Appendices - Documents Attached |
| | None |