



Subject:	Request to present – economic briefings
Date:	12 th September 2018
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development

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"/>
Some time 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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	As agreed by the Committee in June 2018, the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) will present their annual economic briefing at the meeting on 26 th September 2018. Dr Eoin Magennis will provide this presentation on behalf of the UUEPC. This engagement with the Council is part of our sponsorship support for UUEPC.
1.2	In addition to the engagement and insights provided by UUEPC, the Committee previously agreed that presentations from other economic perspectives would be provided throughout the year in order to ensure that there was a rounded perspective on city challenges and opportunities.

1.3	This report seeks Committee approval for a number of economic related briefings. If members are in agreement, these will be scheduled at future Committee meetings over the course of the remaining months of this financial year.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to receive a series of economic briefings from the organisations outlined in the report and to suggest any additional perspectives that should be brought forward. The presentations will be scheduled appropriately in the agenda schedule during the 2018/19 financial year.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Committee has agreed that the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre will present an economic briefing that provides an opportunity to consider the city and regional economic conditions and forecasts to inform future direction and priority setting around key inter-related programmes of work for the Council - growing the economy, employability & skills and city development.</p>
3.2	<p>In order to present a range of perspectives and relevant areas of economic interest, it is suggested that the Committee considers and agrees to receive economic briefings from the following organisations:</p> <p>Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)</p>
3.3	<p>The Committee may also wish to suggest alternative perspectives that could be added to create a future programme of economic briefings in order to inform our future work programme and to consider the changing policy environment in which we work.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Relevant areas of interest</u></p> <p>The Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI) is a research organisation based in Dublin and Belfast. It aims to contribute to alternative perspectives and possibilities that will lead to the creation of an economy that works for all. The Committee had previously invited NERI</p>

to present on the potential opportunities and impacts of Brexit. While there were not able to attend on the day, NERI did circulate to the Committee some of its research on the issue. The research areas of interest to the Committee relate to job quality and the changing nature of employment and productivity. NERI also produces regular economic bulletins. These insights will provide an additional information source for the Committee to aid their strategic consideration of our plans and approaches to grow the Belfast economy in an inclusive manner and to effectively progress the Belfast Region City Deal.

3.5 The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) is a registered charity and think tank with bases in Scotland, London, Manchester and Newcastle Upon Tyne. The most recent report of interest to the City Growth & Regeneration Committee's economic agenda focuses on the challenges and opportunities for the skills system in the region. This report recognises that skills are fundamental for driving future economic prosperity and central to inclusive growth. This will also help to provide an alternative perspective and provide additional information to assist how we use the findings from the Skills Barometer for Belfast (UUEPC), further enhancing the Committee's considerations of the Council's role and thinking in tackling the city's employability and skills challenges.

3.6 The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is an independent organisation that produces an annual briefing on poverty and related issues in NI. In addition, areas of interest for the Committee include inclusive growth, the role of the social economy in promoting inclusive growth; and work and worklessness.

3.7 The Committee is aware of the need to develop new approaches to address the city's persistent challenges, given the high levels of economic inactivity, low skills levels and the need to grow the private sector. As part of the Growing the Economy work programme to undertake research, gather intelligence and scope innovative approaches, the Committee should also note that work is underway to take forward an independent update and assessment of Belfast's competitiveness. Building on the analysis undertaken in 2015, this will consider competitiveness in terms of key economic, social, physical, culture and environmental indicators. It will provide a detailed analysis of Belfast's current competitiveness, benchmark performance with other key cities in the UK, on the island of Ireland and in Europe, identifying key lessons and learning, and take account of the opportunities and risks arising from the changing political and economic global context. This will supplement the Belfast Agenda data requirements as well as informing our programmes of work to support new businesses to start up and grow to export and strengthen the city's

	<p>economic growth sectors. By bringing together a range of economic indicators, it will also provide a coherent assessment of the city's performance to help to build on the connections between economic growth, productivity and employability and skills programmes. The Committee will also have an opportunity to receive a presentation on the findings and recommendations at a future meeting.</p>
3.7	<p>Members are asked to consider the briefings in the context of the current issues associated with the decision for the UK to leave the EU. With the establishment of the Brexit Committee, the Committee may wish to consider extending an invitation to attend these presentations to Members of the Brexit Committee.</p>
3.8	<p>The scheduling of these economic briefings will be planned over the course of the meetings taking place in the 2018/19 financial year to take account of Committee business and the Committee Plan commitments.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The costs associated with the UUEPC annual commitment, the competitiveness assessment and any costs associated with the briefings such as travel (if required) are included within the 2018/19 departmental budget and programmes of work.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The briefings and information will consider equality and good relations issues and will assist when carrying out future screening and rural needs assessments.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None