



Subject:	Proposed Visit to Brussels
Date:	11 th October 2018
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Grainia Long, Commissioner for Resilience

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
	The purpose of this report is to outline for Members the proposed objectives and logistics for a delegation to visit Brussels.
2.0	Recommendations
	Members are asked to consider the proposals for the visit, as outlined in this report, and recommend it to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for agreement.
3.0	Main report

Key Issues

Members are reminded that at the September meeting of this Committee it was agreed: *‘That an all-Party delegation from the Council undertake a visit to Brussels to engage with EU officials to represent the views of the council in relation to Special Designated Status, remaining in the single market and the Council’s position on the Backstop; and to engage with EU Funding Bodies about our future participation in EU Funding Programmes.’*

Following on from this agreement the Council’s Commissioner for Resilience met with the Head of NI Executive Office in Brussels, while in the city for the EU Week of Regions and Cities, and discussed a proposed approach for the visit.

Objectives of a Delegation to Brussels

The following objective are proposed for the visit:

- To receive an update on negotiations on UK withdrawal for EU – meeting with the UK representation on the negotiations.
- To gain an understanding - from an EU perspective - on the options for a future relationship with the UK, following withdrawal.
- To discuss in detail the particular issues concerning the withdrawal agreement for Northern Ireland, and for Belfast in particular.
- To meet members from EFTA countries and the EEA and discuss management of the relationship with the EU e.g. Canton delegation in Switzerland, embedded in the mission from Switzerland.
- To meet senior staff from the EU Committee of the Regions.
- To meet lead staff from other UK cities with a permanent presence in Brussels, regarding preparation for Brexit at city level.

Logistics

- It is proposed that the delegation travel in early December - at this point it is expected that negotiations will have passed a critical milestone. The visit will be well timed irrespective of the outcome of negotiations - if the EU and UK have agreed terms, it will allow the delegation the opportunity to consider the detail of those terms and what it might mean for city planning. If terms have not been agreed, members will be in a position to discuss potential implications for the UK and for the city of Belfast.
- It is hoped that the NI Executive Office in Brussels will help to host meetings and arrange introductions at agency level. During this period we will also seek to meet NI MEPs who we hope will also host relevant introductions and meetings.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is expected that the delegation will take place across three working days, with two nights spent in Brussels. • Flights and accommodation will be arranged to facilitate maximum opportunity for meetings to take place. <p>It is proposed that the all-party delegation will be made up of the Chair and Deputy Chair, or their nominees, and a representative from each of the other four parties. The delegation will be accompanied by two officers.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>It is expected that return flights plus two nights' accommodation and cost of meals and transport will be approximately £1000 per delegate. Formal approval will be sought from Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no implications relating to this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	None