



Subject:	Update on Eastern Economic Corridor
Date:	5th December, 2018
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development, ext. 3470
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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"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
	The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on progress to date on work to support the development of the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor, including engagement with the other seven other councils along the corridor.
2.0	Recommendations
	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note the progress to date on this work, including the proposed conference, which members will be invited to attend;• note the plans for the conference and the emerging research outcomes; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> agree to receive a future report in advance of the conference, providing an update on the Memorandum of Understanding for information and endorsement.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Members will recall the update provided on the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 12 September 2018. The report provided an update on the work currently being undertaken by the Economic Development team to increase collaborations with Dublin, and opportunities to support economic cooperation and engagement between the cities and along with Belfast-Dublin corridor.
3.2	The report outlined plans for a proposed conference which aims to highlight cooperation opportunities along the corridor and Belfast City Council has been working with the other seven Councils along the corridor to develop this concept further. The eight councils are Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Belfast City Council; Dublin City Council; Fingal County Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council; Louth County Council; Meath County Council; and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
3.3	In order to shape the conference and ensure that all partners are content with the content and approach, a steering group of senior council officials has been established. The steering group has commissioned the local universities (a collaboration between Ulster University and Dublin City University) to carry out further research to articulate the economic opportunities along the corridor. This research will form the basis of the conference proceedings and will provide a useful platform from which to scope additional opportunities for ongoing engagement with partners, in order to exploit the economic potential of this 100-mile corridor.
3.4	A key agreed outcome of the steering group meetings to date has been the aspiration to deliver a Memorandum of Understanding between the eight local authorities. This MoU will set out the scope of the joint areas of working across the corridor on infrastructure, attracting investment and jobs. This MoU will be brought back to the Council for information and endorsement.
3.5	A workshop was held in September, where each of the 8 EEC Councils outlined the key economic challenges and opportunities in their area and discussed the future of the partnership. The session documented a number of common themes, which is to be further explored through the research.

3.6	<p>On 29th November 2018, the Chief Executives of each of the councils will attend a steering group meeting in Belfast City Council. At this meeting, an update on the themes emerging from the research will be presented and the strategic themes for the conference and next steps will be agreed.</p>
3.7	<p>The key requirements of the study are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define the geographic boundary of the economic corridor study area based on the economic value of the area; • identify sectoral strengths and opportunities for the Corridor; • identify assets and explore core economic drivers or hubs on the Corridor; • identify how the region can accommodate and deliver against the ambitions contained in national and regional policy to facilitate growth; • assess the potential impact of Brexit; and • set out the case for collaboration on the Eastern Economic Corridor.
3.8	<p>To date, the research project has identified a number of key strategic sectors and overarching themes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employability - Connectivity - Inclusive growth - Tourism - Agri-food - Biotech - Advanced engineering - Energy
3.9	<p>The conference will take place in the Waterfront Hall Belfast. Currently, this is planned for the end of February but will be confirmed in due course. The content of the conference will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signing of MOU between the 8 EEC Councils - Presentation of the research - Speakers from international business community - Chief Executives from Belfast and Dublin Councils to outline the potential of the Cities to work in partnership. - Other partners to feature in panel discussions

3.10	<p>Members will be invited to attend the conference and there is likely to be public and private sector representation from all eight council areas as well as attendance by senior government representatives from both sides of the border.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.11	<p>The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2018/19 Economic Development budget previously agreed by this Committee.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.12	<p>The unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure that consideration is given to equality and good relations impacts throughout the development and delivery of this project. Both urban and rural areas are involved in this work.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	None