



Subject:	Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor
Date:	19 June 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
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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"/>
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	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on progress to date on work to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the outcomes from the research paper undertaken by UU Economic Policy and Dublin City University
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that Belfast City Council and Dublin City Council have a longstanding working relationship built up over many years and focused principally on issues relating to economic development and city growth.

3.2	A partnership has been established including four councils in Northern Ireland and four in RoI. The council partners 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 future direction of the partnership and identify economic opportunities along the corridor, Dublin City University and Ulster University were commissioned to carry out research on behalf of the councils. The research paper has now been completed and is included in Appendix 1. The partnership have agreed that the research paper will be provided to the North South Ministerial Council for consideration and further discussion.
3.4	The report details the current economic performance of the Corridor and the future prospects for the region based on current trends. The report also begins the work of identifying potential areas for cooperation which could create a stronger trajectory for growth.
3.5	<p><u>Future prospects for the Eastern Economic Corridor</u></p> <p>The report highlights a number of population and employment forecasts which are based upon 'baseline' or 'current trends' assumptions, while adjusting for potential impacts of Brexit, although developed prior to Covid 19. The 'baseline' scenario to 2040 pointed to the current divergence in growth rates between NI and Ireland continuing. It also found that the Corridor would continue its trajectory to becoming the location for a third of the island's population, perhaps reaching a total of 2.5 million people by 2040.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Strengths of the corridor and sector priorities</u></p> <p>The report also identifies the general strengths of the Corridor as it is currently functioning, highlighting demographic trends, skills levels and connectivity. These strengths hold even in light of the current events and public health crisis. Sectoral concentrations and strengths include tradeable services (including ICT, Professional Services and Financial Services), as well as high tech Manufacturing and Construction. Another sector that is important in every Council area is tourism with 68,000 jobs across the Corridor. Over 10 million trips were made in the Corridor in 2017, with access onto the island being especially beneficial. A high proportion of these numbers are in Belfast and Dublin.</p>
3.7	The report concludes by proposing a number of broad areas for government-led collaboration which aim to deliver additional economic value to the region and the island more generally.

	<p>These includes promotion of the corridor area to attract investment from both inward private and domestic and public sources, in addition to investment in infrastructure in areas such as transport connectivity as well as research and innovation centres, Smart Cities initiatives, and investment in environmental and energy management projects.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial and resource implications</u></p> <p>No specific resource requirements associated with this work at present.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The Economic Development unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of each project.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor: Current Profile, Potential in Recovery & Opportunities for Cooperation Final Report</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor Logo concepts</p>