



<b>Subject:</b>	Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor
<b>Date:</b>	3 March 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Cathy Keenan, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
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 and to provide an overview of plans for the official launch of the Corridor Partnership.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Note the contents of this report and progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.</li><li>- Approve the budget allocation to be managed by Fingal County Council to support the delivery of the work programme aligned to the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	At its meeting on the 7 November 2020 members were provided with an update on progress to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. At the meeting

	<p>members noted the progress to date, endorsed the emerging plans and member representation for participation on the political advisory group as part of the governance structure of the partnership.</p>
3.2	<p>Members will be aware that since the establishment of the partnership, partner councils have been working to shape its future direction and to find ways to work collaboratively to realise the potential benefits of the further development of the Corridor. In 2019 DCU and UU were commissioned to carry out research on behalf of the councils to inform how the councils could collaborate for mutual benefit between the cities of Dublin and Belfast and the regions between. The report detailed the current economic performance of the Corridor and the prospects for the region based on current trends. The report also began the work of identifying potential areas for cooperation which could create a stronger trajectory for growth.</p>
3.3	<p>However, since this initial research was undertaken the global economy has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in monumental declines in levels of economic activity across the board. The pandemic has also had an impact on the speed of the partnership's plans to support economic regeneration across the corridor area, however the pandemic has highlighted the interdependencies across the area and reinforces the need for a coordinated commitment to enhancing the future economic potential of the corridor.</p>
3.4	<p>Officers continue to work in partnership to progress the recommendations of the research and have been engaging with councils along the economic corridor on a monthly basis. These specific areas for collaboration included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Opportunities for branding and promoting the area to attract private and public investment;</li><li>• Identification of areas of complementary policy and objectives to support collaborative opportunities and the development of joint interventions;</li><li>• Skills development to ensure that the skills pipeline is appropriate to meet future demand;</li><li>• Use of sectoral strengths to influence of FDI pipeline;</li><li>• Further development of sectoral concentrations which already exist in tradeable services, Agri-Food and high-tech Manufacturing and Construction;</li><li>• Cooperation in the development and delivery of enterprise supports to increase the number of new businesses along the corridor area;</li></ul>

- Development of joint policies on infrastructure to enhance transport, innovation, education;
- Enhancing Research and Innovation through the development of cross border complimentary research, access to funding, access to students etc e.g. joint internships;
- Collaboration to collectively address the shared challenges which are not confined by spatial or administrative boundaries such as Environmental resilience and management.

3.5

Thus far the partnership has agreed/progressed the following;

- The governance structure including roles and responsibilities for the partnership at an advisory, strategic, operational and political level.
- Engagement with the North South ministerial Council, and the shared Island Unit to draw their attention to the important and ongoing work of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor Network and its efforts at promoting cross-border economic development. Highlighting the importance of our collaborative endeavours in maximising the potential of the network to kick-start the economic recovery in each of our respective areas. The initiative was positively welcomed by the NSMC and the Shared Island Unit are keen to engage in further dialogue with the partnership to identify opportunities to bid for funding for cross border research, research infrastructure etc.
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have taken the lead in developing the branding and suite of marketing material for the partnership. This is now complete, and work is underway to develop a website showcasing the partnership, key projects and linking to the work in each of the council areas.
- Development of the Corridor Research Seminar Series which aims to grow the knowledge base among partners and enhance the potential of the corridor. The series will provide a platform for regional, national and international sharing of ideas and initiatives designed to maximise the assets of corridors.
- Review of existing policies in areas of R&D, Skills, Tourism, Infrastructure, Trade and Investment to identify areas of alignment and areas for immediate collaboration and development of joint interventions.

3.6

At the meeting of the Chief Executives in December 2020 it was agreed that there would be an official launch of the partnership on the 24 March 2021 which would highlight the current profile of the corridor, potential in recovery and opportunities for cooperation. The aim of the launch is to position the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor in the minds of decision-makers

	<p>in government and other state agencies and in the business community to present a cohesive, regional approach to economic development along the corridor among the 8 local government bodies.</p> <p>3.7 The format of the event will include a range of segments highlighting reasons to collaborate which will outline the key findings from the research undertaken to date to profile the corridor area and provide an outline of the strategic vision of the partnership. The event will also include a range of panel discussions with businesses, agencies and politicians from across the corridor area which will focus on opportunities for collaboration. This section will set out the possibilities across the area for innovation and collaboration, the role that agencies will play in supporting the messaging and the role of politics in strengthening the Economic Corridor and making the strategic vision into a reality through strong decision making. The details of the launch event are currently being finalised, at that point members will be issued with an invitation to attend.</p> <p>3.8 To support the development and delivery of the launch event and the programme of work completed to date it has been agreed that each council would be required to make a contribution to Fingal County Council as the current chair of the partnership of £27,000 in to cover activity in 2020 and 2021. This budget would be retained by Fingal County Council and utilised to cover the cost of any partnership activity approved by the Strategic Oversight Group of Chief Executives.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.9 The activities outlined within this report will be resourced from the 2020/21 Economic Development budget agreed by this Committee on 4 March 2020.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.10 The 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 this project.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None