



Subject:	Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and National Development Plan
Date:	12 January 2022
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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 a progress update on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) and work on a development plan, strategy and action plan to progress this work.
1.2	The report also provides members with a synopsis of the Republic of Ireland Government's Shared Island Initiative and draws out elements of the National Development Plan aligned

	with cross border economic co-operation, with specific reference to the Dublin-Belfast corridor.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the contents of this report and progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.
3.0	Main report
3.1	At its meeting on 9 June 2021, Members were provided with an update on progress to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor including proposals for work on a development plan and governance structure involving business and elected representatives. Members noted the progress to date and endorsed the approach.
3.2	<p>Since the last committee update, the DBEC group proceeded with the commissioning of a development plan, strategy and action plan for the partnership. Belfast City Council acted as lead partner on the tendering and contract management of this work. The development plan is progressing well. It is being supported by a working group of officials from across the partnership. Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of successful corridors, including staffing, funding, legal and governance structures including powers and purpose, and successful initiatives or projects carried out by the partners Review of existing cross border structures/entities and funding, legislative environment Review of existing research and delivery in priority sectors to identify gaps in provision/research, areas of alignment and potential for collaboration Identification of options to support the development of a DBEC entity aligned with the partnership's ambitions including recommended governance, legal and operating structures Development of a detailed resource plan to support the delivery of the DBEC entity including identification of potential sources of funding.
3.3	To date, the delivery team has undertaken research in relation to future governance, operational, legal and resourcing models for the partnership. This has included a comparative analysis of other corridors and consultations with existing cross border institutions and relevant internal and external stakeholders. The next steps for stage 1 include finalising consultations with cross border bodies and preparing the implementation and resourcing plan. Once approved the delivery team will proceed to stage 2 of the project.

	<p>Since the previous update, the inaugural meeting of the Dublin Belfast Political Oversight Group took place on 23 November 2021 at City North Hotel, Dublin. The CEOs of the council partners attended the meeting along with the three elected representatives from each council. A Chair and Vice Chair of the group were elected to serve a one-year term. The Chair is Councillor Pete Byrne from Newry Mourne and Down District Council and the Mayor of Fingal, Councillor Seána Ó Rodaigh, of Fingal County Council was elected as Vice-Chair. The team delivering the development plan used this session as an opportunity to undertake a consultation workshop with elected representatives and officials and this will feed into the development plan.</p>
3.4	<p>It was previously decided to delay the convening of a business advisory group until work on the development plan and strategy has progressed. It is expected that the private sector will be consulted as part of the current work.</p>
3.5	<p>One of the key considerations in the development plan will be to look at how this work can support the delivery of key commitments by the NI Executive and the RoI government. In the case of the latter, this will include reference to the renewed National Development Plan (NDP) which outlines strategic economic investment plans to 2030. The plan also sets out investment commitments relating to the Shared Island Initiative (launched in October 2020) which aims to enhance co-operation, connection, and mutual understanding on the island of Ireland, as well as East-West.</p>
3.6	<p>The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor Initiative is referenced within the NDP, notably: “The Government will continue to support fully the work of cross border local authority partnerships and pursue opportunities for collaborative investment and working in implementing the Shared Island NDP investment priorities”.</p>
3.7	<p>Some potential opportunities identified through this document include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement of €50 million through The Shared Island Fund in Budget 2021 to advance key projects and a commitment to a total of €500 million to this fund out to 2025 • The plan will support the purchase of new and additional fleet for the Dublin-Belfast Enterprise service allowing for trains to move to an hourly frequency when the new fleet is introduced by 2027. This All-Island Strategic Rail Review is also currently underway, led by ARUP consultants

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for a joined-up approach to environmental protection and sustainability across the island, including an electric vehicle and sustainable transport network • Development of a National Clustering Policy that will set out Ireland's approach to promoting the emergence and further growth of large scale, self-sustaining, business clusters • Creating new all-island research centres and innovation is identified as a priority. A funding allocation of €40m to support cross border academic research was announced in summer 2021 and a call for projects closed in November 2021.
3.8	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The work on the development plan will be resourced from the 2021/22 Enterprise and Business Growth budget.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>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>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	N/A