

<b>Report on</b>	SOLACE NI Report on Strategic Funding Alignment - Mapping of Investment Fund Opportunities in Northern Ireland
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	16 February 2023
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Assistant Director of Economy, Tourism & Strategic Programmes

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>  If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
<b>1.1</b>	The purpose of this paper is to provide Members with an update on a SOLACE NI Report (prepared by Ekosgen), focusing on Strategic Funding Alignment to Map Investment Fund Opportunities in Northern Ireland.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<p><b>SOLACE NI report on Strategic Funding Alignment - Mapping of Investment Fund Opportunities in Northern Ireland</b></p> <p>Members may be aware that Ekosgen had been commissioned by SOLACE NI during the summer to undertake a scoping exercise of the existing funding landscape and to identify potential sources of investment/funding opportunities available to Councils in NI.</p> <p>The aims of this project were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provide Councils and SOLACE NI with a clear understanding of the existing funding landscape and to inform the strategic alignment within and between Councils and partners of investment funds in NI;</li> <li>ii. Inform council officers of the timeframes that exist within these funds including engagement sessions, fund opening submission dates, fund award and fund closing dates; and</li> <li>iii. Where possible, outline the range of different projects that are currently within the pipeline in NI delivered through these investment funding vehicles.</li> </ul> <p>The study focused on the alignment of the various funds' themes and priorities, timings and bid submission dates. It is crucial that as the representative body for Local Authority Chief Executives in Northern Ireland, that SOLACE NI on behalf of</p>

	<p>their constituent Councils understand how all these funding opportunities align with existing sectoral and strategic priorities. It is also vital through this work that each Council also explores how as a local government sector and individual Councils we can scope out existing (and potential future) partnerships to maximise the drawdown and benefit of these funding opportunities.</p>
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Main Report</b></p>
<p><b>3.1</b></p>	<p><b>SOLACE NI report on Strategic Funding Alignment - Mapping of Investment Fund Opportunities in Northern Ireland</b></p> <p>The report attached presents the findings of an investment mapping exercise conducted by Ekosgen. The purpose of this report is threefold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. To provide an overview of the range of different sources of investment available to local authorities in NI;</li> <li>ii. To identify any potential areas of synergy or potential overlap across funding themes and potential projects; and</li> <li>iii. To inform users of the content and use of the Investment Mapping Tool which has been created for the purposes of detailing the strategic fit of the Northern Ireland Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) programmes Interventions List against the investment themes, projects, and missions of other funding programmes currently active in NI.</li> </ul> <p>Members should note that the baseline funding programme set out within the Mapping Tool is interchangeable and for example the Peace Plus programme could substitute the SPF to demonstrate strategic fit against the investment themes, projects, and missions of other funding programmes as required by each Council. The wider aim of this tool is to establish synergies that could be gained from acknowledging that investment funds in Northern Ireland have similar aims and objectives, and thus can be exploited for wider collaboration across the funds. The mapping tool can be used by each Council or in conjunction with sub-regional partners to align their strategic objectives against emerging funding opportunities. The tool can be tailored and designed to the specific needs of each Council, and it will be the decision of each Council to decide the level of resourcing required to maintain the information it wishes to maintain and analyse within this tool.</p> <p>The mapping tool can be used in the decision-making process of Councils and across wider funding partners to identify potential areas of complementarity between their projects and other investment funds.</p> <p>It is important to note that the Mid South West (MSW) interventions/projects referenced in <b>Appendix 2</b> remain the focus of ongoing development and are therefore subject to change.</p>

4.0	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<p data-bbox="225 297 975 331"><b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b></p> <p data-bbox="225 342 1326 450">Financial: This report was commissioned by and will be paid through SOLACE NI on the basis of equal contribution by each Council of £1,310.</p> <p data-bbox="225 488 341 521">Human:</p> <p data-bbox="225 560 496 593">Risk Management:</p>
4.2	<p data-bbox="225 678 746 712"><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b></p> <p data-bbox="225 750 791 824">Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications: N/A</p> <p data-bbox="225 846 595 920">Rural Needs Implications: N/A</p>
5.0	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	<p data-bbox="225 1055 708 1088">It is recommended that Members:</p> <p data-bbox="225 1126 1385 1200"><b>5.1 SOLACE NI report on Strategic Funding Alignment - Mapping of Investment Fund Opportunities in Northern Ireland</b></p> <p data-bbox="225 1238 1394 1312"><b>5.1.1 Endorse</b> the Report and Investment Mapping Tool appended to this report, produced by Ekosgen.</p> <p data-bbox="225 1350 1385 1458"><b>5.1.2 Agree</b> that officers use this report and the Investment Mapping Tool as a 'live' tool which should be updated as may be required to guide and inform the approach to funding opportunities.</p> <p data-bbox="225 1496 1394 1682"><b>5.1.3 Agree</b> that officers consider the establishment of a process to continuously review and update the investment mapping tool, investment/funding opportunities and approved/committed projects internally and also across local government. Consideration should be given to the resource implications of introducing and maintaining this process.</p> <p data-bbox="225 1720 1394 1827"><b>5.1.4 Agree</b> to share the final report as appropriate, with relevant partner organisations eg, Community Planning Partnerships, City and Growth Deal Board's etc.</p> <p data-bbox="225 1865 1321 1939"><b>5.1.5 Agree</b> that Council pay an equal share of costs to SOLACE NI to fund development of the report, ie, £1,310.</p>

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
	<p><b>Appendix 1</b> – Northern Ireland Investment Fund Mapping</p> <p><b>Appendix 2</b> – Investment Mapping Tool</p> <p><b>Appendix 3</b> – Investment Mapping Tool Guidance</p>