AGENDA ITEM 9.

Committee:	Strategic Growth Partnership
Date:	24 May 2018
Agenda Item:	UNESCO Learning Region
Officer presenting:	Director of Business and Culture.

1   Purpose of Report/Recommendations

1.1   To update members on progress made by the Education & Skills Delivery Partnership on the application process to become a UNESCO Learning Region.

2   Background

2.1   The UNESCO GLOBAL NETWORK OF LEARNING CITIES (GNLC) is an international policy-oriented network providing inspiration, know-how and the sharing of best practice. Learning Cities are a crucial driver in the achievement of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was approved in 2015 and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a number of related targets to be met by 2030. The Network supports the achievement of all seventeen SDGs, in particular;

2.2   "SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", and:

2.3   "SDG 11: 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."

2.4   Promoting lifelong learning for the sustainable development of cities is therefore fundamental to achieving all of the SDGs.

2.5 The UNESCO GNLC supports and improves the practice of lifelong learning in the world's cities by promoting policy dialogue and peer learning among Member Cities; forging links; fostering partnerships; providing capacity development; and developing instruments to encourage and recognise progress made in building Learning Cities. There are 200 Learning Cities from 40 countries including Cork, Limerick, Bristol and Swansea.

2.6 In September '17 representatives from the Education & Skills Outcome Delivery Partnership attended the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities Conference in Cork. The event clearly outlined the benefits of becoming a Learning City and the main challenges of establishing a governance structure and a shared vision to take the initiative forward. Following attendance at this conference it was agreed that a workshop should be hosted locally on 26th January, 2018 to enable key stakeholders from the City and District to gain a better understanding of what building a Learning City involves and to explore if this is an accolade to pursue.

3   Key Issues

3.1 Further to the workshop held on 26th January to explore the benefits of becoming a Learning City and Region there was unanimous collective support from those present to progress with an application. As a follow up to the workshop a report was issued by the Facilitator (attached as appendix i) outlining a number of immediate actions including the development of a Learning Cities leadership and governance model, the establishment of a working group and the identification of resources to deliver a number of short term tasks. On the recommendations emerging from the report, which were discussed at a meeting of the Education and Skills Delivery Partnership on 26th February, it was agreed that collaboratively Council, NWRC & UU would take the lead on driving this initiative forward. The recruitment of a Learning Cities Co-ordinator was identified as the next stage.

3.2 It was also discussed that within the application to UNESCO consideration would be given to a North West Learning Region, something the Learning Cities Co-ordinator will drive forward. This provides a greater opportunity to build upon the recently announced new agreement in education, training and innovation for the North West City region with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between education sector providers on both sides of the border.

4   Recommendations

4.1   It is recommended that the Partnership note the work of the Education & Skills Delivery Partnership and the progress on the application process to become a UNESCO Learning Region.

4.2   The Partnership are also advised that a further update on the progress of this Outcome Delivery Partnership be provided at the next Partnership meeting.

Background Papers

Appendix I - UNESCO Learning Cities Workshop January '18 - Final Report