

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 8th September, 2021

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Aldermen Dorrian and Kingston; and
Councillors Beattie, Brooks, Donnelly, Ferguson,
Harvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Long, Lyons, Maskey,
McLaughlin, McMullan, O'Hara, Spratt and Whyte.

In attendance: Mr. A. Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;
Ms. E. Henry, Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Gormley.

Minutes

The decisions of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority, for the Committee and the minutes of the meeting of 11th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Donnelly declared an interest in respect of item 6b – ESF Update and Proposed Match Funding Approach, on the basis that he was employed by the Upper Springfield Development Trust, and left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

Councillors Brooks, Hussey, Maskey, McMullan, Murphy and O'Hara declared an interest in respect of item 5d – Correspondence referred from the Planning Committee – Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR) Project, on the basis that they were all Members of the Planning Committee which had referred the invitation to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee due to PPR being objectors to a current planning application within the former Mackies Factory site, and therefore would not participate in a site visit. As the report was presented for noting only, the Members were not, therefore, required to leave the meeting.

Correspondence - Sunday Opening Hours

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy reminded the Committee that, following its meeting on 9th June, the Chief Executive had exercised her delegated authority to approve the request from city business organisations to extend the current approach to Sunday opening for large retailers until 5th September, 2021.

He referred to the decision of Council, at its meeting on 1st July, where it had been agreed that the minute of the meeting of 9th June, under the heading "Sunday Opening Hours" was amended to provide "That the current extended Sunday trading hours are not brought back to the Committee for further extension beyond 5th September, 2021 and, that the Council acknowledges the full range of challenges facing retail in the city, write to The Executive Office requesting an urgent meeting of the Hight Streets Task Force".

He informed the Members that Democratic Services had, subsequently, written to the Junior Ministers who convene the Task Force and that a response had been received from the Department for Communities on their behalf, indicating that it was content to add the issue to the agenda for the Task Force's next plenary meeting, once a date for it had been confirmed.

The Strategic Director also drew the Member's attention to correspondence which had been received from the Belfast Chamber in relation to this matter, which requested that the Council reconsiders its previous decision not to extend its permissions for early Sunday trading hours by larger retailers.

The Committee noted the correspondence.

Matters Referred Back from Council

Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review

The Director of Economic Development reminded the Members that, at its meeting on 1st September, the Council agreed that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the decision of the Chief Executive, taken under delegated authority for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the minute of the meeting of the Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th June, 2021, under the heading "Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review", which had been called-in, be referred back to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for further consideration.

He directed the Members to the legal opinion of Counsel, which had been sought by the City Solicitor in accordance with Standing Order 47(c)(5), and reported that an equality impact assessment was underway and an update on that assessment would be presented to the Committee at its meeting in October.

The Committee noted the report.

Presentations

Belfast Rapid Transit 2 - Consultation on Route Options

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. C. Robinson, Belfast Rapid Transit, Phase 2 (BRT2) Programme Manager, and Mr. M. Fox, BRT2 Senior Project Engineer, from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to the meeting.

Mr. Fox thanked the Committee for inviting representation from DfI to the meeting to discuss the Public Consultation for the BRT2 Programme.

He reported that the upcoming milestone in delivering the programme was to develop an outline business case in order to demonstrate if it would deliver value for money. He stated that identifying a preferred route for the system was the next step and a public and stakeholder consultation was required as part of that process. He outlined the process undertaken to arrive at a short list of routes for consideration, and he explained the rationale as to why particular options passed the long list assessment and others did not.

He highlighted that consideration had been given to how the services would route through the city centre and that the assessment had concluded that the options for a potential Antrim Road route and a Shore Road route could be taken forward to service north Belfast. He added that a number of options had also been considered to service south Belfast and that the connection to Ormeau Road and the connection to Ravenhill Road were the two options that had passed the long list assessment.

He pointed out to the Members that the proposal to extend the Glider network included an extension of the G2 service to link with Belfast City Hospital and Queen's University, and that only one option had passed the long list assessment, a clockwise route from Dublin Road, to facilitate access to Queen's University via University Road, connecting to Belfast City Hospital on Lisburn Road, by way of Elmwood Avenue.

He referred to the more detailed criteria which had been used to conduct a short list assessment, such as catchment analysis to identify measures of social deprivation in the area, key attractors and levels of car ownership in the area.

He reported that the short list assessment had further discounted a number of options, including Crumlin Road and Ravenhill Road and that, on completion of the shortlisting process, three options had been identified for public consultation and engagement, to link north and south Belfast:

1. O'Neill Road via Antrim Road to Cairnshill;
2. Longwood Road via Shore Road to Cairnshill; and
3. O'Neill Road via Shore Road to Cairnshill.

He stated that the public consultation period was from 26th July to 4th October, and that a virtual approach had been undertaken, to engage as widely as possible, by developing a bespoke digital platform containing all of the public consultation material, with a facility to leave feedback. A freephone voicemail number had also been created as an alternative, where comments could be made, questions asked, and hard copy information material could be requested.

He further added that the public consultation was being promoted on social media platforms and in the local press and that a number of engagement events and webinars would be held during the consultation period.

Following a number of questions from the Members, Mr. Robinson stated that the consultation was focussed on the corridors and that, once a route had been identified, the project would move to the detailed design phase, following which a more comprehensive consultation would be carried out with the people who live and work along the route. He also addressed concerns with regard to Glengormley. He stated that, logistically and geographically, it posed a huge challenge and that it was not considered a viable option for a Glider.

He further added that, with regard to concerns around the city centre, a meeting had been scheduled between DfI, Council officers and Bolder Vision consultants to try to achieve a balance between accessibility and the look and feel of the city centre and that it would remain as part of the overall consultation process.

Following further discussion, the Committee thanked Mr. Robinson and Mr. Fox for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

The Director of City and Regeneration Development drew the Members attention to the associated report and the proposed mechanism for providing the Council's response to the public consultation. She pointed out that, given the timeframes of the BRT2 Public Consultation, it was proposed the Council consultation response would be brought to the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum prior to submission on 4th October and that the consultation response would be submitted, subject to Committee approval on 13th October and Council ratification on 1st November.

The Committee agreed to:

- Note the information provided within the presentation and associated report on the emerging preferred routes for Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2;
- Note the timelines of the ongoing BRT2 Public Consultation; and
- Note the Council's proposed mechanism for providing the Councils response to the Public Consultation.

Renewed Ambition Programme Task Force

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. J. O'Neill, Chair of Renewed Ambition and Chief Executive of Belfast Harbour, Mr. J. McDonald, Managing Director of GRAHAM

Investment Projects, Mr. D. Mitchell, Property Director at Causeway Asset Management, and Ms. A. Feeney, Partner, KPMG, to the meeting.

Mr. J. O'Neill thanked the Committee for inviting the Renewed Ambition Task Force to the meeting. He outlined the range of organisations who were involved in the Programme who had a shared interest in the development and promotion of the city to generate investment.

He reported that the programme agenda had been structured upon the following five pillars:

- Programme and Content;
- Advocacy and Engagement;
- Media and Communications;
- Research; and
- Repository.

He pointed out to Members that 14 key events had taken place, both physical and virtual, which focussed on housing regeneration, waterfront regeneration, city centre living and net zero city, with both internal and external stakeholders.

He referred to two pieces of research which had been commissioned, one with regard to taking stock of what had been achieved by investments in the city over the past five years and the other with opportunities for further investment.

Ms. Feeny reported that the power of the collaboration had facilitated a joined up and balanced perspective to strategic investment related matters which impact the city, for example, the proposal to set up an independent infrastructure commission for Northern Ireland, to help drive a long term infrastructure strategy, and the Northern Ireland Water Consultation. She added that it had facilitated investment into research to develop collateral used to support engagement with government departments and help build investor confidence on a global stage, through the public sector having a more meaningful and better understanding of the challenges the private sector faced.

Mr. O'Neill referred to high growth sector led regeneration, including Belfast Harbour Film Studios, Titanic Quarter Film Studios and Innovation City Belfast, establishing Belfast as a globally significant destination for innovation and investment.

Mr. Mitchell highlighted that Merchant Square and Chichester House represented recent success in attracting investment into Belfast through office led regeneration and how the developments were important in attracting organisations to the city that, in turn, created graduate and apprenticeship opportunities and benefited associated service industries.

Mr. O'Neill outlined how housing led regeneration contributed to the Belfast Agenda's ambition to attract 66,000 new residents to the city by 2035 and he highlighted the wide range of positive impacts and how it would contribute to keeping Belfast globally competitive.

Following a number of comments by the Members, Mr. O'Neill assured the Committee that the public sector had equal weighting within the programme, and at no point had any private sector representatives made propositions for absolute profit. He added that the Renewed Ambition Programme employed a holistic approach to ensure social value.

Following discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development drew the Members' attention to the following report which had been published alongside the presentation, which outlined the Public-Private Partnership Programme to date:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to:

- Update Members on the Public- Private Partnership Programme to date
- Seek approval to extend the Council's involvement in the Partnership Programme and contribution as part of a wider public-private approach

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Note the presentation to this Committee from representatives from the Renewed Ambition Partnership Taskforce
- Note the update on the programme of work which is being delivered via a public private sector partnership, aimed at delivering regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and the proposals as set out below in relation to the 2022 Programme.
- Approve the Council contribution on basis as set out below as part of the wider public private partnership investment towards the delivery of the Programme

3.0 Main report

As Members will recall, at the meeting of the City Growth & Regeneration Committee on 9th June 2021, an update was provided on a public-private partnership programme of work underpinning regeneration, development and infrastructure activities in the city. As highlighted in that 'Renewed Ambition' report, the partnership is delivering a programme of work aimed at ensuring Belfast is positioned to continue to attract investment and deliver on inclusive growth. The partnership is supported by public, private and key anchor institution partners including BCC and other BRCD partner Councils, Invest NI, Belfast Harbour, Translink, Housing

Association representation, the local development community and representatives from key city infrastructure, regeneration and development projects.

The programme of work is delivering activity across a number of strands aligned to securing investment and regeneration for the Belfast region. A key objective is to build awareness of the Belfast investment proposition aimed at attracting investment and creating employment opportunities and facilitate investor engagement to support the delivery of regeneration projects across the City, with a focus on creating the economic and social infrastructure/assets we need for inclusive sustainable growth.

Members had agreed that representatives from the Renewed Ambition Taskforce attend a future Committee meeting to update on activity and priority issues and these representatives will be attendance at this Committee.

3.3 Context

Post-pandemic the City continues to face a range of economic, social and environmental challenges. At a city level 'Belfast: Our Recovery' identifies areas of focus to drive city recovery in the short term, laying the foundations for sustained recovery, while supporting our longer term ambitions as outlined in the Belfast Agenda, including supporting 46,000 additional jobs and our city being home to an additional 66,000 people. The City Recovery Framework also supports the delivery of our Corporate Plan and other city plans and strategies - albeit through the lens of these new challenges. Priority areas include building business resilience, digital innovation; investing in jobs-led growth within key sectors and working in collaboration with city partners to drive city regeneration and development, while maximising the impact of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and partnerships including the Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor, Innovation City Belfast and Belfast Climate Commission.

The priorities within the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) together with the Future City Programme and city-wide regeneration and investment priorities remain critical to supporting city recovery and delivering physical and inclusive development in the city. From a Community Planning Partnership perspective, the City Development Board has identified housing-led regeneration; improving connectivity and active travel; supporting city-wide development and regeneration and delivering the Future City Centre programme as key priorities. Various Renewed Ambition partners are also represented on the City Development Board, underpinning the importance of a collaborative approach to city development.

Through our Inclusive Growth Framework, we are committed to working with others including the private sector, anchor institutions, community and voluntary sector and our wider public sector partners to create an inclusive city. The physical and built environment is part of an overall enabling framework to deliver on this.

Enhanced connectivity, in terms of connecting people physically as well as socially and economically to opportunities, will be key to supporting city recovery. This will require having fit for purpose physical and digital infrastructure in place. Major infrastructure projects, such as the Belfast Transport Hub and BRT Phase 2, are at differing stages of the development process and will improve connectivity at a city and regional level. The Bolder Vision Connectivity Study also seeks to address connectivity and the interdependencies with infrastructure and development /regeneration proposals. Critically, collaborative working across a number of city stakeholders and partners on such projects is needed to improve connectivity across the city and with communities.

Members will also be aware of the 'Reset for Growth' report that the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission has recently produced. Delivering a house building programme at scale, creating a sustainable, connected and animated city centre, focusing on making Belfast a globally significant innovation hub in key sectors and building strong global co-operation frameworks were identified as focussed action areas to address to generate inclusive economic growth in Belfast. Specifically, the Commission highlighted the need for collaborative working with partners, building strategic networks and relationships and developing viable investment propositions to bring to market as being critical to positioning the city globally and attracting investment.

Working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure we create the right environment and have the right physical, digital and social infrastructure in place, underpinned by our ability to attract investment, is critical to the creation of jobs and delivering sustained, inclusive growth across the city.

In terms of the journey that the partnership has taken, Members may recall that in 2016 a public private sector partnership was established to promote Belfast in the context of development and regeneration that provides for sustainable, inclusive growth. This also involved attendance at real estate and investment events, which in the

past included MIPIM. More recently this partnership approach has evolved to having a wider focus, anchored in the desire to ensuring inclusive economic growth as a key objective of regeneration, development and investment in the region. This approach is one lever within a wider 'Position the City to Compete' proposition which seeks to build on the city's reputation as a unique destination for investment, tourism, development and supporting inclusive economic growth.

Outlined below are some of the programme objectives and activities although representatives of the Taskforce will be in attendance at Committee with further detail.

Position Belfast's attractiveness to support delivery of regeneration projects across the city and create employment opportunities to provide for sustainable, inclusive growth:

To date the programme has delivered an extensive programme of events, webinars and podcasts aimed at the regeneration, real estate and investment community. This provided an opportunity to highlight Belfast's key strengths and investment proposition on a variety of topics including Housing Led Regeneration, Reimagining our City Centre, Net Zero City, Waterfront Renewal, Sustainable Development & Construction, Tourism and Cultural Regeneration and Investment. In addition, major regeneration projects and housing opportunities were showcased to potential investors and end users to assist city partners to bring forward and maximise their regeneration potential. Upcoming events include a Belfast focused event on 'City Centre Living' at Real Estate Live which will showcase our ambitions to accelerate city centre living and bring forward significant city centre residential opportunities across all housing tenures.

A suite of marketing tools has been developed to facilitate the sharing of positive messaging around Belfast's investment proposition. This has included the development of a regular newsletter, marketing collateral and the delivery of a communications strategy, with Belfast featured in international, national and regional publications.

Engage with key stakeholders to highlight the role real estate investment plays in strengthening the Belfast region's resilience and competitiveness, and delivering inclusive economic growth:

Delivering Belfast's ambitions relies on strong collaborative working, for e.g with the Department for International Trade (DIT), Invest NI and their extensive networks. Invest NI are one of the RAP partners and have provided access to their global teams to highlight investment opportunities in the

Belfast City region. By way of example, through continued engagement with DIT, Belfast was invited to present (virtually) at the November 2020 'Downing Street – Investing in Cities' event. An Engagement and Advocacy programme is also continuing using local, national and international contacts of the RAP partners to showcase and pitch the city region for investment.

Continue to foster a strong public-private partnership approach, and align with city recovery plans, Belfast Region City Deal, the Reset for Growth ambitions, and emerging city focus on being an innovative/digital, green and resilient city:

The programme is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institution partners which ensures a collaborative approach to delivering our shared ambitions in terms of key regeneration priorities and recovery plans. It also provides an important forum for Council to engage with key stakeholders on city priorities for e.g Smart Belfast, BRCD, Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor and Bolder Vision.

Future approach

The Renewed Ambition Taskforce are keen to ensure that we continue to take a collaborative public /private approach to positioning Belfast globally for investment and regeneration and wish to extend the programme into the 2022 calendar year.

From the Council's perspective it is felt this partnership approach offers a strong foundation to build on the work to date and presents an ongoing opportunity for alignment with other strategic aims of the Council. For the Council, the key aims and objectives of being part of the partnership and contributing to the programme include:

- Securing longer term institutional investors to support agreed regeneration plans of the Council and other partners.
- Securing investment to deliver housing development at scale as set out in the growth ambitions of the Belfast Agenda and the 'Reset for Growth' report
- Secure investment in the built environment on a city-wide basis to facilitate opportunities for jobs and business, communities and providing physical and social infrastructure to deliver on inclusive economic growth
- Investment in waterfront regeneration and key infrastructure, connectivity and innovation related projects
- Investment to help address dereliction and support the re-use and preservation of heritage assets

- Investment in tourism and cultural products to underpin regeneration priorities
- Investment in clean tech, environmental and sustainability initiatives

Critically, these objectives form part of an overall Belfast proposition for economic growth and investment. Having the right physical, digital and social infrastructure in place is essential for the creation of jobs and delivery of sustained, inclusive growth.

The 2022 programme is currently under development and is to include focused stakeholder, investor and media engagement; showcase events; advocacy and research aligned to the real estate investment market and with a very clear focus on securing investment to deliver on city priorities. This public private partnership programme will continue to align to and complement other BCC led activities within the context of 'Positioning the City to Compete' and delivering a 'Global Future' - a key action area from the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission. This includes work being undertaken by Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, International Relations, the SMART team and partnerships including Innovation City Belfast, Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor and BRCD. In addition, the need to continue to work in collaboration with international partners, including Department for International Trade (DIT) and Invest NI to promote investment opportunities in Belfast will be a critical component.

All five BRCD partner Councils have invested in RAP and it has been an important forum to showcase the real estate investment potential for the wider Belfast City Region and forthcoming BRCD projects. BRCD, which seeks to deliver a 10-year programme to increase GVA by £470m and creating up to 20,000 new and better jobs across the Belfast City Region, is expected to commence its delivery phase across 6 Council areas from Autumn 2021. Within Belfast, it will support the delivery of Belfast Destination Hub, active travel through a new cycle & pedestrian bridge, a Smart District as well as innovative University-led centres of excellence in life & health sciences, data analytics and virtual production. Whilst c.£150m is expected by way of direct capital contributions from the private sector to these projects, there are opportunities and a requirement for a further £1bn of private sector investment in order to deliver the benefits through jobs and productivity set out within the business cases.

The Council has a lead role to play in delivering on this shared agenda. Supporting the collaborative partnership approach taken by the Renewed Ambition Programme to showcasing Belfast, locally and globally, to the real estate investment, development and occupier market is critical, as we seek to attract the right investment into the city to drive the delivery of key regeneration projects, including residential, commercial and forthcoming BRCD projects, to provide for sustainable inclusive growth in the city.

In terms of future events, due to the on-going uncertainty from the health pandemic, a hybrid approach to showcase events is currently being explored by the partnership. This may potentially include physical attendance at investment showcase events and participation in webinar forums, though partners including UKREiif, MIPIM, Real Estate Live and Estates Gazette. However, it is still unclear at this stage how some of these events might be held and the extent of participation by all potential attendees.

UKREiif, the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum, is currently proposed to take place in Leeds in May 2022 and seeks to connect investors, developers, the public sector, funders and occupiers to drive inward investment to unlock inclusive economic growth through an exhibition and forum focusing on the following themes - the UK's Net Zero Target, Social Value and Inclusive Growth, the Future of Real Estate and Building Better Communities. Discussions are ongoing via the Renewed Ambition Taskforce with the event organisers to maximise Belfast brand awareness and explore the potential of a Belfast presence at the UKREiif Forum.

MIPIM, the world's leading real estate market event, is planned to return in March 2022 following the cancellation of the March 2020 event due to Covid-19. In previous years Council had participated as part of a 'Team Belfast' delegation to MIPIM of over 100 delegates from private and public-sector organisations and included a dedicated Belfast stand. The Renewed Ambition partners are, however, currently in discussions with event organisers, other UK and European Cities and DIT to understand plans for March 2022 and explore potential alternative formats to the dedicated stand approach.

Discussions are also ongoing with key stakeholders including INI and DIT to leverage their national and international networks to facilitate focused investor engagement events aligned to specific city priorities and aimed at delivering regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast.

3.12 Finance & Resource Implications

Given the make-up of the partnership across a number of organisations, the funding to deliver the programme comes from a number of parties, with external funding forming the majority of the overall budget.

Within the CGR Committee Plan (2021 – 2022) as agreed in June 2021, the Renewed Ambition Programme was included as a key programme of work to support inclusive economic recovery. A Council investment of £80,000 is proposed to contribute to this overall public and private sector partnership budget to extend the programme into the 2022 calendar year. This is a similar contribution made by Council in previous years, but will also be subject to a significant matched funding package from the other partners, as was the case in previous years where the majority of the funding came from external partners. Eighty per cent of funding for the current programme came from the wider private and public partners and it is envisaged that external funding will again form the majority of the overall budget for the 2022 programme. The Council's contribution will be met from within the City Regeneration and Development existing departmental budget for '21/22.

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None associated with this report.”

The Committee agreed to:

- Note the update on the programme of work which was being delivered via a public private sector partnership, aimed at delivering regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and the proposals as set out in relation to the 2022 Programme; and
- Approve the Council contribution of £80,000 as part of the wider public private partnership investment towards the delivery of the Programme.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives from the Renewed Ambition Task Force for their presentation, and they retired from the meeting.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following 1 item was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Financial Reporting - Quarter 1 2021/22

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy reminded the Members that, at its meeting on 19th March, 2021, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee adopted the recommendation to extend the five step finance strategy, which had been adopted in 2020/21 into 2021/22, subject to quarterly review.

He provided the Committee with an overview of the quarter one financial position and year-end forecast.

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

Regenerating Places & Improving Infrastructure

A Bolder Vision Update

Members of the Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1

- **To update Members on the pre-engagement activity that will shape the A Bolder Vision public consultation document, including the workshop held with Belfast elected representatives on 23 August**
- **To update on the planned 12-week public consultation starting on 27 September until 20 December 2021 and timeframe for completion of the Vision**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note;

- **The update on the Connectivity Study: A Bolder Vision, including the feedback from the elected**

representatives' workshop on the 23rd August, and planned Public Consultation in the autumn.

3.0 Main report

3.1 A Bolder Vision for Belfast involves a fundamental rethink of how streets and places are used to make them attractive, inclusive, accessible, healthy, and vibrant places. As reported previously Phase 1 of the City Centre Connectivity Study, A Bolder Vision (ABV), was agreed by Council and endorsed by the DfC and DfI Ministers and is underpinned by four Visioning Principles that will drive and shape the city centre:

- **Creating a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment that promotes well-being for all, inclusive growth and innovation;**
- **Fundamentally changing the centre of Belfast to prioritise integrated walking, cycling and public transport and end the dominance of the car;**
- **Providing lively, safe, and green streets linking inclusive shared spaces to promote resilience and enhance our built heritage;**
- **Removing severance and barriers to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities to improve access for all.**

3.2 As reported to this Committee on 11 August 2021, Phase 2 of the City Centre Connectivity Study will provide scenarios and projects to inform the future of the city centre by shaping large infrastructure projects and developing supporting or enabling schemes and initiatives. To support the development of these scenarios, five workshops took place in June with a range of community, voluntary, statutory and private sector stakeholders as part of a co-design process. This included a cross-sector Visioning Workshop on 25 June that included Vienna's former Vice Mayor who successfully implemented a transformation agenda comprised of numerous innovative, inclusive projects, as a keynote speaker. The following week four thematic workshops took place covering Community, Heritage & Culture; Infrastructure, Energy and Environment; Economic Recovery, Development & Tourism, and Connectivity (Transport and Digital).

3.3 Follow up meetings have taken place with IMTAC, the Transport Hub and within Council Departments. A part of the governance structure, an Oversight Group comprised on the BCC Chief Executive and the DfI and DfC Permanent Secretaries met in early September. This is a critical partnership that helps align the Vision across local and

central government, including across critical policy, strategy, funding opportunities and capital investment. This early engagement with a range of stakeholders provided a chance to explore opportunities and challenges and consider interventions to support positive transformation of the city centre.

- 3.4 As a continuation of the co-design process, a workshop with Belfast elected representatives including Councillors, MLAs and MPs took place on the 23rd August and provided an opportunity to feed into the emerging scenarios. Representatives were asked to consider how to spatially locate potential Bolder Vision interventions to support the positive transformation and identify potential outcomes for communities of Belfast, both in and outside of the city centre while still ensuring that the accessibility and servicing of the city centre. Representatives were presented with a number of areas of opportunity such as the potential of a city civic spine, inner ring road, a network of streets linking destinations in the context of large infrastructure projects for the city centre, such as BRT2, Belfast Streets Ahead and public realm catalyst projects being delivered through Section 76. This included discussion around the prioritisation of specific streets and access nodes for specific uses, such as public transportation network, walking and cycling and vehicular requirements as opposed to continuing to balance all of the needs within all of the streets.
- 3.5 Through facilitated break out rooms, elected representatives were able to give detailed feedback on the proposals and offer suggestions and concerns. The workshop captured a range of insights and suggestions, both strategic and granular.
- 3.6 The key issues raised during the engagement sessions included:
- Importance of improving connectivity to surrounding communities, particularly in the north of the city, Sailortown and Titanic Quarter and to ensure the realisation of benefits to communities through improved connectivity;
 - Remove the feeling of severance of communities from city centre and create a sense of arrival using heritage buildings and spaces;
 - Consideration of the needs of different users, including elderly, families, those with disabilities, students, visitors, and professionals;
 - How to future-proof the land and keep the essence of Belfast;

- Widened pavements should be kept clear to ensure accessibility is enhanced and street clutter kept to minimal, especially shops placing signs etc;
- Questions around the impact of York Street Interchange, impact on movement and the potential to something better with the funding;
- Need to balance uses and need for those living, working and visiting the city centre;
- Concerns about the timeframes for delivery and need to see short, medium and longer term changes;
- Inner ring road is critical to travel and there is concern of displacement and congestion caused by road closures;
- Concern that cars will be displaced into neighbourhoods and need to establish residents' parking schemes;
- BRT could be complemented though micro-mobility or shuttles and in Multistorey Car Parks to support active travel choices;
- Recognition that the city centre needs to change to accommodate more city centre living, families, green spaces, diverse uses and a better night-time economy to drive footfall and keep people in the city;
- The changes must be radical to make the transformation needed for the future;
- The proposed two-way public transport system for BRT & Metro on Donegall St & Royal is a retro-grade approach in terms of the city centre public realm environment – how can we plan this better?
- Learn lessons from COVID and support businesses spilling out onto streets or bring in more public realm;
- Consider the different levers that could help make the changes, such as congestion charge, Clean Air Zones, residents' parking or increased opportunities for modal change

Public Consultation, autumn 2021

- 3.7 The contribution from the elected representatives will be incorporated into the scenarios and build on the feedback received during the previous co-design sessions. Additionally, follow up meetings will be held throughout the consultation process.
- 3.8 The public consultation document will include scenarios for the future of the city centre, based on emerging infrastructure projects and the future city centre user and supported by short, medium and long term projects. Aligned to the scenarios, a high-level, qualitative Multi-Criteria Analysis will prioritise each option against a set of criteria is

being developed that will outline the benefits of the interventions that will inform the Business Case, including social, economic and environmental benefits. This approach will allow for an informed debate balancing the views and requirements of all of our city stakeholders and users to provide a holistic agreement for the landscape of the future city centre that will test approaches and/or enable larger schemes to come forward and shape the transformational changes required to create a connected and animated city core for an inclusive and modern Belfast. This is particularly critical at the minute to ensure that we get our planned capital works right to support our future ambitions.

- 3.9 The 12-week public consultation will commence on 27 September 2021 and run until 20 December and will be hosted on Council's Engagement HQ site. Engagement events will mainly take place online through a virtual consultation room that will be available 24/7 and will be communicated via Council, DfC and DfI communications channels as well as through Council's own extensive networks that reach across sectors and into communities. During this period, Officers will remain flexible and if opportunities emerge for in person engagement sessions, then these will be incorporated into the consultation plan.
- 3.10 To ensure the process is inclusive, there has been engagement with IMTAC on the public consultation process and Officers will continue to work with them and through their People, Streets and Places group who will help advise on engagement methods.
- 3.11 After the consultation is completed, the responses will be collated in a Public Consultation Report and Summary Recommendations that will be brought back to Committee. The final Monitoring Strategy and ABV Strategy Delivery Plan is due to complete by May 2022.
- 3.12 Finance & Resource Implications
- None associated with this report.
- 3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
- None associated with this report, however, an EQIA Screening will be carried out on the emerging work."

The Committee noted the update on the Connectivity Study: A Bolder Vision, including the feedback from the elected representatives' workshop which had been held on 23rd August and the planned Public Consultation in the autumn.

Dfl Autumn Report

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised the Committee that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had requested permission to present its Autumn Infrastructure Report to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 23rd October.

She pointed out to the Committee that, at its meeting in June, DfI had presented its Spring Update, and reminded the Members of the discussion and actions agreed on the following issues which had been raised with DfI at the aforementioned meeting:

- York Street Interchange Independent Assurance Review;
- Safe Cycle Network;
- Implementation of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) policy and integration;
- 20mph zones in the city centre;
- Pedestrianisation of the city centre; and
- Car Park Strategy.

The Director reported that officers were drafting the specification and Terms of Reference of the Car Parking Strategy and that it would be proposed that work would commence following the completion of the Bolder Vision for Belfast Public Consultation, due to the close relationship between the two pieces of work, and the importance of the Bolder Vision for Belfast in setting the strategic context or the future provision of infrastructure within the city centre, the findings of which would be used to inform the next stages of the Car Parking Strategy.

She outlined the timelines for the Bolder Vision for Belfast public consultation and the Car Parking Strategy review and informed the Members that, the Bolder Vision for Belfast document would be finalised between January and April, 2022.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to:

- to receive the DfI Autumn Report Update to the Special Meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 23rd October 2021;
- note the issues previously discussed at the presentation of the Spring Report;
- note the update on the Car Parking Strategy Action Plan and proposed timelines for the review of the Car Parking Strategy; and
- request an update from DfI, in relation to the Belfast Metropolitan Transport System in advance of the October Special CG&R Committee meeting.

DfC Revitalisation Programme Update

The Members of the Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To update Committee on the ongoing DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme including the provision of covered cycle stands under the DfI Sustainable and Active funded element of the programme.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Note the Extension of Time is now approved for the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and the status summary provided;
- Agree to the proposed covered cycle stand locations as identified within this report.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

The CG&R Committee have received regular updates and provided approvals relating to the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and it was agreed at the Committee Meeting of the 12th May that an extension of time would be sought from DfC to March 2022. This extension of time is required due to delays in the required statutory approvals process, compounded by an escalation in cost and demand on key materials and contractor provision.

3.2 The Committee also received an update on the status of the physical projects aligned with the ‘Re-Imaging the public Realm’, agreed to the funding allocation under the DfI Sustainable & Active Travel Fund for the E-cargo bike pilot, the Active/Sustainable Travel Hubs and expansion of the Belfast Bike network. Members were also updated on the progress of the covered cycle stands with further details to be provided to a future meeting of this Committee

3.3 Main Report

In relation to the request for the extension of time DfC have now approved and provided the Letter of Variance to provide an extension of time to the programme until March 2022.

While this extension of time allows until March 2022 officers, along with our key delivery partners, are committed to have the majority of projects delivered by December 2021. The majority of the Statutory Approvals are now in place and procurement has completed on the majority of the projects minimising the risk of overrun on a number of projects including the Linen Quarter parklets and Brunswick St Hub; the Union St and Warehouse Lane projects; the e-cargo bike pilot; the Belfast bike expansion; and the Business Cluster and Community Grant scheme.

- 3.4 The Cathedral Gardens Active Travel Hub and the Castle Place kiosk are currently in planning and works will commence pending the outcome of the decision, and DfI are scheduled to commence works on the Castle Place footpath extension and cycle lane provision in September 2021 pending final approval of the business plan.

Covered Cycle Stands

- 3.5 At the May CG&R Committee meeting it was agreed that £100k would be allocated from the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme for the provision of covered cycle stands, and members were updated that Sustrans was appointed to develop a strategic approach of identifying well-planned cycle parking across the city.
- 3.6 The report established a set of criteria for assessing cycle parking across the city, including existing provision of cycle infrastructure in the area, access to the DfI Cycle Network, suitable land availability, safe access and egress, revenue implications/operating models and types of units. Given the time constraints of the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme further criteria was added in terms of deliverability, focusing on the use of Council assets to ensure delivery within the funding period.
- 3.7 Sustrans also recommended several types of cycle parking for consideration appropriate to the shortlisted locations and this information formed the specification for the procurement process for the stands. Following a competitive procurement competition, a contractor has been appointed to deliver the following types of covered cycle stand (Suburban type as illustrated in Appendix 1) and will proceed with manufacturing and installation pending Committee approval of the proposed locations, and finalisation of discussions with the 3rd party operators, (i.e. GLL) associated with some of the locations, as outlined in item 3.8 of this report;

1. Urban type for city centre locations – Mono Cycle: a modern modular aluminium shelter; proposed combination of green and solar roof; integrated light unit (LED light powered by solar panel) and perch seating
2. Suburban type for neighbourhoods and parks - Mono Cycle: a modern modular aluminium shelter with green roof

3.8 Based on the above criteria and type of cycle stand the following locations are recommended for approval for installation within this DfC Revitalisation Programme;

Location	Reasons for priority
Gasworks	Council owned, business agglomeration and community proximity, off road and on cycle route, visible, accessible and convenient
St George's	Adjoining Council owned but requiring DfI consent, leisure destination, near cycle route, visible, accessible and convenient
Grosvenor Community Centre	Council owned, leisure destination, on pop-up cycle lane, safe and accessible
Shankill Leisure Centre	Council owned, leisure destination, lack of cycle infrastructure, safe and accessible
Belmont Park	Council owned, leisure destination, off road, visible, safe and accessible
Inverary Community Centre	Council owned, leisure destination, off road, safe and accessible, close to planned greenway
Belfast Zoo	Council owned, leisure destination, off road, safe and accessible
Waterworks	Council owned, leisure destination, off road, safe and accessible
Belvoir Activity Centre	Council owned, leisure destination, off road and on planned greenway, visible, accessible and convenient
Mary Peters Track	Council owned, leisure destination, off

	road, safe and accessible
--	---------------------------

3.9 While the locations above are assessed in terms of the available funding and, critically, deliverability within the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme timeframes as well as the key criteria aligned to cycle infrastructure provision, officers are mindful that there will be demand in other locations. Officers are therefore in discussions with DfI for potential additional funding under the Green & Blue Infrastructure Fund to deliver additional covered cycle stands. As highlighted below however in the resource implications, there is a revenue implication to the Council in terms of maintenance etc, or third party consents required, and this will need to be factored into any future additional provision in a similar manner to the current provision. Provision of £5k has been included to cover any management and maintenance associated with the stands. This revenue provision will be subject to an annual review and, if necessary, further consideration.

3.10 An evaluation of secured cycle stands within the city centre was also undertaken, and given the requirement to have in place a system /personnel resource maintaining the operation of these locations, including membership provision, allocation and monitoring of access fobs, and emergency call-out facilities it was not possible to have the secured cycle provision included within this funding package. To address this officers are also in discussions with DfI for potential funding under the Green & Blue Infrastructure Fund to provide secured cycle locations that would be incorporated within existing publicly available, serviced locations that have the capacity to operate the systems required. These locations could potentially involve a partnership arrangement with for example, Translink and/or Multi-story car park providers. This work is ongoing and a further report will be brought back to this Committee at a future date.

3.11 Additional cycle parking opportunities

Officers have explored other opportunities to enhance cycling provision in that city and as part of the Leisure Transformation Programme there are plans to retrofit covers over the existing cycle parking at four leisure centres: Brook, Lisnasharragh, Andersonstown and Avoneil. This will be taken forward separate from the Revitalisation funding and will be delivered within this financial year.

3.12 Finance & Resource Implications

The capital costs associated within this report will be covered from within the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme via direct delivery by Council. An additional

allowance of £5k has been allocated from the DfC Revitalisation Programme for the maintenance of the covered cycle stands. Revenue implications will be subject to annual review and may require consideration in relation to growth or value for money evaluations.

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Equality of opportunity and good relations, and disability duties screening is complete on the overall programme with mitigating actions agreed and implemented. The screening of the programme is currently undergoing a review and the appropriate actions will be picked up by officers.”

In response to several questions from Members regarding the effectiveness of the proposed covered cycle stands, the Director of City Regeneration and Development informed the Committee that secured cycle stands would be much more expensive to put in place as there would be a resource requirement in that, secured cycle stands required 24-hour access and would therefore require a call-out service. She added that it would not be possible to install secured cycle stands within the budget and timeframe. She further added that Council officers had taken advice and recommendations from Sustrans to identify a fit for purpose model, however, she stated that she would bring a report back to a future meeting of the Committee regarding the potential costs associated with the installation of secured cycle stands.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Hussey,
Seconded by Councillor Dorrian,

That the Committee agrees to the recommendations as set out in the report to:

- Note the Extension of Time for the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and the status summary provided; and
- Agree to the proposed covered cycle stand locations as identified within the report.

On a vote, twelve Members voted for the proposal, with four no-votes and it was declared carried.

Correspondence referred from Planning Committee – Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) Project

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy informed the Committee that correspondence had been received by the Planning Committee from the PPR Project with information relating to the Take back the City coalition, which was seeking the development of a prototype community on the site of the former Mackie’s Factory in west Belfast.

He reported that PPR had invited the Members of the Planning Committee to attend a walkabout at the Mackie's site, in order to assess the site's potential for addressing housing needs and that, given the Planning Committee's potential role in determining any future planning applications in respect of the site, officers were of the view that it would be inappropriate for Members of the Planning Committee to accept the invitation.

He advised the Committee that, at its meeting on 19th August, the Planning Committee agreed to refer the invitation to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for consideration.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor Long,

That the Members of the Committee note the correspondence and agree to accept the invite from PPR to a site visit at the former Mackie's factory site.

Councillors Brooks, Hussey, Maskey, McMullan, Murphy and O'Hara had declared an interest in relation to the item, in that they were all Members of the Planning Committee, and, for that reason, would not partake in a site visit, therefore, they refrained from participating in the decision making.

The remaining Members of the Committee agreed to adopt Councillor Lyons' proposal.

Draft Ten Year Tourism Plan

The Members of the Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2020, it was agreed that a ten-year tourism plan for Belfast would be developed. The purpose of this report is to provide a draft of the proposed plan, *Make Yourself at Home* and seek approval to commence public consultation in October 2021.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report and agree to commence a 12-week consultation period from October 2021.
- Agree to hold a workshop with Members to discuss in detail the priorities set out in the plan.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2020 it was agreed that a new ten-year tourism plan was to be developed. The purpose of this plan is to:

- Deliver on the tourism priorities set out in the *Belfast Agenda* recognising the importance of tourism to *Growing the economy* and *City Development*.
- Align to the ten-year cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*, in order to ensure that tourism development supports cultural development and is based upon an authentic and sustainable Belfast offer.
- Support economic and social recovery in the context of COVID-19 including stabilisation, recovery and growth with the opportunity to build back better.
- Provide strategic context to the Belfast Region City Deal that sets out wider city priorities to ensure Belfast's appeal internationally and ability to attract out of state visitors.

3.2 Tourism Growth Pre Covid-19

In August 2019 Belfast City Council agreed a new ten-year cultural strategy, *A City Imagining 2020-2030*, to drive transformation in the city. For the first time, the scope of this strategy brought together under one compelling vision a number of areas including tourism, culture, heritage, arts, events and festivals. *A City Imagining* (cultural strategy) and *Make Yourself at Home* (tourism plan) should be seen as part of an overall strategic approach with strong alignment and interdependencies.

3.3 *A City Imagining* acknowledges that whilst Belfast has enjoyed relative growth in tourism over recent years that in turn has supported regional development, it is necessary to continue to support sustainable tourism development and

job creation. Belfast's first community plan, the *Belfast Agenda*, also articulates the importance of delivering a culturally vibrant city both for residents and visitors as well as acting as an attractive driver for inward investment. In order to continue to build on the value of out-of-state tourism and welcome more overnight stays in our visitor accommodation it is essential that we collaborate with our tourism sector to evolve, broaden, deepen and expand the tourism offer currently available in Belfast.

- 3.4 Despite significant growth and the success of flagship projects such as Titanic Belfast there is still a gap in scale and maturity of the local industry when compared with other regions. Notably, Northern Ireland lags behind UK regions and Republic of Ireland with respect to tourism as a driver for job growth. However, the positive trajectory in place before Covid-19 had identified tourism growth as both feasible and a necessary part of inclusive economic growth. The challenge of any tourism development plan will be to create a sustainable model that continues to support the growth that is essential for city success and the creation of jobs.
- 3.5 Belfast's tourism and hospitality sectors directly supports 19,300 jobs, one third of the sector in Northern Ireland. Key tourism sectors such as Accommodation & Food Services, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Transportation have been impacted by COVID-19 however if Belfast's recovery from the pandemic is managed then the growth potential remains high. The hospitality sector is an employment-intensive one, supporting a disproportionate number of jobs compared with the average sectoral GVA: jobs ratio. Between 2013 and 2019 employment in Accommodation and Food Services in Belfast increased by 18.2 percent, compared with 8.5 percent growth in the city's total employment.
- 3.6 It was in this context that Tourism NI set the ambitious target of doubling the value of the tourism industry to £2 billion by 2030. A key element of this opportunity further reinforced by ambitions of the Belfast Region City Deal was getting a bigger share of the international visitors coming to the island of Ireland to travel to Belfast and the Belfast region.
- 3.7 Impact of Covid-19
- While the full impact of Covid-19 is as yet unknown what is clear is that recovery will require new and innovative approaches in an increasingly competitive market. As the regional driver, Belfast will be hugely significant to this growth ambition, both in terms of visitor spend and the

creation of new jobs. It is therefore imperative that our city break destination is developed in a strategic way which maximises the economic benefits that can be derived from tourism for local industries, businesses and communities, as well as increasing visitor numbers and spend and improving overall satisfaction levels.

3.8 In advance of the development of the tourism plan, Ernest and Young were commissioned to assess the potential impact of COVID-19 on the city. The report recognises Belfast's role in regional tourism:

- Belfast is an important attractor for international, high value tourists to the region.
- Belfast's share of out of state tourism spend has been significantly higher than the NI-wide share (83% v 72%).
- Spending by tourists in Belfast has outpaced the NI average, growing by 20% year on year compared to 4.5% regionally.
- Belfast has grown at a faster rate than the rest of NI mainly because of its attractiveness in two high value markets – city breaks and business tourism.

3.9 The report also sets out a number of scenarios depending on the length of the pandemic and recovery trajectory. Below is set out a series of recommendations specific to Belfast and need for stabilisation, recovery and longer-term growth. These recommendations have formed the basis for the strategic priorities and actions set out in the draft tourism plan.

3.10 Develop tourism supply in Belfast to foster a sustainable economic model creating jobs and improving local quality of life

1. Bring forward renovations or upgrading of tourism facilities to support the economy and improve the quality of the tourism offer in Belfast.
2. Pursue planned City Deal investments following a dynamic model based on regularly updated visitor numbers and visitor behaviours.
3. Focus on the development of resilient tourism attractions (e.g. mix of outdoor and indoor spaces, online content, attractive to locals) and mitigate the impacts for the most impacted sectors (e.g. business tourism).
4. Launch a wide consultation with key stakeholders and locals regarding the role tourism should play in a city like Belfast (e.g. urban regeneration, housing, sustainability, jobs, social inclusion, international attractiveness).

5. Identify ways for Belfast or specific attractions within the City to be distinguished internationally (e.g. awards, UNESCO, travel guides).

3.11 Developing a ten-year plan

The draft ten-year tourism plan has taken into consideration these initial recommendations alongside the existing commitments outlined in the Cultural Strategy that identified the four areas where Council could make the most difference:

- Increasing the coherency of the Belfast experience
- Supporting quality authentic product
- Developing skills
- Strengthening the city's position through marketing and communications

3.12 The approach

The past two decades have given rise to a number of trends within tourism development. This has included the popularity of approaches such as cultural tourism, green tourism or local tourism. What each of these approaches and associated models have in common is an increasing awareness that sustainable forms of tourism must respect the local context and support the economic, social, environmental and cultural values of a place.

- 3.13 In the context of Belfast, even before COVID-19, this is a complex proposition. The city requires further growth with a clear international agenda and need to continue to attract and grow out of state visitors. The new 10 year tourism plan seeks to set out how this growth can be achieved in a responsible and inclusive way recognising that the city's greatest asset is its people.

- 3.14 The plan sets out a shared vision for tourism in the city and will be supported by 4 strategic themes and three of catalyst projects. The draft strategic themes are:

- Grow Belfast
- Experience Belfast
- Position Belfast
- Sustainable Belfast

- 3.15 Each theme is supported by an evidence-based body of work and research.

3.16 *Strategic theme 1: Grow Belfast* (supported by EY Recovery report)

This theme focuses on the role of tourism in city recovery including the need for stabilisation of the tourism sector and the requirement for further growth in Belfast. This includes:

- Strategic context and evidence-based proposition that Belfast acts as a catalyst for the region.
- Measurement of the attractiveness of the city as a destination and how this plays a key role in maximising the economic impact of each visitor by increasing average length of stay and daily spending levels.
- Priority areas for investment e.g. catalyst projects.
- Introducing social, cultural and environmental measures to better understand and advocate for the true value of responsible tourism growth.

3.17 *Strategic Theme 2: Position Belfast* (supported by a Positioning Review completed by Blue Sail Consulting).

A critical dimension to any tourism development plan is understanding the market and how the brand operates in this space. In order to develop an effective strategy there also needs to be consideration of the brand architecture for the city and the region. The result should be clarity of roles and responsibilities for agencies working in this field including Council's own role and city partners such as Visit Belfast and Tourism NI. The ten year plan sets out a dynamic model for city positioning that strengthens Belfast's role as the gateway to the region in a way that responds to key markets including:

- Business Tourism and sub-sectors within this group.
- Leisure tourism target markets including - geographic considerations and the visitor journey.

3.18 This theme takes forward a new approach that pushes beyond traditional marketing methods towards enabling the people creating the Belfast experience to tell their story. Therefore, the approach is narrative driven and the new plan sets out areas of support on:

- How do we tell Belfast stories? How do we enable people to tell their Belfast story?
- How do we create an emotional connection with visitors?
- How do we make local stories resonate internationally?

- 3.19 The theme brings forward actions that support an effective way of working and will be particularly dependent on successful establishment of governance and leadership support mechanisms that will be strengthened to support the overall delivery of the plan.
- 3.20 *Strategic theme 3: Experience Belfast* (supported by Visitor Experience Framework developed with CHL Consulting)

The plan provides a summary of key actions to strengthen the coherency of Belfast's overall visitor experience. The plan contains strategic priorities that:

- include experiences that can be brought to life through the development of an optimal mix of 'anchor' and ancillary products that get people into an area and keep them there
- focuses on encouraging international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interacting with people, engaging the senses and learning the history and stories of the places.
- prioritises delivering immersive moments that inspire tourists not only to share their experience with others but also make them want to return to the city.

- 3.2.1 This theme is critical to the overall success of the overall plan due to:

- the role of Belfast City Council in developing the Belfast experience through the development of Council assets
- Support for local initiatives and development plans through geographic or thematic based community development

Therefore, a full Belfast Experience Framework has been developed to support implementation. This detailed Framework will be presented to Committee in January 2021 alongside a revised plan followed public consultation. It is proposed that engagement with Members of this Framework takes place through a dedicated workshop.

- 3.22 In developing this Framework, a number of pieces of foundational work have been completed including:

- A mapping exercise which maps our existing tourism assets against the city's 'Belfast brand' and Tourism NI 'Embrace the Giant Spirit' brand.

- Assessment of the quality, market fit and sustainability of existing products.
- Development of a proposed combination of thematic and geographical clustering.
- Undertaken a gap analysis of potential experience-based products. The gap analysis reviewed what was missing from the tourism offer taking into consideration issues such as seasonality, immersive experiences, events and festival animation, and opportunities to meet local people for instance.
- Consideration of investment and evaluation criteria for longer term priorities and programmes of support incorporating social, environmental and economic factors.

3.23 Strategic theme 4: Sustain Belfast (supported by benchmarking of Belfast as part of Global Destination Sustainability Index)

This theme is shaped by recommendations emerging from the benchmarking completed as part of Global Destination Sustainability Index. Members will be aware that Belfast signed up to this benchmarking following Committee approval in August 2020. The Global Destination Sustainability Index is the world's leading benchmarking and performance Index for cities, their events and their visitor economy. Its purpose is to engage, enable and inspire cities to become more sustainable places to visit, meet and thrive in. In addition to benchmarking a city's environmental strategy and social sustainability performance, the GDS-Index assess criteria that are industry specific: industry supplier support (restaurants, hotels, conference centres) and convention bureau strategy and initiatives. Alongside benchmarking it helps destination management organisations, convention bureaus, key industry associations suppliers and clients to develop effective strategies and practices in support of sustainability goals.

3.24 Since 2019, over 60 cities have started the process of benchmarking and assessment. The goal is to have 300 cities collaborating by 2023. The Index is based on 69 Indicators broken down into four categories:

- City Environmental Performance
- City Social Performance
- Supplier Performance
- Destination Management Performance

3.25 Belfast has now completed benchmarking and a series of recommendations are included in the 10-year plan. A number

of these relate to Visit Belfast's role as the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and Visit Belfast have already made significant progress in implementing these as part of their current funding agreement with a commitment to build on this on a multi-annual basis. However, Council also has a direct role and recommendations within the plan include the establishment of a taskforce and a sustainability lab for tourism in Belfast. Further action is also set out in relation to the following areas:

Council assets

- Developing plans for Council's assets and supporting the ICC (as the city's Congress Venue) to achieve accreditation.
- Embed tourism in city emergency planning.

Supporting the supply chain

- Developing a tiered certification strategy for suppliers set targets for certification.
- Funding support to help / incentivise suppliers achieve 3rd part accreditation Sustainability training for suppliers.
- Training and capacity building to help suppliers create and implement their own sustainability policies.

Catalyst Projects

3.26 All four of these strategic themes are underpinned by the need to support inclusive economic growth and to differentiate the Belfast offer in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. A fifth strand to the plan considers key strategic opportunities that could bolster investment in the sector in order to support recovery and future growth. These are catalyst or accelerator projects and are outlined below.

3.27 Catalyst Project 1: Our Place – support for local tourism

Adopting a place-based approach to the development of our neighbourhoods through local tourism investment that supports product development, jobs creation and destination management including the design and delivery of a Belfast Experience Development Fund to support product development. There are also opportunities to support capital development through alignment with existing programmes such as the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.

3.28 Catalyst 2: Make Yourself at Home

This is a renewed commitment to long-term initiatives contained in the cultural strategy including signature Belfast events, International Year of Culture and UNESCO City of Music. The global summit of One Young World has been secured for 2023. A plan will be developed to bid for other major events that support the ambitions set out in the plan. Members will be aware that Belfast had planned to host a year of culture in 2023 in line with the original European Capital of Culture bid. However, the ongoing impact of COVID-19 at a city level in terms of the capacity of our local sector to deliver something of this scale in 18 months and the trajectory for the full return of international markets increasing makes this challenging. Therefore, it is now proposed that a multi-annual approach is taken forward focussing initially on the period 2022-24. Building on the cultural strategy, we have positioned events as one of the catalyst programmes for tourism to help contribute to the city's long term growth (visitor numbers, dwell time, spend and brand positioning) and in particular act as a key motivator for GB and Ireland visitors as part of the next phase of recovery. Over this initial period this would include at least 2 flagship events each with a critical mass of homegrown activity in 2024. Consumer sentiment research is already indicating that Events will be a key differentiator for cities in terms of re-establishing market position post-COVID. It is proposed an update report on events is presented to Committee in November 2021 following the result of the UNESCO City of Music bid.

3.29 Catalyst Project 3: Our Stories

Delivering the Belfast Destination Hub as part of the tourism pillar of the Belfast Regional City Deal must be part of an overall integrated approach to tourism development and inclusive economic growth for the city. The Hub will connect to local tourism product development and infrastructure through a hub and spoke model. Importantly the Hub will be an exemplar for responsible and sustainable tourism demonstrating the principles set out in the ten-year plan. Through the focus on Belfast Stories, the Hub will also be transformative for the positioning of the city. The development programme for the Hub as part of BRCD is fully aligned to this 10-year tourism plan with cross-cutting priorities and synergies.

3.30 Next steps

Subject to approval, the draft plan *Make Yourself at Home* included at Appendix 1 will be subject to a 12-week public consultation with a revised plan presented to CGR Committee in January 2022. It is proposed that a workshop for Members will take place during the public consultation phase.

3.31 Significant engagement has already taken place with public sector stakeholders such as Visit Belfast, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland as well as with the tourism industry. To build on this, a detailed consultation plan will be delivered optimising a number of consultation methods including online platforms, workshops (by sector and by theme) and surveys.

3.32 Financial & Resource Implications

There are currently no immediate financial implications to this report. The final plan will be supported by implementation programmes and a detailed finance and resource plan will be presented to Committee as part of the next phase of work.

3.33 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The cultural strategy, *A City Imagining* has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). A specific screening is being carried out on this plan that will be included as part of the consultation exercise and presented to Committee in January 2022. The Belfast Destination Hub will be subject to a separate Equality Impact Assessment. It is also anticipated that should any investment programmes emerge from this plan these will be subject to further equality screening.”

The Committee agreed to:

- note the contents of this report and to commence a 12-week consultation period from October 2021; and
- hold a workshop with Members to discuss in detail the priorities set out in the plan.

ESF Update and Proposed Match Funding Approach

The Director of Economic Development advised the Committee that, in May, 2021, the Department for the Economy advised that the proposed extension of existing funding agreements for a further year would not be possible, based on advice from the

European Commission and instead, it had issued an open call for applications in June 2021, with a closing date of July 2021.

He reported that Applications were currently being assessed and it was likely that decisions on successful projects would be made by mid-September and that, similar to previous years, successful projects would receive up to 65% of the requested budget and the project promoters would be expected to find the remaining 35%. He explained that the remaining funding usually came from other government departments, council, public bodies or private organisations.

He informed the Members that as part of the application process, the Council had received match-funding requests from ten organisations and that officers had met with representatives from all projects to explain the Council's position and the following proposed approach:

- Maintain the match funding at £240,000 (subject to resource availability as part of the estimates process); and
- Establish a transparent process for assessing which projects should receive match funding from the Council, and the amount of match funding that they should receive.

He added that it was proposed that a number of criteria would be established and formally communicated to those seeking match funding as part of the transparent process and that only those projects that were successful in securing DfE funding would be included as part of the process.

He informed the Members that a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee outlining the proposed projects to be supported and would include the financial allocation recommended for each project

After further discussion it was:

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Heading and

Resolved - That Committee agrees to the recommendations as set out in the report to:

- note the Department for the Economy's decision to open the last year of ESF funding (2022/23) to an open call;
- approve the recommended approach for Council match funding, within the indicative funding envelope of £240,000 (subject to approval of 2022/23 estimates), consistent with the amounts and approach operated in the previous years; and

- note that a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee to advise on proposed funding allocations.

Furthermore, that the Committee agrees to invite representatives from the Department for the Economy to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss future funding.

Destination CQ BID Ballot

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is advise of the upcoming ballot for the Destination CQ BID (Business Improvement District) and to recommend that the council uses its available votes to support a ‘yes’ vote to enable the BID to extend its mandate for a further five years.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Agree to use the council ballots to support a Yes vote for a new five year mandate for Destination CQ BID.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 Members will be aware that Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were established for the first time in Northern Ireland in 2015. There are three BIDs in Belfast:

- Destination CQ covers the Cathedral Quarter, encompassing the area from High Street to Great George’s Street, bounded by Donegall Quay and Millfield
- Belfast One covers the retail core from City Hall to Royal Avenue, bounded by Victoria Street and Millfield
- Linen Quarter BID covers the area from City Hall to Dublin Road, bounded by Joy Street and Durham Street.

- 3.2 Businesses located within the BID area agree a five-year business plan and pay a mandatory annual contribution (levy) to the delivery of the business plan, based on the NAV of their property. BID services must demonstrate that they are additional to core services that are delivered by other statutory partners (such as the Council, Department for

Communities, Department for Infrastructure etc.). Belfast One was the first BID to be established in Belfast in April 2016 and was subject to a successful re-ballot at the end of March this year. Destination CQ's initial five-year mandate is now coming to an end and the re-ballot to determine whether or not the organisation will remain in existence for the next five years is currently open, with a closing date of 22 September 2021.

- 3.3 All property owners are eligible for one vote per levy-paying property in the BID area. Belfast City Council has sixteen properties in the Destination CQ area (largely car parks) and will therefore be entitled to a vote for each of the properties.
- 3.4 Members will be aware that all three BIDs have been playing an active role in the animation and management of the city centre since their establishment a number of years ago. Destination CQ's business plan for the next five year period includes a recap of its activities over the previous five years. These include:
- More than 1200 individuals from Cathedral Quarter businesses attended training events and took part in learning and development activities
 - Helped businesses to reduce their rate overheads by 30% through collective purchasing arrangements
 - Supported council in delivery of public realm improvements funded through DfC's Revitalisation Fund to a value of £170,000
 - Worked with the other BIDs to successfully achieve Purple Flag – recognition of work to support a safe and vibrant night-time economy, as well as delivering events such as Belfast Restaurant Week and participating in collaborative promotion activities such as the Belfast Gift Card
 - Supported delivery of a dedicated police team for the Cathedral Quarter – Street Beat
 - Provided additional and dedicated cleansing services through their appointed contractor, working alongside council teams to improve the cleanliness of the area.
- 3.5 The BID expects to spend up to £2 million over the next five years. Its business plan identifies how this spend will break down across three priority work areas. These are:
1. Business Support: includes activities such as collective purchasing to reduce costs, training and networking activities and support for local businesses/cultural organisations

2. **Safer, Cleaner, Greener:** includes putting in place additional street cleansing activities, progressing pedestrianisation efforts in collaboration with statutory partners, addressing anti-social behaviour issues and working on social issues such as homelessness
 3. **Promoting and Animating:** include activities to encourage visitors to stay in the area outside of work hours as well championing culture and arts activities.
- 3.6 All levy payers will now have received their ballots, which must be returned in advance of 22 September 2021. In order to secure a new mandate, the BID requires that at least 25% of those eligible to vote do so. Of those that vote, at least 50% need to cast a 'yes' vote if the BID is to continue its work for a further five years. It is proposed that officers return the council ballots to confirm support for the BID with a 'yes' vote. The BIDs are important engagement and delivery partners for the council and it will be increasingly important for us to have strong interfaces with city centre businesses as we focus on re-shaping the city centre in the post-COVID era and driving forward on key interventions such as city centre living and progressing the work on the Bolder Vision in conjunction with the other government departments. In addition, the complementary services that the BID delivers such as the Street Beat and the additional street cleansing regime are important in creating a welcome and safe city centre for all.
- 3.7 **Financial & Resource Implications**
- The current levy payable by the council to Destination CQ is in the region of £7,500 on an annual basis. This has been accounted for in existing estimates.
- 3.8 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**
- No specific equality implications. BIDs have been established in a number of locations across Northern Ireland.”

The Committee agreed to use the Council ballots to support a 'yes' vote for a new five-year mandate for Destination CQ BID.

Growing Business & the Economy

City of Music - Support for Autumn Programme 2021

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- update Members on developments on the UNESCO City of Music designation process, strategic music development and music-based events due to happen as part of the city’s recovery programme in October and November 2021.
- Request that Members consider supporting events due to take place in Belfast.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to;

- Gradam Ceoil including broadcast event, local engagement programme and legacy bursary support.
- NI Music Prize – incorporating UNESCO City of Music announcement

3.0 Main Report

3.1 In March 2018, as a result of the coalescence of many conversations which were happening in the city at the same time, Council backed a proposal for the city and its partners to make an application for the endorsement of UNESCO City of Music status which became a key ambition of the city’s cultural strategy *A City Imagining 2020-30*, setting out a commitment to applying for UNESCO Creative Cities Network membership via recognition as a UNESCO City of Music in 2021. Since 2018, Council have spent three years working on music development for the city including extensive engagement with the sector and city stakeholders to co-design the UNESCO application as well as a complementary music strategy and implementation plan to support the ambitions set out for UNESCO designation. In June 2021 Belfast was officially shortlisted in the global competition for UNESCO City of Music status in 2021, the results of which will be announced mid-November 2021. This will coincide with a number of key music events for the city which we seek to support as part of our ongoing commitment to music in the city.

3.2 Support for these high-profile music events will contribute not only to the city’s cultural recovery but to a number of the aims set out in the Belfast Agenda and *A City Imagining* cultural strategy by contributing to:

- An inclusive city where everyone actively participates in cultural life
- A diverse city with vibrant public and cultural spaces

- A city where creativity pushes boundaries
- A city confident of our place in the world

Gradam Ceoil

3.3 *Broadcast Event*

Gradam Ceoil is an annual awards ceremony which celebrates the best of traditional Irish music and song. It comprises a gala event as well as citywide community outreach and engagement events which help to maximise reach and impact.

3.4 The live coverage on TG4 provides a meaningful opportunity to showcase Belfast as a city of music, arts and culture with the event often picked up by other broadcast platforms such as PBS America and online channels. As host city, Belfast continues to work closely with the event organisers to develop deep cultural and visitor engagement opportunities. This year concludes Gradam's four-year residency in the city and plans are underway for a bursary programme for local musicians to build on its legacy by strengthening and continuing Gradam Ceoil's connection with Belfast. In 2019 the event reached 110,000 television viewers with a total of over 500,000 views including online channels.

3.5 The 2021 edition will include:

- Gradam's fourth and final year of residency in Belfast.
- Previous years the Award Ceremony and Concert was held in The Waterfront Hall but this has had to be scaled back due to ongoing Covid restrictions.
- The Award Ceremony and Concert will be recorded at The Whitla Hall the week commencing 25 October and broadcast on TG4 on Sunday 31 October and promotion through online channels.
- Six music categories will be awarded.
- Launch event will take place in Belfast on Wednesday 8 September.

3.6 *Local Programme*

In previous years the Gradam local engagement programme in Belfast centred on small scale music events and tutoring sessions at community venues. These were held in the two days leading up to the main event. With this year being Gradam's final year in Belfast, there is a focus on its legacy and how it will continue to positively impact on Belfast as a music city. The proposal for these events will include a series of special performances in venues across the city:

- Focus on all female performers who are also Gradam award recipients
- Focus on promoting regional artists
- Youth Concert tour – pop up concerts with past Gradam pupils performing in venues in Belfast such as Duncairn, Ulster Scots Centre and QUB. Potential guest performances.

3.7 *Gradam Ceoil – Bursary Programme*

Creating a legacy from Gradam Ceoil Belfast is a priority. Since 2017, in preparation for the arrival of Gradam Ceoil in Belfast in 2018, Red Shoe (Gradam Producer) has been building networks and partnerships with a diverse mix of cultural organisations in neighbourhoods across Belfast and has established a hub at The Duncairn.

3.8 Building on the success and impact of the programme of fringe events that animate the city around the main Gradam Ceoil event, Red Shoe, in partnership with The Duncairn and TG4, now propose to establish a music and audio-visual bursary scheme for an initial five-year period to achieve the following objectives and to contribute to Belfast's proposition to UNESCO for designation as a Music City:

- Create a practical, living legacy from Gradam Ceoil Belfast
- Develop and support the traditional music sector across the city region, and promote Belfast as a destination rich in traditional and other music
- Enrich Belfast's offering as a creative place and as a city that fosters ideas, ambition, in ways that help our artists to build capacity and develop their work
- Recognise potential and support creative ideas, particularly among young people engaged in traditional music
- Create opportunities for young people to work and learn alongside leading figures in traditional music and in the audio-visual production sector
- Provide new kinds of creative opportunities to foster creativity in response to the needs that young people identify for themselves, for their work, and for their communities

3.9 The proposition is to create three Gradam Ceoil Belfast bursaries annually, each valued at £3,000, for the five-year period 2021-25.

- 3.10 The call for applications will seek proposals that are grounded in traditional music, ideally with a Belfast angle, and that can be realised as audio-visual projects such as short film, video, or other digital content. The recipients will be able to work with their ideal team of artistic and technical experts, under the guidance and mentorship of Red Shoe, thereby learning and refining additional and new transferrable skills in many aspects of audio-visual production.
- 3.11 The rationale for this approach is that with the increased availability and ease of access to technology today, the strategic issue is about quality, skills, training, and being able to make the best use of all the tools of audio-visual production to support creative projects based in and around traditional music.
- 3.12 The involvement of the delivery partners is as follows:
- Red Shoe Productions: concept and project development; design and delivery in Belfast of the creative and technical supports for recipients; post-production support to bring projects to broadcast quality; joint management (with The Duncairn) of the project.
- The Duncairn: concept and project development; identification and communication with target groups across the city; location and venue support; administrative support and joint management (with Red Shoe) of the project
- TG4: concept and project development; broadcast platform and online dissemination of selected projects as integral element of Gradam Ceoil; recognition and promotion of the significance of the relationship with Belfast, and Belfast's uniquely diverse musical traditions (this project is unique to Belfast).
- 3.13 The application process for these bursaries will be designed and managed jointly by Red Shoe and The Duncairn, using an open call for expressions of interest and a scored assessment process in line with prevailing good practice. Council will be invited to sit on the assessment panel for these bursaries. The assessment of applications will be carried out by a panel comprising Red Shoe, The Duncairn, TG4, a BCC nominee and an external assessor.
- NI Music Prize & UNESCO City of Music Announcement**
- 3.14 The Northern Ireland Music Prize honours and celebrates the very best of new, established and emerging Northern Irish

music and is a key music event for the city of Belfast, more so than ever with the ambitions for City of Music Designation announcement coinciding with this year's ceremony. It is an annual awards night organised by the Oh Yeah Music Centre and takes place in the Ulster Hall during Sound of Belfast Festival every year. Sound of Belfast is a festival that showcases the Belfast music scene and sector with gigs, panels, talks, workshops, discussions, exhibitions, showcases and special events at various venues across Belfast.

3.15 The prize is a high-profile celebration of music from Northern Ireland. Four awards are available:

- Best Album (with cash prize of £3,000),
- Best Live Act (normally £1000, an alternative in 2021 due to impact on live music in 2020)
- Best Newcomer (Oh Yeah Contender Award (in association with BBC cash prize of £1000)
- Best Single (with cash prize of £1000 and shortlist going to public vote).

3.16 The NI Music Prize was established to support the growth and build the profile of NI Music and reflect similar work and recognition of regional music in other parts of the UK and Ireland. It is a significant event and key milestone for Belfast as the regional driver for the music industry in Northern Ireland.

Plans for 2021

3.17 Due to the pandemic NI Music Prize 2021 will be with an invited audience of music industry, media, nominated and shortlisted acts, stakeholders and supporters as well as a limited number of tickets going to fans or key workers. A cabaret style event on the ground floor, reducing numbers and keeping with the possibility of a more restricted event, but also elevating it to a more formal awards event for the first time. The event will take on a blended approach in terms of reaching audiences:

- A live audience in the hall
- A live stream to a wider and global audience via high quality production via YouTube.
- Media interviews, podcast recordings, live streams and prerecords backstage.
- There will be 5 award presentations
- Guest Presenters and speakers
- Video messages
- Performances from 3 special guest acts

- Performances from 3 or 4 shortlisted acts
- UNESCO announcement – and/or opportunity for BCC to use the platform to communicate successful UNESCO City of Music Designation, and if unsuccessful the plans to continue to support music in the city through the cultural strategy and recovery programmes.

Significance of NI Music Prize in 2021

3.18 This is an important event for music in Belfast given the impact of the Covid pandemic:

- The NI Music Prize can play a key part in the recovery of Belfast as a music city
- It will be an opportunity for the music community of Belfast to come together for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic
- It will be an important platform to recognise the resilience of the industry and how it will be part of the city's overall recovery
- It will be an investment in our world class and strong emerging diverse talent, which is becoming more varied and exciting as the city emerges from almost two years under restrictions
- It will acknowledge the challenges and recognise the role of our creative sector throughout lockdown
- Belfast will be notified of the outcome of the UNESCO City of Music bid at this time therefore this would be a potential platform for an announcement
- It will showcase our local talent through extensive online reach with a live streamed event
- It will demonstrate that Council is committed to supporting and investing in music long term

3.19 Regardless of the outcome of the bid for UNESCO designation, there is still cause for this to be a significant event with a strong message going forward – that music will be at the centre of the recovery and future of Belfast as a culturally vibrant city and that Council is committed to music in the city through delivery of *A City Imagining* and the development of a new music strategy for the city.

3.20 To complement and strengthen the initiatives and ambitions laid out in the UNESCO City of Music application officers have been working with Sound Diplomacy and the City of Music Steering Group to develop a robust Music Strategy and Recovery Plan for Belfast which includes priority actions for the music sector post-pandemic and a three-year

implementation plan which will be taken back to Committee for approval in November 2021.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.21 The financial support requested from Belfast City Council is as follows:

Gradam Ceoil Broadcast event and local engagement programme - £50,000

Gradam Ceoil legacy bursaries for local musicians - £15,000

NI Music Prize - £15,000

These costs are to be met from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

3.22 Officers will work with event organisers to ensure that a wide range of groups and artists across the city are engaged with. There are no Rural Needs implications.”

Following discussion, it was:

Moved by Councillor O’Hara,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey and

Resolve - That the Committee agrees to the recommendations as set out in the report to:

- Approve the funding of £50,000 from existing departmental budgets for the Gradam Ceoil broadcast event and local engagement programme;
- Approve £15,000 from existing departmental budgets for the provision of the Gradam Ceoil legacy bursaries;
- Approve £15,000 to support the delivery of the NI Music Prize, incorporating the UNESCO City of Music announcement and music development programme.

Furthermore, that the Committee agrees to delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development to identify feasible additional funding up to £15,000 from existing budgets and liaise with the Oh Yeah Music Centre, to contribute to the NI Music Prize funding gap.

Support for NI Hospice Public Art Project

The Director of Economic Development reported that the Northern Ireland Hospice was collaborating with Wild in Art and Andersen Press to bring David McKee's popular children's character Elmer the Patchwork Elephant to life during 2022, through a physical and online trail to celebrate the 21st anniversary of their children's in-patient unit - Horizon House and that Elmer's Big Art Parades had taken place previously in Suffolk, Maidstone and London since 2019.

He pointed out that, as part of the project, a herd of around 60 elephant sculptures would be colourfully decorated by local artists working with young people and community groups and would be positioned around key landmarks across Belfast and Northern Ireland from June 2022 before being auctioned off for charity in October 2022.

He advised the Committee that, through delivering this largescale public art event in Belfast, NI Hospice note that the event would likely:

- generate an estimated £20million economic impact including £1million media value through national and regional media coverage (note that similar projects such as Manchester's 'Bee in the City' (2018) and Birmingham's 'The Big Hoot' (2015) generated over £30million economic impact);
- attract one million visitors across ten weeks and one million interactions via the trail app;
- engage more than 10,000 local schoolchildren in over 30 schools;
- offer employment to artists and showcase local and regional artists; and
- promote health and wellbeing (the majority of visitors to 'Bee in the City' said the trail helped them to spend more time with their family)

He pointed out how the project would contribute to the aims set out in the Belfast Agenda through the A City Imagining cultural strategy and the City Recovery Plan and that officers would provide additional support to the NI Hospice to connect with local groups and with artists to help promote the event.

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report and that Belfast City Council act as an official sponsor of the initiative at a cost of £35,000.

International Engagement Activities

The Director of Economic Development reported that, as Belfast City Council was a member of the Eurocities network, an invite had been received to the Eurocities Annual Conference which was scheduled to be held in Leipzig on 3rd and 4th November, 2021.

He informed the Members that the theme of conference was “The Power of Cities – Transforming Society” and that the focus would be on how the “Green New Deal” was being implemented at a local level and that it would explore additional mechanisms to push forward the role of cities as key conduits to move forward at pace in an volatile economic climate.

The pointed out that the conference would provide the opportunity for elected representatives and senior city officials to input into the organisation’s workplan, discuss pertinent city issues and network, collaborate and debate with European officials and representatives from other cities.

He advised the Committee that officers were recommending that it approve the attendance of the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson or nominee, plus one officer at the conference, at a maximum cost of £2,500.

The Director reminded the Committee that over a five-year period, from 2015, the Council had supported the work of the Odyssey Trust in developing and delivering he Friendship Four Festival.

He reported that, based on the success of the Friendship Four Model, the Odyssey Trust was developing plans to host the Women’s Ice Hockey Teams that will represent both the USA and Russia a the 2022 Olympic Games.

He advised the Committee that, as part of the engagement fixtures, officers were proposing that a civic reception for both teams would take place in City Hall on 10th November, with the costs associated with hosting the event, not to exceed £3,000.

He reminded the Committee that the Confucius Institute in Northern Ireland had been established in partnership with Ulster University in Belfast, in 2011 and that its role was comparable to that of the British Council, in that it serves to promote Chinese culture, education and language across the world.

He stated that he Institute had also been working closely with those NI councils that are engaged in activity within China, and had greatly assisted Belfast City Council in its work with Sister City Shenyang since 2016. He added that Confucius Directors had engaged with the Council to explore the potential to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding in order to formalise the support services and agree an outline activity plan. They considered that this approach would help them manage resources more effectively.

He reported that, based on the outline programme of activity, it was being proposed that a budget allocation of £5,000 be set aside for this work. The outputs would be managed and reviewed by officers in order to ensure value for money and to inform future support.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Economic Development agreed that he would explore the opportunity to attend the Eurocities Annual Conference remotely, and the costs associated with virtual attendance.

After further discussion, it was:

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor Maskey,

That the Committee agrees to:

- Approve the attendance of Committee Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson or nominee and one officer at the Eurocities AGM, taking place from 3-5 November in Leipzig, at a maximum cost of £2500, subject to prevailing COVID restrictions, and to delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development to determine the networking and financial viability of attendance at the conference, against virtual attendance, if the option was available;
- Facilitate a City Hall reception on the occasion of the visit to Belfast by the US and Russian Women's Olympic Ice Hockey Teams, as part of their visit to Belfast from 7-12 November 2021, at a maximum cost of £3,000, depending on numbers attending; and
- Refuse to provide financial support to the Confucius Institute on the basis that it is associated with the Chinese State/Government which has a select approach on how it conducts its business, therefore Belfast City Council should not deepen its relationship by developing a memorandum of understanding.

On a recorded vote, eight Members voted for the proposal and three against, with four no-votes, and it was declared carried.

<u>For 8</u>	<u>Against 3</u>	<u>No Vote 4</u>
Councillor Murphy (Chairperson); and Councillors Beattie, Donnelly, Ferguson, Heading, Lyons, Maskey and O'Hara.	Alderman Dorrian; and Councillors Hussey and Spratt.	The High Sheriff (Councillor Long); and Councillors Hanvey, Howard and McMullan.

Chairperson