

**Democratic Services Section  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast  
City Council**

**HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet both online and in-person in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Wednesday, 7th December, 2022 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

**AGENDA:**

1. **Routine Matters**

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

2. **Presentations**

- (a) Ulster University and Queen's University (Report to Follow)
- (b) National Lottery Heritage Fund (Report to Follow)

3. **Restricted Items**

- (a) Council's Powers on Vesting (Pages 1 - 6)
- (b) Belfast Zoo - Quarter 2 Performance Update (Report to Follow)
- (c) Future City Centre Programme: Vacant to Vibrant (Report to Follow)
- (d) Quarter 2 Finance Update (Report to Follow)

4. **Request to Present**

- (a) Department for Infrastructure - York Street Interchange Review Update (Pages 7 - 10)

5. **Growing Business & the Economy**

- (a) Employability and Skills Update (Pages 11 - 20)

6. **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

- (a) Belfast Bikes Quarter 2 Update (Pages 21 - 30)

7. **Strategic & Operational Issues**

- (a) Committee Plan - 6-Month Update (Report to Follow)
- (b) NI Housing Executive - Consultation on draft Corporate Plan 22/23 - 24/25 (Report to Follow)

8. **Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

- (a) GP services in Belfast (Cllr Heading to Raise) (Pages 31 - 32)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6  
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Subject:	Request to Present: Department for Infrastructure – York Street Interchange Review Update
Date:	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise Members that the Department for Infrastructure have requested to present the findings of the York Street Interchange Place-Making Review to the Members of the CG&R Committee
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Members of Committee are asked to:

	<p>I. Note the content of this report and,</p> <p>II. Consider receiving a presentation to this Committee Department for Infrastructure on the findings of the York Street Interchange Place-Making Review</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<p><u>Background</u></p>
3.1	<p>The York Street Interchange (YSI) represents the last remaining at-grade junction on the Belfast Motorway Network and forms the junction of the M2, M3 and A12 Westlink strategic corridors. This signalised junction forms the busiest junction in Northern Ireland and caters for approx. 100,000 vehicles per day. The YSI project proposes to create a grade separated (free-flowing without signals) junction to free up the congestion experienced within the existing scenario and to improve air quality in the area.</p>
3.2	<p>Following a legal challenge in 2018 the procurement competition to appoint a preferred Design and Build Contractor to develop the scheme designs and costs was set aside bringing uncertainty to the delivery timeframes for the project. The Minister for Infrastructure ordered a short-sharp external review of the YSI project in July 2020 focusing on the schemes ability to deliver on sustainable and active travel, creating thriving places for communities and creating liveable places and responding to the Climate Emergency. In March 2021 the Minister announced the outcomes of the review, accepting in full the six recommendations as outlined below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The YSI project brief should be reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with the concept of “place making” and new best practice in terms of urban transport design, and with the Minister’s agenda.</li> <li>2. The wider area impact and benefits of the Project should be evaluated using appropriate quantitative and qualitative assessment mechanisms.</li> <li>3. The current Project costs should be updated to act as a benchmark to inform any decision on future alternative development.</li> <li>4. There needs to be a system of ongoing communications with all interested parties. This should include updating the 2017 Communications Strategy and employing a robust Communications Structure now as well as during any construction phase. Communications should be ongoing and not just point in time.</li> </ol>

3.3	<p>5. There needs be much closer co-ordination both within the DfI and between DfI and other relevant departments and interested parties at both policy and delivery levels with regard to YSI development and delivery.</p> <p>6. There needs to be a co-ordinated decision made in the context of emerging policies, which then needs to be applied to ensure that the YSI project aligns to this context.</p>
	<p>In November 2021 the CG&amp;R Committee agreed that the Members of the Committee withdraw Belfast City Council’s corporate support for the York Street Interchange scheme and will only reinstate corporate support for the scheme, if the review, and any new scheme arising from it, meets the Council’s climate, air quality, place making and housing ambitions as a city and complements the aims of “A Bolder Vision”. This decision was ratified at the December 2021 meeting of the Full Council.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Main Report</u></p> <p>In October 2022 the Minister for Infrastructure published the Placemaking and Active Travel Review report for the YSI project. The full report and its associated appendices can be found on the York Street Interchange home page;  <a href="http://www.yorkstreetinterchange.com">http://www.yorkstreetinterchange.com</a> )</p>
3.5	<p>In the press statement announcing the publication of the report the Minister for Infrastructure stated <i>“I see the publication of this report as the crucial next step in the York Street Interchange project. It will allow public debate and engagement. Not everyone will agree with the three shortlisted options in the report. However, I would encourage people, elected representatives and community organisations, particularly in the areas most affected, to engage with my officials as they work to refine those options and explore any implementation issues. This stakeholder engagement will help to deliver for communities, connectivity and the wider living places agenda.”</i></p>
3.6	<p>In line with this statement the Department and the YSI design team are undertaking engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders, and as a part of this engagement the YSI team have requested to present the findings of the YSI Placemaking and Active Travel Review to a future meeting of the CG&amp;R Committee.</p>
3.7	<p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b></p>
	<p>None associated with this report.</p>

<b>3.8</b>	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b>
	None associated with this report.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	None.





Subject:	Employability & Skills update
Date:	7 December 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Sinéad O'Regan, Employability & Skills Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>								
<p><b>Is this report restricted?</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>    No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Some time in the future</td> <td style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Never</td> <td style="text-align: right; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px;"></td> </tr> </table>	After Committee Decision		After Council Decision		Some time in the future		Never	
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<b>Call-in</b>	
<p><b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>    No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members on a range of activity undertaken so far in 2022/23 to support skills development, economic engagement and job outcomes for key target groups.
1.2	<p>The work programme supports the inclusive growth ambitions of the Council by targeting interventions on key cohorts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents out of work and experiencing barriers to employment/self-employment, including those who are long-term unemployed and economically inactive</li> <li>• Residents with low skills levels</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people who do not have a baseline Level 2 equivalent qualification and/or at risk of dropping out of (or not in) education, employment or training</li> <li>• In work, low earning residents</li> <li>• Those living in areas of highest multiple deprivation.</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the work undertaken in the financial year to date and the positive employability and jobs outcomes associated with the work</li> <li>• Approve the allocation of £40,000 from the existing E&amp;S Revenue budget to continue to work in partnership with RSA Cities of Learning to progress Digital Badging in the city.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Employment Academies</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that Employment Academies are one of the key instruments that the Council’s Employability and Skills team utilises to help people into work. While the content of Employment Academies varies from programme to programme, there are a number of consistent components, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer-led skills training related to the specific job role</li> <li>• In-situ work sampling/work placements</li> <li>• Employability support particularly focused on the final employment interview (all candidates are guaranteed a job interview).</li> </ul>
3.2	<p>Given the volatility in the labour market – and the limited financial resources available to undertake the work – our decisions around the priority work plan have been driven by a number of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity presented by a number of growth sectors (particularly tech and fibre) to support participants into roles with higher earning potential. In recognition of the additional skills support work required, these interventions tend to have a higher per capita cost for participants but offer a positive return on investment in terms of salary levels for those successful in finding work following engagement in the programme</li> <li>• Ongoing need to work with employers to convince them of the value of alternative approaches to finding talent other than pre-existing qualifications and/or experience. This is particularly the case for our work in new sectors – specifically those that have tended to think “degree first” and have not considered alternative routes</li> </ul>

- Employers with entry level jobs – particularly in sectors such as hospitality – continue to experience significant challenges in finding workers and officers are working with them to consider issues such as terms and conditions and payment of the real living wage in order to attract and retain talent
- Opportunities to support existing employees through upskilling interventions – supporting individuals to improve salary levels by progressing to a better job and thereby embedding a skills-escalator by creating additional entry-level roles.

3.3 In this year, we have allocated over 700 places to our Employment Academy interventions. A breakdown of the sectoral engagement is detailed below:

Employment Academy	Participant Numbers
HSC, Childcare & Playwork Upskilling Academy	119
Transport Academy	110
Construction Sector Academy	99
Retrofit Academy*	97
Classroom Assistant Employment & Upskilling Academies	55
Tech Academy	55
Business Services/Administration Academy	50
Customer Service Sectors Academies	40
Fibre Academy	40
Childcare and Health and Social Care Academy	35
BCC General Operative & Business Support Academy	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>723</b>
*The purpose of this Academy is to create the skills infrastructure needed when job demand occurs and as such this will not be measured in terms of job/better job outcomes.	

3.4 Given seasonal variations, most Belfast Employment Academies go live in September and then January of each year. However, we delivered a number of Academies over the summer months as outlined below with some significant job outcomes. Of the places allocated above across the 2022/23 financial year, from April 2022, 409 people have started an Employment Academy with 191 completing to date and 138 job outcomes, representing an into-work rate of 72% of those completing.

3.5 The September roadshows this year were held in Girdwood, St Comgall's, Crescent Arts Centre and Banana Block. In addition to this, officers promoted Employment Academies at

	<p>jobs fairs in Duncairn Arts Centre, Kennedy Centre, Park Centre and St George's Market. As a result, over 400 people have applied for the Autumn suite of Belfast Employment Academies and are currently going through pre-academy screening and selection. An insight into current activity in the variety of sectors is detailed below.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Tech Employment Academy</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the tech sector is one of the largest employers in the city at present. It also remains a key focus for Invest NI in terms of future investment and support for existing businesses and is identified in the draft 10x vision as a priority area for future government support. To date, it has been challenging to secure employer support for exploring alternative engagement mechanisms, particularly those that set aside the requirement for a degree qualification – even for entry-level roles.</p>
3.7	<p>Following extensive research and engagement with employers, the first Tech Employment Academy was launched in June 2022. The programme had over 100 applicants for this ground-breaking 16-week programme supported by Allstate and Citi. Screening and selection included aptitude assessments and interview with 17 starting for jobs the programme, focused on Software Development and Product Management. The programme ran for 16 weeks and concluded in October 2022. To date, 12 participants (71%) have progressed into immediate employment with starting salaries for the above roles range £23k-£28k. Further employability support is being provided to remaining participants including job applications, CV support, interview preparation etc. All participants were deemed employable by the participating employers, who were restricted only by the number of roles on offer.</p>
3.8	<p>As we move forward, the intention is to continue to offer Employment Academies in this area. Strategic employer engagement has been ongoing throughout the Autumn to build awareness of the offer and seek involvement. We have allocated an additional 38 places for people to commence in early 2023 once employer demand is secured. It is interesting to note that, of those who did not secure a place on this first Tech Employment Academy, a large number of the (unsuccessful) applicants to the pilot cohort remain engaged and interested in participating as we move forward.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Retrofit Academy</u></p> <p>The Reset for Growth report completed by the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission (IIGC) in June 2021 identified the need for a retrofit programme of scale in Belfast to create employment opportunities in this new sector, while supporting the city's zero carbon</p>

commitments. Following our initial scoping work, it became apparent that a significant stumbling block was the lack of a curriculum in this space. Officers were successful in securing funding through the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC) Community Renewal Fund to develop a pilot intervention that would help build a curriculum for the vocational skills in this sector while also providing skills support for a number of individuals – thereby providing the “building blocks” for a larger-scale intervention in partnership with key organisations including NIHE.

3.10 To date, almost 100 participants have taken part in the training as follows:

- Level 2 – Understanding Domestic Retrofit – 57 Participants
- Level 3 – Retrofit Adviser – 20 Participants
- Level 4 - Retrofit Assessor – 5 Participants
- Level 5 – Retrofit Coordinator – 15 Participants

3.11 Moving forward from this pilot, the intention is to expand the level of uptake in order to build the supply chain so that government commitments in this space can be met. In parallel, the Climate Commissioner has led on the establishment of a local Retrofit Hub. This brings together a range of work strands related to retrofitting including skills development; building regulations; academic research and government incentives in order to take a more strategic view of the opportunities and challenges within this sector and to develop more coherent responses that can support the drive to zero carbon while also creating employment; improving housing stock and supporting new business development opportunities.

3.12 Fibre Employment Academy

Research undertaken by Ulster University's Economic Policy Centre (EPC) identified the utilities sector as having significant potential for future growth and one that could help improve both median salary levels and business competitiveness and productivity. Based on these insights, officers last year brought forward a Fibre Academy. Working with the delivery partners, we developed an intervention covering a number of roles including fibre installers, splicers and groundwork teams. Based on 2021/22 delivery, employment outcomes were very positive (90% into-employment) and starting salaries for successful applicants averaged at £29k. Some of those who completed the programme last year have already moved into management positions, including an individual who was out of work due to Covid, and who has moved into a project management role with a local fibre company earning a salary of £50k pa.

3.13	Based on the early success of the initial cohorts, we have just commenced delivery of a new programme in November this year and will engage 40 people before the end of the year. Demand from employers remains high and we expect that this will continue.
3.14	<p><u>Business Services</u></p> <p>In addition to tech and digital roles, the wider professional and business services sectors have witnessed significant employment growth over the last decade. Our research indicates the potential for further growth. As a result, we developed a number of interventions this year – including a Business Services Academy that focused specifically on Business Support and Administration roles within Belfast City Council as well as other employers. A particular success of this Academy has the engagement with the disability sector, which has led to a high number of people with disabilities participating in the training and securing employment.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Care Sectors</u></p> <p>Since April 2022 we have supported 35 people through an Employment Academy with 19 people having already moved into paid employment within a care sector job. In addition to this we have also enabled 119 Belfast residents to develop their existing knowledge by offering them the opportunity to upskill for a better job in a care sector role, from Health and Social Care to Childcare and Playwork.</p>
3.16	Our upskilling programmes support participants to achieve their Level 3 and/or Level 5 qualifications within their chosen profession. This then qualifies them to progress into more senior roles within their organisation. It also improves their earning potential and creates further entry-level positions for new entrants into the sector thereby enabling a skills-escalator model in the city. Finally, these upskilling academies also help to fill the skills gaps within these industries and ensure the provision of health and social care services across the city – particularly important for those who are more vulnerable.
3.17	In September 2022, officers also developed an upskilling programme for Classroom Assistants. This will support residents to achieve Level 3 in Supporting Teaching and Learning in School, enabling employees to move from precarious temporary employment to permanent roles within the education sector. We are also working on a pilot academy for new entrants to the Classroom Assistant role which is due to begin in early 2023.
3.18	<u>Construction</u>

	<p>The Employability and Skills teams has been working in the construction sector for a number of years. More recently, our work has focused on supporting the development of major construction schemes, including Weaver's Court. Since April 2022, 99 participants have engaged with our support programmes and 78 having moved into paid employment to date. In addition to this, officers have delivered a General Operative Employment Academy for BCC posts ringfenced for long-term unemployed and all seven who completed secured employment with BCC. Another new intervention in the construction sector has been to focus on key roles that have specialist technical skills. Some examples of additional training that we have provided includes digger/dumper driving and telescopic forklift operation. Staff that have these specialist licences and training can potentially move from minimum wage to earning between a £16ph-£24ph.</p>
3.19	<p><u>Social Value</u></p> <p>The Employability and Skills team continues to support colleagues in Corporate Procurement Service (CPS) in the implementation of the social value toolkit. Our contribution focuses on the employability and skills elements of the toolkit. We have recently produced explanatory materials for employers to outline the types of support that we can provide them with in meeting their social value obligations.</p>
3.20	<p>We also provide advice and guidance to colleagues across the council on social value and supported delivery on several projects such as City Cemetery, redevelopment of St Comgall's, redevelopment of Millennium Park, Templemore Baths Restoration and Shankill Shared Women's Centre project. The work done as part of the creation of visitor's centre at City Cemetery recently won the Social Value Project of the Year award at the Construction Employer's Federation's Construction Excellence Awards 2022.</p>
3.21	<p><u>Digital Badging</u></p> <p>Digital Badging is a relatively new area of work for the Council over the last year. We explored this area of work given the disproportionately high numbers of individuals in the city that have no or low skills. Working with the RSA through a pilot phase in which they provided match funding to the council, we have issued 435 Digital Badges to people completing an Employment Academy. Moving beyond the Council, we have signed up 19 of our partners and they are now working on creating their own digital badges.</p>
3.22	<p>Building on the success of the first year in operation, it is proposed that we extend our partnership with RSA Cities of Learning, Badge Nation and Navigatr by way of a community</p>

	<p>membership licence. This will enable the Council to continue to write, issue and support providers and employers with access to Digital Badging memberships. It will also offer participants access to a live jobs feed on the Navigatr platform, linking them to local job opportunities connected to the skills they have developed through their badges. The partnership with RSA going forward will also provide the Council with scoping, intelligence and research in line with our priorities. Year 2 of the project will cost the Council £40,000. This allocation has been set aside within the existing budget for this financial year.</p>
3.23	<p><u>Stakeholder Engagement</u></p> <p>The Employment Academy work relies heavily of a range of employability organisations to engage and support participants and to communicate and share information on planned activities. At present, we have a network of almost 200 employability practitioners that we engage with on a regular basis and is open to all employability organisations in the city. Over the last year, the communication has largely been through monthly online meetings. However the plan from next year is to move towards more in-person events and engagements.</p>
3.24	<p>Members will be aware of the significant funding challenges for this sector in the coming year, particularly relating to the end of European Social Fund (ESF) support and the lack of clarity around Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) implementation. While the Council has limited authority in this regard, we recognise the importance of having a strong employability sector that can engage and support individuals that are furthest from the labour market.</p>
3.25	<p>One mechanism that we have identified to provide support to the sector is that we have recently become a corporate affiliate partner of the Institute for Employability Professionals (IEP). Through this partnership, we have been able to offer membership places to 100 employability practitioners in the city. The IEP will provide participants with development and upskilling support for their staff. This should be beneficial for those organisations seeking to secure funding or win new business in the future and will also provide access to the most recent thinking in this area of work. The IEP will also provide us with access to a range of expertise and we will use the network to organise events that can benefit the wider sector across the city. The first event is planned for January 2023 and will focus on mental health training and working with those who are neurodivergent. Attendance will be open to all those who are IEP members in the city.</p>
3.26	<p><u>Financial and resource implications</u></p>



3.27	<p>The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2022/23 budget for the Employability &amp; Skills section of the Place and Economy departmental budget that was included as part of the estimates that were approved by this Committee on 12 January 2022. The allocation of £40,000 to RSA Cities of Learning to progress Digital Badging in the city will be taken from this existing budget.</p> <p><u>Equality implications/rural needs assessment</u></p> <p>The team has created a CRM system that allows them to track participant data across all engagement activity. This information is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that all equality implications are considered. Officers also use this information to address under-performance in specific areas and then put in place targeted actions to redress the balance in future engagements.</p>
4.0	<b>Appendices -Documents attached</b>
	N/A

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<b>Subject:</b>	Performance Update on Belfast Bikes Scheme
<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Fintan Grant, Assets Development Manager Ashleigh Fox, Assets Development Officer

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To update Members on the performance of the Just Eat Belfast Bikes scheme in the second quarter (1 July to 30 September 2022) of year 7 of operation.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>note the update of the Just Eat Belfast Bikes performance for Year 7 Q2 (June to September 2022);</li> <li>note the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;</li> <li>note the progress with regard to phase one and phase two expansion.</li> </ul>

3.0	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p data-bbox="256 212 448 241"><b>Background</b></p> <p data-bbox="256 264 1445 600">The Belfast Bikes scheme was launched in 2015 as part Belfast City Council's physical investment programme. The Department for Regional Development provided initial capital funding for the scheme as part of their Active Travel Demonstration Projects budget. The scheme launched with a network of 30 docking stations and 300 bikes. The scheme has been operated by NSL continually since inception using bikes and supporting infrastructure from 'Nextbike by TIER'. The scheme currently operates with 573 bikes (including those in reserve for new stands) and 50 docking stations.</p> <p data-bbox="256 667 624 696"><u>Expansion of the Scheme</u></p> <p data-bbox="256 719 1417 853">At CG&amp;R on 12 May 2021 it was agreed that an additional four Belfast Bikes docking stations would be deployed using DFI Active Travel funding. Installation began in Q1 and current status is as follows:</p> <ul data-bbox="304 875 1417 1160" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre was installed on 7 July 2022 and is operational;</li> <li>- Olympia Leisure Centre was installed on 25 October 2022 and is operational;</li> <li>- Kennedy Centre installation has been delayed due to supply chain issues, and is expected to be operational by mid-December;</li> <li>- Waterworks installation has been delayed due to supply chain issues, and is expected to be operational by mid-December.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="256 1182 1417 1256">Council officers are currently liaising with the operator and supplier to improve the supply chain issues for future installations.</p> <p data-bbox="256 1323 1437 1503">At CG&amp;R on 9 June 2021 it was agreed to proceed with an additional 15 docking stations. An investment of approximately £525,000 is required, based on cost estimates from previous network expansions. At SP&amp;R on 18 June 2021 members agreed for £500,000 to be invested in the expansion proposal.</p> <p data-bbox="256 1570 1445 1659">A procurement exercise is ongoing for the design and installation of eight stations in Phase 1 (to be installed 2022/23):</p> <ul data-bbox="304 1682 1038 1861" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- North: Yorkgate and Shore Road</li> <li>- West: St Mary's College and Shankill Road</li> <li>- South: Lisburn Road and Malone Road</li> <li>- East: Castlereagh Road, Upper Newtownards Road.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="256 1883 1142 1912">Seven stations will follow in Phase 2 in the following year (2023/24).</p>
3.2	
3.3	
3.4	

3.5	<p>As previously agreed by the committee, discussion and agreement through Area Working Groups is required to determine exact locations and consider those against the Site Expansion Matrix as outlined in Appendix 2. These site options and discussions with Area Working Groups commenced in November.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Operational Performance</u> Availability</p> <p>Following challenges sourcing replacement bike parts earlier in the year, supplies and bike availability significantly improved during Q2. Average daily bikes on the street during Q2 was 340.</p>
3.7	<p>An additional 180 bikes have been purchased to facilitate the ongoing docking station expansion, so availability levels are expected to further increase in coming months.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Membership</u></p> <p>There were 75,129 registered Belfast Bike users at the end of Q2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Q2 'Pay as you go' (PAYG) memberships was the most popular form of membership, accounting for 95% of users.</li> <li>• Annual memberships accounted for 5% of users. There is an ongoing trend of users switching from annual membership to PAYG.</li> <li>• Casual memberships have greatly reduced, accounting for less than 1% of memberships, due to the introduction of PAYG.</li> </ul>
3.9	<p><u>Journeys</u></p> <p>There have been 1,292,583 journeys since the scheme was launched including 56,175 journeys during Q2 Year 7.</p> <p>Although this is a decrease of 23% from the same period in Year 6 (which was an exceptionally busy year for the scheme), journeys during this period increased by 12% against Q2 average since the scheme commenced.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Vandalism</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that vandalism is an ongoing problem. Upgrades to the forks to help prevent the unauthorised removal of bikes has been successful however, damage is now being caused to the rear wheels while bikes are being forced from docking stations. There have also been instances of bikes being set on fire and damaged beyond repair.</p>

3.11	<p>There were 130 instances of vandalism in Q2. Vandalism costs payable by the Council for this period is £17,201. This figure is significantly higher than the quarterly average (£5,314).</p>
3.12	<p>Members should note that generally the number of vandalism incidents has decreased in recent years, however vandalism costs have increased due to the higher cost of parts associated with a higher quality of bike. Bikes were upgraded to 'SMART' bikes in 2021. For comparison, in the same period in 2017, there were 243 instances of vandalism at a cost of £6,032 i.e. higher incidents but at a lower cost. See Appendix 1 tables 2 and 3 for annual comparison.</p>
3.13	<p>Members should also note that following the upgrade to 'SMART' bikes, the amount of theft has decreased due to GPS tracking in the bike allowing for recovery. The operator is very proactive at retrieving missing bikes.</p>
3.14	<p>The bikes operator continues to deliver operational improvements and community engagement initiatives with PSNI to help decrease vandalism incidents.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Subscriptions and Usage Revenue</u></p> <p>Income from fees and charges in Q2 was £71,608.</p> <p>Year to date income from fees and charges is £123,699. This is 29% higher than average for this period.</p>
3.16	<p><u>MARCOMMS</u></p> <p>Marketing activity during Q2 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising campaign including radio, digital and outdoor;</li> <li>• Full page advert in City Matters magazine (circulation of 160k homes);</li> <li>• Council-led press release on new station at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre with additional stations to follow. Media coverage included Belfast Live, North Belfast News (front page), Andersonstown News, South Belfast News and South Side Advertiser;</li> <li>• Additional media and social media coverage included NIfamilybloglife, NI Travel News Online, Insider Media, 4ni.co.uk;</li> <li>• Social media updates across all Belfast Bikes channels on new station at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre with additional stations to follow.</li> </ul>

3.17	Belfast Bikes currently has 5.1k followers on Twitter; 1.7k on Facebook; and 1.1k on Instagram.
3.18	<p><u>Operator contract</u></p> <p>NSL continues to operate the Belfast Bikes scheme, with a contract renewal available until 2024. Council staff are reviewing the scheme and will make future recommendations for the management, operation and potential expansion of the scheme as part of a new procurement package.</p>
3.19	<p><u>Sponsorship</u></p> <p>Council officers are currently assessing procurement options for a new sponsor of the scheme.</p>
3.20	<p><u>Response to Notice of Motion</u></p> <p>Following a Notice of Motion from Councillor O’Hara the Committee agreed on 4th March 2020 to investigate “ <i>as part of the current strategic review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme, consideration be given to granting free access to young people 25 years of age and under to the scheme</i>”.</p>
3.21	<p>Belfast Bikes operator, NSL, added date of birth (D.O.B.) as an essential criteria for users from 13 October 2022. It would be prudent to wait approximately six months to allow the majority of users to upgrade their information before accurate age demographics can be determined.</p>
3.22	<p>However, initial reports indicate the 49% of users fall within the ‘25 and under’ age group. Providing free usage to under 25’s is likely to have a significant detrimental impact on revenue generated from the bike scheme, which directly contributes to operating costs.</p>
3.23	<p>Alternative proposals for discounted rates for certain users (e.g. young people, students, corporate discounts) are being explored. The current operator has advised that while discounted offers are complicated to be added to the system, they can be done. The application of these is being finalised and it is hoped trials will commence in the coming months.</p>
3.24	<p><u>Update on Covered Cycle Stands city-wide</u></p> <p>Whilst Covered Cycle Stands are not part of the Belfast Bikes scheme, both initiatives are aligned to the Bolder Vision with a focus on improvements in the active travel provision and</p>

	<p>infrastructure across the city. Covered Cycle Stands are part of the Active Travel Enablers project.</p>																				
3.25	<p>Phase 1</p> <p>Under the Dfl Sustainable and Active Travel elements of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, 10 covered cycle stands were funded city-wide. Locations were agreed in previous CGR Committee and the status is as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Gasworks</td> <td>Installed July 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St. George's Market</td> <td>Stand delivered but still awaiting Dfl approval</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grosvenor Community Centre</td> <td>Installed September 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shankill Leisure Centre</td> <td>Installed July 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belmont Park</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inverary Community Centre</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belfast Zoo</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Waterworks</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belvoir Activity Centre</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mary Peter's Track</td> <td>Installed September 2022</td> </tr> </table>	Gasworks	Installed July 2022	St. George's Market	Stand delivered but still awaiting Dfl approval	Grosvenor Community Centre	Installed September 2022	Shankill Leisure Centre	Installed July 2022	Belmont Park	Installed August 2022	Inverary Community Centre	Installed August 2022	Belfast Zoo	Installed August 2022	Waterworks	Installed August 2022	Belvoir Activity Centre	Installed August 2022	Mary Peter's Track	Installed September 2022
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3.26	<p>Phase 2</p> <p>Members received an update on the Dfl funding for the Active Travel Enabling Projects in March 2022 that outlined the projects, budget and timeframe for delivery. In terms of the covered cycle stands, officers drew upon the priority areas identified by Sustrans, and these locations were also assessed in terms of the deliverability within the timeframe as well as the key criteria aligned to cycle infrastructure provision.</p>																				
3.27	<p>Following a procurement process, a supplier has been appointed for the next 10 covered cycle stands being delivered in-year.</p>																				
3.28	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>There are no specific financial or resource implications contained within this report.</p>																				
3.29	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>																				
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>																				
	Appendix 1: Belfast Bikes - Performance Data Q2 2023-23																				



**Table 1 – Belfast Bike rentals by Month and Year**

Month	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
April	2,162	15,163	17,253	13,274	13,306	0*	30,693	10,617
May	16,151	20,490	21,689	17,867	16,720	0*	20,533	12,711
June	20,828	20,404	21,902	17,448	14,698	0*	26,142	15,579
July	19,807	16,593	18,461	16,878	15,350	2,898	25,310	17,891
August	17,709	21,345	19,756	15,406	13,799	4,693	23,840	20,858
September	19,448	21,448	17,037	15,438	11,959	4,755	22,968	17,426
October	18,807	21,270	17,348	19,373	12,402	3,274	18,587	
November	15,274	18,676	12,726	15,031	9,173	3,462	15,716	
December	13,036	15,022	7,724	10,526	7,829	3,149	9,678	
January	12,121	16,300	9,461	13,316	9,712	4,967	10,053	
February	13,846	15,695	10,640	13,434	7,540	9,233	8,137	
March	14,982	19,064	11,199	12,314	4,761	28,903	12,119	
<b>Total</b>	<b>184,171</b>	<b>221,470</b>	<b>185,196</b>	<b>180,305</b>	<b>137,249</b>	<b>65,334</b>	<b>223,776</b>	<b>95,082</b>

\*Not operational due to Covid-19

**Table 2 - Vandalism costs to Council**

Mth	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/2022	2022/23
<b>Apr</b>		£411.00	£429.24	£225.72	£1,060	£0.00	£3,449.83	£0.00
<b>May</b>	£949	£1,862	£2,970.54	£0.00	£1,707	£0.00	£1,766.12	£748.91
<b>Jun</b>	£1,005	£1,025	£1,829.92	£977.04	£2,303	£0.00	£1,934.00	£3,327.74
<b>Jul</b>	£0.00	£846.08	£1,793.98	£0.00	£904	£404.21	£1,427.00	£7,256.48
<b>Aug</b>	£744	£2,258	£1,794.00	£222.15	£1,374	£967.16	£1,815.32	£3,573.92
<b>Sep</b>	£356	£3,527	£2,444.02	£1,635	£0.00	£991.79	£1,809.04	£6,370.18
<b>Oct</b>	£556	£1,297	£4,918.74	£0.00	£939.41	£0.00	£397.23	
<b>Nov</b>	£674	£771.22	£2,459.30	£2,316	£701.91	£0.00	£1,314.79	
<b>Dec</b>	£0.00	£2,374	-£135.48	£0.00	£417.24	£0.00	£ 0.00	
<b>Jan</b>	£0.00	£1,170	£1,763.62	£1,130	£1,274	£259.31	£0.00	
<b>Feb</b>	£0.00	£3,227	£1,112.26	£930.35	£0.00	£432.43	£ 173.06	
<b>Mar</b>	£0.00	£840.68	£464.54	£119.20	£215.05	£3,153	£494.28	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,285</b>	<b>£19,612</b>	<b>£21,844</b>	<b>£7,556</b>	<b>£10,898</b>	<b>£6,208</b>	<b>£13,913</b>	<b>£21,277</b>

**Table 3 – Vandalism incidents**

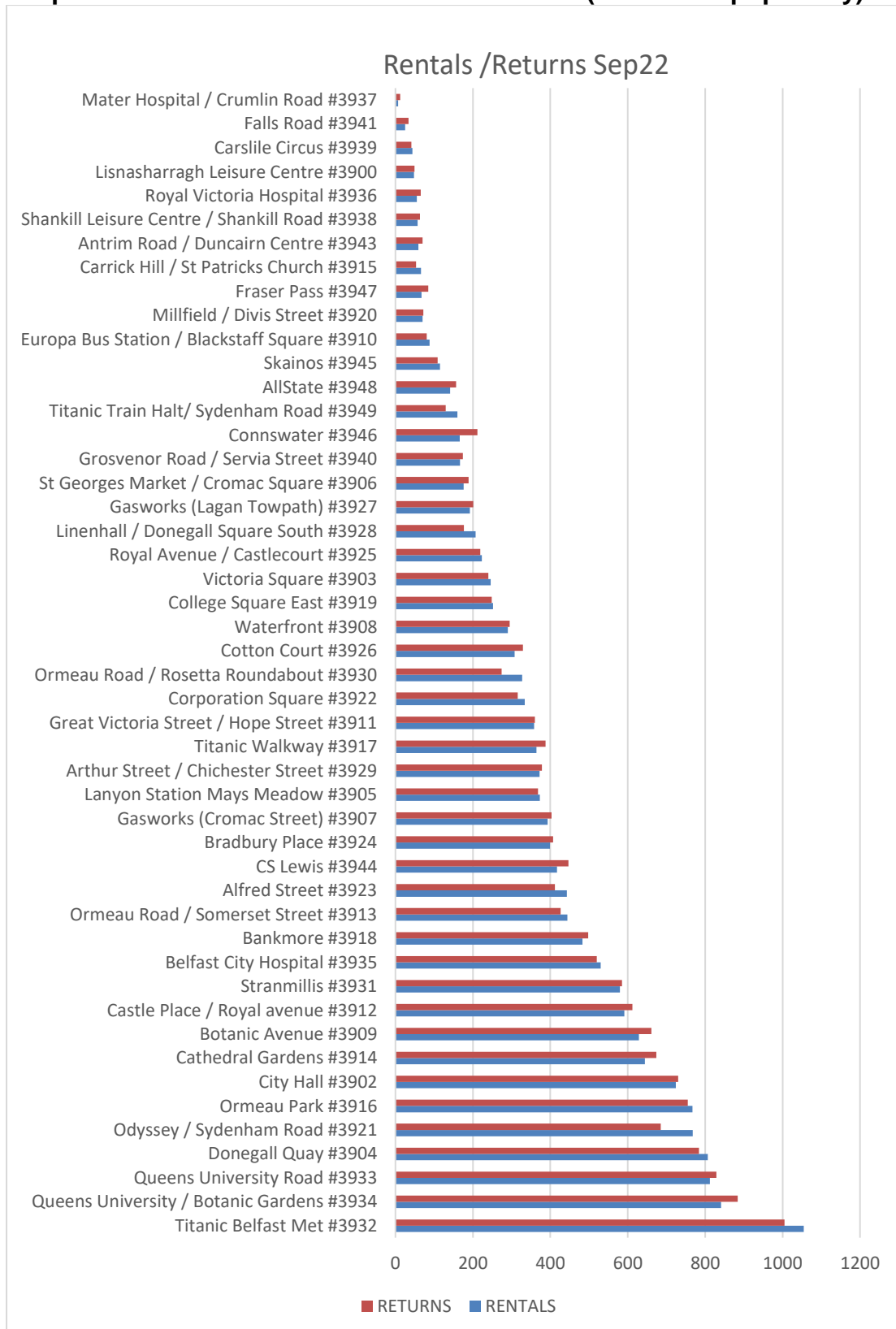
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Apr		16	82	35	23	17	84	17
May	7	50	111	31	45	0	70	17
June	6	19	78	32	54	0	47	24
July	13	17	61	28	31	21	48	35
Aug	14	28	84	34	8	31	40	27
Sept	16	17	98	87	5	43	61	68
Oct	15	22	107	27	26	13	34	
Nov	11	28	78	12	18	15	18	
Dec	7	47	41	37	23	15	5	
Jan	7	41	23	19	27	14	13	
Feb	4	59	35	33	17	14	18	
Mar	4	54	29	20	17	92	12	
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>188</b>

**Table 4 – Location of docking stations September 2022 (alphabetical order)**

Place name	Official Station	Station number	Bike racks
Alfred Street	1	3923	14
AllState	1	3948	12
Antrim Road / Duncairn Centre	1	3943	8
Arthur Street / Chichester Street	1	3929	8
Bankmore	1	3918	16
Belfast City Hospital	1	3935	18
Botanic Avenue	1	3909	16
Bradbury Place	1	3924	16
Carrick Hill / St Patricks Church	1	3915	12
Carlisle Circus	1	3939	20
Castle Place / Royal Avenue	1	3912	22
Cathedral Gardens	1	3914	20
City Hall	1	3902	20
College Square East	1	3919	16
Connswater	1	3946	10
Corporation Square	1	3922	14
Cotton Court	1	3926	12
CS Lewis	1	3944	16
Donegall Quay	1	3904	16
Europa Bus Station / Blackstaff Square	1	3910	16
Falls Road	1	3941	8
Fraser Pass	1	3947	14
Gasworks (Cromac Street)	1	3907	12
Gasworks (Lagan Towpath)	1	3927	16
Girwood Community Hub / Cliftonville Park Avenue	1	3942	14
Great Victoria Street / Hope Street	1	3911	18
Grosvenor Road / Servia Street	1	3940	12
Lanyon Station Mays Meadow	1	3905	20
Linenhall / Donegall Square South	1	3928	16
Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre	1	3900	12
Mater Hospital / Crumlin Road	1	3937	10
Millfield / Divis Street	1	3920	18
Odyssey / Sydenham Road	1	3921	22
Olympia Leisure Centre	1	3994	12
Ormeau Park	1	3916	12
Ormeau Road / Rosetta Roundabout	1	3930	16
Ormeau Road / Somerset Street	1	3913	12
Queens University / Botanic Gardens	1	3934	14
Queens University Road	1	3933	16
Royal Avenue / Castlecourt	1	3925	12
Royal Victoria Hospital	1	3936	20
Shankill Leisure Centre / Shankill Road	1	3938	18
Skainos	1	3945	8
St Georges Market / Cromac Square	1	3906	12

Stranmillis	1	3931	14
Titanic Belfast Met	1	3932	18
Titanic Walkway	1	3917	20
Victoria Square	1	3903	10
Waterfront	1	3908	24

**Graph 1 – Rentals and returns for each station (in order of popularity)**



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## **Issues raised in advance by Members**

### **GP services in Belfast (Cllr Heading to Raise)**

To request that the Strategic Planning and Performance Group be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to present on how they plan to maintain GP services in Belfast, in particular details of future provision based on the Belfast Agenda population growth ambitions, especially in the City Centre where there are limited GP services.

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