

BRC D

Memorandum of Understanding

Delivery of the Deal

February 2022

Joint Delivery of the Belfast Region City Deal

Phase 3 - Delivery

Memorandum of Understanding

Between **Belfast City Council acting as Belfast Region City Deal Lead Authority**

And the following partners (hereinafter referred to jointly as 'the Partners' and individually as a 'Partner')

- (1) Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- (2) Ards and North Down Borough Council
- (3) Belfast City Council
- (4) Belfast Metropolitan College
- (5) Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- (6) Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
- (7) Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- (8) Northern Regional College
- (9) Southern Regional College
- (10) South Eastern Regional College
- (11) Queen's University Belfast
- (12) Ulster University

Hereafter referred to jointly as 'the Partners' and individually as a 'Partner'.

This MoU takes effect on **INSERT DATE and lasts for the duration of the BRCD Deal and Partnership**

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1.0 Purpose of MoU

- 1.1 This MoU reflects the commitments made by Partners to work collaboratively and collectively in relation to delivery of the BRCD Programme to achieve the partners' ambitions for inclusive growth. This MoU should be read in conjunction with the formal Deal Documentation including the overall Deal Document, the Financial and Implementation Plans, the Financial Agreement, the Governance Framework and the Communications Protocol. This MoU represents the additional commitments agreed by partners beyond those formally agreed through the aforementioned documents and the requirements of Letters of Offer.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Belfast Region City Deal ('the Deal') comprises the six councils of: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council, Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, working in partnership with Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, the four further education colleges, Belfast Metropolitan College, Northern Regional College, Southern Regional College and the South Eastern Regional College (collectively 'the Partners') to develop and deliver a programme of investment that delivers inclusive economic growth across the region. The programme has been developed in partnership with the UK and NI governments each of which is represented within the governance structures.
- 2.2 The overall ambition of the BRCD is that, through a 10-year programme of the investment, it will deliver a marked step change to the region's economic performance increasing Gross Value Added (GVA) by £400m and creating up to 20,000 new jobs.

The BRCD's ambitions for inclusive growth will be delivered through the following pillars of investment;

- **Innovation and Digital** - Achieving world leading competitive advantage in key sectors - building our innovation and digital capability - facilitating invention, commercialisation and widespread adoption as a driver of economic prosperity and increased well-being;
- **Tourism and Regeneration** - Boosting tourism and regenerating our region – creating world-class visitor attractions and investing in towns and cities to provide a year-round destination that will stand out in international markets;
- **Infrastructure** - Connecting our region - connecting people to opportunity and services through enhanced and sustainable infrastructure; and
- **Employability and Skills (E&S)** - Putting in place arrangements to enable a constant pipeline of talent to support the growth created by the BRCD investments and ensure that the right skills are available within the region to support the emerging job opportunities.

- 2.3 Partners are fully committed to delivering the Deal and ensuring that its economic impact is maximised and that it is well placed to leverage additional investment. Partners will continue to work to identify and build on the local strengths and priorities that will help overcome some of the challenges facing the region, identifying new and more collaborative ways of working that will deliver inclusive growth for the benefit of the Belfast region, and by extension, the wider NI economy.

Phase 1 – Developing the Proposition

- 2.4 During Phase 1 a robust analysis of the key competitive strengths and economic challenges facing the region helped to inform the thematic priorities of the Deal and the content of the economic investment programme. The BRCD was allocated £350m of capital investment by the Treasury through its Autumn Budget statement of 2018. The NI Executive confirmed that this would be match funded by an additional £350m. Participating councils and universities have together committed a further £150m to the Deal and FE colleges have agreed to support the E&S Programme through the alignment of partner resources and plans to meet the skills needs emerging from the capital investment. Combined with direct investment from the private sector the total Deal investment package will be significantly in excess of £1 billion.

Phase 2 – Delivery Development

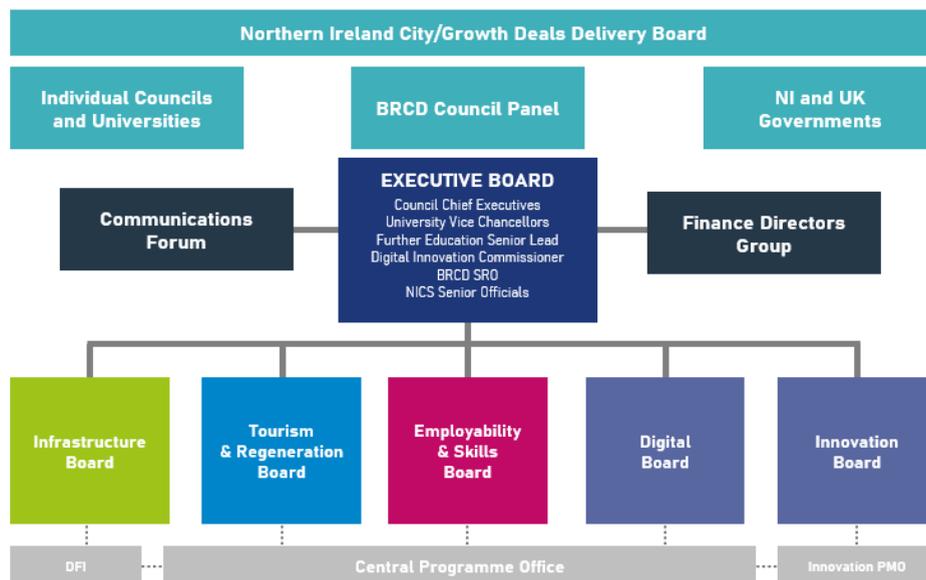
- 2.5 Following ratification of a Heads of Terms document in respect of the aforementioned Proposition, the Partners completed Phase 2, a detailed programme of work in preparation for delivery. This included the development of business cases for all projects, agreeing the programme of investment aligned with the budget envelope, obtaining approval for business cases for the most advanced projects and agreeing a final deal document, which commits all partners to full implementation of the deal including the specific financial commitments made for each project. It also included an Employability & Skills Proposition outlining how the partners will work collaboratively to maximise the employment and skills opportunities arising from the capital investment programme. The 'Deal Document' which is critical to the release of funding was signed in December 2021.

Phase 3 – Delivery of overall Programme of Investment

- 2.6 This MoU brings together partners' arrangements for working together to deliver the BRCD Programme. Partners will of course also have direct responsibility for the delivery of their individual projects in accordance with the approved business cases and will therefore also put in place the resources necessary to support such delivery. In addition, and reflecting the added value that the city deal process can offer, partners will continue to build upon their commitments to collaborate in a wide range of areas beyond the BRCD.

3.0 Governance Arrangements

3.1 A diagram illustrating the BRCD governance structure is included below. It builds on the structures already in place and comprises roles for a BRCD Council Panel, the individual Councils and Universities, an Executive Board and Pillar Boards to support the continued development and effective delivery of each of the pillars of the deal.



3.2 The ‘Executive Board’ for the BRCD comprises Council Chief Executives, University Vice-Chancellors, the Chair of the E&S Board, a senior Lead from the FE sector, the Chair of the Digital Board, the SRO for the Deal and observers from the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The Executive Board is supported by five Pillar Boards. These represent the strands of capital investment; Tourism & Regeneration, Innovation and Digital, and Infrastructure, and an Employability & Skills Board which, through oversight of delivery of the agreed E&S Proposition, will support the emerging skills needs and job opportunities created through the investment.

3.3 Individual Councils and University Partners will be responsible for the delivery of the approved capital projects and be required to approve decisions on their own proposed investments in BRCD projects, whilst remaining in line with agreed change management processes.

3.4 Belfast City Council will act as the Accountable Body in relation to the Deal, ensuring that the Partnership makes decisions in accordance with all legal, financial, and administrative requirements. As the Accountable Body all capital grant funding for BRCD projects (with the exception of funding for infrastructure projects) from Government will be channeled through Belfast City Council which will have the authority to hold to account any of the members of the bodies within the governance structure or projects, should they present a risk to the overall programme. Belfast City Council’s responsibilities in respect of its Accountable Body function are contained within the documents associated with the signed Deal.

3.5 Belfast City Council is the Lead Authority in relation to the Deal. As Lead Authority it will carry out a range of functions to support and enable regional partnership working. This will include supporting the partnership and its governance arrangements, employing the PMO and providing the necessary administrative, professional and technical support required to ensure effective delivery of the Deal.

3.6 Belfast City Council, as a recipient of funding, will also exist as an individual partner to the MoU and will be subject to the same conditions as all partners.

3.7 The activities delivered through this MoU will directly contribute towards the vision for the City Deal;

“Inclusive economic growth that delivers more and better jobs, a positive impact on the most deprived communities and a balanced spread of benefits across the region”.

4.0 Delivering the Deal – Partner Obligations

- 4.1 All partners to this agreement will act in the best interests of the Belfast Region in delivering the Deal. Partners agree to comply with the codes of conduct of their respective organisations and the values, principles and aspirations of the Belfast Region City Deal Partnership as contained within the Deal Documentation and this MoU. This MoU outlines the rationale and principles that form the basis of the mutual partnership agreement between the City Deal partners. It sets out an agreed approach for the Lead Authority and BRCD partners to achieve the intended goals and outcomes of the City Deal programme.
- 4.2 This MoU brings together partners' arrangements for working together to deliver the Programme and the wider ambitions of the partners. The formal, relationship between partners and the governments is detailed in the signed Deal Document and Governance Framework, Implementation Plan, Financial Plan, Financial Agreement, Communications Protocol and associated Letters of Offer. The additional obligations outlined in this MoU are intended to capture the supporting activity that will contribute to achievement of the overall ambitions of the programme and to provide clarity and confidence in the partnership arrangements. Needs emerging from the BRCD investment programme across the lifetime of the City Deal may require changes to ways of working and this will be considered as part of a regular process of review and its resulting work programme.
- 4.3 It is recognised that partners have already demonstrated their commitment to the BRCD, including by investing significant financial and people resources at risk, to support both the development of this programme and the individual projects that they plan to deliver.

Shared Commitments

- 4.4 All 12 signatories to this MoU commit to working collaboratively in the following areas to ensure successful delivery and maximise the impact of the BRCD Programme. Partners agree to contribute to and participate as required in the following:
- (i) Partnership Working:**
- Delivery of the Deal is predicated upon a strong partnership structure and requires a commitment from partners to work collaboratively, aligning resources and interventions as appropriate in response to the opportunities arising. By continuing to work in partnership we will be better positioned to contribute to more inclusive future growth and to act as an exemplar of what is possible and a catalyst for improvements in the wider NI economy. Partners agree that stronger collaboration over the longer term will enhance our ability to cut through traditional boundaries as we work together to shape priorities and to respond to challenges which can be more effectively addressed in partnership. To this end Partners agree to:
- Advocate and represent the interests of the BRCD to include positively profiling its activities

- Work collaboratively and proactively engage through BRCD governance structures
- Align resources and/or interventions to support the delivery of the BRCD programme
- Identify and respond to opportunities for further collaborative working aligned to the priorities of the BRCD programme e.g. complementary funding opportunities
- Provide robust, accurate and timely information, including via formal monitoring and reporting systems, to enable the partnership to operate effectively

(ii) Inclusive Growth:

To realise the BRCD's Inclusive Growth and Sustainability ambitions, ensuring that people living in the Belfast Region are primed to benefit from the jobs emerging, Partners commit to maximise the contribution to inclusive growth within their organisations, including through:

- **Procurement:** Integrating social value and sustainability considerations, where appropriate, through their procurement of works, goods and services. Partners commit to exploring opportunities to adopt consistent approaches to social value and sustainability through their future procurement activities. Partners will work together with government to agree a minimum standard in relation to the BRCD programme of investment, though will continue to be free to do more. This will help deliver wider inclusive growth impact across a range of areas including; creating employment/work experience opportunities targeting BRCD priority client groups, school engagement activities, creation of new apprenticeship opportunities etc. It will also contribute to delivering the climate change objectives of the partners.
- **Human Resources:** Working collaboratively on agreed HR priorities identified as part of the BRCD Employability & Skills Programme. As significant employers within the region Partners commit to harness their collective potential to further deliver upon our inclusive growth commitments. Partners agree to work collaboratively on agreed HR priorities which may include public sector apprenticeships, school engagement activities, pre-recruitment training programmes etc. Many of the areas highlighted will directly align to the interventions proposed as part of the BRCD Employability & Skills Programme, offering a clear demonstration of a collaborative approach.
- **Equality and Good Relations**

Independent expertise was commissioned to conduct an equality and rural needs screening of the Belfast Region City Deal programme processes during Phase I of the City Deal development. This screening exercise recognised the overall intent of the City Deal programme to improve inclusivity. The Programme is committed to ensuring it continues to deliver for equality both at the individual project level and for the Programme as a whole. Commissioning of additional specialist support may be required in this regard.

Partners agree to remain vigilant to ensure that equality is properly considered throughout the life of the Programme in order to address potential adverse impacts and to highlight opportunities for further positive impact, encouraging project teams to maximise the scope of these opportunities where possible.

(iii) Communication and engagement arrangements

All BRCD Programme communication with the public in respect of press, media and marketing will be coordinated and managed centrally by the Communications Forum and communication and engagement will continue to take place in accordance with the agreed Communications Protocol. Individual partners are expected to communicate within their own organisations and to maintain open communication channels with all other partners within this MoU. Communication for individual projects will be coordinated by the lead Partner Organisation.

Partners will report regularly on project engagement and communication and through the Communications Forum will agree programme level plans for public communication and strategic engagement with industry and other stakeholders.

(iv) Programme Management Office / Accountable Body

A centralised resource is required to support Phase 3. Given the BRCD is a 10-year Investment Programme, Partners recognise that appropriate full-time resources now need to be put in place to oversee the delivery of the programme over this period and in particular to carry out the functions of both:

- the lead authority and,
- the accountable body.

This includes a Programme Office as recommended under DoF guidance for programme management and will be an extension of the arrangements in place during Phase 2. The partners agree, in line with arrangements set out below, to jointly fund the central team to carry out the functions required of the accountable body and lead authority which will include, at a minimum:

- Overall programme management of all aspects of the deal
- Financial management required to fulfill its role as the accountable body in relation to the receipt and administration of grant funding including the establishment of appropriate accounting and reporting arrangements
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on projects and programmes
- Programme assurance
- Ongoing support to the BRCD governance structures including the Council Panel, Executive Board etc.
- Liaising with UK govt and NI Executive both through formal NI City Deal structures and BRCD specific arrangements

The Programme Office will work with partners to ensure, so far as practicable, that the functions are delivered in a manner that complements the project management arrangements established by partners

In addition, there will be an ongoing requirement for specialist technical support relating to the Programme in the areas of Governance and Assurance, Digital and Communication and Engagement.

The costs for this Programme resource will be shared between all partners who will contribute up to a maximum level as agreed by the Executive Board and approved by all partners.

Any underspend on the agreed level of contribution will be deducted from the contribution of partners for the following year.

Belfast City Council will provide legal, procurement, HR and communication advice in relation to the Programme from within the existing resources of the Council.

The requirements for the level of specialist or technical advice, as outlined above, will be agreed by the Executive Board, normally in November of each financial year.

Where it is agreed that specialist support is required, the BRCD PMO acting on behalf of the Executive Board will;

- procure, appoint and enter into contracts with service providers
- provide the resources required to run the procurement process
- evaluate tenders
- manage the contracts
- ensure that contracted outputs and outcomes are delivered
- ensure that funding is used in accordance with the contract for service and
- report to the Executive Board on progress of any contracted work

The Partners agree to abide by the decision as to the successful Tender. The Lead Authority will be responsible for paying the costs of the work to the Contractor(s).

As colleges receive no capital funding they will not be expected to contribute to any costs of the Accountable Body and will only be expected to contribute to PMO costs directly relating to the E&S programme.

(v) Data Sharing – GDPR

Development of data sharing agreements will be considered on an ongoing basis between partners as required.

5.0 The Approach to Employability and Skills

- 5.1 As an underpinning pillar of the BRCD programme of investment, the BRCD Employability and Skills proposition offers a key mechanism to enable the employment benefits of the city deal to be maximised. The BRCD Employability & Skills Proposition (approved by the Executive Board in July 2021) sets out how the partners will work collaboratively to identify and respond to the skills needs that city deal investment will create and to address the barriers to employment that might hinder ambitions for greater inclusion. This section of the MoU reflects Partners' stated commitment to support and deliver the Proposition and associated E&S work programmes that may emerge.
- 5.2 With a specific focus on the job and skills requirements originating from the BRCD Programme of investment, and the sectors within which they operate, Partners will develop and deliver collaborative interventions to prepare the pipeline of skills and talent required to support the city deal by:
- (i) identifying the skills needs that it will create and helping to shape and inform solutions that will respond to these needs and;
 - (ii) addressing the barriers to employment that might hinder our ambitions for greater inclusion.
- 5.3 This will be undertaken in the context of the wider employability and skills environment, integrating with existing and emerging employability and skills eco-system, including local and regional structures associated with the Skills Council and Labour Market Partnerships.
- 5.4 The BRCD will support, enhance and contribute to arrangements emerging through the creation of Employability NI, Local Labour Market Partnerships (LLMPs) and the NI Skills Strategy for more joined-up employability and skills planning. The NI Skills Council will be the key mechanism to capture the skills and employability needs emerging across all NI City/Growth Deals and will ensure collaborative working with the NICS departments which have responsibility for the policy, delivery and investment of skills.
- 5.5 The approach to E&S as agreed by Partners through the E&S Proposition are:
- A sub-regional **Employability and Skills Board**¹ to provide leadership and co-ordination and enable planning and co-design for BRCD projects; to help inform delivery of employability and skills provision across organisational and funding boundaries and encourage joined-up employability and skills provision that reflects employer and resident need.
 - **An E&S Programme** of partnership initiatives drawn from existing employability and skills resources and complemented by new interventions as needs emerge and funding is secured. These will be designed to add value, address gaps in provision, enhance existing delivery and respond to new opportunities. The Programme will reflect the focus of BRCD investment projects and the expected job creation in priority high value and growth sectors.
 - **Promotion of inclusive growth** through the creation of socially inclusive employment opportunities across

¹ As illustrated on the diagram in Section 2

the BRCD investment projects and areas of joint activity agreed by the partners, influencing behaviours and practices. We will also actively engage and support geographical hotspots of deprivation and target client groups. E&S activities will be agreed through an annual action planning process, which will enable flexibility whilst also ensuring that activities are defined over a specific timeframe.

- 5.6 The E&S Programme has been designed to be agile and to align with the overall BRCD investment programme and wider labour market conditions. The overriding principle involves Partners aligning existing investments to support the delivery of BRCD E&S priorities, supplemented where need is identified by proposals for new interventions requiring additional investment.
- 5.7 Each partner in receipt of BRCD funding accepts responsibility for the development and implementation of plans to ensure that the required skills are in place both to deliver BRCD investments and to ensure that the stated benefits are realised. The partners recognise that this can be achieved most effectively through a collaborative approach to skills delivery.
- 5.8 In addition, the BRCD partners are committed to working together to leverage extensive new employability and skills opportunities, through the application of social value clauses within the contracts signed with industry partners to deliver the £1billion programme.
- 5.9 Partners will seek to add value to the core E&S offer by potential interventions where the need for new and innovative approaches is identified

5.9 Shared Commitments for Delivery of E&S Programme

All signatories to this Deal commit to working collaboratively in the following areas to ensure successful delivery and maximise the impact of the E&S Programme. Partners agree to contribute to and participate as required in the following:

(i) Delivering the Employability & Skills Programme:

Across the timeframe of the city deal, investment of up to 20,000 new and better jobs are expected to be created. To prepare a pipeline of skills in response to this opportunity the BRCD partners agree to:

- **Participate in joint annual action planning process** by sharing relevant organisational plans, contributing to the development of annual priorities for the E&S programme and aligning relevant partner resources and programmes as required. Partners will update and refresh the E&S work programme through an annual joint planning process to ensure its continued relevance and ability to add value.
- **Identify opportunities to realign existing resources and/or programmes of intervention** to the skills needs arising from the BRCD investments and within associated priority sectors. A number of priority interventions have been identified as core contributors to the employability and skills programmes e.g., Apprenticeships, Digital Futures etc. Partners' contribution to the Employability and Skills programme will include, but will not be restricted to, these interventions. As part of a joint action planning process, Partners will identify planned activities that align to the priorities of the BRCD and report on these through agreed reporting arrangements. As the BRCD programme progresses, there will be greater clarity around employment needs and how they might be met through existing provision. Where gaps in provision, or concerns as to the level of provision, are identified, we will collectively explore options for further investment.

(ii) Supporting the E&S Partnership:

Delivery of the Employability and Skills Proposition is predicated upon a strong partnership structure that connects and responds to the needs arising from the BRCD capital investment programme. This will require a commitment from partners (and wider stakeholders) to work collaboratively, aligning resources and interventions as appropriate in response to the opportunities arising. To this end Partners agree to:

- **Provide appropriate representation from within their organisations to the E&S Board** and to actively support the functions of the Board, as formally agreed through the BRCD Governance Framework.
- **Advocate and represent the interests of the BRCD within the wider Employability and Skills eco-system**, to include positively profiling the associated activities of the pillar and advocating for investment in areas of identified need/gaps in provision aligned to the BRCD investment projects and associated priority sectors.
- **Proactively identify and communicate opportunities for collaborative working** to include identification of funding opportunities, synergy with wider skill planning/development work etc.

(iii) Resourcing the Employability & Skills Unit²:

BRCD Partners will support the establishment of a centralised E&S Unit within the BRCD PMO (through financial contributions or 'in-kind' staffing resources as agreed directly with partners). This shared resource will underpin

² Specific details of resourcing arrangements will be agreed outside of this MoU. The commitment outlined here is therefore 'in principle'.

the work of the E&S Pillar, support the E&S Board, work collaboratively across the investment pillars and projects and; facilitate collaboration between partners. Partners also agree to supplement the team as required through representation on task and finish groups or to inform specific development tasks e.g. funding applications etc. Where identified, how funding opportunities are taken forward will depend on the subject matter and will be decided on a case-by-case basis. The proposed approach will be agreed by the E&S Board and approved by the EB.

(iv) Labour Market Intelligence:

An intelligence-led approach will underpin the priorities and delivery of the BRCD Employability and Skills Programme. A wealth of data sets are already available across the partnership and Partners agree to share relevant intelligence with the E&S Unit to help inform the prioritisation, development and targeting of the E&S programme. A central repository of data - comprising BRCD project level data and wider labour market demand and supply intelligence - will be created by the E&S Unit. Partners also commit to assist in the development of any bespoke research required for the BRCD investment programme to inform its targeting, facilitating access to key stakeholders i.e. employer etc.

(v) Promoting the Opportunities:

A central communication and marketing campaign will be undertaken to complement the work of the E&S pillar and the associated activities of the city deal partners. A centralised web platform will offer visibility on the range of BRCD opportunities and partner interventions that will support individuals and businesses to obtain the employability and skills needed to access these opportunities. It will also promote positive case studies to stimulate demand and highlight career potential in priority sectors. City Deal partners commit to supporting E&S communication activity by promoting the alignment of interventions to the city deal programme and by supplying content (e.g. participant case studies, role models etc.) where applicable.

(vi) Reporting & Evaluating Impact:

Partners agree to report progress on E&S activity related to the E&S Proposition for which they are responsible. Reporting and monitoring arrangements will be defined in association with Partners to create effective, streamlined mechanisms. Partners will support activities designed to evaluate the impact of interventions and activities delivered. A monitoring and reporting cycle will be agreed, and partners will be kept abreast of progress through an annual engagement event. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the progress of the employability and skills activity will take account of any future arrangements agreed for the BRCD at a Programme level including the overall Benefits Management Plan.

5.10 Commitments specific to FE and HE Partners

(vii) Skills Planning (FE Colleges & University Partners)

By assessing and future-proofing skills provision, Further and Higher Education Partners have a critical role to ensure that skills provision aligns to the skills needs emerging from BRCD investments and the associated priority sectors and that they are available in the right areas at the right time. FE and HE partners therefore agree to support skills assessment and planning to:

- **Develop an understanding about the skills needs associated within BRCD investment** and within linked priority sectors/sub-sectors;
- **Assess the extent to which existing skills pathways are aligned to support known skill needs** (both technically and in terms of scale). This will include assessment of skill pathways from an inclusive perspective ensuring progressive pathways exist from lower to higher level skills;
- **Co-design new skills and pathways** in areas where the need is identified;
- **Advocate for new investment** in skill areas where the need is identified and engage through appropriate structures associated with the NI Skills Strategy.
- **Inform priority areas for skills planning** through horizon scanning activity linked to the BRCD investment programme, known employer skill needs and labour market intelligence. Specific areas of focus will be agreed through the BRCD annual action planning process and the E&S Board. Skills planning activity will be undertaken through an agile task and finish project approach, framed around FE and HE partners with input from wider stakeholders (employers, Invest NI etc) as and when required. Skills planning activity related to the BRCD Programme will be coordinated by the E&S Team and agreed with FE and HE partners.

5.11 Commitments specific to Council Partners

Through its Employability NI Programme the Department for Communities has committed to work in partnership with local councils and others, through LMPs, to better co-ordinate, deliver and co-design employability interventions and ensure that provision is targeted to specific areas of need. This reflects councils' increasing remit in supporting unemployed and economically inactive people.

Responding to this evolving remit, Councils, through LMPs, have committed to lead on the delivery of the "Skills for Inclusion" element of the E&S Proposition which focuses on connecting local residents to entry level employment opportunities and addressing barriers to employment. Through these LMPs (and wider economic development programmes) Councils will work alongside BRCD partners, to align activity to reflect both local needs and the BRCD priorities to:

- Create awareness of and access to BRCD opportunities;
- Focus on supporting unemployed people (including those furthest from the labour market) to move closer to and into employment;
- Deliver employer led approaches through employment academies and new innovative programme;
- Enable inclusive growth by stimulating employers to create new and innovative pathways into priority sectors.

The E&S Unit within the PMO will share intelligence relevant to opportunities emerging through the BRCD and its associated priority sectors and will, where appropriate, help to co-ordinate activities across LMPs. Partner councils will ensure that city deal priorities are incorporated into their local delivery plans to ensure the necessary pipeline of talent is in place to align to city deal opportunities and will share information on progress to the E&S Unit.

6.0 Principles for Collaboration

All partners are responsible for the implementation and delivery of their individual BRCD projects. In addition, the following principles will guide activities and arrangements for working together, in the spirit of partnership, for delivery of the overall programme:

Partnership	Commit to working in partnership to ensure that activities are delivered and actions taken; learn from each other and develop effective working practices, work collaboratively to identify solutions, eliminate duplication of effort, mitigate risk and reduce costs;
Leadership	Recognise that effective leadership is required to deliver the vision of the BRCD;
Consensus	Recognise that coordinated solutions are required to respond effectively to the challenges facing the region;
Interdependencies	Understand and observe all obligations in relation to decision making and delivery;
Integration	Be open to and initiate opportunities to complement and maximise programme benefits through integration;
Commitment	Understand the responsibility to appropriately resource the programme to ensure its successful delivery;
Transparency	Facilitate and contribute to open decision making;
Communicate	Contribute to effective two-way communication and share concerns and relevant information within and outside the partnership in a timely way;
Adapting	Focus on solutions to address unplanned events;
Learning	Share experiences and learning for mutual benefit to achieve full potential;
Accountability	Take on, manage and account to each other for performance of the respective roles and responsibilities set out in this MoU;
Timeliness	Recognise the time-critical nature of the Programme and respond accordingly to requests for support;
Confidentiality	Treat confidential information as confidential not to be shared outside of the Programme without prior agreement.

7.0 Terms of Agreement

▪ Status of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

This MoU is not intended to be legally binding, and no legal obligations or legal rights shall arise between the Parties from this MoU. Partners will act in accordance with the MoU as a basis for delivering a common approach to delivery of the BRCD Programme. It will commence upon signature by all partners and will remain in effect for the duration of the BRCD Programme, subject to annual review by the PMO or on request by any Partner. Partners enter into the MoU intending to honour its obligations and agree to do nothing that *cuts across* the statutory responsibilities of other signatories. Partners enter into the MoU intending to honour their responsibilities.

▪ Charges and liabilities

Except as otherwise agreed, Partners agree to bear any costs or expenses incurred in complying with the obligations of this MoU. If a Partner receives any formal inquiry, complaint, claim or threat of action from a third party in relation to the Deal (including, but not limited to, claims made by a supplier), the matter shall be referred to the Executive Board promptly.

▪ Dispute, Review and Variation

Any disagreement arising from the interpretation of this MoU should be considered within the spirit implicit in the cooperation arrangements. Partners agree that timely negotiation of disputes will ensure stability and minimise risks to programme delivery.

Should any dispute arise between the parties, then that dispute will first be referred to the appropriate management structure within the organisations concerned. If the dispute is not settled within 14 days of such referral, it shall be referred to the respective Chief Executive/Vice Chancellor/Principal of the organisations.

If the dispute is still not settled within 14 days of this referral, either party may refer it for Mediation by a Mediator agreed by the Parties, or nominated by the Law Society of Northern Ireland in the absence of agreement.

Nothing in this MoU should prevent the making of further arrangements to meet specific exceptional needs between any combination of Partners should the MoU fall short of what is required.

The MoU will be reviewed at agreed intervals and may only be varied through the mutual written agreement of all Partners. A review at any time may be arranged through the PMO.

Partners also recognise that any identified need to revise the MoU in the light of future developments should be approved by the Executive Board in the first instance.

- **Term and Termination**

This MoU shall commence on the date of signature by all Partners and shall expire on completion of delivery of the Belfast Region City Deal or on such a date as agreed by the Executive Board. By signing this MoU Partners confirm that they have secured their own internal approvals to the conditions outlined and agree to be bound by its terms.

Signatories