

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 8th June, 2022

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Alderman Dorrian; and
Councillors, Bunting, Duffy, Hanvey, Heading,
Hussey, T. Kelly, Lyons, Maskey, McCabe,
Murray, Nelson, O'Hara and Whyte.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mr. A. Cairns, Zoo Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Beattie and McLaughlin.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee of 11th May 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 June.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McCabe declared an interest in that, she was an employee of Feile an Phobail.

Presentations

Renewed Ambition Partnership

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. J. Dobson, Useful Projects, Mr. J. O'Neill, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Mr. J. Eyre, Titanic Quarter, and Ms. K. Doran, Lanyon Communications, to the meeting.

Ms. Dobson outlined the case for change, a shared ambition for a built environment that would deliver more and enhance communities, sustain the environment and provide a springboard for economic growth. She explained the purpose of the project, which was to deliver research that would demonstrate the positive economic, environmental and social impact that investment in the built environment could deliver

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and to provide recommendations to realise economic, social and environmental impacts from future investment and development in the Belfast region.

She pointed out the main objectives of the project were to look back, look locally and further afield and to look to the future.

She referred to local case studies and to the summary of recommendations, a pathway to inclusive and sustainable development, which included that local councils should continue to drive and support more inclusive and sustainable real estate investment, which could be done through three key levers: to lead by example, influence and invest.

Ms. Dobson explained the key findings and associated recommendations.

Mr. O'Neill stated that a mainstream process was required to undertake all major capital projects to deliver the ambition of the report and that it was an opportunity to share best practice and to create a practical tool kit to apply across all projects.

**The Committee agreed to consider the following item
subsequent to the above, associated presentation.**

Renewed Ambition Programme Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report, which was accompanied by a presentation delivered by the Director of City Regeneration and Development, Mr. J. Eyre and Mr. J. O'Neill:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- **Update Members on the Renewed Ambition Partnership Programme for 2022 / 2023 aimed at delivering regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and wider City Region.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- I. **Note an update on elements of the programme of work which is being delivered via the Renewed Ambition public-private partnership, including report findings from research which examined the role that the built environment plays in delivering Social, Environmental and Economic benefits to Belfast and the wider Belfast City Region, and update following Belfast's attendance at UKREiiF – the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum**

- II. Note that a presentation will be made at this Committee (by the Chair of the Renewed Ambition Partnership Taskforce and consultants) on the report findings in relation to the role that the built environment plays in delivering Social, Environmental and Economic Benefits including recommendations on how this can be enhanced and maximised going forward for the benefit of the city and wider region.**
- III. Approve entering into contractual arrangements on behalf of the Renewed Ambition Partnership with event organisers for MIPIM 2023, noting that this event will be funded through the existing Renewed Ambition Partnership sponsorship.**
- IV. Approve attendance by the Chairperson of the Committee, or their nominated representative, along with senior officers as appropriate at MIPIM 2023**
- V. Approve the establishment of a Members City Centre Working Group, with further details to be brought back on the Terms of Reference and membership based on advice via Democratic Services.**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 At May's City Growth and Regeneration Committee Members agreed that representatives from the Renewed Ambition Taskforce, alongside the consultants who undertook research which sought to examine the role the built environment plays in delivering social, environmental and economic benefits to the Belfast Region, attend this month's Committee meeting to update on report findings and wider programme of work currently being undertaken by the partnership.**
- 3.2 Members will be aware that the Renewed Ambition Partnership, a joint public – private initiative which is supported by public and private sectors as well as key anchor institutions, is currently delivering a programme of work aimed at ensuring Belfast is positioned to continue to attract investment and delivering sustainable and inclusive growth.**
- 3.3 The Renewed Ambition Partnership is comprised of Belfast City Council, all Belfast Region City Deal Partner Councils, Invest Northern Ireland, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Belfast Harbour Commissioners,**

and representatives from the developer and built environment supply chain community.

- 3.4 Having the right physical, digital and social infrastructure in place is essential for creating the physical capacity for people to live, work and visit the city and delivering on our shared longer-term ambitions for the city, as outlined in the Belfast Agenda. Underpinning the successful delivery of regeneration and development projects and creating the right city infrastructure is the ability to attract investment. This requires collaborative working with city partners to attract investment and ensure we create the right physical and built environment required to support a sustainable, inclusive city.**
- 3.5 The Renewed Ambition Partnership is an important lever within our wider 'Positioning 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. It aligns to work being undertaken by other city partnerships including Innovation City Belfast, Belfast Region City Deal and Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor, alongside council-led activities to accelerate city centre living, build resilience and create a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment that promotes wellbeing for all, inclusive growth and innovation.**
- 3.6 The Renewed Ambition Programme of activity for 2022 / 2023 launched in April and is delivering a structured 12 month programme of work focused on the five key pillars of Research; Events; Advocacy and Engagement; Communications and Repository with a clear focus on securing investment to deliver on city priorities.**
- 3.7 Research Report: 'Building Impact – The Role the Built Environment Plays in Delivering Social, Environmental and Economic Benefits to the Belfast Region'**
- 3.8 Members are reminded that the Renewed Ambition Partnership commissioned research to identify and demonstrate the positive social, economic and environmental impact that real estate and built environment projects can deliver when done well but importantly provide recommendations as to how, moving forward, the built environment partners can further enhance the delivery of wider sustainable development benefits from future development in the Belfast region.**
- 3.9 The report findings and recommendations were informed through engagement with representatives from the Renewed**

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Ambition Partnership, City Growth and Regeneration Committee, the CPP City Development Board, the Belfast Region City Deal partner Councils (inc Belfast City Council) and the local and international real estate development community.

- 3.10 A presentation will be made to Committee (on 8 June) which will provide further detail on the research findings and the recommendations going forward.**

- 3.11 In summary, the report found that the real estate sector in the Belfast region is already stepping up to the sustainable development challenge and has performed well at delivering social, environmental and economic benefits to the wider city region. It highlights however that there is an opportunity for the built environment to drive additional sustainable development benefits, while also playing a key role in resolving some of the region's societal and sustainable development challenges, including unemployment, skills inequalities, economic growth, housing provision, levelling up, community cohesion, and climate change. It found that wider sustainable development and inclusive growth outcomes can be delivered over the three main phases in the real estate lifecycle: planning and acquisition, development phase and operational phase, and have a positive impact both within the redline boundary of any built asset as well as within local surrounding communities and in the wider Belfast region.**

- 3.12 The local case studies identified in the research report include examples of real estate projects that have gone beyond minimum building regulations and delivered wider social, environmental and economic benefits to the city region. Some highlights from case studies contained within the report include Titanic Quarter which has already delivered £146 million of social value and it is expected that by 2035 that a further £382 million of social value will be generated. During construction of the new Ulster University campus in Belfast, UU has indicated that the equivalent of 101.7 years' worth of training, placement and apprenticeship opportunities were delivered to young people, students, and the long term unemployed. The Belfast Transport Hub early works was highly commended by the National Social Value Awards in 2021 for its approach to social value and the outcomes achieved during the enabling works phase. The restoration of Durham Street to create social housing by Clanmill Housing has won several awards. Council's Leisure Transformation Programme has provided the equivalent of 3,120 employment weeks to date throughout construction (still ongoing) to those furthest removed from the labour market. Blacks Gate, a 244**

housing-led development being brought by Radius Housing Association on former industrial land, was also highlighted within the report. This project will see the delivery of 244 new homes, including 28 affordable homes, 3 play parks/open space, a linear park, a community facility and 60,000sqft of commercial space and has included significant social clauses to promote community development, employment, and apprenticeships.

- 3.13** The report also highlights that there are major real estate projects across all asset classes in the Belfast region that are in the pipeline – i.e. projects that are currently in design and construction, due to be completed in the future, that have the ability to deliver wider social, environmental and economic benefits to Belfast and the wider city region, including the potential to generate significant employment, skills development and local supply chain opportunities, as well as community and wellbeing benefits, for people and businesses in the Belfast region.
- 3.14** There are a number of public and private sector led projects and initiatives referenced in the report as examples of best practice, including Belfast City Council, Belfast Region City Deal partner Councils and BRCD projects. From the Council’s perspective, the report highlighted the leadership Belfast City Council has demonstrated on the social value agenda by developing a Social Value Procurement Policy and a Social Value Toolkit, which aims to both achieve the best commercial outcome from our procurement activities and make a positive difference to the people and communities in Belfast. Council’s Leisure Transformation Programme, Innovation Factory and Connswater Community Greenway were identified as positive projects in delivering wider social, environmental and economic benefits to the city region, while ‘A Bolder Vision’, Belfast Stories and Giant’s Park North Foreshore were recognised as pipeline project examples that have the ability to deliver broader social, economic and environmental benefits to the city.
- 3.15** The report also recognises that the Belfast Region City Deal presents a unique opportunity to accelerate inclusive growth and sustainable development in the region. The tourism, regeneration, infrastructure and innovation projects funded through the Deal are being developed with inclusive growth and sustainability in mind, underpinned by an employability and skills programme. All BRCD projects are required to adhere to the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework seeks to set new standards for the delivery of

wider benefits in Northern Ireland and the reporting of outcomes.

- 3.16** The report has resulted in six key findings, and associated recommendations. Three of the recommendations are for the real estate sector and construction supply chain, one relates specifically to BRCD projects, one is focused on the role of local Councils, and one relates to the role of the NI Executive. These will be presented as part of the presentation at the CGR Committee.
- 3.17** The final draft report has been endorsed by the Renewed Ambition Taskforce and is being considered by the wider Renewed Ambition Partnership. It is also hoped that it will be brought to a future meeting of the Social Policy Working Group for consideration. A copy of the final report will be made available for Members following consideration by the wider Renewed Ambition Partnership.
- 3.18** The presentation to Committee will provide further detail on the research findings and the recommendations going forward as to how to ensure that the built environment continues to deliver positive social, environmental and economic benefits to the city and wider city region.
- 3.19** A key pillar of the 'advocacy and engagement' strand of the Renewed Ambition Programme of work moving forward will focus on ensuring that the report findings and recommendations act as enabling levers for city region partners to incorporate sustainable development best practice into real estate development projects moving forward. From a Council perspective, officers from across Council have input into the report and with mechanisms being progressed internally to ensure the Council takes a lead role in implementing the report recommendations in terms of their specific areas of responsibility.
- 3.20** 2022 / 2023 Programme of Work

At the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 8 September 2021 an update was provided to Members on the Renewed Ambition Partnership, the programme objectives and proposed future programme of activity (copy September CGR report attached at Appendix 1). As set out in that report, from a Council perspective, this collaborative public / private sector partnership approach offers a strong foundation to build on the work to date achieved through attendance at international built environment events 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, with a particular emphasis on housing led regeneration and city centre living**
- **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**

3.21 UKREiiF

UKREiiF, the UK’s Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum took place in Leeds from the 17 to 19 May 2022 and brought together nearly 4000 representatives from the public and private sector, central and local government, investors, funders, developers, housebuilders and end-users with the objective of accelerating the Levelling Up Agenda, whilst unlocking sustainable, inclusive and transformational investment across the UK. All major UK cities had a presence at the conference, and as previously agreed by Committee, included Council as part of a Belfast Region Partnership presence.

3.22 Key themes and conference sessions included achieving net zero targets by designing and delivering healthier, equal,

greener cities; how we create vibrant places that work socially, economically and spatially, while delivering social value and inclusive growth; building better communities and inclusive inward investment.

- 3.23 As part of the Renewed Ambition Partnership, officers from Belfast City Council and Belfast Region City Deal partner Councils, alongside representatives from Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, private sector developers and supply chain companies attended the conference to showcase the Belfast, and wider city region to support the delivery of our inclusive growth ambitions.**

- 3.24 The Belfast programme included a dedicated panel discussion focused on how the Belfast Region City Deal will further strengthen the region’s compelling investment proposition and unlock a decade of opportunity; a Belfast networking reception on the DIT Stand; a joint investment facilitation networking session with Glasgow City Council, and a dedicated Belfast stand within the exhibition space.**

- 3.25 Belfast City Council officers also presented and attended events organised by other cities and partner organisations including a main stage Panel discussion on “Levelling Up Across The UK” with BCC Chief Executive alongside representatives from Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Manchester; a panel discussion in the DIT Pavilion on “The UK is open and ready for business” featuring Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and DIT; Networking Reception hosted by Leeds City Council and Core Cities CEO’s Meeting and Investor’s Roundtable. In addition, there were a number of 1:1 meetings organised with institutional investors, funding organisations active in other UK cities, social value delivery vehicles, housing delivery partners, Innovation District representatives, senior officers from other UK Cities and regions, and the Department for International Trade, which facilitated the opportunity to discuss and share learnings on best practice for bringing forward sustainable, inclusive development and mechanisms for funding and delivery.**

- 3.26 Officers are currently following up on a number of leads generated at UKREiiF, alongside other Renewed Ambition partners, and it is worth noting that there was a strong interest in investment and development opportunities across all residential tenures to support housing-led and mixed use regeneration, although with further information being sought as part of the follow up discussions on issues around demand/supply, planning, viability, rates and land values etc. In addition, there was a strong focus on innovation and the**

city's growth sectors and how the Belfast Region City deal will support inclusive economic growth across the region, as well as net zero and infrastructure related projects. Further detail will be brought back to Committee as these follow up discussions progress.

MIPIM 2023

- 3.27 Members are reminded that in previous years the Council has participated in the 'Team Belfast' attendance at MIPIM - the world's leading built environment conference and exhibition. Following the cancellation of MIPIM 2020 due to Covid, the 'Team Belfast' partners coalesced into the Renewed Ambition partnership but with a renewed focus around a wider range of activities to bring forward investment and support inclusive growth with a particular focus on priority areas such as housing and another example being the research paper referenced above aimed at maximising the social, environmental and economic benefit from real estate. The Partnership membership was also expanded and now includes NIHE, Housing Association representation, all the BRCD Councils and anchor institutions as well as developer and supply chain representatives.
- 3.28 Whilst there was a MIPIM 2022 event in March, the Renewed Ambition Partnership did not attend on this occasion. However, the Renewed Ambition Taskforce has recently endorsed a Belfast presence at MIPIM in March 2023 and its inclusion within the Renewed Ambition Programme of activity for 2022 / 2023. The presentation to Committee from representatives from the Renewed Ambition Taskforce will provide further detail on how a Belfast Region presence at MIPIM assists on the delivery of investment that provides for sustainable inclusive growth in the city and wider city region, based on previous experience at MIPIM and looking forward.
- 3.29 MIPIM is an annual built environment exhibition and conference which brings together nearly 27,000 public and private sector built environment representatives from across the globe, including all major UK and European cities. It provides city leaders with an opportunity to promote their city to a global audience and connect with potential partners and sources of investment required to unlock built environment regeneration and development. In a similar vein to UKREiiF, MIPIM has re-pivoted to focus on ensuring the built environment supports sustainable development. Discussions are on-going with the event organisers on emerging themes and structure for the 2023 conference and they have indicated that the conference themes are likely to build on the 2022 key

themes of Cities for Citizens, Housing, Sustainability and Decarbonising the Built Environment.

- 3.30** From a Renewed Ambition Partnership perspective, partners feel that attending MIPIM allows Belfast and the Belfast Region to position itself to a global audience and attract the interest of institutional investors, developers, occupiers and funders in the context of bringing forward sustainable development to create a well-connected and culturally vibrant, sustainable city and region. The Partnership has therefore proposed a Belfast City Region presence at MIPIM 2023, in line with other UK Cities, and a focused programme of activity which would include key investment priorities of housing, innovation, green technology and showcasing investment opportunities within the Belfast region which draw on our key growth sectors, BRCD ambitions and delivering key regeneration projects to help ensure the built environment delivers social, environmental and economic benefits to the wider city region as highlighted within the 'Building Impact' Report.
- 3.31** The other BRCD partner Councils and private sector partners have expressed a clear interest in attending MIPIM 2023, however they feel that in order to successfully showcase Belfast and the wider City Region, it requires the civic leadership and attendance of Belfast City Council. As referenced in section 3.20, the Council's involvement will 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, with a core focus on accelerating city centre living, notably seeking institutional investment to help drive housing building at scale, while also supporting work being undertaken by Economic Development, Tourism and Culture, Resilience, SMART Belfast and partnerships including Innovation City Belfast, Belfast Dublin Economic Corridor and BRCD.
- 3.32** The governance of the Renewed Ambition Partnership is via a Taskforce comprised of representatives of the public and private sector, with Council managing all contractual and financial elements of programme delivery. Subject to Members approval, officers would enter into contractual arrangements on behalf of RAP with the event organisers for MIPIM 2023, noting that the Belfast City Region presence at MIPIM will be funded through the existing RAP programme budget.

City Centre Working Group

- 3.33** Post-pandemic the city continues to face a range of societal, economic and environmental challenges. Committee are regularly briefed on projects and interventions that Council and partners are working on to drive city recovery in the short term, while also bringing forward priorities under the Corporate Plan and strategic programmes of work including 'A Bolder Vision' and wider city connectivity, housing led regeneration, tourism and cultural activity and the Future City Centre Programme aimed at delivering a vibrant, liveable and sustainable city centre which connects to the surrounding communities. From a city centre perspective, there remain a number of opportunities but also challenges ranging from operational issues such as cleansing, safety and transport, to vibrancy/cultural and tourism activities, engagement with businesses, development and regeneration priorities including the drive for more city centre living, enhanced connectivity and the importance of physical, social and economic connections to existing communities.
- 3.34** Successfully delivering our city ambitions and addressing the challenges of the city centre requires public and private sector city partners working collaboratively to address these challenges. All city stakeholders have a key role to play in successfully delivering this ambition and there is a clear desire amongst a number of these stakeholders for a more cohesive forum for discussing and addressing issues, whilst maximising opportunities to collectively deliver on the ambitions for a successful city centre.
- 3.35** It is proposed that a Members City Centre Working Group is convened to provide a forum to allow, as appropriate, public and private city stakeholders, including representatives from business and community organisations, the development, tourism and cultural, housing and education sectors and BID's, to engage with Members to address the short- and longer-term challenges facing the city centre. Members will be aware that similar Working Groups are already in place for North, South, East and West Belfast and it is felt that it would be beneficial to have a similar dedicated focus on the City Centre. Given the important role of the city centre as a hub for investment, culture, tourism, learning and employment, it is felt that a Members Working Group could help ensure it can continue to perform these important roles for all areas of the city to derive the benefits. Given the importance of continued public private partnership working it could also serve as a useful forum to consider some of the matters raised via the

Renewed Ambition Partnership and seek input of Members as appropriate.

3.36 Subject to Members agreement on this approach a further paper will be brought back on the Terms of Reference and advice via Democratic Services on the make-up of the Group.

3.37 Financial and Resource Implications

The Renewed Ambition Partnership is delivered as a public private sector sponsorship fund and is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institutions.

3.38 Council has previously agreed to contribute of £80,000 towards the 2022 Renewed Ambition Partnership. In addition, all Belfast Region City Deal partner Councils, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Queen's University Belfast, and representatives from the developer and built environment supply chain community have contributed towards the current programme of activity, with external and private sector funding forming the majority of the overall programme budget.

3.39 The Renewed Ambition Partnership (RAP) Taskforce, the governing body for the Partnership, are proposing that a Belfast City Region presence at MIPIIM 2023 should be included in the RAP 2022 / 2023 programme of activity, with associated costs being funded through the existing Partnership sponsorship budget.

3.40 Council undertakes the contract and financial management on behalf of RAP. Approval is sought for officers to enter into contractual arrangements on behalf of RAP with event organisers for MIPIIM 2023, noting that this will be funded through the sponsorship already secured from public and private partners to deliver the wider Renewed Ambition Programme.

3.41 Approval is also sought for the Chairperson of the Committee, or their nominated representative, along with senior officers as appropriate to attend MIPIIM 2023 with travel costs to be met from within existing departmental budgets. All other costs related to the Belfast Region Presence at MIPIIM 2023 would be met from the existing RAP Public - Private Partnership Programme Budget.

**3.42 Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**

None associated with this report.”

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In response to a request by a Member, the Director of City Regeneration and Development agreed to explore the viability of a Communities of Interest Working Group and to provide an update to the Committee, in conjunction with a future update on the establishment of a Members City Centre Working Group.

Subsequent to responding to a number of questions from Members, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation, and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee:

- Noted an update on elements of the programme of work which was being delivered via the Renewed Ambition public-private partnership, which included report findings from research that examined the role that the built environment played in delivering Social, Environmental and Economic benefits to Belfast and the wider Belfast City Region, and update following Belfast's attendance at UKREiiF – the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum;
- Noted that, a presentation had been made to the Committee (by the Chair of the Renewed Ambition Partnership Taskforce and consultants) on the report findings in relation to the role that the built environment played in delivering Social, Environmental and Economic Benefits, which included recommendations on how it could be enhanced and maximised going forward for the benefit of the city and wider region;
- Approved entering into contractual arrangements, on behalf of the Renewed Ambition Partnership, with event organisers for MIPIM 2023, noting that this event would be funded through the existing Renewed Ambition Partnership sponsorship;
- Approved attendance by the Chairperson of the Committee, or their nominated representative, along with senior officers as appropriate at MIPIM 2023; and
- Approved the establishment of a Members City Centre Working Group, with further details to be brought back on the Terms of Reference and membership based on advice via Democratic Services.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following two items 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 following five items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of

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exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

A Bolder Vision Update

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided the Committee with an update on A Bolder Vision, that included the ongoing engagement with Ministers for Communities and Infrastructure, and the ongoing traffic analysis in relation to options for the Donegall Place/Royal Ave section of the Civic Spine.

She further updated the Committee on the timeframe to complete the Bolder Vision Strategy and Action Plan, and that, a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would form the basis of a framework for collaborative partnership working under A Bolder Vision.

The Committee:

- Noted the ongoing engagement with DfC and DfI Ministers and other partners, including the work being undertaken by a DfI consultant focusing on resolving issues on the Civic Spine and Inner Ring Road Key Moves aimed at enabling the design for Belfast Streets Ahead 3 and the Frederick St Junction to progress within the context of the Bolder Vision, to enable the completion of ABV Strategy and Action Plan;
- Noted the ongoing work on the BCC/DfI/DfC partnership and MoU approach, subject to agreement from all three organisations, and that, this will be brought to Committee at the appropriate time; and
- Noted the planned BCC/DfI/DfC statement that would follow the proposed Ministerial meeting, anticipated to take place late June/early July and the next steps to bring forward the Bolder Vision Strategy and Action Plan.

Quarterly Zoo Performance Update

The Director of Economic Development and the Zoo Manager provided the Committee with an update on the Zoo performance during Quarter 4 (January - March) of the 2021-22 financial year.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development agreed to bring a report to a future meeting of the Committee with further detail on the financial performance of the Zoo.

The Committee:

- Noted the Zoo performance update report for the period January to March 2022; and
- Approved the process for dealing with Charitable Requests.

Request to Present

Streetdock

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from Streetdock on an update on its e-cargo delivery pilot that was supported under the Revitalisation Funding, at a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

Car Parking Strategy Update

The Director of City Regeneration and Development reported that it had been proposed that the refresh of the Car Parking Strategy would be postponed until the completion and publication of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) and the adoption of the Belfast LDP Draft Plan Strategy.

She informed the Committee that an important strand of the Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan (2018) had been to ensure the appropriate provision and location of car parking in the city and that the volume, location and quality of parking in the city was seen as key to its vitality and viability.

She explained that the Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan (2018) outlined a range of actions designed to promote more sustainable travel provision and to address residential parking issues.

She reported that officers had, in preparation for undertaking the refresh of the Car Parking Strategy, considered the statutory processes which had been underway, including the development of the draft Plan Strategy and BMTP, the publication of which would provide direction for all policy approaches to car parking and other transportation issues.

She concluded by stating that officers would continue to implement, monitor and promote the Action Plan as contained within the Car Parking Strategy through the Car Parking Working Group and would provide regular updates to the Committee with regard to the implementation status of the actions.

The Committee:

- agreed that, the refresh of the Car Parking Strategy would be deferred until after the LDP draft Plan Strategy (dPS) was adopted; and
- noted that the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) had been considered during the Independent Examination of the (dPS) and that it would be prudent to postpone a refresh of the Parking Strategy to ensure consistency in the policy approach.

**Blue and Green Infrastructure Funding:
Active Travel Enablers Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- To update Members on the progress of the Active Travel Enablers projects supported under the Dfl Green and Blue Infrastructure Fund that includes covered cycle stands, cycle repair kits and secured cycle parking provision
-
- To note the ongoing engagement with the Department for Infrastructure on future funding for active travel projects

2.0 Recommendations

The Members of the Committee are asked to:

- Approve the proposed covered cycle stand locations and repair kits as outlined within this report to enable delivery within the timeframes of the Letter of Offer;
- Approve the recommendation to provide funding to deliver secure cycle stands as identified within this paper
- Approve the further development and submission of further funding bids to support the delivery of additional secure cycle provision.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

As previously reported to Members, on 2nd February 2022 Council received a Letter of Offer from Dfl for capital funding to support Active Travel Enabling Projects in line with the Business Case submitted to the Department. The Letter of Offer for £207,500 of capital funding includes covered cycle parking, secure cycle parking and cycle repair stands. Originally Dfl required spend by the end of March, however, Council Officers secured agreement from Dfl that the funding could be drawn down prior to 31 March and spend to be completed by 30 September 2022. These Active Travel Enablers are aligned to the Bolder Vision as early

interventions to bring forward improvements in the active travel provision and infrastructure across the city, utilising our own assets and expanding the capacity of key delivery partners to promote and install enabling infrastructure to increase active travel provision and to address the dominance of car-based infrastructure and usage across the city.

3.2 Covered Cycle Stands

Committee had previously agreed the allocation of £100k from the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme for the provision of covered cycle stands. Sustrans was appointed by the Council to identify appropriate locations for cycle parking across the city, identifying key attractors and locations aligned with the DfI Belfast Cycle Network. Based on their developed criteria and type of cycle stands, locations were identified and approved for installation as a first phase within this programme. Following a competitive procurement competition, Council appointed Externiture to produce ten covered cycle stands. These units are currently under production and will be installed later this summer in the following locations as agreed by this Committee in September 2021:

- Gasworks
- St George's Market
- Grosvenor Community Centre
- Shankill Leisure Centre
- Belmont Park
- Inverary Community Centre
- Belfast Zoo
- Waterworks
- Belvoir Activity Centre
- Mark Peters Track

3.3 Members received an update on the DfI funding for the Active Travel Enabling Projects in March 2022 that outlined the projects, budget and timeframe for delivery by 30th September 2022. In terms of the covered cycle stands, Officers drew upon priority locations areas as 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. On approval of the locations Officers (via the City Regeneration & Physical Programmes teams) will commence the procurement process.

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- 3.4** Based on identified priority recommendations from the Sustrans report and additional applied criteria such as need and demand and timeframe for expenditure, we are seeking approval for the following locations for the next phase of delivery. In terms of deliverability within the expenditure timeframe there has been a focus on utilising Council owned sites where possible. Reflecting on experience from the first phase and delays for implementing the stands in certain locations, we suggest that Members approve additional locations as a fall-back position in case some of the first set locations become difficult to implement. Additionally, it is proposed that there are five repair kits to go alongside some of the covered cycle units and Officers are seeking flexibility in terms of the location of these due to the need to engage with 3rd party landowners and ensure a spread across the city. If there is additional Dfl funding this year, further repair kits could form part of an overall request for funding.

Proposed locations for approval (including backup locations)	
Avoniel Leisure Centre	Ligoneil/Wolfhill Centre
Botanic Gardens	Brook Leisure Centre
New Park Colin	Cherryvale Park
Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre	Crumlin Road Gaol
Ormeau Park	Templemore
Andersonstown Leisure Centre	Writer's Square
Belfast Castle	Connswater Community Greenway
Linen Quarter	Shaftesbury Centre
Four Corners	Musgrave Park
Sailortown	Grove Leisure Centre

- 3.5** Depending on the outcome of the procurement exercise it is envisaged that this funding will provide between 13 & 16 covered cycle stands at the locations identified above with Officers working across the list as above in terms of deliverability and funding within the time period of September 2022 in accordance with the Letter of Offer.

Secure Cycle Parking Provision

- 3.6 As part of the DfI funding to support the Active Travel Enabling Projects the CG&R Committee approved an Expression of Interest for the provision of secure cycle parking within the city centre. The provision of funding of up to £20k capital funding for secure cycle infrastructure provision was proposed to bring forward publicly accessible, secure cycle parking that would be installed and operated by a competent supplier that could deliver the units within the funding period of September 2022.
- 3.7 The Expression of Interest (EoI), which closed on 16 May 2022 was brought forward to test the market and identify suitable delivery partners for this project, potential locations, and interest in the concept. In addition to utilising the Councils normal advertising channels Officers also engaged directly with delivery partners including the BIDs, the Chamber, Translink and Multi-Story Car Park Operators to promote the scheme throughout the EoI period, targeting operators that can utilise and repurpose existing physical assets and provide strategically located, publicly accessible, and maintained and operated locations that could deliver out additional secure cycle parking as pilot projects for this type of provision
- 3.8 Delivery partners were assessed by a panel of Council Officers based on the criteria as established within the EoI and as previously agreed by this Committee. These criteria included the proposed location in relation to key trip attractors, as well as their operating model and ability to adequately deliver a publicly accessible model within the timeframe. In total four applicants responded to the EOI with details and recommendations within the summary table below;

Applicant	Location	Recommendation	Reason
Savilles	Murrays Exchange	Not recommended	Proposal to provide employee bike parking within a building frontage within the Murrays Exchange. Not publicly accessible and for employee use only
Castlecourt	Castlecourt	Recommended	Meets the agreed scheme criteria. Located within the

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			<p>Castlecourt Car Park to provide 24 secure cycle stands beside the security office with lighting & CCTV coverage and included within an established facility management system. Accessible from Berry St and Gresham St during normal car parking hours with overnight parking available.</p>
Linen Qtr Bid	Linenhall Street	Not recommended	<p>Proposal to place a secure cycle cage onto existing on-street parking bays within the Linenhall area. Accessible via a keyfob issued on a first come first served basis and proposed to include within the BID area cleansing team and StreetBeat Officer patrols. Delivery not achievable within the delivery timeframe given landowner consent & statutory approval requirements</p>
Victoria Sq Q Park	Victoria Sq	Recommended	<p>Meets the scheme criteria. Proposed to deliver in conjunction with Spokesafe as a pilot project in Belfast. Located within the Multi-storey car park provided a cycle hub on existing</p>

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			<p>parking spaces. Provided 30-35 bike parking spaces (including e-cargo), bike repair and locker provision. Facilitated online customer booking process including PAYG, weekly and monthly booking options and incorporated within the structure's facilities management.</p>
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3.0 The EoI has enabled the Council to recommend two successful applications from CastleCourt Shopping Centre and Spokesafe Ltd in partnership with Q-Park Victoria Square Shopping Centre to deliver and maintain safe and secure cycle parking provision within their existing assets, and to provide a self-sustaining operating model for the ongoing use of the facility. This model aligns with one of the emerging actions of the Bolder Vision Action Plan in terms of re-purposing existing assets to create multi-model locations at key locations across the city centre and aligned to the DfI Belfast Cycle Network. Pending approval, a Letter of Offer for £20k capital funding will be sent to the successful applicants, enabling the implementation of grant funding for the secure cycle parking to commence June 2022 and to ensure the project is completed September 2022. This Letter of Funding will stipulate the conditions of the provision of publicly accessible and secure cycle parking aligned with the terms of the submission received from the successful operators. The Letter of Offer will transfer all risk, liability and operation and maintenance to the successful applicant and will also include provision for a clawback of funding should the offer be removed at any stage during the agreed period of two years as per the Letter of Offer.

3.10 It should also be noted that during the EoI period Officers received direct interest from a total of twelve groups/businesses who would be interested in bringing forward secure cycle provision but who were however unable to commit to the timeframes of this Letter of Offer in terms of delivery.

3.11 The responses received have helped guide decision making around the next steps of this process and highlighted that there is a growing appetite in the market and the potential to support its growth by also expanding the scheme outside the existing city centre boundary, looking at different operating models and by including stakeholders such as private sector employers and the BIDs via a potential second tranche of funding from Dfl. This approach would also support the growing number of Cycle to Work schemes and provide security for those using e-bikes. The EoI has demonstrated that there is a demand for secure cycle parking (subject to appropriate delivery models and funding) and Officers feel there is an opportunity to work with stakeholders and help stimulate the market further and bring forward other options and models. As a result of this Members are asked to approve the development and submission of an additional funding request to Dfl to support secure cycle infrastructure through future potential funding streams.

4.0 **Finance and Resource Implications**

The capital costs associated within this report will be covered from within the Dfl Green and Blue Infrastructure Fund.

5.0 **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.”

During subsequent discussion, a number of Members stated that city centre locations for secure cycle parking should be explored and considered as a priority, as part of the Active Travel Enablers projects.

The Committee:

- Approved the proposed covered cycle stand locations and repair kits, to enable delivery within the timeframes of the Letter of Offer;
- Approved the recommendation to provide funding to deliver secure cycle stands;
- Agreed that a covered cycle stand location at the Kennedy Centre, be considered as an additional proposed location; and

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- Approved the further development and submission of further funding bids to support the delivery of additional secure cycle provision.

Growing Business and the Economy

Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Strategy for Belfast

The Director of Economic Development provided the Committee with an update on the Economic Strategy: Supporting Sustainable and Economic Growth.

He stated that the purpose of the strategy was to respond to opportunities in a timely manner, effectively plan ahead to secure new funds and improve coherence across the range of Council services. He added that the strategy provided a framework for internal collaboration, focus and prioritisation and facilitated alignment with the work of key partners across the public, private and third sectors.

He explained to the Committee the following objectives of the Economic Strategy:

- Foster growth of indigenous businesses in Belfast;
- Establish Belfast as a resilient, net-zero, circular economy;
- Create new and better jobs in the city;
- Build and maintain a skills pipeline that addresses the skills gaps;
- Improve socio-economic inclusion;
- Grow levels of exports and FDI; and
- Establish Belfast as a vibrant place to invest, live, work and play.

He concluded by outlining the next steps, that included strategic engagement with key partners, public consultation, reshaping internal workplans and establishing management and governance arrangements.

In response to a request from a Member, the Director of Economic Development agreed to include regular Party Group Briefing meetings on the Economic Strategy.

The Committee:

- Noted the progress to date, in the development of the Economic Strategy to support sustainable and inclusive growth in Belfast for the period 2022-2030;
- Endorsed the draft vision, objectives and emerging policy actions and advise on any suggested amendments in advance of the planned public consultation exercise; and
- Noted the ongoing work to develop activities that would be consistent with the emerging vision and objectives of the strategy; and

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- Agreed associated budget allocations, which included £45,000 towards the Social Enterprise Incentive Fund.

Positioning Belfast to Compete

Update on City Imagining and Make Yourself at Home

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the delivery of two recent strategies, Make Yourself at Home and City Imagining. The report specifically updates members on:

- **Development work and concept a year of culture with the working title Belfast Imagining**
- **Progress on Neighbourhood Tourism and approval for continuation funding**
- **Update on major events including overview of future commissioning model**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the principles, concept and work related to the development of a year of culture, Belfast Imagining and agree to receive future reports as this work develops further.**
- **Note the progress on the development of a Neighbourhood Tourism investment framework and timeline for the introduction of that framework.**
- **Agree the funding of £37,500 to each of the two partners within the existing ‘City Connections’ programme totalling £75,000 to provide security and the continuation of this work until the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment framework is active. To note the requested monies are within exiting departmental budgets and requires no additional monies.**

- Note the findings from the evaluation of 2022 St. Patricks Day events and the proposed future commissioning model and the development approach to the Maritime Festival.
- Agree that a full bid is submitted for Belfast to host the Fleadh Ceoil and to receive future reports.

3.0 Main report

3.1 At its meeting on 6th April 2022 members were provided with the final version of the 'Make Yourself at Home' 10 year tourism strategy and approved its adoption as a council strategy. The strategy aims to double the value of tourism in the city and work with city partners to enhance and develop coherent authentic tourism offers, marketing and visitor servicing. The Make Yourself at Home strategy is designed to 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.

3.2 At this committees meetings in March and April members approved the 22/23 workplan for both strategies. Those workplans contained a number of initiatives to be delivered within this financial year. These activities are interrelated and are designed to equip the city to deliver on a core ambition of 'A City Imagining' - to deliver our home-grown year of culture to build capacity and ambition in our creative sector whilst placing Belfast on the map internationally as a culturally vibrant destination that will assist our cultural, tourism and hospitality recover and create more and better jobs.

Belfast Imagining

3.3 As laid out in the cultural strategy the ambitions of an upscaled year of culture will directly deliver on all 4 strategic themes and their associated priorities – A City Belonging, A City Challenging, A City Creating and a City Exploring – including:

- Long-term capacity building and ensuring sustainability of the cultural sector
- City-wide civic engagement and buy-in on culture and regeneration development for Belfast
- A new commissioning model for the city's events and festivals

- **Strengthening the tourism proposition in the city through greater understanding of the city's cultural narrative and international appeal**
- **Integration of planned major developments, such as the Belfast Stories & UNESCO City of Music status, into a citywide approach maximising inclusive growth opportunities for this investment**

Belfast Imagining 2024*- Post-Covid

- 3.4 We believe creativity will be at the heart of Belfast's recovery from the pandemic ensuring that we can build back better – across culture, tourism, and hospitality - to a more sustainable position than we were in before the effects of the pandemic set in, leaving a lasting legacy for these sectors, as well as the people of the city. While the full impact of Covid-19 is yet unknown, what is clear is that recovery will require new and innovative approaches, as well as time. We recognise the profound socio-economic impacts across the city, especially for the culture and arts sector. We are pivoting our programmes to help build the capacity of our cultural sector and maintain our commitment to a year of cultural celebration in our city, this will now take place in 2024 recognising the impact on the cultural sector's capacity post-pandemic. Belfast will continue to host a number of landmark international projects in such as UNBOXED 2022 and One Young World in 2023 in the lead up to this home-grown year of culture in 2024.**

Belfast Imagining 2024*- Concept

- 3.5 Belfast Imagining* is an investment in the collective imagination of the city, giving space, time and resources for the coming together of its people to imagine, dream and invent. To speculate and investigate. To learn and experiment. To build and develop plans for new futures, new spaces, new expressions of humanness and our relationship with nature, new stories and new experiences that will assemble us together across the city (and in virtual spaces that now are an integral part of our lives) releasing new meaning and building new connections to pave our way into an exciting and creative future for our city.**
- 3.6 Council will lead on a process of investment and capacity building that allows a collective imagination to take place across the city. A city allowing its imagination to flourish through creation and collaboration, connecting with each other and with nature, bringing our streets and**

neighbourhoods to life, through extraordinary things taking place in ordinary places.

Principles for Belfast Imagining 2024* Programme

- 3.7 **Collaboration and Co-design - Belfast Imagining*** is an opportunity for the city to connect, assemble and collaborate in a multitude of new ways. It is a year to make new connections, to build new relationships and to invent new ways of working and creating through partnership and genuine co-design. It will be a year of Inter-sector collaboration (culture, science, business, education) A year of citizen involvement in the cultural and artistic development processes of the city. And with new relationships come new processes and models of engagement. It is a year to explore and create together.
- 3.8 ***New work - Belfast Imagining**** will involve a significant investment in new work and the creative process. Through a process of co-design, development, commissioning and grants the city will be alive with new and exciting experiences and initiatives that will assemble us together across the city throughout 2024.
- 3.9 ***Us and nature*** - It is the most challenging question of our time: how can humans co-exist more harmoniously with all that we share this planet. Sustainable. Inclusive. It will be a year to reassess, reinterpret and celebrate the splendour of interconnectedness with our natural world. How does nature become a part of how we regenerate our city centre? How can we use creativity to help people understand and engage with the climate crisis? The city will open itself to fresh perspectives and paradigms. 2024 will contribute to the search for harmony and a greener, more sustainable future for our city.
- 3.10 ***Future thinking - Belfast Imagining**** will be an opportunity to project, develop and investigate what possible new futures lie ahead of us. What new spaces, new forms, alternatives, reinvention can we encourage and explore through creativity and culture? What lies ahead for Belfast and for the planet? It will be a space for our collective imagination to explore our future city.
- 3.11 ***Public space Belfast Imagining**** will make a substantial contribution towards examining cultural belonging through public space. The city of Belfast itself will be the canvas for the year; its streets, its walls, the water surrounds it, the air that fills it. It will be a chance for creators and the people who live,

work and play in Belfast to rediscover their city, to build our civic pride and weave creativity and imagination into the very fabric of Belfast.

Belfast Imagining 2024* Next Steps:

- 3.12 As the Culture team progress with recruitment for the new staff structure designed to support the development and delivery of the ambitions of Belfast Imagining 2024* progress will now focus on delivering the following:
- SOC/ OBC – council have commissioned the development of a Strategic Outline Case and Outline Business Case for Belfast Imagining 2024* to be delivered in June and July respectively. This will help secure buy-in and both private and public sponsorship, as well as partnership, opportunities to deliver on these ambitions with collaborative cross sector, cross governmental and cross departmental approaches.
 - Eden Project Partnership – Eden Project are currently finalising their feasibility study to commission as a lead partner in 2024 design and delivery with a focus on core themes of nature and public space, plans include urban gardens, social prescribing, urban bee keeping, largescale sculptural works and long-term city centre greening and wilding.
- 3.13 *Governance Model* – Culture & Tourism teams are working collaboratively, to design a governance model to suit a variety of largescale projects in delivery over the next 3 years (One Young World, Fleadh Ceoile, UNESCO City of Music, City Compact, Belfast Imagining 2024) to streamline these processes and the ask of various city stakeholders. A future report will detail this governance model.
- 3.14 *Commissioning Model* – Culture & Tourism teams are liaising with procurement, audit and legal departments to develop a bespoke commissioning model that is fit for purpose specifically for cultural development and events commissions for delivering on the ambitions of the year of culture in 2024 as well as the new approach to commissioning local, and of scale, artworks and creative programmes for city events such as St Patrick’s Day and Maritime Festival.

3.15 Update Neighbourhood Tourism:

Members will be aware that an Investment Programme for Local Tourism was included as an integral part of the Year 1 Action Plan of the Tourism Strategy 'Make Yourself at Home' approved at April 2022 Committee.

3.16 Initial work has indicated that this Programme will have multiple strands recognising that one size does not fit all. It will also include capacity building for those areas of the city or organisations that are at an earlier stage of development in terms of readiness for investment.

3.17 At the current time, Officers continue to:

- **Consult and engage with the appropriate stakeholders around the outline parameters of the Programme ensuring strategic fit to tourism priorities.**
- **Develop aims and objectives and outcomes of the Programme which are inclusive of geographic communities, communities of interest and thematic clustering while delivering on the four strategic themes within the Tourism Strategy - Grow, Position, Experience and Sustain.**
- **Benchmark best- practice investment models from other jurisdictions and account for 'lessons learned'.**
- **Scope and scale an appropriate delivery mechanism which takes cognisance of the varying tourism priority needs across the city.**
- **Map and develop a flexible and tiered approach to the funding delivery and investment model.**
- **Resource the internal mechanics to facilitate Programme development and delivery eg. grant management system**

Next Steps:

3.18 The proposed timeline for the Investment Programme for Local Tourism is as follows:

- **Detailed report will be brought back to Committee in August 2022 (ratified September 2022) detailing the process and criteria for the Programme.**
- **Consultation on the Programme including Equality Screening - (12 weeks) will be completed by the end of November 2022.**

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- Final Committee approval and ratification in December 2022.
- Programme opens for applications in December 2022.
- Programme closes and award of applications March/April 2023

Officers are initially working on a multi-strand approach to Neighbourhood Tourism funding recognising the differing stages of development and capacity across the city. It is envisaged the programme will have a core element of 2 year funding, and a one year capacity development component to address these differing requirements. This will allow capacity, product and experiences to be built across the city that align with key strategies including 'Make Yourself at Home', City Imagining' and the Belfast Stories project.

City Connections:

- 3.19 Members will be aware of the ongoing partnership model between Fáilte Feirste and Eastside Partnership to deliver a programme of works that supports the development of local tourism products and city connections including market research, support for local business through joint initiatives, as well as support for delivery partners.
- 3.20 At the March 2022, Committee £25,000 funding (£12,500 each for Eastside and Fáilte Feirste) was approved to cover the period April to June 2022. This financial support was for the purpose of research and delivery of two collaborative projects. At that time, it was intended that the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme would be open for applications to cover the period beyond June 2022.
- 3.21 However, in consideration of the ongoing work on the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme as detailed within this report and with the projected opening date for applications now likely to be December 2022, it is proposed that Members consider approval to release funding for the remainder of the financial year, amounting to £37,500 for each organisation to cover the period July to March 2023.
- 3.22 This proposed funding would be allocated to further market research which could inform a future application to the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme, as well as two further collaborative projects.

Major Events

3.23 St Patrick's Day

Members will be aware that at a meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 28 August 2019 a new ten-year cultural strategy for Belfast, A City Imagining, was agreed. As part of this strategy a new investment approach was approved and this model committed to a partnership approach to supporting the cultural sector, with the aim of sustaining and developing accessible cultural activity and infrastructure across Belfast and creating the conditions for long-term transformation. It was agreed that this partnership model should be applied to the direct delivery of City events by Council as well as funded programmes of activity.

- 3.24 For these reasons, it was agreed by SP&R Committee in January 2021 that a different approach would be taken to the future development of St Patrick's Day. Officers designed an open and competitive process to support applications for creative development awards for St Patrick's Day 2022. This opportunity was published to Council's cultural database, promoted on social media and via Council's website as well as through partner organisations and networks.

3.25 The Approach:

Building on the strong foundation of recent years, Council agreed to develop an ambitious approach to St Patrick's Day in the city. This opportunity was designed to allow space for real innovation and experimentation and genuine co-design with the people of the city. Rather than commissioning an external consultant to review the event it was agreed to test a different approach by directly investing in the local sector through Creative Development Awards that could then be progressed to a next stage commission for March 2022.

STAGE 1 - Application for Creative Development Awards:

The four highest scoring applications were awarded £15,000 each to complete a Research and Development (R&D) phase on their approach as agreed by CG&R Committee.

STAGE 2 – Delivery of a feasibility study For St Patrick's Day pilots in 2022:

The lead organisations for the four proposals outlined above completed a period of Research and Development to produce

a feasibility study including full costings and delivery model for the proposed pilots for St Patrick's Day 2022. Organisations were asked to develop proposals based on a guide budget of £80,000 per pilot, however as this was a commissioning process Council reserved the right to offer more or less funding based on information contained in the section of the feasibility report relating to scalability and alternative options.

STAGE 3 - Selection of pilots to be taken forward for delivery in March 2022:

By allowing an opportunity to pilot ideas in March 2022, proposals could be 'tested' in real time and evaluated (by city stakeholders, visitors and residents) with an option of one or more of the pilots to be taken forward to full delivery in 2023. In 2022, Council assumed an overarching curatorial, programming, production and co-ordination role to produce a festival of events over multiple days and also lead on the marketing of the event.

At SP&R in December 2022, Members agreed to proceed with the appointment of Duncairn and Beat Carnival to ensure deliverability for March 2022. Furthermore, Council engaged with Féile and MayWe to refine proposals around core themes of stories and music in keeping with the emerging vision for the programme. These refined proposals were also approved by SP&R.

3.26 Review of 2022 Activity

While there were clearly a number of successful outcomes from the programme, there were also some learnings that will be used to educate the process this year.

Strategic Learnings:

The uncertainty stemming from COVID-19 meant the timescales from the appointment to deliver the programme in 2022 was not feasible to allow the events to be delivered to full potential. Earlier commitment would assist partnership planning, production, programming development and community/participant engagement particularly in respect of the parade and concert. In addition, it allowed no time in attracting additional funding streams, putting in place a framework for worldwide streaming, a more intense, and longer, marketing campaign i.e. tourism package. The short deliver window greatly decision making on all projects.

Operational Learnings:

The parade attracted huge numbers to the city centre, and consideration needs to be given soon to extending the route and other logistical alterations. The concert would have also benefited operationally from a longer lead in time. It was clear that the ability of the Council to call on experienced contractors was of significant benefit.

3.27 The 2023 Approach

As in 2022, Council will have an overarching curatorial, programming, production and co-ordination role to produce a festival of events over multiple days and also lead on the marketing of the event. Officers are seeking approval to use a similar commissioning approach for the events in 2023 and 2024.

- 3.28** That commissioning approach will utilise a similar model to that used in 2022, essentially a Design Contest that will allow council officers to actively review and feed into the creative elements to ensure alignment with existing council strategies including 'City Imagining' and our recently developed Music Strategy. It is proposed that design contest would request competitors to submit a concept for 2023 and 2024 recognising the opportunity to further elevate St. Patricks Day celebrations for our year of culture 'Belfast Imagining' in 2024. However, most significantly all parties will have adequate lead in time to fully explore the development of these projects, recognising the evaluation of 2022 activities. In addition, this will allow for greater collaboration between the projects and longer lead in time to develop a joined up marcomms approach. Early decisions on funding and delivery models will greatly assist with this innovative work so it is proposed the initial stages of the design competition are opening in early July 2022.

Maritime 2022/2023

- 3.29** It has been previously agreed to deliver the full Maritime Festival on a biennial basis in order to grow ambition, budget and impact of the festival. The Festival has been successfully delivered as part of a wider partnership model with key stakeholders in Titanic Quarter.
- 3.30** A Service Level Agreement will be drawn up in 2022/23 with Maritime Belfast Trust (MBT) to support the delivery of activity throughout 2022. Officers have been liaising with MBT to fully develop and cost their initial proposal, which will include a series of smaller events throughout the year. In tandem with

this MBT direct delivery of activity, Council officers will conduct developmental work on future festivals, on the back of both an external and internal review. Some of this work may involve further pilots which may be trailed during the MBT events.

- 3.31 Officers continue to engage with both internal and external stakeholders such as the 2024 team, TNI, Derry & Strabane Council and MBT to establish future festival dates with the best strategic fit; aligning to A City Imagining, Make Yourself at Home, and recognizing Year of Culture, the Foyle Maritime Festival and The Open.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Update

- 3.32 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann takes place annually in August and is the most important event in the traditional music calendar and up until the COVID 19 pandemic had been continuously held since 1951. The Fleadh encompasses a range of entertainment activities including concerts, ceili/set dancing, traditional sessions plus competitions in music, song, language and national and international events.
- 3.33 The full Fleadh programme was last held in Mullingar in 2019 and Dundalk in 2018. In recent years the 10-year programme has attracted up to 450,000 visitors with 6,000 accounted for through competitors alone.
- 3.34 Whilst it is estimated that the initial outlay to secure the event is approximately £2.5 million there are also significant opportunities for the host city to recoup this investment through partnership initiatives including media buy-in. It would also be intended to bid for support from government and other sources using the UBC being developed for Belfast Imagining.
- 3.35 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann will:
- Offer direct economic return through bed nights and visitor spend
 - Profile the city's cultural offering and increase awareness of the city's tourism offer to attract new and repeat visitors in subsequent years
 - Increase exposure of Belfast brand through national and international media coverage

- **Provide opportunity for capacity and skills development within the music sector**

- 3.36** Members will be aware that in January 2022 permission to submit an EOI was approved. The EOI submitted to the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCE), co-signed by Ards Comhaltas Branch was to host in 2023 (although this is likely to be 2024 or beyond). In line with the Cultural Strategy, Draft Tourism Plan, UNESCO designation and recovery plans this expression of interest would indicate 2024 and 2025 as optimum years to host the event. Work will continue to ensure that any plans are progressed in a complementary approach to other activity in that period including working in partnership with other cities as required.
- 3.37** The EOI was submitted on 26th April 2022 following a very positive site visit to Belfast on 13th April 2022 which included representation from CCE and Fleadh Executive Committee. The delegation visited City Hall, 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast Waterfront Hall, the Mac, University of Ulster and other venues. Officers presented to the delegation, highlighting the alignment of the Fleadh Cheoil to Cultural and Tourism Strategies and within the context of Year of Culture 2024 and there were discussions involving other stakeholders on project bidding and delivery.

Next Steps Fleadh Cheoil

- 3.38** BCC are currently awaiting confirmation of a further site visit from the wider Fleadh Executive Committee - this is likely to be June / July 2022. It is envisaged that a full bid will need to be submitted following that visit, so approval is sought from members of the committee for the development and submission of that bid. In advance of submitting a bid work is continuing to address particular bid elements, which are deemed to be of significance, in order to prepare for the next visit (areas such as camping, accommodation, school of music requirements). If permission is granted for the submission of a full bid regular updates report will be brought back to committee for consideration. It is envisaged that any financial implications stemming from a successful bid would be funded via departmental budgets with a bid being made for Executive funding, with a report detailing this approach being brought back to committee.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.39 The activities outlined within this report will be resourced from the 2022/23 Economic Development budget agreed by this Committee in March 2022.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.40 The unit is currently working with our Equality unit to develop the required programme of EQIA and screening for the individual elements of this work.”**

The Committee:

- Noted the principles, concept and work related to the development of a year of culture, Belfast Imagining and agreed to receive future reports as the work developed further;
- Noted the progress on the development of a Neighbourhood Tourism investment framework and timeline for the introduction of that framework;
- Agreed the funding of £37,500 to each of the two partners within the existing `City Connections` programme, which totalled £75,000, to provide security and the continuation of the work until the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment framework was active;
- Noted that the requested monies were within exiting departmental budgets and required no additional monies;
- Noted the findings from the evaluation of 2022 St. Patricks Day events and the proposed future commissioning model and the development approach to the Maritime Festival; and
- Agreed that a full bid would be submitted for Belfast to host the Fleadh Ceoil and to receive future reports on the submission.

Strategic & Operational Issues

Notice of Motion - Quarterly Report

The Committee considered the quarterly update on the Notices of Motion that the City Growth and Generation Committee was responsible for.

The Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion that the Committee was responsible for; and
- Agreed to the recommended closure of the following two Notices of Motion:
 - i) Belfast Bikes - Pilot Scheme to use Rolloe; and
 - ii) Air Passenger Duty.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee –
End of Year Report (2021-22) and Committee
Plan (2022-23)**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To provide an end of year progress update (Appendix 1) on the key actions contained in the 2021-22 City Growth and Regeneration (CG&R) Committee Plan, as agreed by this Committee in June 2021.

1.2 To present to Committee the draft City Growth & Regeneration Committee Plan for 2022-23 (Appendix 2).

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the end of year report; and
- Approve the new draft City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan for 2022-2023.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 The 2021-2022 Committee Plan and the draft Plan for 2022-23 were both developed in the context of the Council’s Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda. Consequently, the Committee Plan contains the commitments within the Corporate Delivery Plan, which fall under the remit of the Committee, plus additional deliverables that have been agreed by CG&R Committee and are relevant to the Standing Orders of the Committee. The Plan sets out the main priorities and programmes of work that the Committee is overseeing to maximise the Council’s contribution to the Belfast Agenda and delivering a sustainable and inclusive recovery.

3.2 Whilst the CG&R Committee have a role to play across a number of the Belfast Agenda themes, the focus for this Committee has been on City recovery and reopening. Work has also continued to deliver on longer term plans for the city, with key priorities that will help the people and businesses of Belfast continue to respond to, and recover from, the economic impact of the pandemic while also shaping the future development and sustainability of the city.

3.3 Committee Plan Progress 2021-22

While the Committee has received regular updates on progress for specific programmes and initiatives, Appendix 1 sets out an overview of progress against the main commitments in the Committee Plan 2021-2022, with examples highlighted below:

- Delivery of £4.039m DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme including the award-winning Belfast Entries programme.
- Continuing to develop A Bolder Vision Strategy with DfC and DfI including the completion of the public consultation exercise.
- The acquisition of two heritage buildings, one as the site for the flagship Belfast Stories project and 2 Royal Avenue with delivery of subsequent meanwhile use.
- Securing additional funding for active travel enabling infrastructure, Belfast Entries Phase 2 and development of tactical regeneration programmes for the SW Quarter, the 5C's and Castle Street area.
- Vacant to Vibrant Programme: includes launch of an EoI to inform the viability of a £700k capital grant scheme for the city centre.
- Progressing the Strategic Site Assessments Phase 1 and 2, including regeneration concept plans to PAD stage on a number of city centre sites, and the establishment of a joint public sector housing group, as the appropriate vehicle to drive forward Phase 2 through an agreed methodology.
- Engaged 760 individuals through Enterprise awareness activity supporting them to progress to start a business, including targeted support for 143 women.
- 656 individuals were engaged in business start-up activity, 454 of those developed a business plan through the Go For It programme, supporting the creation of 279 jobs
- Provided test trading opportunities for 49 new businesses and 13 social enterprises through our dedicated start up space at St George's Market.
- 56 Social Enterprises and Co-operatives organisations were supported with one-to-one mentoring, advice and guidance. Six of these were new co-operatives.
- Social Economy Incentive Fund launched, 11 winners receiving a share of £60,000.

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- Supported almost 700 businesses through 1-2-1 mentoring and access to masterclasses and workshops across a range of areas including improving tendering skills, developing digital marketing strategies and managing cashflow.
- Launched the Digital Surge programme in partnership with the 10 other councils, providing digital capacity support for businesses with significant growth potential.
- Launched the Vibrant Business Destinations programme in partnership with DfC to drive footfall and create vibrancy in areas outside of the city centre.
- Of the 816 people who participated on an Employment Academy since April 2021, 454 people have successfully completed and 342 have secured employment so far, representing an into-work rate of 75%.
- Our GCSE support programme was significantly disrupted over the last two years but, since September 2021, 362 young people have engaged on the programme.
- Supporting 166 young people who have or are at risk of dropping out of the education system, employment or training through our Youth Support Programme.
- The Labour Market Partnership (LMP) action plan was submitted to DfC and a letter of offer was received. Work is now under way on delivery of priority interventions.
- Produced a draft tourism plan for Belfast, 'Make Yourself at Home' and undertook a 12-week public consultation to refine the plan.
- Achieved UNESCO City of Music designation & developed a music strategy for Belfast.
- Provided £3.08m funding for Arts, Heritage, Festivals and Events through 117 grants.
- Completed cultural mapping of the city including an infrastructure audit.
- Developed a Co-design Framework for culture, arts and heritage and relaunched an Annual Event Programme as Covid restrictions were lifted.

3.4 Draft Committee Plan 2022-23

An Annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-23 was approved by Council on 4th April 2022. The Corporate Plan reflects the in-year deliverables against the priorities agreed as part of the

four-year corporate plan, plus some additional priorities that have arisen in response to the pandemic. The plan is structured as follows: Our services; Inclusive economic recovery; Community recovery; Environmental recovery; Strategic planning frameworks; and Organisational foundations. A series of priorities fall under each theme, each with a number of committed deliverables for 2022-23.

3.5 The draft Committee Plan for 2022-23 (Appendix 2) follows a similar structure and contains the commitments within the Corporate Delivery Plan which fall under the remit of the Committee, plus additional deliverables that have been agreed by CG&R Committee and relevant to the Standing Orders of the Committee. Highlights include:

- Progressing the 'A City Imagining Plan' Festival 2022 and the 2023 programme.
- Delivering the UNESCO City of Music actions.
- Delivering ongoing support for businesses as part of the City Recovery Programme.
- Developing a Regeneration Programme Framework for key regeneration projects.
- Providing Council input and strategic direction to major regeneration and development projects; and continuing to progress city wide strategic opportunities.
- Progressing the Bolder Vision for Belfast.
- Work to establish a new entity to support and bring forward priority investments on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.
- Starting delivery of the 10-year Tourism recovery plan 'Make Yourself at Home' including support local tourism and delivering an accessible tourism programme.
- Continuing to promote sustainable tourism via the Global Destination Sustainability Index - the Green Tourism Accreditation; and working with supply chain businesses.
- Deliver the Annual Events programme.
- Provide support for people to start and also to grow local businesses.
- Support and promote opportunities for Social Enterprises and Cooperatives.
- Developing options for institutional investment to augment city growth ambitions; and working via the

Renewed Ambition Programme to promote Belfast as a place to invest.

- **Continuing to progress the Future City Centre Programme and priority areas under the Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy including physical regeneration and environmental improvements.**
- **Delivering a major new attraction at the Zoo with the development of a new Lion/Big Cat Enclosure.**
- **Continuing to progress Belfast Stories.**
- **Developing an overarching programme to coordinate our approach to access, active and sustainable travel and connectivity**
- **Support young people (most in need) to progress through education, into employment.**
- **Delivering Employment Academies in priority sectors, and Enterprise Pathways with intensive, person-centred support for those further back in the labour market.**
- **Delivering the Belfast Employability and Skills Action Plan as part of the LMP.**
- **Maximise residential development opportunities to promote city centre living.**
- **Managing the Development Brief marketing and development process for the INW Northern Cluster and continuing to progress each of the cluster sites.**

3.6 Progress Reports

Following agreement on the draft Committee Plan, as well as in-year reports on a number of priorities, officers will bring an overall progress report against all commitments in the Committee Plan in October 2021 and a year-end report in April 2022.

3.7 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The Committee Plan will be delivered in accordance with the cash limit of £19,461,512 as highlighted in the Key Expenditure section, on page 16 of the Committee Plan.

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

Strategies, programmes and actions within the Committee Plan are developed and delivered in consultation with the Council's Equality & Diversity Unit and subject to appropriate equality, good relations and rural needs assessment."

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The Committee:

- Noted the content of the end of year report; and
- Approved the new draft City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan for 2022-2023.

Chairperson