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#BRCityDeal

BRCDC Council Panel

Subject:	Minutes of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCDC) Council Panel
Date:	12.30 pm, 22 June 2022
Councillors in attendance:	<p>Councillor Uel Mackin - Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (Chairperson) Alderman Allan Ewart – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Alderman Amanda Grehan – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Councillor Matthew Magill – Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council Councillor Stephen Ross – Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council Alderman Alan McDowell – Ards & North Down Borough Council Alderman George Dorrian – Belfast City Council Councillor Ronan McLaughlin – Belfast City Council Councillor Carl Whyte – Belfast City Council Alderman Billy Ashe MBE – Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Alderman Audrey Wales MBE – Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Councillor Robin Stewart – Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Councillor Timothy Gaston – Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Councillor Barra O’Muirí - Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Councillor Charlie Casey - Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Councillor Robert Burgess - Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Councillor Pete Byrne - Newry, Mourne & Down District Council</p>
Officers:	<p>David Burns – Chief Executive, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Stephen Reid – Chief Executive, Ards & North Down Borough Council Marie Ward – Chief Executive, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Ronan Cregan – Deputy Chief Executive, Belfast City Council Majella McAllister – Director of Economic Development and Planning, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Ursula O’Loughlin – Head of Economic Development, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Conor Mallon – Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Amanda Smyth – Head of Regeneration and Business Development, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Damien Martin – BRCDC Programme Director, Belfast City Council Emer Husbands, Theresa Slevin, Stephen Wallace, Ruth Rea, Joanne Delaney, Lorraine Beggs – BRCDC Programme Office Padraic Murphy, Shelley Baldrick, Lisa Crossey - Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Lesley Holmes, Marketing & Communications Co-ordinator, Belfast City Council David Roberts – Director of Strategic Development, Tourism NI</p>

1.0	Welcome and Introductions
1.1	<p>Councillor Mackin welcomed the members of the BRCDC Council Panel to the meeting which was hosted by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.</p> <p>Councillor Mackin thanked officers and the Executive Board for their work in driving the City Deal forward in recent months and outlined the key areas of focus for the meeting.</p>

2.0	Apologies
2.1	<p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Alderman Mark Cosgrove – Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council Councillor Julie Gilmour – Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council Councillor Stephen Dunlop- Ards & North Down Borough Council Councillor Richard Smart - Ards & North Down Borough Council Councillor Alistair Cathcart – Ards & North Down Borough Council Councillor Eric Hanvey – Belfast City Council</p> <p>Apologies were received from the following Officers:</p> <p>Jacqui Dixon – Chief Executive, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council John Walsh – Chief Executive, Belfast City Council Valerie Watts – Interim Chief Executive, Mid & East Antrim Borough Council</p>
3.0	Declarations of Interest
3.1	Cllr Mackin asked Councillors if they had any interests to declare in relation to the agenda. No interests were declared.
4.0	Minutes of Previous Meeting
4.1	<p>Cllr Mackin asked if the Panel agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>Ald Ewart proposed that the minutes from the previous meeting were agreed. Seconded by Cllr Casey Members agreed the minutes.</p> <p>Cllr Mackin noted that an action from the previous panel, to send a formal letter of thanks to former Belfast City Council Chief Executive, Suzanne Wylie, had been completed.</p>
5.0	BRC D Programme Update
5.1	<p>Cllr Mackin highlighted that Members had received a paper outlining the intensive work ongoing by a range of partners following deal signing to progress the development of projects and to enable funding to start to flow to the projects.</p> <p>Damien Martin, BRC D Programme Director, provided Members with a detailed update on programme delivery across a number of areas, including Outline Business case Development (OBC) and approvals, with an increasing number of projects having received both Ministerial and Department of Finance approvals and a number of other projects, proceeding towards casework committee or through departmental approvals. Damien Martin also noted that several of the Innovation pillar projects had continued to proceed at risk (in advance of receipt of funding) including through the appointment of design consultants and establishment of operational models.</p> <p>Projects in digital and infrastructure, with the exception of i4C and the Lagan Cycling and Pedestrian Bridge, are at an earlier stage of development and are currently developing or commencing individual OBCs.</p> <p>Damien Martin highlighted the significant programme risk of construction inflation which is affecting all large capital projects at present. Whilst it was noted that all projects, through the OBC process, had factored in the potential for construction inflation, it was recognised that the current scale of construction inflation was exceptional.</p> <p>The importance of skills was further noted and recognised as a key challenge. An employability and skills action plan has been developed with key areas of work focusing upon understanding and identifying ways to create a</p>

skills pipeline to support City Deal projects. Training has also been rolled out on the approach to integrating social value within city deal procurements and it was further noted the OBC for the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund is currently at draft business case stage.

Following Deal signing, arrangements have been put in place to support new processes & procedures for the delivery phase, including for the Accountable Body, and partners are supporting these arrangements.

In relation to wider Deal Documentation, it was noted that an Implementation Plan and Financial Plan for the Deal had now been agreed and would be updated as required.

Finally, Damien Martin provided Members with an update in relation to the progress in agreeing a framework Contract for Funding. The intensive and complex work across multiple partners, including a number of Government Departments, was recognised and whilst there are still a small number of issues outstanding, the majority of key issues had been resolved and it was hoped that the framework Contract for Funding could be concluded and agreed in the coming weeks. It was explained that this was critical as delays in agreeing the Contract for Funding were starting to impact on the most advanced projects. The agreed framework would then apply to individual project agreements, which would be approved by relevant partner organisations through back-to-back agreements.

Ald Ewart noted concerns around construction inflation and asked about the options for projects in the absence of additional funding from government. Ald Ewart further asked if projects were scaled back whether this would require updates to OBCs.

In response, Damien Martin explained that all projects have taken account of construction inflation in their OBCs, however the current situation is exceptional. The City Deal partners have raised the issue with NI and UK Government on the basis that-if proposals are developed in relation to other government led or funded capital investments, then City Deal projects should not be treated any less favourably. It was noted that there was no indication of additional funding from governments at this point, but government partners do recognise the scale of the challenge and are willing to work with the BRCD partners to explore solutions. In relation to OBC updates, this has also been discussed with Departments and it is hoped a pragmatic approach can be found given that OBC updates would take time and could cause delay and this would not assist projects in an inflationary environment.

In relation to the Contract for Funding, Damien Martin explained that BRCD partners had been involved in discussions with all the Departments and so when the framework is agreed shortly, that will include agreement with Departments.

Ald Ewart followed-up by asking whether the levelling-up fund was a potential funding solution. Damien Martin explained that this was unlikely at a programme level, but that the City and Growth Deals Complementary Fund may be an option worth exploring.

Cllr Casey thanked Damien Martin for his detailed overview and thanked officers for their work in addressing all challenges to date. Cllr Casey asked whether there were any specific challenges in relation to the Southern Relief Road and its progress.

Damien Martin explained that decisions were required for the project in relation to the option of a lifting bridge and that delays in relation to this decision could result in project delays. The additional challenges are those faced by any large road scheme.

	<p>Members noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the update on the development of the key documents supporting the delivery of the deal; and • the update on the progress of projects within the individual Pillars of Investment <p>Proposed by Ald Henderson Seconded by Ald Ewart</p>
6.0	Impact of Tourism & Regeneration Investment Royal Hillsborough
6.1	<p>Cllr Mackin introduced David Roberts, Director of Strategic Development at Tourism NI.</p> <p>David Roberts presented an overview of the planned investments and the key role these major investments will play in supporting the recovery of the tourism industry.</p> <p>Cllr Casey stressed the importance of Tourism NI working with partners in Tourism Ireland for the benefit of all regions.</p> <p>Cllr Mackin then introduced David Burns, Chief Executive of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.</p> <p>David Burns presented an overview of the Destination Royal Hillsborough project and set out how the City Deal investment will build on the major investments made by Historic Royal Palaces and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, to help to deliver a successful project for the benefit of the region.</p>
7.0	BRC D Communication and Engagement Update
7.1	<p>Cllr Mackin introduced Lesley Holmes, Marketing & Communications Co-ordinator at Belfast City Council.</p> <p>Lesley Holmes provided an overview of the work of the Communications Forum in support of the City Deal, outlining some of the successful campaigns and promotional activity in the media since the Deal launch. She advised that the newly developed communications products, including a programme video, updated BRC D Summary document, slides and social media assets are available for partners to use individually in order to promote the benefits of the deal. Lesley then outlined the proposed next steps and the communication objectives for the next phase of the deal.</p> <p>Damien Martin highlighted that there will be a stronger focus during Phase 3 on project level communication. He outlined the benefit of now having several projects at detailed design stages, as this provides tangible material to support communications.</p> <p>Members agreed the focus and objectives for communication in phase 3 and noted the update in relation to the proactive releases, promotion and media activity.</p> <p>Proposed by Ald Ewart Seconded by Ald Grehan</p>
8.0	Press Release
8.1	<p>Cllr Mackin asked members if they were content to agree the draft press release circulated in advance of the meeting, subject to one minor amendment which had been proposed.</p> <p>No further comments were raised, and on this basis Cllr Mackin was happy to note that Members agreed the press release.</p>

9.0	Schedule of Meetings
9.1	Cllr Mackin highlighted that the next meeting is to be hosted by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council on 28 September 2022.