



<b>Subject:</b>	Future City Centre Programme Update
<b>Date:</b>	10 January 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Deirdre Kelly, Programme Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Information relating to any individual</li><li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li><li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li><li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li><li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li></ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>										
1.1	To update the Committee on positive activity and messaging aligned to the five pillars of the previously agreed Future City Centre Programme.										
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>										
2.1	The Committee is asked to: I. Note the update as set out within this report and Appendix 2.										
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Background</b>										
3.1	<p>The City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 8 November 2023, approved the revised Future City Centre Programme and monitoring framework. Members will recall that the Framework (attached at Appendix 1) is supported by eight programme objectives, measured by 14 strategic indicators and underpinned by work within five thematic pillars, as below. The programmes of work and activities included in each pillar are not exhaustive and many involve other partners but they are intended to reflect the broad range of activities that are ongoing and are managed and reported via programme and project management arrangements for the various strands:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="236 913 1540 1406"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="236 913 486 981">Regeneration &amp; Connectivity</th> <th data-bbox="493 913 743 981">Business &amp; Investment</th> <th data-bbox="750 913 1000 981">Animation &amp; Distinctive Offering</th> <th data-bbox="1007 913 1257 981">Clean, Green, Inclusive &amp; Safe</th> <th data-bbox="1264 913 1540 981">Vulnerability</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="236 990 486 1406"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major regeneration schemes</li> <li>BRCD projects including Belfast Stories</li> <li>City Centre Living / Housing-led regeneration</li> <li>Connectivity and Active Travel</li> <li>Connected spaces &amp; 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3.2	As previously reported to Members the Future City Centre has emerged as a priority area within the “Our Place” theme of the Belfast Agenda. Community Planning has provided the vehicle to anchor core city centre governance structures (Future City Centre Leadership Group and Strategic Leadership Group (Complex Lives).										
3.3	At their meeting in September 2023 the All – Party Working Group on the City Centre had agreed the need to amplify any positive messaging in relation to the city centre, whilst simultaneously seeking to ensure that the various issues are dealt with via the appropriate governance structures and the short, medium and longer term plans, projects and initiatives are brought forward working in partnerships with the wide range of public and private stakeholders. At the meeting of the working										

	<p>group in December 2023 a presentation was delivered in respect of this which aligned to the five pillars of the Future City Centre Programme and picked up on key highlights with the city centre retail market landscape, footfall, and media on activities under each of the FCC pillars (noting that these are a combination of Council led, partner and stakeholder led, and public and private sectors initiatives).</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
4.1	<p>Work is ongoing around the development of the Future City Centre Monitoring Dashboard, aligned to the FCC framework which was noted and agreed at City Growth and Regeneration Committee in November 2023. It is planned that this will be presented to the Committee in Q1 2024.</p>
4.2	<p>In the interim and pending presentation of the FCC Monitoring Dashboard and by way of an update aligned to the vision, objectives, pillars and strategic indicators of the FCC programme Appendix 2 has been collated providing supporting evidence on positive activities aligned to the five pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration and Connectivity</li> <li>• Business and Investment</li> <li>• Animation and Distinctive Offering</li> <li>• Clean, Green, Inclusive and Safe</li> <li>• Vulnerability</li> </ul>
4.3	<p>In addition to this Members will note that City Centre footfall increased by 7.5% from September – November this year compared to 2022. For the same period average weekly footfall was 703,349 an increase of approx. 50,000 from last year (654,083). Footfall figures are one of the strategic indicators identified for the FCC Programme and provide a measurement of vibrancy or pedestrian activity measured using 6 fixed location cameras in the city centre. Council have further access to data on city centre visitors which has found the city centre is attracting more visitors from Belfast communities, areas within a 2km radius have an average increase of 80% more visits. However there is evidence based on September – October 2022 to the same period in 2023, that there has been a significant negative decrease on the visitors coming from outside of the Belfast City Council area to the city centre.</p>
4.4	<p>As reported to the City Growth &amp; Regeneration Committee in November 2023, to support the wider vacancy programme and to complement the Vacant to Vibrant capital grant scheme, officers are also delivering a ‘Matchmaking’ service, with the assistance of a commercial agent, Frazer Kidd. A general market commentary was included in the report to Members in November 2023 which noted a number of new retailers / occupiers including some that are first to Region and Island brands for Belfast. Officers are continuing to build on existing market commentary and intelligence through continued engagement with the commercial agent, with positive forecasting in future development</p>

	of vacant units in the primary retail core such as Donegal Place, Castle Lane and Arthur Street expected to come forward in 2024.
4.5	Members are asked to note Appendix 2, which highlights a summary of activity and media reports across the various FCC pillars including Council commencing procurement to seek a private sector partner to take forward £630m housing led regeneration opportunity, design team appointed for Belfast Stories, jobs announcements across private sector, and launch of the Innovation Challenge Fund. Member are asked to note that as well as the report on the FCC Monitoring Dashboard, a paper on the Belfast Regeneration Tracker is also scheduled for Q1 2024 which will detail market activity across all asset classes retail, residential, leisure, offices etc.
<b>5.0</b>	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b> None
<b>6.0</b>	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications associated with this report.
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – Future City Centre Framework Appendix 2 – Future City Centre Update (media and communications)