



<b>Subject:</b>	Smart Belfast: City Innovation programme update
<b>Date:</b>	24 January 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark McCann, City Innovation Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <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>	
<p><b>After Committee Decision</b></p> <p><b>After Council Decision</b></p> <p><b>Sometime in the future</b></p> <p><b>Never</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <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</b>
1.1	To update Members on plans for an Inclusive Innovation workshop to take place at the Titanic Hotel on January 28 <sup>th</sup> and on Council’s application to the Bloomberg Mayoral Challenge competition 2025.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the details of the Inclusive Innovation workshop and the invitation to Members.</li> <li>2. Note that Belfast City Council has applied to the Bloomberg Mayoral Challenge competition to support work on re-imagining city alley-ways.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p>The Smart Belfast Urban Innovation programme encourages collaboration between government, industry, SMEs, academia, and communities. The aim is to harness digital innovation to address public policy challenges, while at the same time encouraging greater investment in innovation to stimulate economic growth. The following update outlines two initiatives that contribute to these aims:</p>
3.2	<p><b>Inclusive Innovation Workshop</b></p> <p>Members had previously approved a city partner workshop to be held to explore the opportunities for ‘inclusive innovation’; what it means; why it’s important; and how it can help to unlock more local economic and social value from innovation investments such as Belfast Region City Deal and planned major investments by UK Government in innovation over the next four years.</p>
3.3	<p>Invitations have been extended to all Members, community organisations, industry, public and university partners (with 70 participants currently confirmed). It will take place on 28<sup>th</sup> January at the Titanic Hotel from 9:15am. The agenda has been developed with the Belfast Innovation Commissioner, Adrian Johnston, who will chair the event. It will feature local and national speakers who will share their experiences and perspectives on inclusive innovation. This will include the Council’s own four-year Hubs of Innovation project with the Maritime Belfast Trust; research by <a href="#">King’s College</a> who have been working with Catalyst on measuring inclusive innovation; Newcastle Upon Tyne’s i30 research programme (which are looking at practice in Newcastle, Belfast, Medellin, and Pittsburgh); and Queen’s University’s Communities &amp; Place programme.</p>
3.4	<p>This workshop, which is mainly funded by Horizon 2020, will help inform a future programme of work led by the Innovation Commissioner and the City Innovation Office. Members are encouraged to come along.</p>
3.5	<p><b>‘Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayoral Challenge’ competition</b></p> <p>This global innovation competition opens every few years and provides city governments with up to \$1 million and multi-year support to transform an essential, city-wide public service.</p>

3.6	The competition is delivered in two stages: Phase 1 provides up to \$50,000 to 50 cities to refine and test their initial ideas (March 2025.) While Phase 2 will provide 25 of these cities with a further \$1 million to bring their ideas to life. (Phase 2 awards will be made in October 2025.)
3.7	The deadline for submission was 20 December, giving Council officers very little time to prepare an application that would meet Bloomberg’s detailed criteria and not affording time to submit this first iteration of the application to committee in advance. Officers therefore focused on areas that aligned to areas of work already agreed by Members. Following an ideation process, that included discussions with the Bloomberg team in New York, the Belfast application focused on re-imagining the city’s alley-ways. The idea is to develop a mechanism that would allow Council and other bodies, including social enterprises, to work directly with communities to sustainably manage city alleyways to promote biodiversity, cultural activities, to encourage active travel, and by doing so crowd out anti-social behaviour. This builds on an existing priority of Members and the existing work of the Parks Outreach Team, the Climate team and others.
3.8	Members are asked to note the application, and that any decision on whether Belfast has made it through to the first phase is expected in March 2025 at which point, if selected to progress to the next stage, the proposal will be brought back to Members for further consideration.
<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>	
3.9	Resources for the initiatives have been identified within the existing City Innovation Office budget. The Inclusive Innovation workshop is primarily funded from Horizon 2020.
<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>	
3.10	None.
<b>4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached</b>	
None.	