



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: City Development Conference

Date: Tuesday 29 January 2013

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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	At its meeting on 14 December 2012, the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee agreed to the proposal for the Council to hold a city development conference at the end of March 2013. A copy of this report is attached as Appendix 1.
1.2	As Members will be aware, there was an intention to hold a conference to promote the city to potential investors as part of the Investment Programme. Subsequently, Members met with Ministers from the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss a series of strategic issues, including the review of the draft Masterplan for Belfast, which had been commissioned by the Council to inform the city development debate. It was suggested that the launch of the draft Masterplan for consultation would provide a useful introduction to the broader debate on the city development, economic growth, competitiveness, regeneration and the potential for attracting future investment.
1.3	This report summarises the proposed approach to a city conference which supports and builds on the revised format for the State of the City Development Debates as agreed by Committee in June 2012. This will provide a platform to attract a wide range of city stakeholders to discuss ways in which to improve the competitiveness and success of Belfast.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The city investment/development conference has the following objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide a mechanism for engagement with key stakeholders about the priorities for city development in the context of the return of regeneration and place-shaping powers to the Council;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To begin a wider conversation with stakeholders about the key value drivers within the city (city centre, new economic sectors, core infrastructure, transportation, access and connectivity) and to align activity with an overarching vision; - To communicate progress in delivering the Investment Programme to date and engage with stakeholders in relation to the potential for a sustained focus on delivery on a cross organisational basis (guiding coalition or similar mechanism linked to delivery boards or thematic operational frameworks). - To provide an opportunity to take stock of the city development during the 400th anniversary year.
2.2	The one day conference event would take a tiered structure with initial speaker sessions providing the context as an introduction to several interactive and practical outcome-related workshops. The aim is that the conference would enable Council to secure commitment and recognition from key stakeholders of the need to establish shared delivery mechanisms to support a shared vision for the city.
2.3	The emphasis of the conference is on ensuring effective and co-ordinated delivery of projects to maximise Belfast's role in driving economic growth for the region. The First Minister and Deputy First Minister will be invited to participate to reinforce the Belfast's regional significance and provide continuity and relevance to the Investment Programme and ongoing Local Government reform process. In addition, the role of elected Members, including the Chair of Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and Development Committee will be vital in the conference.

Comment [b1]: Is this the purpose of the conference? We need vision first and then everything else. I think this should be the main purpose

Comment [b2]: I would maybe add here that ' the outcome of this conference will likely change the shape and format of the State of the City Dev. Debates and if so the Members will be informed.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The event is anticipated to cost £20,000 and is budgeted for within current State of the City Development Debate Departmental estimates.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report.

6	Decision Tracking
Timeframe: March 2013 Reporting Officer: Claire Patterson	