



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Impact of Belfast Anchor Institutions
Date:	7 May 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>In June 2012 Committee agreed to commission research into the impact of the anchor institutions in Belfast which was completed by Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), and Julian Dobson (Urban Pollinators). The main purpose of the research was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– review the economic, social and environmental roles of anchor organisations elsewhere and their impacts;– identify the key anchor institutions within Belfast, as perceived by a range of stakeholders, and the benefits and impacts they are perceived as having within the city;– develop measures to assess the current and potential impacts of anchor institutions in Belfast;– identify how anchor institutions can more effectively achieve economic, social, and environmental benefits through partnership working;– develop recommendations for Belfast City Council and partner organisations to ensure that the impacts and multiplier effects of anchor institutions are realised; and– explore the challenges and factors potentially limiting the impacts and multiplier effects of anchor institutions, and how these may be overcome.
1.2	<p>Anchor institutions were considered to be public and private sector organisations which have deep economic, social, cultural, and political roots within Belfast. They are sufficient in scale to make a significant contribution to the city's social and economic vitality; their fixed assets also mean that they are unlikely to relocate. As a result they represent a type of 'capital' around which</p>

	local policies and interventions can be devised and put into effect.
1.3	The research involved interviews with 19 key organisations in the city, some of which have been identified as anchors (e.g. health, education, culture and arts sectors) and some as enablers (e.g. central government departments, Belfast City Council). The Council is however, in a unique position, as it is considered to be both an anchor and enabler. An executive summary is attached as Appendix 1 and the full report is available on request.
1.4	This research builds the Council's relations with the anchor institutes and supports the developing areas of work such as, Belfast Future City Conference, Masterplan, Integrated Economic Strategy, International Marketing Framework as well as Local Government Reform and Community Planning.

2	Key Issues
2.1	Anchors play a crucial role in driving Belfast's development through innovation, private sector development, international connectivity, leveraging capital and foreign direct investment (often through joint working), and through their own significant economic impact. Their role in private sector development and encouraging investment is particularly critical in view of the small business base in Belfast and Northern Ireland and the lack of larger private sector businesses. They perform important functions in promoting local skills and employability and stimulating business development. Economic, social and environmental impacts have been identified through the research.
2.2	The research summarised the economic impact of anchor institutions as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Anchors employ approximately 62,900 employees, which represents 33% of the overall Belfast workforce – In total, anchors spend around £1,43 billion annually – The local economic impact is estimated at around £3billion a year – Belfast anchors are large landowners occupying approximately 40% of the land (Belfast Harbour and the Council own around 37% of Belfast land) In addition, anchors have a strong impact through skills development, investment attraction, land development and innovation.
2.3	The social impact is also significant but more difficult to measure. Anchors contribute to Belfast's social development in terms of the provision of services, enabling employment, especially through addressing disadvantage, educators and skills developers, supporting apprenticeships and providing shared spaces.
2.4	In terms of the environmental impact, anchors were identified as having a negative impact through energy use, commuting and using transport to deliver services and a positive impact through green procurement and contracting (environmental supply chain) and as environmental re-assurers.
2.5	The research also considered the relationships between anchors, barriers and opportunities to maximising the impact. The main findings of the research are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agreeing a 'Belfast Anchor Charter' to provide a framework within which anchor institutions can coordinate their activities and maximise the benefits they bring to the city without adding new governance models that will demand new levels of political buy-in. Anchors will be linked through information sharing and developing a common vision for the city. The core principle is that organisations commit to work together towards a shared

	<p>vision of a prosperous Belfast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To drive the Belfast Anchor Charter concept forward, a five-outcome approach is proposed which all stakeholders sign up to in order to effectively deliver strategies and change in the city: Outcome commitment 1: A joined up vision for sustainable procurement Outcome commitment 2: Create jobs and employment Outcome commitment 3: Foster collaborative business development and supply chains Outcome commitment 4: Create apprenticeships Outcome commitment 5: Monitor local economic, social and environmental impact. - Suggested outcomes and associated indicators to determine and monitor impacts of anchor institutions in Belfast. The indicators, linked to the outcomes should measure different stages of change (short, medium and long-term) and measure the rate of progress in delivering each objective. - Prioritising recommendations categorises the recommendations based on level of priority, resource requirements and timescales. Strategic, operational and delivery-based recommendations are proposed. The Belfast Charter, information sharing and the strategic incorporation of anchors through key city development agendas and shared outcomes are some of the most important to progress.
2.6	All stakeholders were extremely positive about working with the Council and viewed community planning as a great opportunity for fully utilising civic leadership and moving the city forward.
2.7	<p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>This research contributes directly to the Future City conference on 22 May, informing the purpose and the discussions during the day. CLES and Julian Dobson will also participate at the event to stimulate discussion. This allows the Council to build on the existing positive relationships with the city's anchor institutes to recognise their roles in shaping the city for the future.</p>
2.8	Developing relationships with anchor institutions and working collaboratively will enable the effective delivery of a future community plan and local development plan that connects to key strategies and future collaborative opportunities that will shape the city.
2.9	<p>The Council has a key convening role in building these relationships with city anchors to connect them with the city and its development. Building on the willingness demonstrated by anchor institutions the city conference is a timely opportunity to take this forward by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a shared city vision and outcomes - Confirming commitment to engage in the city vision process and delivery of shared outcomes - Securing agreement to participate on city platforms that will emerge from the conference (i.e. digital city, low carbon city, centre city, neighbourhoods) - Supporting the effective, joint delivery of city wide strategies and plans e.g. Integrated Economic Strategy or International Marketing Framework to ensure effective city development.
2.10	To maintain momentum and the positive city relationships it is proposed that a further engagement session should be organised with the anchor institutes, following the city conference in May 2013 to discuss their key contribution to city

	development, the city vision and outcomes.
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3	Resource Implications
3.1	None at this stage. However resources will be required to hold a further engagement session in Autumn 2013; these will be determined at a later stage.

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 this report and agree to a follow-up engagement session with anchor institutes in autumn 2013.

6	Decision Tracking
6.1	Timeline: November 2013 Reporting Officer: John McGrillen