



**Report to:** Development Committee

**Subject:** Core City Regeneration & Investment Framework

**Date:** 17 June 2014

**Reporting Officer:** John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

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<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Members will be aware that Urban Strategies (Joe Berridge), with Deloitte and ARUP as part of the consultant team, have commenced the development of a Belfast Core City Regeneration and Investment Framework which is due to be complete in September/October 2014.
1.2	Urban Strategies have met with the Budget & Transformation Panel and engaged with a significant number of key city stakeholders. As agreed by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in April 2014, a public city centre event is planned for 20 June 2014 in Belfast Waterfront Hall. This forms part of their programme of engagement to make stakeholders aware of the approach, allow comparison with other cities and to test the direction of travel of the plan. This is also a key opportunity to reinforce the role of Belfast as the key regional driver and the importance of the city centre in planning for future economic growth and competitiveness.
1.3	While the focus of this work is initially on the core city and surrounding communities, it is important that it is placed firmly within the context of the wider regeneration and planning context of Local Government Reform i.e. the development of the local development plan, the community plan, and area regeneration frameworks.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	As well as building on some of the key Investment Programme projects such as Public Bike Hire, the Creative Hub and Superconnected Belfast, the Core City Regeneration and Investment Framework has also been informed by a number of strands of work that Committee has been involved in, such as: Belfast Masterplan Review, Opportunities for Investment, Impact of Anchor Institutions, the developing Tourism Strategy and the City Access Strategy Baseline which

	<p>benchmarked parking, congestion and public transport in the city .</p> <p><u>Overview of the findings to date</u></p>
2.2	<p>Through the Budget &amp; Transformation Panel, Members have highlighted a number of issues which have been taken account of. These included the need to ensure connectivity between the city centre and local communities in terms of accessibility and mobility and in terms of ensuring that job creation and investment benefits local residents. The importance of incorporating social clauses into investments was also cited as important to promoting and securing local employment. The issue of housing in the city centre was noted as well as the importance of creating an attractive city for tourists and residents alike. Suggestions were also made about the benefit of a city art gallery and a casino in terms of attracting tourists and spend in the city.</p>
2.3	<p>Based on their numerous interviews with key stakeholders and analysis of the city, the consultant team will identify key policies, projects and places for the core city. Initial discussions have been wide ranging, however, recurring themes include the need to: increase employment and the living population in the city; maximise the tourism opportunity; transportation and connections to the rest of the city; manage the retail offer of the city centre; promote Belfast as the Regional Centre. The report will also consider key development projects in the City and how these opportunities can be maximised to extract the greatest impact on a city-wide level.</p>
2.4	<p><u>Belfast: Future City Conference – A Vision for our City Centre</u></p> <p>As part of the programme of engagement, a consultation event in the Waterfront Hall on 20 June will make stakeholders aware of the approach, allow comparison with other cities and test the direction of travel of the plan. All Members have been invited to attend this event and can register by visiting <a href="http://event-ful.co.uk/events/futurecity">http://event-ful.co.uk/events/futurecity</a></p>
2.5	<p>The conference will also tie in with the major International Festival of Business which is taking place in Liverpool in June, and Party Leaders or their nominees will be attending the key event on regeneration and investment on 18 and 19 June.</p>
2.6	<p>The Chairs of Strategic Policy and Resources and Development Committees will introduce the event drawing on the impact of local government reform and the enhanced role of local government in shaping places. Members will also have a significant contribution to make during the day, including the workshop discussions which will practically explore the challenges and opportunities for city developments, how they can link citizens to opportunities and play an ever stronger role in driving regional and national growth using regeneration and planning powers.</p>
2.7	<p>The Belfast: Future City Conference will provide a key opportunity to help shape the revitalisation of the city centre and ensure that the benefits are felt across the city and regionally. The key themes emerging that will benefit from an informed debate at the Future City Conference focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belfast and its Talent - focussing on the encouragement and expansion of innovative and entrepreneurial activity in the city centre, as well as how best to maximise the impact of the educational institutes and the University of Ulster's regenerative opportunities in the city centre's northern end.</li> <li>- Belfast and its waterfront - transforming the river corridor, creating new</li> </ul>

2.8	<p>neighbourhoods in the city centre and the regeneration of the Lagan River Corridor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Destination Belfast – building on Belfast as a popular weekend destination and attractive place to do business through the employment of additional attractions, improvements to a wide range of activities and greater branding of the city’s distinct culture.</li> <li>- Belfast and its connectivity – building on the Belfast rapid transit plans, the Bike Hire project to focus on how we can create city wide connectivity and encourage alternative transport options within the city centre.</li> <li>- Belfast and the city centre economy – successful city centre retail management needs to be highly directed and realistic while also supporting the trend of near-shoring and continuing to provide the city with a plentiful employment base.</li> </ul> <p><u>Next Steps</u> The outworkings from the conference will be brought back to Members and will inform the draft City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Framework. There will be ongoing engagement with the consultant team during the summer months with a draft report being brought before Members by October. It is planned that the final report will be launched in early autumn.</p>
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<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
There are no additional resource implications.	

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Considerations</b>
4.1	Equality considerations have been factored into the conference design and invitee list. The Council’s Equality & Diversity Officer will be consulted in relation to the emerging framework to ensure that equality and good relations implications are taken account of.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
<p>Timeline: June 2014                      Reporting Officer: John McGrillen</p>	