



Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	City Development Agenda Conference
Date:	14 December 2012
Reporting Officer:	J McGrillen, Director of Development
1.0 Purpose	
1.1 To review and agree the approach to the proposed conference on city development. The proposed date for the conference is end March 2013.	
2.0 Background	
2.1 As part of the Investment programme, Members set out their intention to have a conference to promote the city to potential investors. 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.	
2.2 During these Ministerial meetings 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. This report, therefore, sets out a proposed approach to a city conference, building on the State of the City Development Debates, to attract a wide range of stakeholders to discuss ways in which to improve the competitiveness and success of Belfast.	
3.0 Key Issues	
Proposed Objectives of the Conference	
3.1 The following are suggested as objectives for the conference:	
<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;• 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 over-arching 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).
- opportunity to take stock of the city development during the 400th anniversary year.

3.5 In the light of the above, it was proposed that the approach to the conference could follow a tiered structure providing the context as an introduction to practical outcome related workshops.

Proposed Conference Structure

3.6 It is proposed that the tiered initial sessions would comprise:

- **Introduction to the regional city context:** - introduction from the First Minister and Deputy First Minister with a focus on the importance of Belfast as the regional driver.
- **Benchmarking Belfast – how do we compare?-** input to this session would be from Alex Jones, Chief Executive of the Centre for Cities. This would provide the overview, highlighting strategic indicators such as those produced by the Centre for Cities and using the Cities Outlook Data due to be published in January 2013. This data reinforces some of the key issues for cities such as economic infrastructure; employability and skills development; tourism; business growth and competitiveness; neighbourhood investment and quality of life.
- **Review of Investment Programme to date and launch of key elements of the updated “ Investment Programme II”:** Picking up on session by Alex Jones, this aspect of the conference will highlight the Investment Programme as a response to some of the key issues identified in the Cities Outlook Data. Demonstrating the importance of the Investment Programme as an initial response to the challenges faced in the City – the promotion of growth and investment alongside regeneration and balanced development. A reflection on delivery of the Investment Programme to date and look forward to the next challenges and opportunities. This will then segue into discussion of the Masterplan/City Development agenda.
- **Launch of the Masterplan Review (City Development Agenda) for consultation:** focus on the existing elements that are still applicable, such as the need to grow the population and the importance of the city

centre as an economic driver. This would begin to focus on the inter-relationships between the key and supporting projects in the Masterplan, many of which are included in the Investment Programme, along with the identification of the challenges in taking key projects forward and the necessity for partnership delivery.

- It is proposed Paul McTiernan, the consultant responsible for the revision of the Masterplan would do a short presentation at this point with other contributions/responses from city stakeholders, also connecting in related pieces of work such as those on city financing and the IBM Smarter Cities project.

3.2 The final workshop session would address the:

Engagement of stakeholders in focussed delivery discussion with the emphasis on specific lobbying positions being created and processes for taking forward the key projects or initiatives being identified. The workshops would address specific projects or initiatives based on recent experience around examples such as Titanic Belfast or UU Campus relocation. The areas of focus could include:

- a integrated regeneration strategy for the **city centre**;
- maximising the strategic opportunities from development proposals such as the **stadia**;
- development of the **leisure estate and tackling health inequality**;
- the essential **infrastructure** to support accessibility, investment, competitiveness and quality of life (including flood prevention);
- connectivity **digital infrastructure** and new economic sectors ;
- sustainability, **energy efficiency** and environmental assets.

3.3 This aspect of the conference would seek to ensure commitment from key stakeholders and recognition of the need to establish shared delivery mechanisms to support a shared vision. The key outcomes will be shared ownership of the initiatives and a pathway to driving them forward through such mechanisms as ISNI/ and the Programme for Government; coalescence towards a common vision for development and creation of a guiding coalition.

3.4 In concluding the conference it will be important to create a process through which momentum can be maintained. OECD have previously carried out analysis for the Council on Belfast's economy, this may be an appropriate time to ask the organisation to refresh this work in the context of the RPA and the Masterplan.

Leadership

3.7 The delivery needs to highlight that this is an Investment Conference; the emphasis being on ensuring more effective and coordinated delivery of projects to maximise Belfast's potential in driving economic growth for the region.

3.8 It was a powerful symbol of confidence in Belfast when the Minister and Deputy First Minister launched the Investment Programme and their input to the 2013 conference would be extremely valuable in providing continuity to the Investment Programme process one year on as well as reinforcing Belfast's regional significance. Given the importance of the Department of Regional Development and the Department of Social Development in city regeneration, it would be extremely beneficial to have the Ministers responsible for these departments contribute to the conference.

3.9 The role of elected Members in the conference will be vital – it is proposed that the Lord Mayor would act as MC and that the Chair of SP&R Committee would provide the update on the Investment Programme. Key roles will also be played by the Chair of the Development Committee and other elected Members. This conference report will also be submitted to the Development Committee in January for information.

4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 The event is likely to cost £20,000 and has been budgeted for from within current 2012/13 Departmental estimates.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Agree that the "City Conference" as outlined above should take place at the end of March 2013 and the costs associated with the conference, its organisation and retention of expert contributors;
- Agree that the First Minister, Deputy First Minister, Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Social Development should be invited to participate in the conference.