



Subject:	City for Investment – service update
Date:	8 August 2018
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Council-led City for Investment support for indigenous businesses and new investors. An 18-month pilot of the City for Investment Service commenced in April 2018. The report covers progress to date and considers options for the future.
1.2	Future development of the service is dependent on demand, consideration of resource implications and value for money assessment. The pilot will review and assess performance of the service over the 18-month period to inform choices regarding the future approach.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the work being progressed by the “City for Investment” Service to date; • Note that future options concerning the strategic development of the service will be presented to a future meeting of the Committee based on the learning gained in the pilot project period (18 months from April 2018); and • Note that any future approach to scaling the service may require additional finance or staff resources which will be referred to relevant Committees for consideration and will also be taken account of in the future rate-setting processes.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>The Council currently delivers a range of business support activities focused on Starting a Business, Growing a Business and Investing in Belfast. It is one of a number of partners operating in this field. In recognition of the challenges that local businesses and inward investors can face in navigating the current system, the City for Investment Service approach agreed by this Committee in March 2018 consolidates the Council’s business services available across the various departments with a view to making it easier to do business in Belfast and enhancing the investor experience. It also links to the various support services provided by other partners.</p>
3.2	<p>The development of the “Belfast: City for Investment” Service does not preclude the Council undertaking investment attraction initiatives such as MIPIM and international relations business members. Lead prospecting for investment from cities such as Dublin and London will also continue as part of the Council’s core service offer to local businesses who are seeking to explore export markets for their products and services or diversification of their business model into Belfast.</p>
3.3	<p>Following agreement by the Committee in March 2018, activity has started on the City for Investment Service. Available support includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft landing Service: Working proactively with investors, providing the professional and personal connections to help businesses be successful in Belfast including advice on business accommodation; • Welcome Service and Accessing Networks: Assisting with an overview of the city and providing familiarisation visits of local businesses, housing, schools, colleges and universities, as well as providing an insight into Belfast’s social and cultural energy;

- Planning: Co-ordinating and providing advice including pre-planning application discussions, planning performance agreements, local development plans and arranging access to development engagement managers where required;
- Sector-specific support and skills academies: Guidance and direction on the availability of sector-specific support, citywide skills academies, upcoming career fairs and events and provide access to third-party training providers;
- Supplier and supply chain opportunities: Access to meet the buyer events, local supply chain opportunities and enabling corporate social responsibility with neighbouring communities; and
- Internationalisation and export opportunities: Providing access to Sister City Networks in Boston, Nashville and Shenyang and World Trade Centre Networks.

3.4 To date there have been 37 client enquiries.

- Early Stage/Pre-Investor: A business which is undertaking initial scoping work, intelligence gathering, familiarisation, business development scoping, as part of their consideration to locate or expand in Belfast – 14 enquiries to date
- Committed: A business which has committed to locating in Belfast and is further developing or implementing their plans and / or proposals or awaiting planning approval – 12 enquiries to date
- Established: Company is post-investment and seeking receipt of Council support post investment to better become embedded in the City and grow – 11 enquiries to date.

3.5 11 of the businesses included above are businesses in receipt of joint support from both Invest NI and Belfast City Council.

3.6 Enquiries have been received across a range of business sectors including Retail, Office, Recruitment Consultancy, Cyber Security, Creative & Digital, Construction Products, Renewable Energy, Joinery, Hospitality and Leisure, Advanced Manufacturing & Composites. The total potential scale of investment across the enquiries is £3.5million, with a need for 50,000sq ft. of new accommodation or occupied premises. The estimated number of jobs that may be created as a consequence of this investment is 181 jobs. An overview of the activity to date and projected outputs is attached as **Appendix 1**.

3.7	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The current City for Investment Service is being met from existing Economic Development Budgets for 2018/19. Conclusion of the review of the pilot in September/October 2019 will be used to inform the estimates setting process for 2019/20.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Each of the proposed projects referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. New projects or service areas are equality screened and considerations given to equality and good relations impacts at the initial stages of project development. Officers will work closely with the Equality and Good Relations Team on this activity.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1: Summary of City for Investment Service and outputs