

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 5th December, 2018

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Lyons (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Haire, Kingston and McGimpsey; and  
Councillors Baker, Beattie, Corr, Dudgeon,  
Graham, Hussey, Johnston, Mullan, Murphy,  
O'Donnell, O'Hara, O'Neill and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;  
Mrs. C. Reynolds, City Regeneration and Development  
Lead Officer; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of the High Sheriff (Councillor Howard) and Councillor Dorrian.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of 7th November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd December.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Presentations**

#### **Steer Economic Development - Draft Enterprise Framework for Belfast**

The Committee was reminded that Steer Economic Development had been commissioned by the Council to develop an Enterprise Framework for Belfast.

It was reported that Mr. Pringle, Director of Steer Economic Development, was in attendance in order to outline the extent of the work which had been undertaken to date and he was welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. Pringle began his presentation by outlining the main challenges and opportunities faced by Belfast in terms of its enterprise economy. He reported that it was

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one of the best locations in Northern Ireland in which to start a business and that the ability to scale-up businesses and support the growth of small high-growth firms was a key strength. It was also a relatively inexpensive place in which to start or grow a business and performed well in the context of 'Quality of Life' measures. However, when compared with other cities across the United Kingdom, it struggled in terms of the volume of business start-ups, had lower survival rates and higher incidences of failure.

He explained that there were currently twenty-seven providers delivering 180 initiatives/programmes across the City, which demonstrated the need to adopt a more co-ordinated approach. There was also a high degree of dependence amongst entrepreneurs/the business community on publicly funded enterprise support programmes.

He informed the Members that an Enterprise Framework had now been formulated, which was comprised of three distinct elements, namely, an overarching vision, thematic priorities and cross-cutting themes. The vision statement reflected the overarching aim of the Framework, whilst the thematic priorities outlined the issues to be addressed, the corresponding objectives and the outputs, outcomes and impacts to be delivered. Finally, the cross-cutting themes set out the underpinning factors and guiding principles behind all activities to be driven by the Framework.

Mr. Pringle then outlined a number of issues which were essential to the success of the Enterprise Framework, such as the need for genuine collaboration between the public and private sector in leading the enterprise agenda and to deliver cultural change in equality of perception between entrepreneurship and employment. In terms of future steps, the Council and its partners would be working to embed the Enterprise Framework, establish governance and management arrangements, scope new delivery models and formulate a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, with the Framework to be implemented over the coming year.

Mr. Pringle was thanked by the Chairperson, following which the Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the Enterprise Framework for Belfast.**

**1.2 Members will be aware that the Council has been working with partners to develop an agreed approach to investment in enterprise support in the city to focus on increasing the number of business start-ups and making existing businesses more productive and competitive. The work is supported by more than 30 partners active in the delivery of enterprise and business support activity across Belfast including Catalyst Inc., Prince's Trust, the Enterprise Agency network, the universities and Belfast Metropolitan College.**

- 1.3** This report sets out some of the key information to be included as part of the presentation by the team from Steer Economic Development – the expert team that has been working with officers on the development of the framework.

**2.0** **Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to:

- approve the ambition and priorities for Belfast through the Enterprise Framework;
- agree to Council officers working in partnership with the Enterprise and Business Growth working group (EBGWG) to agree next steps and key actions to realise the ambition of the framework and;
- approve the allocation of £50,000 from the existing 2018/2019 Economic Development budget to support the delivery of the Scale Up initiative in partnership with Catalyst Inc. and Invest NI which will commence in January 2019.

**3.0** **Main Report**

- 3.1** Members will be aware that, as part of the transfer of functions and Local Government Reform, responsibility for business start-up and support for under-represented groups in terms of enterprise support transferred to Councils.

- 3.2** In 2017, the Council convened an Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group to support the achievement of the economic priorities set out in the Belfast Agenda, and work collectively towards addressing Belfast's 'Enterprise Economy' challenges around business start-up and growth. These include:

- Low business start-up rates: the 2016 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) reported that the levels of total entrepreneurial activity in Northern Ireland were 6.3%, significantly lower than in England (9.2%) and the UK average (8.8%)
- High levels of business deaths: Since 2008, there has been a tendency for business deaths to outnumber the creation of new firms
- Rebalance the economy: Belfast is too reliant on the public sector. Approximately 1/3 of employment in the city is within this sector
- Employment opportunities: the long-term unemployment rate has fallen, albeit very slightly, over

the period between 2014 and 2017 and is currently at 45.2%. However, this is still almost double that of the UK, where the rate is currently 25.3%

- **Business Survival Rates: Belfast's start up rate per 10,000 populations is the highest in the region, which averages at 24.4% this, is significantly lower than the UK average of 45.7%.**

However, the three-year survival rate of businesses in Belfast sits at 55.3%, higher than the UK average of 54.4%. Belfast is also the best place for businesses to reach £1m turnover in their first three years in the UK. The figures beyond that indicate that firms in Belfast are less likely to scale to £3m turnover than companies based on other parts of the UK.

**3.3 Taking account of its statutory remit in this area, the Council has brought together the key enterprise partners to explore opportunities for a more collaborative approach to addressing these challenges and making Belfast a great place to start and grow a business. Partners agreed to develop an enterprise framework around which they could focus activity and investment.**

**3.4 The objectives of the framework – agreed by the Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group – were to:**

- **Set the ambition for Belfast by establishing targets to enable Belfast to achieve rates of entrepreneurship and business start activity comparative to other relevant cities**
- **Identify initiatives, programmes and/or projects to be delivered through a partnership approach to achieve the ambitions/targets set**
- **Inform future investment decisions for Belfast City Council and the Enterprise and business growth working group partners**
- **Consider the appropriate management and governance arrangements to deliver against the framework.**

**3.5 Steer Economic Development was commissioned to develop the Enterprise Framework for Belfast in Spring 2018. Their work to date has involved:**

- **a review of the existing activity to support enterprise**
- **a series of targeted consultations with local stakeholders from the public and private sector**
- **workshops with 29 stakeholders to test and refine the emerging framework thinking and**

- research to establish key metrics to implement, monitor and evaluate progress performance.
- 3.6** Some of the more developed findings have now been shared with the Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group. There is consensus among the group on the ambition and the priorities that the framework identifies and also recognition that a significant amount of work needs to take place to realise this. This will also require a cultural change to the current funding-led approach, where the metrics focus on participants engaged rather than more qualitative outcomes that would align with the Belfast Agenda ambitions.
- 3.7** The draft Enterprise Framework includes a vision which sets out the ambition for the city as a great place to start and grow a business. It also outlines the steps to be taken for Belfast to be *'recognised for its diverse community of entrepreneurs, who benefit from a comprehensive, planned and coherent system of enterprise support, which fulfils their needs at all stages of the business growth life-cycle'*.
- 3.8** This vision is supported by four thematic priorities which include:
- enable a vibrant and productive business base;
  - nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a viable career option;
  - nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a route out of economic inactivity; and
  - be characterised by clear leadership, co-ordination and communication
- 3.9** Success will be measured through the following metrics:
- Business Birth Rates
  - Business Survival Rates at 3 and 5 years
  - Levels of entrepreneurial activity.
- 3.10** Some of the key actions to be required to enable Belfast to achieve these targets include;
- Review of the Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group governance structure aligned to the recommendations of the framework and the governance procedures of the Growing the Economy theme in the Belfast Agenda
  - Development of a shared brand, communication strategy and potential MIS (management information system) that incorporates partner services and better

supports entrepreneurs to navigate their journey through the enterprise landscape

- Establishment of an incentive scheme which removes barriers to enable potential entrepreneurs to explore entrepreneurship as a viable option
- Establishment of a Belfast based programme that works with entrepreneurs, SME's and investors to facilitate access to market funds.

- 3.11 While the Council now has statutory responsibility for the business start element of enterprise, it still has a relatively modest budget for this work, which is currently supplemented by EU funding resources. A key consideration for the long-term strategy will be to look at the level of resourcing required – across all parties – to achieve the targets set, focusing on both the social inclusion angle (enterprise as a response to economic inactivity) and the productivity challenge (supporting the development and growth of competitive, export-focused businesses).
- 3.12 The framework notes that this is a long-term challenge that will need to remain an area of focus for some time if things are to change. It proposes a series of short-term interventions (to 2021) alongside longer-term plans (to 2035). The Framework does not address specific interventions required to support the development and growth of the social enterprise sector. The main aim is to address the structural issues across the enterprise sector in Belfast, to reduce fragmentation and encourage a more collaborative and coordinated approach to delivery.
- 3.13 Subject to agreement of the framework by the Council, officers will re-engage with the Enterprise and Business Growth Working Group to agree the programme of work and resource allocations required to improve performance.
- 3.14 One of the key challenges identified through the enterprise framework is the need to encourage more businesses to scale and grow to turnover of more than £3million. In May 2018, in partnership with Catalyst Inc. and Invest NI, Belfast City Council provided support to 10 high-growth start-ups to participate in a Belfast Mass Challenge Programme. Mass Challenge is a global incubator, based in Belfast's sister city of Boston. It has a global reputation and has supported more than 1,500 start-up businesses, creating in excess of 80,000 jobs between them. The aim of Mass Challenge was to identify and accelerate the top start-ups in Belfast, connecting them to the global market and Mass Challenge's global network. Following an application process, 10 successful startups

participated in an intensive multiday bootcamp in Boston in May 2018. Over the week long bootcamp, the businesses made over 100 network introductions, and 50 one to one mentoring sessions. 100% of the programme feedback has been positive with participants commenting that the support has benefited their Go to Market strategy for the US, supported the development of their US networks and enabled them to access US investment opportunities. A full evaluation is underway to establish the economic impact of the support.

**3.15 Building on the learning from the Mass Challenge experience, officers have been working with Catalyst Inc and Invest NI to consider how we can extend the support available to eligible businesses and continue the momentum of the MassChallenge Initiative. Catalyst Inc. have now taken this learning and have developed a proposal for a 'Scale Up' initiative. This will provide practical support to 10 businesses to encourage CEO transformation, business modelling and sales strategy support for those businesses with the ambition to scale. The programme will encompass three core elements, namely:**

- 1 week Boston Residential at Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Entrepreneurship Development Programme
- Interim peer-to-peer workshops with Catalyst Inc designed to maximise peer learning and address real-time business challenges
- 1 week Boston residential at MassChallenge which focuses on go to market strategies and tactics

**3.16 The programme will be delivered in partnership with Catalyst Inc and Invest Northern Ireland. The overall cost of the programme will be £211,000. Given the alignment with the ambitions set out in the enterprise framework it is recommended that this is supported with funding of £50,000 to maximise the take-up by Belfast-based businesses, this equates to 23% of the overall programme cost. Invest NI, Catalyst Inc and the participating companies will cover the cost of the remainder (INI 30%, Catalyst Inc 24%, Participants 23%).**

#### **Financial and Resource Implications**

**3.17 The development of the Enterprise Framework for Belfast has been resourced from the 2018/2019 Economic Development budget. The financial implications of any new areas of investment will be factored into the budget estimates for 2019/20 and into the medium-term financial planning process.**

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- 3.18 The Scale Up initiative will be resourced from the 2018/2019 Economic Development budget previously agreed by this Committee.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.19 The proposed Enterprise Framework for Belfast will undergo the process of equality screening ensuring the framework gives consideration to equality and good relation impacts. A rural needs assessment will also be undertaken.”**

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that a copy of the report which had been produced by Steer Economic Development should be circulated to Members.

**Presentations**

**Request to Present to Committee**

The Committee agreed to receive at its special meeting in January a presentation from representatives of the International Convention Centre Belfast and Visit Belfast on the business tourism sector in the City.

**Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

**Update on Bank Buildings: City Centre Recovery Programme**

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the activity under way to support the City Centre Recovery Programme, focusing on the period to end December 2018. A similar update report was brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd November.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note:

- the update on the construction work, the cordon and the protected walkway;
- the update on the city marketing, street animation, major attractions and environmental improvements to enhance the vibrancy and increase footfall in the city centre;

- the progress on the allocation of the funds from the Primark Business Support Fund; and
- the update on the proposed incentive scheme, including the timeline for implementation.

### **3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1** Members will be aware that, following the fire at Bank Buildings at the end of August, the Council and partners have put together a significant programme of investment to secure and consolidate the city centre in the short term. In parallel, work is under way on a longer-term plan to secure the future viability of the city centre. There are a number of strands to this work, and details on the current position are set out below.

#### **Update on Cordon**

- 3.2** Work on the container cordon is nearing completion and construction of the protected walkway has commenced. This walkway will allow pedestrian access between Donegall Place and Royal Avenue and is still on schedule to be open on Monday 3 December 2018. Once the walkway opens, 8 businesses that were inside the original cordon will be able to open and trade (Argento, Spar, Coffee Kiosk, Cookie Box, DV8, McDonald's, Skechers and Aldo). Discussions are ongoing with these businesses about access arrangements prior to 3 December and some started work to prepare for re-opening on 26th November.
- 3.3** Works to remove the most dangerous parts of the Bank Buildings continue with 2 of the chimneys now removed on the Castle Street elevation. Unfortunately, examination of the stonework has revealed that 80% of this is too badly fire-damaged to be able to be used in any reconstruction works. Props have been installed to the front of the building and work will commence this week when we expect that the clock will be next to be removed. Works are still on track to have the facade retention system in place by spring 2019.

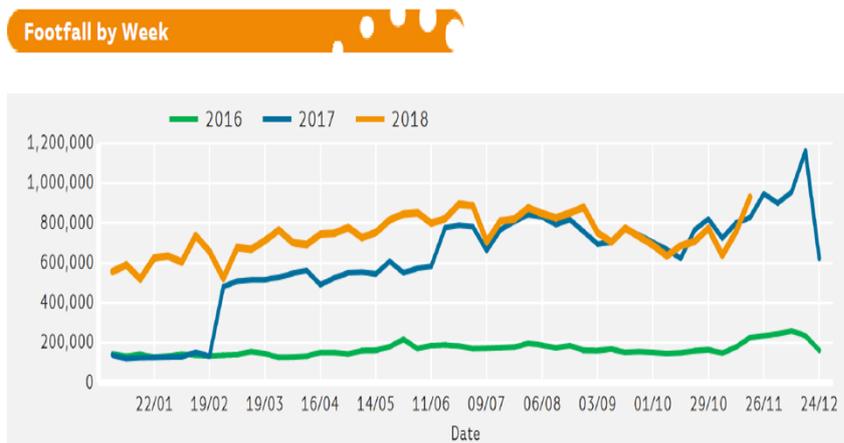
#### **Marketing and Communications**

- 3.4** All of the animation investment is being supported by a tactical and sustained PR and marketing campaign led by the Council and inclusive of all city partners. The Head of Marketing has advised that feedback via social media and other channels has been positive and a marketing summary is included below:

- Each day there is a renewed effort to keep the media briefed – keeping the narrative on the city centre positive. Figures from 24th October to 21st November show 754 articles, the majority of them being positive.
- On social #YourBelfast had organic reach of 13.5 million and a selection of positive social media anecdotal comments.
- The ‘Belfast Alive with Christmas’ overarching marketing and campaign activities include print, digital, outdoor, TV – 10 second and 30 second ad and the reskinning/ redirecting of Belfast Wifi. This activity stretches to New Year sales.
- In parallel with this, each city event/ programme of activities has tactical PR and marketing campaigns to support it – sitting within overarching campaign.
- Business and support organisations have received a toolkit to help share city messages. The #YourBelfast toolkit can be used on social media to share updates from @BelfastCC, @VisitBelfast and @Translink\_NI on Twitter. Details of all events and attractions are updated daily on Council and Visit Belfast websites.

### Footfall Figures

- 3.5 While members will be aware of the challenges around footfall, figures from last week (week 47) do show some signs of recovery. Details are set out below:



### Street Animation, Major Attractions and Environmental Improvements

- 3.6 Following approval by the SP and R Committee on 19th October, a programme of animation, major attractions and environmental improvements, supported by an enhanced

marketing campaign has been developed in order to drive footfall into the city centre and support the economic recovery. Given the tight timeframes, and in the lead-up to Christmas, this has required a concerted effort to pull the programme of activity together, taking into account the need to obtain consents, procure, mobilise and deliver the activities, while undertaking engagement with all relevant stakeholders and putting in place an enhanced marketing campaign.

**3.7** There has been investment in new feature lighting, planters, wayfinding and other environmental improvements and these are currently being rolled out. In addition, large scale family based attractions have been is aimed at attract visitors into the city to experience the Christmas offer.

**3.8** A summary of the main elements include:

- **Donegall Place:** an astro-turf area is in place along with new planters and seating arrangements adjacent to the chalets as part of the extended Christmas Market. This area will be supplemented with additional seating following the removal of the trading locations to create a temporary area of green space within the city centre and to facilitate a 2019 animation programme. A large snow slide attraction has also been installed on Donegall Place adjacent to the cordon. This snow slide, alongside the other attractions, has proven very popular to date.
- **Castle Place:** a new astro-turf area and image representing the location of the River Farset is in place alongside family based attractions, including a carousel, children's rides and a German bratwurst grill. Final work to complete this area is ongoing and the area will be supplemented with additional seating following the removal of the attractions to create temporary additional green space.
- **Royal Avenue:** an area for animation has been constructed outside the entrance to Castle Court as an attractor to Castle Court and the wider Royal Avenue area. Based on an astro-turf surface, a temporary pop up stage has been installed and operated by Cathedral Quarter Trust for choirs, brass bands and City of Music animation. The area has been further enhanced by large lighting attractions, planters and seating arrangements and will provide a focal point for a proposed lighting projection spectacle onto adjacent

buildings. This complements a programme of animation and events being undertaken in conjunction with Castlecourt and BID.

- **Fountain Street Area:** a number of lighting features are already in place throughout the perimeter of the cordon area to improve safe access along the existing diversion routes. Canopy lighting has been installed to Fountain Lane, Fountain Street and Berry Street, with additional lighting schemes planned to be in place on Castle Arcade for the beginning of December.
- **Bank Square/ Castle St Area** -There were proposals to install environmental improvements onto Bank Square, including an astro turf and seated area. However, following concerns raised by some businesses relating to attracting antisocial behaviour to the area, it was agreed that animation and programming should be promoted in the area instead of the temporary environmental improvements. Following discussions with the traders, and in conjunction with DfC, we are currently exploring more permanent improvements that could be installed within the square including a potential canopy system that would enable the square to be better utilised by the traders throughout the year. A further report will be brought back to committee as cost and feasibility options are complete. Approval was also given by the SP&R Committee on 23 November 2018 on a potential public realm scheme in the Queen Street, King Street and College Court. This could provide improved connectivity to Castle Street and the surrounding areas and act as a catalyst for further environmental improvements in the area. In addition, a meanwhile use of the DfC site at 83-87 Castle Street is currently being explored to provide a temporary hub use of a derelict site, pending confirmation of a permanent development proposal. This concept is currently under design in conjunction with DfC. Further reports will be brought back to Committee as the scheme develops.
- **Cathedral Gardens** – Family based attractions including a 40m Observation Wheel and other rides. Work to provide dressing to this area is ongoing.
- **Lighting features:** Christmas-themed lighting features is being installed to the areas of animation on Castle Place, Royal Avenue, Cathedral Gardens and Donegall Place. The lighting features include 4m high ribbon

towers of light and a 4.5m high Christmas Bauble archway that will be moved among the animation areas.

- **City Dressing:** with the construction elements of the animation areas now largely complete, additional dressing to these areas commenced from Monday 26 November. This will include Christmas themed wraps to the heras fence panels, lighting features to trees and planters, and dressing across areas of animation and market chalets.
- **Wayfinding:** an enhanced wayfinding system commenced installation on 26 November with an installation period of 1 week. These measures will include new easy-to-use maps for wayfinding around the perimeter of the cordon, an enhanced Yellow Dot Trial with the yellow dots lifted from the pavement and placed at strategic locations above eye line throughout the perimeter route. Key decision point totem signs will replace the existing heras fence panel arrangements at key junctions. The existing cordon fencing wrap will be replaced with bright messaging promoting the 'We Are Open' message at the cordon locations to ensure visitors are aware that the areas are still open for business.
- **Cordon Dressing:** Primark are currently installing the structural container cordon to Castle Place and the scaffold access walkway between Donegall Place and Castle Place, and between Castle Place and Royal Avenue with an opening date of 3 December 2018. The exposed surfaces of the containers and the access walkways will be dressed and there will be enhanced lighting. It is intended that this will be in place early December.

**3.9** In addition to the infrastructure and installations, there has been a significant programme of animation and activities underway. The programme of events started in early November with the Red Bull F1 event which attracted 35,000 people into the city. This was followed by the Christmas lights switch-on took place on 17 November 2018. This attracted almost 11,000 people into the city centre. It also marked the opening of the Christmas Market at the front of City Hall and this will remain in place until 22 December 2018. Given the challenging business environment this year, members will be aware that a number of chalets will extend on to Donegall Place. These will house a number of local businesses – including some who have been displaced or whose business has been adversely affected by the fire. These locations were

operational by 23 November and will operate at this location until 6 January 2019.

**3.10** Members were previously advised that the attractions were to be supported by a wider programme of animation, events and entertainment. The Council is working in partnership with the Cathedral Quarter Trust (CQT) who are responsible for the annual Culture Night event that is held in Belfast each September. CQT are working with other cultural providers across the city to put together a programme of animation and events with the aim of providing a vibrant city atmosphere with a diverse offering and experience for all. CQT's plans include:

- **Magical Musical Christmas Stage on Royal Avenue (adjacent to CastleCourt). This will be programmed every weekend and during the week in the run-up to Christmas and will feature a selection of local choirs, orchestras, performers and youth arts organisations**
- **Big Belfast 'Christmas' Busk Off on 15 December – performances will take place across the city, offering a platform to local talent**
- **Caribbean Christmas on Royal Avenue on 16 December – working in conjunction with the African and Caribbean Society of Northern Ireland, CQT will present a unique experience of Christmas with a Caribbean twist**
- **'Cinema on the Square' – pop-up cinema on Bank Square from 1-9 December 2018. The cinema will feature a number of popular Christmas classics and will include a signed performance and one performance specifically for those with autism. This event is being delivered in conjunction with Belfast One BID**
- **Fire and Ice – this will involve an ice sculpture gallery on Royal Avenue/Bank Square. It will be complemented by spectacular performances by fire artists. This event will take place on the weekend of 7/8 December**
- **Q-Con Christmas Bizarro – this is a gaming event that will attract young people and those interested in gaming into the city centre. It will be supported by retailers and specialist businesses in this field and will take place on 15/16 December**
- **'A Gift for All' sound and light spectacular – this is a six-minute light show which will run on repeat every quarter hour from 4.30-9pm from 17-23 December 2018. The show will take place on Royal Avenue, adjacent to CastleCourt.**

- **Elf workshops and Christmas walking tours at various venues across the city centre, running through to 23 December, as well as a Santa Post-box on Royal Avenue (operated by Belfast One BID) which will be available from 29 November 2018.**

**3.11 While the detail above focused on the activity up to the Christmas period, work is also under way to look at a programme of investment post-Christmas, in order to underpin the longer-term viability of the city centre. Further details will be brought back to Committee in the near future. .**

**Public Transport Offers**

**3.12 Translink has revealed its most extensive range of discount travel tickets and special services to attract more people to shop and socialise in Belfast during the festive season. The launch follows the recent Executive Office announcement that the Department for Infrastructure will provide extra funding to Translink to support delivery of a high impact festive travel campaign.**

**Starting from 17th November 2018, the package includes:**

- **Day travel across the city for just £2 (£1 child), a £5 family ticket and additional bus, coach and train services including midnight departures**
- **Ulsterbus or Goldline services incentives include day return travel for the price of a single ticket after 9.30am from across NI**
- **One third off NI Railways day return tickets after 9.30am on weekdays and all day at weekends until the end of December**
- **50% off bus and rail single fares for yLink card customers**
- **Midnight departures on NI Railways, Metro and Goldline on Fridays and Saturdays until Christmas and main Park & Ride facilities will offer late night and Saturday services along with free parking at the Park & Ride sites.**

**3.13 Although it is too early to report on the impact of these incentives, Translink have indicated an increase of some 25% across the Glider network since the announcement, although the relocated northbound services continue to experience a diminished uptake. Translink will report uptake on the fare incentives on a weekly basis going forward.**

**Incentive Scheme**

- 3.14 Traders and city centre partners have given feedback that, while they are supportive of activities that are taking place across the city, they were keen to consider how we could drive additional footfall to generate sales in the stores.

As a result of this feedback, officers have been working with partners to develop an app to support a City Centre Incentive Scheme, the Your Belfast Rewards app will go live on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December. It aims to drive the additional visitors into city centre businesses by providing a range of incentives and rewards for city centre shoppers and visitors. This will also offer the potential to profile local business.

- 3.15 When users download the app, they will be tasked with finding codes located in the premises of retailers in areas around the city centre, each retailer will have their own unique code. This location of these will be tactical based on footfall figures. Once they have collected the allocated number of codes, they will have to answer a quiz question to be entered into the daily / weekly draw. The winners will be selected at random and the rewards will take the form of vouchers from various retailers. An indicative promotional calendar has been developed; however, this is subject to change based on feedback and review of the weekly analytics. Through the app users will also be able to access a range of offers from city centre retailers and find out what events are happening throughout the city in the run up to Christmas.
- 3.16 To date 200 city centre businesses have signed up to the scheme. Officers are still engaging with businesses and further businesses are likely to get involved. The consultation on the app with partners and retailers has been extremely positive and they see the value of getting involved. The analytics on the app will enable officers undertake a weekly review to ensure that it is having an impact on those businesses most adversely affected and to flex the offers to ensure that these areas and businesses are benefitting from engagement.

**Finance and Resources and Equality Implications**

- 3.17 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at the meeting on 13th November, was provided with details of the full City Recovery programme budget, following confirmation of Treasury monies and funding from NI Executive departments. The Committee agreed the overall programme

**expenditure as set out in the report and was advised that further detail on expenditure to March 2019 would be brought to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment**

**3.18 No specific equality or good relations implications associated with this investment.”**

The Chief Executive referred to recent media coverage relating to the cost to the Council of providing security around the Primark building. She reminded the Committee that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed that those costs should be met by the Council in the interim but that a legal approach would be made to Primark and its insurers to recoup those costs. She confirmed that there had since been correspondence between the parties on that matter.

In terms of the phased work being undertaken in and around the Bank Buildings, she reported that the covered pedestrian walkway between Donegall Place and Royal Avenue had opened on 3rd December, which had allowed for the cordon to be reduced and a number of businesses to re-open. The Primark store in Commonwealth House, Castle Street, was due to open on 8th December. Work was ongoing to remove the upper parapet layer and one floor of the building, following which the façade would be stabilised using shipping containers and the interior would be cleared, to allow eventually for building works to commence. That would mean that vehicular access to Castle Street would continue to be restricted.

The City Regeneration and Development Lead Officer confirmed that the process of affixing heritage themed images to enhance the shipping containers would commence the next day and reviewed the animation work and other activities which would be taking place at the various locations over the Christmas period, as well as the physical and environmental improvements being delivered. She reported that, based on the most recent analysis, footfall had increased from 680,000 in October to 775,000 in November. The November figure was, she pointed out, only slightly short of the 793,000 recorded in the same month in 2017. She also drew the Committee’s attention to footfall by location figures in and around the Bank Buildings which showed an upward trend and added that information received from businesses had pointed to an increase in trading.

At this point, a Member pointed out that no reference had been made within the footfall figures to Castle Street, given that it was one of the streets which had been most affected by the Bank Buildings fire.

In response, the Chief Executive explained that there were no footfall sensors in Castle Street and that the Council had, historically, no input into the siting of such sensors. She added that the Council was conscious of the issues being faced currently in relation to Castle Street and that it would, from the New Year onwards, be focusing upon the long-term regeneration of that area.

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The Director of Development then provided an update on the incentive scheme which had been introduced on 1st December. He confirmed that two competitions had already been held, involving retailers in Castle Street, and that the scale and range of incentives would increase over time. Information derived from the scheme would be used to evaluate footfall and sales figures and there was the potential eventually to add other elements to the scheme.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Belfast at MIPIM 2019**

The City Regeneration and Development Lead Officer submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 To update the Committee on proposals for MIPIM 2019.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to note:**

- the successful launch event on 9th October, 2018 and the ongoing preparations for MIPIM 2019;
- the designs for the proposed new larger Belfast stand in its current location, which was approved in principle by the Committee in April 2018, subject to officers presenting more detailed proposals at a later meeting; and
- the approach to MIPIM 2019, including activities being undertaken to promote Belfast to the investment and development community.

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Members will be aware that MIPIM is the premier event in the European real estate calendar where many of the world's investors, developers and funders from both the private and public sectors gather to showcase cities and investment and regeneration opportunities. Over 27,000 people attended MIPIM 2018.**

**3.2 In April 2018, the Committee authorised officers to commence preparations for MIPIM 2019 (to be held 12-16 March 2019) including budget spend. Specialist support for programming, event management, communications and design have subsequently been procured and work is ongoing in terms of securing sponsorship, speakers and programming of events.**

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- 3.3** Belfast at MIPIM 2019 was successfully launched on 9th October, with strong media interest and attendance. Cllr. Donal Lyons, as the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, delivered the opening speech at the event, which was attended by over 100 representatives from across public and private sectors. It was highlighted at the launch that if we are to attract further growth, investment and regeneration, we must work collectively with all stakeholders to set out our ambitions to achieving sustainable, inclusive growth and building resilient cities. Subsequent sponsorship support for the Belfast at MIPIM 2019 delegation has been strong, both from the public and private sectors.
- 3.4** At the time of writing, organisations committed to supporting Belfast at MIPIM 2019 include: Aecom, Arup, Aurora Prime Real Estate, Belfast City Council and Belfast City Region Councils, Belfast Harbour, Benmore Developments, Bruceshaw, Bywater Properties, Carson McDowell, Castlebrooke, Causeway Asset Management, Deloitte, Heron Bros, Invest NI, Killultagh Estates, McAleer and Rushe, Oakland, Queens University, Titanic Quarter, TLT, TODD Architects, Tourism NI, Tughans, Ulster University, Valor Homes, Osborne & Co. It is anticipated that further organisations will support the delegation in coming weeks. The level of support to date is creating a platform for the strongest Belfast delegation at MIPIM yet.
- 3.5** Following the announcement from the Chancellor in the Autumn budget statement in relation to the Belfast Region City Deal, Members should note that this year's MIPIM delegation will, for the first time, include representatives from the five councils partnering with Belfast City Council in the Belfast Region City Deal bid. This represents a strong commitment to collaborative working as part of the BRCD proposition.
- 3.6** A dedicated MIPIM landing page has been built into the Council's 'investinbelfast.com' website. This page was live in line with the launch event and provides a platform for organisations and individuals to register their interest and support. The website provides details on investment opportunities in the City and provides news updates. .
- 3.7** Key objectives for MIPIM 2019 are to:
- attract the interest of real estate investors, developers, occupiers and funders in the context of development and investment that provides for sustainable inclusive growth in the city;

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- positively influence perceptions of the city showing its investment potential;
  - create and continue to foster a strong public-private sector collaborative effort; and
  - deliver an initiative which reflects the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda;
- 3.8** MIPIIM is a real estate conference aimed at investment, development and regeneration but it important to note that it is not just about commercial development. It is intended that we will have an increased focus on housing this year in the context of inclusive growth across the city, mixed use developments and increased city centre living.
- 3.9** The 4-day event conference at MIPIIM involves a concentrated programme of events, meetings and engagements which allow us to showcase Belfast as an exciting location for investment. A 4-day programme at MIPIIM based on initial work by officers with the appointed contractor and MIPIIM at Belfast Task Force is being drafted and includes:
- Speaking engagements on and off stand involving high profile speakers from the City and beyond
  - Joint ventures with other Cities from across the UK and Europe
  - BRCD focused session
  - Panel sessions focusing on the following initial proposed themes:
    - City centre living; mixed use developments and housing
    - City of Innovation
    - Smart City
    - Screen Tourism
    - Office Market
    - BRCD
    - Waterfront Cities
  - On and off stand presentations to identified potential city investors, developers and funders
  - Media interviews and social media slots
- 3.10** Officers, along with the MIPIIM at Belfast Task Force and the appointed consultant, will work to firm the event programme, including building the narrative and engaging speakers. There will also be further work undertaken to increase and build on sponsorship. It is also proposed to have a pre MIPIIM Huddle event for February 2019 in advance of the delegation heading out to MIPIIM.

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- 3.11 At its meeting in April 2018, approval was given by Members to scope out options for re-positioning the Belfast stand or increasing its size in its current position, with approval for additional investment in a larger stand, subject to final details being presented to Committee. The Council contribution represents less than 20% of the cost of the stand, marketing, speaking events etc that take place at MIPIM. The remainder will be paid for via the business community.**
- 3.12 Given the larger Belfast delegation proposed for this year and, in particular, the addition of the BRCD Councils, an increase in size of the stand is considered appropriate. Whilst Reed MIDEM, the MIPIM event organisers have been unable to offer an alternative location for the Belfast stand there is an opportunity to increase the size of the Belfast stand in its original location.**
- 3.13 Members may recall that we were limited in previous years as to what events we could hold on stand due to its size and capacity. With 2019 set to have a record number of Belfast delegates the larger stand is required not only to hold the delegation including those from the private sector and City Region Councils but also those from the international and global markets who want to visit and hear the Belfast story. The larger stand will allow Belfast to raise its profile and compete with those regional Cities from across the UK who upped their game in 2018 through increasing their foothold at the conference. Belfast has built a reputation in MIPIM attracting a lot of interest regionally and internationally and the larger stand will enable the accommodation of larger groups and networking, allowing us to get our message across to a bigger audience and removing the need to hire of stand venues. The larger stand will have a dedicated BRCD area whilst showcasing Belfast as the regional driver.**
- 3.14 Details of the proposed stand designs have been circulated to the Committee. These designs allow the stand to double in size and with an extended terrace to the rear and an open terrace to the front giving Belfast a more visible presence. The new increased stand incorporates a glazed frontage which gives the feeling of bringing the main thoroughfare of Croisette in, and Belfast out to the Croisette. The designs also include a dedicated BRCD area.**

**Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs implications**

- 3.15 None**

**Finance and Resources Implications**

- 3.16 At the time of writing, £350,000 of private sector sponsorship for Belfast at MIPIM has been raised.”**

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Belfast Bikes Scheme – Performance Report**

The Director of Development submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the performance of the Belfast Bikes public hire scheme with regard to usage to and financial performance. It considers options for a strategic review in the future to maximise the usage and minimise the subvention of the Belfast Bikes Public Hire Scheme while ensuring equity of access for all Belfast residents.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **consider a strategic review of the Belfast Bikes Public Hire Scheme, examining the current operating model and how usage can be increased and commercial revenues enhanced. Members will receive a future report detailing the terms of reference for a strategic review and any associated costs; and**
- **note the performance to date of the Belfast Bikes public hire scheme.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Background**

**The Belfast Bikes scheme launched in 2015. The business case used to inform the Council’s projections was commissioned by the Strategic Investment Board and published in 2012. At the time, bike share schemes were in their infancy in the UK and Ireland, and information on the transparency of costs and income was not widely available. In recent years, bike share schemes have expanded rapidly in the UK and in Ireland and experience shows that they require some level of public sector investment. Funding models differ between cities however; the level of investment in the Belfast scheme is similar or lower than other comparator cities. For example, Dublin**

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**City Council contributes approximately €376,000 per annum towards the operating cost of the Dublin Bikes Scheme.**

**3.2 Historic Financial Performance**

Financial Year	Income		Expenditure		Subsidy	
	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual
15/16		£212,987		£392,170		£179,183
16/17	£336,340	£251,064	£422,780	£466,474	£56,440	£215,410
17/18	£247,000	£251,667	£456,016	£493,031	£209,016	£241,734

**3.3 18/19 Financial Performance Forecast**

Financial Year	Income		Expenditure		Subsidy	
	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual
18/19	£305,313	£167,186*	£469,321		£163,918	£302,135*

**\*forecasted**

**3.4 The forecasts articulated in the table above are predicated on the following assumptions. Expenditure is in line with budget at year-end.**

**3.5 YTD Financial Performance  
18/19 YTD – Revenue £87,342.63  
17/18 YTD – Revenue £79,120.94**

**Financial Performance Issues**

**3.5 The forecasted financial performance is primarily due to two factors, namely:**

- 1. a delay in securing the sponsorship of the Belfast bikes; and**
- 2. a forecasted failure of the bikes to achieve their rental revenue plan.**

**Sponsorship**

**3.6 Sponsorship of the Belfast Bikes ended in April 2018. A procurement exercise began Mid-April 2018 with a closing date of May 8th 2018. An award was made in August 2018 but, due to ongoing contract negotiations, the contract was signed in October 2018. The 18/19 financial plan assumed the ongoing sponsorship at a value of £110,000 per year, £9,166 per month. Therefore, the delay in**

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sponsorship between April and September inclusive as resulted in a financial loss of £55,000.

- 3.7** It was agreed by the Committee in September 2017 to introduce new membership and usage charges from 1st April 2018. The annual subscription fee was increased from £20 to £25, the casual subscription was increased from £5 to £6 and a new ‘pay as you go’ option introduced with usage charges of £1 for 30 minutes usage was introduced. The changes have resulted in a drop in income detailed later in the report. In conjunction with the price change, the revenue plan for the Bikes assumed an increase in rental revenue from £114,845 to £194,668, a 69% increase in revenue. It was thought at that time that a combination of increased usage and price would generate the planned increase in revenue.

The table below details historic year on year growth/decline in rental revenues.

	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Rental Income	£115,000	£134,000	£114,429	£118,436
Yr on Yr		116.52%	85.39%	103.50%

- 3.8** The increase in planned rental revenue was predicated on an increase in users of 35% linked to the aforementioned increase in rental rates. Members should note the relatively flat growth in the usage of the Belfast Bikes scheme.

**Operational issues**

**Vandalism**

- 3.9** Vandalism was an ongoing problem in Year 3 and did affect bike numbers on the street during Year 3 in particular in the last quarter. Extensive work has been ongoing with local communities, elected members, schools and the PSNI to reduce the incidents. There has been a reduction in the last quarter of Year 3 and the first 4 months of Year 4.

- Year 1 (27th April 2015 to 31st March 2016) - £1,800
- Year 2 (1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017) - £19,000
- Year 3 (1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018) -£22,700
- Year 4 (1st April 2018 to present) - £4,425.00 (This is down for the same period last year of £6,440)

**3.10 Anti-vandalism initiatives include:**

- Increased engagement with the PSNI
- PSNI stickers on the terminals
- Support for the operating team from Council community safety staff
- Increase awareness of customers and citizens in general (crime prevention – phone number to call)
- Continuous work with the operator to make the system more vandal proof
- increased involvement of community organisations
- Schools programme

**3.11 NSL (the operator), has arranged, in conjunction with the youth justice agency, to provide training and work experience days for several young persons following youth conferences**

**Recent community Engagement Event are as follows:**

**3.12**

Date	Event
June	Presentation to school – Corpus Christ
June	School St Joseph's - stall and competition (around 50 kids took part)
June	Presence at community event Roden Street Community Centre
July	Presence at Lower Shankill Community Regeneration event
Spring	Meeting with Ballymac Community group
May	Stall at Girdwood Open Day

**Proposals**

**3.13 Strategic Review – a strategic review of the bike scheme is required, specifically considering, reviewing the performance of the location and operation of Bike Docking stations, with a view to maximising revenue opportunities while ensuring equity of access.**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

**3.14 A further report will be provided to Committee detailing any additional cost associated with the proposed strategic review.**

**Equality or Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications**

**3.15 None.”**

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The Director of Development provided an overview of the scheme's performance to date and pointed to the increase in income and usage on the previous year.

The Committee then raised a number of issues, particularly around the small number of docking stations outside of the City centre and ongoing vandalism.

In response, the Director of Development pointed out that the scheme had applied initially to the City centre to facilitate movement between transport hubs and that a subsequent roll out to several strategic sites beyond there had been due primarily to the acquisition of funding from external sources and the re-siting of underperforming stations. The Chief Executive added that, should the Committee be minded to extend the scheme to outlying areas, there would be subvention costs associated with the purchase and operation of bikes and those would need to be reflected within the Council's financial forecasts.

The Director of Development outlined the measures which were had been put in place to prevent vandalism and referred to the fact that the costs resulting from vandalism had fallen significantly from the previous year.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed that the report to be submitted in advance of the review should include a map of all docking stations and usage figures on a station by station basis.

**Update on Belfast Region City Deal**

The Committee was reminded that the Chancellor had, on 29th October, announced a commitment of £350 million towards the Belfast Region City Deal. That figure would rise to £850 million with contributions from the Northern Ireland Executive, the six councils and two universities involved in the initiative and would be boosted by at least £150 million from the private sector.

The Chief Executive explained that the Belfast Region City Deal was comprised of approximately twenty-two projects, located across the investment pillars of Digital/Innovation, Infrastructure and Tourism-led Regeneration and were underpinned by a significant employability and skills programme. Whilst each project would require significant resources in their own right, the benefits of the deal would be realised only when managed and delivered at an overall programme level.

She reported that it was anticipated that the Council would be expected to act as the lead authority and accountable body in terms of the City Deal. It would, therefore, be required to work with the partners to put in place the appropriate structures to manage and deliver the investment programme, oversee the governance and decision-making process, financial planning and management, programme and project management, performance monitoring and assurance and communication and engagement. In addition, specific city region structures needed to be established to develop the digital strand of the programme, given that it was not under the ownership of a specific partner, the specialist nature of the projects and the potential for significant private sector investment.

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The Chief Executive reported further that experience gained from other deals had suggested that it could take up to one year to develop the programme structures and outline business cases. Given the scale of the Programme, it would be necessary to allocate resources to support the development and delivery of the City Deal and officers were liaising currently with other authorities involved in similar deals, to determine the required structures and resources, following which a report would be submitted to the Committee. In terms of next steps, she confirmed that officers were working with their counterparts in the Northern Ireland Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to draft a Heads of Terms document, which would set out the funding commitments and be signed by all partners, before being presented to the Council early in 2019 for approval.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Update on Transport Hub**

The City Regeneration and Development Lead Officer submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with an update on progress of the proposals for the Transport Hub.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 Members are asked to note:**

- **the update in relation to the planning application for the proposed Transport Hub and its strategic importance in the regeneration and growth of the city;**
- **that, in light of its strategic and economic significance, the Council's SP&R Committee agreed on 23rd November, to provide its support to the proposed development and to note that this is in the context of the comments already made from a planning perspective, as agreed by the Planning Committee on 11 September 2018 and 17 October 2017; and**
- **that the future proposals for the wider Weavers Cross regeneration will be brought to both the City Growth & Regeneration Committee and to the Planning Committee in due course. This will, of course, consider neighbouring communities.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Background**

**3.1** The proposed Belfast Transport Hub and wider Weavers Cross regeneration is a transport-led regeneration project which will ultimately involve the redevelopment of the Europa Bus Centre, Great Victoria Street Railway Station and surrounding NI Transport Holding Company (NITHC) land. It is proposed that this 20 acre mixed-use development site will comprise a multi-modal transport hub alongside commercial, leisure and residential facilities.

**3.2** NITHC served a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) on the Council in October 2016 in respect of both the Transport Hub and the wider Weavers Cross Regeneration proposal. Subsequently a planning application was received for the new integrated Transport Interchange element only on 16th June 2017. This was called in by the Department for Infrastructure on 26th June 2017 due to its regional significance and it is still under consideration. Consequently, the proposed development now consists of two separate elements:

- Transport Hub; and
- Wider masterplan development scheme (Weavers Cross)

**Transport Hub**

**3.3** As noted above, in June 2017 NITHC submitted a full planning application ([LA04/2017/1388/F](#)) for a new integrated transport interchange comprising:

- station concourse;
- 26 bus stands;
- 8 railway platforms;
- bus maintenance and parking;
- track and signaling enhancements;
- bus access bridge;
- cycle and taxi provision;
- car parking;
- new public square and public realm improvements;
- highway and infrastructure improvements; and
- temporary structures and compounds for bus operations during construction.

**3.4** The application is currently being considered by DfI and a decision is expected before the end of 2018. The Council, as

the local planning authority, responded formally to the consultation supporting the application, following meetings of the Planning Committee on 17th October 2017 and 11 September 2018.

**Key Issues.**

- 3.5** By way of policy background, the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) sets out the Council's collective ambition for the continuing growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding area and includes a road map of policies and projects to underpin this growth, with the Transport Hub highlighted as a key strategic project in this overall regeneration. The Strategy was shaped by extensive engagement with city stakeholders from all sectors.
- 3.6** Transport and connectivity will play a key role in the economic growth and regeneration of Belfast by enhancing access and serving as one of the key elements to catalyse growth and support Belfast as a successful modern city. BCCRIS underscores the importance of this in terms of city wide regeneration.
- 3.7** The proposed Transport Hub is located in one of the identified signature areas of the BCCRIS i.e. the South Centre and the significance of the Transport Hub becoming the gateway to the city centre and its immediate vicinity is emphasised in this. It highlights that the proposal for a new Transport Hub at this location is to be welcomed as a major improvement in convenience and connectivity of the regional rail system and associated transport links, with significant increases in passenger traffic anticipated. It also emphasises that the opportunity is not just one of transport engineering but is a chance to redefine the gateway to Belfast's city centre and act as a major regeneration opportunity for the entire city centre and neighbouring areas.
- 3.8** The Transport Hub is also identified in the Belfast Agenda as a key element of the City Development growth ambitions. It highlights the importance of improved connectivity and that we will seek to maximise the opportunities of the Transport Hub and provide the development of sustainable transport.
- 3.9** The Council's Planning Committee responded to the planning application as consultee and the response was agreed by the Planning Committee on 27th October 2017 and again on 11 September 2018. A copy of the response has been circulated to the Committee.

**3.10 Translink is also liaising with Council to bring forward various aspects of the development. There has been ongoing liaison on the Buy Social clauses and a draft Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared and will be implemented upon planning approval and appointment of the contractor. This Memorandum of Understanding agrees partnership-working arrangements for Council and Translink to deliver employability and skills interventions that will optimise the ability of those long-term unemployed and economically inactive within Belfast to access employment opportunities arising from the Buy Social requirements within the Belfast Transport Hub. This will initially focus on embedding the Construction Employment Academy model within the enabling works and construction phases of this redevelopment as a demonstrator project for the wider partnership to optimise the employment opportunities resulting from the wider redevelopment of the surrounding area.**

**3.11 The Construction Employment Academies will involve:**

- Stakeholder engagement with the range of employability, community and training providers across the city to prepare individuals for upcoming Construction Employment Academies;
- Targeted animation within local communities close to the vicinity of the development to identify individuals interested in the job opportunities;
- Outreach animation across the city to identify individuals interested in the job opportunities;
- Belfast City Council will provide resources to deliver Construction Employment Academies and co-designed with Translink and the relevant contractor/subcontractor for the identified employment opportunities;
- The Construction Employment Academy includes job roadshows, site visits, training and employability skills development delivered close to the vicinity of the development;
- Guaranteed job interviews with the contractor; and
- Working with the appointed contractor/s to identify wider employment opportunities within the construction of the Belfast Transport Hub and ensure the contractor has access to the Construction Employment Academy model to meet these employment needs;

3.12 This is planned to ensure a focus on achieving sustainable employment outcomes that contribute to achieving the goals of the Belfast Agenda.

3.13 It is clear that the Transport Hub will bring about significant regeneration, economic and environmental benefits to the city and aligns with the Council's ambitions within the Belfast Agenda and the Belfast Regeneration and Investment Strategy. The Council will however continue to work with Translink to ensure that delivery of the Transport Hub generates the greatest possible regeneration benefits to local residents in terms of jobs, training and economic impact.

3.14 Wider masterplan development scheme (Weavers Cross)

The full application for the wider regeneration scheme has not yet been submitted to the Council. The site sits within the wider context of a regeneration masterplan, referred to collectively as Weavers Cross, which will be submitted in outline planning application form. The proposed regeneration masterplan for this wider area is expected to consist of a mix of commercial and residential development. Initially both the outline and full applications were to be submitted in tandem but the outline application for the wider site is yet to be submitted pending planning approval for the Transport Hub.

3.15 Further reports on the wider Weavers Cross regeneration proposals will be brought back to the City Growth & Regeneration Committee in due course and officers are continuing to engage with Translink on this. In addition, it is expected that the outline application for the wider site will be processed and determined by the Council. Prior to the submission of an outline application for the wider development, the applicant will be required to undertake pre-application community consultation as the proposal will be for Major development.

3.16 Financial & Resource Implications

No direct resource implications associated this report.

3.17 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

No specific equality or good relations implications at this time."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Positioning Belfast to Compete**

**Long-Term Cultural Strategy for Belfast**

(Ms. E. Henry, Cultural Regeneration Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 13th June, it had agreed that officers would develop options for the delivery of a five-year cultural strategy for the City.

The Cultural Regeneration Manager reminded the Members that that decision had been taken in the context of a number of important developments and milestones, such as the cessation of the European Capital of Culture bidding process, initial recommendations arising from the draft Festival and Events Strategy and the conclusion in March 2020 of the current Cultural Framework and Tourism Strategy.

She reported that, following a review of previous approaches and models from other cities, particularly Liverpool's Impacts 18 programme, it was now proposed that a Cultural Transformation Strategy be developed to cover a minimum of ten years and that a year-long programme of activity be delivered in 2023. In addition to supporting the Belfast Agenda, the Strategy would assist in defining the role of culture across priority areas such as the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, the Good Relations Strategy, Tourism Strategy and the Local Development Plan.

She explained that the work around the Cultural Transformation Strategy would commence with the formulation of a cultural statement, which would present a vision for transformation, recognising the value of culture in the City. That would be followed by the establishment of an outward facing narrative, presenting a coherent and authentic story which would resonate both nationally and internationally. A strategic framework would then be created, which would establish a number of crosscutting strategic priorities. That would be followed by the development of an investment programme to support the delivery of strategic priorities, of detailed implementation plans and, importantly, of a bespoke programme of activity centred around 2023. The proposed timeline around this work would be as follows:

December 2018 – March 2019	Ongoing engagement Development of cultural statement, narrative, strategic framework and investment programme
March 2019	Approval for draft strategy to go out to public consultation
April 2019 – June 2019	Public Consultation
August 2019	Approval of final strategy
September 2019 – February 2020	Development of implementation plans
October 2020	Opening of new funding programme
March 2020	Approval of funding recommendations and implementation plans

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The Cultural Regeneration Manager concluded by recommending that the Committee approve the development of a ten-year strategy and the associated timeline, as outlined.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendation and agreed that a report be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee regarding the funding of an interim year for building signature and growth events and festivals.

**Update on Eastern Economic Corridor**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th September, it had received an update on the work being undertaken by the Economic Development Unit around the development of a Belfast – Dublin Economic Corridor. That update had made reference to plans for a proposed conference, which would seek to highlight co-operation opportunities along the corridor and the Council had been working with the other seven partners, namely, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Louth County Council, Meath County Council and Newry and Mourne and Down District Council, to develop the concept further.

The Director of Development reported that, in order to shape the conference and ensure that all partners agreed with its content, a steering group comprised of senior council officers had been established. It had commissioned the Ulster University and Dublin City University to collectively conduct further research around the economic opportunities along the corridor, which would, amongst other things, form the basis of the conference programme. The steering group was aspiring also to deliver a Memorandum of Understanding between the eight participating councils, which would set out the scope of the joint areas of working, in terms of infrastructure and attracting investment and employment.

He explained that a workshop had been held in September, which had provided the councils with an opportunity to outline the key economic challenges in their area and discuss the future of the partnership. The Chief Executives of the participating councils had, at a steering group meeting in November, been briefed on the themes which had emerged from the research and the strategic themes for the conference and the next steps had been agreed. It was anticipated that the conference would be held in the Belfast Waterfront Hall in late February and that it would include the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, information on the outcome of the research, speakers from the international business community, the outlining by the Chief Executives of Belfast and Dublin City Councils of potential areas of partnership working and panel discussions. The costs of the activities associated with the aforementioned work would be met from within the Economic Development Unit's budget for 2018/2019.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and that it would, at its monthly meeting in January, receive a presentation on the findings of the study which had been undertaken around a potential high speed rail connection between Belfast and Dublin.

**Strategic and Operational Issues**

**Closures - Belfast Zoo**

The Committee granted approval for the Belfast Zoo to close for a period of four weeks, excluding weekends, over the winter period to allow for essential maintenance and staff training, with the dates to be agreed in consultation with the Property Maintenance and Management Unit.

**Belfast Partners**

The Director of Development submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on progress to date on Belfast Partners and planned events taking place in London in February 2019 and early March 2019 in order to promote engagement between business contacts in Belfast and London and Dublin and to recommend attendance at the event by the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and for aspects which are of a civic nature, the Lord Mayor.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **note the upcoming Belfast Partners Financial Services Sector event in London on 5 February 2019 and potential event in Dublin early March 2019; and**
- **approve attendance at the event by the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (or their nominee) and for aspects which are of a civic nature, the Lord Mayor, in London on 5th February, 2019 and potential event in Dublin early March, 2019.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Members will be aware that at the 7th March meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee, an update was provided on a range of business development activities that had taken place in London in previous months. This included the work to secure the City Deal and previous activity with Belfast Partners Network in London. Furthermore a member of Council staff had been seconded to the City of London**

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**Corporation in order to explore opportunities for further collaborative engagement.**

- 3.2 One of the areas of particular joint interest that has emerged is support for the financial services sector post Brexit. There is both a sectoral ecosystem which should be leveraged and promoted between London and Belfast as well as Belfast and Dublin.**
- 3.3 In regard to this, Members will be aware that the City of London now has a regional strategy for financial and professional services which features Belfast and that the Lord Mayor of London is promoting this internationally, and in this vein have invited the City of Belfast to be hosted by the City of London in early 2019.**
- 3.4 Members will also be aware that Belfast City Council has been supporting the Belfast Partners Network in London for the last two years. Belfast Partners is a network of London-based companies within the Financial Services, and Fintech with an interest in Belfast – focusing on the city as a business and investment location.**
- 3.5 As part of our engagement within this network, we have now hosted two major receptions in the City of London, at Mansion House on 23 November 2017 and a business mission for six local tech companies to engage with London based partners on 22 and 23 November 2017.**
- 3.6 Further to this an inward investment visit to Belfast for 10 Venture Capital companies based in London took place in March 2018 in collaboration with Belfast Partners and British Business Bank, as well as local partners including Invest NI, CSIT, Novosco, and KPMG. Local Belfast companies were given the opportunity to engage directly with Venture Capitalists to explore opportunities for obtaining Venture Capital finance and to grow their business.**
- 3.7 To follow on from these activities, and in order to sustain the networks and relationships that have been developed and to respond to an invitation that has been offered by City of London Corporation, an event for up to 150 senior representatives within the Financial Services Sector is currently being finalised for February 2019.**
- 3.8 City of London Corporation have offered to host the evening in the Crypt, Central London which will be hosted by Catherine McGuinness Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee of the City of London Corporation ( a specialist in**

financial law) and Right Honourable, the Lord Mayor of Belfast. The proposed running order will include speeches from Catherine Maginness, Lord Mayor of Belfast, a Chief Executive Officer Belfast City Council, and a representative from Financial Services for example Danny Colligan who was involved in setting up Chicago Mercantile Exchange Belfast. There will be senior ambassadors from Belfast Financial Services invited including, Maginnis Consulting, Ernest Young and PA Consulting.

- 3.9** Speeches will focus on the business benefits of locating a business within the sector in Belfast, and how the city can offer a positive solution for a range of support services for a business working in a global operating environment. Belfast provides very similar accolades to London and it is an opportunity to describe the stand-outs which are particularly important bearing in mind post Brexit as it has been reported that a number of financial institutions are considering moving operations out of London and Belfast can provide an alternative proposition. Following the formal speeches there will be an opportunity for networking with those in attendance and the ambassadors from Belfast.
- 3.10** Equally firms based in Dublin within the financial services sector have an opportunity to locate a second site or new site in Northern Ireland and still support European passporting.
- 3.11** The proposed event in Dublin in March 2019 will follow a similar methodology, the detail of this is still to be confirmed however Glandore have offered to host the event. The focus will again be on Financial Services and the promotion of Belfast as an investment location. A date for early March is to be finalised in early December.

**3.12** Financial and Resource Implications

The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2018/19 Economic Development budget previously agreed by this Committee in March 2018.

**3.13** Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure that consideration is given to equality and good relations impacts throughout the development and delivery of this project. Both urban and rural areas are involved in this work.”

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,  
Wednesday, 5th December, 2018**

The Committee adopted the recommendations

**Finance, Procurement and Performance**

**Financial Reporting 2018/2019**

The Committee considered a report which set out the financial position of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for the second quarter of 2018/2019. The report confirmed that there had, during that period, been an overspend of £157,000, with a year-end underspend of £24,000 being forecast. The overspend could be attributed primarily to additional staffing costs across a number of services, a loss of sponsorship income through the Belfast Bikes scheme, additional health and safety expenditure in City Markets and programme expenditure ahead of the budget profile.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**20x20 Campaign for Women's Sport**

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor O'Hara proposed:

"This Council supports and endorses the 20x20 campaign for women's sport which aims to achieve:

- 20 per cent more media coverage of women in sport by the end of 2020;
- 20 per cent more female participation, whether at player, coach, referee or administration level, by the end of 2020; and
- 20 per cent more attendance at women's' games and events by the end of 2020.

By supporting this, the council will actively seek opportunities to highlight women's' roles within sport, and opportunities to showcase women in sport through our marketing and promotion of events. Building on our successful hosting of the Women's Rugby World Cup and UEFA under 19 women's' championships, the Council will, through our ambitious city events programme, seek to attract major women's' sporting events where possible."

After discussion, the Committee endorsed Councillor O'Hara's proposal and agreed that a report be submitted to the relevant Committee, outlining ways in which the Council could support the campaign, including any associated costs.

Chairperson