Subject:	Request to present – Queen's University Belfast
Date:	3rd April 2019
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director Place and Economy
Contact Officer:	Claire Patterson, Business Research & Development Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No** X

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	
After Council Decision	
Some time in the future	
Never	

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes** X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	With two universities located in the city, and over 45,000 full time students the Higher education sector is one of Belfast's strengths. The Council has positive working relationships with the Higher Education sector at both a strategic and operational level. As anchor institutions in the city, they play a key role in helping to position Belfast as a successful global city, and more locally as a driver of the regional economy. Notably, the Higher Education (HE) sector has played a central role in shaping the Belfast Region City Deal.
1.2	The Committee is asked to consider receiving a presentation from Queen's University to consider the major issues impacting on the Higher Education sector and their role in growing the economy.

2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree to receive a presentation from Queen's University to consider the role and issues impacting on Higher Education in the region at a future meeting.
3.0	**Main report**
3.1	Key Issues The Belfast Agenda and City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, recognise the value of universities as important anchor institutions, which have a considerable impact on the city and regional economy. They contribute to the city's vibrancy by: - Increasing educational attainment and the supply of skills and knowledge workers - Direct employment of teaching, research and support staff; - Structured support of start-ups; - Increase GVA associated with student spend; - Supply chain benefits with locally based businesses; and - Attracting a skilled, diverse and young population
3.2	The Universities also play a key role in the city's international agenda in profiling and strengthening the city's international relationships. Both universities play an active role in delivering the Belfast International Relations Framework and they have recognised international expertise with global centres of excellence in areas such as cyber-security, health & life sciences and artificial intelligence.
3.3	Queen's University have outlined the following key issues that they would value the Committee's input and views on: - Student places and the cap on student numbers - Post Study Work (PSW) Policy for International Students to help attract international students and retain them for employment opportunities in the city - Expansion of Postgraduate Taught Programmes to provide pipelines of specialist skills to support current and future growth in key sectors such as cyber-security and data-analytics - Higher Level Apprenticeships to address skills shortages - Widening Participation and Addressing Economic Inactivity utilising the bespoke QUB Pathway Opportunity Programme to encourage access to higher education opportunities.

3.4	The city's two universities have raised several of these issues jointly and independently but there is recognition that a shared agenda and joint city messaging on these issues would help to support the delivery of the Belfast Agenda ambitions to ensure inclusive economic and social growth.
3.5	The Committee is asked to consider this request to present in the context of the Working and Learning programme of work, as there may be opportunities for collaboration or to address any gaps in order to support the delivery of the inclusive growth agenda and the commitments in the Belfast Agenda.
3.6	Financial & Resource Implications There are no resource implications attached to this report.
3.7	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment None.
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	None