



Subject:	Ministerial Advisory Panel: NI Infrastructure Commission
Date:	11 November 2020
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager

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	To provide Members with an update on the findings of the DfI Ministerial call for evidence in relation to a potential Infrastructure Commission for Northern Ireland.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee are asked to note: (i) That the Ministerial Advisory panel has recommended that an Infrastructure Commission, with a clear remit and the support of the entire Northern Ireland Executive, should be established as soon as practical.

	(ii) The further findings of the Ministerial Advisory panel regarding the role and remit of an Infrastructure Commission for Northern Ireland, as set out in the Ministerial Advisory Panel Report (attached at Appendix B).
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	In September 2020, the Minister for Infrastructure undertook a Call for Evidence to establish the need and support for, and role of, a potential Infrastructure Commission for Northern Ireland.
3.2	As reported to City Growth & Regeneration Committee in September, due to the timescales involved, Council officers provided a draft response to the Call for Evidence, subject to Committee and Council approval. Members should also note that the Belfast Commissioner for Resilience, Grainia Long; the Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner, Jayne Brady; and Solace, (represented by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Chief Executive) provided evidence to the panel on the 7th September.
3.3	Following stakeholder and consultee engagement, a report has now been published capturing the findings of the panel.
	<u>Belfast City Council Submission</u>
3.4	The Council submission noted the importance of well-managed, planned and sustainable infrastructure in contributing to inclusive growth as set out in the Belfast Agenda, and the contribution this in turn makes to sustainable regional development. Gaps in infrastructure provision were also noted and the need for strategic, integrated infrastructure planning and investment was highlighted as an essential requirement for Belfast and Northern Ireland.
3.5	The Council submission also argued that an independent, expert-led Infrastructure Commission focusing on strategic prioritisation and delivery could bring value, and should have a role in both strategic planning and challenge/oversight across the infrastructure 'ecosystem', including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard infrastructure (water & waste, drainage and inland waterways, public transport, roads and cycling infrastructure) - Digital Infrastructure - Energy Infrastructure - Housing Infrastructure

	The Council response to the call for evidence is attached at Appendix A .
	<u>Panel Findings (Summary)</u>
3.6	A report has been prepared by the Ministerial Advisory panel and is attached at Appendix B , which includes an <i>'unequivocal recommendation that an Infrastructure Commission, with a clear remit and the support of the entire Northern Ireland Executive, should be established as soon as practical.'</i>
3.7	The panel recommends an Infrastructure Commission (independent, permanent & fully funded) should be in place prior to 2022 as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) of the NI Executive that has statutory independence.
3.8	Further key recommendations made by the panel regarding the role of an Infrastructure Commission include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and publish a 30+year vision (to 2050) that will provide the overarching framework and vision to meet future economic growth, environmental and societal needs. - The Commission should advise government on all elements of NI's economic infrastructure. This is defined as: energy, roads, rail and bus, water and wastewater (drainage and sewerage), waste, flood risk management and digital communications. - Climate change is recognised as a key challenge, with the Commission's vision to include delivery of net-zero targets by 2050, but preferably before. - The Commission should play the role of 'strategic broker' to break down investment and delivery silos and ensure that NI is able to fully realise its growth ambitions. - Local government acknowledged as a key stakeholder to be engaged.
3.9	Further reports will brought to Committee as information is received.
3.10	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>
	None
3.11	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u>
	None.
4.0	<u>Appendices – Documents Attached</u>
	Appendix A: Council Evidence Submission Appendix B: Ministerial Advisory Panel Report