



Subject:	Minutes of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Council Panel
Date:	12:30 pm, 25 November 2020
Councillors in attendance:	<p>Councillor Peter Johnston (Chair) – Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Alderman Mark Cosgrove – Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council Alderman Phillip Brett – Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council Councillor Stephen Ross – Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council Councillor Robert Adair – Ards & North Down Borough Council Alderman Alan McDowell – Ards & North Down Borough Council Councillor Richard Smart – Ards & North Down Borough Council Councillor Stephen Dunlop – Ards & North Down Borough Council Alderman Brian Kingston – Belfast City Council Councillor Carl Whyte – Belfast City Council Councillor Eric Hanvey - Belfast City Council Councillor Sorcha Eastwood – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Councillor Uel Mackin – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Alderman Allan Ewart MBE – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Alderman Michael Henderson – Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Alderman Billy Ashe MBE – Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Councillor Timothy Gaston – Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Councillor Robert Logan – Mid & East Antrim Borough Council Councillor Charlie Casey – Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Councillor Robert Burgess – Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Councillor Pete Byrne – Newry, Mourne & Down District Council Councillor Willie Clarke – Newry, Mourne & Down District Council</p>
Officers:	<p>Anne Donaghy – Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Jacqui Dixon – Chief Executive, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Stephen Reid – Chief Executive, Ards and North Down Borough Council Suzanne Wylie – Chief Executive, Belfast City Council David Burns – Chief Executive, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Ronan Cregan – Deputy Chief Executive, Belfast City Council Damien Martin – BRCD Programme Director, Belfast City Council Donal Rogan – Director of Service Transformation, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Susie McCullough – Director Regeneration, Development and Planning, Ards and North Down Borough Council Padraic Murphy – Programme Co-ordinator, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Nicola Rowles – Interim Director of Development, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Amanda Smyth – Head of Regeneration and Business Development, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Stephen Wallace, Ruth Rea, Theresa Slevin – BRCD Programme Office</p>
1.0	Welcome and Introductions

1.1	Cllr Peter Johnston welcomed the members of the BRCD Council Panel to the meeting hosted by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council and Anne Donaghy, Chief Executive of Mid & East Antrim Borough Council, outlined the key areas of focus for the meeting.
2.0	Apologies
2.1	Apologies were received from: Cllr Glenn Finlay (Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council) Cllr Ronan McLaughlin (Belfast City Council) Alderman Audrey Wales MBE (Mid & East Antrim Borough Council) Cllr Robin Stewart (Mid & East Antrim Borough Council)
3.0	Declarations of Interest
3.1	Cllr Johnston asked Councillors if they had any interests to declare in relation to the agenda. No interests were declared.
4.0	Minutes of Previous Meeting
4.1	Cllr Johnston asked if the Panel agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate reflection of the meeting. Cllr Gaston proposed that the minutes from the last meeting were agreed. Seconded – Cllr Richard Smart. Members agreed the minutes.
5.0	BRCD Programme Update
5.1	Cllr Peter Johnston and Anne Donaghy outlined to the Panel key points from the programme update. Cllr Johnston asked Members if they had any specific questions on the update. Alderman Ashe observed that all projects are at different states of readiness and asked how the Panel would know when projects would be ready to go. Cllr Gaston asked when an overview would be provided as to the projects proceeding and when they would commence. Damien Martin, BRCD Programme Director, responded to both questions by explaining that the OBC process would now inform the draft Financial and Implementation Plans for the Deal. These draft Plans would set out the projects proceeding as part of the Deal, their individual project budgets, capital profiles, timetables and benefits. However, he also pointed out that once developed with Partners at the Deal level, these plans and profiles would then form part of a collective negotiation with Government, both the NI Executive and the UK Government, before a Deal Document could be signed and funding directed to projects.

	<p>Cllr Gaston raised the importance of understanding the financial plans so that Councils could make informed decisions as part of the rate setting process. Damien Martin explained that once a draft Deal Document was ready, it would be shared with all Partners.</p> <p>Cllr Ewart asked for clarification as to whether a project which was ‘ready’ to be funded could be held up by other projects which were not yet ready. Cllr Johnston explained that this would be covered in more detail as part of the next item on the agenda and asked if Cllr Ewart was content to await clarification. Cllr Ewart confirmed that he was content.</p> <p>The Chairperson thanked officers for their work. Members were content to note the papers and the answers provided.</p>
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Deal Development</p>
<p>6.1</p>	<p>Anne Donaghy explained how the Deal would be developed and advised that officers across all Council areas had worked extremely hard until this point, collectively and individually to reach the milestone of the submission of OBCs.</p> <p>Anne Donaghy explained that the Deal Document for the BRCD would require budgets for each pillar to be agreed, as well as individual project budgets and indicative capital profiles. It was explained that OBCs were a crucial piece of information in order to inform this piece of work. Anne Donaghy explained that this was an extremely complex and iterative process given the number of projects and stakeholders and that phasing of the Deal over the 10-year timeframe was essential due to varying degrees of project readiness and other considerations, such as the overall affordability of the Deal, including for NI Executive partners.</p> <p>Anne Donaghy advised that projects would be classified as type A-C depending on the state of readiness / stage of development before consideration by Government Departments. Project type-As would be submitted seeking OBC approval to allow expenditure to be provided for development costs and further procurement. Project Type-Bs were those projects for which further detailed work was required in specific areas, but the project was considered to meet the objectives of the Deal. Project type-Bs would be submitted seeking OBC approval to allow expenditure to be provided for further development costs, with a more detailed OBC2 document required before the project could proceed to procurement of construction contractors. Project Type-Cs would be those where either the project sponsor, BRCD partners or Government funders believe the project does not meet the specific objectives of the BRCD or which, due to deliverability issues, the project could not meet the timescales for the Deal.</p>

Both Project Type A and B would be included in the BRCD Deal Document with indicative capital profiles and project budgets assigned. Project Type Cs would not be included within the BRCD Deal Document and would no longer form part of the BRCD.

Alderman Ashe asked who was going to make decisions around the classifications of projects. Damien Martin explained that project sponsors had been going through an extensive period of engagement with Government Departments and that this process will inform sponsors and BRCD partners in seeking to develop an agreed view with Government Departments- ultimately it would be for Government Departments to approve expenditure and make these decisions. Damien Martin also emphasised that this did not mean that the BRCD would deliver in two distinct phases, but that projects would be submitted and considered on an ongoing basis subject to their state of readiness.

Anne Donaghy explained that Departments, in informing their decisions regarding Value for Money through the appraisal process would consider factors such as GVA and jobs – which are key City Deal objectives.

Cllr Mackin noted that all OBCs were now nearing completion and asked how this fitted with the phased approach. Anne Donaghy explained that projects which were ready to have expenditure approved by Departments would not be delayed by a phased approach.

Cllr Kingston stated that he welcomed that the BRCD had reached this stage and has turned around some of the delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Cllr Kingston sought further clarification on classification of projects and who the Deal Document would have to be approved by. Damien Martin confirmed that the ultimate decision on classification lay with Government Departments, having taking into consideration the views of BRCD partners and explained that the Deal Document was required to be approved by all the partners, the NI Executive and UK Government.

Cllr Byrne outlined that he was pleased to see the progress being made and asked whether, if Councils fundamentally disagreed with the decision on phasing/state of readiness, they would have a right to appeal. Damien Martin explained that there will have been a gradual decision making process based months of engagement with Government Departments which should ensure partners are well informed in relation to the likely decision.

Cllr Smart also welcomed the progress on the Deal against the backdrop of Covid-19. Cllr Smart asked whether in relation to project scheduling there is a risk that this would be on a first come first served basis and whether, in relation to the Infrastructure pillar, the substantial amount of spend involved created a risk that it would not be spent within the 10-year timeframe for Deal delivery. Anne Donaghy explained that the OBC process will allow Deal partners to consider all projects together as a programme which will inform the Deal Document. Damien Martin concurred and explained that the fact the Deal Document would provide all

projects with a project budget should avoid the risk of the earliest/most developed projects eating up the budget, but recognised that this was an important issue that would need careful management throughout the delivery of the programme. Damien Martin also recognised the challenges arising from the nature of the Infrastructure projects and their early stage of development and explained that conversations were ongoing with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in relation to the projects.

Cllr Casey, speaking on behalf of Newry, Mourne & Down Borough Council, recognised the work undertaken by officers in producing the OBCs and asked, if projects were likely to be classified as Project Type Cs, whether partners would be given advance warning to enable them to seek to rectify the projects. Damien Martin explained that the process to determine stage of development/readiness would happen over a number of months and so partners should have time to address feedback and concerns. Anne Donaghy highlighted that Departments and BRCD PMO have been consistently highlighting and providing feedback to partners on their projects.

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive, Belfast City Council, explained that initially the BRCD Partners would have to negotiate with Government Departments to agree a programme of investment, within the funding envelope available, in order to agree a Deal Document. Following this, projects which achieved expenditure approval from Departments would then be able to receive funding.

Cllr Gaston highlighted that in considering scaling across the projects from the £450m budget to the £350m budget now available, the i4c project led by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council had scaled by c.15% and asked for assurances that all Council partners would do everything they could do achieve the requisite scaling across the Deal. Anne Donaghy explained that discussions were ongoing and assured Cllr Gaston that across all Council areas and projects, officers were doing what they could in order to meet the funding envelope for the Deal. Damien Martin further explained that the conversation relating to scale has been ongoing throughout Phase 2 of the BRCD and explained that partners were using the OBC process to identify areas of projects which may be scaled but not significantly impact on benefits. Damien Martin stressed the importance of agreeing a programme of investment which met the funding envelopes available in order to progress the Deal Document and that as part of this process, discussions were ongoing with all partners, including DfI in relation to the Infrastructure pillar budget. Cllr Gaston stated that he appreciated the responses and reiterated the importance of all partners demonstrating scaling across their projects.

Cllr Dunlop stated that he appreciated that it was a very complicated and complex programme and asked whether everything was required to be CPD compliant as this could impact on delivery and lead to delays. Damien Martin explained that the BRCD PMO were working with the Department of Finance (DoF) to understand how CPD would be involved and at what stage. Ronan Cregan, BRCD SRO and Deputy Chief Executive, Belfast City Council, explained that sponsors have undertaken significant work to date validating costs to inform OBCs and highlighted that Universities are considered to be Centres of Procurement Expertise.

	<p>However, further work was required with DoF to understand where CPD would be involved. Ronan Cregan also explained that there was opportunity to work with CPD in relation to social value to increase the inclusive growth elements delivered within the Deal.</p> <p>The Chairperson thanked Anne Donaghy for her explanation of the proposals on deal development and officers for their answers and work to date.</p> <p>Members confirmed that they were content with the proposed approach to deal development.</p>
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Integrating Inclusive Growth</p>
<p>7.1</p>	<p>Members were provided with a paper in relation to the approach to inclusive growth within the BRCD, which provided the Panel with an update on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How the city deal has been designed and projects have been shaped in support of this ambition; - Approach undertaken through the programme office to create a common framework for inclusive growth; - Mechanisms to enable inclusive growth to be delivered through the BRCD Employability & Skills programme and wider collaboration across partners utilising procurement and human resource levers. <p>Cllr Johnston asked if Members had any questions in relation to the paper. No questions were raised.</p> <p>Members were content to note the paper.</p>
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Engagement & Communications</p>
	<p>Chris Kirkpatrick delivered a brief presentation on the engagement and communication programme underway in support of the BRCD and outlined how, as the milestone of OBC completion was approaching, Deal partners and project sponsors were increasing communications and engagement activity. Chris Kirkpatrick advised that this would be developed further in the coming months through the BRCD Communications Forum and as a result of the strategic engagement programme supported by Weber Shandwick.</p> <p>Cllr Smart asked whether the political engagement event which had been discussed by the Panel previously was still being planned. Damien Martin explained that in the first instance, engagement was planned at Ministerial level but that a collective event at the appropriate time was still being planned.</p> <p>Cllr Casey observed that this had been a very positive and useful meeting.</p>
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Press Release</p>

	<p>Cllr Smart proposed that the Press Release for the meeting was agreed.</p> <p>Seconded – Cllr Gaston.</p> <p>Members agreed the Press Release.</p>
9.0	Schedule of Meetings
9.1	<p>The schedule of meetings was agreed.</p> <p>The next meeting would take place at 12.30pm on 27th January 2021 and would be hosted by Newry, Mourne & Down District Council.</p>
10.0	AOB
10.1	None