



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Update on Urban Innovation Programme</b>
<b>Date:</b>	19th November, 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resource
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Deborah Colville, City Innovation Manager Mark McCann, City Innovation programme Lead

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To seek approval for a number of new Smart Belfast initiatives and to provide an update on the work currently underway to review and refresh the Smart Belfast Framework – (to be known as the Urban Innovation Framework) and plans for engagement on that framework with Members and city stakeholders.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is requested to:  1. note the work underway on a refreshed Urban Innovation framework (2022 to 2027);  2. note the work underway to develop a £30 million Belfast Region City Deal business case to stimulate investment in advanced wireless infrastructure;

	<p>3. grant retrospective approval for a Council-led partner application to the Dept. for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for a £500,000 Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator pilot; and</p> <p>4. note the Council's participation in a £400,000 programme with the city of Sejong to develop approaches for international procurement of innovation.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<p><b>Smart Belfast Framework Refresh</b></p> <p>3.1 Over the past four years, the Council's Smart Belfast programme has encouraged city institutions together on maximising the potential of urban innovation to help tackle major urban challenges while at the same time helping to grow our economy.</p> <p>3.2 Developed and managed by the Council's City Innovation team, Smart Belfast has attracted over £10 million of investment to Belfast and delivered a range of successful projects with industry, SMEs and our universities. Furthermore, the Smart Belfast approach directly contributed to the design of the £120m Digital pillar of Belfast Region City Deal. And its concept of collaborative urban innovation has shaped the ambition and programme of the city's new innovation partners – Innovation City Belfast (ICB).</p> <p>3.3 The development of a refreshed Urban Innovation framework is being developed in a changing strategic environment that includes the implications of Covid on the future of the city and its economy and the Council's commitment to addressing the climate emergency. It also sits against a backdrop of the establishment of ICB, the city deal and the opportunities they represent. The aim of the updated framework will be to identify how emerging technological innovation can best contribute to addressing the many urban priorities and challenges that Belfast now faces and lays out the plans for a Smart District within the city to trial and test new ways of working and delivering services.</p> <p>3.4 The City Innovation Team is currently completing a draft framework which will be presented to Members at the December SPR Committee meeting. Alongside the development the team is delivering a 2-phase approach to an engagement and consultation programme to ensure Members and city stakeholders have the opportunity to inform the framework and its programme of work. Phase 1 is focussing on Members, our 2 Universities and the Belfast Met, public sector departments and industry as the key stakeholders required to make the</p>

innovation ecosystem work across the city. Phase 2 will be the delivery of a citizen programme to build capacity to co create and co design the future programmes and projects.

#### **Stimulating Advanced Wireless investment**

3.5 As part of the Belfast Region City Deal Digital programme, the Council is leading on the development of a £30 million proposal aimed at stimulating greater investment in advanced wireless connectivity. The initial geographical focus for investment is the Smart District and central core of the city – but with the aim of creating a successful model that can be scaled to the wider city and region.

3.6 The strategic case for the wireless investment is based on the analysis that the region's innovation, economic and societal ambitions would be greatly enhanced by the widespread availability of next generation wireless connectivity. UK Government's position is that such connectivity is going to be the backbone for areas such as advanced manufacturing, the creative industries, urban mobility, climate adaptation, etc. However, the Government's analysis is that, due a number of barriers, there are likely to be delays in reaching this level of widespread wireless connectivity over the medium term. The development of the proposal for BRCD funding seeks to address a number of these barriers and stimulate more rapid private sector investment.

3.7 The proposal is being facilitated by independent industry consultants, Real Wireless who have now finalised a three-month techno-feasibility study. Based on the positive findings of this study, Real Wireless are now working with Council and its city and regional partners to develop a project business case. A draft of this business case will be presented to Members in February 2022 prior to final submission to BRCD Executive Board and then to the Department for Economy.

#### **Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA) Pilot**

3.8 In a related strand of work, the Dept. for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has launched a £4 million competition for local councils and regional authorities aimed at mapping public assets that are needed to support the UK's wireless ambitions. (Public assets such as rooftops, street-poles, spare land could all be utilised to support the faster deployment of wireless networks.)

3.9 DCIA will make up to £500,000 available to each participating city for a one-year pilot commencing in January 2022. It will assist partners in mapping the relevant assets and

	developing the policies and procedures to support easier access to them by the wireless industry.
3.10	The Council wishes to lead on a £500,000 bid to the programme (closing date is 18 November 2021) with partner support from Land and Property Services (Ordnance Survey NI), Lisburn and Castlereagh, Ards and North Down, and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Councils, the Department for Infrastructure and the Department for the Economy.
3.11	The expectation is that the learning from the pilot will support local councils regarding the policies and procedures in relation to asset management and planning; and will directly inform the development of our Advanced Wireless proposition to the City Deal described in the item above.
3.12	Given the short timeframe (closing date for applications 18 November) and the complexity of a multi-partner bid, Members are asked to retrospectively approve a Council led submission to the programme. And retrospectively approve the commissioning of consultants, Perform Green, to support partners on development of the bid.
	<b>Accelerating Research and Innovation between UK and Global cities.</b>
3.13	The Council's City Innovation team have been working with Connected Places Catapult on a £400,000 proposal to the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to develop pilots that will generate opportunities for bilateral trade and investment in innovation between the UK and other global cities. Belfast has been offered the opportunity to link with Sejong, South Korea's leading 'Smart City'. Established in 2008 its population has grown to over 200,000 and is expected to double again in the next decade. It is associated with significant world-leading technologies and industries and offers Belfast companies the opportunity to build their experience in international trade and to tap into global leading innovative technologies.
3.14	As part of the programme, we will develop a common best practice playbook for innovative procurement aimed at supporting SMEs between Belfast and global cities to accelerate commercialisation and routes to market for research and innovation.
3.15	Working with Connected Places Catapult (CPC), the UK Science and Innovation Network (SIN), and Innovate UK, the programme builds on Smart Belfast programme's experience in

	such areas as Small Business Research Initiatives, Collaborative Growth Networks and Collaborative Innovation Agreements.
3.16	The city will also deliver a £200,000 challenge competition to encourage local SMEs to provide an opportunity for their innovative ideas and products to be exported to the other city. The practical learning of this element will inform and be informed by the emerging playbook. Led by the City Innovation Team local Belfast partners include the Economic Development Team, Invest NI, dept for Economy and our two local universities.
3.17	Regular senior level meetings are being scheduled with Belfast and Sejong to explore further the opportunities for collaboration on areas and projects of interest such as zero carbon, marine, automotive and aerospace and knowledge sharing on reg tech and regulatory sandboxes. An MOU will also be developed between the cities to set out expectations and joint ways of working for the pilot programme.
	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>
3.18	The maximum £29,600 budget to commission consultants to support the DCIA has been identified in the existing City Innovation team budget.
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.19	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None