



Subject:	Belfast Stories Update
Date:	11 May 2022
Reporting Officer:	Wendy Langham, Programme Director
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Strategic Lead

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"/>
Sometime 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	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Update Members on the Belfast Stories programme as part of the Belfast Region City Deal including the development of a Stories Collection Framework.- Outline emerging engagement plans and seek approval to undertake a public consultation.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the contents of this report and progress against Belfast Stories programme of work. - Agree to complete a public consultation exercise to include elements of the Stories Collection Framework as set out in Appendix 1. - Agree to hold a Members' workshop in August 2022 as part of the consultation process. - Agree to receive a future report setting out the key findings of the public consultation and recommendations on next steps.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Members will be aware that Belfast Stories is the Council's flagship project under the Belfast Region City Deal and is due to open in 2028. Several important milestones in relation to the project have been achieved including the acquisition of the site for Belfast Stories in October 2021 and the signing of the Deal Document for the BRCD and press launch of Belfast Stories in December 2021.
3.2	Members will be aware that majority of the site (95%) was secured by BCC for Belfast Stories and that negotiations for the acquisition of two smaller properties on the site are ongoing.
3.3	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed at its meeting on 19th November 2021 to progress a number of key pieces of work, in order to ensure we meet the 2028 anticipated opening date including the appointment of the integrated design team, the exhibition design team and the stories collection. City Growth and Regeneration Committee received a programme update in December 2021 where Members noted that a further presentation would be brought to Committee in 2022.
	<u>Programme Update</u>
3.4	Progress against the agreed programme is ongoing.
3.5	Members will be aware that an initial Outline Business Case was completed in 2020 in advance of the purchase of the site. This work will now be updated to reflect progress and

	<p>project development. Following engagement with Tourism NI and the Department for Economy (DfE) and an assessment of options by the project team it is proposed that an updated Outline Business Case is submitted when concept designs have been further developed to RIBA Stage 2 in 2023, when the project would then move to departmental casework review. We have requested BRCD approval to move to this approach via the Tourism and Regeneration Advisory Board and the BRCD Executive Board.</p>
3.6	<p>To align with Belfast City Council's Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast and the Resilience Strategy, a feasibility study has been commissioned to assess the viability of using geothermal technology to meet the building's heating and cooling requirements. An initial report has been completed by Tetra Tech Ltd and concludes that geothermal is a viable option for the site with a shallow closed loop geothermal solution preferred. This would increase capital costs and alternative funding sources are being considered. However, as well as being a low carbon solution there would also be operational savings compared to air source alternatives. Further work will be required as detailed design work progresses and Members will be updated in due course.</p>
3.7	<p>Work is ongoing with Physical Programmes supported by KPMG to bring forward a number of key appointments as the project moves to the next phase of development.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RIBA has been appointed following a tender exercise to provide the necessary expertise to conduct a Design Competition to appoint the Integrated Design Team. - Documentation is being finalised to commence the procurement in June 2022 of an Integrated Design Team, Interpretative Planning and Exhibition Design Team and Project Management and Design Assurance Team.
3.8	<p>A Benefits Realisation Framework has been developed to define and refine the range of benefits and outcomes linked to the investment spending objectives of the project and Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) funding. A key spending objective is "to create and sustain a diversified, vibrant city centre – attractive place to live in, invest in and work in" and within this objective we have been examined the wider impacts on the city centre, local community, local residents and local economy. Crucial to realising the impacts will be identifying the enabling mechanism(s) to deliver against expected benefits.</p>
3.9	<p>An important aspect of the wider benefits of Belfast Stories is to define and deliver social value including increasing secure employment and skills, building ethical and resilient supply</p>

	<p>chains, promoting wellbeing and delivering zero carbon. Social clauses will be included in all contracts in line with buy social Public Contract Regulations PPN 01/21 with the main value opportunities to be delivered during the construction phase 2025 - 2028.</p>
3.10	<p>A Social Value, Employability, Skills and Education group has been set up to advise and input on opportunities. In addition, members of the Belfast Stories project team have attended Social Value in Construction Contracts training as part of BRCD programme, to further understand and support the key themes around creating job opportunities, investing in skills, supporting social enterprises, new businesses, voluntary and community organisations, reduce our carbon footprint, promote equality and diversity and improve mental health and wellbeing.</p>
3.11	<p>It will be important for the Business Case for Belfast Stories to demonstrate delivery against social value outcomes. As part of the consultation and engagement process, the work strands of the draft engagement plan will be developed to ensure all opportunities are maximised that in turn will feed into the overall project Benefits Realisation Framework. This approach will be embedded into all aspects of the programme including opportunities as part of Stories collection.</p>
	<p><u>Stories Collection Framework</u></p>
3.12	<p>The collection of Belfast's stories underpins the Belfast Stories concept and is key to the success of the project in meeting its ambition and delivering the benefits. To support this work, Council commissioned Lord Cultural Resources to develop a Stories Collection Framework. The purpose of the Framework is to support the development of the Belfast Stories project and delivery of Council's wider ambitions as set out in the <i>Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy</i>, the <i>Belfast Agenda</i>, the ten-year cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i> and the recently finalised tourism plan, <i>Make Yourself at Home</i>. This will provide a Framework for future plans and recognises the important role that many city partners representing the community, cultural and tourism sectors have in telling Belfast stories across the city and throughout the year.</p>
3.13	<p>Members will be aware that the Belfast Stories project seeks to strengthen existing structures and networks to ensure that the benefits of the project are realised on multiple levels. The initial concept for Belfast Stories identified the opportunity for a significant new anchor in the city centre that would not only deliver regeneration in the immediate area but also act as an</p>

anchor that would help establish a hub and spoke model to strengthen connectivity and flow of visitors across the city and support community tourism projects.

3.14

Working in collaboration with key stakeholders and subject matter experts across the city we have developed a Stories Collection Framework (SCF). The Stories Collection Framework outlines the proposed direction on a number of areas including:

- Guiding principles – programmes such as the Decade of Centenaries have established good practice in setting clear guiding principles that inform Council’s position and partnership approach.
- Ethical parameters – there are important ethical considerations that must be assessed and necessary processes put in place to ensure best practice is reached across engagement, collecting and telling of Belfast stories.
- Themes – the purpose of the thematic framework is to assist in what will be a considerable undertaking to collect and arrange stories. This is an organisational tool and is not how the stories will be presented or told as this will be addressed at the next stage when the curatorial approach will be developed as part of public engagement and design processes.
- Partnership approach – this sets out a phased approach to a wider programme and partnership model to support cultural and tourism development in relation to collecting and telling Belfast stories. Whilst this will in turn support the building project, the potential benefits are much wider.
- Governance – Council is not a collecting organisation. This requires significant infrastructure and expertise. The governance is linked to the partnership model that locates Council within a wider stories ecosystem for the city and acknowledges the considerable expertise that exists in partner organisations.

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The Stories Collection Framework is a flexible tool that will evolve over time. It is critical to ensuring the authenticity and diversity of the stories represented in Belfast Stories and across multiple initiatives. In its present form, the Framework seeks to:

- Explore new ways and perspectives of telling the stories of the people of Belfast.
- Bring the people of Belfast into the heart of the initiatives.
- Increase accessibility of existing collections across the city and beyond.
- Identify and address gaps in stories that have not been collected or that lack visibility.
- Encourage long term active engagement with partners creating a network across the city and beyond that will increase opportunities to participate in the cultural life and support neighbourhood tourism.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify efficient and sustainable ways of sharing and putting collections to their best use. - Bring in new perspectives and creativity in adding to the city-wide cultural offerings.
3.16	<p>From 2022 it is proposed that Council delivers a Belfast Stories Programme that will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Story collection audit – to better understand what stories have been collected and current levels of access to these collections. - Feasibility study – to establish what infrastructure (including digital) may be required to support a city level collecting initiative. - Public engagement programme – as outlined below and at appendix 2 the public consultation is the beginning of a sustained programme of engagement with the city. - Pilot projects – this would include alignment to planned activity and commissioning of new work to help test the Framework. - Partnerships – establish joint working within Council on initiatives such as Year of Culture, UNESCO City of Music and neighbourhood tourism to deliver on shared objectives. New partnerships would also be developed (local and international) with community, cultural and tourism partners to begin to establish a Stories network in advance of the building opening in 2028. <p><u>Public consultation</u></p>
3.17	<p>Belfast City Council’s Consultation and Engagement Framework describes a broad spectrum of two-way communication (from consultation to engagement to involvement) between the council and its residents and stakeholders. It recognises that effective dialogue helps make decisions, policies and services that are better suited to the people they are intended to benefit. It is in line with this that Belfast Stories seeks to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are at its core, supported by a co-designed and inclusive process throughout all aspects of the project.</p>
3.18	<p>Belfast City Council appointed Smith and Kent Consulting to provide specialist guidance and support to plan and assist with Belfast Stories consultation and engagement. This Belfast Stories Engagement Plan (Appendix 2) brings together a range of consultation, engagement and involvement approaches to build on best practice, statutory requirements and stakeholder expectations.</p>
3.19	

3.20	<p>The overall approach seeks to build long-term relationships while using a variety of methods to engage people on the terms they want to be engaged. As an initial step it is proposed that a public consultation is carried out early in the process.</p>
3.21	<p>The purpose of the engagement plan is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To help make Belfast Stories a destination that resonates with local people, captivates visitors and is welcoming of all. - To bring Belfast Stories to life through the knowledge, insight and ideas of its people and stakeholders.
3.22	<p>This engagement plan covers RIBA Stage 2 as aligned to overall Belfast Stories programme, which runs from May 2022 to June 2023. During this stage, concept designs and plans are produced in line with the requirements of the project brief. This will include plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the layout of the building - the design of the exhibition space - the Story Collection Framework
3.23	<p>There will be two broad parts to our engagement between May 2022 and June 2023.</p> <p><i>Public Consultation</i></p>
3.24	<p>The public consultation is planned to run for 14 weeks from week commencing 6th June to 14 September 2022. The public consultation will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raising awareness of Belfast Stories so that people are excited and want to continue to be engaged in its development. - Making sure that Belfast Stories can be a positive experience for everyone, including consultation on the EQIA, RNIA and Story Collection Framework. - Asking people how they would like to continue to be involved in the ongoing engagement. <p><i>Ongoing Engagement</i></p> <p>Ongoing engagement will be structured around four work strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equity - Sustainability - Partnership

3.25	<p>- Experiences</p> <p>These will set the foundations, building relationships and shaping further ongoing engagement up until (and possibly after) Belfast Stories opens in 2028.</p>
3.26	<p><u>Next steps</u></p> <p>It is proposed that a Members’ workshop is held during the public consultation period in August 2022. A report will be presented in October 2022 outlining the key findings of the public consultation and will present further detail on recommendations and next steps.</p>
3.27	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no new financial implications to this report.</p>
3.28	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>An initial Equality screening has been complete. An Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Assessment will be undertaken as part of the public consultation and will be reported on in due course.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	<p>Appendix 1: Story Collection Framework Executive Summary</p> <p>Appendix 2: Belfast Stories Engagement Plan Summary Report</p>