

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 10th May, 2017

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Graham (Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff (Alderman Haire);  
Aldermen L. Patterson and Spence; and  
Councillors Beattie, Boyle,  
Dudgeon, Hargey, Kyle, Magee,  
McAteer, McDonough-Brown, Mullan,  
O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development;  
Mrs. L. Toland, Head of Economic and  
International Development; and  
Mr. D. Donnelly, Finance and Investment Manager;  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman McGimpsey and Councillors Carson, Dorrian and Johnston.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 12th April, omitting the decision under the heading 'Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan' which had been called-in, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd May.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### **Matters Referred Back from Council**

#### **Notice of Motion - Use of Bus Lanes by Taxis**

The Committee was reminded that the Council, in accordance with Standing Orders, had referred the following notice of motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Beattie and seconded by Councillor Reynolds, to the Committee for consideration:

**"This Council supports the decision by the Department for Infrastructure to introduce the twelve week trial period permitting all taxis to use the Belfast Rapid Transit bus lanes and agrees to write**

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**to the Department for Infrastructure a letter of support to extend the duration of the trial period for an additional six months and expand the trial to include all Belfast bus lanes.”**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that requests to speak on the issue had been received from Mr. Jonathan Hobbs, NI Greenways, Mr. John Wright, Green Action, and Mr. Sean Duffy, Belfast Taxi Group. The Committee agreed to accede to the requests.

Mr. Hobbs explained that the cycling lobby was strongly against the proposal to extend the use of bus lanes by taxis. He outlined that he was pleased that the twelve week trial was coming to an end that he looked forward to seeing the results of the trial from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). He reported that the only public consultation which had been carried out on the issue had been in 2012, by the former Department of Regional Development. He stated that he would like to see a five year freeze on any additional vehicular access to bus lanes in order to allow the Belfast Rapid Transit scheme to realise its full potential and to allow the DfI to begin to build the Belfast Bicycle Network. He also explained that he felt a proper deputation on the issue should be considered from Sustrans NI.

Mr. Wright outlined to the Members that the issue with taxis using bus lanes was ill-advised not only in terms of safety for cyclists but with regards to a long-term transport plan for the city. He emphasised to the Committee that Belfast should be serious about promoting sustainable, low-carbon transport and that he felt it would be unwise and hasty for the Council to support an extension of the trial by a further 6 months.

Mr. Duffy explained that the trial had been an overwhelming success for the taxi industry as a whole, with customers having benefitted from cheaper fares and had been able to reach their destinations quicker. He reported that taxis were able to use bus lanes in a number of cities across Great Britain and Ireland, including Manchester, Glasgow, Cork, Dublin and Cardiff. He emphasised that taxis provided a vital community service in the city, by taking people who were unable to use public transport to hospital appointments and to school. He explained that taxi drivers would be severely disadvantaged if they were forced out of bus lanes, given the introduction of twelve hour bus lanes throughout the city, with a substantial increase in traffic as a result. He outlined that taxi drivers wanted the trial period to be extended for a further six months and that the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Peter May, had the power to extend it.

During discussion, a Member pointed out that many of the roads in Belfast were too dangerous to cycle on. He felt that cyclists shouldn't have to use bus lanes and that there should be a network of safe, dedicated cycle lanes.

A further Member stated that the debate should not be between those who cycle and those who use taxis and that, through the Belfast Agenda, Belfast should seek to be an accessible city for all and he highlighted the key role that taxis played in terms of providing accessible transport to many.

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**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Beattie, and  
Seconded by Alderman Spence,

That the Committee supports the decision taken by the Department for Infrastructure to introduce the twelve week trial period permitting all taxis to use the Belfast Rapid Transit bus lanes and agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure a letter of support to extend the duration of the trial period for an additional six months and expand the trial to include all Belfast bus lanes.

On a vote by show of hands thirteen Members voted for the proposal and one against and it was declared carried.

**Presentation**

**McCadden Design - Place Positioning Update**

The Chief Executive reminded the Members that the strategy for the City narrative had previously been agreed by the Council and that, as part of that procurement process, the Council had invited a number of organisations to create a visual design based on the narrative to market Belfast both locally and internationally.

She reported that the winning submission had been created by McCadden Design and advised the Members that Mr. G. Stewart was in attendance to present the proposed branding materials for the Committee's opinion. The Chairperson welcomed him to the meeting.

Mr. Stewart presented the Committee with the Place Positioning brand which he and his team had created and showed the Members a promotional video illustrating the brand identity. In response to a question from a Member, he explained that the video had been created specifically to attract a young demographic to Belfast.

During discussion, the Chief Executive pointed out that the branding had not been finalised and that consultation with the Members and other city stakeholders was crucial to the process. A number of Members stated that they felt that the branding was strong and appreciated that the design could be altered and used in different ways by different businesses to suit their needs. Mr. Stewart pointed out that, for the branding to be a success for Belfast, the City's partners needed to use and support it.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Stewart for his presentation and he retired from the meeting.

**Restricted Reports**

**The Information contained in the following three reports is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014**

**City Centre Investment Fund**

The Director of City Centre Development reminded the Members that, in February, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had approved that some of the City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF) would focus on Grade A office space.

The Finance and Investment Manager outlined to the Members that CBRE had been commissioned to provide a report on the Belfast office market, the NI debt market, potential intervention methods and strategy and criteria. He advised the Members that this work had since been completed.

The Chief Executive explained to the Members that there was an immediate demand for 400ft<sup>2</sup> of Grade A office space. The Director of City Centre Development added that the Council was not in competition with the private sector and that the Fund would be used to stimulate the market.

In response to a Member's question regarding the risk to the Council, the Finance and Investment Manager assured the Committee that the due diligence process would be rigorous and explained that the funding through the CCIF would be drip fed.

After discussion the Committee:

1. noted the contents of the report; and
2. agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee the high level parameters which were to be provided to the market to start the process of scheme identification and to support the structuring of investment in the future and the project prioritisation matrix as detailed.

**Inner North Framework Update**

The Director of City Centre Development provided the Committee with an overview of the work which had been undertaken on the Inner North West Masterplan and outlined the proposed timeline for engagement with the Members.

She explained that the area covered a range of complex areas with wide ranging issues and a variety of sensitivities, including planning appeals, land ownership, public and private sector interest and the old Northside scheme. She reported that, as a result of these complexities, a workshop was planned in order to provide the Members with an opportunity to inform the Masterplan work before engaging with wider stakeholders.

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During discussion, a Member expressed concern with the name, to which the Chief Executive clarified that the name 'Inner North West' was an interim name to differentiate it from being another 'quarter' of the city.

A further Member expressed concerns that the Masterplan needed to incorporate the Western Quarter and asked that it also be included in the workshop.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted that a workshop for Members was scheduled to take place on 17th May to present the initial findings and facilitate the direct input of Members into the Masterplan;
2. agreed that the Western Quarter would also be included at the workshop; and
3. agreed to receive the draft Masterplan at the next Committee meeting, ahead of public consultation.

**2017-18 City Centre Programme**

The Director of City Centre Development provided the Committee with an update on the programme of work which was underway in the City Centre. She highlighted a number of the key projects, which included the Belfast Story Destination Hub, the acquisition of the former Belfast Telegraph building, the City Centre Investment Fund, the promotion of City Centre living and the regeneration of the five Special Action Areas within the city centre and the surrounding districts.

She also outlined the importance of a number of emerging strategies which would be crucial to the success of the Programme, including the car parking strategy, and explained that the City Centre team was working with stakeholders to bring forward a brief for infrastructure which tied into the aspirations and growth projections as set out in the Belfast Agenda.

A Member pointed out that the Strategy should seek to address the needs of families living in the city centre, in terms of schools and play facilities.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the projects which were being progressed as part of the City Centre Strategy; and
2. noted that a workshop on the issue of city centre living would be held at a future date.

**Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

**East Bank Strategy and Proposed Consultation**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the report to allow further work by officers to be undertaken.

### **City Development Forum**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1** Following initial presentation to SP&R in March, this paper contains a revised proposal to create a City Development Forum as a pilot for 12 months with two key aims:

- To consider, at an early opportunity, proposals for major or strategically important development in the city; and
- To provide a forum to discuss related strategic issues related to development, including community engagement; job creation; education & skills; housing; transport; infrastructure; and investment.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- Agree the creation of a City Development Forum as a pilot for 12 months, including the detailed operating protocols set out at Appendix 1.

**2.2** It is recognised that in setting up this Forum, the Council also needs to provide a mechanism and support for an increased level of community engagement on development, planning and liveability. A more detailed report on community engagement is being presented to Committee alongside the City Development Forum, highlighting options to ensure this is achieved.

#### **3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** The launch of the City Centre Investment Strategy in Sept 2015, combined with the recovering economy and a step change in our international marketing, has stimulated a significant upsurge of new development. This includes planning or construction for 14 purpose built student housing with over 5,000 bed spaces; 19 hotels (6 in construction, 13 with approved planning); and a growing number of Grade A Office schemes, including City Quays, All State, and Concentrix. A number of major development schemes, including North-East Quarter, By-Water and Sirocco are also being brought forward by the private sector.

- 3.2** To land these developments effectively, a wide range of strategic issues need to be considered. This includes how we engage and involve the local community, helping to ensure residents can help shape and benefit from the developments that are taking place. It also include themes such as job creation; education & skills; housing; transport; infrastructure; and investment; all of which will be considered in greater depth at the Forum.
- 3.3** It is proposed that the Forum is establish as a pilot for 12 months and will be chaired by the Chief Executive, or her nominee, and administered by professional officers as an internal Council meeting. However Members have a major role providing strategic oversight for developments across the city, and ensuring that those developments help support both business and community needs. In light of this important role, it would be beneficial if there was a stronger mechanism to involve elected members in discussions before key decisions are required.
- 3.4** The key benefits and objectives of the Forum are to:
- align proposed physical and strategic developments with the vision of the Belfast Agenda;
  - ensure greater certainty over the shape and impact of potential development at an early point in the process;
  - consider wider strategic issues (referenced at ii above); how these shape the future needs of the city; and the impact that proposed development could have; and
  - ensure the needs of all stakeholders, in particular the needs of the surrounding community, are identified and supported.
- 3.5** The Forum is not a decision making body nor does it form part of the planning application process. However, it will have an important role to consider strategic developments in greater depth. This will provide a mechanism to review conceptual ideas at an early stage, and to facilitate more detailed discussions on strategic issues.
- 3.6** The attached operating protocol provides further details on the format and criteria for the meeting; the frequency and membership; community interests, and the code of conduct.”

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The Committee agreed to the creation of a City Development Forum as a pilot for 12 months, including the detailed operating protocols as set out [here](#) on the Council's website, with the Membership of the Forum to be amended as follows:

- The Chief Executive;
- The Director of Planning and Place
- The Director of City Centre Development; and
- Party Group Leaders or their nominee.

The Committee also noted that reports from the Forum would be submitted to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee every three months.

**Regeneration Engagement Plan**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To propose a new engagement plan covering strategic regeneration across Belfast, with specific focus on the city centre. The plan will engage a wide range of stakeholders, with a particular aim to involve and empower all Belfast residents, ensuring impacts of major developments are understood and benefits shared.**
- 1.2 This report sits alongside the proposal to create a new City Development Forum for Members, with the objective to improve consideration of strategic regeneration schemes, and related thematic issues, at an early stage.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the proposal to:**
- **develop and implement an engagement strategy, linked to regeneration in the city, with the primary aim of delivering physical, social and economic benefits to residents, businesses and other existing shareholders.**
  - **apply and extend existing models of community benefit including skills academies, social clauses, and social regeneration initiatives being pioneered by the Innovation Factory and small business start.**
  - **allocate via an internal trawl a dedicated resource to develop and implement the strategy. If members considered it to be appropriate this could be done on a temporary basis and then reconsidered.**



**3.0     Main report**

**Strategic Regeneration**

**3.1     The City Centre Regeneration Strategy sets out eight areas for development, including growth in employment, tourism, retail, and city centre living. Since the publication of the strategy, in Sept 15, significant regeneration has started to come forward, including:**

- **New offices under development at City Quays, the Linen Quarter and by Allstate and Concentrix adjacent to Central Station;**
- **Six hotels currently in construction and a further 13 with approved planning;**
- **A 48,000 square foot extension to Primark, along with a number of new entrants to the retail market;**
- **5,000 new student bedspaces have been approved, with flagship developments such as John Bell House now complete.**

**3.2     The pace of development is increasing year on year, with major planning applications expected later this year for the North-East Quarter, Transport Hub, Sirocco and redevelopment of the Belfast Telegraph building. There are a number of strategic schemes outside the City Centre, including Giant's Park, and the King's Hall health hub; while there is also agreement in principle to use part of the City Centre Investment Fund to help finance more Grade A offices.**

**3.3     The Belfast Agenda highlights the City Ambition to go even further, with 1.5m sq foot of Grade A offices and 2,500 hotel bedspaces created by 2021; 70,000 new residents and of 50,000 jobs created by 2035.**

**3.4     Regeneration Engagement Plan**

The City Centre Regeneration Strategy will play an important part in achieving the ambition set out in the Belfast Agenda. Council is committed to ensuring inclusive growth for the city and to ensure that all Belfast residents feel part of and benefit from city centre regeneration. Council is also committed to job growth so engagement will also include the existing commercial and business sector as well as the arts and cultural sector.

**3.5     While the growing pace of development is welcome, to help ensure that residents and the business community in the city**

feel part of and benefit from the regeneration of the city, it is proposed that an engagement plan be established to include;

- Belfast residents with emphasis as required on communities adjacent to significant developments within the city centre and wider areas
- City centre and other businesses, arts and culture organisations/other key stakeholders  
(for the sake of brevity in the report, further reference to all these organisations will be referred to as 'business')

**3.6 The Regeneration Engagement Plan will focus on three key area;**

- Physical Inclusion
- Social Inclusion
- Economic Inclusion

**3.7 Physical Inclusion**

This focuses on capacity building of residents and businesses to enable them to understand impacts of proposed physical developments, including transportation infrastructure, and be fully involved in the development of strategic projects.

**3.8 Engagement will include:**

- leadership, vision and direction on involvement;
- managing independent technical advice as required for residents where deemed necessary; and
- developing and implementing a range of local consultation exercises, with elected members, residents, businesses/stakeholders and partners;

**3.9 Social Inclusion**

Key themes of engagement will be connectivity and working to address both physical and perceived barriers between the city core and its surrounding areas for both residents and business community and ensuring that the benefits of city centre developments are fully realised and captured. Underpinning this entire approach will be the concept of shared space and how it becomes inherent in the development of any policy or project.

**3.10 The engagement plan will also include provision for positive engagement enabled by a series of proactive, capital 'Meanwhile uses' on vacant sites and vacant building within**

the city centre. These uses will help drive footfall into areas that require it to assist local businesses and/or address issues of safety. It will also seek to ensure that all Belfast residents from across the city have an opportunity to be involved in the concept/design and delivery/use of these 'Meanwhile uses'. This will help to create a sense of ownership of and pride in the city centre, and additionally provide an opportunity for citizens to learn, via this process, about development and design principles.

**3.11 Economic Inclusion**

This area of engagement will tie in with Planning and Place, the statutory consultation process on development management, and the Economic Development Department/Belfast Employability and Skills teams. The aim is to facilitate a process that creates a pipeline between potential jobs that may be coming forward with new developments and how residents can be upskilled, access and become job ready for these positions.

**3.12 To achieve this objective existing models of economic inclusion will be extended and developed to major regeneration projects coming forward. This includes:**

- Use of social clauses in procurement contracts
- Skills academies relevant to key developments coming forward, e.g. construction, hospitality or retail.
- Adopting and applying the economic regeneration approach pioneered through the Innovation Factory and Small Business Start.

**3.13 Workteams on city centre engagement will tie in with BCC Consultation and Engagement Framework across the council including Planning and Place consultation processes on the LPD and link closely with the Community and Neighbourhood Services Department to seek to ensure all sections of the community are reached.**

**3.14 Financial & Resource Implications**

Evidence from previous experience suggests that a dedicated staff resource is required to take forward the significant consultation and engagement issues associated with regeneration.

**3.15 The staff post could initially be allocated from within existing Council resource via an internal trawl, with additional work**

being commissioned out as required. There is sufficient budget within the City Centre Team to fund this arrangement.

**3.16 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

Any engagement programmes taken forward by the City Centre team will be equality screened. A map illustrating the city centre boundary is also attached.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Growing Businesses and the Economy**

**Belfast Economic and Social Policy**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 The Belfast Agenda sets out an ambition for growth and opportunity that includes four headline goals to focus collaborative efforts on economic and social growth of Belfast so that by 2035:**

- Our city is home to an additional 70,000 new residents
- Our urban economy supports 50,000 more jobs
- There will be a 50% reduction in the life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods
- Every young person leaving school has a destination that fulfils their potential

**1.2 In an increasingly competitive global environment, Belfast must emphasise its distinct competitive advantage if it is to continue to compete and successfully attract FDI, and tourists to the city as well as encouraging more businesses to start and support those existing businesses to grow in the city. Members have emphasised the importance of continuing to attract and support FDI to Belfast and the Council has been delivering on the Tourism Strategy Action Plan, developing a ‘Go to Market’ plan and working with city stakeholders in the development of the International Relations Framework which seeks to promote the profile of Belfast internationally as a place to visit, live and invest. Likewise, they have noted the importance of creating an economy that supports inclusive growth, ensuring that residents can take advantage of the development of the city.**

- 1.3** To focus our efforts on growing a sustainable, inclusive economy a number of targets have also been set for 2021 along with key programmes of work (see draft Belfast Agenda). This report focuses primarily on the issue of city deals and economic and social progress in the context of Brexit. It needs to be noted that significant other pieces of work sit alongside this paper on job creation, skills development, liveability and neighbourhood regeneration.

**2.0** **Recommendations**

- 2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- note the current programme of work underway which seeks to position Belfast as a competitive place and key attractor for people to visit, live, learn and invest;
- note the proposed next steps set out at paragraph 3.2.4 below, as agreed by SP&R Committee on 21 April 2017.

**3.0** **Main report**

**3.1** **Key Issues**

- 3.1.1** The Council is increasing its ambition around positioning the city to attract international investment from developers, FDI and institutional investment and the recent success at MIPIM 2017, along with the International relations Framework 2016-2021 provide fresh impetus to consider how the City can begin to embed and sustain this collaborative and outward-focused approach to deliver on the City ambitions in the Belfast Agenda.
- 3.1.2** Central to promoting growth and positioning the city is the Council's role in supporting and adding value to the work of key city partners in their efforts to increase the number of international students in the city, grow tourism investment and support more Foreign Direct Investment as well as helping local businesses to become more active in international export markets.
- 3.1.3** In the context of the Belfast Agenda, Members have already commissioned or agreed a range of work, currently underway, to drive forward growth and position the city in a time of increasing economic and political flux. Some examples include:

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- **International Relations Framework – including the development of sister city relationships with Boston, Nashville and Shenyang.**
- **Strengthening private sector relationships as demonstrated by the recent success of MIPIM and the strong public/private sector approach adopted (e.g. in access of 70 private sector representatives as part of the Belfast delegation and £240,000 private finance secured).**
- **Refocus the Belfast-Dublin MOU to enhance collaboration on economic, tourism, education & investment programmes.**
- **Exploring the development of a mutually beneficial city-to-city programme of co-operation and collaboration between Belfast and the City of London, in the interests of galvanising and stimulating both cities as growth engines, particularly as the UK exits the European Union.**
- **Launch of the Belfast-London Business Network in February 2017 with over 150 delegates attending providing a platform to pitch the real estate investment opportunities available in Belfast as well as promoting the opportunities for foreign direct investment, particularly the emerging and growing specialisms such as cyber security, legal services and business and professional services.**
- **The Council is developing a detailed programme of support, interventions and incentives to support business start-ups, existing businesses wishing to grow and foreign owned businesses that might consider Belfast as an investment location with a view to establishing a bespoke ‘City Investment Advice/Concierge Service that supports and enhances the work of key city partners.**
- **Belfast part of the 100 Resilient Cities Network and is in the process of appointing a Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) whose role is to work with city stakeholders to develop a Resilience Strategy which will seek to address the inter-related issues of economic, social & environmental resilience.**
- **The development of a City Growth Deal for the Belfast City-Region is moving into a detailed feasibility study and financial modelling phase. This work will focus not only on the delivery of key city infrastructure priorities but also how the principles of inclusive growth can be integrated within a city growth deal so that communities across the city benefit. Intensive engagement will take place with both elected Members**

and city and regional partners to define what is possible.

- 3.1.4 There is no doubt that there has been a growing recognition and support for the Council's leadership role in promoting economic growth and positioning the city on a regional, national and international basis as evidenced in the engagement and feedback received on the Belfast Agenda.

**Brexit**

- 3.1.5 Given the changing and uncertain global economic environment, there is a growing focus in other city-regions across the UK on the importance of place and ensuring that local government have the necessary financial levers and powers to support inclusive economic growth. There has been a reaffirmed commitment to devolution and introduction of growth deals covering all parts of GB but not Northern Ireland.
- 3.1.6 It will be important that the Council and Members continue to proactively seek to ensure that such similar freedoms, including a Growth Deal, are at the heart of any negotiations around Brexit and form part of the specific asks being developed by political parties and government. Whilst the detailed feasibility study will help to identify potential opportunities and evidence the financial and social benefits around a growth deal and further double devolution asks, it will be critical that this is supported by a strong political strategy/manifesto which gives focus and intent to the Councils engagement with relevant stakeholders and influencers.
- 3.1.7 Correspondence recently received from NILGA, attached at Appendix 2, outlines some the approaches being taken by other councils in relation to forward planning around Brexit including, for example, the commissioning of joint research pieces and entering into MOU type arrangements with cross-border council colleagues. NILGA is strongly advocating that an evidence-based and collegiate approach is taken to further strengthening NI council's position and in securing the best fiscal, legislative and policy outcomes associated with Brexit. Whilst it will be important that we continue to work with our local government colleagues including NILGA, it will be critical that we build upon the current momentum of growth and position Belfast to maximise the potential opportunities which may emerge around Brexit.

3.1.8 It is also important that the social implications of Brexit are understood and that plans to ensure 'inclusive growth' take account of these impacts.

3.2 Next steps – creating an integrated and strategic approach and establishing 'quick wins'

3.2.1 Given the changing economic, political and social landscape, it is vital that the Council continues to show leadership in driving inclusive economic growth. As detailed in this report, Members have led and commissioned a number of significant interventions which have successfully raised the profile of the city and started the process of effective advocacy around securing the powers and resources needed to deliver inclusive growth for the city-region.

3.2.2 There is now a need to ensure we draw these strands together to ensure that they are mutually reinforcing and underpinned by clear evidence and messaging so that Members can effectively influence on behalf of the city and that this leadership is visible to city stakeholders. Key linked strategic pieces which will have the continued leadership and oversight of the committee moving forward will be:

- City-region growth deal
- Place positioning;
- International relations framework;
- City Resilience
- An inclusive growth model

3.2.3 In terms of city marketing, it is important that we seek to build upon the momentum created at MIPIM and the successful relationships Members have built with the private sector to position and market Belfast at a time of flux when businesses are making location decisions. We must also consolidate and build upon to the relationships which Members have built with our surrounding councils and with other cities such as London and Dublin in line with our growth strategy.

3.2.4 In order to take this forward Members are asked to consider and agree the following:

- (i) Members to lead and fully engage in the next stage of feasibility work on the city growth deal proposition including the specific deliverables (asks) and funding model.
- (ii) Develop and implement a political lobbying strategy which gives focus and intent to the Council's engagement with relevant stakeholders and



influencers; and seeks to inform the negotiations and forward planning around Brexit.

- (iii) Develop a strong and strategic marketing piece, in partnership with the private sector including developers, agents and investors, anchor institutions and the public to position Belfast in a post Brexit context as a place to live, visit and invest
- (iv) Engage and potentially co-commission specific research pieces with the City of London and Dublin City Council & Dublin Chamber of Trade and Commerce to identify opportunities of mutual benefit including e.g. joint marketing, trade and investment.
- (v) Undertake detailed analysis work on the likely impact of Brexit on Belfast in order to inform future interventions and to ensure sustainable and stable growth in the future.
- (vi) Ensure an ongoing focus on an inclusive growth strategy in order to enable all Belfast residents to benefit from the developments in the city.

**3.2.5 A cross-discipline project team of council officers is being established, chaired by the Chief Executive, to assist Members in bringing forward these strands of work in an integrated way so as to further enhance the city leadership role of Members and regular updates will be brought to the Committee**

**3.3 Financial & Resource Implications**

**Within budget estimates for 2017/18.**

**3.4 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**Inclusive growth is intended to reduce inequalities and improve relations in the city.”**

In response to a request from a Member, the Chief Executive agreed to engage with Mr. Michel Barnier, European Chief Negotiator for Brexit, in relation to the issues affecting Belfast.

The Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

**Tourism - Annual Action Plan**

The Chief Executive provided the Members with an update on the work which had been carried out to date on the Integrated Tourism Strategy for the city. She reported that tourism was a key priority through the City Development and Growing the Economy themes of the Belfast Agenda.

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She highlighted to the Members that the key areas of focus and the associated budgets for 2017-2018 were:

- Business Tourism Investment – where a budget of £200,000 had been set aside and would be matched by investment from Tourism NI;
- Developing Local Tourism Infrastructure – where a budget of £130,000 had been set aside, where officers would also engage with partners, including Tourism NI, to lever additional budgets to increase investment in this area;
- Improved Tourism Research and Analysis - with a budget of £45,000;
- Visitor Management – where a nominal budget of £10,000 had been set aside, with additional investment required from other partners; and
- Food Tourism – with a budget of £40,000.

She reported that, given the impending Regional Tourism Strategy and the finalisation of the Belfast Agenda in the coming months, it was proposed that a mid-term review of the current Integrated Tourism Strategy be carried out. She outlined that the review would include the potential impact of Brexit on the tourism economy, the recent growth and the continued push to grow the tourism accommodation, the ongoing investment in the city centre and the new city centre visitor attraction.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Noted the key areas of focus for 2017-2018, and endorsed the delivery of the actions and associated budgets as outlined.

**Positioning Belfast to Compete**

**International Relations Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.0 The purpose of the report is to update Members on international relations work undertaken in the period since the March 2017 update to Committee and to outline planning work under way on a number of outbound and inbound visits from Sister Cities partners in the coming weeks.**

**2.0     Recommendations**

**2.1     The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the update on the international relations activity since March 2017, including the planned inward and outbound visits to take place in the coming weeks.

**3.0     Main report**

**3.1     Members will be aware that the International Relations Framework 2016-2021 was approved by the Committee in November 2016. The aim of this Framework is to continue to promote Belfast on the international stage as a place to visit, study, work and do business. The Framework will deliver primarily on the formal relationships already in place through the Sister City Agreements with Shenyang, Boston and Nashville, the Memorandum of Understanding with Dublin and the developing relationships with London. New areas of opportunities will be considered on their merits and relevance to Belfast.**

**3.2     In addition to the city-to-city linkages, the Council and its partners have, for a number of years, taken part in key international events to showcase the city, develop business opportunities and support our local companies to expand into international markets. These events include MIPIM which takes place in Cannes each March and which was the subject of a report to this Committee last month, and South by Southwest (SXSW) which takes place in Austin, Texas each year.**

**3.3     A report to the March 2017 City Growth and Regeneration Committee set out a range of outputs achieved in the year to date on the international relations activity. Since that date, a number of additional international engagement events have taken place while work is ongoing on a programme of outbound and inbound visits from Sister Cities and other key partners. An overview of the key work in the period since March 2017 is set out below:**

**3.4     SXSW 2017**

**Belfast City Council, along with partners from Invest NI, Digital Catapult NI, Generator NI and the Department of International Trade (DIT), participated in SXSW 2017 – the annual music and digital business event that takes place in Austin, Texas. In total six bands and twenty-six businesses were collectively**

supported to attend. Four of these companies were supported by the Council and were attending the event for the first time.

**3.5** A joint programme of engagement took place over the week from 11-18 March 2017. Belfast City Council support focused on a number of priority activities including:

- “Output Belfast”, a specific networking event to promote the film, digital and music sectors within the City and provide participants an opportunity to invite and do business with key international buyers. This event was by invitation only and attendees included buyers from Sony, Warner Brothers, Spotify, Blizzard entertainment, ThinkSync Music, Kobalt and Believe Digital. Other guests included key contacts from the City of Austin, Austin Chamber of Commerce, Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation, The White House, Swissnex Boston, Mayor of London, Spotify and CTM Nashville. The event attracted more than 750 people throughout the day
- Engagement in and attendance at the DIT exhibition stand in the main convention centre. The stand was used as a focal point for the Belfast presence and offered opportunities for meet and greets. Over 3,000 people visited the stand over the four days including Greg Hands, Minister of State in the Department for International Trade. Two Virtual Reality demos from Belfast companies took place and a wide range of meetings took place including DELL, City of Miami Film and TV Commission, Core Innovation Capital, Isovera and The Texas Music Office
- Support to help four new music and tech businesses to take part in the event for the first time.

**3.6** A review meeting between all partners is scheduled to take place in the coming weeks. This will focus on the relative merits of attending the event as well as exploring opportunities to reprioritise areas of investment. It will provide an opportunity to take a long-term planning approach to the event in order to maximise the return on investment and also to consider mechanisms for exposing new businesses to this opportunity and supporting their engagement. In the context of the emerging Place Positioning Strategy, it will enable the team to look at how this event can be used to profile Belfast as a dynamic business location that is attractive to and supportive of new, creative businesses. As part of this process there will be a formal evaluation of outcomes for

participants. An interim review has recorded the following outcomes for the four Council-supported businesses:

- Potential sales of £185,000 identified
- 1 company to follow up with UK head of music for Sony Playstation, Mattel group and Spotify;
- 1 company to meet with Amazon Prime to identify new workflow patterns to help secure ongoing work for a second season of a hit Amazon Prime TV show;
- 1 company to hold follow-up meetings with Facebook and You Tube regarding developing 360 VR technology for use in live events and visual performances;
- 1 company has a planned collaboration with Kieron Pepper (The Prodigy) now ACM on a programme to help students develop stronger visual brands;
- 1 company established a relationship with High Snobiety magazine for provision of video content (2million Facebook followers).

- 3.7** Comments taken from participating bands and Belfast City Council-supported businesses are attached in Appendix 1.
- 3.8** Officers are currently working on follow-up opportunities which were identified as part of the SXSW visit. There is a strong commitment from Austin City Council's Creative Industries Development Manager to work collaboratively with Belfast City Council in an informal capacity to achieve mutually-beneficial opportunities for our businesses. This includes showcasing joint creative and digital business collaborations at SXSW in 2018 and organising and facilitating meetings between Belfast and Austin-based creative companies prior to attendance in 2018.
- 3.9** Austin City Council also has a contractual relationship with Capitol Factory, a co-working space in Austin. They have agreed to explore opportunities for utilising this co-working space on favourable terms for Belfast businesses making return journeys to Austin. We are currently looking at how the Innovation Factory on Springfield Road could be used to reciprocate this offer for Austin-based businesses seeking to develop a European presence or doing business in the city.
- 3.10** In addition, US Accelerator company, 500 Start-ups, is looking at Belfast as a potential base for one of its global accelerators. Officers are sharing information with 500 Start-ups to support them in the development of a Belfast-specific proposal. In addition, Warner Brothers and Spotify are keen to develop further relationships with Belfast City Council in terms of the

**Output Belfast conference and the identification of new talent that may be of interest to them.**

- 3.11 Help Musicians UK are also keen to work in partnership with Belfast City Council in terms of providing added value to events and initiatives both in Belfast and internationally. Opportunities exist to look at how this could work for events such as Audio Visual Arts Festival (AVA), SXSW and the Output Belfast Conference.**

**3.12 Other Sister City and international engagement activity**

**In addition to the SXSW engagement and attendance at MIPIM (feedback reported to the Committee in April 2017), the following activity has been undertaken:**

- Preparatory work for the visit to Shenyang and Beijing in early May. This visit will focus on developing new education linkages and Council representatives will be accompanied by colleagues from our key educational establishments**
- Planning work for the May 2017 visit to Nashville. This visit will focus on developing the business opportunities between both cities, as a follow-up to the recent visit to Belfast by the Nashville Healthcare Council**
- Engagement with Dublin City Council to explore additional opportunities for business engagement and investment, particularly in the post-Brexit scenario**
- Planning work for incoming delegation from Irish Business Association of New York. Working with the US Consulate and Invest NI, we will put together a one-day programme for the early June visit, focusing on new investment opportunities in the City**
- Planning work for an incoming visit from Boston in early June 2017. This visit will comprise a mixed delegation with interests across a range of fields, particularly education and business**
- Hosting three inward visits from US-based universities who are exploring opportunities to expand their overseas study programmes**
- Co-hosting the first visit to Belfast by the Wenzhou Chamber of Commerce (China), focusing on investment and property development opportunities**
- Hosting a delegation from Stockholm City Council who were visiting Belfast to explore opportunities around port development and sustainable technologies investment.**

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- 3.13 A follow-up progress report will be brought back to the Committee in October 2017. It will set out the key deliverables from the various inward and outward visits that are to take place in the coming months and will also outline the programme of activity for the second half of the year.**

**3.14 Financial & Resource Implications**

**No specific financial and resource implications. The budgets for each of these activities have been approved by the Committee as part of the departmental estimates.**

**3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**The International Relations Framework has been equality screened.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Operational Issues**

**Belfast Bike Scheme**

The Head of Economic and International Development provided the Members with an update on the Belfast Bikes Scheme which had been launched on 27th April, 2015. She advised the Committee that, to date, there were 41 stations across the city and that the usage figures were as follows:

	<b>April 2015 - March 2016</b>	<b>April 2016 - March 2017</b>
<b>Annual</b>	3,504	4,930
<b>Casual</b>	2,400	5,302
<b>Journeys</b>	183,522	223,688

She reminded the Members that a further two stations were being funded under the Building Successful Communities Fund, at Carlisle Circus and Twin Spires, Falls Road, with three to be funded by Urban Villages, the locations of which were still to be agreed.

The Committee was advised that, at Year End, March 2017, revenue income had been £251,064 and total revenue costs were £466,474.

The Members were advised that there had been a significant increase in the level of vandalism in Year 2 of the scheme, with the cost of theft and vandalism having increased ten-fold, from £1,805 in Year 1 to £18,807 in Year 2. The Head of Economic and International Development advised the Committee that the recent increase had resulted in 210 out of the 576 bikes being out of operation due to either theft or vandalism. She pointed out that whilst certain hotspots had been identified earlier in the year, with

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bikes having been removed from certain stations overnight, the problem had worsened and all stations had been impacted to some extent.

The Committee was advised, however, that the Bike scheme was very popular and that this had resulted in a number of requests to extend the scheme across the City. She explained that the recent additions had demonstrated the need to undertake a strategic review of the scheme before any further developments took place. She reported that a workshop was being proposed as part of the review, which would look at resolving the vandalism challenge, the pricing policy, a policy for deciding future locations of docks and opportunities for alignment with wider city developments and future funding options.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted and approved the update on the Belfast Bikes Scheme;
2. noted that a further report on progress would be presented to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in June 2017; and
3. approved the request to hold a workshop in late June 2017, to provide an update on the strategic review of the scheme.

**Last Meeting**

Councillor Graham referred to the fact that this had been her last meeting in the role of Chairperson, as her replacement was due to be appointed in June, and thanked the Members and officers for their support over the previous year.

Chairperson