

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 14th June, 2017

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor O'Donnell (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Alderman Haire);
Aldermen McGimpsey, L. Patterson and Spence; and
Councillors Beattie, Boyle, Dorrian,
Dudgeon, Graham, Hargey, Howard, Johnston,
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
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th May were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st June.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman McGimpsey and Councillors Dorrian, Johnston, Magee, McAteer, McDonough-Brown and Mullan declared an interest in Item 2b, in that they were Members of the Planning Committee, and Councillor Boyle declared an interest in the same item in that he was a Member of the Markets Development Association. Upon receiving advice from the City Solicitor, the above mentioned eight Members left the room for the duration of the discussion on the item.

Councillor McDonough-Brown also declared an interest in Item 9d, namely, strengthening the Cultural Sector: Proposed 'Resilience Building' Investment Programme, in that his mother was an employee of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and did not take part in the discussion.

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Matters Referred Back from Council/Notices of Motion

Response from Permanent Secretary, Department for Infrastructure re: Use of Bus Lanes by Taxis

The Committee considered correspondence which had been received from the Permanent Secretary, Department for Infrastructure, in response to the Committee's letter of support of a six month extension to the trial of taxis using Belfast Rapid Transit bus lanes in the City Centre, which also requested that all bus lanes be included in the extension.

The response outlined that the Department had received a range of representations and that there were competing views on the matter. The Committee was advised that, as the twelve week trial had been determined by the former Minister for Infrastructure, following discussions he had had with representatives from both the taxi industry and the cycling lobby, the trial had ended as planned, on Sunday, 14th May, 2017.

The Permanent Secretary outlined in his response that the Department was currently carrying out working to inform decisions on future taxi access to bus lanes and that the Department would take into consideration analysis of traffic data gathered during the trial and collation of information received from its online survey and other related correspondence which had been received since the start of the trial. He confirmed that the Department would take into account the view as set out by the Council.

The Committee noted the response from the Permanent Secretary.

Presentations

Area Learning Community – West Belfast

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Ms. A. Mervyn, West Belfast Area Learning Community, Ms. K. O'Hare, Hazelwood Integrated College, and Mr. A. Logan, Belfast Boys Model School, were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

Ms. Mervyn provided the Committee with an overview of the Learning Education Programme which had been implemented by the West Belfast Partnership Board (WBPB) to promote a partnership between schools and the community to improve outcomes for the young people in the area.

She explained that education was the number one priority for the Board and explained the importance of the structural development of robust partnerships and the Strategic Education Plan for the area. She outlined to the Committee that, since the Learning Education Programme had been established within West Belfast, the percentage of pupils in the west of the city which had achieved 5 or more GCSEs, Grade A*-C, had increased by 17.3% between 2011 and 2016, which had meant that it was now 0.2% above the average for the whole of Northern Ireland.

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She outlined to the Committee that Easter Schools were run by the Partnership and that the Aisling Bursaries scheme, which was sponsored by local businesses and individuals, had donated a total of £574,500 to 671 students since its inception in the year 2000.

The Committee was advised that the EastSide Partnership, in the east of the City, had recently implemented EastSide Learning, which was based on the success of the WBPB's Learning Education Programme model and was seeing positive results.

Ms. O'Hare explained that Hazelwood Integrated College was located in the north of the City and currently had 939 pupils. She pointed out that 19% of pupils had Special Educational Needs and 58% of pupils were entitled to free school meals. The Committee was advised that, while the college had improved greatly over the past few years, a lot more had to be done in order to effectively tackle social deprivation. Ms. O'Hare outlined a number of innovative approaches which the school had taken, including a Pathways Curriculum, collaboration with Northern Regional College and Belfast Met, engagement with the Greater Shankill Partnership, mentoring programmes, home visits, work placements and a successful internship programme with large companies including Deloitte, Danske Bank and the Clayton Hotel group.

Mr. Logan outlined to the Committee that the Belfast Boys Model School in North Belfast was a non-selective boys school with approximately 1000 pupils, 60% of whom were entitled to free school meals.

He advised the Members of how, over the last three years, the school's performance in GCSE English and Mathematics at Grades A* - C had been above the Northern Ireland average for similar non-selective schools.

During discussion, a Member raised the issue of lower educational attainment by protestant males. Ms. O'Hare outlined that, while their grades generally remained lower than their counterparts, there were a number of champions who were seeking to change that and pointed out that the top achieving male from Hazelwood Integrated for the past two years had been a protestant male.

A Member stated that it was enlightening to hear about the best practice model from the West Belfast Partnership and the number of ways in which other areas of the city had been able to share the successes of the approach.

In response to a suggestion from a Member, the Committee agreed that a paper be submitted to a future meeting regarding how the gap in North Belfast be filled, given that it no longer had a Partnership Board for the area.

The Chairperson thanked the three deputations for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

Belfast Business Investment Advice Service Update

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr. A. Webb, Webb Consulting, and Mr. M. O’Connell, OCO Global were in attendance in connection with this item and they were admitted to the meeting.

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 Members will be aware that the Belfast Agenda has at its core a commitment to inclusive growth. The scale of Belfast’s ambition is set out in the draft Belfast Agenda which aims to grow the city’s population by an additional 70,000 people and for the city’s economy to support 50,000 more jobs by 2035. To focus our efforts on growing the Belfast economy, a number of ambitious and challenging targets have been set for 2021:

- **Creating 15,000 new jobs**
- **Attracting £1 billion of private sector Foreign Direct Investment**
- **Supporting 4,000 small business start-ups**

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.

1.3 Members have emphasised the importance of continuing to attract and support investment and FDI to Belfast as well as committing to a step change in a comprehensive support for small businesses to start and grow. Consequently, at its meeting in November 2016, Committee agreed that professional expertise would be secured to develop a menu of city support & incentives and to scope the establishment of a Belfast Investor Advice/Concierge Service.

1.4 Combined with the changing global economic context, this provides an opportunity to take a more holistic approach to further consider the establishment of an economic delivery vehicle similar to the Belfast Investment Development Agency (as per the Notice of Motion raised in January 2014) and a number of the practical items raised in the Notice of Motion to support micro and small businesses in the city to help strengthen and progress the Council’s city leadership role (as per the Notice of Motion raised in July 2016).

1.5 The purpose of this report is to enable the appointed contractor (OCO Global/Webb Advisory) to present their findings to date, together with some initial outline options for such a service in Belfast, for the Committee to consider. The Committee's views are sought on the thinking to date to enable the development of more detailed and robust proposals which will be brought back to Committee in September 2017 for further consideration.

2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the findings to date
- Consider the issues raised and provide comment on the options and priorities which will inform the recommendations and way forward.

3.0 **Main report**

3.1 **Key Issues**

The City has already developed a successful track-record in attracting FDI and specialisms are emerging in the fields of Financial Technology, Financial & Legal Services, Creative & Digital Industries, Cyber Security, Green Tech and Life & Health Sciences. The attractiveness of Belfast as a business investment destination is evidenced through accolades such as:

- Number 1 destination for financial technology investments.
- Europe's leading destination for new software development projects.
- Named as the most Business Friendly City of its size for the second consecutive year and Being in Europe's top 10 cities for business friendliness of any size.
- Ranked in the top 20 in the world for FDI Strategy.

Research shows that those who have already invested in the city consistently report its positive aspects including the skilled workforce, the competitive cost base, quality of life, connectivity and the scale of city which makes it accessible.

3.2 To support continued investment and project a positive profile for Belfast, the Council has opened the Innovation Factory, successfully attended MIPIM and is taking forward a market-facing strategy to position Belfast and working with city stakeholders to implement the International Relations

Framework. Accelerating investment in the city is central to meet the ambitions in the Belfast Agenda. Equally, the new powers for economic development have strengthened the Council's commitment to support indigenous businesses and local entrepreneurs and Committee have agreed to the development of a comprehensive business support service. In 2016/17, the Council helped to establish 584 new businesses, created 900 new jobs from start-ups and business growth and supported 2,200 people through our business support and networking activity across a range of programmes.

- 3.3 On reviewing this activity, there are several common elements of support and advice that local business, investors, developers and FDI clients would benefit from in the City, particularly in terms of ensuring co-ordinated promotion, marketing and access to the available support measures, incentives and services. Crucially, there is an opportunity to better connect and enhance the supply chain and partnership opportunities that new foreign owned investment and business will create for local businesses.**
- 3.4 Therefore, at its meeting on the 9th November 2016, Committee agreed to secure professional expertise to:**
- Identify and propose a package of potential support measures and incentives that Belfast City Council can offer to business start-ups, existing businesses wishing to grow and foreign owned businesses that might consider Belfast as an investment location.**
 - Specify a realistic scope of services to be provided through a 'City Support & Investment Advice/Concierge Service' to meet the needs of FDI, developers and indigenous businesses who may choose to start up, grow and invest in Belfast.**
- 3.5 The purpose of this is to augment the existing services and incentives to support, attract, secure and sustain business starts, business growth and investment. This will also be designed to provide an opportunity for better co-ordination of services and assurance that future approaches are additional and complementary to those services and support that is already provided by city partners.**
- 3.6 OCO Global/Webb Advisory were commissioned to take forward this work. To date this has included:**
- Research into similar provision in other cities in Europe, GB and Republic of Ireland.**

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- **Assessment of the current availability of incentives and support for those wishing to start a business, existing businesses that wish to grow to export and foreign owned businesses who may choose to invest in Belfast**
- **Product and service mapping of the business development and investment journey in the city**
- **Local engagement to identify what local stakeholders and investors require. This includes engagement with the Innovation factory, Federation of Self Employed & Small Business Enterprise NI, inward investors, banks, recruitment agencies, property agents, commercial lawyers, the City's two universities, Inter-Trade Ireland and Belfast Harbour Commissioners.**
- **Engagement with Invest NI and Council officers in key service areas including economic development, international relations physical development, finance, planning, city centre, Smart and Resilient Cities.**

3.7 The findings to date have highlighted that there is an opportunity for the Council to take a greater city leadership and co-ordination role, creating a clear city proposition to accelerate investment and business opportunities in Belfast. The following key issues have been identified as important factors for investors, business and developers:

- **Competitive operating costs such as rental, property, labour costs**
- **Property availability, especially to 'land and expand' opportunities e.g. through the Innovation Factory**
- **Availability of, and ability to attract, talent and local skills levels**
- **Ease and speed of accessing key services such as planning, regulatory and business advice & support services**
- **Infrastructure and connectivity, including digital connectivity and the importance of air routes**
- **Quality of life and the importance of 'place'**

3.8 The consultants will build on these key issues at the Committee meeting, outlining their findings to date and presenting their initial thinking on the options for Belfast. This will provide an opportunity for the Committee to input their views to enable the further development of robust and focused proposals for a clear city proposition of incentives and support and the most effective means of establishing a co-ordinated city service. This will be brought back to Committee for consideration at their September meeting.

3.9 Financial and Resource Implications

Resources are included within departmental budgets for 2017/18. Current delivery is being undertaken by teams from both the City Centre Development and Development Departments. The final report will include consideration of any specific issues, skills requirements, technical support or physical assets required to deliver an effective package of support measures and Belfast Business Investment Advice/Concierge Service.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications

Equality screening will be carried out once the options have been further developed. However, there is the potential to produce a positive impact on those sectors of the population who are currently underrepresented in business ownership and start-up.”

Mr Webb advised the Committee that, between 2009 and 2016, over 3,000 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects had established operations in Western Europe annually. He reported that the UK and Germany were the dominant destination markets, receiving nearly 50% of FDI arrivals.

Mr O’Connell advised that, while London was by far the largest recipient of FDI projects in the UK, taking 40% of the total projects, Belfast was a strong competitor given its size. The Members were advised that Belfast ranked 2nd, in terms of projects received per 100,000 residents, with a yearly average of 6.8 projects.

During discussion, Mr. Webb highlighted that Berlin was a good example of a City which had set itself up as a partner for any companies which wished to establish a base in the city.

A Member stated that there was a perception that FDI businesses were treated more favourably than local businesses and that was something that the Council should be mindful of in terms of the Advice Service.

A further Member stated that the Council needed to ensure inclusive growth was central to the Service while also ensuring that the Service did not duplicate services which were already being provided by Invest NI.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted:

1. the findings to date; and
2. that a further update would be provided to the Committee at its meeting on 13th September.

Restricted Reports

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

**Item Referred back to Committee:
Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan**

(The City Solicitor and the Director of Property and Projects attended
in connection with this item)

The City Solicitor identified that a planning application directly impacted by this item was to be considered by the Planning Committee at a future meeting and that it would be prudent for Members of that Committee to leave the room for the duration of the discussion in order to avoid any allegations of pre-determination. Alderman McGimpsey and Councillors Dorrian, Johnston, Magee, McAteer, McDonough-Brown and Mullan declared an interest and left the room for the duration of the item. Councillor Boyle also declared an interest in the item, in that he was a Member of the Markets Development Association, and also left the room.

The Director of Property and Projects reminded the Committee that the Council, at its meeting on 1st June, had referred back the decision of 12th April, under the heading "Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan", to the Committee for further consideration.

The Director of Property and Projects outlined that the proposal in the Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan was for mixed-use developments in sites A, D, the NIE-owned site adjacent to D, J and K. He confirmed that the NIE had stated that it no longer required the site adjacent to Site D, and that it would consider selling it.

During discussion, a number of Members stated that it should be noted that the report had been published just two days in advance of the meeting, with the revised opinion from the Q.C. having been circulated to Members a matter of hours before the meeting.

A Member expressed serious concerns with the proposals, stating that mixed-use development could mean that two houses would be built on each site. The Member also stated that sites A, B, C, D and the NIE-owned site were currently zoned for housing under the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP); the Council did not own the NIE site; the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) had stated that sites J and K were out of the common housing area; there were inaccuracies in paragraphs 6, 7 and 26(b) in the Q.C.'s opinion and that the Q.C. agreed that there was evidence of social housing need in the immediate area with a significant number of cases registered as being in housing stress.

The City Solicitor explained that the information provided in paragraphs 6, 7 and 26(b) of the Q.C.'s opinion was not incorrect and, in relation to 26(b), clarified that the overall Gasworks Northern Fringe site was zoned for both residential and commercial development. He also advised that any outline planning application would be subject to consultation.

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The Director of Property and Projects advised the Committee that mixed-use developments would include housing but that the Council was not a housing provider.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Hargey,
Seconded by Councillor O'Hara,

That the Committee agrees to defer the item in order to receive details of what is to be included in each site of the Northern Fringe.

On a vote by show of hands five Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee considered the recommendations within the report, namely, that the Committee:

1. agrees to note the updated position in relation to the emerging Gasworks Northern Fringe Masterplan;
2. notes that a pre-planning process (PAD) is being pursued; a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) will be served and a fully compliant pre application consultation process will be undertaken; and
3. agrees to submit an outline Planning application for a comprehensive mixed use development, following the completion of the PAD process.

In response to a Member's request that a recorded vote be taken, the Committee agreed.

On a recorded vote, six Members voted for the recommendations and five against and it was declared carried.

For (6)	Against (5)
Aldermen Haire, Spence and L. Patterson; and Councillors Dudgeon, Graham and Howard.	Councillors Beattie, Hargey, O'Hara, O'Donnell and Walsh.

SIB – Review of Property Management

The Director of City Centre Development advised the Committee that the Department of Finance had proposed to consolidate and rationalise the central government office estate in Belfast city centre and that it was initially looking at three locations, Hope Street, Castle Street and Dunbar Link/Corporation Street.

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The Director provided the Members with an overview of each site and the benefits and challenges which they provided. She reported that construction was scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2019 and that it was expected that 1,500 staff would potentially be located at each site.

The Members were advised that the Council would continue to work closely with a number of agencies across the three locations in order to develop proposals for government offices.

The Committee noted:

1. the contents of the report; and
2. that any further masterplanning proposals which affected Council-owned assets would be the subject of a separate report to the relevant Council committees.

Inner North and West – Ongoing Masterplan Work

The Director of City Centre Development reminded the Members that, as part of the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (CCRIS), a number of detailed planning activities had been undertaken to support and shape development in the city centre. She reported that, as part of that work, masterplanning work had been undertaken for the Inner North and West area of the city centre.

The Members were reminded that the Inner North and West areas were experiencing significant change, largely due to the new Ulster University campus and the planned works of Streets Ahead Phase 3.

The Director advised the Committee that the Masterplan sought to provide a detailed framework to help ensure a more comprehensive approach to development on public and private sector owned land, and to provide greater connectivity between adjacent communities and the city centre. She reminded the Committee that a holistic consideration of the key issues such as transport, connectivity, built heritage, community connections and an appropriate mix of uses would be used for that part of the city.

The Committee was advised that, given the numerous land owners and a number of complexities with the area, her team would engage with a diverse range of stakeholders over the coming months in order to develop the masterplan.

The Committee:

1. noted that targeted engagement was proposed to take place over the summer months with members and external stakeholders; and
2. agreed to receive a presentation of the draft masterplan in August for the Committee's consideration, ahead of the public consultation process.

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VESPA Event June 2018 – Request for Funding

(The City Events Manager attended in connection with this item)

The City Events Manager explained to the Committee that he was seeking approval for financial backing of £30,000 for the 2018 World VESPA Gathering, which was proposed to be held in Belfast between 14th and 17th June.

He explained that, each year, a National Vespa Club put on a World event which attracted thousands of Vespa enthusiasts from around the world and that Belfast had been offered the chance to host the event by the Vespa Club of Britain.

He advised the Members that the local organising Committee for the VESPA World Gathering had estimated that the economic return to the City would be in the region of £7million through hotel, hospitality and retail expenditure, with up to 4,000 participants from across Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and Europe visiting Belfast over a four day period.

He highlighted to the Committee that the event linked into the Belfast Agenda and the Place Positioning Strategy, in that it would reflect the vibrancy of Belfast, and also to the city's European Capital of Culture bid, due to the pan-European nature of the project.

The Committee was advised that officers would be requested to sit on the various Local Organising Committees and working groups in relation to the event and he explained that this had proved very useful and beneficial to the Council when working on previous events on a similar scale.

He reported that support for the event would be subject to a full legal contract with the event organisers and clarified that, if a default on the terms was to occur, Members would be notified accordingly.

The Committee agreed to provide support of £30,000 from the Events budget for the 2018 World VESPA Gathering to be staged in Belfast between 14th and 17th June, 2018.

Zoo Update

(The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services attended in connection with this item)

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 8th March, it had considered the outcomes from the Members' Workshop on the future options for the Belfast Zoo.

He reported the range of issues which were to be considered by the Committee at a later stage, including the future business operating model, the site, the size and animal collection and any capital investment implications.

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A Member stated that, during the Members' Workshop, the zoologists had confirmed that they believed that Bellevue was the location for the Zoo in the City.

He outlined the next steps to the Committee and confirmed that discussions with stakeholders had now taken place. He reported that a range of criteria and potential weightings had since been drawn up to allow an evaluation of the options to take place.

During discussion, and in response to a number of Members' comments, the Committee agreed that animal welfare was paramount and that the weighting allocated to it should be increased.

The Director explained that a similar process had been carried out for the newly opened Exploris Aquarium and that it was proposed that a visit be arranged to hear from the Members and officers from Ards and North Down Council who had been involved in the process to engage the market. It was envisaged that the visit would take place at the end of August.

A Member suggested that a visit to Tayto Park, Co. Meath, could also be useful for comparison.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. agreed that Criteria 3, namely, 'animal welfare', should be given a higher weighting in the evaluation criteria which would be used to assess the options;
2. agreed that a visit to Exploris be arranged in late August to discuss with, and hear from, Members and officers from Ards and North Down Borough Council regarding their experience, with all Members of the Council invited to attend; and
3. agreed that, following the visit to Exploris, a feasibility exercise be carried out to assess the options for the future business operating model for the Zoo, noting that the Council would not be committing to any option at that stage but that it would allow operational understanding of the impact of each and details of savings and/or costs.

Request to Present to Committee

Exterior Media

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the request in order to allow officers to meet with Exterior Media in the first instance.

Strategic Issues

Committee Plan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The Committee held its annual planning workshop on 6 March 2017 to shape the upcoming work of the Committee and the new Corporate Plan. This was informed by the Council’s budget setting process for 2017/18. The workshop also provided the opportunity to consider the Committee’s role in maximising the Council’s contribution to delivering the Agenda.
- 1.2 The Belfast Agenda has at its core a commitment to inclusive growth. The Committee is familiar with the four main priorities in the Belfast Agenda which demonstrate the centrality of growing the local economy to improving quality of life in Belfast. It sets out an ambition for growth and opportunity that includes four headline goals to focus on the 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
- 1.3 The Committee has already noted that delivering the ambitions in the Belfast Agenda will require a significant uplift in the investment and resource commitment from the Council to ensure that, along with partner organisations, we develop appropriate support, services and programmes to grow the economy, improve the skills base, support city development and enhance the ‘lived experience’ in the city.
- 1.4 The draft Committee Plan (available on modern.gov) draws together several annual delivery plans previously agreed by Committee (such as city centre development, support for businesses, employability & skills, tourism and the cultural framework). It sets out the main priorities and programmes of work that the Committee will oversee during 2017-18 to contribute to the delivery of the Belfast Agenda.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Approve the draft City Growth & Regeneration Committee Plan 2017-18; and
- Agree to receive a further economic briefing, which includes consideration of the Belfast's position post Brexit from the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) at a future meeting.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 The City Growth and Regeneration Committee is responsible for:

- The development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects directed towards regeneration and growth of the city in the context of outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategy decisions.
- Oversight of the exercise of Council functions in relation to economic development, urban development, tourism, culture & arts, European and international relations, car parks, city markets, city events, Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoo.

3.2 With input from Prof Neil Gibson (UUEPC) the planning workshop on 6 March 2017 provided an opportunity to set the Council's ambitions and Committee's progress and priorities within the current economic context and outlook. The purpose of the workshop was to translate the priorities of the Belfast Agenda into a work plan for the Committee to deliver in 2017/18.

3.3 To achieve the city ambitions to grow the economy and develop the city, Members agreed the need for a step change in what we do and how we work and a corresponding uplift in investment in 2017/18. In particular this will enhance small business and investment support and align it with the Smart City framework and employability and skills programmes, including the Belfast Works programme, which focuses on developing skills and employment opportunities for those furthest from the labour market.

3.4 The draft Committee Plan indicates the main programmes of work and aligns them to the priorities and work-streams

identified in the draft Belfast Agenda that will deliver on the four pillars of: Growing the Economy, City Development, Working & Learning and Living Here.

3.5 The draft Committee Plan outlines the key actions, milestones and Lead Director responsible for the delivery of programmes and projects. However, as Committee is aware many of these programmes and projects are cross-cutting and therefore require the involvement of more than one Council service, as well as engagement and partnership with city partners and communities.

3.6 The Committee has approved several reports on the key areas of work over the last two months which have been included within this annual draft Committee Plan; therefore the following provides a brief summary of the broad areas of work.

3.7 **Growing the economy**

- Developing an integrated sustainable approach to inclusive economic growth and investment
- Shaping the development of a Growth Deal for the City-Region; including strengthening the case for the transfer of regeneration powers to local government and enhanced devolution for employability & skills
- Maximising the city's connections to drive growth by delivering the International Relations Framework; and progressing the Belfast Business Support scheme and Investment Advice/Concierge Service
- Making it easy to do business in Belfast by developing and delivering a comprehensive small business service to help those wishing to start a business, existing businesses that wish to grow to export, accelerating growth for priority sectors; and encouraging foreign owned businesses to invest in the City.

3.8 **City Development**

- Delivering the City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy, including the development of comprehensive masterplan frameworks to better connect the city and developments, and supporting and delivering the key strategic city centre projects
- Supporting city centre governance arrangements to co-ordinate regeneration efforts, such as the Joint Regeneration Board, and stimulate market interest in

city development opportunities through the £18.7m City Centre Investment Fund

- Developing and submitting a joint bid for the 2023 European Capital of Culture with Derry City and Strabane District Council
- Delivering the integrated Tourism Strategy and developing the city's tourism offer
- Developing a city centre based world class visitor Belfast Story destination hub, that complements the current offer and connects to the wider city experience
- Delivering a successful market-facing strategy to promote and position Belfast, building commitment for a city brand identity and maximising opportunities for investment, tourism, study and regeneration

3.9 Working & Learning

- Delivering the Employability & Skills Framework; including the development of a Belfast employability pathway model (Belfast Works).
- Increasing engagement with the education sector and better understanding the needs of those furthest removed from the labour market to identify opportunities to help address the city's educational and skills inequalities.
- Working with the further and higher education institutions to ensure alignment of course provision to meet industry needs

3.10 Living Here

- Delivering the Cultural Framework and developing a new approach to culture, festivals and events

3.11 Central to this is ensuring that strategies and frameworks connect neighbourhoods to the city centre and that the whole city can enjoy the benefits. An important aspect of this will be the development of a Regeneration Engagement Strategy for the city centre, and ongoing efforts to engage with partners, business and communities to take a co-design and co-delivery approach to progress these programmes.

3.12 Regular updates on progress with key programmes will be brought back to Committee. A separate item on the Committee agenda proposes a new more accessible infographic-style format that is currently being developed to support this process. In the first instance this will be applied to the key Council programmes designed to contribute to growing the economy.

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3.13 Financial & Resource Implications

The Committee Plan will be delivered in accordance with the cash limits previously agreed by Committee and approved by Council in February 2017.

3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications

Programmes and activities contained within the Committee Plan will be subject to appropriate equality and good relations considerations.”

A Member stated that, while the input from Professor Gibson from the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) had been very informative to date, it would also be useful to hear other perspectives on Brexit.

During discussion, and in response to suggestions from Members, the Committee agreed to hold a Special meeting to discuss Belfast's position post-Brexit, with Prof. N. Gibson, UUEPC, Dr. T. Healy, Nevin Economic Research Institute, and Dr. S. Nolan, Trademark, being invited to attend.

A Member highlighted the importance of the enterprise outreach and engagement programme which would target under-represented groups.

A further Member raised concerns regarding a recent article in The Irish News which stated that the Council had been storing wooden pallets for use on a bonfire in Hope Street. He requested that information be provided on what Council resources had been used to store the pallets and any legal implications which the Council might be open to as a result of any damage or injury to property or members of the public from that bonfire.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the issue of bonfires would be discussed at a meeting of the Budget and Transformation Panel with the Party Group Leaders the following day and, as part of ongoing engagement on those issues, a further briefing at the Inter Agency Group partners and Party Group Leaders Forum had been scheduled for the following week.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Beattie,

Seconded by Councillor Magee,

That the Committee requests that a report be submitted to the next Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the issue of bonfires.

A further Member stated that the issue of bonfires was not relevant to the item which was under consideration and asked that the Chairperson make a ruling on whether

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the issue was relevant. The Chairperson ruled that the issue was relevant, in that bonfires could impact upon the City's economy.

Amendment

Moved by Alderman McGimpsey,

Seconded by Alderman Spence,

That the Committee refers back to the agenda, and that no report be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

On a vote by show of hands, eight Members voted for the amendment and eleven against and it was declared lost.

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Beattie and seconded by Councillor Magee was put to the meeting, when nine Members voted for and none against and it was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee:

1. agreed the draft City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan 2017-18; and
2. agreed to hold a Special meeting on Brexit and the economic impact, with Professor N. Gibson, Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (JUEPC), Dr. T. Healy, Nevin Economic Research Institute, and Dr. S. Nolan, Trademark, being invited to attend; and
3. requested that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the issue of bonfires.

Car Parking Strategy

(The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 A report to update Members on the outcome of the public consultation on the Council's draft Car Parking Strategy, seek endorsement from elected members on the proposed final strategy and outline next steps for implementation was deferred by Committee in April to allow for further elected member briefings and consideration.**
- 1.2 The strategy makes recommendations relating to Council owned car parks and car parking provision outside our**

ownership. A key component of the strategy is to facilitate and encourage stakeholders to work together to achieve the vision and objectives. The Council wish to provide a strong civic leadership role for the promotion of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system for the City of Belfast and its wider region.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to

- note the issues raised during the party briefings and proposed response as outlined on modern.gov;
- note the main issues received during the public consultation process and if appropriate agree the Council's proposed response on how it will influence the final strategy content; and
- endorse the final strategy for publication and note the proposed next steps for the implementation of the action plan.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Public Consultation

3.2 The draft car parking strategy was published for public consultation on the Citizen Space platform from the 30th August 2016 to the 21st November 2016 and received 84 consultation responses with 11 additional responses received outside the Citizen Space platform. A public consultation event was held in City Hall on the 4th October 2016 which was open to elected members, key stakeholders and members of the public and was attended by over 30 representatives.

3.3 The overall response from the public consultation has been supportive of the strategy in particular the strategy objectives and the Council priorities. The consultation requested views on the Council's vision outlined in the strategy '*Belfast is a city offering sufficient, high quality and appropriately located parking which supports economic development and regeneration within the city by balancing the requirements of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors.*' 42% of respondents agreed with the vision whilst 38% disagreed. The general comments relating to the vision showed that car parking is a highly divisive issue with respondents either requesting that there should be increased car parking provision at lower cost or that car parking provision should be restricted in the city centre to improve the amenity for residents and visitors to the city. It is suggested that the vision

remains unchanged as we are advocating a balanced approach to car parking provision in the city. The strategy recognises that car parking in suitable amounts and locations is vital for the city centre to function properly. A balance is therefore necessary between car parking and other transport modes and between the needs of short-stay and long-stay parking users.

- 3.4** It is clear that the relationship between parking availability, cost, length of stay and its effect on retail trade is a complicated and emotive one. Evidence from Christmas 2015 suggested that the Council's offer of free car parking increased congestion, reduced accessibility and may have had a negative impact on footfall and retail trade. The Council's decision in 2016 to work with Translink to improve and incentivise public transport as an alternative to free car parking whilst controversial has proved highly successful with BCCM reporting average sales up by 7.8%, footfall up by 4.8% and Translink reporting ½ million extra passengers travelling into Belfast over the Christmas period.
- 3.5** There is currently a high volume of commuters travelling by car to Belfast which is leading to problems of increasing congestion and associated emissions resulting in poor air quality in a number of areas in the city. It is recognised that there is limited capacity in the city's highway network and therefore the promotion of public transport along with the appropriate provision for cars as part of a balanced approach is outlined in the strategy.
- 3.6** The public consultation responses showed strong consensus on the following issues:
- the need to introduce residents parking schemes in areas affected by all day commuter parking;
 - the proposal for consolidation of low quality surface car parking sites into multi storey/underground car parks with the caveat that adjacent local communities are consulted on the location and design;
 - the setting up of a Parking Forum with a number of groups expressing a willingness to participate in the Forum;
 - the need to improve quality, safety and security of car parking provision and to encourage car parking operators to achieve Park Mark standard;
 - the need to improve the information on parking availability and use of smart technology; and

- measures to deter all day commuter parking in free car parks at district centres to allow turn over and provision for shoppers.
- 3.7 A number of areas were highlighted that were missing from the strategy or needed more emphasis:
- the need for close consultation with local communities on any proposals to consolidate surface car parks and develop high capacity provision;
 - improved enforcement to prevent parking at bus stops, parking across dropped kerbs, parking on pavements and to prevent potential fraud and misuse of Blue Badges; and
 - parking initiatives to promote the evening economy and provision to cater for overnight/weekend visitors to hotels travelling by car.
- 3.8 The response from the Department for Infrastructure is generally supportive of the strategy and action plan, however, they would advocate for a clearer message on the need to reduce the supply of long stay commuter car parking in the city to support more efficient and cost effective public transport. They call for a more collaborative working approach on a number of issues which would be welcomed by the Council.
- 3.9 The Council's website provides further details on the [main comments](#) emerging from the public consultation process and our suggested response. It contains the proposed [final strategy and action plan](#). It is proposed an executive summary will be devised for the final version containing a narrative on the purpose of the strategy and a summary of the objectives, priorities and actions.

Implementation

- 3.10 The City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy identified car parking as a major issue for Belfast City Centre and recommended that the Council work with the Department for Infrastructure to develop and implement a strategy for car parking for Belfast. Representatives from DfI have been involved in the project steering group and the process has involved engagement with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. The strategy has outlined a number of objectives and priorities for action which is dependent on external bodies such as DfI, Translink and private car operators to deliver. It is proposed the delivery of the action plan will be cross departmental with the City Centre

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Development Team taking the lead and involvement from the City & Neighbourhood Services department, Planning & Place and Property & Projects.

3.11 The proposed next steps include:

Key next steps	Lead Department
Publication of final Car Parking Strategy and action plan including timeframe for implementation	City & Neighbourhood Services
Review of Council's off street parking provision to consider issues such as pricing, operation and naming through the internal Parking Order Working Group	City & Neighbourhood Services (currently underway)
Establish joint working arrangements with Dfl and consider priorities such as the review of the current city centre car parking provision/location and options to progress the implementation of residents parking schemes	It is proposed that the governance and delivery will be raised at the Transport Workshop meetings chaired by the Chief Executive with involvement from elected members, Council officers and senior officials from Dfl and Translink.
Establish the Parking Forum - Agree terms of reference and membership; and - agree priorities for action such as improved parking information/smart technology.	City Centre Development
Provide guidance to inform the development of the Council's Local Development Plan in terms of transport policy and the	Planning & Place / Dfl

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review of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan.	
Review of Council owned surface car parking provision to consider potential options for consolidation and redevelopment Visioning exercise to establish good design principles in relation to integration of high capacity car parking provision within the urban context Carry out a consultation process with local communities on any proposals to consolidate car parking provision and potential locations and design options	City Centre Development, Property & Projects & Place & Place
Report to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to outline resources required for the implementation of the car parking strategy action plan.	City Centre Development & City & Neighbourhood Services

3.12 Finance and Resource Implications

Additional resources may be required for the implementation of the car parking strategy. If endorsed the recommendations will have future implications on Council revenue such as the resourcing of a Parking Forum, loss of parking revenue due to the redevelopment of city centre surface car parks, costs of improving car parks, introduction of charging in some free car parks in district centres and the introduction of free disabled car parking in Council owned off-street car parks. These have not been quantified in the research and will be reported to a future Strategic Policy & Resources Committee once the strategy is finalised.

3.13 Equality and Good Relations Implications

Equality and good relations screening was conducted in parallel with the proposed consultation processes.”

A Member stated that discussions with the Department for Infrastructure were still to take place in relation to residents parking schemes. The Member also emphasised that residents should be consulted at the earliest possible stage in relation to the proposed placement of multi-storey carparks within the vicinity of inner city neighbourhoods.

In response to a further Member’s question, the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reported that the implementation of Residents Parking Schemes was being considered alongside the Local Development Plan and the Belfast Rapid Transit scheme.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services confirmed that, if the Car Parking Strategy was to be agreed, it did not prohibit discussions with inner city residents from taking place. The Chief Executive added that community consultation was essential before any multi-storey car parks would be agreed.

During discussion, the Committee agreed that any references to multi-storey car parks in specific areas around the inner ring should be removed from the Strategy, given that the positioning had not yet been agreed.

In response to a further Member’s question regarding the income that the Council received from each car park, it was agreed that this information would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

It was further agreed, in response to a request from a Member, that a letter be sent to the Department for Infrastructure in support of two hour waiting limits being introduced for car parking spaces which were positioned in local community areas near to bus stops, in order to prevent all-day commuter parking, given the impact that commuter parking was having on small, out-of-town shops.

The Committee:

1. noted the issues raised during party briefings and the proposed response as outlined;
2. noted the main issues received during the public consultation process and agreed the Council’s proposed response on how it would influence the final strategy content;
3. endorsed the final strategy for publication, with the removal of references to any specific areas of the city around the inner ring, so as not to pre-determine the positioning of proposed multi-storey car parks;
4. noted the next steps for the implementation of the action plan;
5. agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the income which was generated by each Council-owned car park; and

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6. agreed that a letter be sent to the Department for Infrastructure in support of two hour waiting limits being introduced for car parking spaces in local community areas near to bus stops, in order to prevent all-day commuter parking.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

East Bank Strategy and Proposed Consultation

The Director of City Centre Development reminded the Committee that it had previously agreed to appoint a multi-disciplinary consultant team, led by Arup, to take forward a detailed framework for the area identified as the East Bank.

She explained that the draft strategy sought to ensure that the East Bank was fully woven into the fabric of the city centre. She outlined how the Strategy would seek to create a lively, diverse and accessible area which would be well-connected to the city core, the River Lagan and surrounding communities and would provide places to live, work and socialise.

The Council had established a Steering Group with staff from the City Centre Development and the Local Development Plan teams working alongside the appointed multi-disciplinary team led by Arup. The Director reported that both Transport NI and the Department for Communities had also nominated senior representatives to the group.

The Director explained that Arup had undertaken a comprehensive review of land use, transport and the economic context and had held two stakeholder workshops. She reported that early consultation with elected Members and other key stakeholders including major landowners, residents and community groups had commenced in December 2016, with a second stakeholder workshop having taken place in February 2017.

The Committee was advised that options for discussion in the draft Strategy had included significant rationalisation of road and rail infrastructure in the area to create a visionary sustainable transport corridor on Bridge End. She reminded the Members that planning consent had been granted for the removal of the Station Street flyover adjacent to Queen's Quay. The Committee was also advised that other proposals included the removal of the Bridge End flyover, a reduction of road space for general traffic and a proposed relocation of the TQ railway station.

She explained that the changes to the road and rail infrastructure would be carried out in phases, with a significant change required in the way people travelled on that corridor, in favour of public transport, walking and cycling, to compensate for the reduction in road space.

The Director advised the Members that the next step was to consult with key stakeholders and adjacent communities to seek their input on the options proposed and opportunities identified. She advised that the proposed consultation and engagement exercise would commence following the Council meeting on 3rd July and would last for 12 weeks.

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The Committee:

1. agreed to recommend to the Council that a public consultation exercise on the draft East Bank Strategy be undertaken over a twelve week period during summer 2017;
2. agreed to delegate to the Director of City Centre Development, in conjunction with the City Solicitor, the authority to take forward a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the area; and
3. noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting on the finalised version of the Strategy for approval in the autumn.

Positioning Belfast to Compete

European Capital of Culture

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 **This purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the Council’s joint bid with Derry City & Strabane District Council to become the UK designated city for the 2023 European Capital of Culture.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to:**

- **Note the contents of this report**
- **Note the joint Members workshop which will take place in the Seamus Heaney Centre in Bellaghy on the morning of 19 June 2017. All Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee as well as the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Party Group Leaders (or nominees) to be invited to attend**
- **Note the proposal to hold a workshop with key cultural partners as part of the engagement process in the afternoon of 19 June 2017**
- **Note the plans for the launch event to take place on 20 June 2017**
- **Note that work is underway on the programme development and the financial due diligence and that further reports will be brought back to the Committee for consideration at a future date.**

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3.0 Main report

3.1 Members are reminded that the submission of the European Capital of Culture Bid is a two-stage process as set out below:

Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submission to the Department of Culture Media and Sport of bid book by 27th October 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the bid proposal – November/December 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of bid proposal – November/December 2017
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announcement of shortlisted candidate bids to move to Phase 2 – January 2018
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stage II Submission & Detailed Programme – November 2018

3.2 A summary of the critical timeline in relation to the development and submission of the Stage 1 bid is available on modern.gov.

3.3 Member Workshop

In order to ensure that elected members are aware of the process and have an opportunity to input into and shape the programme development, it is proposed that a workshop will take place on the morning of 19 June 2017 at the Seamus Heaney HomePlace in Bellaghy. This will involve elected representatives from both Councils. It is proposed that all Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee as well as the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Party Group Leaders (or nominees) from Belfast City Council be invited to attend this workshop. The workshop will start at 10.00am but there will be an opportunity for Members to undertake a tour of the Homeplace at 09.15am that morning.

3.4 The workshop will be an interactive session with colleagues from Derry City and Strabane District Council which will provide a forum for elected Members to:

- explore the opportunities and benefits of progressing a European Capital of Culture Bid;

- gain an insight into the experiences of other European Capitals of Culture in terms of the positive legacy which has been created; and
- input and shape the emerging vision and themes of the Bid.

3.5 Members will also receive an update on the programme of work underway and the associated timelines to submit the Stage 1 bid. They will also consider the draft engagement plan which is currently under development. This will contain a stakeholder analysis matrix; potential methods of engagement; an events calendar identifying engagement opportunities and a stakeholder gap analysis highlighting other audiences which may require bespoke engagement. Lessons learned from other cities underline the need for creative engagement mechanisms which will support wider outreach and feedback. Discussions are also underway with support agencies such as Volunteer Now to identify innovative engagement mechanisms and secure additional resources (e.g. volunteer network) to support the roll-out of engagement. It is anticipated that the above engagement process will not only assist both Councils in bidding for the European Capital of Culture, but will also allow both cities to engage with its citizens in a new mechanism that will provide benefits beyond the bid process.

3.6 Stakeholder Engagement

In the afternoon of 19 June 2017, it is proposed that there will be a stakeholder engagement session with key cultural partners. Attendees will include representatives from some of the major cultural institutions as well as relevant representatives from government departments and third sector organisations. This will also take place at the HomePlace.

3.7 Launch Event

The above engagement day will be followed by the formal public launch of the joint bid on 27 June 2017. Plans for the launch event – including venue and format – are currently being developed and an update will be provided at the Committee meeting.

3.8 Financial & Resource Implications

Members are reminded that the Council has committed £500,000 to support the initial bid, with Derry City & Strabane District Council inputting £300,000. This finance will cover costs associated with the bid development including staffing;

consultancy; business case development; engagement process; marketing; public relations and bid design and production. As part of the development work on this phase of the bid, officers will identify the level of investment required for the delivery of the wider programme, if successful. This will require significant due diligence as well as engagement with other partners to explore opportunities for financial leverage. Additional information on this will be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee for consideration and decision.

3.9 Equality & Good Relations Implications

As with all major public facing cultural projects, the securing of the 2023 European Capital of Culture has the potential to bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and therefore promote good relations in the city and across.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Growing Businesses and the Economy

City Deal Update

The Chief Executive provided the Members with an update on the progress which had been made in relation to a City Region Growth Deal for Belfast.

She reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 7th December, it had agreed to commission a full feasibility study on a City Region Growth Deal (City Deal) and she advised the Members that KPMG had been appointed to carry out that work. She explained that they had been tasked to provide a detailed evidence base, including forecast modelling, which would set out the rationale, financial construct and benefits of a City Deal for Belfast.

She reported that KPMG had indicated that an initial narrative to build partner and political engagement, and to secure buy-in, would be completed by mid-June. Financial and economic modelling reports based on potential geographies and investment priorities, and an analysis report on infrastructural needs, were estimated for completion by September, 2017, with a detailed City Deal proposal completed by the end of March, 2018.

The Committee was assured that, throughout the process, there would be ongoing political and stakeholder engagement with the following groups:

- Belfast City-Region Councillors and officers
- Newry, Mourne and Down, and Derry and Strabane Councillors and officers
- NI Assembly representatives
- Northern Ireland Office and Taoiseach's Office/Department for Foreign Affairs

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- Business sector including large businesses and representative bodies
- Innovation sector including universities, further education and innovation hubs
- City stakeholders such as the Belfast Harbour Commission
- NI Civil Service departments notably Department for Infrastructure; and Department for Finance

The Chief Executive reported that, further to political engagement over the past 6 months at Westminster, Stormont and in Council, an initial narrative paper, “When Belfast Succeeds...” had been prepared.

She advised the Members that KPMG was preparing a position paper to provide more detail on a potential City Deal vision, objectives and targets. The Members were advised that it would outline the city-region’s competitive advantages and a compelling programme of ‘asks’ which would demonstrably build inclusive growth, particularly in preparation for exit from the European Union. A copy of the paper would be circulated to the Members when it was available.

During discussion, the Chief Executive reported to the Committee that Belfast would follow the Glasgow model of a City Deal, which sought to provide above average improvements in areas of social disadvantage. She also highlighted to the Members that the City needed to raise its Gross Value Added (GVA).

A Member stated that he felt that Glasgow’s approach was the best fit for Belfast, and that the Council should also examine the ways in which Manchester had failed to deliver those improvements so that the same mistakes would not be made.

The Chief Executive advised the Members that she would circulate a copy of the position paper by KPMG.

The Committee noted the progress to date and agreed to the next steps.

Smart City Framework Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To present Members with a proposed ‘Smart Belfast’ framework that seeks to harness the talent of the city’s digital SME sector, and our world-class university research, to support the Council, community planning partners and local communities to create more innovative solutions to complex public policy challenges as identified in the Belfast Agenda. This work is part of a wider ambition to foster innovative methodologies and complements the Council’s parallel work on Social Innovation with local communities and our corporate commitment to service transformation.**

- 1.2** The Smart Belfast framework is the product of a twelve-month co-investment agreement between the Council and the UK Future Cities Catapult which also delivered a series of ‘demonstrator’ projects that utilised a mix of ‘smart city’ approaches to address current city issues. (One of these demonstrator projects has already identified more than £370,000 of additional annual Rates income for the region.)
- 1.3** This report provides an overview of the framework and the results of the demonstrator projects. It also sets out a proposed programme to deliver the Smart Belfast framework within a wider Council commitment to innovative service delivery. It also includes details of an offer from Invest NI to support a ‘Smart Belfast’ challenge programme which has the potential to provide over £860,000 funding support to local SMEs. And an offer from the Digital Catapult to provide £50,000 funding support to local SMEs for an innovation challenge around the city’s visitor experience.

At its June 2017 meeting Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed to:

- **Consider and adopt the Smart Belfast framework as a basis for driving collaborative innovation between city partners.**
- **Agree the proposed programme of work including the delivery of a Smart Belfast challenge programme with Invest NI and the delivery of the Digital Catapult’s open challenge competition on the visitor experience.**
- **Agree to a September launch event for the framework and Challenge programme. (Details to be issued to Members later in the summer.)**
- **Agree that the Council develops an approach to innovation that integrates opportunities presented by the Smart Belfast work, the Social Innovation programme with communities, and the organisational development programme**

2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 **Committee is asked to:**

- **Note the contents of the report including plans for the launch of a Smart Belfast framework and supporting Challenge programme for SMEs in September 2017.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

Many cities around the world have created ‘smart city’ frameworks that aim to foster the conditions in which city partners can better exploit leading-edge technologies, data science and industrial design practices to address urban challenges in more innovative ways (while at the same time providing a welcoming environment for start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop new products).

3.2 Places such as Glasgow, Dublin, Bristol, and Manchester are successfully using such frameworks to:

- leverage substantial private sector investment and grant funding (e.g. Innovate UK and Horizon 2020 funding);
- provide a creative environment in which local digital SMEs and entrepreneurs can develop new products and services;
- deliver innovative joint projects that make substantial contributions to urban challenges such as waste, energy, traffic and water management; and
- Improve public services for citizens and communities.

3.3 At the January 2016 SP&R Committee, Members agreed that the Council would co-invest with the Government’s Future Cities Catapult in a twelve-month programme to design a bespoke Smart Belfast framework that would seek to tap into our city’s own unique strengths (particularly our growing digital sector) to support the delivery of elements of the Belfast Agenda. The joint programme also included a commitment to deliver a series of ‘demonstrator’ projects which would be used to build the Council’s capacity in this area whilst also delivering solutions to real-world problems.

3.4 The ‘demonstrator’ projects

The programme adopted a ‘learning by doing’ approach: delivering a number of substantial ‘demonstrator’ projects that provided practical learning and ‘proofs of concept’ as the framework was developed. These projects included:

1. **Business Rates Identification:** Historically it has proven difficult to maintain an up-to-date Rates Register of businesses. (This is mainly due to the dynamic nature of the city’s economy with a large number of businesses opening, closing or moving in

any given financial year). The existing approach to maintaining the list is expensive and time-consuming resulting in significant loss in potential Rates income for Council and the NI Government. To address the issue the Council, working with colleagues from Land and Property Services and the Department for the Economy, ran a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition which provided small pots of R&D money to six SMEs to develop innovative solutions to this problem. In a second phase of the competition two of the SMEs were provided further support to develop machine-learning proto-types. In their first iterations these solutions identified nearly £370,000 of new recurring non-domestic Rates revenue for the region. Further iterations are expected to grow this figure. In addition, the project attracted £100,000 of funding from Department of Finance and has been featured nationally as a best practice example of SBRI. Both companies have also indicated that they intend to develop their proto-types into commercial products which they plan to sell to cities across the UK.

2. **Belfast Growth-planner: Working with the Planning Department the Smart Cities team developed a software tool - the first of its kind in the UK – that supports urban planners in determining the capacity of different parts of the city for future physical development. It includes user-friendly analysis of utility provision, water, transport and housing growth capacity. Partners are keen to continue development of this product with the Council and use it to promote Belfast’s reputation as a place to innovate and develop complex tech solutions.**
3. **A Rates forecasting model sought to build upon the Council’s new planning authority role to support longer term financial forecasting. A design-led process has established the likely approach – with further work required to gather relevant data from public sector partners. The project will also inform the specification of the city’s future planning system.**
4. **A specification was developed for a city indicator dashboard to support Members and Community Planning partners to track the impact of the Belfast Agenda over time.**
5. **Ipedal: This R&D collaboration between the Council, See.Sense (a local SME), BT, Next Bike and Queen’s**

University seeks to deploy state-of-the-art motion sensors on a number of the city's bikes. The project seeks to understand cycling behaviour (including bike theft) and may inform future bike lane investment decisions. The project also has the potential to identify pot-holes and to measure local air quality. The project attracted £5,000 of co-investment from the Department of Infrastructure and substantial in-kind investment from BT and See.Sense.

6. **Waste Management analytics:** The Council has been awarded 20 hours of world-class 'big data' analytics expertise to analyse household recycling behaviour with the aim of providing insights that can assist in driving up recycling levels.

The Smart Belfast framework

- 3.5 The Smart Cities team drew practical learning from the delivery of these demonstrators to identify the key elements of the framework. The team also drew on the best practice of other cities and adopted many of the concepts in the BSI Standard for Smart Cities (PAS 181). They also engaged with a broad range of local stakeholders through a series of workshops, one-to-one interviews and an online co-design process.
- 3.6 In general there was strong support for the concept of a Smart framework, particularly from the local SME community which saw it as an opportunity to deploy proto-types and products in a real-world environment, and from public sector partners who recognised the potential to bring innovation to bear on existing challenges. There was also broad agreement that Belfast City Council has an important convening role to play in bringing a diverse range of partners together for a common social impact.
- 3.7 The resulting framework is available on modern.gov and sets out the following:
 - The guiding principles for a Smart Belfast
 - The 'foundations' that the city needs to have in place to deliver innovative programmes
 - A pipeline of potential projects that can directly contribute to the Belfast Agenda whilst also strengthening the city's smart foundations; and
 - A roadmap that describes proposed workstreams and resources.

The foundations for a Smart Belfast:

3.8 Belfast has a growing community of innovators, designers, researchers, data scientists, and technologists. The city also has a strong digital infrastructure (enhanced by our recent investment in Superconnected Broadband and City WiFi) that offers first class connectivity for organisations and individuals. However, in order to harness these resources to better address city challenges, the city needs to strengthen four ‘foundations’:

- 1. Shared understanding of city challenges:** Partners need to find new ways to work together to understand and analyse shared problems. There is the opportunity to adopt innovative ‘design-led’ approaches from industry that allow public sector partners to think differently about challenges, and then to develop and test their ideas before applying them at scale.
- 2. An engaged innovator community:** If we want to co-opt the local SME sector and our universities to tackle challenges together, we need to find new ways of doing this beyond traditional procurement channels. These might include establishing innovative city challenge programmes, Small Business Research Initiatives (SBRIs), R&D collaborative agreements, social innovation programmes, competitions, joint investment vehicles, etc.
- 3. Building city data assets:** In a modern knowledge economy access to data is as important an economic resource as access to financing or a skilled workforce. There is a growing demand from digital SMEs for access to public data that will allow them to create new products and services. Partners in a smart city need to get much more sophisticated in how they generate, manage and share public data safely and securely.
- 4. Robust delivery mechanisms:** City partners need to find better ways of attracting investment; co-opting the support of partners; and designing agile delivery mechanisms that can develop ideas, test them, and rapidly scale proven successes in timescales that are measured in weeks rather than months.

Roadmap

3.9 The framework identifies a series work strands that the Council and its partners need to deliver in order to strengthen the foundations described above:

- 1. Building governance structures** A cross-sector group to guide the Smart Belfast work; build partner commitment; provide data assurance, and contribute to the delivery of the programme.
- 2. Building the Smart Belfast team** The Council and other city partners to build a core team to champion the approach; to engage with challenge owners, and; to coordinate collaborative programme and projects.
- 3. Building engagement channels** Utilise digital and more traditional engagement methods for coordination and to communicate the smart city work with stakeholders including local communities, while promoting Belfast as a place for innovators to invest.
- 4. Building the innovation network** Provide mechanisms and opportunities for responsive, agile partnerships to deliver projects that address city challenges. These partnerships would draw upon Social Innovation or Living Labs-style techniques to better understand challenges and work towards solutions.
- 5. Building IoT and data infrastructure** Individual projects generate lots of data that can often be developed into a shared city platform that can be used by other innovators. Internet of Things (IoT) technology allows cities to deploy inexpensive sensors for a vast range of purposes from air quality monitoring to tracking tourist and retail behaviour in the city centre.
- 6. Building innovation experience** Providing new procurement challenges through such mechanisms as open calls and competitions supported by an Innovation Fund.

Smart Belfast project pipeline

3.10 The aim is to drive the framework through the delivery of challenge-focused projects. That is, the Council and its partners will identify a series of projects over the next period that build our capacity as a Smart City, but also, at the same time, practically address Belfast Agenda challenges.

3.11 Over the past few months officers have engaged with partners (including Tourism NI, Department for Infrastructure, Queen's and Ulster University) to draw up a pipeline of likely projects for which there is a demand from 'challenge owners' and potential smart city solution-providers. Further work is required to identify collaborative investment opportunities but emerging proposals include:

- A circular economy grand challenge: A SME-led challenge in support of the Resourceful Belfast strategy to rethink the city's waste as an economic resource.**
- A Belfast Health and Leisure Passport: Developing a detailed understanding of the physical activity citizens to improve programmes and interventions and enhancing the impact of the Council's £105m leisure transformation programme.**
- Public transport challenge: Nearly half Belfast's workforce travel to work by car. Attitudes to travel by public transport or active travel remain a barrier. As major improvements to public transport are completed (Belfast Transport Hub, Rapid Transit System), this barrier will need to be lifted in order to maximise these opportunities.**
- City centre parking: Adopting new technologies to understand driver behaviours and providing interactive solutions to address the parking challenge.**
- Building an integrated employment pathway: Belfast has a complex, underperforming employability pathway with many providers offering a broad range of interventions for those working towards employment. A key step is understanding employability as a total system.**
- Understanding visitor trends: Building a more sophisticated model of tourist and conference delegate behaviours to enhance the city experience.**
- Leveraging the public estate: Drawing on new technologies to provide innovative ways of managing the wider public estate including the planned leisure estate.**
- Understanding the future labour market: The Northern Ireland Skills Barometer reveals areas of significant imbalance, such as an undersupply of STEM skills, and an over-supply of hospitality skills. More work is needed to create actionable insights at a local level.**

Smart Belfast Challenge programme

- 3.12 Invest NI has been particularly supportive of a Smart Belfast and have identified it as an opportunity to provide R&D support to the region's burgeoning digital SME sector. They also see it as a means by which city partners can develop ideas that may form the basis of future applications to the Government's Innovate UK funding programme. As Members may be aware, over £2 billion of innovation funding is being provided to business growth sectors over the next few years – with urban infrastructure challenges being a particular focus for funding. Work on Smart Belfast challenges can provide important experience in the development of more complex future applications to Innovate UK.
- 3.13 Invest NI is therefore proposing to provide up to £25,000 each to eight SME-led networks addressing four or five Smart Belfast challenge areas over an eight month period. These networks would then be eligible to apply for a second phase of funding of up to £170,000 each to help them design prototypes and concepts that address a Belfast challenge. The potential maximum funding pot available is approximately £860,000.
- 3.14 To deliver the programme the Council would be expected to facilitate engagement between city partners and work with the network members on the challenge areas. Officers are recommending that the Council work with Invest NI to deliver this programme with an initial 'challenge' workshop with partners in June 2017 and a public launch in late September 2017 at City Hall. Further details of this launch event will be presented to Members in August 2017.

Digital Catapult Open Challenge competition

- 3.15 The Council has also been approached by the Northern Ireland node of the Digital Catapult. This organisation also support the concepts behind the framework and are offering to provide £50,000 of funding to local SMEs in a two-stage design competition to unlock local expertise in immersive technology to develop proposals to support the visitor experience in the city. The Catapult is seeking £25,000 of match-funding from Council in support of the competition (which is scheduled to open on 26 May).

Wider innovation ambition

- 3.16 The Smart Belfast framework is part of a wider ambition by the Council to foster innovation in service delivery and it

complements our parallel work on Social Innovation with local communities and the Outcomes-Based Accountability model adopted for community planning. Each of these strands adopts a number of core methodologies (such as design-led innovation, partnership working, agile and scalable deployment of projects, etc.) There is an opportunity to support a growing innovation culture within the Council by incorporating these Smart City and Social Innovation methodologies into aspects of the Organisational Development programme.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.17 During its first twelve months the Smart Belfast work has already attracted over £200,000 of co-investment (from Future Cities Catapult, Department of Finance and Department for Infrastructure). The Smart Cities team also led the successful application to the 100 Resilient Cities programme which will attract substantial funding from the Rockefeller Foundation over the next two years. This ability to attract co-investment is only likely to grow during the implementation phase – particularly if the framework is successful in creating the conditions for attracting Innovate UK funding.
- 3.18 Invest NI has offered to support SME partners to a potential value of £860,000 while the Digital Catapult has offered an initial £50,000. There are also offers of in-kind support from other partners including data science, Queen’s University and Ulster University (which include access to Phd researchers and UU’s new Cognitive Analytics and Research Laboratory).
- 3.19 Delivery of the first year of the framework will require a budget of £378,000. This total includes the delivery of six main work-strands:
- Smart Belfast framework implementation: £105,000
 - Smart Belfast challenge programme with Invest NI and Open Challenge call with Digital Catapult: £55,000
 - City data management and digital strategy: £70,000
 - Further development of existing demonstrator projects: £123,000
 - Develop new pipeline projects proposals £20,000
 - Development support for a corporate Innovation programme £5,000
- 3.20 Having been agreed by SP&R the financial implications for the framework outlined above will need to be considered as part of the year end finance report which will be presented to the June SP&R Committee.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.21 Equality and good relations implications will be taken into consideration and it is proposed that we will take this through equality screening; however it is anticipated that any collaborative efforts should have a positive effect on section 75 groups.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Strengthening the Cultural Sector:
Proposed “Resilience Building” Investment Programme**

(Councillor McDonough-Brown declared an interest in this item and did not take part in the discussion)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide Members with an update on the development work that has been undertaken by Officers from Belfast City Council, in conjunction with their counterparts from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), to develop a targeted ‘resilience building’ programme for key citywide arts and cultural organisations in order to help the organisations to build a more stable foundation for their future growth
- Seek Members’ approval to proceed with the development and delivery of the programme
- Note the overall programme costs of up to £600,000 over a three year period, with costs to be evenly split between Belfast City Council and Arts Council for Northern Ireland. The Council contribution in the current financial year will be £100,000. This amount was set aside in the financial estimates for the current year and has already been approved by this Committee in April 2017, as part of the Cultural Action Plan.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the report

- Approve to recommendation to proceed with the development and delivery of the programme, as set out in sections 3.6-3.12.

3.0 Main report

Strategic Context

3.1 In 2016, the Building Change Trust, in partnership with Arts and Business Northern Ireland, commissioned and financed research that examined social investment in the arts. The purpose of this research was to explore the potential for increasing social investment in the arts and cultural sector in Northern Ireland as a means of contributing to the sector's sustainability in the context of ever-reducing public funding sources.

3.2 The research report highlighted a number of key findings. These included:

- Arts and cultural organisations are very reliant on public funding at a time when this funding source is under significant threat. 59% of the organisations that participated in the survey reported public subsidy levels of 75% or more. Although some arts organisations have lost some or all of their funding over the last three years, standstill ACNI funding has been the reality for the majority over the past five to six years. It is important to note that, over that period, Belfast City Council budgets have been maintained and increased slightly. However, given the importance of the Arts Council's investment, this means a significant reduction in real terms for most organisations
- The need to increase the strategic financial management capacity amongst arts organisations and the development of board and trustee vision and expertise, particularly in relation to risk and investment readiness.
- Current funding structures and models do not support organisational stability and impede organisational development and growth. Arts organisations identified a number of specific challenges including:
 - Difficulties in securing adequate core funding
 - Annual funding cycles make it difficult to plan and to develop their programmes
 - The perception that funders penalise organisations which hold reserves

- **Very burdensome application and reporting regimes;**
- **Delays in decision making, and;**
- **The burden of making provision for proposed 'in-year' funding cuts while trying to programme to meet audience demands.**

3.3 It identified the need for a programme of strategic investment to cover areas such as:

- **Diagnosis of organisational assets and organisational capacity to exploit them**
- **Attention to common themes and issues which organisations might more effectively tackle in collaboration with others rather than working alone**
- **Provision of dedicated and targeted support relevant to the needs of the specific organisation – while recognising opportunities for joint learning and supporting collaboration among organisations**
- **One-to-one mentoring and support to provide organisations with consistent encouragement and advice.**

3.4 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council, in conjunction with Derry City and Strabane District Council, has agreed to submit a joint bid for European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in 2023. The foundation of a viable application is a strong and vibrant cultural sector. Belfast City Council currently invests almost £2million per annum across a range of support initiatives for the sector. However, it is clear that, similar to the issues identified in the Building Change Trust report, organisations are struggling with issues of limited capacity, short term funding management, cash flow management and limited marketing and financial management expertise. In that context, officers have been exploring opportunities for targeted investment in the city's key cultural infrastructure in terms of organisations and events in order to stabilise and establish a platform for sustainable development into the future.

3.5 Based on the Building Change Trust research and on engagement with cultural organisations that we already support, Officers have developed the concept of a Capacity Building Resilience Programme that would run over a three year period. The programme would be delivered through a phased approach, concentrating on building the capacity whilst helping to support the financial stability and longer-term resilience of the arts and cultural organisations that both organisations currently support.

Programme overview

- 3.6** The aim of the programme is to encourage creative thinking about how participating organisations can remain sustainable and develop in the context of a challenging funding environment and changing audience needs and to build the capacity within the organisation to meet those needs. The programme will enable citywide organisations to review and change their missions and/or business operations to achieve long-term creative and financial stability as part of the capacity building work aligned to the European Capital of Culture process. Organisations will be expected to commit to a forensic analysis of their current operations, examine their capacity at operational and Board level and demonstrate a willingness to take on board the recommendations of the independent advisors. Given the scale of investment, it is likely that there will be no more than 15 participants throughout the duration of the programme.
- 3.7** All elements of the organisation's operations will be considered – depending on their individual circumstances. These might include:
- Review of business processes, taking account of opportunities to streamline activities, or perhaps to put an end to activities that are no longer in keeping with the organisation's mission
 - Consideration of changes in business structures e.g. acquisitions, mergers, alliances or joint ventures
 - Exploration of opportunities for financial restructuring to reduce overheads and or achieve economies of scale
 - Assessing how organisations can engage better with artists and audiences alike and how they can develop new audiences
 - Exploring ways to support innovative artistic practice
 - Improving organisational management capacity to support business growth.

Programme timetable

- 3.8** It is planned that the programme will commence in the current financial year. The main focus of the work this year will be on programme design, development and commissioning.
- 3.9** An initial call for applications will open at the end of 2017. Organisations applying for support will be required to give consideration to their key current challenges in creative and

business terms and the outcomes that they expect from participation in the programme. Once they are accepted on to the programme, the initial diagnostic work and that detailed technical support interventions will take place over a period of around nine months, depending on the needs and availability of the individual organisations. Following this intervention, organisations may be able to apply for financial assistance to help towards the implementation of some of the recommendations. This financial assistance may cover items such as funding for time-limited development projects or provision of mentoring support over a defined time period on issues such as marketing or audience development to stimulate business growth. Other forms of support may be available, such as injections of working capital. However, financial awards will not be made to help with the day-to-day financial outgoings of the organisation; they will focus on supporting the strategic development of the organisation.

Draft Eligibility criteria

- 3.10 Officers are currently finalising the eligibility criteria for the scheme. However, at present, it is proposed that participating organisations should comply with the following criteria:**
- 1. Must be based in Belfast and currently in receipt of funding from both ACNI and Belfast City Council. This means that organisations must have an office in and operational focus in the Belfast City Council area**
 - 2. Must be a formally constituted arts or heritage organisation, in other words, have a constitution or memorandum and articles of association**
 - 3. Organisation's primary missions must lie in the creation, production or presentation of the arts**
 - 4. Must be recognised as charities or established on a non-profit distributing basis**
 - 5. Must have paid full-time staff**
 - 6. Must demonstrate that their programme has a city-wide reach**
 - 7. Must have an annual turnover in excess of £400,000**
 - 8. Must have a business plan covering at least the next 1-3 years of activity**
 - 9. Must have a marketing and audience development plan (s) covering at least one year of activity**
 - 10. Must have up-to-date annual and management accounts signed and agreed by the board or management committee**
 - 11. Must have a board or management committee and supply a list of members**

12. Must agree to dedicate adequate senior management time to the programme, for the entire duration of the support activity
13. Must be willing to disclose their business affairs fully to external advisors and enter into the spirit of the programme
14. Must have all relevant policies in place, such as a child protection policy and equal opportunities policy and keep to relevant laws including the Race Relation (NI) Order 1997, the Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976, fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

3.11 Financial & Resource Implications

The Belfast City Council budget allocation for this year is £100,000. This amount will be matched by the same level of funding from ACNI. The Council allocation will be resourced from the agreed Departmental budget allocations for the current financial year, as set aside in the budget estimates process. These have already been approved by the Committee.

- 3.12 Overall programme costs over the three year period will total £600,000. This will be evenly split between Belfast City Council and ACNI. The budget for subsequent years of the programme delivery will have to be secured through the annual estimates setting process and will be included as part of the Tourism, Culture and Arts Unit's annual budget.

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications

Officers will liaise with the Council's Equality & Diversity Officer on the development and roll out of the programme and undertake any required equality screening exercise of the programme."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Other Voices Event

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to provide financial support towards the organisation and delivery of an "Other Voices" event in Belfast at the end of October 2017. It is intended that this event will be a precursor to a larger event

which will take place in the city annually from 2018 onwards, linking in with other, more established creative events.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the report, including the proposal to bring the “Other Voices” event to Belfast for the first time in October 2017 – as a precursor event to a potentially larger event in 2018
- Agree to a budget allocation of £40,000 from the existing development department budget towards the October 2017 event.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background to Other Voices

Other Voices started as a one-off music event in a small church in the west of Ireland in 2002. Since that time, the event has grown to become one of the most significant music events in Ireland. Its reach has also extended beyond its Dingle base. In 2013, the event moved to Derry-Londonderry as part of the UK City of Culture celebrations. In 2016, Other Voices recorded live from Austin, Texas, as part of the SXSW international music event. In Summer 2017, there will once again be an “Other Voices” stage as part of the annual Electric Picnic concert. The event has also been produced in New York.

3.2 This enhanced profile has enabled the event to attract a range of well-known acts over the years. These include Willie Nelson, Ellie Goulding, Gregory Porter, Amy Winehouse and Mumford and Sons. In addition, the event has attracted many indigenous acts and has provided a platform for showcasing up-and-coming talent. The event is currently broadcast on Irish broadcaster RTE’s television and digital platforms.

3.3 In addition to the live performances, the event also involves a wide range of outreach and engagement activity with local residents and those involved in the culture and arts sector. Events include workshops, tours and trails, musical showcases, school engagement activities and local concerts.

3.4 Event organisers have, for some time, been exploring the opportunity of bringing the Other Voices Festival to Belfast. Given the decision to make an application for the European Capital of Culture in 2023 with Derry-Londonderry, and the commitment to build the city’s cultural profile and showcase its creative talent, it is considered that this would be an appropriate time to consider an event in Belfast.

- 3.5 Early discussions have identified the potential to use this event to position Belfast as a unique musical destination as well as a smart, creative, tech city. This is in keeping with the emerging City Positioning brand and narrative that Members considered at the May 2017 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. It also aligns with the Cultural Framework, particularly in terms of the themes of “Attracting Audiences” and “Inspiring Communities”. Finally, the “City Development” theme of the Belfast Agenda focuses on supporting the cultural regeneration of the City as a means of supporting inclusive growth and profiling Belfast as a dynamic business location.**
- 3.6 At this stage, a number of key partners have been identified and further work is underway to scope the detail of the programme. The initial view of the organisers is that the Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts would be a good “hub” for the 2017 event but that there would be a number of satellite venues across the city. This is in keeping with the heritage of the event which began in a small church. It also underlines the unifying power of culture and ensures that the event is firmly rooted in the community. An indicative date of end October 2017 has been pencilled in. Organisers are keen to focus on the “current Belfast” narrative, particularly the success of the City in the areas of technology and media. They have been engaging with a number of local events such as Digital DNA which profiles the importance of technology across all business sectors and have identified opportunities for greater alignment with this and other local events for future years.**
- 3.7 Although at the early stage of planning, it is proposed that the event will encompass live indoor concert performances, classes and workshops, mentoring, talent development, a music trail and extensive filming and editing of high quality digital content for broadcast and global digital transmission. Community engagement is key to the success of Other Voices. The team will work closely with community groups and local delivery partners, to deliver an ambitious and wide-reaching programme of events in October 2017 in the build up to a wider festival event to be held in the City in 2018. Discussions are under way with local broadcasters to ensure that the event is profiled locally and internationally and this will provide an opportunity to relay a positive narrative about Belfast’s vibrant cultural scene as well as its global technological capacity. There will also be extensive use of digital platforms as a means of engaging young people (who tend to consume material in this way) as well as international audiences. Both are key target audiences for the City Positioning work.**

- 3.8 Experience from previous events suggests that the Other Voices event can have a significant economic, social and cultural impact on the local area. The organisers have provided examples from their work in Derry-Londonderry where they worked closely with a mixture of schools, community groups, local music organisations and venues including the Glassworks, the Apprentice Boys' Hall, St Augustine's Church and the Craft Village, as well as the hospitality sector. Other Voices commissioned economic impact research in Dingle, Co Kerry, which showed that the festival had a significant impact on business and turnover in the hospitality sector, particularly at a traditionally dormant period (early December). It also showed that Other Voices was effective in positioning and promoting awareness of the destination brand "The Wild Atlantic Way" and this is widely carried in all Tourism Ireland promotion of the area.**
- 3.9 At this stage, the organisers have identified funding of more than £100,000 from a number of partner organisations towards the event. They expect that the overall costs associated with organising the event will be in the region of £200,000. They have approached Belfast City Council to request a contribution of £40,000 towards the event. If this is approved, an updated programme will be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee, in advance of the event.**
- 3.10 Financial and Resource Implications**
The cost of the event in October 2017 is likely to total around £200,000. This will include all production costs, development and delivery of the outreach programme and broadcasting costs. Funding of £100,000 has been identified and secured by the event organisers. They have approached Belfast City Council to ask for a contribution of £40,000 towards the costs of hosting the event. These funds have been set aside within the Development Department budget for 2017/18 that was approved as part of the budget estimates process.
- 3.11 Subject to satisfactory delivery of the October 2017 event, the organisers are planning ahead for a more significant event to take place in Belfast in 2018. Work is already underway to explore potential funding partners as well as building the local networks at community level to create a solid foundation for future activities. No specific funding request has been made from the Council at this point.**
- 3.12 Equality or Good Relations Implications**
The event programme will be equality proofed and there will be a significant programme of outreach and engagement which will be open to all communities."

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 14th June, 2017**

In response to a Member's question, the Head of Economic and International Development confirmed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting with more detail on Other Voices, including costs.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Q4 Finance Report

The Chief Executive presented the financial position of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee to the Members. She advised them that the Quarter 4 (Q4) position for the Committee was an under spend of £147,000 (0.9%), which she explained included additional income of £86,000, and was well within the acceptable tolerance of 3%.

The Committee was advised that the current position related to vacant post across a number of services, receipt of additional income of Off Street Car Parking charges and an under spend of programme Costs in the Development Directorate and Parks Estates.

The Committee was reminded that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed, at its meeting on 18th November, 2016, to cap in-year Departmental cash limits at the Quarter 2 forecast levels to offset the rates clawback advised by the Land and Property Service. The Committee noted that it was not, therefore, in a position to re-allocate any of the under spend.

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

**Quarterly Progress Report – Business Programmes,
Initiatives and Events**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The Belfast Agenda sets a challenging ambition for the city to be home to an additional 70,000 new residents and an economy that supports 50,000 more jobs by 2035. Growing the economy and driving inclusive growth to ensure that all people benefit from economic success is at the core of this ambition.**
- 1.2 To deliver on this, the Council has agreed to a significant step change in the provision of Council support to accelerate new businesses to start and support existing businesses to grow and export as well as driving the delivery of the Employability & Skills Framework. This forms a core element in ensuring that all communities benefit from economic growth as well as**

positioning Belfast to attract international investment from developers, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and institutional investment.

- 1.3** In March 2017, the Committee agreed to the publication of the 'Belfast Facts & Figures' booklet which has been well received by external audiences. Committee also noted the ongoing work to produce additional infographic-style materials to increase awareness of the contribution of Belfast City Council programmes to deliver on the ambitions to Grow the Belfast economy. The Committee already receives updates on the annual programmes of work and the Committee Plan, which features as a separate item on the agenda. However, this report outlines the proposed format for future quarterly progress performance reports on the Council's contribution to Growing the Belfast Economy to ensure Committee is kept informed of progress.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note that infographic progress reports will be brought to future meetings of the Committee to provide regular updates on the Council's performance and contribution to delivering the Belfast Agenda ambitions.
- Consider and agree the proposed format and type of information to be included in future progress reports on the Council's contribution to achieving the Belfast Agenda targets to Grow the Belfast economy

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1** The Committee receive a series of economic briefings as well as updates and presentations on key strategic developments in the city. The recent publication of the Belfast Facts & Figures booklet has been well received by internal and external audiences as an easily accessible information source.
- 3.2** A report on the Committee Plan 2017/18 is included as a separate item on the Committee agenda. The Committee Plan collates the annual programmes of work, agreed by Committee at their meetings in March and April 2017 and demonstrates the alignment to the Belfast Agenda priorities

and city ambitions and the significant increase in the range of programmes and support.

- 3.3** The Committee have requested regular updates on the performance and contribution of the Council to delivering the City's targets outlined in the Belfast Agenda. Committee have noted that infographic style materials will be developed to provide an easily accessible visual representation of the Council's progress against performance targets. These materials will be developed in line with the key programmes and projects included in the Committee Plan to provide a more concise and visual representation of this information. This will also assist Members in communicating the Council's progress and contribution to Growing the Belfast Economy in terms of encouraging new businesses to start up, supporting existing businesses to grow and export, inward investment and employability and skills.
- 3.4** The proposed format and example content for the progress performance reports are available on modern.gov for Starting a Business and [Growing a Business](#). This includes key performance and programme information relating to the support provided for those who wish to start a new business and for those existing businesses that wish to grow to export. This includes key performance information related to Council activity in terms of:
- the financial investment to support this activity
 - the number of jobs created
 - the number of programme participants
 - the number of referrals to other agencies
 - summary information on the programmes delivered by Council
- 3.5** At this stage the infographics include indicative budgets and funding / investment secured. The figures are still estimates, as several of the core programmes and initiatives are currently being procured and the actual cost/income and targets will be profiled and confirmed once these procurements conclude and contracts are entered in to. Many of the projects are being part-funded by ERDF and Invest NI. Eligibility and funding draw-down is another factor that will impact on some of the key reporting headlines. It is therefore proposed that the first progress report in this format will be brought to Committee in October 2017, which will include information relating to Quarters 1 and 2.
- 3.6** It is proposed that similar reports will be developed for other priority themes such as Employability and Skills and Investing

in Belfast. There is also scope to develop this further into other areas of Council activity to build on the range of concise infographic-style materials on key statistics, information and performance to support the ambitions in the Belfast Agenda. Members are therefore asked to note that these materials will continue to evolve and develop as programmes go live and that they will provide a key reference point to support existing material used by our city partners when promoting Belfast as a place to do business, visit, study or invest in.

- 3.7** The Committee should note that these materials will be made available on the Members Portal, once finalised and that regular updates on progress will be brought back to Committee on a quarterly basis.

3.8 Financial & Resource Implications

The progress reports will be produced internally, therefore requiring officer time, and within existing departmental budgets.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

Chairperson