

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 8th November, 2017

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor O'Donnell (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Alderman Haire);
Aldermen Kingston, McGimpsey and L. Patterson; and
Councillors Beattie, Boyle, Dorrian,
Dudgeon, Graham, Hargey, Howard, Johnston,
Kyle, Magee, McAteer, Mullan, O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. D. Durkan, Director of Development;
Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor McDonough-Brown.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 11th October 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 November.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Presentations

Festivals and Events International (FEI)

The Committee was advised that, in accordance with the Committee's decision of 9th August, representatives from Festivals and Events International (FEI) were in attendance to provide the Committee with an update on the ongoing review of the Events and Festivals Strategy for the city.

The Chairperson introduced Mr. N. Dodds, Managing Director of FEI, and Mrs. D. Close, Lead Consultant, to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

The Managing Director advised the Committee that he had thirty years' experience in the events and festivals sector, having been the General Manager of the Edinburgh Festival for 10 years and Chief Executive of the Brighton Festival for 8 years and that, for the past ten years, had been providing advice on the sector to authorities and local governments around the world. He advised the Committee that Ms. Close had 22 years'

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experience of working in the events sector, having formerly been a Head of Service in Brighton and Hove City Council and having worked as an Events Producer.

The Managing Director provided the Committee with an outline of their brief and methodology, which included a review of the City's portfolio, consideration of delivery structures, consideration of the decision making criteria, consultation with stakeholders, benchmarking against other cities and impact modelling. They advised that, eventually, this work would lead to a new Events and Festivals Strategy for Belfast, 2018-2023.

He highlighted to the Committee that they were keen to hear the Members' views on the work which had been carried out to date and that this engagement with Members formed an important part of the consultation process.

The Lead Consultant outlined that they had classified all events into six categories, namely, mega, major, signature, growth, local and neighbourhood events. She explained that, through their research, they had determined that over 70% of the events which Belfast had hosted were local and neighbourhood events, 25% were growth events, 1% were major events, such as the MTV Awards, and that it had hosted no globally-recognised 'mega' events, such as the Olympics.

The Committee was advised that benchmarking had taken place against similar sized cities, including Galway, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Aarhus and Rotterdam, in terms of investment and practices. She outlined to the Committee that they had compared the amount which each Council invested in its city events and how many of those events that the Council had produced.

In response to a Member's question regarding the engagement which had taken place with those working in the events and festivals sector in Belfast, the Lead Consultant advised the Committee that, while they had been disappointed with the low number of survey responses which they had received so far, they had met with 67 stakeholders face to face. She advised that this had included engagement with 24 officers from numerous sections across the Council, 8 representatives from the Departments for Communities and the Economy, 5 representatives from business groups within the city, representatives from Visit Belfast, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland, and around 20 participants at the festival forum steering group.

The Member stated that she was concerned at the low level of response to the survey which had been sent out to those who were involved in the organisation of festivals in the City.

The Managing Director of FEI suggested that, while he did not know why so few responses had been received, in his experience, those involved in organising festivals were often small groups which heavily depended on volunteers and might not have the resources nor the time to respond to the survey.

The Director of Development advised the Committee that, following the last Committee meeting, he had asked FEI to specifically engage with EastSide Arts and Féile an Phobail, and that consultation with those organisations was ongoing.

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The Chief Executive reminded the Members that a parallel piece of work was ongoing to review the Council's grants process. She advised the Committee that this would be brought together with the work of FEI at a later date.

In response to requests from a number of Members, the consultants agreed to analyse the postcodes of the completed surveys and that they would endeavour to engage with those communities which had not yet participated in the consultation. The Members also requested that further engagement with Members also take place.

The Managing Director of FEI advised the Members that the draft Events and Festivals Strategy 2018-2023 would be submitted for the Committee's consideration at its meeting in January, 2018.

The Committee noted:

1. the contents of the presentation; and
2. agreed that the officers and consultants would consider ways in which they could engage with the Members and with festival organisers who had not already been directly engaged with through the consultation process.

Growing Businesses and the Economy

Events and Festivals Funding

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 9th August, it had agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that priority be given to the following events and festivals when it was considering in-year re-allocations, totalling £270,000:

- Gradam Ceoil 2018/19: £50,000
- Féile an Phobail 2018/19: £180,000; and
- Other Voices 2018/19: £40,000.

He outlined that, in the intervening period, a number of other organisations had approached the Council seeking funding for the following initiatives:

- EastSide Arts Festival: £40,000
- C.S. Lewis Festival: £40,000;
- Belfast Tattoo: £25,000;
- First World War Commemorative Event: £35,000; and
- Every Day Remembered: £138,840.

A Member stated that they would be supportive of the five events being added to the priority list but that, in the interest of fairness, both sets of events should receive the same amount of money in total.

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A further Member disagreed and stated that event funding should not be split evenly and allocated on the assumption that certain events were for one section of the community and other events were for another section.

Moved by Councillor Beattie,
Seconded by Councillor Hargey,

That the Committee agrees to recommend that the five requests be added to the priority list for the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee's consideration of in-year re-allocations and, in order to ensure equality, that the Committee agrees to allocate an additional £8,000 towards Féile an Phobail, so that each set of events receives the same amount, that is, £278,000.

On a vote by show of hands, seven Members voted for the proposal and ten against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed the recommendations as outlined in the report, namely, that the Committee:

1. recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that priority be given to the five named events and festivals when considering in-year reallocations, based on the half year financial position; and
2. notes that the events would be added to the list which had previously been agreed by the Committee.

Employability and Skills Forward Planning

(Mrs. R. Rea, Economic Development Unit, attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- **Update Members on the proposed approach for Council to advance the Employability and Skills workstream through a phased approach, in line with Belfast Agenda commitments and the emerging priorities of the Belfast Region City Deal;**
- **Identify mechanisms for Elected Member engagement in the process of developing the key elements of this workstream**
- **Advise Members of the job creation impacts of the work to date (550 new jobs created in the first six months of the year) and the potential to increase the impact of this**

work, subject to partnership engagement and additional resources.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note and approve the principle of the phased development of the Council’s Employability and Skills workstream;
- Agree to participate in a process of engagement to inform the content of the future work programme, including a detailed workshop in the new year.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 Employability and Skills development is a core priority of the Belfast Agenda, principally within the ‘Working and Learning’ theme. Equally, the principal ambition of ‘inclusive growth’ – whilst not exclusively focused upon employability – recognises that, for many individuals, the benefits of economic growth are experienced through accessing a job and moving up the career ladder, and that employment is a key route out of poverty.

3.2 Over the next four years, the Belfast Agenda sets ambitious targets for economic growth focusing upon new job creation and private sector investment alongside targets to improve skills attainment (with a particular focus on lower level skills), and to address social and educational inequalities. One of the biggest targets to be achieved in the next four years is to reduce the economic inactivity rate in Belfast to 23%. In real terms, this will mean moving 7,500 individuals who are not currently working into employment – many of whom have not worked for a long time.

3.3 The Council has been scaling up its level of investment year-on-year over the last few years. Additional staff resources have also been recruited to deliver on this programme of work. The following headline targets are expected to be achieved in the financial year 2017/18;

- More than 1,000 residents are expected to enter employment (550 jobs created to date)
- 4,000 residents will be engaged through employability interventions and early engagement projects

- **Over 1,000 students and young people to be engaged through career events and digital skills programmes and over 290 work experience opportunities to be provided through the Council and key employers across the city.**

3.4 While there is widespread support for the Council assuming a more significant strategic and operational role on Employability and Skills issues, it is important to be aware of some of the challenges associated with this. These include:

- **The Council does not have statutory responsibility (for education, employability and/or skills development). It will therefore be important to work in partnership with those who do have the authority and budgetary resources in order to achieve the quantum of change required. If the Council is to deliver on its ambitions, there will be significant financial implications going forward;**
- **Policy approaches to education and Employability and Skills development take place in isolation, reflecting the demarcation of responsibilities across government departments such as Department of Education (DoE), Department for the Economy (DfE) and Department for Communities (DfC);**
- **The operational environment is competitive and participant-focused. This results in a variety of mainstream, regionally-funded programmes and numerous smaller-scale initiatives targeting specific geographical areas, client group(s) or sectors. As an example, a recent review of employer engagement programmes across the various government departments identified more than 160 publicly-funded interventions;**
- **Research with employers suggests that they are often unaware of the breadth of support available and are also unable to differentiate between the various interventions. They would prefer a solution that is based on their business needs, as opposed to the participant needs or the narrow range of services offered by individual organisations.**

3.5 It is proposed that the Council approach should be based on the following principles:

- **It should be principally employer-led, focusing on identified employment opportunities and gaps in provision. This will present the greatest opportunity for success for those engaging in the interventions;**

- Once the opportunities are identified by employers, we need to take a needs-based approach to client/participant engagement. This is critical if we are going to deliver against the principles of 'inclusive growth', targeting interventions towards geographical areas and/or client groups;
- It will be important to take account of the challenges around low pay in the City. Recognising that some of the sectors that are attractive to those with low skills often have the reputation of low pay, it will be important to consider how we can work with employers to support upskilling of employees. This will enhance pay rates and will also create additional entry-level opportunities;
- Our approach must be ambitious: we need to increase visibility and awareness of Council's role within this environment and strategically build our position in this area;
- The Council's intervention should add value and should not duplicate existing provision. It needs to be flexible to meet the wide-ranging needs of participants.

3.6 It is proposed that this work will evolve over the short to medium-term. In order to give Members a sense of the proposed direction of travel, a phased approach is set out below. This approach has been based on a number of key milestones for mainstream programmes as well emerging opportunities to lever additional resources from public sector partners and from the private sector, principally through developer contributions (subject to legal advice). An overview of these 'phases' is available on modern.gov.

Phase 1: April 2017-March 2019

- 3.7 The current delivery approach of the Council is based on adding value to existing market provision, with a focus on outreach to key target groups as well as employer engagement. For example, Employment Academies currently utilise leveraged funding from ESF projects to undertake the early engagement work and basic skills development support while the Council funding is used to support the employer-led training activity.
- 3.8 Officers tested out this approach in the 2016/17 financial year with seven pilot programmes involving around 100 unemployed individuals. The results of these interventions demonstrated that more than 60% of those participating in the

Academies found a job. This compares with around 25% of those taking part in ESF-only schemes.

- 3.9 The upshot of this successful pilot is that Council has now been asked to become the *de facto* training and recruitment partner for a number of the new hotels that are scheduled to open in the coming months. We are in the process of helping the Hastings Group (for Grand Central Hotel) and Dalata (for the new Maldron Hotel) to fill 200 jobs in these new hotels. Other hotel partners are also approaching us and this is quickly becoming a recognised solution for entry-level job creation in this sector.
- 3.10 We are also imminently launching new Construction Academies on behalf of Heron Bros (Leisure Transformation Capital Contract) and for Translink (Transport Hub project) and are currently scoping an extensive 'Social Care Academy' given the projected jobs growth in this field.
- 3.11 There is a significant opportunity to consider how the outreach and engagement work and the employer engagement activity can align to the Local Area Working approach that is currently being developed. In all of the designated areas, issues of low skills, lack of employment opportunities and lack of positive role models have been identified as challenges facing residents. By looking at the development activity in the areas through an employability lens, there is an opportunity not only to support physical improvements in but also to create sustainable employment opportunities and improve skills levels.

Phase 2: April 2019 – March 2021

- 3.12 There are a number of mainstream government contracts that are scheduled to come to an end during this period or just in advance of 2019. These include the Apprenticeships NI contract and the Training for Success contract (focusing on provision for young people aged 16-18). Discussions are progressing within government departments around the issue of 'Traineeships' as well as expanding the 'Apprenticeships' provision. This can present opportunities to look at opportunities for local contracting (based on Council boundaries) as well as developing programmes that align to local labour-market intelligence (i.e. quotas and targets for certain sectors, in line with research projections). It is expected this approach would involve the joint development of city targets, alignment of interventions to local needs/opportunities and measurement of localised impacts.

- 3.13** The Universal Credit transition period is scheduled to end in April 2020 for existing claimants (new claimants will automatically transfer to Universal Credit from May 2018). Given the very localised nature of benefits uptake in some part of the City, it will be important to work closely with the Department for Communities to mitigate against any potential negative impact on the sustainability of local communities.
- 3.14** Work will also be expanded on higher skills development. Activities are likely to include internship programmes, roll-out of Higher Level Apprenticeships in key growth sectors in partnership with DfE and other targeted initiatives as informed by skills gaps, particularly those at levels 3-5. To fulfil the commitment within the Belfast Agenda, it is also intended to explore the potential of a 'City Pledge', securing partner commitment to help young people to find positive employment or training outcomes.

Phase 3: April 2021 – March 2023

- 3.15** During this phase of delivery, the current European Social Fund (ESF) funding will conclude (March 2022). Consideration will need to be given to how the outreach and engagement work can be supported in the absence of these resources.
- 3.16** At this stage, we will need to consider how the support programmes can be offered as an 'end-to-end' provision. This will involve bringing together partners so that employers and clients can have access to a 'one stop shop' for employment and skills development solutions. In-work progression schemes will also be developed to encourage up-skilling of the existing workforce, aligned to key growth sectors and focusing on areas when known skills gaps exist.
- 3.17** The phased approach outlined above (3.7-3.15) illustrates the transition from programme-based interventions towards a more coherent programme of work. This is likely to require additional investment if we are to make a meaningful impact. It is the intention that funding will be levered from other government resources (Invest NI, Urban Villages, Peace IV etc.) as well as through developer contributions (subject to legal advice). However, the Council will need to consider allocating additional resources towards this priority activity as part of the upcoming rates setting process.
- 3.18** Taking account of the complexity of these issues as well as the political ambition for the Council to play a key role in this work, it is proposed that there is an ongoing programme of engagement with Members as part of the process of

developing the detail that will sit under these broad priority areas of focus set out above. This is likely to be done through a series of workshops and Special Committee meetings, with any decisions coming to this Committee for endorsement. If this approach is approved by Members, Officers will put together a programme of workshops and engagement sessions with a view to securing endorsement on the detailed programme of work by the start of the new financial year. This will, of course, be an evolutionary process as the external environment and the economy change, but it is the intention that this additional engagement with Members will help build an understanding of the key issues and lead to informed decision-making on how to best allocate our resources to deliver on the City ambitions in this area of work.

City Deal

- 3.19 The proposed Belfast Region City Deal provides the opportunity to take a longer-term approach to addressing Employability and Skills challenges across the six Council area. As part of the development activity on the City Deal, preparatory work is being undertaken on an Intelligence Model which will inform the Employability and Skills priorities of the six Council area. Officers have also explored the Employability and Skills programmes within other cities that have secured City Deals and we will use this work to inform the investment proposals for the Belfast Region City Deal. It is proposed that this information should also be part of the engagement process with Elected Members on these issues.

Financial & Resource Implications

- 3.20 Members should be aware that the expansion of the Employability and Skills work stream will require an increase in the current budget allocated to this area. This increase in budget will be managed through the annual estimates process. Additionally, it is recognised that new income streams will need to be developed to support Employability and Skills. This will involve leveraging funding from Central Government, as well as new income streams such as developer contributions, once this policy approach is agreed.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.21 Activities above will be agreed and reviewed with the Equality and Good Relations Officers.”

In relation to the new Construction Academies which the Council would run on behalf of Heron Bros, a Member stated that they were at a Workshop promoting the

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Academy that morning. She outlined to the Committee that it would commence in January 2018, training up to 30 people, with priority being given to the economically inactive and long-term unemployed. She explained that 14 jobs were already available, through the Leisure Transformation Capital Contract, for those who successfully completed the training through the academy, and that other companies within the industry had expressed their desire to also get involved.

In response to a Member's question regarding the Council's employability schemes and how it had chosen to focus on the hospitality and construction sectors, the Director of Development advised the Committee that officers had looked at the applications which had been approved by the Planning Committee, as this provided a good preview of upcoming jobs within the city.

The Director highlighted that there were currently over 160 different employment and skills programmes across the city. He advised the Members that the Council was working with a number of those organisations to upskill those in training in order to meet the demands of employers. He also highlighted the importance of the Council's flexibility in its approach and the need to ensure that services were not being duplicated.

During discussion of the other sectors which the Council could seek to focus on, the Director outlined the increasing importance of the digital sector and also advised the Members that a Pilot Health and Social Care Academy had been established and currently had 35 jobs available.

After further discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

Requests to present to Committee/Meetings Schedule

Requests to Present to Committee - Special meetings

(Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer, attended in connection with this item)

The Senior Democratic Services Officer outlined to the Committee that its previous meeting had lasted almost five hours due to the mixture of business on the agenda, which had included three presentations. He explained that a number of Members had complained about the length of the meeting and the fact that some of the important matters which appeared later on the agenda had not been given proper consideration due to the length of time spent on earlier items, particularly the deputations.

The Committee was advised that it had already agreed to receive a further five presentations over the next two months.

He outlined to the Members that the Committee might wish to consider implementing a time limit for presentations, schedule monthly Special meetings or retain the current position. He also pointed out that the Members might wish to consider an earlier commencement time for the meetings.

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During discussion, it was felt that introducing a time limit for presentations was impractical due to the nature of the deputations which presented to the Committee, and particularly in relation to the questions afterwards from the Members.

In relation to the scheduling of monthly Special meetings, the Senior Democratic Services Officer pointed out that the schedule of meetings for 2018 could be amended to include a Special meeting each month, to be held only if required, to receive presentations and would not include any other items of business.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that:

1. the commencement time of the Committee would remain at 5.15pm;
2. a maximum of one presentation would be added to the agenda for each monthly meeting;
3. where 2 or more presentations were scheduled for any month, a Special meeting would be held and would not include any other items of business which would normally be considered at the monthly meeting;
4. a Special meeting to receive presentations would be scheduled each month, except July, and would be cancelled in a timely manner if it was not required; and
5. a list of Special meetings, from January – December 2018 (excluding July), would be submitted to the next meeting.

Schedule of Meetings 2018

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee during 2018 and agreed that it would meet at 5.15 p.m. on those dates:

- Wednesday, 10th January;
- Wednesday, 7th February;
- Wednesday, 7th March;
- Wednesday, 11th April;
- Wednesday, 9th May;
- Wednesday, 13th June;
- (No meeting in July);
- Wednesday, 8th August;
- Wednesday, 12th September;
- Wednesday, 10th October;
- Wednesday, 7th November; and
- Wednesday, 5th December.

Restricted Item

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

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Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion of this item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42 (4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Request to Present: BeITel LLP

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from BeITel LLP and its appointed design team, at a future meeting, on the development proposal for the former Belfast Telegraph site and the associated branding and engagement for the scheme.

Request to Present: Transport NI

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 9th August, it had acceded to a request from NI Water to present at a future meeting. The Committee was advised that Transport NI had recently been in contact to present its Autumn Report to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

The Chief Executive pointed out that the Committee had previously agreed to hold Special City Infrastructure meetings, as and when required, to receive presentations from outside bodies such as Transport NI and NI Water.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to hold a Special meeting in December, to which all Members would be invited to attend, to receive a presentation from NI Water and to receive the Autumn Report from Transport NI. The Committee also agreed that the previous item, a presentation from BeITel LLP and its appointed design team, would be added to the agenda of the Special meeting.

Regenerating the City and Improving Infrastructure

Transport Update

(Ms. A. Doherty, Planning and Transport Officer, attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 York Street Interchange

To provide an update on the York Street Interchange (YSI) strategic road improvement scheme, the outcome of the Public Inquiry and the Council’s ongoing involvement in the next stages.

1.2 Operation times of loading bays – Belfast City Centre

Dfl has requested views on a proposal to relax operation times of the loading bay restrictions in the city centre with a view to reducing the existing 'at any time' restrictions to allow general parking in the bays in the evening / overnight.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the YSI update and the ongoing participation of Council officers in the process; and;
- Consider the proposed response to the loading bays consultation outlined in Para 3.8- 3.10 and, if appropriate, agree this response for submission to Dfl.

3.0 Main report

3.1 The Department for Infrastructure (Dfl) is developing the York Street Interchange strategic road improvement scheme to improve links between the Westlink, M2 and M3 routes and remove a bottleneck on the strategic network. The estimated cost of the scheme is between £125 and £165 million. The development of the scheme has been progressing since 2008 and the Council provided formal responses to public consultation processes held in June 2011 and in March 2015.

3.2 Dfl also established a Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) in January 2015 to consider and advise on aesthetic aspects of the proposed scheme and Council officers have been represented on this group. Council officers also made representations on key issues during a Public inquiry held from the 10th to 12th November 2015.

3.3 During the public inquiry Council officers made representations on the following issues:

- the need for careful design to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and to enhance connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. It was emphasised that York Street interchange scheme should secure the enhancement of the wider environment to support improved connectivity for adjacent communities and these improvements should be included in the overall project budgets.
- Air quality - the York Street Interchange scheme has been identified as one of the principal measures to

include in the new Belfast plan to improve air quality in that area. The Council agreed to carry out further monitoring in the adjoining residential areas.

- **Noise and vibration** - the need for the detailed construction programme including proposals for the chosen piling methods and hours of proposed works to be communicated and agreed with the Council well in advance of works commencing.
- **Contaminated land** - the Council is broadly satisfied with the Transport NI's management strategy towards ground contamination and towards the mitigation of risk posed by contaminated land.

3.4 Following the completion of the public inquiry, the Inspector's report was published and the inspector made the following recommendations relating to Council representations:

- **DfI Roads to liaise with the Council throughout the remainder of the design phase and construction phase;**
- **DfI Roads to consider necessary resources to incorporate design and aesthetic changes identified by the SAG group;**
- **DfI Roads to continue to liaise with the Council regarding procedures for managing noise and vibration; and**
- **DfI Roads to continue to liaise with the Council regarding future analytical results of any ground and hydrogeological groundwater monitoring.**

3.5 The Department acknowledged the inspector's recommendations and agreed to progress the project in line with the recommendations. Further information on the inspector's recommendations and Department responses are outlined [here](#). A summary of Council responses to the York Street Interchange scheme is outlined [here](#).

3.6 As a result, the Strategic Advisory group has been reconvened with further representation invited from the local community and the first meeting took place on the 22nd September 2017. The main aim of the group is to provide a Forum to:

- **Consider the integration of the scheme with other government agencies and private initiatives to maximise future redevelopment opportunities;**
- **Develop the detail of the aesthetics of the scheme, having regard to the scheme's objectives, the**

**inspectors report, the Departmental statement and
feedback from local community engagement.**

3.7 It should be noted that a letter has been received from local community representatives outlining concern about noise and the impact of the construction of the scheme on the adjoining residential areas. Council officers from the Environmental Protection Unit have agreed to meet with the residents to discuss the concerns.

3.8 **Loading Bays**

The Dfi is considering relaxing operation times of the Loading Bays restrictions in the city centre with a view to reducing the existing '*at any time*' restrictions to allow general parking in the bays in the evening / overnight. The loading bays affected are located in Wellington St, Chichester St, Fisherwick Place, Queen St, Upper Queen St, Upper Arthur St, Linenhall St and Bedford St.

3.9 It is proposed that the Council generally welcomes the proposal as it will provide extra capacity for residents and visitors to access the city centre in the evening and night time and support the evening economy. Car access in the off peak period would not be seen as detrimental to air quality or the city centre environment. However, it should be noted that the delivery times for the city centre are 6pm to 11am so the relaxation of the restriction could mean that cars may be parked in loading bays which are required by businesses to make evening or late night deliveries. Therefore, it is recommended that the consultation process should liaise closely with the businesses along the frontages to ensure it does not impact on deliveries.

3.10 It should be noted that any parking within the city centre can have negative impacts on cleansing operations in this area. Cleansing vehicles (mainly in the form of mechanical sweepers) need access to footpaths, pavements, roads and road channels and sometimes the only opportunity for them to access particular city centre areas are during night time hours. However, it is considered that the areas proposed are not significant.

3.11 **Finance & Resource Implications**

None associated with this report.

3.12 **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

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None associated with this report.”

In relation to a Member’s question regarding how the York Street Interchange would improve the air quality, the Planning and Transport Officer advised the Committee that the Interchange would remove a bottleneck in the area, thereby creating free-flowing traffic and significantly lower level of stationary vehicular exhaust fumes.

A further Member welcomed the proposal from the Department for Infrastructure to relax the operation times of the loading bay restrictions in the city centre to allow general parking in the bays in the evening or overnight.

Another Member requested that the Council’s response would include a suggestion that clearer signage was required in relation to the restrictions which existed in relation to vehicles parking in loading bays.

It was further suggested that a number of vans were regularly parked on Ann Street on weekday mornings and that this surely had an impact on traders in the area. The Chief Executive advised that this could be discussed with Belfast City Centre Management.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the York Street Interchange update and the ongoing participation of Council officers in the process;
2. agreed the proposed response to the loading bays consultation, outlined in Paragraphs 3.8 - 3.10 of the report, with the addition of a request for clearer signage outlining the parking restrictions at loading bays; and
3. agreed its submission to the Department for Infrastructure.

Positioning Belfast to Compete

NI Science Festival

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on a request for sponsorship for the 2018 Northern Ireland Science Festival based on the success of the 2017 event. The festival will take place from 15 to 25 February 2018 in venues across the city and throughout Northern Ireland.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the contents of this report and**

- **Agree to allocate £35,000 from existing budgets for festivals of this nature, to the Northern Ireland Science Festival 2018 as per the agreement in October 2016.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

The Northern Ireland Science Festival has been taking place annually since 2015. The 2017 event took place over 11 days in February 2017. It offered over 180 events across a wide range of venues, presenting local and international work that focused on a wide range of themes including science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The daytime programme targeted children and young people with workshops, talks and interactive activities while, in the evening, the Festival presented an eclectic mix of science debates, talks, theatre, comedy and music to engage youth groups as well as adults and families.

3.2 The event was organised by Science Festivals NI, a unique collaboration of major STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) outreach organisations in Northern Ireland. Belfast’s exceptional higher level skills talent pool is the primary reason why investors choose the city. Events such as the NI Science Festival help grow collaborations between such organisations and individuals, showcasing Belfast in a positive light. Funding for the event was provided by a number of organisations including the then Department for Employment and Learning, the British Council, Queen’s University and the Ulster University and Belfast City Council.

3.3 Science Festivals are a relatively new type of event that is growing in popularity worldwide, with cities such as New York, Edinburgh, San Francisco and Dubai hosting large scale events as part of their wider cultural frameworks. In 2015, the inaugural NI Science Festival joined this international group by becoming the largest festival of its kind on the island of Ireland and one of the largest in Europe. Since the first Festival in 2015, the event has continued to go from strength to strength.

3.4 Since it was established in 2015, the festival has continued to exceed agreed targets, and successfully competing with other established science festivals.

3.5 Evaluation of the 2017 achieved the following :

- Audience numbers of 63,000 exceeded the 2017 target of 60,000 set out in the funding agreement;
- 182 events took place across a range of venues, with approximately 85% of audiences coming to events taking place in Belfast;
- 94% of attendees indicated that they would visit the Festival again, with 71% of survey respondents indicating that they were more likely to pursue or encourage others to pursue a career in STEM following the Festival;
- The Festival's wide ranging programme is designed to reach a wide demographic. The Festival's audience is made up of young people (40%), adults, teachers and parents (51%) and schools (9%);
- As a percentage of the audience, the number of extensive engagements rose to 63% of the audience (compared to 39% in 2016) which equates to an additional 9760 tickets sold compared to 2016 figures (30,714 tickets sold in 2016);
- An analysis of postcodes from across the UK indicates a significant section of the Festival audience came from England, with London proving to be a particular hotspot;
- The Festival's growing international reputation meant that it was able to attract some of the top names in science, resulting in headline acts that attracted international attention.
- Several out of state visitors visited Belfast to observe the Festival as a model of best practice. The Norwegian Research Council sent a team of 50 people to the Festival for five days to learn how the Festival operates while the British Council also brought a delegation of 52 Newton Fund scholars from across 8 countries to the Festival;
- The Festival's media coverage increased dramatically from previous years with 114 print, 82 online and 11 broadcast items. The total PR value of coverage received by the Festival was equivalent to £349,229.79, a notable increase from £47.5k in 2016.

3.6 Proposed 2018 Programme

The 2018 Festival will take place from 15 - 25 February 2018. The core objective of the Festival continues to be a commitment to reaching a broad and diverse audience to

increase the accessibility of science and to promote learning. This is in line with the ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda to improve skills and employability, make the city an attractive location for investors and improve vibrancy and city animation. This will once again be achieved through a series of events and partnerships that link science into different areas of interest.

3.7 The Programme themes include:

- Tech and Digital – linking with local companies and international experts, this theme consists of talks, debates and workshops on areas such as coding;
- Engineering and robotics – highlighting the advances in engineering and robotics across Belfast, including some of the unique strengths of Belfast businesses in this field;
- Food Science – attracting a new audience through events linking with local restaurants, cafes and venues, including as St George’s Market;
- Art and Science - a number of events will focus on the crossover between art and science. This theme is centred around an exhibition and workshops by the Festival’s ‘artist in residence’ as well as a celebration of Lillian Bland by the Ulster Orchestra;
- The Festival will also host events on photography, invention, history and wildlife in addition to the core themes such as mathematics, physics and space.

3.8 There are opportunities for a number of the Council’s services to engage with the Science Festival to promote their work in innovative ways, particularly to young audiences, and to engage more residents around key issues for the city. These may include the support programmes on education and skills, profiling Council’s business start-up and business growth programmes and profiling ‘investing in Belfast’. There may also be opportunities for community engagement activity, managing waste and food waste in particular, supporting active communities and promoting mobility and encouraging access to arts and culture for all residents. In addition, the innovative nature of many of the events – alongside the flagship events already lined up – will act as an attraction for people coming from outside of the city into Belfast, for the purpose of attending some of these specific events or associated activities. A postcode analysis for the Festival indicates that a large proportion of the previous Festival’s audiences come from outside Belfast.

3.9 The success of the 2017 event has helped to secure international events with a high calibre of speakers for the 2018 programme.

3.10 These include:

- Talks by the 21st century's most famous Astronaut Chris Hadfield;
- A specific focus on women in STEM;
- A partnership with the BBC around employability and skills, with opportunities to link to the Council work in this area;
- The annual Turing Lecture hosted in Belfast City Hall;
- A 'artist in residence' programme in partnership with the British Council ;
- Several events focused on key issues in tech such as cyber security, smart cities and the internet of things;
- A partnership with Belfast Zoo, 'Zoo Ambassador' day. Behind the scenes partnership work with Queen's University Belfast and the Zoo's Animal Welfare Programmes alongside the 'Get 'bee-hind' bee conservation project and the Red Squirrel conservation project;
- Programmed workshop in partnership with Bounce Culture. The workshops will be aimed at Young People within Belfast and will be focused around digital technology, beat making techniques and visual art;
- Second year partnership with the Botanic Gardens Belfast aligned to the re-opening of the Tropical Ravine;
- Titanic Belfast STEM Quest Final. Aimed at school children throughout Northern Ireland at Key Stage 3 Level.

3.11 The Festival has strong alignment with the city's investment, education, skills and tourism priorities as outlined in the Belfast Agenda, the Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020 and the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. In particular, this is achieved through an emphasis on skills and educational attainment, international profiling, city events and programming. The message is consistent with the city positioning work which is has created a new narrative for Belfast that is based on the quality of its talent, reflecting its rich industrial heritage and its emerging specialisms in new technologies.

3.12 Equality and Good Relations Implications

There are no specific equality or good relations considerations attached to this report.

3.13 Financial and Resource Implications

The total budget for the Festival is estimated at £237,000. Funding of £83,000 has been secured from the Department for the Economy (this includes £50,000 of core funding), £5,000 from the British Council, £20,000 respectively from Queen's University and Ulster University. A further £19,000 has been secured from Tourism NI alongside £10,000 from the Matrix Panel and £10,000 from Corporate sponsors MCS recruitment. The Festival anticipates ticket sales to generate around £35,000. The allocation requested from Belfast City Council is £35,000, in line with the awards made since 2015. This funding is available within existing Departmental budget estimates."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Strategic and Operational Issues

Committee Plan Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a 6-month progress report on the key actions contained in the City Growth & Regeneration Committee Plan, as agreed by Committee in June 2017. In particular, it will highlight the impact of the work undertaken in terms of jobs growth, skills development, cultural investment and physical regeneration. The headline figure is that almost 800 jobs were created as a direct result of the Council's investment over this period.
- 1.2 The Plan draws together several annual delivery plans; 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 maximise the Council's contribution to delivering the Belfast Agenda that, at its core, has a commitment to inclusive growth.

1.3 The Belfast Agenda 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 66,000 new residents**
- **Our urban economy supports 46,000 more jobs**
- **There will be a 33% 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.**

1.4 This report sets out the progress against the programmes and projects aligned to the delivery of the 4 key work streams in the Belfast Agenda: Growing the Economy, City Development, Working & Learning and Living Here. Appendix 1 (available on modern.gov) provides an overview of the main commitments under each priority workstream.

1.5 In addition, there are a number of stretch goals which together with city partners, this Committee will make a significant contribution to deliver on by 2021:

- **Create 15,000 new jobs**
- **Attract over £1bn in private sector investment, including FDI**
- **Create 4,000 business start-ups;**
- **Increase the value of out of state tourism to £500million and welcome 1.9m overnight tourist stays per year**
- **Grow the city's rate base by 5% through increased number of residential and commercial developments**
- **Create 1.5 million sq. feet Grade A office space and 3,000 new hotel bed spaces**
- **Reduce working age economic inactivity to less than 23%**
- **Reduce the proportion of working population with no qualification to less than 10%**
- **Increase the proportion of the working age population with Level 2 qualification and above to more than 82% and those with Level 4 qualifications and above to 38%**
- **98% of school leavers in employment, education or training.**

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the progress to date against the agreed actions within the Committee Plan, including the creation of**

**almost 800 jobs and progress towards the commitment
of the City Centre Regeneration Fund**

- **Agree that Officers continue to progress with the rest of the actions in the plan over the course of the financial year.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Key Issues

The 2017-18 Committee Plan was developed in line with the Council's Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda. The Belfast Agenda has at its core a commitment to inclusive growth and the importance of growing the local economy to improve the quality of life. A summary of the four priority work streams is available on modern.gov. While the Committee contributes to the delivery of all 4 work streams, Growing the Economy, City Development and Working & Learning are the focus of this Committee, therefore the Committee continues to take the lead in ensuring that there is connectivity between the need for economic growth and the purpose of this growth – to connect people to opportunity and reduce inequality.

3.2 Appendix 2 (available on modern.gov) provides an update against each of the main action areas in the committee plan. Members are also aware that a number of detailed reports on key programmes of work have recently been considered and will continue to feature regularly on the Committee agenda.

3.3 As the Committee is aware, over the last 6 months, there has been a corporate focus on working with Derry City & Strabane District Council to prepare and submit the joint bid for European Capital of Culture 2023. The Committee has received regular updates on progress with this significant corporate programme of work. The theme and development of the cultural programme will shape the ongoing work across the Council to ensure alignment to events and festivals, cultural and arts and community programming where opportunities arise.

3.4 The first two quarters have seen additional recruitment activity to resource the teams to deliver on the Council's ambitions for attracting investment, engaging with communities in the city centre and creating jobs and enhancing employability for local people.

3.5 Overview of Progress (April-September 2017)

Particular highlights for the first six months of the plan include:

Growing the Economy

- 149 jobs created through the Start a Business programme
- Supported the creation of an additional 83 jobs within 25 companies based at the Innovation Factory (since Innovation Factory opening in October 2016)
- Supported Visit Belfast to secure business tourism investment to the value of £55million over the last year, with 69 major conferences attracting 25,000 delegates
- 248 people have participated on our business start support programmes and over 600 people have participated on our business growth programmes
- Secured buy-in from the enterprise sector and commenced the development of collaborative Enterprise Framework to boost enterprise and encourage under-represented groups to set up their own businesses
- Delivered two successful Twilight Markets at St George's Market, with over 120 traders at each event, attracting a total footfall of over 40,000 across both events
- Delivered a successful Belfast in China week in May 2017 and confirmed a regionally significant China Summit and visit from our Sister City, Shenyang for December 2017
- In partnership with Invest NI, delivered the successful 'Routes' conference which attracted 1,160 international delegates, including 114 airlines, 270 airports and 36 tourism authorities.
- Completed the development work on a City Proposition and Concierge Service, with the service due to be operational from the new financial year
- Refreshed Belfast's place positioning and branding and agreed roll-out plan with city partners
- Commenced the development of the MIPIM 2018 programme with an expected November launch
- Hosted site visits for potential investors and continued to liaise with indigenous developers
- Development work under way on an Events and Festivals Strategy for the city.

City Development

- Launched a new phase of the £18m City Centre Investment Fund to support construction of Grade A Offices. There was a good response from the development market and applications are currently being evaluated
- Over 1,000 hotel bedrooms are under construction in Belfast. The majority of these will be open in 2018 and bring the city's hotel room stock to over 5,000.
- Draft masterplans for the East Bank and Inner North & West were completed. Public consultation results for East Bank and a presentation on Inner North & West masterplan will be brought to Committee in the coming months
- Work has commenced on interim use arrangements for the Belfast Telegraph; including use of the former print room as an events space, and the lease of the first floor to Digital Catapult NI to pioneer an Immersive Digital Hub
- Secured approval to procure a new city infrastructure strategy. This will highlight current provision and identify gaps, in particular additional infrastructure investment required to support the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda
- Progressed the planning and design work for Blackstaff Square
- Procurement of the outline business case (OBC) for the Belfast Story Destination Hub is progressing. This will be a central component of our City Deal.

Working & Learning

- Over 550 Belfast residents have found work and over 2,000 residents have accessed employability support (CV building, work experience, work-based training etc.)
- Over 550 training accreditations have been supported, of which 200 are Level 2 qualifications or above
- Almost 4,000 young people have participated in enterprise skills development activities in schools across the city
- Work has commenced on delivering a large-scale programme of work experience and skills development opportunities for young people within 25 schools
- Development and delivery of Digital Skills Initiative for 36 schools and 16 youth groups across the city

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- Agreed the city centre engagement strategy, which includes community capacity building, social engagement, and economic inclusion. A new Regeneration Engagement Officer was recruited in September to implement the strategy.

Living Here

- The joint submission between Belfast City Council and Derry City & Strabane District Council for European Capital of Culture 2023 is on target to have engaged with 14,000 citizens by the submission date of 27 October 2017
- Successfully delivered a range of high profile events during the summer months: - the Women's Rugby World Cup where the live coverage of the final saw a peak television audience of 2.6 million viewers; the U-9 Women's Football which resulted in almost 4,000 beds have been booked in Belfast hotels for the teams and officials; and the Ice Hockey World Championships were also successfully delivered during Summer 2017.

3.6 Finance and Resource Implications

Progress to date is in line with the previous agreed Departmental budgets.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications

Programmes and actions within the Committee Plan are developed and delivered in consultation with the Council's Equality & Diversity Officers."

A number of Members stated that the officers should be commended for their hard work which had contributed to the numerous successes outlined in the report. A Member suggested that the Council should seek to highlight the positive initiatives in the report to the media through regular briefings.

During discussion, a Member pointed out that it was important to ensure that the right jobs were being brought to the City and that the working poor figures were not being perpetuated.

The Chief Executive highlighted to the Members the importance of a City Deal for Belfast.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Progress Infographics

The Committee considered the undernoted report with accompanying infographic style materials:

“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 66,000 new residents and an economy that supports 46,000 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 up and support existing businesses to grow and export as well as driving the delivery of the Employability & Skills Framework. This is central to 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 Delivering on these ambitions will involve a range of interventions. This can mean that it is difficult to see, at a glance, how these activities are contributing to the overall Belfast Agenda targets. There has been increasing emphasis on producing accessible and user-friendly infographic style materials to assist in communicating information about Council programmes and services. A detailed update on progress delivering the Committee Plan 2017-18 is a separate item on the agenda. However, this paper presents an overview of the key achievements to date relating to the Council's efforts to deliver on the Belfast Agenda ambitions to Grow the Belfast Economy, illustrated by the use of infographics.

1.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the overview of the Council's performance and contribution to delivering against Belfast Agenda ambitions to grow the Belfast economy, focusing on the current support for Business Start-up and Growth as well as Employability and Skills.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1** The Committee receives regular updates on the performance and contribution of the Council to delivering the City targets outlined in the Belfast Agenda. This information is included in various reports presented to Committee; including the six month progress report on the Committee Plan 2017-18 which is included as a separate item on the Committee agenda.
- 3.2** Given the volume of activity and breadth of programmes relating to the key priority to 'Grow the Belfast Economy', Members have previously advised that infographic style materials would provide an easily accessible, consistent and concise visual overview of the Council's progress against key performance targets. These can also provide Members with a source of assurance that Council investment is continuing to make an impact. For this Committee, some of the key targets that Members want to support include the number of jobs created and the number of jobs supported as well as investment levered.
- 3.2** As a starting point, officers have begun the process of creating infographics for the Business Start-up and Growth as well as some of the Employability and Skills metrics. Infographics outlining progress for the first six months of the financial year 2017-18 for Council support for the Start Up and Growth areas are available on modern.gov. This includes key performance information related to Council activity in terms of:
- Number of jobs created
 - Number of new businesses created
 - Number of programme participants
 - Number of referrals to other agencies
 - Summary information on the programmes delivered by the Council.
- 3.4** While this information has traditionally been gathered and reported to the Committee and to funders on an annual or six-monthly basis, enhanced focus on the jobs and skills measurements mean that for these targets, in particular, it may be more appropriate to present the information in this format on a more regular basis (subject to data availability).
- 3.5** In addition to the information set out above, details are also gathered on additional benefits and outcomes achieved by

participants engaging in Council-supported activity. These include innovation / new product development and enhanced service standards. All of these support mechanisms are intended to support business competitiveness and productivity, and, in turn, create jobs and increase turnover.

3.6 The Committee will also note that work is under way to update the **Belfast Facts & Figures** booklet. This has been well received by internal and external audiences as an easily accessible information source. The document will be revised in time for MIPIM 2018.

3.7 These materials will continue to evolve and develop as programmes go live and 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. This information will be made available on the Members' Portal and regular updates on progress will be brought back to this Committee.

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. Representation by under-represented groups is one of the key performance indicators of the service."

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

Chairperson