

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 3rd April, 2019

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Lyons (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Haire, Kingston and McGimpsey;  
and Councillors Beattie, Black, Dudgeon,  
Graham, Hussey, Johnston, Kyle, Magee,  
Mullan, Murphy, O'Donnell, O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. A. Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;  
Mrs. C. Reynolds, City Regeneration and Development  
Lead Officer; and  
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Councillor Dorrian.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of 6th and 27th March 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 April.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Matters Referred Back from Council/Motions**

#### **Private Car Parks – Response from Department of Justice**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 9th January, it had endorsed the following motion on Private Car Parks, which had been proposed by Councillor McReynolds:

“This Council is concerned at the practice of private car park operators and their agents in Northern Ireland, is concerned at the lack of an effective and independent appeal mechanism to allow individuals to challenge penalty notices issued by or on behalf of such operators and agrees to write to the Department of Justice, calling for an independent Parking Ombudsman, similar to England and Wales, to be created at the earliest opportunity.”

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The Democratic Services Officer drew the Committee's attention to a response which had been received from the Permanent Secretary, Department of Justice. The Permanent Secretary had explained that the Department of Justice's remit for private parking extended solely to the licensing of vehicle immobilisation operatives, through the Security Industry Authority, with a view to protecting public safety. It had, therefore, no responsibility for the wider aspects of parking.

He had pointed out that the regulation of parking in England and Wales was handled differently to Northern Ireland and referred to the Parking on Private Lands Appeals (POPLA) process which had been introduced in those countries by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. That legislation had introduced also the concept of "keeper liability", which allowed companies which were members of an accredited trade association to obtain details from the Driver and Vehicle Agency to pursue the keeper of a vehicle for charges. Keeper liability was, therefore, fundamental to the POPLA process.

The Permanent Secretary had concluded by stating that the British Parking Association had been invited to extend POPLA to Northern Ireland. However, it would only consider doing so if keeper liability were to be introduced which, he had confirmed, was not a matter for the Department of Justice.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Presentation**

**Grand Opera House**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 9th January, it had agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation on the proposed restoration and development of the Grand Opera House.

It was reported that Mr. I. Wilson, Chief Executive of the Grand Opera House, and Mr. J. D'Arcy, Deputy Chair of the Grand Opera House Trust, were in attendance and they were welcomed by the Chairperson.

Mr. Wilson informed the Committee that the Grand Opera House, which had opened on 23rd December, 1895, was regarded as one of the finest examples of nineteenth century theatre architecture. He highlighted the unique relationship which had developed between the Grand Opera House and the people of Belfast over the years and pointed out that in 2018:

- the theatre had attracted a total audience of 300,000 across 400 performances;
- 78,000 people had attended a pantomime;
- 56,000 schoolchildren had viewed a show;
- 55,000 people had attended shows which had been produced in Belfast;

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- there had been 6,500 participants in the theatre's Creative Learning Programme; and
- 1,000 people had registered for the Theatre's Access for All scheme.

He reported that the Grand Opera House had last been restored in the late 1970s and that, for the past five years, the Grand Opera House Trust had been planning an ambitious restoration and development project, with a view to securing the asset for future generations. The project would include the restoration of the auditorium's plasterwork and of the glass extension facing onto Great Victoria Street, the upgrade of air handling equipment and technical infrastructure and the replacement of seats and the stage curtains within the auditorium. Facilities for theatre-goers would be enhanced by, for example, improving disability access and toilet provision and the Act II front-of-house space would be re-modelled to incorporate a permanent exhibition celebrating the many famous people who had performed in the theatre.

Mr. Wilson added that the restoration and development project, which was scheduled to commence early in 2020, would take approximately ten months to complete. During that time, the Grand Opera Trust would undertake an extensive outreach and education programme, involving talks, tours, workshops and events across Northern Ireland. He concluded by pointing out that the project would support the aims of the Belfast Agenda and would contribute to the local economy and the City's tourism and cultural offering.

Mr. D'Arcy explained that the restoration and development project would cost in the region of £12.17 million, with the Grand Opera House Trust contributing £4.2 million and the National Lottery Heritage Fund £4.8 million. A further £500k had been secured from charities/foundations and it was hoped that a public fundraising campaign and in-kind contributions, through volunteer time, would generate a further £920k. Of the £1.5 million still required, the Department for Communities and the Council were being requested to allocate £1 million and £750k respectively.

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy informed the Committee that the Director of Finance and Resources had confirmed that no budgetary provision had been made within the current financial year to meet the request from the Grand Opera House Trust.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Kingston,  
Seconded by Alderman McGimpsey,

That the Committee is supportive of the Grand Opera House restoration and development project and agrees to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that significant funding be allocated to the project.

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**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor O'Donnell,

That the Committee is supportive of the Grand Opera House restoration and development project and agrees that the request for funding for the project be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

On a vote by show of hands nine Members voted for the amendment and eight against and it was declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put to the Committee as the substantive motion and passed.

**Request to Present**

**Queen's University Belfast**

The Committee approved a request from a representative of Queen's University Belfast to attend a future meeting in order to outline the main issues impacting upon the Higher Education sector and its role in growing the economy.

**Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

**City Centre Recovery Programme**

The Committee was provided with the latest update on the City Centre Recovery Programme, which had been established following the Bank Buildings fire on 28th August.

The City Regeneration and Development Lead Officer provided details of those premises which had re-opened recently and those which were due to re-open and confirmed that, whilst the Bank Buildings' façade retention scheme was due to be completed by the end of April, it would be a further period of time before the cordon at the Castle Street junction would be reduced. She reviewed the footfall figures for the City centre for the month of January and, together with the Director of Economic Development, reviewed the work which was being progressed or was being planned under each of the key strands within the Recovery Programme, namely, physical and environmental enhancements, the animation programme, incentivisation and trader support, marketing/communications and research/retail.

She then drew the Members' attention to regeneration plans for the Bank Square/Castle Street Area, which would include, in the medium term, the College Court Developer Contribution Pilot Project public realm works and, in the longer term, the re-development by the private sector of Norwich Union House and proposals for residential and hotel developments in the Fountain Street and Queen Street area.

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After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Support for City Centre Accessibility (Shopmobility)**

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee's consideration the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on progress to undertake research to establish City centre accessibility needs. The report also seeks approval to provide financial support to Shopmobility Belfast to ensure service continuity, pending the outcome of the research.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- i. note and agree the aims and objectives of the proposed research work to be undertaken to assess city centre accessibility needs which will inform future city centre investment decisions; and**
- ii. approve a financial contribution of £15,000 for Shopmobility to support the continuation of service delivery in the Belfast City Council area in this financial year.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Members will be aware of the scale of investment that is taking place in the city centre and the commitments contained within the Belfast Agenda to continue to invest here. In order to ensure that these developments can be experienced by everyone, officers are currently working on research to identify barriers to accessing the city centre and its range of facilities including shops, entertainment venues, bars, restaurants, accommodation and services. This research will consider access issues that could potentially reduce participation and will include customer and visitor satisfaction surveys to measure current levels of private and public provision. It will also identify potential improvements that could be implemented to ensure that the city centre is more user-friendly and welcoming to all. The initial work will focus on physical disabilities but the research will also consider the wider range of disabilities and actions required to ensure that**

those with any type of disability can access and enjoy the facilities of the city centre.

**3.2 The key aims of the research are to:**

- assess the level to which accessibility is an issue for Belfast city centre;
- identify areas of intervention and make recommendations on the appropriate type of interventions required to achieve a meaningful impact; and
- assess the level of commitment from private and public sector partners to invest collectively towards more joined-up, accessible and inclusive services.

**3.3 The research piece will include the following elements:**

- a series of engagement with users of the city centre including surveys with shoppers and event attendees;
- one-to-one meetings and focus groups with key internal and external stakeholders including Disability Advisory Panel, Shopmobility and Disability Go, BIDs and city economic and community stakeholders;
- consideration of best practice across other areas including innovative solutions to promote inclusive city centres;
- an analysis of demographics to quantify the demand for accessibility services across Belfast, forecast, and changes in this demography over the next 3-4 years;
- an assessment of the quality and extent of accessibility support services across the city by private, public or community organisations;
- consideration of how interventions to support city accessibility needs could be supported through broader factors such as developer contributions and private sector interventions; and
- recommendations for future interventions to maximise the economic benefits for Belfast whilst promoting an accessible and inclusive city agenda.

**3.4 This research will commence in April 2019, with an expected completion date of September 2019.**

**3.5 Members will be aware that the Council has a number of statutory requirements in the provision of its services to ensure that it addresses issues of disability. The Council's Draft Disability Strategy and Action Plan 2018/19 outlines our commitment to fulfilling our statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination**

**Act 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006) which places new duties on public authorities to:**

- **promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and**
- **encourage participation by disabled people in public life.**

- 3.6 The draft Disability Action Plan for 2019 – 2022 is currently being finalised, with formal consultation commencing on 15th April for 12 weeks.**
- 3.7 Currently, the main mechanism to support accessibility across the city is through the AccessAble initiative, which is delivered through the Council’s Equality and Good Relations Unit. The AccessAble initiative provides access guides online and via a mobile app for 1000 venues across the city enabling people to make informed choices about the services they want to access. Raising awareness of access issues helps break down physical and attitudinal barriers as well as the significant psychological barrier of tackling the unknown for persons with a disability.**
- 3.8 From the Council’s perspective and that of businesses, providing information on accessibility not only helps meet legal obligations but also actively promotes services to residents and visitors to boost inclusion and revenue. 5400 people used these guides in the past year. Whilst this app has made a positive contribution to supporting accessibility within the city, it is recognised that there is a requirement for further support.**
- 3.9 Shopmobility Belfast is a charity which provides access to a mobility scooter or a wheelchair for those who need it. There are currently over 8,500 members and eight locations throughout Belfast. The reduction in the Disability Action Transport Scheme (DATS) from the Department for Infrastructure has resulted in reduced funding to cover Shopmobility’s operational costs. This has put the organisation in a position where their service may become unsustainable and may have to close. As a result, the charity has approached the Council to seek support which will enable it to continue to deliver its services to meet user needs.**
- 3.10 Given the levels of usage, it is recommended that the Council provides one-off financial support to Shopmobility of £15,000 to enable the continuation of service delivery in the Belfast City Council area in this financial year. As a condition of this funding, it is proposed that the council also works with**

Shopmobility to review its business model and explore opportunities to reduce overheads and drive efficiencies in order to maintain service delivery.

**3.11 Financial and Resource Implications**

The activities set out in this report will be resourced from the budget for Economic Development, as previously approved by this Committee.

**3.12 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

The City Centre Accessibility research will have a positive impact on equality by encouraging access to the city centre for those with a disability. A rural needs assessment will be undertaken as part of the research.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Positioning Belfast to Compete**

**Update on MIPIM**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To report on the outcomes of Belfast at MIPIM 2019 and seek approval to attend MIPIM 2020.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- i. note the update from Belfast at MIPIM 2019, including the programme of events, meetings and media coverage, and to note that a number of follow up visits and meetings are planned in the near future as a direct result of this;**
- ii. note that planning for MIPIM 2020 needs to commence immediately and Members are requested to approve attendance by the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Committee, or their nominated representatives, along with senior officers, as appropriate, this will include travel and accommodation;**

- iii. **approve funding of £80,000, as part of the overall public private sector sponsorship fund, in line with the Council's sponsorship amount in 2019. This will be met from within the existing City Regeneration and Development departmental budget;**
- iv. **approve the appointment of external consultancy support for programming, event management, communications and design for MIPIM 2020. The cost of this will be met from the overall private public sector sponsorship fund;**
- v. **approve the Council entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Waterfront Cities Network, as outlined below; and**
- vi. **approve officer attendance at EXPO Real in October 2019, as outlined below.**

### **3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1 The Committee will recall that, at its meeting in April 2018, it approved attendance at MIPIM 2019. MIPIM is the premier event in the European real estate calendar where many of the world's investors, developers, funders, from both the private and public sector gather to showcase cities and investment and regeneration opportunities. Almost 27,000 people attended the 30th MIPIM Edition 2019. This is the fourth consecutive year that the Council have led the Belfast delegation to MIPIM.**

#### **Belfast at MIPIM Delegation**

- 3.2 A record number of 100 delegates attended MIPIM as part of the Belfast delegation. This was made up of 43 supporting private and public-sector organisations. Organisations supporting Belfast at MIPIM 2019 included: Belfast Region City Deal partner Councils, Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Queens University Belfast, Tourism NI, Translink, Visit Belfast, Ulster University together with a number of developers, professional and financial consultancy organisations.**

#### **Belfast at MIPIM Programme**

- 3.3 The 3-day event conference involved a concentrated programme of events, meetings and engagements which provided a key opportunity to promote and showcase Belfast as an attractive location for investment and development. It should be noted that the major UK and European cities and**

regions are all represented at MIPIM. It is considered critical that Belfast is represented on this global platform as a place to invest in alongside other key cities and regions.

**3.4 The Belfast at MIPIM 2019 Programme included 15 unique events organised by Belfast at MIPIM, with each event designed to highlight a range of key strengths that underpin Belfast's strong investment proposition. This included the Belfast Region City Deal, connectivity, technology and innovation, waterfront regeneration, fast growth sectors, track record for FDI and quality of life. This year the programme included a focus on housing including housing in the context of mixed use developments, increased city centre living and inclusive growth across the city.**

**3.5 Programme topics covered included:**

- **Belfast Region City Deal focused events**
- **City Centre Living**
- **Masterclass with Daniel Libeskind (an internationally and globally acclaimed figure in architecture and urban design, including the iconic design of the rebuilding of the World Trade Centre)**
- **The life and work of Peter Rice: An Engineer Imagines**
- **Screen City Tourism: Belfast creative industries driving growth in tourism**
- **Connectivity Driving Growth for International Belfast**
- **Waterfront City: Belfast's Major Regeneration Projects**
- **Region of Innovation: Scaling Ambition to Create Belfast's First Innovation District**
- **Real estate investor showcases included landmark Belfast developments including The Sixth (JV BCC and McAleer & Rushe) and Giant's Park.**

**3.6 In addition, Council officers also presented and attended events organised by other cities or partner organisations including:**

- **Housing Forum; local authorities delivering more**
- **Destination Building: Culture, Leisure and Tourism**
- **Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Opportunities and potential for growth (Department for International Trade)**
- **Inclusive waterfronts - how to keep them affordable and open**
- **Capital to Country: Strengthening the Spokes for UK Investment (Department for International Trade)**
- **UK Cities: Partnership Power with Estates Gazette**
- **UK Post BREXIT Investment Strategies**
- **Waterfront Regeneration**

**3.7** In addition there were a number of one-to-one focused meetings between officers, developers and investors interested in Belfast. A number of these were pre-arranged in the run up to MIPIM although there was also a notable increase in interest from developers and investors who visited the Belfast pavilion on an impromptu basis. It is worth highlighting the significant interest this year from a residential development perspective. Given the level of interest from this particular sector thought is being given to how best to take advantage of this for the benefit of the city in terms of follow up actions and meetings.

**3.8** **FDI Awards**

The annual FDI awards organised by the FDI Magazine were held during MIPIM. Belfast was exceptionally successful at the awards ceremony in receiving 8 awards. The Chair of City Growth and Regeneration Committee received these awards on behalf of the city. A stand out accolade for the City was being ranked number one for business friendliness and second globally to Hong Kong for FDI Strategy. Other awards include being ranked within the overall top 10 for mid and small sized cities, economic potential, human capital and lifestyle, cost effectiveness, connectivity and within the top 25 emerging and developing global markets.

**3.9** **Belfast at MIPIM Pavilion**

The Belfast at MIPIM pavilion incorporated the City brand and included touch screen digital displays including VU.CITY and the Belfast Region interactive map. The front of the pavilion incorporated two large screens which played the Belfast marketing video showcasing the City's investment and regeneration opportunities as well as our key growth sectors and reasons to invest in the city. The pavilion incorporated authentic Game of Thrones costumes from the touring exhibition.

**3.10** Figures on footfall to the pavilion are currently being collated. There was, however, a significant increase in activity at the Belfast pavilion, indicating that Belfast is continuing to attract interest regionally and internationally.

**3.11** A dedicated Belfast at MIPIM investment guide was produced which highlighted Belfast's proposition to potential investors. It included an overview of key sectors, investment opportunities, property market outlook and profile of the Belfast at MIPIM sponsors. This was available for potential

investors and developers on the pavilion or download from the Council dedicated website [www.investinbelfast.com](http://www.investinbelfast.com).

**3.12 Media Coverage**

Eight media releases were issued during MIPIM 2019. These included press releases around Belfast's success at FDI Awards, Daniel Libeskind at MIPIM, and details of Belfast's development opportunities. These generated significant interest from print, broadcast, trade and online media. Of particular significance are two interviews which took place during MIPIM; a radio interview from Mr. Daniel Libeskind and an online Property Week interview with a leading developer within the city promoting Belfast.

- 3.13 A final number on total media coverage is currently being collated. At the time of writing information to date indicates that Belfast MIPIM 2019 secured significant high quality coverage in a range of publications including international, property and trade, alongside regional and national coverage. Social media activity for Belfast MIPIM 2019 was greatly increased. The @BelfastMIPIM Twitter account issued almost 300 tweets an increase of over 20% compared to 2018 and generated 8.8 million impressions. The messaging via Twitter reached 1.2 million twitter accounts.

**3.14 Marketing and Engagement Opportunities**

Part of the Belfast MIPIM 2019 programme included two European Waterfront Cities Network (EWCN) organised events on waterfront regeneration and how to keep them open and affordable. The objective of the network is for waterfront cities to share best practice, identify funding opportunities and to collaborate on optimal development of respective waterfronts. The EWCN is an excellent example of collaborative working and invaluable access to regional and European contacts. The EWCN comprises of; Amsterdam, Cardiff, Copenhagen, Gdynia, Glasgow, Gothenburg, Hafen City, Lisbon South Bay, Liverpool, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Tallinn (Estonia).

- 3.15 The EWCN is keen for Belfast to formally form part of their network. The network is of particular importance to Belfast considering the regeneration around our waterfront with the Waterside, Titanic Quarter, Giants Park, and Belfast Harbour City Quays. It is proposed that the Council, like the other cities will formalise their relationship with this network through a Memorandum of Understanding for a period until July 2020.

**3.16** The Council has also been invited to attend EXPO Real between 7th and 9th October 2019, to participate in discussions with the European Waterfront Cities Network. This follows participation at EXPO Real in 2017. EXPO Real is Europe's largest property and investment trade fair, providing access to central and eastern European investors. There are a number of events planned over the two-day conference, including open and private events. In addition to the EWCN invite, EXPO Real have been in touch with the Council to be part of the UK and Partners stand at the trade fair. A number of other UK cities including Glasgow and Manchester attend. Members are being requested to authorise officer attendance only noting that costs will be accounted for through the existing departmental marketing budget. Further updates to be brought to Committee.

**3.17** Future Focus

Officers are currently following up on a number of leads generated at MIPIM and it is worth noting that they hosted a visit to the City just last week for an investment company as a direct result of a meeting at MIPIM. Further follow ups with potential investors and developers are underway. There are more planned visits over the coming weeks, with the objective of translating this pipeline into tangible investment opportunities for the city.

**3.18** As noted above, this is the fourth consecutive year that the Council has led the Belfast delegation to MIPIM. In 2016, the City had a target to attract £1bn of investment. Taking into account development that has already been completed or in progress, together with major regeneration schemes that are being promoted, the value currently runs to approximately £2bn. It is essential that the city keep this momentum going into 2020. The growing ambitions for 2020 underpins the requirement to start planning as soon as possible for MIPIM 2020 to ensure we can continue to deliver a programme that effectively markets Belfast as a location for investment.

**3.19** In development terms, it is worth highlighting that within the last two weeks the city has welcomed positive news on the planning for the Transport Hub, the proposed Cruise Terminal, the Belfast Energy Plant and the signing of the Heads of Terms for the Belfast Region City Deal. These positive development and regeneration news stories were topics of conversations with international audiences at MIPIM. It is fitting that their announcements come on the back of a successful Belfast at MIPIM 2019.

**3.20 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

None associated with this report.

**3.21 Finance and Resource Implications**

Members are asked to note that an overall sponsorship fund for Belfast at MIPIM 2019 was £426,730, over 80% of which was raised from the private and other public sector bodies. The Committee previously approved Council expenditure of £80,000.

**3.22 Effectively delivering a project on the scale of MIPIM is a very resource intensive activity. Belfast at MIPIM was delivered by Council officers, the Belfast at MIPIM Taskforce and Lanyon Communications, a consultancy agency appointed in June 2018 to assist with event management, PR, marketing and communication, sponsorship and pavilion design for MIPIM 2019. Members are asked to approve the appointment of external support to assist with the delivery of MIPIM 2020. Subject to approval from Members, this will be funded through the public-private budget approach as outline above, with £80,000 investment from Council in line with the amount approved for Belfast MIPIM 2019. This will be met from within the City Regeneration and Development departmental budget.**

**3.23 The costs associated with the Memorandum of Understanding with the European Waterfront Cities Network is an annual amount of approximately £3,000. The cost of participating at the UK and Partners stand at EXPO Real is estimated at approximately £10,000 depending on level of participation which is currently being explored. These costs can be met from within the departmental budget.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations and agreed, in response to concerns which had been raised by several Members around the ongoing costs associated with MIPIM, that a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining the benefits for the City resulting from the Council’s participation in the event.

**Arts Council of Northern Ireland Five-Year Strategic Framework - Draft Response to Consultation**

The Director of Economic Development informed the Committee that the Arts Council for Northern Ireland had published for consultation its draft five-year strategic framework for developing the Arts for the period from 2019–2024. The framework, which followed on from its previous five-year strategy, provided an overview of the strategic direction which the Arts Council was proposing to take over the next five years, with its ambitions and priorities being structured under the principles of Inspire, Connect and

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Lead. The draft framework had been developed in consultation with the arts sector and key stakeholders, including the Council, and input from the public had been welcomed.

He submitted for the Committee's approval the following draft response to the consultation and pointed out that, although the deadline for submissions had passed, the Arts Council had agreed to accept it, on the understanding that it would require ratification by the Council on 29th April:

**Council Response**

**“1.1 Belfast City Council's support for Culture and Arts**

**1.1.1 As the Arts Council (ACNI) is aware, Belfast City Council is strongly committed to supporting culture and arts in the city. The Cultural Framework for Belfast 2012 to 2020 sets out a vision for Belfast that:**

***By 2020, everyone in Belfast experiences and is inspired by our city's diverse and distinctive culture and arts. Arts and heritage are valued for enriching quality of life and creating wealth, and the city's culture and creativity is renowned throughout the world.***

**1.1.2 In March 2016, we committed over £5.8m to support the core costs of 56 culture, arts and heritage organisations in the city over a four-year period (2016-2020). Our investment over this period also included additional financial support of over £1m for high quality arts and heritage projects, as well as community festival awards (jointly financed by the Department for Communities).**

**1.1.3 We have also worked with the ACNI on a number of partnership projects. In 2014 we invested £900k in partnership with the ACNI on seven large-scale Creative and Cultural Belfast projects. These were big, bold, collaborative projects aimed at offering as many people as possible the opportunity to take part in high-quality cultural projects which were distinctly Belfast in character.**

**1.1.4 In 2017, we agreed to co-invest £600k over a period of three years with the ACNI in a Resilience Programme which aimed to tackle complex issues of sustainability in the context of a challenging funding environment.**

**1.1.5 In 2018, the Council also secured £400k of EU funding for the delivery of our PEACE IV Creative Communities projects which are currently under development.**

1.1.6 The points outlined above by no means represent a full picture of our levels of investment in the arts. Rather, they offer a snapshot of the variety of investment and highlight in particular previous and on-going areas of collaboration with the ACNI. Overall, since the inception of our Cultural Framework for Belfast in 2012, the Council has maintained levels of investment in cultural and arts.

1.1.7 In 2017, the Council also took the decision to lead on a bid for the designation of European Capital of Culture in 2023. This decision demonstrates both commitment to the social value of culture-led transformation as well as an underlying commitment to the intrinsic value of the culture, arts and heritage sector to the cultural vitality of Belfast as a whole. Although the competition was halted, the Council has committed to the development of a new 10-year Cultural Strategy for Belfast and has recently undertaken its own far-reaching pre-consultation on the strategic priorities for culture in the city. The comments in this document are written both in the context of the Council's on-going development of a new Cultural Strategy for Belfast and in the context of Belfast's position as a regional driver for culture in Northern Ireland. We believe that that the opportunity for strategic collaboration with the ACNI and other statutory and non-statutory bodies is timely. We welcome the opportunity to raise the ambition and deepen our understanding of what the requirements are for sectoral resilience at this critical juncture.

## 1.2 General Comments on the Consultation Document

1.2.1 The Council welcomes this opportunity to comment on the draft five year strategic framework for developing the arts 2019–2024.

1.2.2 The Council is already committed through its Cultural Framework for Belfast 2016-2020 and through its draft Cultural Strategy for Belfast 2020–2030 to delivering on many of the ambitions outlined in the draft five year strategic framework in a Belfast context.

1.2.3 We welcome the ACNI's Shared Vision as one that:

- *Celebrates arts and creativity*
- *Links us to a shared heritage of ideas, words and images*
- *Helps us to be connected, confident and outward looking (p.4)*

We note the complementarity of this vision with that of the Belfast Agenda which states that by 2035 Belfast will be:

*[...] a city re-imagined, a great place to live for everyone [...] Beautiful, well-connected, culturally vibrant, it will be a city shared and loved by its people and admired around the world.*

- 1.2.4 We welcome your statement that you will support local authorities in the delivery of Community Plans (p.6) and look forward to exploring a shared approach to this. We recognise our role as the city authority places Belfast in the unique position of being a regional driver for the rest of Northern Ireland in this respect.
- 1.2.5 We note that you feel the arts can make a meaningful contribution to the Draft Programme for Government outcomes 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10 (page 6). We agree with this alignment and note that the Belfast Agenda will also broadly support these outcomes.

### 1.3 Ambitions/Priorities

- 1.3.1 We note what your document describes as a *simple* (p.7) approach to the stated guiding principles which are summarised by the words *Inspire, Connect, Lead*. We note that an accompanying business plan will be produced each year which will set out in detail the actions which the ACNI will take in order to deliver on your strategic objectives. As such, we note that your consultation document takes a high-level approach to the direction of travel for the ACNI over the forthcoming years. The Council also notes that the consultation document refers on a number of occasions to the current atmosphere of uncertainty and short-term operational challenges which are being faced by the ACNI. The Council wholly acknowledges that whilst we need to have cognisance of the local, regional and global challenges that we are all facing in terms of austerity, lack of central Government, budgetary cuts and on-going Brexit negotiations, that there is now perhaps a greater need than ever to look at long-term planning in order to ensure the cultural vibrancy of Belfast and the surrounding region reaches its full potential. We recognise that new ways of working and new models of investment are required in order to sustain and grow the cultural offer in twenty-first century cities. The Council's draft ten year Cultural Strategy will present a long-sighted view of cultural transformation with a review of the governance of arts investment at the heart of developing a new way of working. The Council is committed to further strengthening existing cultural infrastructure in the long-term whilst also tackling the

challenges of investing in new projects. This will involve the evolution of a new understanding of the concept of resilience, an understanding which has flexibility, adaptability and sustainability at its centre. We acknowledge that in order to be successful in this, local governments must be able to take on different roles as leaders, financial supporters, advocates, facilitators and occasionally observers. We also believe that this new approach will involve developing new models of co-investment. Given the Council's investment in culture, the number of arts organisations based in Belfast (the majority of which have a regional or wider remit) and the shared portfolio of clients between the two organisations, it is essential that the ACNI and the Council work closely together to achieve shared aims. We regard the ACNI as a crucial investment partner with a leading role to play in co-ordinating collective action to ensure that a holistic vision and approach for the arts is embedded across Belfast and Northern Ireland.

- 1.3.2 The Council supports and welcomes the objectives and actions under all three principles and notes in particular the ACNI's *consideration of the reinstatement of multi-annual funding*, the objective to *transform the relationship with local government through partnership working* and the intention to work with the Council on *the development of a major city centre visitor attraction*. The Council notes that Belfast was one of a number of pilot cities who took part in the recent Cultural Enquiry project as part of the UK Core Cities Network. One of the key recommendations coming out of the Cultural Enquiry which the Council hopes to adopt for Belfast, is the establishment of an adaptable model called a City Compact which will support collective, co-ordinated action to grow and sustain the city's cultural ecosystem. This Cultural Compact will involve aligning activity and funding and leveraging additional human, financial and property resources in support of agreed local actions. It is intended that the Compact will be the primary vehicle for discussion between local partners and Government about how best to deploy culture and cultural resources for the city. Council believes that the ACNI must be a central partner in this scheme and looks forward to taking the next steps to developing a Cultural Compact for Belfast.

#### 1.4 CONCLUSION

- 1.4.1 This five-year strategic framework is timely given the Council's own current work on a proposed ten-year Cultural Strategy for Belfast 2020-2030. The response has highlighted a number of areas where the Council and the ACNI could work together with common purpose to meet the needs of the sector in the short and long term. We look forward to reading

detailed yearly action plans which will enable the framework to be monitored, evaluated and reviewed.

**We recognise that it is our role as the city authority to support Belfast's cultural infrastructure to appropriate levels. However, we strongly believe that the ACNI must also acknowledge and commit to supporting on-going levels of investment in cultural infrastructure in Belfast in order to maintain the City's critical status as a regional driver for Northern Ireland."**

The Committee approved the foregoing response to the consultation.

### **Tourism, Culture and Arts Delivery Plan 2019-20**

The Committee considered the following report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

##### **1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the activities set out in the delivery plan for 2019-2020 to support:**

- commitments in the existing Cultural Framework for Belfast Action Plan 2016-2020 and the Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020 including approval to enter into relevant legal agreements and Service Level Agreements with named delivery partners; and
- ongoing work on the development of a new Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 and associated implementation plans.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

##### **2.1 The Committee is recommended to:**

- i. note the contents of this report; and
- ii. agree the work programme (2019/20) including the associated budget requirements.

#### **3.0 Main Report**

##### **3.1 Background**

**The Committee will recall that, in March 2019, it approved the draft Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 to go out for a 12-week public consultation. To support the ongoing development of this strategy, Committee also agreed with the proposed**

timeline to bring back a series of draft implementation plans and a financing strategy in September 2019. The Delivery Plan which has been circulated integrates this work with ongoing programmes already in place to support the delivery of the final year of both the existing Cultural Framework for Belfast 2016-2020 and the Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020.

### **3.2 Key Issues**

#### **New Cultural Strategy 2020-2030**

The purpose of the strategy document that was approved for public consultation subject to Council ratification is to present the overall approach and commitments over a ten-year period. The next phase of work will give detailed consideration to how this will be delivered in line with the agreed timeframe that requires new programmes to be operational from April 2020. Therefore the delivery plan for 2019/20 includes the development of initial three year implementation plans that as well as being cross-cutting will specifically address:

- Arts and Heritage
- Events and Festivals
- Tourism product development including neighbourhood tourism
- Major strategic initiatives.

3.3 These will be supported by a proposed investment model, communications strategy and evaluation framework. In addition, there is a need to continue with existing commitments to support the final year of implantation of the current Cultural Framework and Tourism Strategy.

### **3.4 Cultural Framework**

The plan has taken into consideration the range of actions to be delivered over the four-year period of the Cultural Framework Action Plan (2016-2020) and has identified a number of priorities to be delivered in the final year 2019/20. As in previous years, partnership working is essential to the development and delivery of actions within the Cultural Framework and Action Plan. Across each of the 4 themes of the existing Cultural Framework, some of the proposed actions for 2019/20 will include:

**Distinctly Belfast**

- Deliver a City of Music programme to support plans to apply for UNESCO designation as well as animating the city centre and celebrating the city's music heritage
- Deliver a 'Bringing Heritage to Life' programme and establishing a Heritage Forum
- Deliver a partnership project with National Museums and Ulster University to increase access to existing collections.

**3.6 Inspiring Communities**

- Deliver an Artist in Residence programme in a number of key locations across the City, funded through the Peace IV programme
- Deliver an ongoing civic engagement programme that will also support the development of the strategy and the plans for 2020-2030.

**3.7 Attracting Audiences**

- Develop and deliver a tailored programme of support on audience development and growing cultural audiences in partnership with the cultural sector and statutory partners.

**3.8 Strengthening the Sector**

- Work in partnership with ACNI to deliver year three of the Resilience Programme, focusing on 14 key cultural organisations in Belfast
- Engage with Arts and Business NI to continue to deliver a tailored programme of support that helps build the sustainability of small to medium sized cultural organisations.

**3.9 Tourism Strategy**

Since the publication of the Strategy, the tourism economy has continued to grow in the City and in Northern Ireland as a whole. Statistics published by NISRA in July 2018 show that, in 2017, there were almost 1.5million overnight trips to Belfast generating around £328million to the local economy. This is around a third of the total expenditure on tourism across the region. The sector also employs more than 18,000 people in the city. The profile of visitors to Belfast differs from that to other parts of NI; there are more business tourists, more cruise tourists and slightly fewer tourists visiting friends and relatives than other parts of NI.

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3.10 In terms of Belfast's performance in 2018, the room percentages decreased a little – falling to 76.7% from 81.6% in 2017. The overall numbers of visitors using the hotels were up on the previous years. While this is reflective of the increased hotel stock in the city it also highlights the ongoing need to continue to support tourism growth. This includes the requirement for the Council and partners to enhance efforts to support high quality tourism product development in order to complement private sector investment in the hotels and wider hospitality sector in Belfast.

3.11 The Delivery Plan sets out specific actions to support tourism growth in 2019-20 including the areas outlined below:

3.12 *Supporting Product Development, including Local Tourism*

Members will be aware that, in September 2018, a report was presented to the Committee outlining the findings and recommendations for a Local Tourism Framework. The proposed approach has also been taken into consideration as part of the draft Cultural Strategy 2020-2030. The next stage of this work will be to develop a 3-4 year neighbourhood tourism implementation plan and funding model to be operational from April 2020. This will be presented to Committee as part of a larger programme of work in September 2019. There is however a need to build on the work that has taken place in recent years and agree an approach for 2019-20. In line with 2018-19 it is therefore proposed that the Council develops and manages a significant programme of capacity-building and information-sharing to improve the quality of existing products, bring forward new products and help develop coherent packages and experiences that are aligned to visitor needs and in keeping with the tourism narrative. It is proposed that the focus of activity for 2019-20 will include:

- Use of local conduits where possible to increase engagement and promote the benefits of participation (e.g Fáilte Feirste Thiar, Eastside Tourism)
- Testing out of potential new products – support for initial feasibility to help bring forward ideas emerging from the local consultations and engagement activity and working with new capital schemes coming forward from Council
- Capacity building and development work on cluster approach, in conjunction with Tourism NI - involvement of industry experts and practitioners who have first-hand experience of this activity.

3.13 *Supporting Business Tourism Investment*

Members will be aware that the Council and Tourism NI have, for a number of years, co-invested in a Conference Support Scheme for the City. This has been a key element of the business tourism support activity over recent years and will be critical if the growth ambitions are to be achieved in the coming years. It is proposed that the Council makes an investment of £200,000 in this scheme for 2019/20 in line with levels of investment in recent years. This allocation will be matched by investment from Tourism NI. In addition to the Conference Support Scheme, the Council will continue to provide access to City Hall for key functions such as conference receptions as this is a critical element of added value and a unique selling point for the City.

**3.14 Financial and Resource Implications**

Activities identified in the Delivery Plan will be resourced from the agreed departmental budget allocations for the current financial year. These have already been approved as part of the estimates process. Up to a further £100,000 has been allocated from resources set aside for the stage 2 bid for European Capital of Culture for the ongoing development of the new Cultural Strategy 2020-2030.

**3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment**

Existing strategies have been equality screened. The draft Cultural Strategy 2020-2030 will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Assessment.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that the £200,000 being allocated by the Council to the Conference Support Scheme, as alluded to within paragraph 3.13 of the report, would be administered by Visit Belfast.

**World Chambers Congress Bid**

The Director of Economic Development submitted for the Committee’s consideration the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Council’s support for the campaign to host the World Chambers Congress event in the City in 2023. This bid is a joint effort involving many city and regional partners. If successful, it is estimated that the congress would have an economic impact of almost £2million for Belfast.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- i. note the proposed joint bid to hold the World Chambers Congress in Belfast in 2023; and**
- ii. agree to allocate up to £10,000 of Council resources towards the bid process and to approve the attendance at the Rio event in June 2019 of a senior officer from the Council, as part of a wider delegation from Belfast, with costs for attendance not to exceed £3,500.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 The Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NI Chamber), supported by Visit Belfast and Invest Northern Ireland, is bidding to host the ICC WCF World Chambers Congress in 2023 and is working in partnership with a range of Northern Ireland stakeholders to help drive the campaign and add weight to the bidding process.**

**3.2 The Congress is held every two years in a different region of the world, and is a three-day event that brings together over 1,000 delegates representing chamber leaders, business heads and key government figures. Travelling from across the globe, they attend to learn and be inspired by some of the world's leading influencers – all with the goal of helping transform the future of business.**

**3.3 The opportunity to host the Congress in Europe only comes round every 8 years with the next European bidding cycle completing in autumn 2020. NI Chamber has lobbied its networks in GB and ROI, and Belfast will go forward as the only UK/Ireland bidding city, with the support of the 52 UK and 24 Irish Chambers of Commerce. This significantly enhances the strength of the Belfast bid.**

**3.4 The World Chambers Congress has been identified as a key strategic hosting opportunity and securing the Congress for Belfast could contribute an estimated £1.92m to the local economy as well as supporting the economic objectives of:**

- attracting foreign direct investment**
- establishing links for international trade and**
- promoting business and leisure tourism.**

**3.5 NI Chamber has initiated a two-year bidding campaign which will culminate in the final bid presentation to members of the**

**World Chambers Federation General Council in November 2020. In 2019, the campaign will focus on generating awareness of the Belfast bid as well as outreach to the key decision makers within international Chambers. A core element of this strategy will include attendance at the 2019 World Chambers Congress being held in Rio de Janeiro in June this year. It is a significant opportunity to:**

- **Showcase Belfast's bid proposition and all associated messaging**
- **Connect with Chamber representatives from the judging panel**
- **Evidence commitment to supporting the congress through sponsorship**
- **See the Congress first hand to aid Belfast's own bid development.**

**3.6 The promotional campaign will continue in 2020 and align with the application process. This will involve a range of engagement and outreach activities to build the case for Belfast as the preferred host city. It is likely to include activities such as engagement with WCF judging chambers, hosting international speakers from the WCF network, bid brand and messaging development and bid book development outlining the city's proposition. As part of the process, there will be a site visit to Belfast encompassing a visit to the venue and engagement with partners to establish the nature of the local support for the bid. The details of the bid will be presented directly to the World Chambers Federation Jury in November 2020.**

**3.7 Given the scale of investment required and the need for input across a range of public and private partners, NI Chamber is bringing together a steering group comprised of key stakeholders. The Council has been asked to be part of that steering group, alongside other partners including Invest NI, British Chambers of Commerce, Chambers Ireland, Visit Belfast and ICC Belfast. These partners are also being asked to resource the bid development process over the coming two years. The amount requested from the Council is £10,000 towards the bid development activity. In order to demonstrate the breadth of support for the bid, the Council has also been asked to consider sending a senior officer to Rio for the upcoming World Chambers Congress. The costs associated with attending this event will not exceed £3,500. If the bid is successful, the organisers will seek to draw down funding from the conference subvention scheme which is funded by the Council and Tourism NI.**

**3.8 Financial and Resource Implications**

The financial ask of the Council is £10,000 towards the 2019/20 bidding process. The Council has also been asked to consider attendance at the Rio 2019 event by a senior officer. Costs associated with attendance at this event will not exceed £3,500. The NI Chamber has also asked the Council to consider appointing a senior officer to be part of the steering group for the bid process. The aforementioned costs will be drawn from existing Economic Development Departmental budgets.

**3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment**

**No specific equality or good relations implications. No issues associated with the Rural Needs Assessment.”**

The Director of Economic Development, in addressing issues which had been raised around the costs contained within the report, pointed out that the funding being sought to support the City’s joint bid would be used for development activity. In terms of an officer’s attendance at this year’s event, he confirmed that the amount being requested was reflective of the cost of travel and accommodation and stressed that the experience gained by that officer would prove beneficial, should Belfast’s bid be successful.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Strategic and Operational Issues**

**Update on Belfast Marathon**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 27th June, 2018, it had agreed that, from 2019 onwards, the Belfast City Marathon would be held on a Sunday and had approved a revised route for the event. The Committee, at its meeting on 13th February, had approved a rolling reduction in the Council’s financial commitment to the Marathon, from £26,000 in 2019 to zero support by 2025/26.

The Director of Economic Development explained that the request to move the Marathon to a Sunday had originated from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, on the basis that trade had suffered significantly when the event had been held on a Bank Holiday Monday and that visitor numbers would increase.

He reported that the number of competitors registering to run the full Marathon course had risen from 2,394 in 2018 to 4,180 in 2019, with out-of-state competitor numbers increasing from 751 to 1,008. Feedback had suggested that the increase could be attributed to the decision to move the event to a Sunday and to change the route.

The Director pointed out that, whilst it was anticipated that the holding of the Marathon on a Sunday would reduce the level of disruption on the City’s road network, it was inevitable that a significant number of roads would be inaccessible, due to the need

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to comply with the Council-enforced road closure legislation. He added that Translink was examining currently its operational requirements for Glider and Metro services on the day of the Marathon and that there had, to date, been significant engagement with statutory and community organisations and with churches, businesses and residents located along the new Marathon route.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

**Update on Markets**

The Committee considered the following report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to:**

- update the Committee on the performance of the city markets, including St George’s Market and the Christmas Market at the City Hall;
- set out priority areas of work for the coming year at St George’s Market; and
- seek approval for a markets licence, as part of the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival (CQAF) in early May 2019.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- i. note the performance of the Christmas Market, including the economic impact and contribution to the City;
- ii. agree the priority areas of investment in St. George’s Market for the coming financial year; and
- iii. approve the granting of a markets licence for a market to take place in St. Anne’s Cathedral on 2nd May 2019, as part of Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival.

**3.0 Main Report**

**Christmas Market**

**3.1 Members will be aware that the Christmas Market operates at the City Hall in the run-up to Christmas each year. The market is operated by Market Place Europe (MPE). As part of its contract with the Council, MPE is required to undertake an**

independent evaluation and economic impact of the market every two years. The report for the Christmas 2018 market has just been presented to Council officers as part of the post-event review process.

**3.2** Members will also be aware that, as a one-off, the Christmas Market was extended to the upper part of Donegall Place. This was due to the fire in the Primark building and the commitment by the Council and other partners to undertake an enhanced programme of animation and activity in the city centre in the run-up to the important Christmas trading period. The additional stalls were offered to those businesses affected by the fire.

**3.3** The evaluation and economic impact report was completed by an independent market research organisation. It involved a survey of 400 individuals who had visited the market, as well as an online survey of market users and visitors to the city. The survey covered a number of areas including:

- levels of satisfaction with the market and opportunities for improvement
- identification of how people were aware of the market – and what made them visit
- an assessment of whether they would recommend the market to others
- an understanding what other activities the market visitors had undertaken as part of their visit to the city
- an assessment of whether visitors had used other city centre facilities as part of their visit to the city.

**3.4** The high level findings of the work include:

- more than one million visitors came to the market over the six-week period. The combined total expenditure for those attending was in the region of £87million. This covers items such as accommodation (for out of state and non-Belfast residents); eating out, shopping and entertainment. This does not just involve spend directly on the market but does illustrate the role of the market as a catalyst for spend in the city centre;
- adjusting the figures to take account of those visitors who would not otherwise have visited Belfast if the market had not been present, the evaluation indicates that the total estimated economic impact of the market itself is in the region of £40million;

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- **39% of visitors to the market were from the Greater Belfast area; 44% were from the rest of Northern Ireland; 8% from ROI and 10% from elsewhere;**
- **most of those visiting the market had been previously – 85% of visitors. They were aware of the event from their previous attendance but the social media profile also encouraged many visitors to attend;**
- **over a third of visitors planned their visit up to a month in advance – principally those attending from outside Belfast;**
- **over 91% of visitors rated the market as good or very good – an increase of 2% from the 2016 figures. Those who were positive commented in particular on the ambience, the fact that it offered something different to the mainstream brands and the fact that it felt safe. Those who were less positive suggested that there was a need for more variety in the stalls and they also suggested that it was too busy, particularly for prams. 78% of visitors said that they would definitely return next year;**
- **69% of visitors came to the market as they were interested in local products – and 42% of people confirmed that they spent more than they thought on products from local traders;**
- **in terms of suggestions for improvements, the most common comments related to more space (particularly for seating) and additional entertainment. Despite the space constraints, there is overwhelming support for the market to remain in City Hall grounds;**
- **more than 2/3 of those visiting the Christmas Market also shopped in other parts of the city centre. This illustrates the point that the Christmas Market is a significant draw for the entire city centre. 25% of those visiting the market were also planning to eat out elsewhere in the city following their visit to the market; and**
- **97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that events like the market encourage people to come to Belfast.**

**3.5 Officers will work with MPE to review the market for Christmas 2019, taking account of these issues raised. MPE will also be**

responsible for the delivery of the Spring Continental Market which will take place at City Hall from 24th till 27th May, 2019.

**3.6 St. George's Market**

Members will be aware that a three-day market operates at St. George's Market each Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The market is a popular attraction for both local residents and visitors to the city. Up to one million visitors came to the market last year, with attendance figures generally ranging between 6,000 and 10,000 people each day. St. George's Market recently won the award for the Best Large Indoor Market at the NABMA Annual conference – the umbrella body representing all markets across the UK.

**3.7** The market performs a number of functions. It is an important tourism attraction and is generally considered as a must-see destination for visitors to the city. It is also a popular space for local residents of all ages – bringing together a mixture of food, craft and musical/entertainment performances. The market is also a great location for new business starts – and there are opportunities for new businesses participating in our business start-up programmes to undertake a period of test trading at the market. A number of businesses started life at the market – and many maintain a presence there, despite the fact that they now have stand-alone businesses elsewhere and are trading globally in a number of cases. It also provides a source of income for more than 200 independent traders that are based at the market on one or more of the operating days.

**3.8** Taking account of all of these reasons, the market is a significant asset for the Council and all of our investment needs to work towards maintaining and enhancing its reputation. Officers are currently looking at how the market can evolve in the coming years to meet the increasing tourist demand while still serving an important role as an asset for the city, its residents and the businesses that operate within it. Members will be aware that, in 2014, Deloitte undertook work on a development plan for the market. This led to changes in the staffing structure and some of the operating hours of the markets. It also identified some longer-term development opportunities for the market which would require significant investment. Officers work with the market trader representative bodies on an ongoing basis to bring forward collaborative plans for the future development of the market. Areas for consideration in the coming year are likely to include the operating times; venue hire opportunities; enhancing visitor experiences and linking to key city events; opportunities for additional revenue generation to meet overhead costs and mechanisms to build in customer

feedback in order to ensure that services meet with user expectations. Any proposals that significantly impact on the market will be brought back to the Committee for information and endorsement.

- 3.9** In parallel with the future development plans, officers are also placing an enhanced focus on the operational management issues at the market. Given that the team is now at full complement following a series of recruitment exercises, the frontline staffing resources will increasingly be deployed to focus on ensuring compliance with the various guidance documents such as the code of conduct, traders' permit and enforcement policy. The staff also have an enhanced customer service function and will be more visible on the market floor, thereby improving our service standards. Clearly, the traders at the market are obliged to abide by the various legal requirements around food safety, wider health and safety and trading standards. The Markets Management Team works closely with colleagues in Environmental Health and Corporate Health and Safety in order to ensure that individual traders and the market as a whole are meeting these legal obligations. This approach is critical to maintaining the reputation of the market. One of the current challenges is the need to invest in an extraction system for the market. Officers have been working with technical experts to identify how this can be resolved. This is challenging given the nature of the building. A solution has now been identified which involves a number of mobile extraction units for the hot food traders. One of these units has already been tested by an existing trader and the feedback was positive. Significant financial investment is required and officers are currently working to identify how this can be financed.

**3.10** Application for an External Market, as part of Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival

Members will be aware that anyone wishing to operate a market or car boot sale within Belfast must apply to the Council for permission to do so. An application has been received for the 'CQ Bazaar' to be held in St Anne's Cathedral, as part of the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival, from 5 pm till 9 pm on 2nd May 2019.

- 3.11** In line with the overall Belfast City Council Markets Development Strategy, this market will help to enhance this area of the city and, in doing so, drive footfall into Cathedral Quarter and the surrounding area. The market will complement the wider festival and programme of animation in the city at this time, including the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival and the Festival of Fools. This will support the

commitments to enhance the city animation activity as part of the City Revitalisation programme.

**3.12** Stall numbers are currently being finalised but it is expected that there will be up to 60 stalls at the event. The organisers are Destination CQ Business Improvement District (BID). They will be asked to supply the relevant documentation for this event such as public liability insurance, method statement and risk assessments, HACCP policy and house rule. An Operational plan covering issues such as security and stewarding, first aid provision, environmental health information regarding noise omission, sale of food and beverages, food sampling, alcohol sampling and licensing, waste management and fire regulations will also be sought. Officers from the Markets Development Unit will then engage with the relevant officers across the Council in order to check and verify this documentation and are content that all is in order. Checks will also be carried out during the event, in line with the Markets Rights Policy guidelines.

**3.13** **Financial and Resource Implications**

No specific financial implications associated with this report. The applicant for the markets licence will have to pay an application fee of £50 in line with the markets policy. The total amount payable will depend on the number of stalls that are in place.

**3.14** **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

No specific equality or good relations implications. No issue with Rural Needs Assessment.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairperson