

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE
- REPORT TO FOLLOW

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall on Wednesday, 8th May, 2024 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

3. **Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

- (b) Department for Communities Correspondence - Regeneration Powers
(Pages 1 - 8)

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Subject:	Correspondence received - Department for Communities (Regeneration Powers)
Date:	8th May, 2024
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Eilish McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports					
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.					
Insert number <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 					
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?					
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<table style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px; border: 1px solid black;"></td></tr> </table>				

Call-in	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider the correspondence received from the Department for Communities, in response to the request in relation to regeneration powers.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the update and correspondence as set out in the report and to consider if any further action is necessary.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.2	At its meeting in February, the Committee was provided with an update on the Regeneration Lobbying and Advocacy Paper and Regeneration Framework regarding the work which had been undertaken in relation to the Place Based Growth Proposition and Regeneration.
3.3	At the meeting, it was agreed that the Council would write to the Minister for Communities to request that work is undertaken with all the relevant stakeholders to achieve the conferring of regeneration powers to councils with the appropriate budgets within this Assembly mandate (Appendix 1).
3.4	Accordingly, a response has been received from Mr. P. Anderson, Director, on behalf of the Minister, which provides an update on the issue (Appendix 2). It notes that the Minister has indicated that he has no plans currently to devolve any additional powers to local councils as this would require a fundamental review of the current position across several Departments and would potentially require Executive referral.
3.5	It states that the issue of further work being required to revisit the potential transfer of regeneration powers to Councils was most recently raised at the Partnership Panel meeting in August 2022 at which it was agreed that Local Government and Central Government officials would engage to discuss what a future transformation of regeneration powers could look like.
3.6	The response outlines that, in October 2022, the PSG/SOLACE Engagement Forum co-chairs agreed that SOLACE would undertake scoping work to understand what is meant by regeneration powers. The Department awaits the outcome of that work.

3.7	In addition, a meeting has been scheduled by SOLACE for the end of May, to meet with the Director of City Regeneration and Development, NILGA, and Mid Ulster District Council to discuss the issue and next steps.
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – BCC Letter to DfC - Regeneration Powers - 28 March 24</p> <p>Appendix 2 – DfC Response = Regeneration Powers - 16 April 24</p>

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Legal and Civic Services Department

Democratic Services Section



Your reference

Being dealt with by Ms Eilish McGoldrick

Our reference EMcG280324

Email mcgoldricke@belfastcity.gov.uk

Date 28th March, 2024

Gordon Lyons
Minister for Communities

Via email: private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk

Dear Minister Lyons,

Regeneration Powers

At its meeting in February, Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee was provided with an update regarding the work which had been undertaken in relation to a Place Based Growth Proposition and Regeneration.

At the meeting, it was agreed that the Council would write to you to welcome you to your new role as Minister for Communities, and call on you to work with all the relevant stakeholders to achieve the conferring of regeneration powers to councils with the appropriate budgets within this Assembly mandate.

I wish to note that the Chief Executive has also written to you to discuss the aforementioned issue.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eilish McGoldrick'.

Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services Officer

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www.communities-ni.gov.uk

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1-7 Bedford Street
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BT2 7EG
Phone: 028 9082 9274
email:
Patrick.Anderson@communities-ni.gov.uk

Your ref: EMcG280324

Our ref: TOF-1241-2024

Date: 16 April 2024

Dear Ms McGoldrick,

REGENERATION POWERS

Thank you for your letter of 28th of March 2024 to the Minister for Communities on whose behalf I am providing this response. You advised that Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee met in February and consequently agreed to write to the Minister requesting that he works with all the relevant stakeholders to achieve the conferring of regeneration powers to councils, with the appropriate budgets, within this Assembly mandate.

As Council will be aware, several attempts have been made to put the necessary legislation in place, but on each occasion have not progressed due to a lack of consensus, on the broader issue of local government reform, or on the content of the legislation itself. The last attempt saw the Regeneration Bill introduced in the Northern Ireland Assembly on the 8th of December 2014 (Bill 43/11-16). This was withdrawn in November 2015.

Due to the significant period, which has passed since the introduction of the last Regeneration Bill (2014), and the experience of recent initiatives in response to Covid-19

e.g. the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation and Small Settlements Programmes in partnership with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the cross-departmental nature of regeneration activities has been clearly demonstrated. The Minister has indicated that he has no plans currently to devolve any additional powers to local councils as this would require a fundamental review of the current position across several Departments and would potentially require Executive referral.

The issue of further work being required to revisit the potential transfer of regeneration powers to Councils was most recently raised at the Partnership Panel meeting in August 2022 at which it was agreed that Local Government and Central Government officials would engage to discuss what a future transformation of regeneration powers could look like.

In October 2022, the PSG/SOLACE Engagement Forum co-chairs agreed that SOLACE would undertake scoping work to understand what is meant by regeneration powers. The Department awaits the outcome of that work.

Yours sincerely



PATRICK ANDERSON
DIRECTOR