



Subject:	Belfast City & Region Place Partnership Update
Date:	12 June 2024
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Update members on the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) 2023 / 2024 Programme.Seek approval to extend Council's involvement in the BCRPP to 2024 / 2025 .
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note a presentation will be made at Committee from representatives from the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP).Approve that Officers continue to support the delivery of the BCRPP 2024 / 2025 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the BCRPP and in line with Council's procurement processes.Approve the Council investment (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as part of the wider public private sector partnership contribution towards the delivery of the BCRPP 2024 / 2025 programme.Approve attendance by senior officers at MIPIM 2025 as part of the BCRPP 2024 / 2025 programme, noting that the BCRPP presence at MIPIM will be funded from the wider public-private sector BCRPP programme budget.
3.0	Background

3.1	<p>Members will recall that this Committee agreed in May 2024 to receive a presentation from representatives of the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) in June 2024. The purpose of this presentation is to update Members on the 2023 / 2024 programme of work and proposed 2024 / 2025 activities, including priority issues and objectives for the Partnership moving forward.</p>
3.2	<p>The BCRPP, formerly Renewed Ambition Partnership (RAP), is a joint public-private initiative that is delivering a programme of work aimed at ensuring Belfast is positively positioned to continue to attract inclusive investment to unlock and development, regeneration and infrastructure required to deliver on our inclusive growth ambitions.</p>
3.3	<p>BCRPP is supported by public, private and key anchor institution partners. Partners comprise of Belfast City Council, Belfast City Region Deal Partner Councils, Invest NI, Belfast Harbour, Translink, Housing Association representation, Queens University Belfast, and representatives from the local development community bringing forward regeneration and development projects.</p>
3.4	<p>For the past nine years Council has played a lead civic role in supporting this joint public private sector approach aimed at ensuring Belfast is positively positioned to attract external capital investment required to deliver on our sustainable and inclusive growth ambitions as outlined in the Belfast Agenda. This sets bold ambitions and economic development priorities for the city aimed at delivering inclusive growth. It aims to create a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city through prioritising housing-led regeneration; connectivity, active and sustainable travel; and future city centre and wider city regeneration and investment. It is recognised that a collaborative partnership working approach between the public and private sector is key to successfully delivering on these ambitions, with the BCRPP being an important delivery mechanism. The BCRPP is also an important tool within our wider 'Position the City to Compete' proposition which seeks to build on the city's reputation as a unique destination for investment, tourism, development and supporting inclusive economic growth. Members will be aware that 'Positioning the City to Compete' is a key programme of work within this Committee's work plan as agreed at a special meeting of CGR Committee in May.</p>
3.5	<p>It has been estimated that c £7.5bn investment is required to deliver the Belfast Agenda growth ambitions, therefore working collaboratively with the private sector to attract external investment is critical. It is also worth noting that approximately 80% of the Councils income comes from the district rate. Increasing the rates base therefore through further development and regeneration activity will support delivery of Council's corporate priorities.</p>
3.6	<p>This Committee received a presentation on the 2023 Regeneration Tracker in April 2024. This provided an overview of regeneration and development activity which took place in 2023. It noted the overall positive trajectory of development and regeneration activity since 2015 and how this positively contributes to the wider region including economic growth, job creation, access to services and cultural and recreational amenities. However it had also highlighted some of the challenges and opportunities to</p>

3.7	<p>future regeneration and development activities, with a particular focus on increasing city centre living, city wide housing-led regeneration and unlocking major regeneration schemes.</p> <p>Party Group Leaders (or nominees) and senior officers participated on a study visit to Manchester and Leeds in April 2024. Discussions with elected representatives and senior officers from both cities highlighted the importance of having a long-term vision and supporting strategies, and strong public and private sector partnership working to secure external funding to bring forward development and deliver on growth ambitions. Both councils noted that the key to successful regeneration and development was not always direct delivery, but councils using their strong convening role in attracting external investment and supporting private sector delivery. They also emphasised the importance of city national and international marketing activities in developing long term relationships with international brands and investors, and how this assisted in securing both long term patient capital and partners who have bought into the city's values and vision. They highlighted the economic benefits of this partnership approach to bringing forward development and regeneration. This included supporting graduate retention, attracting FDI and providing employment opportunities.</p>
4.0	Main Report
4.1	<p>The 2023 / 2024 programme commenced on the 1 September 2023 and is delivering a structured programme of work focussed on the key pillars of Research; Events; Advocacy and Engagement; and Communications aligned to securing investment and regeneration for Belfast and the wider city region. The presentation to Committee by the BRCP Taskforce will provide an overview of the programme and highlights including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Marketing collateral to reinforce positive messaging around Belfast and the city region. This includes updating the Belfast Region Investment Guide and creating a digital interactive version which is a key marketing asset at showcase events and wider marketing tool, producing monthly newsletters and securing media coverage highlighting positive news stories. • Organising a Dublin Investment Showcase event which was delivered in conjunction with Urban Land Institute (ULI) to showcase the Belfast City Region investment opportunity to a ROI investment and development market with positive engagement and a strong interest in the Belfast market, notably the Residential sector. • Belfast City Region presence at MIPIM 2024 which comprised of attendees from 15 organisations including Belfast Harbour, Invest NI, Titanic Quarter and private sector developers attending as part of the Belfast City Region delegation. • Belfast City Region presence at UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiF) 2024 which comprised of attendees from 13 organisations, including partner BRCD Councils, key developers and professional services firms. • Advocacy and engagement activities to unlock development and barriers to delivery including to support delivery of the place-based growth proposition for Belfast; housing-led regeneration; and engagement with Planning in relation to the Local Development Plan – Plan Strategy and the emerging Local Policies Plan.

4.2	<p>It is recognised that the BCRPP public private partnership approach is an important lever as part of our wider “Positioning the City to Compete” proposition. It complements other city region partnerships including Belfast Region City Deal and Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor; and is aligned to council-led activities to accelerate city centre living, city innovation, connectivity, resilience / net zero and EDU activities.</p>
4.3	<p>Participation in the BCRPP programme has delivered a number of benefits in terms of working to achieve our corporate and city level strategic priorities. Members will be aware of the on-going focus on accelerating city centre living and the advanced stages of Council’s competitive dialogue process which is seeking a long-term Private Sector Partner to deliver residential led, mixed use developments to support growth ambitions as set out in the Belfast Agenda. Showcasing this opportunity through BCRPP activities has undoubtedly played a key role in terms of positively positioning this proposition within the investment and development market. It has been clear that participation generally as part of the BCRPP programme has generated interest in wider regeneration, development and investment opportunities across the city.</p>
4.4	<p>There has been strong interest in Belfast from the investment and development market with positive engagement at showcase events and subsequent requests for follow up presentations and inward visits to Belfast. There has been a number of follow up meetings in Belfast over the past months, with more planned in the coming months from investors, developers and occupiers including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major housing / residential developers who have not to date delivered projects in Belfast / NI • Real estate investment trust (REIT) with a strong interest in residential developments • End-use occupiers including FDI companies, commercial / leisure operators, innovation hub operators and Food & Beverage operators
4.5	<p>Proposed approach to 2024 / 2025</p> <p>The Partnership is governed via a Taskforce comprised of representatives of the public and private sector. The Taskforce has endorsed continuing the Partnership into 2024 / 2025. The presentation from the BCRPP Taskforce will set out the core objectives and proposed workstreams for the 2024 / 2025 programme.</p>
4.6	<p>For the Council the key aims and objectives of being part of the BCRPP Partnership and contributing to the programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing investment required to assist with delivery of our growth ambitions as outlined in the Belfast Agenda and aligned to corporate priorities, noting the wider economic benefits these investment delivers and that from a council perspective increased investment and development activity also results in increased rates generation and delivering on corporate priorities. • Strengthening additional support and advocacy for the Place Based Growth Proposition for Belfast. • Maximising the benefits of the Belfast Region City Deal investments

<p>4.7</p> <p>4.8</p> <p>4.9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing investment in the built environment on a city-wide basis to maximise opportunities to create jobs, support inclusive economic growth alongside enhancing physical and social infrastructure across the city. • Securing investment in key city infrastructure schemes including waterfront regeneration, connectivity, net-zero and innovation related projects. <p>Council plays a key role in both the strategic and operational management of BCRPP including the development, management and delivery of the Programme of Activity. Members are asked to approve Council continuing to take on this role, with officers supporting the 2024 / 2025 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the BCRPP Partnership, and in line with Council’s procurement processes.</p> <p>The BCRPP is supported and funded by public, private and key anchor institution partners, with external funding forming the majority of the overall programme delivery budget. Members are asked to note the proposed approach to the 2024 / 2025 Programme and approve the Council investment (from existing and approved City Regeneration & Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership contribution towards the delivery of the 2024 / 2025 Programme.</p> <p>Council has participated in the ‘Team Belfast’ attendance at MIPIM since 2016. MIPIM is the world's leading built environment conference and exhibition attended by approx. 20,000 public and private sector representatives from across the globe, major European and UK cities including London, Manchester, Newcastle, Cardiff, Liverpool. It provides an opportunity for Belfast and the wider city region to position itself to a global audience and attract the interest of institutional investors, developers, occupiers and funders in the context of bringing forward sustainable development to create a well-connected and culturally vibrant, sustainable city and region. Following positive feedback from MIPIM 2024 the BCRPP has endorsed a Belfast City Region presence at MIPIM 2025 in line with the approach taken by other UK Cities, and its inclusion within the wider BCRPP Programme of activity for 2024 / 2025. The BCRPP Partnership feel that in order to successfully showcase Belfast and the wider City Region it requires the civic leadership and attendance by Belfast City Council. Members are asked to approve attendance by senior officers at MIPIM 2025, noting that the BCRPP presence at MIPIM will be funded from the wider public private BCRPP budget.</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
<p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>The BCRPP is delivered as a public private sector sponsorship fund and is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institutions who contribute financially towards the 2023 / 2024 programme, with external and private sector funding forming the majority of the overall programme budget. It is anticipated that the majority of the 2024 / 2025 programme budget will again be funded through external funding.</p> <p>Council has previously agreed to contribute of £80,000 towards the 2023 / 2024 Programme, and subject to Members agreement it is proposed that Council contribute £80,000 (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as</p>

	part of the wider public private partnership investment towards the delivery of the 2024 / 2025 programme.
5.3	Approval is sought for attendance of senior officers at MIPIM 2024. Travel costs for Council attendance at MIPIM 2024 to be met from within existing and approved departmental budgets. All other costs related to these events would be met from the 2024 / 2025 BCRPP programme budget.
6.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u> None associated with this report.
7.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None