



<b>Subject:</b>	City Centre Boundaries
<b>Date:</b>	11 September 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager Callie Persic, Development Manager

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**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

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?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	Following a request by Members to clarify the boundary of the city centre and the rationale for how boundaries are applied for projects, and how this might be looked at going forward, this paper sets out the city centre boundary and proposes a future approach on this issue.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Note the context of the Draft BMAP City Centre Boundary and the update on the rationale for allocating city centre boundaries to specific projects.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
3.1	<p>At the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 12th June and at the Climate and City Resilience Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 Members raised queries in relation to the boundary of the city centre and how these are used to delineate project borders. Members had referenced certain examples including the Inner North West, UP2030 and the Business Cluster and Community Grant schemes. The Committee agreed that “a future report would be brought to the Committee to outline the rationale around red line boundaries including the city centre boundary and various Programmes and projects and how this might be looked at going forward.”</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
4.1	<p>The statutory boundary of the city centre is often used as the recognised and defined boundary area given its definition within planning policy in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP). The city centre boundary as defined by draft BMAP remains the most up to date expression of the Department’s spatial planning approach to the Belfast Metropolitan Area and may remain a material consideration where appropriate within a planning context. The city centre boundary will be reviewed as part of the Local Policies Plan stage of the LDP process.</p> <div data-bbox="432 1379 1217 1989" data-label="Image"> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Figure 1 - Draft BMAP City Centre Boundary</i></p>

4.2	<p>A number of schemes or projects developed within in the city centre have been brought forward based on the eight principles of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) as set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the Employment Population;</li><li>• Increase the Residential Population;</li><li>• Manage the Retail Offer;</li><li>• Maximise the Tourism Opportunity;</li><li>• Create Regional Learning and Innovation Centres;</li><li>• Create a Green, Walkable, Cyclable Centre;</li><li>• Connect to the City Around, and</li><li>• Shared space and social impact</li></ul>
4.3	<p>As projects are developed to target specific issues or priority areas the parameters of the project, including boundaries, are brought to the CG&amp;R Committee for approval prior to designing and implementing the project. When developing projects aligned to BCCRIS the Draft BMAP city centre boundary is typically used as the starting point for setting the boundary, subject to discussions with Members. Setting boundary areas is often required on projects when addressing specific area-based issues, or when subject to funding constraints.</p>
4.4	<p>An exception to the use of the draft BMAP boundary is in relation to the Inner North West Masterplan which was defined by the Special Action Area agreed by Council in 2016 as a part of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy document where, following consultation with Members the agreed BCCRIS document established the INW boundary as one of five Special Action Actions to be addressed through BCCRIS. With regard to the UP2030 Net Zero District the boundary was selected to encapsulate the highest concentration of typical city infrastructure, including high frequency transport networks, walking &amp; cycling, a mix of commercial and residential areas, to develop a holistic framework that could be adopted for any city area. Following consultation with Members in 2021 the boundary area was increased to include more residential area that surround the city centre.</p>
4.5	<p>Recently delivered schemes such as Vacant to Vibrant, Grey to Green and the Active Travel Enablers were brought forward within defined funding allocations and/or timeframes and agreed through the Committee process. In each of these cases, the interventions were developed to address specific city centre issues, such as vacancy, or contained elements within the grant process that were aligned to the BCCRIS Strategy with the draft BMAP city centre definition used to identify the boundary for these projects.</p>

4.6	<p>For example, this definition was applied to the Vacant to Vibrant pilot due to the particular issues in the city centre where vacancy is significantly higher than the UK average and with a recognition that the city centre was in need of intervention to preserve it as the economic centre for the region. The initial pilot project for secure cycle facilities was also trialed within the city centre following a Notion of Motion from Members to bring forward secure cycle facilities within the city centre. Funding for both of these schemes was limited in the pilot phases and it was agreed that concentrating the funding within a defined area would create the greatest impact. Following the initial pilot period the secure cycle project received additional funding to deliver a city-wide project, and Officers are currently seeking external funding to deliver a city wide Vacant to Vibrant programme as agreed at the June Meeting of the CG&amp;R Committee.</p>
4.7	<p>At the time of the initiation of Vacant to Vibrant and with the secure cycle parking projects there were a number of complementary projects and programmes under delivery that supported communities and businesses outside the city centre including the Vibrant Business Destinations Programme (in partnership with DfC) and community-focused funding streams such as the Business and Community Cluster Grants and city-wide covered cycle schemes. Members will also be aware that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund was developed in line with the Area Working Group boundaries and other area-based funding streams, such as the Social Investment Fund, Urban Villages and the Local Investment Fund are delivered within an agreed geographical boundary and are reported to the appropriate Area Working Groups.</p>
4.8	<p>Where funding is defined or limited, it is often necessary to define the parameters and area of funding to ensure maximisation of the impact of benefits within a defined programme or when addressing area specific issues. While some Programmes do need to be defined within a certain area for a specific reason, it is acknowledged that using standard approaches may not always provide the best results and may lead to parties, groups, businesses or communities just outside the boundary area failing to be able to avail of or engage with the initiative.</p>
4.9	<p>While it is normal that the parameters of a new project are presented to the City Growth &amp; Regeneration Committee prior to finalisation and initiation, it is recommended that at the development stage the proposed boundary areas are outlined as a specific element of the parameters for discussion and agreement by the Committee within the remit and constraints of the project, but recognising that budgetary constraints may influence the scope and impact.</p>

<b>5.0</b>	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no financial or resource requirements associated with this paper, although financial implications will need to be considered on a project-by-project basis as boundary areas are agreed.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no Equality, Good Relations nor Rural Needs Implications associated with this paper.</p>
<b>7.0</b>	<p><b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None</p>