

Public Document Pack

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

18th April, 2024

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

I enclose a copy/copies of the report for the following items to be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.30 am on Friday, 19th April, 2024.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

2. Restricted Items

- (c) City Centre Regeneration Scheme (Pages 1 - 6)

5. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

- (a) City Development and Regeneration (Pages 7 - 46)
- (d) Culture Night (Pages 47 - 56)

8. Equality and Good Relations

- (c) 80th Anniversary of D-Day Landings (Pages 57 - 60)

10. Issues Raised in Advance by Members

- (b) Use of City Hall - Launch of Orangefest - Councillor Bunting to raise (Verbal Report)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Document is Restricted

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Subject:	City Development & Regeneration
Date:	19 th April 2024
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <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 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime 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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide Members with an update on the Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Development Tracker, capturing regeneration and development activity which took place in the City Centre

	during 2023, as aligned to the eight core policies of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS). The detail of this report will be provided by way of a presentation at Committee. This also follows the agreement at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in February 2024 that a regular update on city centre developments be included on the SPR agenda.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Note the overview of city centre development and regeneration activity during 2023 as provided within the attached Regeneration Tracker (Appendix 1). The tracker is aligned to the eight core principles set out in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy - the regeneration policy for the city centre. This follows a presentation of the Regeneration Tracker made to the City Growth & Regeneration Committee in April and the agreement at the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in February 2024 that a regular update on city centre developments be included on the SPR agenda. A brief overview of the Regeneration Tracker presentation will be provided at SPR Committee. ii) Note that this presentation provides a high-level overview of some of the challenges and proposed next steps to help unlock the next stage of the delivery of the Regeneration & Investment Strategy priorities. Further reports will be brought back on a number of these issues including proposals for a reframed City Centre Investment Fund, the Place Based Growth Proposition, the Regeneration Framework, A Bolder Vision and updates on the outworking's of the All-Party Roundtable on housing led regeneration. iii) Note that, as agreed at the February meeting of the SP&R Committee, a special meeting will be held to consider the Regeneration Framework, city centre development and heritage assets.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	At the February meeting of the SP&R Committee it was agreed that a regular update on city centre developments would be included on the SPR agenda. Regular reports are brought to the CGR Committee on the Future City Centre Programme, the Regeneration & Development Tracker and other workstreams including the Housing Led Regeneration Programme, Bolder Vision and the Place Based Growth Proposition. However, given the role that the City Centre plays at a regional and local level in terms of job creation, economic impact opportunity and rates income, regular updates on these issues will also be brought to the SP&R Committee which will help inform the Council's position in terms of policy, corporate priorities and investment decisions. This is particularly relevant as the Council moves towards agreeing a new Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan and in light of the Belfast Agenda Refresh.

3.2	<p>The city centre provides an important role for Belfast, the Council and the wider region given Belfast's role as the regional driver and the critical role the city centre in particular plays in terms of employment, investment, tourism, education and a place to live and to visit. The city centre makes up 2.6% of Belfast's spatial area but represents the largest employment base employing over 86,000 workers across the various sectors, representing c37% of Belfast's workforce. Approx 80% of the Council's income comes from the district rate, with the city centre accounting for 42% of Belfast's non-domestic rates income equating to 27% of the Council's total rates income. The sectors contributing greatest to city centre rates are the office sector (60% of city centre non-domestic rate or 16% of Council's total rate income) and retail (22.5% of city centre non-domestic rate or 6% of Council's total rate income). From 2020/21 to 2022/23 the city centre non-domestic rate has increased year on year going from £42.19m to £46.52m over this 3-year period.</p>
3.3	<p>The Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) sets out our collective ambition for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding areas for the period 2015 to 2030. It contains a road map of policies to guide city centre decision-making and key projects that translate those policies into action, aligned to our overarching ambitions outlined within the Belfast Agenda. BCCRIS seeks to address the universal elements of a thriving city centre as well as challenges and conditions that are unique to Belfast and is underpinned by the following eight core principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the Employment Population; • Increase the Residential Population; • Manage the Retail Offer; • Maximise the Tourism Opportunity; • Create Regional Learning and Innovation Centres; • Create a Green, Walkable, Cyclable Centre; • Connect to the City Around, and • Shared space and social impact.
3.4	<p>To facilitate the implementation of the eight policies for the city centre, BCCRIS identified a series of projects aimed at creating a liveable and economically thriving city, alongside, identifying the following five Special Action Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inner North • Inner West • North East Quarter • Transport Hub and South Centre

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxford Street and the Eastern Bank
3.5	<p>The purpose of the annual Regeneration & Development Tracker (Appendix 1) is to provide an overview of regeneration and development activity which has taken place in Belfast City Centre and Titanic Quarter during 2023 (1st January – 31st December), aligned to the eight core policies outlined within the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. An overview of the Future City Centre Performance Dashboard (as reported to the City Centre All Party Working Group and CGR) is also included, providing an overview of footfall, jobs, vacancy, and cleanliness and safety among other indicators to provide a health check overview of the performance of the city centre.</p>
3.6	<p>A number of the core principles and projects and developments identified within BCCRIS have progressed well since 2015 to date, including during 2023 which is the focus of the attached Regeneration Tracker presentation. This has included significant office development, hotel and tourism, purpose-built student accommodation and major developments identified in BCCRIS such as the relocation of the University Ulster, progression of the new Transport Hub and Weavers Cross development, progression of City Deal projects including the Belfast Stories tourist attraction, waterfront development etc. Whilst retail across the UK has remained challenging, previous reports to the CGR Committee have highlighted that footfall figures have recovered well in the city centre, and that primary retail core ground floor vacancy levels have decreased from 23% to 21% with a number of new first to Belfast /first to market brands and the Vacant to Vibrant scheme assisting in this transition.</p>
3.7	<p>It is however recognised that challenges remain around city centre living, place-shaping and public realm, dereliction, and infrastructure investment. As reported to CGR and SP&R in February 2024 the lack of regeneration related funding for Belfast (and the wider region) as compared to other UK city regions has put Belfast at a distinct disadvantage in terms of city competitiveness and addressing issues of viability, place making and progressing development and regeneration including housing and increased city centre living. As highlighted to Committee there are a number of funding streams available in other UK cities that have helped accelerate development inc the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Fund, Future High Streets Fund, Transforming Cities Fund etc. The experience from other cities has shown that these have been critical in order to realise the full regeneration potential of their city centres and to meet wider city region requirements.</p>
3.8	<p>Notwithstanding the lack of this external funding, the Regeneration Tracker presentation highlights positive development activity during the 2023 period across the private and public sectors. In order to deliver the growth ambitions as set out in the Belfast Agenda to 2035 it has</p>

	<p>been estimated that this will require c £5.5bn investment and clearly the role of the private sector is critical in this. The Regeneration Tracker details the extensive private sector development delivered in 2023 along with highlighting a number of projects and initiatives where Belfast City Council are leading on the delivery of and addressing some of our key sectors for growth and aligning to our corporate priorities. This includes the Housing Led Regeneration Programme, the Bolder Vision, Strategic Property Acquisitions, Belfast Region City Deal Projects inc Belfast Stories, Cathedral Gardens redevelopment, 2 Royal Avenue, the Vacant to Vibrant Programme, Belfast 2024 cultural activities etc.</p>
3.9	<p>An update on these various areas of work have been brought previously to both CGR and SP&R Committees. In terms of city centre living specifically it is worth highlighting the update brought to the March CGR Committee in relation to the housing led regeneration programme. This included an update on the Development Partner process where Members had been advised of the progress on the competitive dialogue process with 3 bidders for a significant multi-site, residential led mixed use regeneration development opportunity (c £630m GDV). This followed the development of a number of Concept Regeneration Plans for Council and wider public and private sector lands and PADS for a number of cluster sites, and represents a significant decision by the Council in terms of utilising public sector assets across a number of sites to bring forward a long-term partner to fund, develop and where appropriate own and manage assets through the partnership to deliver residential-led mixed-use regeneration across the city. Members were also updated on the reframed Inner North- West Development Brief which has been forwarded to Housing Associations, following the previous pause at the request of Members and liaison with DfC as landowners and in conjunction with NIHE. An update was also provided in relation to the city-wide Strategic Site Assessments where planning appraisals and feasibility studies are being completed, with updates to be brought initially to the Area Working Groups from May onwards.</p>
3.10	<p>It is worth highlighting that there are a significant number of consented residential units / schemes that have come through the planning system in the city centre particularly, and that many of these have not progressed for various reasons including issues around viability, policy, supporting infrastructure etc, most of which are outside Council's responsibility. Notwithstanding this however it is worth noting that there are currently over 1,000 homes under construction across 6 city centre sites, and over 1,550 social homes under construction across the city. As agreed by Members at CGR in March it is also intended to hold an All-Party Roundtable with Party Group leaders or their nominees on Housing Regeneration to consider the various housing regeneration issues in more detail.</p>

	Opportunities & Challenges & Future Priorities /Next Steps
3.11	The Regeneration Tracker presentation also provides a brief overview (final slide) on some of the challenges and proposed next steps to unlocking the next stage of the delivery of the Regeneration & Investment Strategy for discussion and future consideration with Members. Updates have been provided to both the SPR and CGR Committees on some of these issues including the disparity of regeneration funding applied to Northern Ireland in comparison to other UK cities and the benefit of a Regeneration Framework that would seek to align the city and Council's strategic priorities to support and strengthen the city's position in relation to investment and funding opportunities to deliver economic, social and commercial outcomes aligned to the Belfast Agenda; the Bolder Vision etc. Further updates on these, alongside proposals for a reframed City Centre Investment Fund will be brought to Committee. As agreed at the SP&R February meeting a special meeting will also take place of the SP&R Committee to consider the Regeneration Framework, city centre development and heritage assets with the meeting date to be confirmed in the near future.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.12	None associated with this report.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.13	None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix A – Regeneration Tracker 2023 Update.



Review of 2023

Belfast City Centre
Regeneration Tracker

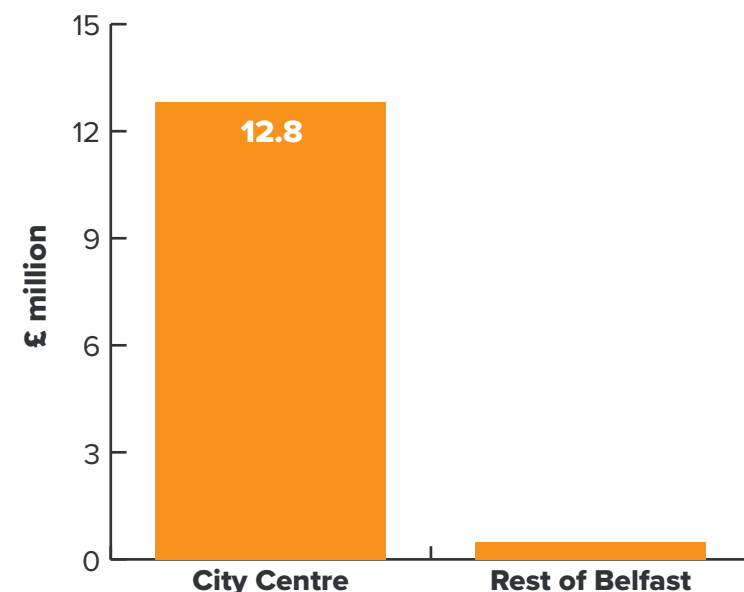


Role of the city centre

We are committed to creating a strong and vibrant city centre. Its development is vital for attracting private sector investment, creating revenue and enabling the sustainability of council expenditure and service delivery.

80% of council's income comes from the district rate.

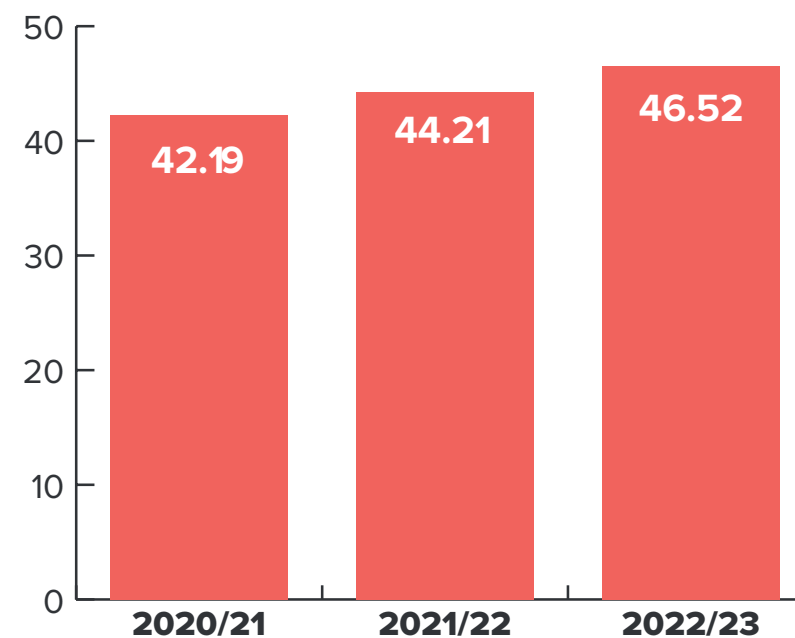
City centre represents 42% of Belfast's non-domestic rates income



Non-Domestic Rates income per sq km (2022-23)

- **60%** of city centre rates comes from **office**
- **22.5%** of city centre rates comes from **retail**

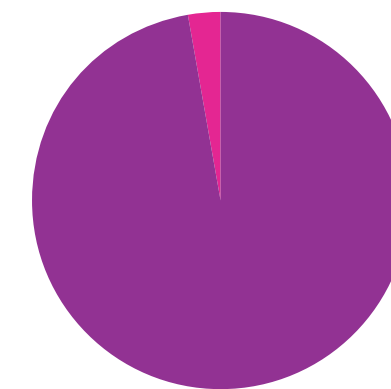
City centre non-domestic rates rise year-on-year



City Centre Non-Domestic Rates (£M)

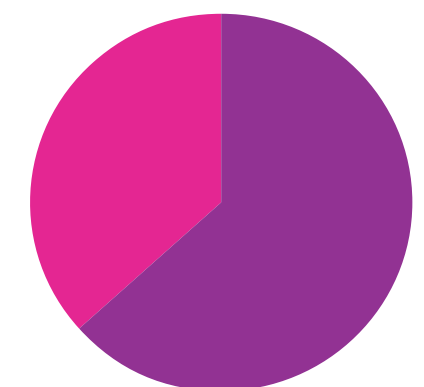
City centre employs 86,427 citizens, 37% of Belfast's workforce

Outside city centre
City centre



Spatial area

The city centre makes up **2.6% of Belfast's spatial area**



Employment Population

The city centre employs **37% of Belfast's workforce**

Future City Centre Programme Performance Dashboard

Future City Centre Programme Strategic Indicators (these reflect the city's overall performance for which all stakeholders are accountable)

1 FOOTFALL LEVELS 

5.85m

visits to Belfast city centre (Dec 2023) ↓ 17%YoY from Dec 2022. However, footfall within the retail core ↑YOY by 3% over the same period.

2 DWELL TIME 

198

mins average dwell time (Nov 2023)
↓YoY from Nov 2022 (205 mins)

3 UNIQUE VISITORS 

110,480

average daily visitors to the city centre during Nov 2023.
↑ 30,674 YoY or 38% from Nov 2022.

4 CATCHMENT AREA 

351km

The top 50 SOAs with the most visits were 351km from the city centre (Dec 2023)
↑ 97km YoY or 38% from Dec 2022)

5 RATES INCOME 

£46.5m

non-domestic rates (2022-23)
↑YoY from 2021/22 (£44.2m)

6 CLEANLINESS & SAFETY 

37%

think the city centre is clean and attractive (2023)
↑ 6pp from May 2021 (31%).

7 AIR QUALITY 

20.2

µg/m³ - NO₂ annual mean concentration (Dec 2023)
↓ from 27.5 µg/m³ in Nov 2022. Note measurements for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} were unavailable.

8 EMPLOYEE JOBS 

86,427

jobs in the city centre (2022)
↑ 625 from the previous survey (2021).

9 DEVELOPMENT VALUE 

£190m

value of development (2022) across 3 asset classes
↑YoY from 2021 (£100m)

10 VACANCY RATE 

21%

vacancy rate for the city centre retail core (2023)
↓YoY from July 2022 (23%). TBC

11 INDEPENDENT RETAILERS 

57%

of total retail units were occupied by independent retailers (2021)
↑ from 2019 (51%).

13 TOURISM SPEND 

£417m

estimated spend on overnight trips in Belfast in 2019
↑YoY from 2018 (£395m)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Performance Measures and Secondary Indicators (these primarily reflect the impact of individual interventions and investments and seek to contribute to the above Strategic Indicators)

Regeneration & Connectivity

15 Vacant to Vibrant applicants have received funding of: **£286k+**

These awrds have resulted 56 city-centre employment opportunities and estimated Rates over the course of the lease periods of:

56

£808,769

2023 Physical Development

269 units of PBSMA completed and a further 1237 units under construction.

175 new hotel rooms were developed and a further 133 under construction.

338,000

sq ft office accommodation completed

Business & Investment

Between 2021 and 2022, there were:

2,016 more Professional, Scientific and Technical Jobs

1,031 more Public Admin Jobs

2,179 Less Retail Jobs



3,725

Businesses in Belfast city centre

23% are Professional, Scientific & Technical
14% are Retail

£1 billion



Retail contributed £1.02 billion in Business Turnover to the city centre economy - more than any other Industry.

Animation & Distinctive Offering



130,608

Unique visitors to the city centre for the Christmas Lights switch-on (18 Nov), 20,128 more than the monthly average.

Let's Glow Belfast

- 10,000 attendees - 50% from Belfast, 45% from rest of NI; 5% out-of-state.
- 78% ate-out and direct spend was estimated at £193,950.
- 93% of residents said that such events improve their sense of well-being & community.

Belfast Maritime Festival

- 80,000 attendees, 10% of which were out-of-state.
- 14% of visitors stayed in accommodation.
- Estimated direct spend was £1.33 million.
- 97% agreed that the Festival improves Belfast's reputation as a place to visit.

Clean, Green, Inclusive & Safe

67%

average Cleanliness score in city centre (since April 2022). Considered a good standard of cleanliness by Keeping NI Beautiful

3,195

Violence and sexual offences was the most common crime type in the city centre over the last year (2022-23) with 3,195 incidents of recorded crime. Over the last year:

- Drug crime ↑ by 24.3% (904 incidents);
- Shoplifting ↑ by 4.1% (907 incidents);
- Bicycle theft ↑ by 15.6% (215 incidents);
- Vehicle crime ↓ by 30/9% (141 incidents).

3,048

incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour in the city centre (2022-23) - ↓YoY by 9.7% (2021-22, 3,377 incidents).

Vulnerability

26 Rough sleeper count (2022)



75

people currently engaged in the Complex Lives initiative (42 males, 33 females) bringing the overall total to 107.

Agenda Item 3

Benefits of investment

The contribution that Belfast city centre makes to the wider region includes economic growth, job creation, access to services and cultural and recreational amenities



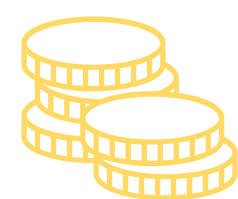
For every 1,000 new homes delivered in the city, Belfast would benefit from **an additional £10.2m in rates** over 10 years



For every 500 new businesses occupying commercial space in the city, Belfast would benefit from **an additional £87.9m in rates** over 10 years



Every 10,000 sqft additional commercial floorspace will support around 50 new jobs, **adding £25.7m GVA** to the regional and national economy over 10 years



Spending by the new employees (each 10,000 sqft) would total **£9.3m** over 10 years **on goods and services** in the regional economy

Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Policy (BCCRIS)

BCCRIS was produced by Belfast City Council in 2015 and subsequently adopted by Department for Communities. It represents the agreed regeneration policy for the city centre. It sets out the context for developing the city centre and connecting to the city around and outlines aspirations for the continued growth and regeneration of the city centre.

BCCRIS set out **eight core policies to support the ongoing regeneration of Belfast city centre**. They are:

1. Increase the residential population
2. Increase the employment population
3. Manage the retail offer
4. Maximise the tourism opportunity
5. Create a regional learning and innovation centre
6. Create a green centre, accessible to cyclists and walkers
7. Connect to the surrounding city
8. Enhance shared space and social impact

The Regeneration Tracker provides a snapshot of regeneration activity during 2023 within **Belfast city centre (including Titanic Quarter)**. The Tracker provides an overview of activity and is not intended to be a comprehensive review.



City Centre & Titanic Quarter Regeneration Tracker

2015 -2023

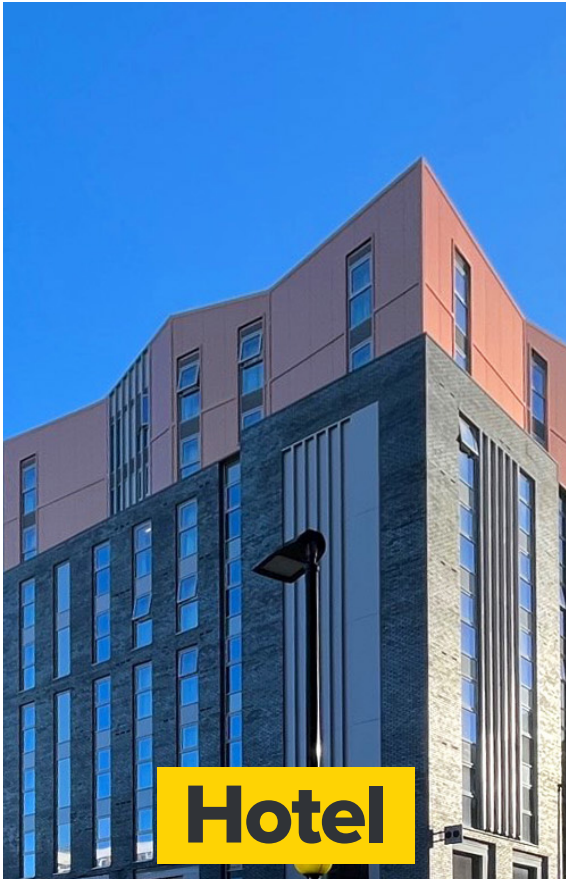
The Belfast Agenda
The city's population has **increased by 2%**.
The increase accounts for 9% of the 2035 target of 66,000 additional people.



Office

2.7m sq. ft. completed across 43 sites including **2m sq. ft. of new build** across 17 sites

120,500 sq. ft. under construction, 4m sq. ft. approved but not started and **265,000 sq. ft. pending** decision



Hotel

1928 rooms completed across 16 sites

311 rooms under construction

1249 rooms approved but not started, **278 pending** decision and **550 at pre-planning**



Retail & Leisure

150,000ft2 of retail floor space **completed**

441,000ft2 of leisure floor space **completed**

150,000ft2 of retail and leisure floorspace **under construction**



PBMSA

5223 beds completed across 13 sites

1081 beds under construction across 2 sites

1058 beds approved but not started, **817 pending** decision and **5000+ beds at pre-planning**



Residential

441 homes completed across 18 sites

1000+ homes under construction across 6 sites

3400 homes approved but not started, **1233 pending** decision and **2,500+ at pre-planning**



1 / Increase the residential population

Focus on the need for a **critical mass of people living in the city centre** across a **mix of tenures** to support a **vibrant and sustainable centre**

1 / Increase the residential population

- While residential completions during 2023 remained low, significant progress and positivity with Loft Lines breaking ground
- Completion of the Living Over The Shops scheme as Castle Place has started a trend of applications along Royal Avenue and Donegal Place, an adaptive reuse for the upper floors of some of our heritage buildings
- Towards the edge of the city centre there are a number of new homes under construction
- Currently 3400 homes approved but not started which highlights a number of challenges which exist in increasing the residential population
- Currently over 1000 new homes under construction in the city centre

Complete



Portland 38, Ormeau

- Completed
- 38 apartments
- Barnett Developments



First Living Over the Shops Scheme to complete

Castle Place

- Completed
- 9 apartments
- Alterity Investments



College Square North

- Construction
- 48 social apartments (38 General Needs, 7 Active Elderly, and 3 wheelchair units)
- Triangle Housing Association



1000+ new homes under construction

Council Owned Land

Gasworks Northern Fringe

- Construction
- 94 social homes
- Radius Housing Association

Under construction...



Start of build to rent pipeline

778 homes

Loft Lines

- Construction
- 778 homes, 151 social and affordable
- Lacuna / Watkin Jones



Weavers Cross

- Pre - construction
- c.400 homes, at least 20% affordable
- Translink & MRP



Porter's Annex, Apsley Street

- Construction
- 23 homes
- Bluehouse Development



Dublin Road

- Construction
- 85 serviced apartments
- Z Property Development

1 / Increase the residential population

- A number of significant planning approvals have been granted, including those at Corporation Street and May Street
- Following the adoption of the LDP in 2023 which created a 20% affordable housing policy, City Quays 4 will provide 69 affordable homes at Pilot Street, a provision of more than 25%
- Recent approvals mark an important step forward in the BTR pipeline, the natural progression from significant levels of PBMSA development seen previously
- The planning pipeline shows a number of new build schemes & also trends working with existing buildings, as encouraged by the LDP

Significant approvals for Build to Rent homes



18 Central, Corporation Street

- Planning approval granted
- 298 homes
- MRP



May Street

- Planning approval granted
- 77 homes
- Vinder & Endeavour



Posnett Street

- Planning application submitted
- 28 mixed tenure homes
- Clanmil Housing Association



Donegall Place Suites

- Planning application submitted
- 30 serviced apartments
- Kirk Bryson & Co Ltd



City Quays 4

- Planning approval granted
- 256 'energy efficient' Build-to-Rent apartments
- Belfast Harbour



Pilot Street

- Planning approval granted
- 69 homes (outside CC boundary)
- Belfast Harbour



Marlborough House

- Pre Application Notice
- 120 homes (20% affordable homes)
- The Martin Property Group



Havelock House

- Pre Application Notice
- c.105 new social homes
- Lotus Property & Clanmil Housing Association

1 / Increase the residential population

- Council is continuing to play a key role in facilitating mixed-tenure housing within the city through the Housing Led Regeneration programme

Private Sector Partner - Seed Sites



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The council progressed work seeking a Private Sector Partner (PSP) which will act as a master developer to deliver residential-led, mixed-use developments in support of our city's growth targets. Together with four initial seed sites identified in the images above, it is anticipated that there will be further additional opportunities across the city, totalling £630m GDV of housing led placemaking regeneration. The council's key objective is to bring forward sustainable development with high quality placemaking and people at its core. The PSP will have the financial means and relevant experience, capability, and resources to make a significant contribution to achieving our vision for Belfast.

Concept plans have been completed for the seed sites which show that there is a significant opportunity for residential-led, mixed-use developments, with potential for c£280m Gross Development Value (GDV) and not less than 850 residential units, alongside commercial, community space and public realm.



Inner North West - North

A Development Brief has been reissued by council, alongside DfC, to deliver housing led regeneration across three cluster sites, centred around key regeneration principles and via placemaking development, ensuring connectivity to surrounding communities.



Dunbar Cluster

Work continues to prepare a placemaking opportunity across nearly 3 acres of the Cathedral Quarter. Including the council's cleansing depot and Commission House, public car park and adjoining private land.



Surrounding City

Council, along with public sector partners, have continued work to identify potential land and assets that could enable housing-led regeneration opportunities across the city. This work has identified a number of sites, either in isolation or adjoining public sector partners lands, which could enable enhanced regeneration and placemaking.

1 / Increase the residential population - PBMSA

- Over 5000 student beds have been completed since 2015
- Additional regeneration development through developer contributions
- Key completions include Vita Student's first Belfast location, as well as Bradbury Place Mezzino Student's first Belfast location
- It is estimated 8,000 student beds will be required over the next few years to cater for our universities and Queen's University Belfast is set to invest up to £100m in the next four years
- In line with demand, there are currently more than 5000 PBMSA beds at pre planning

39%
increase in weekly
footfall along Royal
Avenue compared
with 2022

Completed...



Vita Student

- Completed
- 274 student beds
- MRP



Bradbury Place

- Completed
- 156 student beds
- Elkstone Partners with Mezzino Student



140 Donegall Street

- Planning approval granted
- 724 student beds
- LDS Devco with Mezzino Student

Ongoing...



14 Dublin Road

- Planning application submitted
- 463 student beds
- Queen's University Belfast

Under construction...



Nelson Place

- Construction
- 774 student beds
- Graham



48-52 York Street

- Construction
- 307 student beds
- ROK Property



Titanic Quarter Student Village

- Pre Application Notice
- c.1100-1200 student beds
- Lacuna Developments and Watkin Jones



The Grattan

- Pre Application Notice
- South Bank Square

1 / Increase the residential population - Outside city centre

- Outside of the city centre a number of significant developments were completed during 2023
- Significant construction continues at the 75 acre Glenmona site
- There are currently 1551 social homes under construction across the city

Completed...



Park Avenue / Hollywood Road

- Completed
- 90 homes - 63 social, 27 for private rent
- Choice Housing and Maple & May



Lisburn Road & Tates Avenue

- Completed
- 23 social homes
- Choice Housing



Kings Hall

- Construction
- 81 homes includes 45 apartments for over 55's and 36 apartments for social rent
- Choice Housing and Maple & May



Knock Road

- Construction
- 52 new social homes
- Radius Housing

Under construction...



Glenmona

- Construction
- 653 homes - 549 social and 104 affordable
- Apex Housing and Braidwater Homes



Milner Street

- Planning approval granted
- 87** apartments, of which 18 are affordable
- CTM Properties Ltd



Glen Road, Anderstown

- Planning application submitted
- 15 new homes in Anderstown



Oldpark Road

- Planning application submitted
- 21 new homes including 19 CAT 1 elderly apartments and 2 wheelchair apartments



Completed offices at The Paper Exchange by Wirefox

2 / Increase the employment population

Ensuring that **appropriate space exists for all businesses**, i.e spaces of **varying sizes**, **locations** - a diverse offering

2 / Increase the employment population

- A number of key lettings occurred across recent office completions highlighting the importance of ESG credentials to key tenants
- We continue to see a healthy split between Grade A new build, heritage conversions and re-purposing of late 20th century office buildings, as well as wider benefits such as developer delivered public realm
- Pearl Assurance House, Printworks and Create Lab all involved the conversion of vacant or under-occupied heritage buildings into modern workspace.

Lettings...



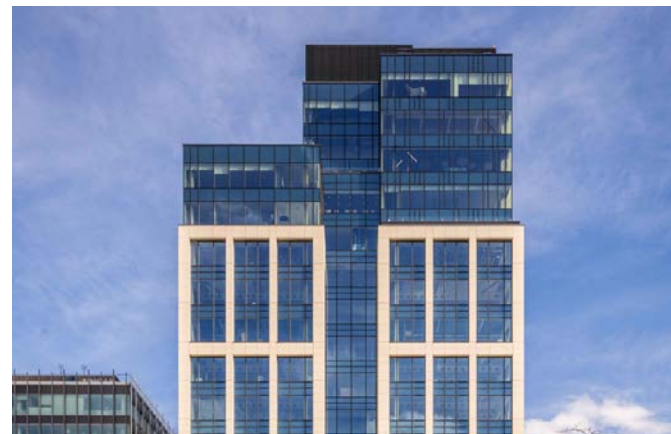
The Ewart

- £85m restoration and extension of the Grade A former Ewart's warehouse
- Only four floors not fully let



The Kelvin

- Property consultancy Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) moved its Belfast headquarters to the building



City Quays 3

- Santander relocating their Northern Ireland operation to the Belfast Harbour Building
- Microsoft has also been linked with a move



Custom House

- £12m refurbishment the Grade B+ listed building
- RICS NI are one of the new tenants

Completed...



The Paper Exchange

- Completed by Wirefox
- 11 storey Grade A commercial office building, with two ground floor retail/ cafe units
- Lloyds Bank relocating here from Gasworks



The Printworks, Queen Street

- Partially completed - Angus Properties
- Refurbishment and extension of 19th Century red-brick warehouse into office space over ground floor retail units



Pearl Assurance House

- Completed by MJM Group
- Refurbishment of 19th century listed building to high-end office with new restaurant with adjoining cafe space



Create Lab

- Completed by Andras House
- Refurbishment of a historic former industrial building to create Grade A office space

2 / Increase the employment population

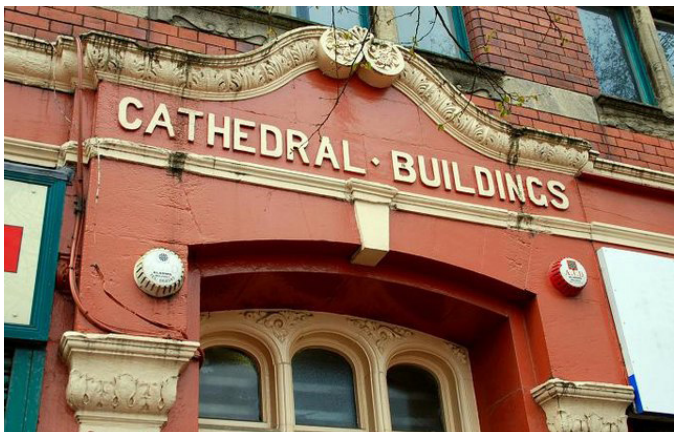
- Concern continues about the quality and longevity of some of our existing office stock. Changes to Energy Performance Certificates could set grade B as the minimum acceptable rating for commercial buildings, which research suggests is only 25% of our existing large office buildings.
- In 2024 we expect to see an increasing focus on office vacancy and how empty stock will be redeveloped/re-used/re-purposed. While re-purposing existing stock may present viability issues, there may also be opportunities to drive quality design and to enhance the city centre environment with an emphasis on embodied carbon reduction

Approved...



Urban HQ2, Upper Queen Street

- Planning approval granted
- Second £7m Urban HQ shared workspace building opposite Eagle Star House
- Magell



Cathedral Buildings

- Planning approval granted
- Restoration of the listed Old Cathedral Building including offices to the upper floors and retail units to the ground floor
- Killycrot Estates Ltd



Lesley Buildings, Fountain Street

- Planning approval granted
- Refurbishment of the Lesley Buildings with a new communal breakout area and roof terrace
- Gortalowry Developments Ltd



Glandore, Arthur House

- Planning approval granted
- Office space at the ground and first floor
- Glandore



Weavers Cross

- Outline planning approval granted
- Mixed-use office space
- Translink announced MRP as their commercial partner



City Quays 5

- Pre Application Notice
- A new office building with retail, leisure and exhibition space
- Belfast Harbour

Ongoing...



Bankmore Exchange, Dublin Road

- Planning application submitted
- Grade A office space with retail / restaurant space at ground floor and landscaping
- Kainos



Clarence House

- Listed Building Consent submitted
- Refurbishment of office space including repairs to the external envelope
- Dax Developments



3 / Manage the retail offering

Ensuring to **address the retail decline of the centre** through a **targeted and proactive approach to regeneration**



3 / Manage the retail and leisure offering

- In line with the Future City Centre Programme, which seeks to reimagine, diversify and future-proof the city centre, there has been rearranging and investment in our ‘high street’ along Donegall Place and Royal Avenue - with the Ivy opening at Cleaver House by the end of the year, a new River Island concept store, a number of new stores at CastleCourt, as well as council’s own investment in 2 Royal Avenue
- The Vacant to Vibrant capital scheme has continued to incentivise property owners and potential occupiers to bring vacant spaces back into use
- Six years after the closure of BHS the Keep is due to open its doors by the summer with H&M as well as new brand Deichmann shoes

Significant investment on Royal Avenue & Donegall Place



39%
increase in weekly footfall along Royal Avenue compared with 2022

The Ivy, Donegall Place

- The Ivy is beginning fit out of part of the former Cleaver House building activating a prominent corner opposite City Hall by end of 2024



CastleCourt

- New luxury cinema, with cafe and a bar.
- Construction continues on the new £10m leisure and retail destination
- New stores opened including New Look and Miniso, Muffin Break and Exclusive Designs



Future City Centre Programme

2 Royal Avenue

- 2 Royal Avenue continues to support the diversification of the city centre
- 2024 will see a continuation of the community and cultural space



River Island, Donegall Place

- New concept store on Donegall Place
- 11,000sqft over two floors, including combining physical and digital with interactive fitting rooms and self-checkouts



Future City Centre Programme

£808k
estimated rate value

56
employment opportunities

Vacant to Vibrant

- £1m capital grant scheme by BCC to incentivise property owners and occupiers to bring vacant spaces back into use
- 17 applications have been approved
- Complemented by Matchmaker service



The Keep

- Construction
- 70,000sqft retail and leisure space will include Deichmann footwear and H & M
- Alterity Investments



Vacant to Vibrant Funding

21%
vacancy rate for city centre (down from 23% in 2022)

Verona Bridal, Bruce Street

- Vacant to Vibrant scheme
- Verona Bridal relocated to Belfast city centre to expand their business, and transformed the former Creations furniture store



Pret A Manger, Donegall Square

- Northern Ireland’s first Pret A Manger
- Company is working with local Northern Irish suppliers

3 / Manage the retail and leisure offering

- The arrival of a number of new brands, including Pret A Manger, who are now looking for other locations. The White Company, who opened in Victoria Square, and Jamaica Blue who opened in the ground floor of Cornmarket, activating a site that had previously laid vacant since 2009
- Alongside new international brands some of our home grown brands, especially in F&B, have been doing well in the city centre.
- Other home grown businesses such as Trait, French Village and Orto, who started up outside the city centre have now opened city centre locations.



The White Company, Victoria Square

- Lifestyle retailer The White Company opened its first Northern Irish store
- Victoria Square also saw the opening of Irish retailer Sculpted By Aimee



Neighbourhood Cafe

- Neighbourhood Cafe found their long term home between Commercial Court and Donegall Street.



Dylan Oaks, Castle Lane

- Contemporary jewellers Dylan Oaks opened on Castle Lane
- The second of five locations the jeweller plans to open throughout Ireland



Jamaica Blue, Cornmarket

- Coffee shop Jamaica Blue opened its second flagship store in Cornmarket's ground floor



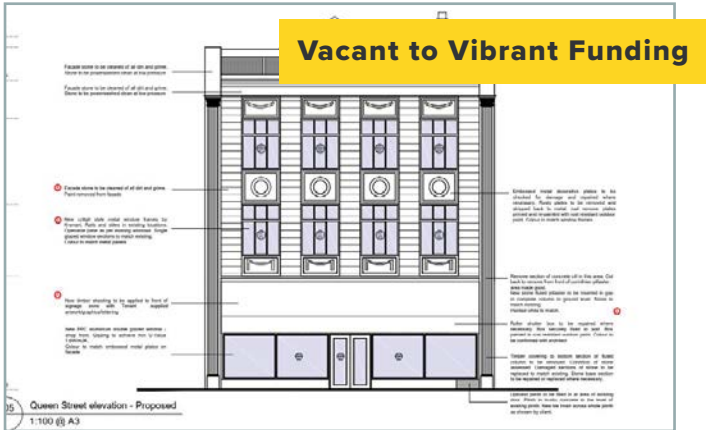
Haymarket, Royal Avenue

- Planning permission granted
- Masterplan across several interconnected buildings with a series of food and beverage outlets around a central space



Mamó, St George's Market

- The restaurateur behind a Peculiar Tea opened a patisserie on the Oxford Street
- Local brands including Trait, French Village, Orto have also opened new city centre locations



Craftworld, Queen Street

- Planning application submitted
- The Golden Thread Gallery plan to restore the old Corporation Gas Showroom, creating a gallery at ground floor with office space above



Writer's Square trading pitches

- Department for Communities is seeking expressions of interest for retail / food & beverages traders for 6 pitches on Writer's Square

3 / Manage the retail and leisure offering - Outside city centre

- Along the Maritime Mile the 10 year refresh at Titanic Belfast completed during 2023 as well as the opening on the Titanic Distillery in the Thompson Dock Pump House
- The Odyssey Pavilion, now known as Odyssey Place opened new restaurants well as a new leisure golf operator
- The completion of both Templemore Baths and Crumlin Road Gaol sees two new leisure destinations in the east and west of the city, both significant investments in heritage buildings



Titanic Distillers, Thompson Dock

- Titanic Distillers converted the Thompson Dock Pump House into a distillery and visitor attraction along the Maritime Mile



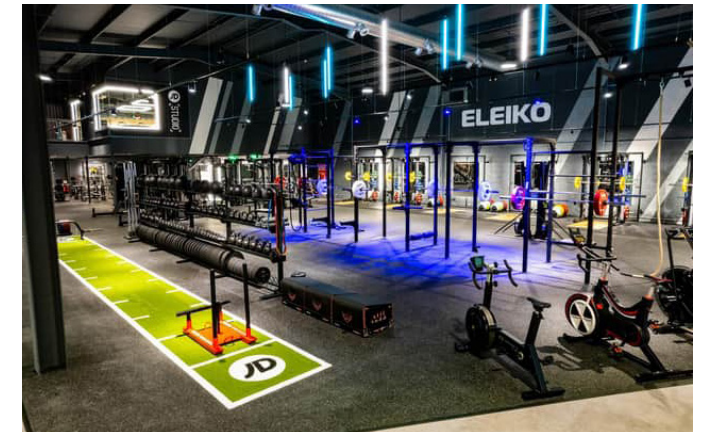
Odyssey Place

- Three major restaurant brands opened including; Zizzi, Nando's and Five Guys
- Venue become home of Lost City Golf, a golf leisure operator



The Strand Arts Centre

- A £6.5m redevelopment and restoration of the Strand Arts Centre is to begin including the creation of a 'living museum' experience



Hillview Retail Park

- JD Gym is due to open its first Northern Ireland venue at Hillview Retail Park. A new Screwfix store is also due to open at the retail park



Templemore Baths

- Construction completed on the £17m refurbishment and extension of the leisure facilities at Templemore Baths



Crumlin Road Gaol

- A new £22m distillery and visitor experience will open in the A-wing of Crumlin Road Gaol later this year



Boucher Retail Park

- A planning application was submitted by the Fraser Group to open a new Frasers superstore at Boucher Retail Park



Kennedy Centre

- The retail outlet reported an 7% increase in footfall, with new lettings from Anderson School of Music and Clonard Credit Union



4 / Maximise tourism opportunities

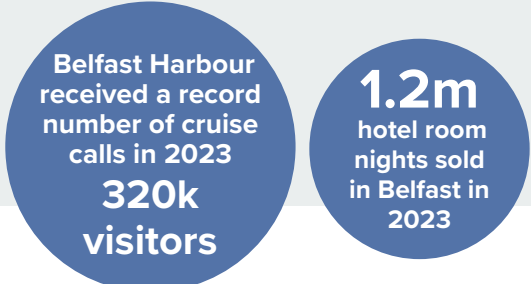
BCCRIS sought to **take tourism in Belfast up a level by complimenting the existing offer with another big attraction.** The early years of BCCRIS focused on ramping up hotel capacity within the city to cater for a growing tourism market



4 / Maximise tourism opportunities

- We continue to see a diversification in the hotel market with further delivery and development apart-hotel accommodation - catering for longer term visitors to the city, and different segments of the tourism market to ensure that the city tourist offer is sustainable and varied
- Over 300 hotel beds are in construction and over 1000 are approved

- A number of hotel approvals occurred in 2023, and we continue to see a trend for the reuse and adaption of our historic building stock and creation of active vibrant ground floors with restaurant, cafe, bar and gym offers.



Completed...

Room2

- Completed
- 175 bedroom apart hotel with a cafe/ restaurant, coffee roastery, meeting and workspaces, a gym, a bar and a lounge
- Oakland Holdings

Construction...

Marriott Aloft, Hamilton Dock

- Construction
- 228 room £30m hotel at Hamilton Dock in Titanic Quarter. Aloft Hotel and Residence Inn Apart-hotel.
- JMK

Hill Street Hotel

- Construction
- 20 bedroom boutique hotel with ground floor restaurant and bar
- Ducales Trading

Beaufort House Apart-hotel

- Planning approval granted
- 113 bedroom £20m apart-hotel
- Lotus Property

Centre House, Chichester Street

- Planning approval granted
- Conversion and extension part of the Centre House office building into a 163 bedroom apart-hotel
- Kilmona Property

Donegall Street Hotel

- Planning approval granted
- 20 bed hotel with bar / restaurant
- 3 Wise Men Pubs Ltd

Previously vacant for 15 years

Waring Hotel

- Planning approval granted
- Conversion and extension of the Grade B2 listed War Memorial Building into a 120 bedroom hotel with restaurant/ bar venue
- SOM Properties

Scottish Mutual, Donegall Sq South

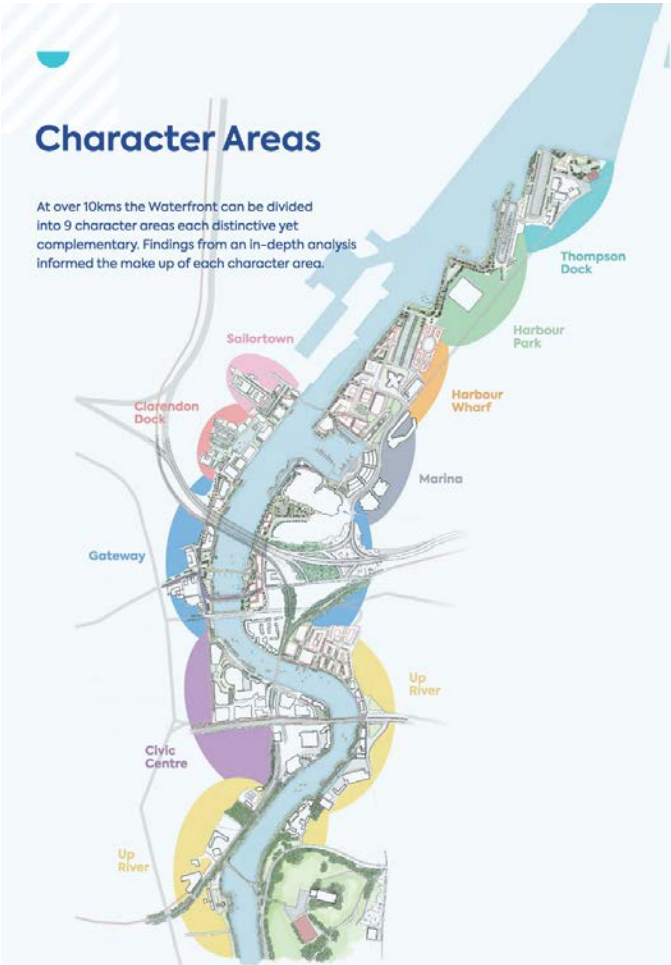
- Pre Application Notice
- Grade B1 listed building to a hotel with public bar, restaurants, and function space
- The Martin Group

4 / Maximise tourism opportunities



Belfast Stories

Following a 12 month competition an integrated design team have been appointed for Belfast Stories. The **unique visitor destination for Belfast** is set to open by 2029 unlocking almost 100 years of heritage at the 1931 Art Deco Bank of Ireland Site on Royal Avenue. The appointment of the team marks an important step forward for the regeneration project.



The Belfast Waterfront Promenade

Belfast has launched its vision to make its waterfront a truly iconic location to work, socialise, live and play. Spanning over 10 kilometres along the River Lagan, the Waterfront Promenade Framework provides a **generational opportunity to reshape Belfast's relationship with its waterfront**, and to maximise the area's potential to provide environmental, economic and social benefits.



Giant's Park

Alongside the development of Ulster Studios / film facilities, council has agreed initial proposals via a private sector led development brief process to bring forward a major visitor attraction for the city. The proposed investment by Giant's Park Belfast Ltd will include leisure and recreational uses.



Casement Park

Having been derelict for more than 10 years, in April 2023 Casement Park was named as one of 10 stadiums in the UK and Ireland's bid to host the Euro 2028 finals.

5 / Create a regional learning & innovation centre

BCCRIS placed significant emphasis on the opportunities to **build on the existing strengths of established city institutions and diversify the spaces offered for businesses** in Belfast. The Belfast Region City Deal has accelerated progress in this area alongside other ongoing council initiatives

5 / Create a regional learning and innovation centre

Belfast Region City Deal



Momentum One Zero

The £70m innovation centre significantly aims to transform Northern Ireland's digital economy. Queen's University Belfast has submitted a Pre Application Notice for an extension to the ECIT Building in the Titanic Quarter.



Centre for Digital Healthcare Tech

Progress continues on Ulster University's £43M Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology (CDHT), a research-led, industry-facing project, developed in response to the identified strategic needs of the digital healthcare technology sector.



Riddel Hall, QUB

Queen's University completed its £17.5m business school in front of the Grade II listed Riddel Hall. The building hosts teaching and learning spaces for postgraduate students, and promotes a low-energy ecologically sensitive design.



Northern Ireland Investment Fund

King's Hall Health & Wellbeing Park

The development consists of medical and health services centre, retirement living, retail, restaurant, cafe, leisure and gym facilities. Dataworks, the first phase of Life Science space is complete. Further phases of Life Sciences space are proposed totalling 142,500sqft.



iREACH, Lisburn Road

Public consultation events were held and a planning application was submitted for the proposed Belfast Region City Deal funded iREACH Health facility for world class clinical research. The project is lead by QUB in partnership with the NHS.



Studio Ulster

Belfast Harbour progressed construction on the investment for a large scale Virtual Production studio complex at the North Foreshore. The project is being developed in partnership with Ulster University and NI Screen and is due to complete this year.



Belfast Region City Deal

Wireless Innovation Funding

The Belfast region, led by Belfast City Council, secured £3.8m wireless innovation funding from the UK Department of Science, Innovation and Technology, becoming one of 10 5G Innovation regions across the UK.



Catagen

The net zero innovation company has received £1m of funding from the Growth Finance Fund which will be used to accelerate the growth of the business. With support from Belfast Harbour they have also received funding to look at decarbonising the domestic maritime sector.

6 / Create a green centre, accessible for cycling and walking

A precursor to the **Bolder Vision**, this BCCRIS policy was intended as a key strand throughout the full strategy. The importance of **an attractive, accessible and green city centre - with a focus on placemaking** - is key to most, if not all, major investment and regeneration projects

6 / Create a green centre, accessible for cycling and walking

- A Bolder Vision remains a key priority driving forward green and accessible changes to the city
- Significant progress has been made in two of our key city centre green spaces, Cathedral Gardens and City Quays Gardens
- Alongside this a number of projects led funded or delivered by council have also progressed
- Tactical interventions such as planting and street art have been successful across the city however delivery at scale has been limited due to challenges



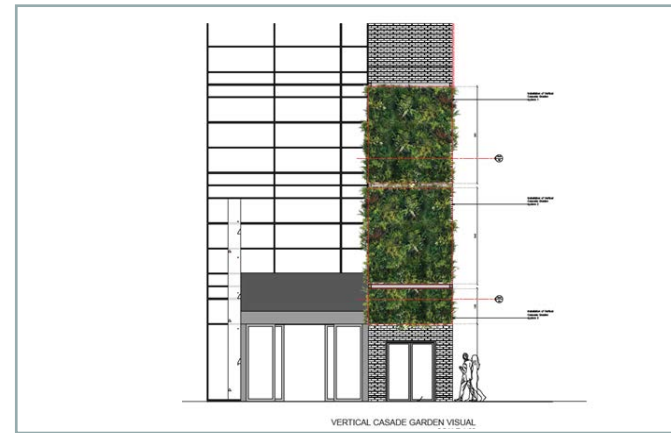
City Quays Gardens

Belfast Harbour has commenced works on the £3m City Quays Gardens to create a new urban garden in the city. Works are expected to be complete by August 2024.



Cathedral Gardens

Following public consultation and the preparation of a Business Case, an integrated design team has now been appointed for this urban garden and multi-use events space.



CC Greening Fund, Linenhall St

Killulagh Estates will create a Living Wall at 32-38 Linenhall Street; a vertical greening project on the façade of a prominent nine storey office building in the heart of Belfast city centre.



Demonstrator Project, Belfast Stories

The Conservation Volunteers will use a section of the Belfast Stories site to develop a community garden, using polytunnels, raised planters and vegetable beds. Volunteers will also deliver an extensive engagement programme.



Little Patrick / Little York Street

A planning application was submitted in July and engagement continues with local residents, student accommodation providers and DfI to deliver a scheme that enhances the safety and improves the look and feel of the area through placemaking interventions.



South West Quarter

The South West Quarter Revitalisation programme, co-funded by DfC and council, through Developer Contributions and Business Cluster & Community Grants, delivered a focused approach to the regeneration of Great Victoria St and Shaftesbury Square.



Cathedral Gardens Active Travel Hub

Following the success of the first year of operation in 2022, and with continued funding from Public Health Agency and Ulster University, the Hub moved into its second year of the pilot, delivering a range of programming to increase the profile of active travel.



CC Greening, Maritime Belfast

Council is working in with DfC and Belfast Maritime Trust to deliver a Kiosk and the Queen's Quay Greening Project, transforming a vacant area of land into an attractive green space to improve connectivity and wayfinding. A planning application was submitted in 2023.

7 / Connect to the City Around

Whilst the hard boundaries of the river and arterial roads define a **compact and identifiable city centre**, they also add to its isolation from surrounding communities. **If the centre is to belong to everyone in Belfast these physical barriers have to be overcome.**

7 / Connect to surrounding city

- Progress throughout 2023 on public transport and active travel including construction continuing at pace on Grand Central at Weavers Cross, with work now entering its final phases and expected to open before the end of the year.



Belfast Grand Central

The station marked topping out in July 2023. The hub is expected to open to passengers by the end of 2024 and will comprise 26 bus stands, 8 railway platforms, cycle and taxi provision and enhanced public realm.



Belfast Bikes

The bike hire scheme opened a new halt and the Kennedy Centre and has extended further into South and West Belfast with halts located at the Broadway entrance to the Royal Hospital, Grosvenor Road, Twin Spires and Millfield.



A Bolder Vision

A Bolder Vision sets out the Vision for a renewed city centre landscape that will encourage and support the diversification of the city centre, to encourage new city centre residents and to connect back to our existing communities.



The Eastern Transport Plan

DfI are preparing a new transport plan to enhance and re-balance transport networks in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connect communities creating an attractive, inclusive and safe economic region. ETP 2035 will be developed in a phased approach.



Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge

The bridge, which has full planning consent, will connect Belfast city centre with Ormeau Park, providing access to jobs, leisure space, services and opportunities for residents and visitors, contributing to the improved health and well being of local communities.



Sailortown - Titanic Quarter Bridge

The Cork Belfast Docklands Regeneration Initiative under the Shared Island Fund progressed plans for a bridge linking Sailortown and the Titanic Quarter. Options are currently being explored for further funding.



Belfast Rapid Transit, Phase 2

The Department for Infrastructure identified the potential to further extend the Belfast Rapid Transit network to North and South Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council areas.



Embracing the Belfast Waterfront

In response to A Bolder Vision, a Belfast Waterfront Task Group has been established to scope how the waterfront can fully realise its potential as a connected, vibrant corridor linking to and with key destinations, neighbourhood communities and city centre.

8 / Enhance shared space and social impact

The centre needs to be a place where people can **come together and participate in the life of the city** around them.

8 / Enhance shared space and social impact



2 Royal Avenue

Throughout 2023 the building’s internal space has been re-imagined to provide family friendly spaces and multi generational programming. Spaces include a cafe, seating and meeting space. A new entrance to the rear will connect the building to Bank Square. Longer term permanent uses are currently being progressed.



Cathedral Gardens

Cathedral Gardens will create a new urban garden in the city. The gardens will be publicly accessible to all creating important space for wellbeing and access to nature in the city centre. Following further consultation and engagement a planning application will be submitted later this year.



Belfast Stories

By 2028 an exciting new visitor destination will open in the city centre, reflecting the unique spirit of Belfast through a variety of media and immersive experiences. Belfast Stories will drive culture-led regeneration across the city, enabling international and local visitors to connect with Belfast and one another.



Weavers Cross

Weavers Cross has the potential for 1.3 million square feet of mixed-use office, life sciences, residential, student housing, hotels and retail/leisure space, presenting a unique opportunity to transform and regenerate a current brownfield site and create a new destination in the heart of the city.

Outlook for 2024...

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Belfast
City Council



Unlocking the next stage of BCCRIS

Challenge	City Action	Council Action
The Level of Regeneration investment is much lower in Belfast than in UK & RoI Counterparts , i.e. Future High Streets Fund, Towns Fund, Transforming Cities Fund, Local Growth Fund, Homes England, Brownfield, infrastructure & land fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires parity of funding through NI Exec & Westminster to unlock investment. This will require funding beyond the block grant.• Empowering council to fully address the critical issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to prioritise major investment decisions through Regen Framework, Corporate Plan Priorities & Medium-Term Financial Plan• Innovative approach to Rates modelling & allocation• Gain alignment with Exec Depts• Potential for CCIF to be a vehicle for administering fund
Under investment in key city infrastructure impacting or stalling development – LWWP, Place building public realm, Sustainable & Active Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise & promote Belfast city centre as the region’s economic driver• Requires sustainable & sustained investment plan through NI Exec to enable and encourage growth to fund LWWP & Bolder Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise & promote Belfast city centre as the region’s economic driver• Deliver council investment through the Regen Framework• Provide Civic leadership in partnership with Exec Depts to deliver on Bolder Vision & LWWP
Unlocking Housing Led Regeneration & addressing the critical housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeted funding required to overcome the viability issues• Addressing policy issues to unlock mixed tenure Housing at scale (i.e. Article 15 of the Housing Order)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead on the city-wide Strategic Sites Assessment• Deliver the city centre HLR competitive dialogue opportunities
Addressing Dereliction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need unified approach to overcome dereliction at scale• Specific funding required to unlock blockages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holistic approach required to enable unlocking or vesting of dereliction at scale

Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker



Belfast
City Council



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Subject:	Update on Culture Night
Date:	19 th April 2024
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Lesley-Ann O'Donnell, Senior Manager Culture, Tourism & Events Chris McCreery, Culture Manager

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: 40px;" 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	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <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 provide further information to enable consideration of an issue raised by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr Aine Grogan at last week's City Growth and Regeneration Committee under the procedures available to Members for raising an issue in advance that they wish to have included on the agenda.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the proposal from the Deputy Lord Mayor in the context of further information on how this could be facilitated, resourced and managed and the further action that would be required to provide confidence on the delivery of the option and its costs.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>At the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 10th April 2024, Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Aine Grogan, outlined a suggestion to support cultural venues in the City to open on the evening of 'Culture Night' in September, within the Belfast 2024 Programme of events. The Committee agreed to refer the decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th April for consideration so that further detail of how this could be facilitated, resourced and managed could be provided.</p>
3.2	<p><u>The Culture Night concept</u></p> <p>Established in 2009, Culture Night Belfast was a large scale and free cultural event taking place in the Cathedral Quarter and city centre of Belfast. The concept traces its roots to an initiative of Temple Bar Cultural Trust / Dublin City Council in 2006. The first event in Dublin began as an innovative but relatively modest local event with 40 venues opening free and late in the evening in Dublin's Temple Bar, expanding citywide in 2007, more than doubling in size with 87 cultural institutions participating. From this foundation, the Culture Night concept has grown in scale and profile becoming an established and popular part of the cultural calendar across over 40 towns and cities throughout the island of Ireland alongside events internationally such as London, Paris, Berlin and New York.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Culture Night in Belfast</u></p> <p>Culture Night in Belfast began in 2009 when a number of arts organisations came together to organise the first Belfast Culture Night in September 2010. In 2012/13, the Cathedral Quarter Trust became the custodians of the event, delivering Culture Night in the city until the final event in 2019.</p>

3.4	As the largest free shared cultural event in the city-centre, audiences grew to an attendance of over 100,000 for the 2019 event held across two days in September 2019. This event was delivered by a core team of a Creative producer, a programme assistant, a marketing manager, a freelance production manager, 15 area managers, internship placements and over 100 volunteers.
3.5	The budget for Culture Night ranged from £240k in 2016 to over £328k in 2019. Whilst Culture Night received £12,000 annually from the councils Core Multi Annual Funding programme from 2016 to 2020, the event also received £68,000 in 2019 with additional resource through the City Centre Revitalisation Funding. The event received the majority of its support coming from other statutory bodies including the Arts Council NI, The Executive Office, Department for Communities and Tourism NI alongside support from trusts and foundations and the private sector.
3.6	<p>In 2020, the Cathedral Quarter Trust commissioned a Strategic Review and Three-year Development Plan for Culture Night Belfast. This review identified that whilst “Culture Night Belfast was an extremely well attended, much-appreciated and, to some extent, iconic city event, the existing model for Culture Night has become problematic.”. The report highlighted various concerns with the previous Culture Night model including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audience for the event has grown exponentially whilst the volume and quality in the programme have not; • the idea that artists could, would or should give their time for free no longer sits comfortably; the audience’s relationship with the event has changed so that family audiences feel pushed out and unsafe; • Critically there is confusion over what the purpose of the event in how and what it delivers for the creative sector is and where the responsibility for it effectively achieving that purpose lies
3.7	This review was completed in spring 2022 and the Cathedral Quarter Trust did not run Culture Night in 2022, with organisers stating that the event had “become too big and unwieldy and the original intention of providing a platform for our artistic and cultural communities to connect with a much wider audience had been lost.
3.8	On 6 th April 2023, the Cathedral Quarter Trust announced that it is “has been forced to cease day to day operational activity, including planning any cultural events, with immediate effect and for the foreseeable future, following the withdrawal of core funding by the Department

	<p>for Communities.”. The statement continued “Following the withdrawal of its core funding CQT will not be directly involved in the delivery of any future Culture Night and as a Board we will continue to work with Belfast City Council and other stakeholders to explore all options around the future of this popular and important event.” In the absence of the Cathedral Quarter Trust, no organisation has taken on the lead organising and delivery role necessary to revive Culture Night in Belfast.</p> <p><u>Culture Night in other locations</u></p>
3.9	<p>Through conversations with colleagues across various cities, officers in the Culture Development Team have been examining how Culture Night is delivered in other jurisdictions. In the Republic of Ireland, the Culture Night brand is managed centrally by the Arts Council Ireland, in partnership with local authorities and cultural organisations throughout the island of Ireland. As well as providing financial support to local authorities, Arts Council Ireland manage the core brand, website and major media partnerships such as broadcast events with RTE.</p>
3.10	<p>Whilst delivery models and challenges vary across different locations, Culture Night is largely led by local authorities in each area. Investment in Culture Night initiatives range from approximately €30k in Cork (led by council staff) to over €190k in Dublin.</p>
3.11	<p>As the largest Culture Night, Dublin Culture Night attracts over 100k people over 350 events. The event is embraced as an audience development initiative and is shaped through co-design with the arts sector. The event takes place across arts and cultural organisations and venues of all shapes and sizes, from independent studios and art-spaces to national cultural institutions, by extending opening hours to allow increased access for the public. Unique events and workshops are specifically programmed at participating locations and all activities are made available to the public free of charge. Unlike the Culture Night Belfast model, which was largely about converting the streets of the Cathedral Quarter into a pop-up venue with road closures and on street programming, Culture Night Dublin does not involve road closures and is spread across the whole city.</p>
3.12	<p>Dublin City Council manage the event through procurement for ‘single operator frameworks’, a multi annual arrangement which can be utilised for four years. This procurement covers the operator who in turn tender out for an event management company so they can recruit additional staff/assistants. The Dublin Council Events unit liaise with police/gardai and insure</p>

	<p>the event. The procurement for the freelance event company is accountable to the arts manager in Dublin City Council.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Late Night Art</u></p> <p>Late Night Art is an open-access celebration of arts in Belfast where Galleries and cultural venues open late on Thursday evenings (1st Thursday every month) to the public, showcasing new exhibitions and art installations across the city centre. The event, which is managed and led by the visual arts sector, has a long-established identity and has built a loyal and diverse audience base. The established regularity of the event happening on every first Thursday of every month is a key component of the event's success so far and has been established in the cultural calendar. Recent examples of success include audiences of over 600 people attending exhibition launches at Belfast Exposed & Arcade.</p>
3.14	<p>Officers in the Culture Development team have a strong working relationship with Belfast Visual Arts Forum (BVAf) as a collaborator, funder & steering group member. Throughout 2023/24, officers have worked with the sector to reform the forum and develop initiatives to enhance capacity and skills in the sector. As part of the 2024/25 Culture Development workplan, officers are committed to working with BVAf to help uplift and amplify Late Night Art as a significant cultural event for this city through investing in the development of this programme as well as the Marcomms activity promoting it.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Belfast 2024</u></p> <p><i>Belfast 2024</i> is a year-long celebration of home-grown culture featuring new and exciting events, theatre, music, and art developed through new co-design and partnership models with the city stakeholders, the creative sector and the citizens of Belfast. The year delivers on the aims of the City Council's Cultural and Tourism strategies, Belfast Agenda, <i>Bolder Vision</i> and City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. All founded in a belief and a commitment from Council that culture, sustainability, collaboration, partnership and people should be at the heart of the city's Development to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards Belfast becoming a more 'attractive' place to live and work • Addressing city dereliction, by increasing vibrancy and civic pride • Recognise the Climate Crisis, develop awareness & change cultural behaviours • Re-activate Belfast's Tourism Sector and develop our Cultural Tourism offer • Deliver a distinct portfolio of city events connected to citizens and attracting international visitors promoting Belfast as a world-class cultural destination

3.16	<p>As part of the Belfast 2024 programme, there is a significant number of cultural events happening in the last two weeks of September including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - World Peace Day Block Party in Townsend St with Ulster Orchestra – 21st Sept - Launch of our digital playroom Wiggle Room - BBC Concert – Century of Stories at Waterfront – 24th Sept - Belfast Half Marathon – 22nd Sept - Shadow Dock at Thompson Dry Dock – 26 – 29th Sept - An Droichead Irish Language Dance Showcase - Drift River Installation - throughout - Late Night Art – 5th Sept and 3rd October
3.17	<p><u>Options for a late night event in September 2024</u></p> <p>Following the discussion at City Growth and Regeneration Committee, council officers have examined options on how an event on the night of Culture Night could be facilitated, resourced and managed. In order to develop an evening event, consideration would need to be given to multiple factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic – Is the event in one defined location (e.g. city centre, or a section of the city centre such as Cathedral Quarter) or open to the whole city • Support mechanisms – Is financial support available for groups to apply to or are organisations asked to contribute their own resources as an audience development tool • Thematically – Is the event focused on a particular artform or audience. • Delivery mechanism – Is this delivered via an external facilitator or internally in council • Marketing – Who leads on collation and promotion of the event • Budget – What are the requirements to make the event successful
3.18	<p>Specific challenges and implications, including requirements for engagement with the sector are outlined below in relation to the options identified but it should be noted that the pressures on staff resource during Belfast 2024 are a consideration in all options. Further engagement would be also required on the options identified to assess deliverability.</p>

3.19	<p><u>Option 1 – Extended Late Night Art</u></p> <p>As a pre-existing event in the city with a defined list of galleries and participants, officers could consult with the organisers of Late Night Art to assess the appetite and feasibility of producing a special Late Night Art on 20th September.</p> <p>However, it is important to note that Late Night Art is an audience development initiative created and managed by the visual arts sector, with Belfast City Council playing a supporting role in helping to amplify the event. Officers will need ample time to consult with the organisers of the event to explore the appetite and feasibility of an additional event on 20th September. It is also worth noting that the established regularity of this happening on every first Thursday is a key component of the event's success so far and has been established in the cultural calendar. Galleries & Studios will have their exhibition schedule and Artist contracts in place for the year. Any disruption to this date may negatively impact an Artists opening date, potentially dilute attendee number for openings and impact Late Night Arts profile as taking place on the first Thursday.</p> <p>Given that the regular cadence and “first Thursday” principal is part of Late Night Arts success, an alternative approach could be to invest in a pilot event on the nights that are already scheduled. Two Late Night Art events are currently planned for the 5th September and 3rd October and depending on investment levels, these could be extended to increase audience engagement.</p> <p>Supporting the Late Night Art concept, either through a bespoke event on the 20th September or investing the regular date in October, would require the administration of financial support to organisations who are part of the current Late Night Art ecosystem. There are currently circa 30 organisations/venues who participate in Late Night Art.</p>
3.20	<p><u>Option 2 – Procure an external organisation</u></p> <p>Similar to how the delivery of Culture Night is managed in Dublin, one potential model is the procurement of an external organisation to manage an open call for a series of free events in venues across the city. This contractor would act as a receiving house, collating various events from willing participants under one banner and presenting them to the public as a cohesive programme. This external organisation would be expected to lead on programming, production and marketing of the event, with support from council officers.</p>

	<p>Given the required approvals and time needed for a robust public procurement process, there are significant internal time and resource challenges to this approach. There are also acute resource pressures within the cultural sector which may negatively impact the response to an open call.</p>
3.21	<p><u>Option 3 – Produce the event internally through funding mechanisms</u></p> <p>One possible approach to delivery of an event on 20th September would be to invite organisations to apply for small grants to develop and deliver events in venues throughout the city.</p> <p>There are significant time and human resources required with this approach, particularly given the current workloads relating to delivery of Belfast 2024, the ambitions of the Cultural Workplan, delivery against the Music Strategy and the ongoing calendar of city and major events. This approach would result in Council effectively acting as curators for the night through selecting which projects receive financial support through funding. There is a current baseline as identified in a cultural mapping report delivered by the cultural team there is circa 141 cultural venues across the city who could be eligible for support. Mapping remains an ongoing workstream to reflect changes in the city landscape. Current data shows that the city is home to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 artists studios (places where artists rent/utilise studio spaces for their work) • 39 Gallery & exhibition spaces (places where you can view/buy art including commercial galleries) • 23 Museums & archives (open to the public) • 26 music venues (places to hear live music with regular ticketed events. Does not include pubs) • 34 theatres – Places where you can see live performances/comedy with a regular programme
3.22	<p>Similar to other funding schemes full eligibility criteria, themes and outcomes would be required to be developed. In addition this scheme would still required additional central marketing support to promote.</p>
3.23	<p><u>Long term development of Culture Night</u></p> <p>As an historically successful event in Belfast and a key part of the cultural calendar across multiple towns and cities globally, in recognition of benefits of having a sustainable and successful event in the city, Council officers have been exploring potential ways forward part</p>

	<p>of the legacy planning from Belfast 2024 for September 2025 and onwards. This work to date has included meeting with officials involved in developing and delivering Culture Night in other jurisdictions to understanding funding and delivery models.</p> <p>The concept of Culture Night was initially developed as an audience development tool for the culture sector and this principal is the foundation of other successful Culture Nights such as Dublin. It is therefore vital that any development of a new iteration of Culture Night must begin with the Cultural and Creative Sector co design to ensure buy-in, ownership and the success of the event.</p> <p>In order to build a sustainable Culture Night in future years, it will also be necessary to secure significant buy in and investment from previous statutory funders and supporters such as Arts Council NI, British Council, Museums NI, BBC NI, National Heritage Lottery and finally from the broader business, institutional and educational sectors.</p> <p>Whilst Belfast City Council can act as a catalyst for the re-emergence of the event, there is significant merit in having an independent convenor of these conversations. The contracting of a convener who could broker and bring together conversations and assess interest and capacity across the cities cultural and creative sector to enable BCC to forward the objectives of its Cultural Strategy.</p> <p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.24 In the discussion held at CGR a proposal for circa £75k was discussed but how this would be utilised and the split of this against delivery and marketing support would depend on the option identified. There is no current allocation for this initiative within unit budgets or the Belfast 2024 programme budget and either budgets would need to be reallocated or funding would be required from central budgets and/or underspends. An understanding of available funds would be linked to the reporting of the year end position in June.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.25 The cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i> has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). Specific initiatives as required will be subject to a further equality screening.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

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Subject:	80th Anniversary of D-Day Landings
Date:	19 th April 2024
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Sandra Robinson, Protocol and Public Affairs Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <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 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime 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
1.1	The purpose of this report is to outline a proposed programme of events to be organised by Council to mark the 80 th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings in 1944.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. approve the proposed programme of events to be organised by the Council over the 80th Anniversary period, on Wednesday 5th and Thursday 6th June 2024. ii. approve costs in the region of £10,000 to deliver this programme.

3.0	Main Report
	<p>Background</p> <p>3.1 Thursday 6th June will see the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy in 1944. Multi-National allied forces including US, UK, Polish, Canadian, French and Dutch forces carried out the beach landings which initiated the retaking of mainland European from occupying Axis forces.</p> <p>3.2 Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole played a significant role in the training and preparation for D-Day, hosting a considerable number of US Servicemen before their deployment as well as facilitating the necessary training required for the operation. The anniversary will be marked across Northern Ireland as well as international commemorations focussed on Normandy itself.</p> <p>3.3 A request has been received to mark the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landing from Councillor Bunting.</p> <p><u>Proposed Programme of Events</u></p> <p><u>Wednesday 5th June</u></p> <p>3.4 Themed Seniors afternoon Tea Dance will be held in either City Hall or pending availability the Ulster Hall, commemorating pre-D-Day activities in the city. Free tickets will be made available to senior citizens across the city.</p> <p><u>Thursday 6th June</u></p> <p>3.5 Lunchtime reception and historical talk in Belfast City Hall on the theme of D-Day and Belfast's role in assisting the preparations for the landings.</p> <p>3.6 On the evening of the 6th June, it is proposed to illuminate City Hall blue, in keeping with the maritime nature of the landings, and to place 2 searchlights in the grounds of City Hall evoking the wartime theme.</p> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>All events will take equality and good relations implications into account.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The cost of delivering the council's programme of events is estimated between £10,000 - £12,000. Funds will come from existing budgets.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

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