

Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast
City Council**

8th September, 2025

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

As previously notified to you, I enclose a copies of the reports for the following items to be considered at the meeting to be held on Wednesday, 10th September, 2025 at 5.15 pm.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

3. **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

(a) Major Events Update (Pages 1 - 10)

4. **Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

(a) Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition Update (Pages 11 - 20)



Subject:	Major Events Update
Date:	August 2025
Reporting Officer:	Keith Forster, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Lesley-Ann O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture & Tourism

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

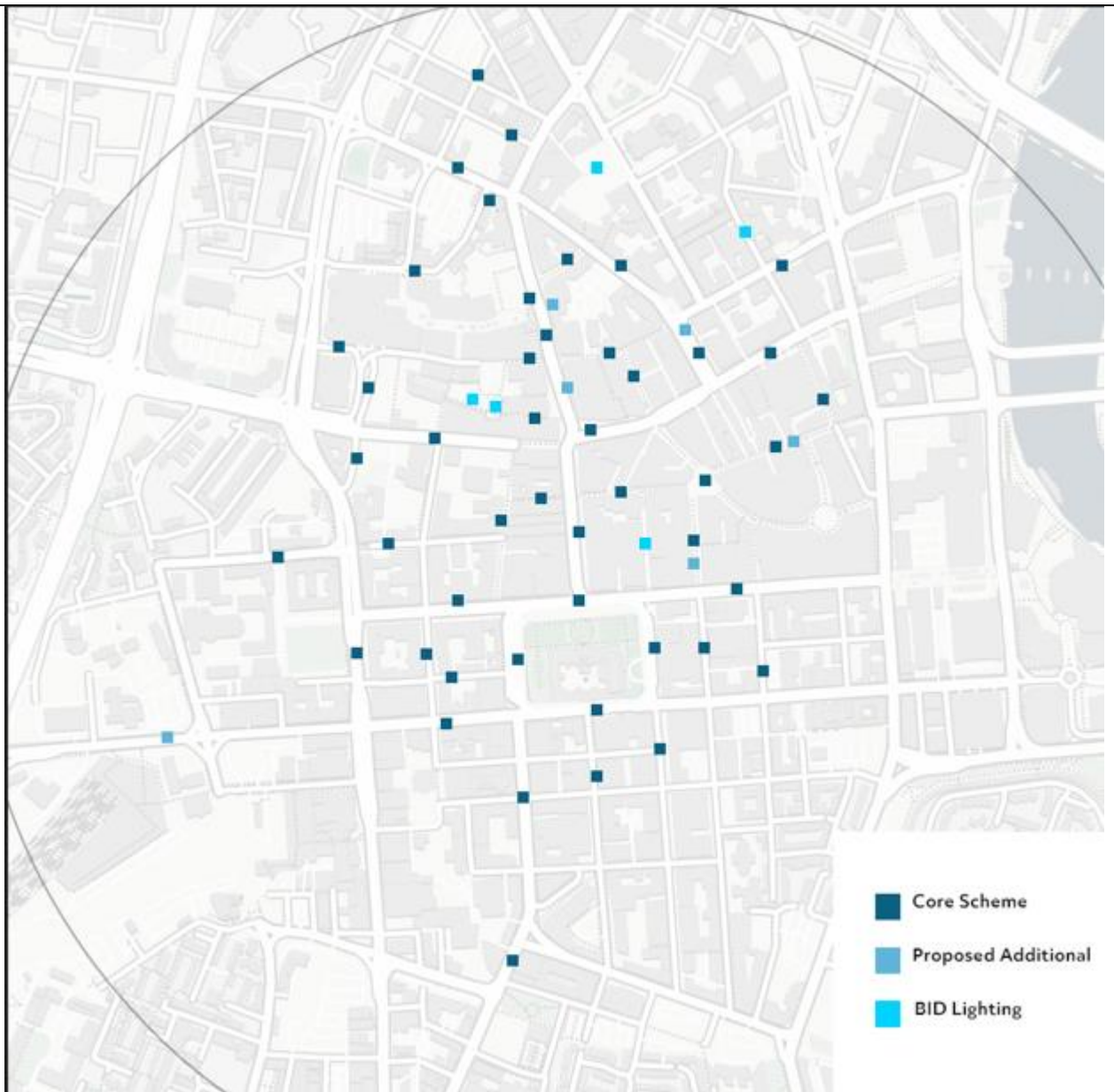
Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide an update on Fleadh Cheoil• To provide an update on Oireachtas• To provide an update on festive lighting• To provide an update on America 250• To provide an update on New Years Eve
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Members are asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the update regarding Fleadh Cheoil• Note the update regarding Oireachtas festival

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note and approve costs associated with Festive lighting scheme • Note the update regarding America 250 • Note the update regarding New Years Eve
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Fleadh Cheoil</p> <p>August SPR committee considered a report on the strategic case for the Fleadh and its significant economic impact and return on investment. Members were updated on the financial plan associated with hosting the Fleadh and the Committee approved the draft outline expenditure budget for Fleadh Cheoil 2026.</p> <p>Following consideration of the proposed governance arrangements, including detailed proposals in relation to governance of Finance Risk, Members agreed not to establish a Members Working Group but that a further report should brought back to the Committee on governance, following engagement with Comhaltas, and on the use of delegated authority.</p> <p>SPR Committee Members were also advised that an engagement plan is being developed to ensure early engagement with stakeholders and local communities which is essential to ensure inclusivity and impact. This will include a city stakeholder group which will help to inform the work undertaken in relation to programme development and operational planning and will be closely aligned with the work of the marketing and communications group.</p> <p>Following attendance at Wexford 2025 a dedicated Party Group Leader session has been scheduled to discuss lessons learned and to update on key areas of work.</p> <p>A number of core work packages are currently under way, being overseen by the internal Programme Board and the Fleadh Executive Committee, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of all governance structures (subject to further report to SPR Committee) • Financial plan, funding & sponsorship • Audit & risk • Lessons learned from Wexford • Brand, marketing and communications • Operations and logistics planning • Ground footprint • Traffic management planning • Core programming • Venue mapping

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licencing • Planning • Accommodation • Volunteering • Visitor servicing
3.2	<p>Oireachtas na Samhna 2025</p> <p>Planning is well under way for the Oireachtas with final technical site visits occurring early September. Core venues remain as ICC, Ulster Hall, City Hall and the Europa.</p> <p>Dedicated brand work has been developed and is being utilised across all partner marketing. Exhibition space within ICC has been identified for BCC which is being led by language officer aligned to ongoing work for the language action plan. Visit Belfast will also avail of exhibition space to facilitate visitor servicing.</p> <p>Officers have been working with core venues to ensure there is a provision of Irish language speaking staff on front of house duties and integration into announcement systems</p> <p>Through the ongoing work of the programme board, Oireachtas have facilitated an ongoing engagement to encourage participation and competition entries as well as a Schools engagement programme.</p> <p>Additional support packages of work in partnership with Visit Belfast are focused on visitor management with the addition of translated city maps, a familiarisation video, web content and industry front of house briefings.</p> <p>Key programme highlights include;</p> <p>Wednesday 29th October</p> <p>Official opening – ICC Belfast</p> <p>Media awards – Belfast City Hall</p> <p>Thursday 30th October</p> <p>Competition schedule commence – ICC Belfast</p> <p>Live Broadcasts – TG4, RTE and BBC NI – Multiple venues</p> <p>Club Celi and festival club - Europa</p> <p>Friday 31st October</p> <p>Competition schedule -ICC Belfast</p> <p>Live Broadcasts – TG4, RTE and BBC NI - Multiple venues</p> <p>Festival club - Ulster Hall</p>

	<p>Saturday 1st November</p> <p>Park run</p> <p>Competitions – ICC Belfast</p> <p>Festival club - Ulster Hall</p> <p>Sunday 2nd November</p> <p>Final live broadcast</p>
3.3	<p>Festive lighting</p> <p>Officers have conducted a number of site visits with the supplier to identify any adjustments to the core lighting scheme to allow for ongoing building works, access to wayleaves and power sources.</p> <p>As part of this work a number of potential additional sites have been identified to enhance the core scheme and address areas where there has previously been limited lighting; namely additional infrastructure in: Royal avenue trees, Ann street, Arthur street, Bank Square and Bridge Street</p> <p>This is at an additional cost of £47,531 to the core scheme.</p> <p>Festive lighting budget allocation is £300,000, with management support previously facilitated through BCCM. Council have been in ongoing discussions with the BIDs about future provisions of the management of the scheme but for 2025 this will remain as council led delivery.</p> <p>In addition to this officers have engaged with the BIDs to identify additional areas that the BIDs will support through allocation of their own funding for Callender Stret, Blackstaff Square, Transport hub, Writers Square and Hill Street. Discussions are on going about potential for co-funding of some of the additional features.</p>



As part of the development work contractors have identified an ongoing issue with the power sources linked to DFI lighting columns. Where they do not currently meet safety standards the points require a full upgrade at a cost of £400/ point, this is a one off upgrade required to ensure a compliant and safe installation with BS7671. This impacts the majority of columns in use for the festive pole mounted features

The remedial works to bring the rest of the city up to standard and safety against the core scheme is a total of £77,600 and to facilitate additional scheme elements would cost £29,000 – totalling £106,600

Discussions have been held with DFI officers and they have advised that while DFI own the columns the infrastructure that lighting power supplies are drawn down from are within BCC ownership and therefore upgrade costs fall to BCC. This allows for access to isolate the power supply for festive lights therefore if a fault occurs only the festive light elements are impacted.

Wayleaves

BCC estates team are continuing to engage with business owners to complete the development of new wayleave agreements to support the scheme. All new wayleaves have been issued with circa 20% returned and ongoing dialogue being facilitated with all key partners. Discussions are well advanced and are being supported by the BIDs to access the appropriate building owners.

3.4 America 250

Following agreement at Committee last month in relation to options to support the marking of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the US Declaration of Independence in 2026, Officers are engaging with stakeholders in relation to planning and activities aligned to America 250.

Tourism Ireland

Tourism Ireland's approach to the 250th commemoration of the founding of the United States of America is pivoted around a number of key themes i.e. food and drink, music, history/heritage, and key attractions or experiences.

Tourism Ireland alongside Tourism Northern Ireland has undertaken a scoping exercise in respect to what sectoral stakeholders may be able to contribute to an overall tourism programme for the 250th commemoration centred around key sites, local anniversaries and marketing opportunities to drive US footfall into the region.

Tourism Ireland will also undertake a digital promotions campaign through e-mail, articles on US websites which will include videos, and instate market opportunities. In terms of media outreach, they will look to undertake:

- Inviting American celebrities who have an Ulster Scotch heritage to come over to Northern Ireland and investigate their roots
- Focused familiarisation trips
- Bespoke food tours for media
- Working on our musical strengths to attract inward visitors
- Targeting the travel trade market via themed webinars outlining key opportunities such as the Fleadh 2026 in Belfast and Ulster American Folk Park's 50th anniversary as components to consider.

Public Records Office NI (PRONI)

PRONI staff coordinate the US NI Cultural Working Group on behalf of the Department for Communities. DfC will coordinate the communications strategy on finalised components. Work is currently taking place to agree the delivery mechanism for the publicly announced small grants programme which is anticipated to go live in Autumn 2025.

Details shared regarding potential programming included:

- National Museums events centred around key dates and music festivals
- Hillsborough Royal Palace visitor engagement initiatives which may include a joint loan of an original copy of the Declaration of Independence to be co-hosted by HRP and PRONI
- Series of public lectures in PRONI Offices

Ulster Scots Agency

The Ulster Scots Agency is considering a number of avenues to commemorate the 250th anniversary:

- Publications: refresh of the Pioneers Trail map and conversion into booklet format;
- Digital projects: applications have been invited regarding a landmark digital project to narrate the role of Ulster Scots/Scots-Irish in American Independence
- Art: potential for a public art trail in a number of local authorities which have an Ulster Scots-US connection
- Gallery: extension of the Visitor Centre gallery to include a special US 250 exhibition with a long-term ambition of including a permanent loan of a copy of the Declaration of Independence. The Agency has also commenced discussions with Dublin's EPIC Museum with a view to using the Ulster Scots impact on the foundations of America to drive footfall to Belfast.
- Talks: Outreach events to highlight the role of Scots Irish in America's history
- Music: a strategic and signature event which pivots around Belfast-Boston-Nashville relationships. Initial concept is in regard to a weekend event centred around 4 July using American artists who also have a link to Belfast/NI e.g. Getty Music. This could act as a hook to attract inward visitors from both Sister Cities and present a cultural offering around an economic mission, should Belfast City Council agree to develop such a programme. Given the scale of such an event, the Agency would also propose city dressing on NI-US 250 within its communication and promotional channels

Linenhall Library

Linenhall Library has expressed willingness to develop and house an exhibition and are prepared to do so around a theme identified by BCC e.g. links between city's emigrants which had economic impact on founding of the US

Our Sister Cities

Research on the State Commission websites for both our Sister Cities shows that both have small grants programmes to commemorate the Semi quincentennial (Massachusetts has assigned funding, whilst Tennessee is seeking applications). Initiatives appear to be centred around museums and heritage sites.

	Officers will liaise with the Department for Communities and with stakeholders with a view to bringing back a further report.
3.5	<p>New Years Eve</p> <p>The Millennium Celebrations was a significant celebration across the globe and was celebrated in Belfast with an event outside City Hall. It was felt at the time that there was some merit in continuing to provide an event in subsequent years, this included two years of a Radio One Dance Party and a small concert at City Hall.</p> <p>However, this particular event was discontinued for a number of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appetite – while there will always be some voicing of the wish for a New Years event in the City, there are questions over the appeal of attending a late concert in mid-winter. • Cost of staging this event was significant, both in respect of suppliers charging high ‘holiday’ rates but also artists. Costs a decade ago were circa £250k for an audience of 3,000-4000, and with event delivery costs rising significantly post-pandemic, the cost of an New Years Eve event could be north of £400,000. • The opportunity cost to Council is very significant. <p>As part of the development of the cultural strategy recommendations were that Council did not host an outdoor New Years Eve event and as Members are aware there is no budget for supporting NY celebrations in 2025 and there are already considerable pressures on both the Culture Tourism and Events Teams. Officers will however engage with city partners to understand their plans for New Year 2025 and a report on this will be brought back to the committee.</p> <p>As part of the agreed work in relation to the events action plan officers are continuing to benchmark and assess the costs and impact of hosting NYE celebrations for future years.</p>
4.0	<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p> <p>4.1 The Fleadh will be delivered in accordance with draft expenditure budget and agreed financial plan. Remaining financial resources will be met from within existing departmental budgets and officers are continuing to work with partners to reduce the financial burden on council.</p>
5.0	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>5.1 The cultural strategy, A City Imagining has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). The Fleadh will be subject to a further equality screening and officers are engaged with the equality unit on progressing this</p>
	Appendices – Documents Attached

	None.
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Subject:	Belfast Regeneration Place Based Growth Proposition
Date:	10 September 2025
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Deirdre Kelly, Programme Manager, City Regeneration & Development Marie Miller, Marketing Manager, City Regeneration & Development

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?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Belfast Regeneration Place Based Growth Proposition.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note the update on the Belfast Regeneration Place Based Growth Proposition, including the Belfast Business Case for Place-Based Investment. II. Note the update on strategic engagement with the UK Government in Westminster, and the Northern Ireland Executive, including forthcoming joint Ministerial meeting with NI Executive as part of a strategic engagement programme aligned to the Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition to seek to secure place based and regeneration investment funding. III. Note the continued role for Members in terms of political party engagement at local, MP and ministerial level. IV. Note the response received from the Minister for Communities in relation to a letter issued from the Council at the request of CGR Committee seeking an update on what consideration had been given to the transfer of regeneration powers to local government.
3.0	Background
3.1	Members will recall that an update was brought to this Committee in June 2025 and SP&R Committee in April 2025 on the Belfast Regeneration Place Based Growth Proposition which sets out the case for enhanced regeneration funding in line with other UK cities, aligned to a growth proposition underpinned by regeneration priorities for the city.
3.2	As previously reported, the Place Based Growth Proposition sets out the compelling case for Belfast but notes that there are significant levers required for the city to realise its growth potential. It notes that due to a combination of funds not being applicable to the devolved administrations, and Northern Ireland receiving relatively lower allocations from funds operating on a competitive basis, results in Northern Ireland having amongst the lowest spend on regeneration and local growth per head of population, compared to Scotland, Wales and English regions – nearly half the regional average spend per capita. This outcome is not reflective of need for regeneration in Belfast relative to other cities in England, Scotland or Wales or Northern Ireland more broadly. Arguably the need is greater in a Northern Ireland context. A number of specific regeneration funds available in the rest of the UK have not been available in Northern Ireland which has led to a clear deficit and a missed opportunity for growth and positive economic, regeneration, social and environmental outcomes. Members will also note that the scale of under investment in Belfast is set out in a separate report to this

	Committee on the current DfC consultation on their proposed 'Shaping Sustainable Places' programme.
3.3	<p>The English Devolution White Paper, published in December 2024, envisions a fundamental change of the relationship between Whitehall and local government in England – with the intent of tackling regional inequality by transferring authority and funding over key policy areas and funding, such as economic development, housing, planning, transport and skills. There is now a presumption in favour of devolution on foot of this White Paper and with the creation of new Strategic Authorities this means funding and legislative powers will be further devolved in other UK cities. The transfer of additional funding and power to these Strategic Authorities across the whole of England will allow Councils to set and deliver on priorities that better respond to local needs and drive growth. Increased funding pots and flexibilities are to be afforded to those Strategic Authorities that progress within the devolution framework, with single-pot integrated settlements over 30 years and access to consolidated funding pots covering local growth, place, housing, and regeneration, non-apprenticeship adult skills and transport. Strategic Authorities designated at the Established Mayoral level of devolution will receive Integrated Settlements. By way of example, West Midlands Combined Authority will receive £388.6m for 2025-26 and Greater Manchester will receive £630m for 2025/26. Other areas include the North East, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region and Greater London Authority, where the process for determining the value of the integrated settlements has been published but not the funding allocations currently.</p>
3.4	<p>Belfast is already facing a regeneration deficit in both powers and funding and could be left even further behind if there are not commensurate levels of funding as with other core cities. This could make it even harder for the city to attract the resources needed to unlock demand and growth.</p>
3.5	<p>The Proposition seeks to secure regeneration funding for Belfast from UK Government and sets out asks for capacity (revenue) funding to further regeneration priorities, in line with similar funding received by the Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and Strategic Authorities in England; and a Regeneration, Housing and Infrastructure Fund seeded by the Government focussed on potential priority areas to transform Belfast, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing led regeneration across all tenures including measures to address dereliction • Improved infrastructure, connectivity, public realm and place making • Unlocking major regeneration schemes • Delivery of public and green spaces

3.6	Development of the Proposition has been informed through significant engagement with a range of cross-sector stakeholders and in line with the Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) Stocktake findings which received political and stakeholder endorsement.
3.7	Work is advancing on the full five-part business case to underpin the ask that is aligned to both corporate and Belfast Agenda priorities, and the BCCRIS Stocktake findings. Engagement continues with NI and Westminster at officer and political level to advocate for the Proposition.
4.0	Main Report
4.1	<p>Belfast Business Case for Place-Based Investment</p> <p>As noted to Committee in June 2025, a full five part business case is being developed to support the Place Based Growth Proposition. The business case outlines the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management case to support the request to Westminster. The business case outlines how BCC has spent the last 18 months laying the groundwork to develop the proposition and establish the conditions for successful delivery. This has included stakeholder engagement with elected representatives and business, investor and local communities, and builds on more than 10 years of wider community and stakeholder engagement through the Belfast Agenda and BCCRIS. The emerging recommendations have been informed through previous engagement with members on key areas including Housing-led regeneration and recent engagement with BCC officers, senior officials from DoF, DfI and DfC and representatives from local development, business and local communities to inform the priority areas, assist with quantifying the ask and assessing project readiness. Members should note that any future funding that might become available would be subject to further discussion and agreement on how it would be deployed.</p>
4.2	The emerging business case includes a comprehensive evidence base to provide insight about Belfast's economic, demographic, housing, business, labour market and commercial property performance. The analysis recognises the city's strategic role within the wider region and its function as the capital city of Northern Ireland. The proposal builds on the success of the Belfast Region City Deal, and targets the city's legacy of physical regeneration challenges, and the wider 'regeneration deficit' that has seen Belfast struggle to match the power and dynamism of the English and Scottish Core Cities. This proposition sets out a compelling case for change and notes that unlike its peers, Belfast has lacked the means and resources to correct what could be seen as 'regeneration deficit'. Public spending on 'regeneration' has been about one half of its English counterparts, while decision-making remains fragmented and difficult. It notes that there are significant opportunities to be gained from an uplift in place-

	based regeneration and that this is best addressed by public-sector led investments which can then provide the leadership and confidence to the private sector and strategic stakeholders.
4.3	It outlines how BCC is seeking to equip itself with the ability and responsibilities to drive growth and investment in the city and is seeking to establish a new City-Wide Investment Fund (CWIF) designed to drive catalytic change - focusing on people and city living, delivering active and sustainable travel, developing green and climate resilient public realm, unlocking stalled major redevelopment schemes, addressing dereliction and vacancy and taking a multi-agency approach to place making and city management.
4.4	Critically, the proposition is based on an evidence-led understanding of market failures and a shared vision for the future. The emerging business case highlights that the proposed areas of focus provide value for money and deliverability, and will provide long-term benefits which will be transformational for city and wider region. Benefits include housing delivery and enhanced sustainable travel provision, better public spaces, improved community wellbeing and cohesion, addressing deprivation and continued regeneration.
4.5	The proposal builds on established systems and existing work streams undertaken by BCC and its partners. This includes the strong governance and administrative structures already in place, and a Regeneration Framework which can prioritise investments and activities
4.6	<p>It recognises the incredibly difficult financial conditions across the United Kingdom but highlights that this proposal is about unleashing potential and growth and is a statement of intent for the future of the whole of Northern Ireland. It notes that our asks mirror arrangements in other parts of the country, and requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity (revenue) funding per annum for three years - Belfast, like other strategic growth areas and new Strategic Authorities in England, would benefit from specific funding to further its regeneration priorities - this would help put the city on a more equal basis with English city regions. • City-Wide Infrastructure, Housing and Regeneration Fund - seeded by the UK Government. This would be targeted on delivering housing led regeneration, green urban infrastructure and placemaking and unlocking strategic regeneration schemes. To address the 'regeneration deficit', we would ask that this be provided on a similar basis as a City Deal, that is over and above the Northern Ireland Block Grant settlement.
4.7	Further detail on the Business Case will be brought back to Members upon completion.
4.8	Advocacy & Engagement

	<p>Work is continuing on engagement and advocacy activities to support the Proposition, including engagement with NI Executive and Westminster at official and political level. As noted to Committee in June 2025, a joint Ministerial meeting with Ministers for Finance, Economy, Infrastructure and Communities has been convened in conjunction with the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership and is scheduled to take place in late September 2025. This meeting follows a meeting with Minister for Finance in April 2025 which was facilitated by the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership.</p>
4.9	<p>Engagement is scheduled with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), Treasury and institutional investment houses in London, and at the Labour Party Annual Conference 2025 in October to advance the Place Based Growth Proposition.</p>
4.10	<p>In tandem, a wider communication and engagement plan, with supporting messaging documents aligned to the business case findings, are being progressed. Continued support from Members in advocating for this Proposition, notably through party political channels, will be very important to raise visibility for this Proposition within NI Executive and Westminster at local, MP / MLA and Ministerial level.</p>
4.11	<p>Correspondence from Minister for Communities on transfer of regeneration powers</p> <p>At its meeting on 4 June 2025 the Committee agreed that the Council would write to the Minister for Communities to seek an update on what consideration had been given to the transfer of regeneration powers to local government.</p>
4.12	<p>The Council has received a response from the Minister (see Appendix 1) which outlined that the most recent attempts to transfer additional regeneration powers to local government did not progress due to a lack of consensus, on the broader issue of local government reform, or on the content of the legislation itself.</p>
4.13	<p>It also noted that due to the time which has passed since the introduction of the last Regeneration Bill (2014), and the experience of recent initiatives in response to Covid-19 e.g. the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation and Small Settlements Programmes in partnership with DfI and DAERA, the cross-departmental nature of regeneration activities has been clearly demonstrated, and concluded by stating that any further transfer of regeneration powers would require a fundamental review of the position across several Departments, consideration by the NI Executive and the introduction of primary legislation. There are no plans to take this forward at this time.</p>
5.0	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>

5.1	Financial impact directly associated with the proposition and emerging business case recommendations will be brought back to Committee in due course.
6.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None associated with this report.
7.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix One – Minister for Communities response to Committee on transfer of regeneration powers

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Mr Craig Mealey
Committee Services Officer
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Belfast Regeneration Directorate
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BT2 7EG
email: BRDBSUsupport@communities-ni.gov.uk

Your ref: CGR170725

Our ref: TOF-0756-2025

29 July 2025

Dear Mr Mealey,

Transfer of Regeneration Powers

Your correspondence of the 17th of July to the Minister for Communities, Mr Gordon Lyons, MLA, advises of the Belfast Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee's support for the collective work that had been undertaken to date in relation to the Belfast Place-Based Growth Proposition.

You also indicated that the Committee have requested an update on what consideration has been given to the transfer of regeneration powers to local government.

I have been asked to respond on behalf of the Minister setting out the current position. The most recent attempts to transfer additional regeneration powers to local government did not progress due to a lack of consensus, on the broader issue of local government reform, or on the content of the legislation itself.

Due to the time which has passed since the introduction of the last Regeneration Bill (2014), and the experience of recent initiatives in response to Covid-19 e.g. the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation and Small Settlements Programmes in partnership with DfI and DAERA, the cross-departmental nature of regeneration activities has been clearly demonstrated.

Any further transfer of regeneration powers would require a fundamental review of the position across several Departments, consideration by the NI Executive and the introduction of primary legislation. There are no plans to take this forward at this time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Tony McKibben', written in a cursive style.

Tony McKibben
Deputy Director
Belfast Regeneration Directorate