

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 27th August, 2025

## SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor I. McLaughlin (Chairperson);  
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer; and  
Councillors Black, Bunting, de Faoite, S. Douglas,  
Duffy, Groogan, Hanvey, Lyons, Maskey,  
McCallin, McKay, R. McLaughlin, Murray,  
Nelson and O'Neill.

Also attended: Alderman Rodgers; and  
Councillor T. Brooks.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration  
and Development; and  
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

### Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor McCormick.

### Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### Presentations

#### Northern Ireland Housing Executive – City Centre Waiting List (CCWL)

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. F. McGrath, Head of Place Shaping, and Ms. C. Wright, Housing for All Lead for Belfast Area, representing the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to the meeting.

The NIHE representatives presented to the Committee an overview of the City Centre Waiting List (CCWL) which included:

- **Background to the CCWL** - Increase in housing need; difficulty securing land in traditional areas throughout the city; recognition of development opportunities within the city centre; new city centre Common Landlord Area (CLA) was approved and presented to the Council in 2012 and aligned with the Council's City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy;
- **City Centre Common Landlord Area (CLA)** - Creation of city centre boundary to attract growth in higher density apartment living; mixed

use/tenure schemes; CLA not created due to no available scheme in 2012;

- **Latent Demand Test** - NIHE sought expression of interest for city centre living from approximately fifteen thousand applicants and transfers on Belfast Waiting List in 2020; virtual list created to enable NIHE to consider type of demand for the area; unable to progress until a scheme was under construction;
- **CCWL Project Team** - Dargan House, Loft Lines, was the first city centre scheme under construction; project team established in Spring 2025 to oversee delivery; expression of interest for city centre living sought from twenty-two thousand households in July 2025; to date, over four thousand had indicated their interest in city centre living;
- **Housing for All Programme** – The programme came out of the Executive's 'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy; NIHE took overall responsibility of managing the shared housing programme in February 2024 (previously managed by the Department for Communities);
- **Belfast Housing for All Overview** - NIHE manage the delivery of programme, working across Belfast to support, currently, eight developments with a total of four hundred and fifty households; developments not classified as shared until all homes are allocated;
- **Local Advisory Groups** - Five Local Advisory Groups across the shared housing communities; managed by Housing Association to support the development and delivery of Good Relations Plans (GRP); Advisory Groups include a wide range of stakeholders; plan to develop a Belfast Advisory Group Forum;
- **Good Relations Plans** - Pre-handover GRPs start when a development is invited onto the programme; five-year GRP begins when homes are fully allocated and deemed shared; longevity of plans key component to success of programme; key actions include promotion, Engagement, Bonding, Bridging, Learning and Sustainability;
- **Dargan House, Loftlines** - First City Centre scheme to be allocated from new city centre waiting list; invited onto Housing for All Programme; Strategic Oversight Forum to consist of key stakeholders; Collaborative Housing Partners Project Team;
- **Dargan House, Loftlines, Project Plan** - Development of a Memorandum of Understanding between NIHE and Housing Association to enable information and knowledge sharing; development of an enhanced Good Neighbour Agreement, Community Charter and Tenancy Success Programme Pilot;

- **Future City Centre Schemes** - Two further schemes with planning approval on the Social Housing Development Programme (Marlborough House and Pilot Street); other schemes in early stages include Inner North West, North Street/Donegall Street, Weavers Cross and Waterside/Sirocco; and
- **City Centre Living** - Additional choice for those in housing need and will not replace support for social housing in other areas; city centre living in support of Belfast Agenda to increase the population of the city centre; need to ensure access to services and to be mixed use/tenure neighbourhoods.

During discussion, the NIHE representatives answered a range of questions in relation to social housing applicants' areas of choice, viability of city centre development, access to services and facilities, the Housing Executive's engagement with statutory partners and stakeholders, and tenant engagement and support. Members also highlighted the value and positive impact of the Local Advisory Groups and the Good Relations Plans.

In response to a Member's query, the representatives advised that further detail would be provided in due course in relation to the viability challenges associated with delivering homes within the city centre against Total Cost Indicators (TCI) and Housing Association Guide (HAG) levels. The representatives also agreed to provide further detail in respect of the Housing Executive's collaborative work to support vulnerable people and the demographic information regarding those who had expressed interest in city centre living.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, the Housing Executive would provide further information on the issues raised.

### **Translink - Belfast Grand Central Station Update**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. G. Marshall, Business Change Manager, Mr. D Bannon, Head of Operational Improvements, and Ms. L. Shannon, Corporate Communications Manager, representing Translink to the meeting.

Mr. Marshall presented the Committee with an overview of the completed works, Phase 1, to the Belfast Grand Central Station, which included eight railway platforms and twenty-six bus stands, an integrated concourse for bus and rail, self-service ticket machines and the Northern Ireland Operating Centre (NIROC Phase 1A) at Lanyon Place Station, which was delivered in parallel on a critical path of the hub. In terms of infrastructure upgrades, he highlighted signalling and track layout updates, timetable enhancement and the relocation of the Enterprise Train, which had helped to significantly increase the number of passengers through the station. He also highlighted the commercial and accessibility improvements to the station.

Mr. Marshall then provided the Committee with a progress update in respect of ongoing works, Phase 2, to Glengall Street and Great Victoria Street. He advised the Committee that Phase 2 would include a comprehensive resurfacing programme which was scheduled for 2026 and would cover multiple areas including Grosvenor Road and Durham Street.

In respect of Durham Street, he outlined the ongoing utilities and culvert works and highlighted that those works had an impact on the delivery of this section. He stated that Translink would continue to work at pace with the contractor to minimise the delay. Mr. Marshall then presented the Committee with a computer-generated image (CGI) of Durham Street post-completion of the works.

In relation to Operations, Mr. Bannon provided the Committee with an update in respect of late-night public transport services and the Translink customer experience.

During discussion, several Members raised issues in relation to the planned layout of Durham Street, highlighting that it differed from initial plans and would now include five traffic lanes with minimal cycling provision. The Members stated that the proposed layout would be a step back from the initial approach of promoting active and sustainable travel and displayed a lack of greenery and tree planting. The Members also expressed concern that the proposed increase in traffic lanes would have a significant negative impact on pedestrian safety, cycling infrastructure, traffic congestion and air quality.

In response, Mr. Marshall advised that there had been an extensive consultation with key stakeholders, in close collaboration with the Department for Infrastructure, in relation to the proposed layout of Durham Street and that the design was aimed at facilitating the needs of all road users, including pedestrians, car users and cyclists. He also pointed out that the pedestrian crossings had been designed and modelled to ensure pedestrian safety. The representatives highlighted that the CGI was a number of years old and agreed to provide the Committee with further detail on the proposed layout of Durham Street.

In relation to active travel, a Member highlighted the need for quality active travel infrastructure which would join up to existing and planned cycle lanes and requested further information on the timeframe for the delivery of the active travel hub and secured cycle parking. The representatives advised that they would provide the Committee with further detail in respect of active travel infrastructure.

The representatives also answered a range of questions in relation to ticketing, road closures, community engagement, retail offering within the station, including provision and support for local independent traders, access to the station, branding of the pop-up market at the former Europa Bus Station, active travel, integration between services and bus tracking information.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, Translink would provide further information on the issues raised.

**2025 Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update in relation to the 2025 Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards.

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised the Committee that the Council had been shortlisted as a finalist in the following three categories of the 2025 APSE Awards:

- **Best Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship initiative** - Vacant to Vibrant;
- **Best Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship initiative** - GoSucceed (in conjunction with Derry City and Strabane District Council); and
- **Best Collaborative Working initiative (with other public sector or third sector)** - GoSucceed (in conjunction with Derry City and Strabane District Council).

The Committee:

- i. noted the update and that the Council had been shortlisted as finalists at the 2025 APSE Awards for the Vacant to Vibrant scheme and, in conjunction with Derry City and Strabane District Council, GoSucceed; and
- ii. approved the attendance of the Chairperson (or his nominee) at the APSE Awards on 11th September, 2025, for the nominations of the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and GoSucceed.

**Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes**

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed that, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 1st September, 2025, for ratification.

Chairperson