



<b>Subject:</b>	Smart Belfast: City Innovation programme update
<b>Date:</b>	18 April 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark McCann, City Innovation Manager

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Information relating to any individual</li><li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li><li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li><li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>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</li><li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li></ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To seek approval to accept a Contract for Funding to deliver Phase 2 of Belfast 5G Innovation Regions programme; and to update on a number of inclusive innovation opportunities.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve that Belfast City Council's acceptance of a £1.3 million contract for funding from the Dept for Science, Innovation &amp; Technology (DSIT) to deliver Phase 2 of Belfast 5G Innovation Regions programme and to note the related work strands.</li> <li>2. Note Belfast City Council's proposed contribution to a bid by Newcastle University's i30 team to the Economic and Social Research Council to deliver a £85,000 programme to inform approaches to inclusive innovation by City Deal and similar innovation investments.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	The Smart Belfast Urban Innovation programme encourages collaboration between government, industry, SMEs, academia, and communities. The aim is to harness digital innovation to address public policy challenges, while at the same time encouraging greater investment in innovation to stimulate economic growth. The approach seeks to leverage significant third-party funding.
3.2	<p><b>Contract for Funding to deliver Phase 2 of the Belfast 5G Innovation Regions programme</b></p> <p>The Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) has offered a Contract for Funding to Belfast City Council for £1.3 million to deliver phase two of the Belfast 5G Innovation Regions programme.</p>
3.3	Members will recall that under Phase 1, Belfast City Council was awarded £3.8m to deliver a twelve-month programme. The majority of this funding was issued by Belfast City Council as grants to third-party organisations to deliver a range of 5G projects which were showcased at City Hall on 5 March. In addition, £50,880 was contracted via the G-Cloud public procurement framework for grant design services, while a further £401,400 was procured via the NI Dept of Finance's Public Shared Services Network to deliver programme management and Enablement Services for Phase 1.
3.4	<p>For Phase 2 a revised approach has been accepted by DSIT that will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for a Belfast City Council programme manager a 12 month period.</li> <li>• £650,000 for 'Public Services innovation hub' based at Cecil Ward / 9 Adelaide which will deliver a small number of 5G-enabled projects focused on issues such as dynamic occupancy management, energy management, environmental monitoring, etc. Work is underway to identify those projects most likely to contribute to Council's efficiency programme.</li> <li>• A £300,000 grant scheme for Belfast region organisations (including SMEs and local councils) to deliver their own 5G-enabled use cases. The City Innovation Office are also engaging with Belfast Region City Deal partners to consider leveraging additional funding from the Digital pillar to increase this total.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The DSIT funding will also fund 'Solution Designer' services for organisations and companies to identify project proposals for the grant scheme.</li> </ul>
3.5	Members are asked to approve acceptance of the Contract for Funding. Following signing of the contract the programme will run through to 31 March 2026.
	<b>Towards an Inclusive Innovation approach</b>
3.6	In January, in collaboration with the Innovation Commissioner, Adrian Johnston, the City Innovation Office hosted a workshop for Members and city stakeholders to consider approaches to inclusive innovation. Following that event CIO has continued to engage with local and national experts and practitioners in order to inform future Council, City Deal and ICB approaches to inclusion.
3.7	The Council has been approached by one of the participating organisations at the conference. 'i30' - a collaboration between Newcastle University, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Oslo and EAFIT University. i30 has been particularly interested in how 'City Deal'-type investments have supported inclusive innovation ambitions in cities in the UK and elsewhere. Their work is helping Newcastle City Council to shape its social inclusion strategy, while their work with Pittsburgh is ensuring that that their city's innovation district is having wider social impact.
3.8	i30 has submitted a £85,000 proposal to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) that seeks to build on their existing work to deliver a range of tools, policy guidance and practice that can support cities in delivering their inclusive innovation outcomes. i30 is keen for Belfast to be part of this bid and has requested a £2,999 financial contribution to their bid plus officer time from both Belfast City Council and the Innovation Commissioner. Funding for this has been identified in the City Innovation Office budget. Members are asked to note that a decision from ESRC is expected in late April and, if successful, further information on the i30 programme will be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.
	<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>
3.9	Resources for the initiatives have been identified within the existing departmental budgets.
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.10	Not at this stage.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None.