



Subject:	Belfast City & Region Place Partnership
Date:	25 June 2025
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Marie Miller, Marketing Manager, City Regeneration & Development

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.	
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<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. 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 matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
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After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sometime in the future

Never

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report / Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide members with an update on the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) and proposed approach to community engagement.• Seek approval for Council investment towards the delivery of the BCRPP 2025 / 2026 programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note the proposal to establish a Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) Community Forum / Reference Group to provide a mechanism for representatives from the Community Planning Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise, (VCSE) Sectoral Advisory Panel to engage with members of the BCRPP as set out in this report. This proposal will also be considered by the BCRPP members, noting that the geographic remit of the BCRPP is Belfast City Region and public /private membership includes Belfast City Region Deal Partner Councils.• Approve Council investment (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as set out below, as part of the wider public private sector partnership contribution towards the delivery of the BCRPP 2025 / 2026 programme.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Members will recall that this Committee received an update on the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) on 4 June 2025 (copy report enclosed at Appendix 1). The Committee approved that officers continue to support the delivery of the BCRPP 2025/26 programme (including governance and contract management as set out in the report); and approved attendance by senior officers at MIPIM 2026 as part of the BCRPP 2025/26 programme.</p>
3.2	<p>Committee agreed however to defer consideration of the Council's investment towards the delivery of the BCRPP 2025 / 2026 programme to a special meeting of the Committee in June 2025, to enable further detail to be provided in respect of community engagement. During discussion Members had requested that consideration be given to the establishment of a sub-committee of the BCRPP to include community representation.</p>

3.3	<p>As previously noted by Committee, the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) is a joint public-private initiative with agreed objectives to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote and market the Belfast region outside Northern Ireland; • Increase engagement and advocacy with all key stakeholders; • Support delivery of the Belfast Region City Deal programme of investment by attracting collaborative partners; • Support delivery of our shared ambition and drive inclusive, sustainable growth; • Continue to build collaboration and partnership in the city and wider region.
3.4	<p>A primary focus of the partnership includes promotion of the city and city region and attracting investment to help deliver on growth ambitions. The previously agreed programme of work also included engagement and advocacy, and research aligned to the impact of real estate investment. This research included a Real Estate Markets Insights and benchmarking exercise to inform the Belfast City Region as a real estate investment location in comparison with other cities, as well as research into the wider economic, social and environmental impact resulting from real estate investment.</p>
3.5	<p>Members may recall that a report to the CGR Committee in June 2022 and August 2023 in relation to the work of the BCRPP included an update on a report that was commissioned via the partnership, '<i>Building Impact</i>' which focused on the role the built environment plays in delivering social, environmental and economic benefits.</p>
3.6	<p>This <i>Building Impact</i> report sought to identify the positive social, economic and environmental impact that real estate and built environment projects can deliver when done well but importantly provided recommendations as to how, moving forward, the built environment partners could further enhance the delivery of wider sustainable development benefits, inclusive growth and social value from future development in the Belfast region. The report had highlighted how there is an opportunity for the built environment to drive additional sustainable development benefits, while also playing a key role in resolving some of the region's societal and sustainable development challenges, including unemployment, skills inequalities, economic growth, housing provision, levelling up, community cohesion, and climate change.</p>
3.5	<p>Going forward, it is proposed that the engagement and advocacy pillar of the BCRPP Programme includes a further focus on the key findings and recommendations of the <i>Building Impact</i> report and act as enabling levers for city region partners to maximise sustainable development and inclusive growth best practice into real estate development projects.</p>
3.6	<p>There is an opportunity for community partners to help shape and inform this work as well as increasing collaboration between the voluntary, statutory, public and private /business sector, acting as a two-way conduit for sharing information on the work of the Partnership and gathering wider sectoral views and input in the context of regeneration and development.</p>

3.7	Given the clear alignment with the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda and the work being taken forward by the Belfast Community Planning Partnership and associated delivery focused boards, including 'Our Place' Board which focuses on regeneration and investment, it is proposed that consideration be given to seeking community partner representation from associated structures.
3.8	Members may be aware that a Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) Advisory Panel has been established to help drive forward the implementation of the Belfast Agenda. The VCSE Advisory Panel plays a central and constructive role in helping drive forward Community Planning by articulating the voice of the sector in strategic planning; supporting the development of cross-sectoral relationships and improved partnership working; and promoting ongoing and effective community engagement in community planning.
3.9	In April 2025, the Belfast Community Planning Partnership agreed a refreshed VCSE Advisory Panel for a four-year term – up 2029. The Panel was selected through an independent nomination and selection process led by NICVA. Membership of the Panel has been extended from 15 to 30 members to reflect a balanced representation across geographical / neighbourhoods, Section 75 and minoritised groups; Belfast Agenda thematic priorities, scale and size of organisation; gender balance; skills and experience; reach and connectivity; knowledge and expertise; time commitment; and senior level of authority.
3.10	Members shall note that representation from the VCSE Advisory Panel is sought and secured on each of the Belfast Agenda governance and delivery structures including the Community Planning Partnership, Thematic Delivery Boards and Task & Finish delivery groups. Whilst two representations are appointed from the Panel onto each of these structures, their considerations and input reflect the views of the wider forum.
3.11	Recognising the role and remit of the VCSE Panel, it is proposed that representation from this Panel is invited to work with the BCRPP, by way of a Community Forum / Reference Group to facilitate ongoing and effective community engagement and support the delivery of the BCRPP agreed objective of delivering inclusive, sustainable growth. As noted above, the outworkings of the ' <i>Building Impact</i> ' report may form the basis of the initial areas of focus, although there is an opportunity to help shape this work strand working alongside the BCRPP. It is proposed that this Community Forum / Reference Group would liaise with BCRPP members and Council officers as necessary, and the structure of the group including attendance, engagement and scope of works would be agreed with the nominated VCSE panel representatives and the BCRPP.
3.12	Recognising that the statutory requirement for public consultation already exists as part of the planning application process, a Community Forum /Reference Group could provide the BCRPP partners with a wider opportunity to engage with community representatives to ensure that maximum social, environmental and economic impact is realised from investment and development being brought forward.

3.13	This proposal will be brought back to the BCRPP for consideration. Noting that the geographic remit of the BCRPP is the Belfast City Region with membership incorporating other BRCD Partner Councils, and with all partners financially sponsoring the partnership.
4.0	Financial and Resource Implications
4.1	The BCRPP Partnership is delivered as a public private sector sponsorship fund and is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institutions who contribute financially towards the 2024 / 2025 programme, with external and private sector funding forming the majority of the overall programme budget. It is anticipated that the majority of the 2025 / 2026 programme budget will again be funded through external funding.
4.2	Council has previously agreed to contribute of £80,000 towards the 2024 / 2025 Programme, and subject to Members agreement it is proposed that Council contribute £80,000 (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership investment towards the delivery of the 2025 / 2026 programme.
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
	None associated with this report.
	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Belfast City & Region Place Partnership report, CGR Committee, 4 June 2025