



Subject:	Destination CQ BID – Ballot update
Date:	10 th June 2026
Reporting Officer:	Damien Martin, Strategic Director Place & Economy
Contact Officer:	Keith Forster, Director economic development Lesley-Ann O'Donnell – Senior Manager Culture Tourism and events

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 type="checkbox"/>	
<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	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
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	<p>The purpose of the report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an update on the upcoming ballot for the third term of Destination CQ BID • Seek approval for the Council’s voting position in advance of the ballot • Outline the Council’s property portfolio within the BID boundary and associated implications
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the update on the pending ballot for the third term of the Belfast One BID (Business Improvement District) • Agree to return yes votes for the Council properties located within the boundary.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that there are three Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Belfast city centre: BID One which covers the main retail core and runs from the City Hall down to the junction of Royal Avenue and North Street; Linen Quarter which covers the office district to the north the City Hall including the new Transport Hub and Destination CQ which covers the Cathedral Quarter including the Ulster University campus</p> <p>Destination CQ represents a key cultural, hospitality, and regeneration area within the city.</p>
3.2	<p>A BID is a defined district where organisations collectively invest in projects, services and events that will benefit that area. Destination CQ BID is an independent, not-for-profit company that works on behalf of its levy payers to support, develop and promote Belfast city centre. It focuses on delivering programmes that enhance safety, cleanliness, business support and the overall vibrancy of the area.</p>
3.3	<p>Under government legislation, all BIDs operate on a five-year term. At the end of each term, a ballot must take place in order for the BID to continue its work.. The ballot for the third term of BID One will open in July 2026 and all votes must be submitted by 1 September 2026.</p>
3.4	<p>Belfast City Council has a number of properties within the BID boundary including Belfast Stories and the Assembly Rooms. The BID area contains around 700 units that are eligible for votes. Each property must pay an annual mandatory BID levy – depending on the NAV (Net Annual Value) of the property. Belfast City Council is responsible (by legislation) for issuing the levy bills (the cost of this service is covered by the BID).</p> <p>In order for the proposal to be successful at ballot, the result will need to meet, as a minimum, three independent criteria, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There must be more yes votes than no votes (volume) 2. Total rateable value of yes votes must exceed total rateable value of no votes (value)

	<p>3. The turnout of ballot papers returned must be no less than 25% of the eligible rate payers entitled to vote in the ballot <i>and</i> total no less than 25% of the eligible rateable value.</p>
3.5	<p>Destination CQ BID works closely with the council on a range of issues related to safety, cleanliness and vibrancy in the city centre. The team and the Board are also represented on a number of city centre forums and working groups and, given their mandate, represent a strong conduit for engagement with city centre businesses operating in this geographical area. They have produced a business plan for the five year term and this proposes focusing resources on three main pillars of work, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Support • Safer, Cleaner, Greener • Promotion & animation
3.6	<p>The draft business plan notes that the BID is likely to generate circa £0.5 million annually through its levy collection and it will use these resources to deliver projects on behalf of levy payers within these agreed priority areas for action. Details of planned activities will be shared by the team at the upcoming meeting.</p>
3.7	<p>Belfast City Council owns and/or manages a range of assets within the Cathedral Quarter BID boundary. The Council's portfolio includes:</p> <p>Car parks (multiple sites across Dunbar Street, Tomb Street, Kent Street, Exchange Street, and others)</p> <p>Office buildings and commercial premises, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22–30 Dunbar Street • Bank of Ireland Buildings, Royal Avenue (multiple floors) • Kyrenia House, Royal Avenue (multiple floors) • Retail / market units, including properties within Smithfield Market • Public conveniences and civic infrastructure <p>The Council's property holdings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Span key regeneration and access locations across the Cathedral Quarter • Include assets central to public realm, transport, and visitor experience (e.g. car parking) • Include vacant assets with future redevelopment or activation potential <p>This reinforces the Council's strategic interest in the success of Destination CQ.</p>
3.8	<p>Given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's significant property and financial stake in the area • The BID's role in delivering improvements aligned to Council priorities • The established working relationship between the Council and Destination CQ • The BID's contribution to culture-led regeneration and city centre vitality <p>It is recommended that the Council supports the renewal of Destination CQ BID through a positive vote.</p>
4.0	Financial and Resource Implications
	<p>Belfast City Council will be liable for levy payments relating to its properties and assets located within the BID boundary.</p>
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

	No specific equality or good relations implications. The Destination CQ designated boundary has been approved by DfC. Visitor insights demonstrate that the city centre is accessed by visitors from all parts of Northern Ireland and beyond.
6.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None