



Subject:	PwC Good Growth for Cities 2022 Report: Taking Action on Levelling Up
Date:	15th April, 2022
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
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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"/>
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 or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on PwC's Good Growth for Cities 2022 Report: Taking Action on Levelling Up.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the update on PwC's Good Growth for Cities 2022: Taking Action on Levelling Up report, which measures the performance of cities and regions across the UK as indicators of 'Good Growth' and ranked Belfast as the highest-ranking city from the devolved nation.
3.0	Main Report
	Background
3.1	The Demos-PwC Good Growth for Cities Index is an annual report which looks at broad measures of economic performance alongside well-being indicators to develop a metric for

'Good Growth' of cities. Specifically, the report ranks 50 of the UK's largest cities based on people's assessment of 12 key economic wellbeing factors, including jobs, health, income and skills, as well as work-life balance, house affordability, travel-to-work times, income equality, environment and business start-ups. This year's report also includes two new indicators covering safety and vibrancy of local high streets. Indicators within the report align to the Council's strategic objectives such as the Belfast Agenda, Corporate Plan, BRCD. Belfast City Centre and Regeneration Strategy (BCCRIS), Bolder Vision for Belfast and the Reset for Growth report, as well as a number of other strategies and programmes.

3.2 Using these 'Good Growth' indicators, the report ranked Belfast in eighth place, and highest ranked city from the devolved nations. Other cities in the top 10 include London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Newcastle, Liverpool, Leicester, Sheffield and Bristol. Members will be aware of the projects and programmes Council are delivering aimed at job creation, regeneration and place making, vibrancy and making Belfast a city a great place to live, work, visit and invest. The recent findings from this report are a positive sense check in terms of our direction and focused priorities, and also highlighting the need to ensure that we continue to work to position the city to compete both nationally and globally.

3.3 Contained within the report are case studies of best practice at how investment in townscapes, support in community cohesion, efforts to foster local pride and attract new types of businesses are being used to boost growth. Belfast was selected as a case study for inclusion within the report, referencing a balanced and deliberately interventionist approach to regeneration. Work being undertaken by the city to invest in place-making, open and green spaces, community infrastructure, connectivity and cultural and tourism offerings in order to create a more attractive, accessible, and vibrant city centre which connects to surrounding communities are highlighted as best practice. It also referred to city investment plans including a citywide commitment to investing in neighbourhoods, leisure and community facilities and to strategies that integrate physical regeneration with cultural, social and environmental regeneration. It highlighted the Bolder Vision for Belfast as being key to a stronger and more resilient city core and acting as a call to action for the council, civic partners, local businesses and the wider local community. It also highlighted how Belfast is working to establish itself as a cultural centre in order to realise its global cultural and economic ambitions, referencing the 10-year cultural programme, UNESCO City of Music and the Belfast Stories development plans. The city's innovation and inclusive economic growth plans, supported by the BRCD investment and Belfast's position as the number one city for FinTech investments were referenced and that further investment in

	<p>digital connectivity and supporting centres of excellence would drive Belfast forward as a global digital and scientific centre and globally significant destination for innovation.</p>
3.4	<p>While the report welcomes the Levelling Up White Paper, analysis within the report demonstrates that Government, public and private sectors need to continue to work collaboratively to address regional inequalities and capitalise on the once in a generation opportunity to create successful places and deliver good growth. Members will be aware that the Council is working collaboratively with public, private, community and key anchor institution partners across a number of partnerships including Innovation City Belfast, Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor, Belfast Region City Deal and the Climate Commission and to deliver strategic programmes of work including A Bolder Vision, a Future City Centre Programme and neighbourhood regeneration aimed at delivering our shared collective ambitions as outlined within the Belfast Agenda.</p>
3.5	<p>The report notes that in general cities which performed well in this year's index had strong local economies, and strong environmental and safety credentials. It also notes that the pandemic has caused a shift in public priorities, with people wanting to be more connected with their local communities and to live in greener, fairer places. Members will be aware of the effects of the pandemic in Belfast, and efforts by the Council to address the impact on our communities and businesses, including the delivery of the DfC Covid Recovery Revitalisation Programme and via Belfast: Our Recovery plan. The report has found that the shift in public priorities has also altered the growth prospects of cities and regions as people change how and where they want to work and live, with small and provincial cities benefitting more in the context of the levelling up agenda. This provides an opportunity for Belfast in terms of its desire to attract and retain residents in the city to deliver on our Belfast Agenda ambitions including to attract 66,000 new residents by 2035.</p>
3.6	<p>The report tracks regional and city recovery across different demographic and societal groups including young workers, ethnic groups, and women, however it does not publish the breakdown per city and region.</p>
3.7	<p>The report also proposed four key areas for cities and regions to consider as they develop Levelling Up plans and continue to address economic recovery. In order to secure a fairer economic recovery and build sustainable growth it highlights that local and central government and the private sector should focus on the following:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Levelling up and the reality of regional inequality 2. Capitalising on growth outside the larger metropolitan cities 3. Driving social mobility and addressing intergenerational inequality 4. Green growth to provide the basis for all future action <p>3.8 There are various actions that sit below these priority areas for central and local government and businesses relating to investment in relationships across the public, private and third sectors to develop place strategies for place-based transformation; investment in high streets; sector focused employment investment; reskilling and apprenticeships; local economic strategies; housing education; improved transportation links; circular economy and green growth; net zero and sustainability.</p> <p>3.9 These action areas align to Belfast’s strategic ambitions as outlined in the Belfast Agenda, and propositions outlined within the Innovation & Growth Commission ‘Reset for Growth’ report aimed at amplifying the city and region’s future success focused around priorities on being more globally relevant; immediate action on climate change and turning this into an economic opportunity; housing development; developing a stronger core city and delivery of a Bolder Vision and a focus on building world-renowned business clusters.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	<p>Document attached</p>
4.1	<p>PwC Good Growth for Cities 2022: Taking action on Levelling Up report</p>