

Public Document Pack

Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS



Belfast
City Council

8th March, 2017

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Wednesday, 8th March, 2017 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

2. Presentations

- (a) Belfast City Centre Management (Pages 1 - 4)
- (b) RESTRICTED Visit Belfast (Pages 5 - 8)

3. Restricted Reports

- (a) Capital of Culture (Pages 9 - 14)
- (b) Grade A Office Market - Update (Pages 15 - 24)

4. **Positioning Belfast to compete**
 - (a) Routes Conference - Programme update (Pages 25 - 28)
 - (b) International Relations Update and Programme 2017-18 (Pages 29 - 42)
 - (c) EU World Cities Project (Pages 43 - 48)
 - (d) Belfast Facts and Figures - Draft Booklet (Pages 49 - 52)
5. **Growing Businesses and the Economy**
 - (a) Rural Development Programme (Pages 53 - 56)
 - (b) Innovation Factory - Annual Business Plan (Pages 57 - 64)
 - (c) BelTech Conference 2017 (Pages 65 - 70)
6. **Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**
 - (a) City Centre Living (Pages 71 - 88)
7. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**
 - (a) Quarter 3 Finance Report (Pages 89 - 98)
 - (b) Commercialisation Opportunities at the Council's Markets (Pages 99 - 102)
8. **Operational Issues**
 - (a) External Market Application (Pages 103 - 106)
 - (b) Draft Belfast Bicycle Network 2017 Consultation (Pages 107 - 120)
 - (c) Zoo workshop - Update (Pages 121 - 130)
 - (d) Belfast Car Parking Strategy (Pages 131 - 182)



Subject:	BCCM Presentation to Committee
Date:	8 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 the report is to advise Members of the review of Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) that is currently being undertaken and to present a request for financial support for the financial year 2017/18.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the review of BCCM that is currently underway. - Note the draft BCCM business plan and the areas where BCC funds will be applied. The overall funding agreement with BCCM is built into the revenue estimates.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that Belfast City Centre Management was established as a public-private partnership to support the development of the city centre.</p> <p>The organisation carries out a range of services on behalf of its funders. The key public</p>

3.2	<p>sector funders are Belfast City Council and Department for Communities. The private sector investment comes through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCTC) and the organisation also receives income from the Belfast One BID to cover the costs of some overheads associated with hosting the organisation in the offices of BCCM.</p>
3.3	<p>The Council is represented on BCCM Board by Councillors Craig and Dudgeon. There are also two officers sitting as advisors to the Board, representing the Development and City and Neighbourhood Services Departments.</p>
3.4	<p>BCCM played an important support role in establishing the Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID). It is also undertaking the development work on another BID which will cover the main office area around the City's Linen Quarter. The ballot for this BID is likely to take place in Autumn 2017.</p>
3.5	<p>BCCM has undergone some changes to its business model since the introduction of the two BIDS in Belfast One and Cathedral Quarter in the course of the last year. The development work on a third BID and its potential introduction from the end of 2017 will mean further changes to the role of the organisation in supporting city centre development. Meanwhile, the establishment of the City Centre Development Team within the Council along with an enhanced focus on the City Centre as a retail, cultural and business hub for the region signifies a change in focus for the Council's activities in this area. Taking account of all of these changes in the operating context, it is important to consider how BCCM can play a useful support role for the Council and other partners going forward.</p>
3.6	<p>At the February 2017 Board meeting of BCCM, Members noted and agreed a proposal to review the organisation. The focus of this review is to look at what the purpose of the organisation should be in a changing operational context. This includes not only the establishment of (potentially) three Business Improvement Districts (BID) but also the establishment by the council of a team to focus on the development of the city centre.</p>
3.7	<p>The review is to be led by Belfast City Council, supported by the other key partners in BCCM, namely Department of Communities and Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce.</p>

3.8	<p>It is anticipated that the review will be completed by August 2017 and the findings will be fed back to the Committee for information.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.9 In the current financial year, Belfast City Council's funding agreement with BCCM will amount to £190,000. An allocation of £190,000 has been set aside within the Departmental estimates for the financial year 2017/18.</p> <p><u>Equality or good relations implications</u></p> <p>3.10 No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

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Subject:	Routes Europe Conference 2017
Date:	08 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Maggie McNally, Strategic Programme Manager,

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	At January 2017 Committee, Members noted the update on the upcoming Routes Europe Conference 2017. They acknowledged the opportunity presented by this event to showcase Belfast to a global business audience as well as the potential of delivering new air routes for Belfast.
1.2	It was agreed that an update report would be presented to the Committee in March to set out the up-to-date programme for the event and to provide Members with an opportunity to identify relevant elements of the conference that they may want to attend.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the update on the Routes Europe Conference which will take place in Belfast for the first time on 23-25 April 2017 - Nominate Members to attend the City Hall welcome reception on 23 April 2017 and Titanic Belfast reception on 24 April 2017 - Note that a report will be presented to the April City Growth and Regeneration Committee providing a more detailed programme outline. Members can confirm attendance at relevant elements of the programme at this point.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>In October 2016, Members agreed to commit £100,000 to support the costs of hosting the 2017 Routes Europe event at Belfast Waterfront. Routes Europe have indicated that the benefits to a city hosting the event in terms of positive PR coverage, potential new airline routes announcements and additional leisure/business tourism visitors, could be in the region of more than £50million. This is based on feedback and measurement of Routes Conferences that have been held in other cities.</p>
3.2	<p>The bid for Belfast involves financial contributions from a range of partners. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Belfast City Council - £100,000 – Invest NI has agreed approximately £348,000. In addition, they have spent £137,000 securing the Routes Conference for Belfast – Tourism Ireland (TIL) - £20,000 – Tourism NI (TNI) - £165,000 – Visit Belfast - £20,000 – BWUH Ltd - £10,000 – The local Airports - approximately £100,000 each.
3.3	<p>In addition to these funding contributions, all partners are also making additional contributions in-kind in order to ensure the success of the event.</p>
3.4	<p>The main Conference and showcase will take place in the Belfast Waterfront while a welcome reception will be held in Belfast City Hall and a gala networking event is to take place in Titanic Belfast. Organisers and the local team are working closely together on a programme of supporting events across the city. This “Team Belfast” approach has ensured joined-up working with all partners. Research shows that the host city has a significant impact on delegates’ overall satisfaction and the Belfast Waterfront will be able to showcase that it can deliver well-organised meetings and a high standard of events in a luxurious, state of the art, riverside location presenting a positive impression of the city.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Progress to date for Members update</u></p> <p>The three working groups that have been set up to co-ordinate the event continue to meet on a monthly basis and these groups will continue to meet in the run-up to the event in order to ensure that all planning details for the event are taken care of and that the City makes the most of this opportunity to showcase Belfast as a successful business and tourism destination. A further progress report on all of this work will be brought to Committee prior to the April 2017</p>

event.

3.6

The draft Programme for the event has been shared with partners. This is a high-level outline of the key sessions (networking sessions, receptions, keynote speeches) and there is limited detail available at present. The Conference itself consists mainly of networking sessions and pre-arranged one-to-one meetings between delegates. There will also be a number of guest speakers in attendance, although these details have not yet been released. Members will be advised of these details once this information is available.

3.7

Belfast City Council has been granted 10 delegate passes which can be for the full duration of the Conference or can be shared between individuals for specific days/events during the week. At this stage, the priority events for which Members need to register are the City Hall Welcome reception and the Titanic Belfast evening. Once further details are received in relation to the actual Conference programme, these will be circulated to Members and, at that point, they can confirm which other elements of the programme they wish to attend.

3.8

The programme for the event is as follows:

Date	Time	Location	Activity
23/04/17	08.00-17.35	Belfast Waterfront Hall	All day conference
23/04/17	17.45-19.30	City Hall	Welcome Reception
24/04/17	07.30-17.00	Belfast Waterfront Hall	All day conference
24/04/17	19.00-23.30	Titanic Belfast	Networking Evening and Routes Europe Marketing Awards
25/04/17	08.00-16.00	Belfast Waterfront Hall	Half day conference
25/04/17	12.35-14.05	Belfast Waterfront Hall	Lunch hosted by Hosts of Routes Europe 2018

3.9

The City Hall Welcome reception on the Sunday night will be an informal occasion with jazz music and drinks and canapés for all delegates. The Lord Mayor will also host 20 VIPs in the Parlour just prior to the Welcome reception. The Titanic evening will take place on the Monday evening and will consist of the Titanic experience tours, canapés and drinks, before the Europe Marketing Awards in the White Star lounge and a standing reception with hot food.

Members are asked to nominate attendees for each of the evening events. Given the availability of tickets, it is recommended that one Member from each party plus the Chair and

<p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p>	<p>Deputy Chairs of Committee and up to two additional Committee members or nominees attend. Once nominated, Members' details will be submitted to the organisers and allow for allocation of delegate passes.</p> <p>Once the final programme is agreed, this will be brought to the April Committee for Members' information and they can agreed, at that point, which additional programme sessions they want to attend. Delegate passes for the relevant sessions will be allocated at that point.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All financial contributions from Belfast City Council have been included in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 budgets and have already been approved by this Committee.</p> <p><u>Equality & Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None</p>



Subject:	International Relations Update and 2017-18 Action Plan
Date:	8 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard, European & International Relations Manager

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of the report is to update Members on the delivery and actions of the International Relations Framework for the period 2016-2017, and to seek approval for the 2017/18 Action Plan.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Note the range of activities and actions outlined in Appendix 1 for delivery of the Council’s International Relations Framework for the period 2016-17. – Agree to support the attendance of the Lord Mayor and an Officer at the 2017 St Patrick’s White House Celebration from 14-17 March 2017 at a maximum cost of £3,000. – Agree to the attendance of the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, or their nominees along with the Director of Development and the International Relations Manager on the China outward mission from 6-13 May 2017. This visit will not exceed £20,000.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Agree to the attendance of the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or nominees and an Officer on the Nashville outward mission from 17-22 May 2017. The cost of this visit will not exceed £10,000. – Agree to Members participation in the programme for the Boston inward delegation on 5-7 June 2017. – Agree to provide £5,000 towards the New York New Belfast Conference from 8-9 June 2017 and the attendance of the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or their nominee along with an officer. The cost of attendance will not exceed £3,000. – Agree to provide £5,000 towards the Belfast International Homecoming Conference form 4-6 October 2017 and to Members’ participation in this event. – Agree in principle to further international activity later in the year, as outlined in Appendix 1 as 2017-18 International Relations Action Plan, pending further details and costs.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will recall the November 2016 approval of a new International Relations Framework for Council for the period 2016-2021.
3.2	The aim of this second Framework is to continue to promote Belfast on the international stage with other stakeholders as a place to visit, study, work and do business. The Framework will deliver primarily on the formal relationships already in existence through the Sister City Agreements with Shenyang, Boston and Nashville, the Memorandum of Understanding with Dublin, and developing relationships with London. New areas of opportunity will be considered on their merits and relevance to Belfast.
3.3	Members will be aware of the increasing activity delivered around the International Relations Framework during the last year. The highlights of these and the outcomes generated from our international linkages are outlined in Appendix 1 of this report by geographical area. These activities have, in the most part, been led by Belfast City Council at Councillor and Officer level and in full partnership with stakeholders in government, education, tourism, business, culture and sport. Members are asked to note this delivery and the progress made in these areas.
3.4	In terms of 2017-18 activity, there are a number of activities in the immediate to short term pipeline that align to the International Relations Framework and require Committee

	<p>approval if they are to progress. The emerging priority activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – St Patrick’s Day invitation to the White House 14-17 March 2017 – Belfast in China Week 6-13 May 2017 – New York New Belfast 8-9 June 2017 – Belfast International Homecoming 4-6 October 2017
3.5	<p>Other activities have already been planned within the International Relations Calendar which are outlined in Appendix 1 as the 2017/18 International Relations Action Plan.</p>
3.6	<p><u>St Patrick’s Day White House Invitation, 14-17 March 2017</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the former Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Arder Carson, and an officer, travelled to the White House St Patrick’s Day celebrations in 2016. The current Lord Mayor has received an invitation through the office of the US Consul General in Belfast, to the 2017 celebrations from 14-17 March. This visit can coincide with a programme of side meetings with government and business associates of the Council in order to explore business, academic and tourism collaborations in line with the International Relations Framework.</p>
3.7	<p>Members are asked to approve the participation of the Lord Mayor and an Officer at the White House programme and associated meetings. The cost of travel, accommodation and expenses will not exceed £3,000 and will be met within the 2017/18 International Relations Unit budget.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Belfast in China Week, 6-13 May 2017</u></p> <p>Members will recall their decision on 9 November 2016, to approve a second Council visit to Beijing and Sister City Shenyang in May 2017. The purpose of this event is to further develop relations and agree concrete collaboration activity going forward on the fields of Smart Cities, sustainable technologies, health, education and investment. Planning is underway for the visit with city stakeholders including Invest NI, Queen’s University Belfast, Ulster University, Belfast Metropolitan College, British Council, and the NI Bureau, who are facilitating the programme for Belfast City Council as they did in 2016. A final programme will be presented to Members in due course. This will establish a series of agreed outcomes for the visit, in line with the outcomes established for the International Relations Framework.</p>
3.9	<p>Members are asked to approve the attendance of the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy</p>

	<p>Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or their nominees, along with the Director of Development and the International Relations Unit Manager and Confucius accompanying interpreter. The anticipated cost of this visit will not exceed £20,000, and this is contained within the 2017-18 budget of the International Relations Unit. Members should note that Invest NI, Queen’s University Belfast, Ulster University and Belfast Metropolitan College have confirmed their participation in the mission to create a second “Team Belfast” approach, and collective message during the mission.</p> <p><u>Nashville Mission, 17-20 May 2017</u></p>
3.10	<p>Again, Members will recall their decision on 9 November 2016 to approve a further Sister City visit to Nashville in 2017 to build on the relationships that had been re-established and developed in the course of that visit. Following close working with the Nashville Mayor and Sister City Board, the proposed dates are now 17-20 May. Ulster University and Queen’s University Belfast have already committed to the visit, and discussions are underway with other stakeholders including Invest NI, Belfast Metropolitan College and the Innovation Factory. Members will be presented with a detailed plan of activity in due course. The focus of the visit is likely to be on following upon business and education linkages to tie down actions for the coming year, as well as sharing plans for our respective activities as part of the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities Network.</p>
3.11	<p>Members should note that an invitation was received for the Lord Mayor of Belfast from Mayor Barry of Nashville to lead a delegation to Nashville. The proposed timeframe has been arranged to fit in with the diary of Mayor Barry.</p>
3.12	<p>Members should note that, given the Nashville and Shenyang visits are taking place in close proximity to one another, there may be logistical challenges for Members taking part in both visits.</p>
3.13	<p>In the meantime, Members are asked to approve the participation of the Lord Mayor, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or their nominees and an Officer at a maximum cost of £10,000. This cost is contained within the 2017-18 budget of the International Relations Unit.</p> <p><u>Boston Inward Mission, 5-7 June 2017</u></p>
3.14	<p>Members are asked to note that a further inward mission from Boston is scheduled to</p>

	<p>take place from 5-7 June. This will include Senators, Senior Judiciary, business and economic development officials, as well as Harvard and arts representatives. Plans are underway to develop a targeted programme of meetings and visit with key stakeholders. Members will be invited to join the programme and any costs of the visit will be contained within the International Relations 2017-18 budget.</p>
3.15	<p>Members should also note that Boston will lead a focussed business and government mission from Worcester (just outside Boston) in December 2017 to coincide with the inaugural Basketball Hall of Fame tournament in Belfast. Details will be presented to Members in due course.</p>
3.16	<p><u>New York New Belfast, 8-9 June 2017</u></p> <p>Belfast City Council has been asked to contribute financial support of £5,000 to the annual New York New Belfast Conference. As in previous years, this will offer Council an opportunity to send an Elected Member to speak at the Conference and promote the city to a high level audience of US government, education, tourism and business delegates. It will also be an opportunity to begin to use the emerging new City Place Positioning Branding and narrative, and to add a civic leadership element to the outward going Belfast delegation.</p>
3.17	<p>Members are asked to approve the request for £5,000 sponsorship and to approve the attendance of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or their nominees, and an Officer. The cost for the event and trip will not exceed £3,000 and can be identified within the International Relations Unit Budget.</p>
3.18	<p><u>Belfast International Homecoming, 4-6 October 2017</u></p> <p>Members are asked to consider a financial request of £5,000 to support the annual International Homecoming Conference in Belfast. Belfast City Council will have the opportunity to promote the city to 100 international visitors from government, business and academics. Belfast City Council will also have the opportunity for Members and Officers to attend the Conference and lead plenary workshops and panel discussions on areas pertinent to the Belfast Agenda.</p>
3.19	<p>Members should note that Nashville has committed to return to Belfast annually for the Homecoming as they found it a valuable event in 2016. Boston is also considering sending a delegation to the event. Members are also being asked to approve £5,000</p>

	towards the Homecoming 2017 event. This amount can be identified within the International Relations Unit budget.
3.20	Members should note that, if approved, this action plan – along with already approved activities – will mean that the International Relations budget is almost fully committed.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.21	International Relations activity cost has been taken account of within the new financial estimates 2017/18. Members have been asked to approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – St Patrick’s Day White House Celebrations - £3,000 – China outward mission - £20,000 – Nashville outward mission - £10,000 – New York New Belfast sponsorship and attendance - £8,000 – Belfast International Homecoming - £5,000
	<u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u>
3.22	The new International Relations Framework 2016-2021 has been equality screened and signed off.
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 - 2016/17 International Relations Activity and 2017/18 Action Plan

International Relations Outputs 2016/17

China Outputs 2016/17

Political/Civic:

- Belfast City Council assisted the Chinese Consulate Belfast with Planning and QC advice on their Capital build on Malone Road (due to open 2017).
- Belfast City Council signed a formal Sister City agreement with Shenyang in May 2016 and has developed a close working relationship with Madam Wang and her team.
- Belfast City Council promoted its successful Rockefeller Resilience work and roadmap at the 3rd Shenyang International Smart City event in November 2016, led by the China Centre for Urban Development.
- Belfast City Council provided briefing for the NI Assembly Business Investment and NI Ministers prior to their China visits in 2016.

Education/Sport:

- Belfast City Council connected Campbell College to the Shenyang Education Bureau and the NI Bureau Beijing to make direct contact for marketing the college to attract Chinese boarding students – ongoing.
- Belfast City Council directly influenced the decision by the China Confucius Institute to increase its number of Chinese teachers from 39 to 52 in Northern Ireland.
- Belfast City Council hosted the British Council China team in December 2016, and shared the education message for marketing.

Business and Investment:

- Belfast City Council regularly shares Belfast investment opportunity pitch information to contacts made in China at DIT, INI, Shenyang Foreign Affairs, Chinese Chamber London etc. This will be followed up by targeted investor pitch events in May 2017.
- Belfast City Council provided Belfast based Colliers Property and Real Estate company with Belfast promotional material for the Investor event in Beijing in October 2016 (KPMG cited the BCC document as best seen to date in the sector).
- Belfast City Council promoted city investment opportunities to the Chinese Investment Corporation during their visit to Belfast in November 2016, and provided a civic visit in City Hall.
- Belfast City Council provided promotional material to the China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation 2016.
- Belfast City Council hosted the China Merchants Group who represent a number of Belfast and NI companies as their port and beverage distributor in China.
- Belfast City Council assisted a Belfast ex-pat in Beijing to return to Belfast, and enter into a China/NI related business start up.

Tourism/Culture/Arts:

- Belfast City Council along with Dublin, joined the World Cities Tourism Federation 2016, and retains an updated web presence (100 million Chinese travel outside of China annually for tourism)

Appendix 1

purposes with only 48,000 travelling to NI).

- Belfast City Council has linked to Tourism Ireland to promote regular positive social media news feed to the China market.
- Belfast City Council co-hosted the 'China Government Chinese Tourism into UK Communities' event in the grounds of the City Hall in September 2016.
- Belfast City Council supported the annual Chinese New Year through a cultural event at the Mac in partnership with Confucius, and through the first ever joint Belfast City Council/Chinese Consulate event in City Hall.
- Belfast City Council shared 150 photos of the City for show at the Shenyang Sister Cities exhibition 2016-18.

International Relations Outputs 2016/17

Nashville Outputs 2016/17

Political/Civic:

- Belfast City Council led a mission to Nashville in March 2016 to be re-invigorate the Sister City link.

Education/Sport:

- Belfast City Council facilitated a Methody College student exchange for 5 Nashville Harpeth Hall students in November 2016.
- Belfast City Council co-hosted 3 Harpeth Hall students for a 3 week work placement in January 2017 and plans are underway in partnership with Strathearn College to facilitate a further exchange.
- Existing links with Queens University Belfast and Nashville's Vanderbilt University have been strengthened as well as new links between Ulster University and Belmont.
- Belfast City Council facilitated connections between the NI Judiciary and the Nashville Bar Association in 2016 - ongoing.

Business and Investment:

- Belfast City Council connected Cleaver Fulton Rankin to key legal contacts in Nashville within the Belfast-Nashville Sister Cities network.

Tourism/Culture/Arts:

- Belfast City Council has engaged (on 4 occasions) on an exchange and learning experience with the founder of the Nashville Music Hall of Fame to explore potentially linking with Nashville and Boston regarding the promotion of music in the Belfast Story attraction – ongoing.
- Belfast City Council facilitated connections with Visit Belfast and the Nashville Visitor and Convention Bureau to explore exchange of staff and city promotional material.
- Belfast City Council brokered a link for Queens University Belfast with the Nashville Mike Curb College of Entertainment & Music Business at Belmont University, and are now linking their Sonic Arts Research Centre for exchanges and learning between academies.

International Relations Outputs 2016/17

Boston Outputs 2016/17

Political/Civic:

- Belfast City Council through the Chair of City Growth met with Boston Senators and Judiciary on women's legal and equality issues. Interest now exists in making a visit to Belfast to study the equality and legal system here at central local and community level.
- Mayor Walsh appointed a Belfast/Boston Sister Cities Chair and International Development team within his office to progress co-operation under the agreement.

Education/Sport:

- Belfast City Council co-sponsored and hosted the 2nd annual Friendship Four Ice Hockey Tournament and engaged professional players with all Belfast Schools, community and youth organisations.
- Belfast City Council began engagement with the inaugural Basketball Hall of Fame Belfast Invitational Tournament December 2017.
- Belfast City Council facilitated connections between Ulster University, Queens University Belfast and Belfast Metropolitan College and the Irish International Immigration Centre in Boston securing 40 further J1 visas, 40 1 year placements in USA and a greater awareness of the programme.

Business and Investment:

- Belfast City Council endorsed recent Boston inward investments in Belfast eg. Black Duck, Rapid 7.
- Belfast City Council connected with Mass Challenge – a business eco system with a global presence, who are keen to link with a Belfast eco system and ultimately link the 3 Sister Cities.

International Relations Action Plan 2017/18

China Actions 2017/18

Political/Civic:

- Belfast City Council will co-host the Chinese Minister Counsel for Science and Technology during his return visit to Northern Ireland and Ulster University, to specifically look at best practice in Green Technology.
- Belfast City Council will lead a multi-partner outward mission to 6-13 China in May 2017 to explore education, investment and business cooperation.
- Belfast City Council will host the first Shenyang inward Mayoral visit in 2017.

Business/Investment:

- Belfast City Council will host an inward business mission from the London Chinese Chamber of Commerce with Invest Northern Ireland in 2017.

Tourism/Culture/Arts:

- Belfast City Council secured an opportunity to feature a Belfast art performance in Shenyang in 2018 when the 18th World Cities Association for Mayors will meet. Belfast City Council is working with Confucius to select and fund this.
- Belfast City Council will support Chinese New Year 2018.
- Belfast City Council connected the Irish Football Association with the 3rd annual Shenyang Peace Football Tournament to send a team of U12 and U13 to Shenyang in August 2017.

International Relations Action Plan 2017/18

Nashville Actions 2017/18

Political/Civic:

- Belfast City Council will lead a cross sectoral mission to Nashville from 17-20 May 2017
- Nashville has confirmed that the city will lead an annual cross sectoral delegation to Belfast each October for the annual International Homecoming, to engage in the event, meet Belfast and Boston colleagues, and continue to progress on collaboration.

Education/Sport:

- Ulster University secured Department of Economy funding to hold a competition to take 10 Undergraduate students to Nashville in April 2017 for a multi-sectoral programme (147 students applied).
- Belfast City Council will again facilitate a Harpeth Hall student work placement for 3 weeks in January 2018 in partnership with Strathearn College.
- Belfast City Council has helped facilitate a March 2017 Methody College student (5) exchange with Harpeth Hall.
- The NI Judiciary is planning an initial exploratory visit to Nashville in May 2017, along with the Belfast City Council delegation.

Business and Investment:

- Belfast City Council delivered a 3 way Sister City Life and Health Science company showcase and business to business programme in Boston in October 2016. This has led to a focused sectoral inward mission to Belfast from Nashville from 2-4 April 2017 and all partners desire to host 3 way annual events in Boston to grow the sector and linkages at business and academia level.
- Generator NI has engaged with the Nashville Centre for entrepreneurship and will lead a delegation of leading Belfast musicians to Nashville in September 2017 to develop business opportunities.

Tourism/Culture/Arts:

- Belfast City Council will continue the conversation with Charles McCutcheon and the Nashville Music Hall of Fame, with regard to engagement in the new visitor attraction, and creating Belfast/Boston/Nashville 3 way music tourism trail.
- Belfast City Council has connected the BBC with Nashville's Annual Country Music Awards to explore the potential of mainstreaming the awards live in Belfast (Ulster Hall), and simultaneously promoting the revival and growth of country/folk music here in Northern Ireland.

International Relations Action Plan 2017/18

Boston Actions 2017/18

Political/Civic:

- Belfast City Council will host a cross sectoral mission from Boston from 5-7 June 2017.
- Belfast City Council is donating an organ donor arts sculpture to Boston on 3 December as part of the global cities initiative to celebrate and provide organ donorship.
Note: Belfast was gifted the sculpture now located in Botanic Gardens by the City of Galway
- Belfast City Council will host Boston and Nashville delegates during the annual International Homecoming in October 2017.

Education/Sport:

- Ulster University will enter into a collaborative arrangement with Emerson College, Boston on animation. This link was made via Belfast City Council.
- Belfast City Council linked Belfast Metropolitan College to the Massachusetts Association of Colleges and Universities – ongoing.
- Belfast City Council secured a Harvard University keynote speaker for the launch of the Belfast Metropolitan College Belfast Business Show 2017.
- Belfast City Council will co-host the 3rd annual Friendship Four Ice Hockey Tournament and Gala dinner in November 2017.
- Belfast City Council will co-host the inaugural Basketball Hall of Fame Belfast Invitational Tournament in December 2017.

Business and Investment:

- Belfast City Council will host a Worcester (MA) trade mission coinciding with the inaugural Basketball Tournament in December 2017.
- Belfast City Council and CSIT (Centre for Cyber Security) will host experts from Nashville and Boston at the annual Belfast Cyber Security Summit 2-4 April 2017.
- Belfast City Council will provide Boston introductions for the first INI Sport technology trade mission to Boston on 5-8 June 2017.
- Belfast City Council will lead a cross sectoral Belfast in Boston week in October to coincide with the annual Boston based Life and Health Science event.

Tourism/Culture/Arts:

- Belfast City Council linked the Mac Belfast to Harvard University to explore receiving a Samuel Beckett exhibition in Belfast 2017.
- The Visitor Convention Bureau Boston and Visit Belfast will co-operate to promote the new Nordic low cost Belfast to Providence flight.

International Relations Action Plan 2017/18

Other planned 2017/18 activity

- Belfast City Council will host a visit of 22 students and teaching staff from the Columbia University in the state of New York, looking at planning and architecture practice in Belfast, and linking with both universities.
- Belfast City Council will host an inward study visit from Stockholm City Council from 24-26 April 2017, around the theme of regeneration and port/maritime development.
- Belfast City Council will host a visit from the Royal Family of Bahrain who will be on an exploratory visit to Dublin and Belfast looking at investment opportunities – date TBC.



Subject:	EU World Cities Project
Date:	8 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive, ext 6001
Contact Officer:	Clare McKeown Sustainable Development Manager

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To advise Committee that Belfast City Council has been invited to participate in the fully funded European Union's World Cities project for 2017 and has been selected to partner with Durban, South Africa and three other EU cities: Birmingham, Bilbao and Gratz.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the successful application to EU World Cities and agree to take part in the project. - Agree to attendance at the Durban visit on 27-31 March by one officer and one Member (or given the timing of the event, 2 officers). All costs to be met by the EU. - Note the proposal to invite up to three representatives from Invest NI, Department for the Economy (DfE) or relevant collaborative networks.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	World Cities (www.world-cities.eu) is a project of the European Union managed and 100% funded by the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO). The project supports the exchange of information, experience and best practice on sustainable urban development between pre-selected EU cities and non EU countries. This is a relatively new EU programme with a particular focus on sustainability issues i.e. developing the green economy, energy security, mobility, circular economy and

	<p>smart city solutions, innovation, new business starts etc. These topics are also at the heart of the Belfast Agenda, Local Development Plan and City Centre Regeneration plan. Following the networking and exchange experience, the cities will work on a pilot project over the course of a year, supported by the World Cities Team in Brussels.</p>
3.2	<p>The project was piloted in 2016 when Dublin, Lazio and West Midland regions were twinned with cities in China and India. The evaluation of the project showed very successful outcomes, enabling the sharing of knowledge on valuable smart sustainable solutions and deepening trade networks, business links and international co-operation.</p>
3.3	<p>There is significant interest in this project from our partners at the highest level in DfE, Invest NI, the NI Digital Catapult INNOVATE UK, both the Ulster University and Queen's University and the Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE) and the NI Office in Brussels.</p>
3.4	<p>DG REGIO World Cities will fund a delegation of up to 5 people from Belfast City to visit Durban 27-31 March 2017, for the first meeting of the network. The delegation should ideally include 2 representatives of the local administration as well as 2 or 3 from other public sector bodies or research institutions with private sector links that can work with local governments on the identified topics, and follow up during the year. There will be a further World Cities seminar in Brussels in October 2017, where one representative from Belfast will be funded to attend. World Cities will also fund a delegation of 4 representatives from Durban to travel to Belfast for reciprocal meetings with networks in October 2017 and one final meeting with the pairing city in the first quarter of 2018.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Partnership with South Africa</u></p> <p>This year, the EU World Cities project offered EU cities the opportunities to develop partnerships with either South Korea, South Africa, Indonesia, Australia or Vietnam. In order to be successful the participating EU city must have an established and demonstrable links to the non EU country of partnership choice.</p>
3.6	<p>Belfast has long established links with South Africa. These include the shared journey of peace building, conflict resolution and reconstruction over the past three decades. We now face some of the very same economic, social and cultural challenges, our energy, water and waste infrastructure need upgraded and we need to focus on skills development and address issues of long term unemployment, as we demonstrate that inclusive growth is possible.</p>

3.7	<p>Our universities are uniquely recognised as international centres for the study of conflict resolution. Queen’s University hosts the Senator George Mitchell School and Ulster University has the INCORE centre. There are further connections through Belfast Metropolitan College and with NICO (NI Cooperation Overseas) and Intercomm - and all these organisations have hosted delegations from South Africa for many years. Queen’s University and the University of Pretoria are also linked, developing Strategic Energy Plans for communities in their regions through another EU-funded project.</p>
3.8	<p>More recently, the cities of Belfast, Durban and Cape Town are now linked together through engagement in the global Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities programme. All three cite the issues of segregation, ageing infrastructure and energy security as major resilience challenges and will be focusing on these as they develop respective resilience strategies.</p>
3.9	<p>Trade with South Africa is in the region of £35million per annum and increasing. Invest NI plan to open their first permanent office in Johannesburg in late 2017. During the time of the proposed study visit (March 2017) Invest NI will be hosting an outward mission to South Africa with NI companies involved in the mining industry, this delegation will be led by the Chair of Invest NI.</p>
3.10	<p><u>City Challenges and Potential Themes for Co-operation</u></p> <p>Belfast and South African cities share some similar challenges. Although cities in both regions remain the dominant centre of economic activity, they are not performing to their potential. Historic under-investment in infrastructure and legacy issues associated with segregation, skew the urban form and affect service delivery, which stymies economic growth and has a detrimental impact on the environment. We have much to learn from South African cities and other European cities in this regard and equally we have much to offer in terms of our expertise and skill. We envisage the following projects could be areas for co-operation for mutual interest and benefit.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Co-operation on the Development of a Smart City Strategy.</u></p> <p>The solutions to energy efficiency, smart metering, smart grids, sustainable transport and waste issues can be significantly accelerated by the application of smart technology. The City Council recognises that the general digital transformation of the NI economy is a significant opportunity to drive growth and prosperity for the betterment of the Council, business and citizens. It offers the chance to reduce poverty and inequalities, improve livelihoods and better enable us to manage growth on limited resources. However this digital</p>

3.12	<p>transformation is not without challenges. Some forecasts for the UK suggest as many as 35% of today's workforce could be lost to automation by 2035 alone and the negative impacts of reduced face to face interactions and hyper connectivity are only just starting to be understood.</p> <p>While developing its Smart City Framework, the Council is cognisant of the above issues and is keen to take best advantage of shared learning from the European cities in this network and the South African cities who are developing similar integrated Smart City Strategies. We are also keen to share the knowledge and experience of our smart city team to date and of the outputs of working with the London-based Future Cities Catapult, a centre of excellence for the development of Smart city projects in the UK, on this issue and other pioneering smart city data projects.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Co-operation on Sustainable Energy Management</u></p> <p>The challenges of energy security and transition to the low carbon economy are common to both countries. Energy security is a significant issue for NI, which is 95% dependant on imported fossil fuel for primary energy demand. On the periphery of Europe and UK for supply, it is vulnerable to price hikes and fuel shortages. In 2011 fuel poverty affected 40% of homes in Belfast. In South Africa cities like Cape Town particularly have faced significant power cuts in recent years, as it struggles to meet energy demand now, while supporting low carbon development for the future. A sharp focus on accelerating progress in this area is a priority if they are both to reach national carbon reduction targets. The development of Strategic Energy Action Plan (SEAP) which is a key focus in the Belfast Agenda, could be an opportunity for co-operation in both cities As progress has been initiated by universities in both cities on this theme through the Citizen project, they could perhaps co-lead in this area as referenced above.</p>
3.14	<p>Members will be aware that, although some progress has been made in recent years, Belfast continues to lag behind other cities in terms of both start-up levels and business productivity and innovation. The Council now has statutory responsibility for business start and has made a number of strategic investments such as developing the Innovation Factory and co-investing in development plans to support the growth of key sectors such as cyber and creative and digital.</p> <p>But in order to stimulate, foster and develop more start-ups and realise the potential benefits, the cross-fertilisation of ideas between the public and private and academic sectors must be</p>

3.15	<p>facilitated. Catalyst Inc, CSIT and ECIT are excellent examples of this. The World Cities project enables that closer participation between these clusters. Players acting across boundaries can develop new communication links, which simultaneously creates business opportunity which invites more innovation.</p>
3.16	<p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that this World Cities project is a unique opportunity to exchange expertise on sustainable urban development, build local and international coalitions, to foster business networks and to raise the city’s international profile in South Africa in line with the Council’s economic development and international ambition. This application had considerable support from Department for the Economy, the NI Office in Brussels, the NI Digital Catapult and Invest NI, who see this as a unique opportunity for all bodies to work collaboratively to build networks in South Africa, a country which they view as a significant partner for growth in exports and international trade.</p>
3.17	<p><u>Finance and Resources</u></p> <p>EU World Cities will cover full financial and content support for this programme over the forthcoming year. This will include:- all travel and participation costs for the 5 delegates from Belfast on the outward delegation: one NI representative to attend the meetings in Brussels - up to 4 delegates from South Africa to travel to Belfast. The management of the programme will be co-ordinated by the Sustainable Development Manager in partnership with the International Unit and wider Development Department as part of their ongoing sustainable development, economic development and International work streams.</p>
3.18	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations</u></p> <p>The project has been screened for equality and good relations impacts. There are no equality and good relations at this stage, however this will reviewed on an ongoing basis as the project progresses.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	None

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Subject:	Belfast Facts and Figures – Draft Booklet (to be tabled)
Date:	8 th March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives & International Development, ext 3427 Claire Patterson, Business Research & Development Manager, ext 3379

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	Last month the Committee noted the work underway to develop more accessible information on Belfast’s economy, its growth sectors, accolades and the opportunities the city presents globally to raise awareness of the key messages, strengths and opportunities to grow the economy. The purpose of this report is for Committee to note the draft ‘Belfast Facts & Figures’ publication to be tabled at the meeting and provide an opportunity for Committee to provide their views on the content.
1.2	The Belfast Agenda sets a challenging ambition for the city to be home to an additional 70,000 new residents and an economy that supports 50,000 more jobs by 2035. Growing the economy and driving inclusive growth to ensure that all people benefit from economic success is at the core of this ambition. Central to this is the provision of a sound, evidence base that positions Belfast as a city to do business in, to invest in and to visit or study.
1.3	The development of a concise, infographic-style publication outlining key fact and figures on Belfast will help ensure that Members and Officers have consistent succinct, up-to-date and compelling information when engaging with potential stakeholders about the city,

	to enhance Belfast's image and reputation as a successful and dynamic city.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to note the draft Belfast Facts & Figures publication (to be tabled) and provide any further feedback.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> Elected Members currently receive a range of statistical information on Belfast in a variety of formats, such as the Profile of Belfast in the Elected Members Handbook, Area Working Group Profiles, economic briefings, presentations on the growth of key sectors etc.
3.2	As the demand for this information grows and the volume of information provided also increases, along with the commitment to monitor and deliver on the commitments contained in the Belfast Agenda it is accepted that a more concise and visual representation of this information is required.
3.3	The draft Belfast Facts and Figures publications is designed to be a user-friendly addition to the resource packs produced for Members, in line with the Belfast Agenda ambition to start and grow businesses in the city as well as positioning the city as a place to invest, study and visit.
3.4	The factors that influence economic growth do not solely lie within the local government's control therefore strengthening business relationships and local-central government relationships is a central tenet of the Belfast Agenda as well as being critical to build the city's role as the regional driver. These materials will therefore evolve over time in line with the ongoing work on Place Positioning and will support existing material used by our city partners when promoting Belfast as a place to do business, visit, study or invest in.
3.5	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> The publications will be produced internally, therefore requiring officer time and within existing departmental budgets.

3.6	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> There are no equality or good relations implications.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

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Subject:	Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme – Support for Village Renewal Schemes in Hannahstown and Edenderry
Date:	8 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard, European & International Relations Manager

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of the report is to seek Members' approval for the submission of a bid under the 'Village Renewal' theme of the Rural Development Programme for the development of renewal schemes in Hannahstown and Edenderry following the completion of the villages plans and to recommend that the capital match funding element which is required to support the submission is referred to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> authorise the submission of a bid under the Village Renewal theme of the Rural Development Programme for village renewal schemes in Hannahstown and Edenderry note that, in order to secure the maximum allocation of £150,000 for the schemes, match funding of £70,000 from the Council is required. As this money is capital this needs to be considered by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee as the Council's investment decision maker and Members are asked to agree that

	<p>this scheme is referred to the SP&R Committee for its consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve £7,500 for the current financial year and £7,500 in the coming financial year to support programme overheads to be met from within existing Departmental budgets
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will recall that at its meeting on the 13 January 2016 the City & Growth Committee agreed to enter into an SLA with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council to support the development and delivery of activities within the eligible area for the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (NIRDP).
3.2	At this time Members also agreed to provide development costs of £10,000 towards the production of village plans for the Hannahstown and Edenderry village areas. These completed plans are a pre-requisite for drawing down NIRDP funding under the Village Renewal Theme. This is one of five priority areas under the programme. Given the limited eligible area within the Belfast City Council boundary, the Village Renewal Theme is one of the key opportunities for attracting NIRDP funding and the only two eligible village areas are Hannahstown and Edenderry.
3.3	At the 13 January 2016 meeting, Members were advised that, once the village plans were developed, information would be brought back to the Council to indicate the level of match funding required to support delivery.
3.4	<p>The completed plans set out a series of potential improvement works, aimed at delivering physical and environmental improvements in the respective areas -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannahstown - the capital works include planting, environmental improvements and boundary improvements in line with NIRDP eligibility criteria. • Edenderry – environmental improvements works including paths upgrades and new marquee
3.5	The maximum budget available under the Village Renewal Programme is £150,000. The funding is subject to securing match funding from Belfast City Council. In order to secure the full £150,000, £50,000 of capital funding is required from the Council (to be allocated equally across the two village areas). In addition the Council will be required to contribute towards external professional services such as Landscape Architect,

Quantity Surveying and Construction Design Management Co-ordination. This should be a minimum of 10% (£20,000) of the overall capital cost of the works. The overall commitment from the Council is therefore £70,000. Given that this is for capital works this needs to be considered by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee as the Council's investment decision maker and Members are asked to agree that this scheme is referred to the SP&R Committee for their consideration. It is also proposed that the projects are delivered by the Property and Projects Department - subject to approval by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

3.6 As part of the Service Level Agreement with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Belfast City Council is also required to make a contribution towards programme staff overheads. This is based on the proportion of the district that sits within the eligible area and the available funding. This contribution covers programme overheads such as staffing and office accommodation. The rest of the funding is provided by NIRD P and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. The amount required is likely to be in the region of £7,500 each year over the first two years of the programme. Overheads will reduce in year 3 as programme expenditure decreases so a revised overhead will be calculated at that point and Committee approval will be sought for any Belfast City Council contribution. Members are asked to approve the allocation of £15,000 for the first two years of the programme from the Development Department's budget.

3.7 Financial and Resource Implications

Financial

Match funding - The RDP is subject to securing match funding from the Council. In order to secure the £150k £70k of match funding is required from the Council – as this money is for capital works this needs to be agreed by the SP&R Committee as the Council's investment decision maker and it is proposed that this is referred to the SP&R Committee for their consideration

Programme support - £15k required over the first two years of the programme - this funding has been set aside in departmental budgets for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years

Resource

Officer time in continuing to work up the proposals

Equality & Good Relations Implications

	All activity will be subject to equality screening.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None



Subject:	Innovation Factory Year 2 Business Plan
Date:	8 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Colin McCabrey, Economic Development Manager

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on performance of the Innovation Factory since opening at the end of September 2016 and to summarise Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and areas of work for the coming financial year, as detailed in the Year 2 Business Plan for the Centre.
1.2	The Year 2 Business Plan, covering the period 1 April 2017 to end of March 2018, has been approved by the joint Project Board. This Board consists of senior-level Officer representation from both Oxford Innovation (the centre operator) and Belfast City Council. It has responsibility for the strategic oversight of the Innovation Factory, including both the capital and business support activities.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the achievements of the Centre to date, as set out in Appendix 1; and • Endorse the Year 2 Business Plan for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, as approved by the Project Board.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>About Innovation Factory</u></p> <p>Innovation Factory is located at Forthriver Business Park and offers Grade A-standard workspace for small businesses. The building is 55,000 sq. ft. in total; this includes 32,240 sq. ft. lettable space and 5,133 sq. ft. innovation space. It is the first development on the wider 14 acre business park site which was previously the site of James Mackie and Sons Engineering Works.</p>
3.2	<p>The Centre will accommodate 382 workstations across 111 business units when at full capacity. It will support at least 145 jobs by December 2018 and 187 by December 2020. It will provide support annually to over 100 businesses and create 5 collaborative networks. It will promote and encourage social and economic regeneration, encourage local and foreign direct investment and act as a catalyst for further development of Forthriver Business Park.</p>
3.3	<p>Belfast City Council accepted hand-over of the Centre from the contractor on 18th April 2016. It was completed two weeks ahead of the scheduled capital completion date and was on budget. Oxford Innovation Limited was appointed as the operator of the centre via a competitive dialogue procurement process. The Service Contract with Oxford Innovation came into effect on 1 June 2016. The contract is for an initial term of 5 years with the possibility of extension for a further three periods of three years subject to performance.</p>
3.4	<p>In accordance with the contract the performance of Oxford Innovation for the period to end of March 2017 will be formally assessed in April 2017. The contract contains a detailed methodology on how performance will be measured across a series of metrics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extent to which services have been delivered in accordance with the Year 1 Service Commencement Plan and Business Plan; - Revenue generated; - Financial outturn (net profit/loss); - Customer satisfaction across tenants and users of the support services; - Complaints; and - Compliance with the Council's requirements
3.5	<p>Summary performance indicators to date are detailed in Appendix 1 for Members' information. A final dashboard of performance at the end of the financial year will be tabled to a future meeting of Committee upon completion. Some of the key performance results</p>

to date are that the centre is at 11.1% occupancy supporting 46 jobs across 14 tenant businesses. The buy local policy adopted by the centre has generated 90% local supplier spend (£165,000 – excluding Oxford Innovation’s centralised contracts). In excess of 50 community and stakeholder groups have been engaged and centre tenants are actively contributing to community benefit. A recruitment company tenant has committed to delivering recruitment training to circa 160 unemployed persons. The Community Engagement Officer is actively building positive relationships with local schools. A very successful Christmas good will event was hosted at the centre, attended by 55 P2 children from Springfield Primary and St Clare’s Primary School, their parents and friends.

3.6

Year 2 Annual Service Plan

The Year 2 Annual Service Plan and Business Plan for the Centre is a comprehensive document, in line with the contract requirements. It covers a range of areas including:

- Business support, innovation and growth services on offer;
- Marketing Plan and Proposed Target Markets;
- Business tenancy products, services and commercial terms (including business coaching delivered by the in-house Innovation Director);
- Benchmarking and comparison with other Oxford Innovation managed centres;
- Financial model;
- Community Engagement, Social Regeneration and Good Relations Plans;
- Continuous Improvement Plans;
- Displacement Mitigation;
- Management and organisation structure;
- Staffing (including placements);
- Facilities Management; and
- Summary of key policies.

3.7

An Innovation Director located at the centre full-time provides tenants with coaching to accelerate business growth and innovation. Alongside the Innovation Director a team of specialist business consultants offer a tailored menu of support including 1:1 coaching, business diagnostics, programmes and support. The workspace products available at Innovation Factory include:

- Dedicated business space
- Dedicated desks in shared offices
- Hot-desks in co-working areas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual office services - Membership - Conference, meeting and business lounge facilities - Café - Additional call and data packages.
3.8	<p>The Year 2 forecast occupancy is in line with Oxford Innovation’s original projection, forecast at 24% (7,749 sq ft). This is projected to increase to 43% in year 3; 76% in year 4 and 85% in year 5. 85% is defined as full occupancy to allow for churn and growth of tenants within the centre. The centre is forecast to come into annual profit in year 4 and cumulative operating profit in year 5.</p>
3.9	<p>The Year 2 business plan has been prepared in accordance with the financial model submitted as part of the original tender submission for the management of the centre. These projections were taken account of in the Economic Development revenue estimates for the 2017/18 financial year.</p>
3.10	<p>The Innovation Factory will continue to target high growth and innovative start-ups and SMEs in the coming year. The existing tenant sector mix is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital Services – 35% - Financial Services – 15% - R&D / Technology – 15% - Business Services – 15% - Insurance – 7% - Recruitment Services – 7% - Social Regeneration/Community focused business – 7%.
3.11	<p>The jobs located at the Centre are forecast to grow from the current 46 to 107 by April 2018. In the course of the coming financial year, key activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement with 115 businesses through first-time unique interventions (both tenant and non-tenant businesses) - 486 follow-on/repeat sessions with existing clients and users. The range of support is described as Growth Services or Innovation Services. It includes growth planning and strategic mentoring of clients and tenants, masterclass programmes with separate 1:1 mentoring, an open innovation event, support aimed at developing collaborations between tenants and users, a developer innovation programme and

a range of collaborative services in partnership with stakeholders such as Council, Invest NI and Techstart

- Targeted activities to attract FDI to the centre through the development of a 'plug and play' option and a price structure based on an all-inclusive cost per workstation model. Officers have been proactively engaging with Invest NI on an attractive proposition at Innovation Factory which can compete with other cities to attract FDI to the benefit of Innovation Factory tenants and the local community.

3.12








In addition to the economic focus of the Centre, social regeneration is a key element of the work programme at the Innovation Factory. This is about much more than just a stand-alone work stream: tenant businesses are encouraged to get involved by providing work placements and pro-bono support to local groups; there is a "Buy Local" policy to encourage the engagement of local businesses and there is an extensive programme of engagement with local schools and community organisations. The Innovation Factory will continue to utilise a proactive and inclusive engagement approach to inform and develop partnerships with organisations, forums, groups and individuals who are key to meeting the social regeneration objectives of the centre. Implementation of Innovation Factory's Social Integration and Community Engagement Plan (2017 – 2018) is built upon six key priorities highlighted below:

- Priority 1: To encourage positive local engagement aligned to the ethos of the Innovation Factory that can extend its core services to include under-represented groups. This includes opportunities to sponsor local initiatives, summer innovation bootcamps for young people and meet the buyer-events;
- Priority 2: To assist and support local businesses to tap into supply chain 'spin-off' opportunities arising from the operation of the Innovation Factory. To date, 90% of expenditure has been incurred locally (excluding centralised OI services such as IT etc.);
- Priority 3: To facilitate skills development, work placements and permanent employment opportunities for long-term unemployed / economically inactive people living within the local community. This activity will compliment City Council employability and skills initiatives, including Belfast Works. Under this priority it is worth noting the intent of Oxford Innovation to position the café within the centre as a "learning café". This means that there will be opportunities for work placements and traineeships. In addition, it forecasts a further 4 x 24 week placements within the centre in 2017/18, working with tenants to secure further placements and delivery of a pre-employment programme and local skills academy;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority 4: To provide school children from the Springfield Road, Shankill area and surrounding locality with first hand exposure to innovation and entrepreneurship with the aim of inspiring the next generation; - Priority 5: To engage actively with the local community to show-case operations including promotion of social enterprise activity and corporate social responsibility. This involves delivering a social community improvement activity that can utilise the skill-base of IF tenants for community benefit and well-being; and - Priority 6: To actively target, exploit and monitor potential sources of external support funding / other opportunities related to social regeneration. <p>3.13 Similarly to 2016/17, a detailed Social Integration and Community Engagement Plan Action Plan will be developed. This will be informed by the wider community engagement activity and will be widely promoted.</p> <p>3.14 <u>Finance and Resource Considerations</u> The Year 2 Business Plan for Innovation Factory has been prepared within the financial parameters detailed in the Financial Model submitted as part of Oxford Innovation’s tender for the operation of the centre. The Financial Model is still accurate as income and expenditure aligned with occupancy and usage is consistent with the original submission. The Council budget for IF Year 2 is included within the 17/18 Economic Development Unit estimates.</p> <p>3.15 <u>Equality & Good Relations Implications</u> The Innovation Factory Project has been successfully equality screened and the Social Regeneration Activities detailed within the Year 2 Annual Service plan will further develop equality and good relations impacts of the centre.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Performance dashboard of Innovation Factory October 2016 to current (still subject to formal performance review in April 2017).

Appendix 1

Innovation Factory (IF) Status Update (October 2016 – current)

Indicator	Performance	Status
Occupancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 66 enquiries, 53 qualified (meeting funding and planning conditions), 38 viewings, 14 licenses; - 11.1% occupancy (3,890 sq ft of Net lettable area of 35,000 sq ft); - BCC's first funding occupancy related target is: to achieve 55% occupancy by 31st Dec 2018; - No customers have left the centre. 	
Sectors / Tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional Services (Planning, Finance, Insurance & Recruitment); - TV Production; - Software & Wifi development; - Engineering Consultancy; - Courier Services; - Training; - Telecommunications 	
Source of Tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 new starts; - 7 relocations; - 4 from home office; - UU pipeline for the grow-on space for university spin-outs in development; 	
Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 new business start tenant extending from 177 sq ft to 501 sq ft and 3 jobs to 5 jobs; 	
Employability & Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 46 jobs across the tenants located at the centre (projected to grow to 58 across the existing tenants in 2017); - 1 x tenant placement to date (voluntary capacity); - 5 staff employed by Oxford Innovation for service delivery; - 2 x SIF 24 week placements secured; - 20 Long-term unemployed persons attended a interview masterclass delivered by BITC and IF; - Developing an employer led skills barometer for the area to inform future IF led E&S activity; - IF engagement with Makematic developing digital content as a resource for secondary schools benefitting a minimum of 40 students at IF (content will be available on YouTube soon); - Promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship to underrepresented groups. An IF facilitated event attracting 50 female entrepreneurs at IF (26th Jan); - Facilitating West Belfast Business Education Partnership (careers cluster) at Innovation Factory; - 1 tenant exploring taking on 2 apprentices (1 from E3 and 1 from Springvale); - 1 tenant providing training to positively support children with Autism; - Developing a learning café environment for the café service delivery; 	
Business Growth and Innovation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 30 businesses attended open innovation event; - All tenant businesses supported by Innovation Director at IF; - 4 Fusion / KTP / Innovation Voucher projects being explored; - 20 businesses attended sales development workshop; - 7 businesses attended innovation leadership workshop; - 11 businesses attended disruptive innovation workshop; - 20 businesses attended a Google digital marketing workshop; 	
Foreign Direct Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCC target to encourage local and foreign direct investments to the centre by 31st Dec 2020; - Proposals in pipeline for INI consideration (cost per workstation option) for FDI companies; - Sales suite proposition being developed for INI consideration. 	

Marketing	<p>66 enquiries have been generated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCC business page: 12 - Referral: 9 - Word of Mouth: 6 - Social Media: 1 - Website: 35 - Other: 3 <p>Current viewing to sales ratio is 38% (OI average across centres is 25%) A Year 2 Marketing Plan has been received as part of the Year 2 Business Plan</p>	
Social Regeneration initiatives summarised below:		
Good Relations & Shared Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 52 stakeholder groups engaged; - Access improvements being scoped with community & stakeholders; - Christmas good will event attended by 55 P2 school children & their families (Springfield Primary & St Clare's Primary School). IF funded community prizes on the evening; - Engaging with QUB Science Shop re: research student undertaking social regeneration multiplier analysis; - Strategic and programme updates provided by IF via attendance at the Springvale Inter-agency meeting; 	
Business supply chain spin-off opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buy local & buy social procurement: £165k local contract spend (only £17.5k of which outside of Belfast); - Developing loyalty and incentive / discount schemes for tenants with local businesses. 	
Tenant led Corporate Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One tenant supporting Belfast Model School for Boys in the development of an App; - 1 tenant aiming to select a local and a regional charity to support through CRS activities; - 1 tenant exploring a project to create a virtual reality piece for social benefit; - 1 tenant aiming to avail of E3 student to develop social media strategy; - 1 tenant considering delivering classes to help parents keep their children safe online; - Training to circa 160 unemployed persons; 	
Sources of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a funding proposal for NI Big Lottery involving IF, Schools and USEL. 	
Facility Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility Amends • Furniture • Operations Manual 	
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial delivery in accordance with year 1 business plan 	
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 2 Annual Service Plan developed for delivery April 2017 – March 2018; • Annual Performance Review completed by Council April 2017 to assess performance 16/17 Financial Year; • Internal lessons learned and exit plan workshop 	



Subject:	BelTech Conference 2017
Date:	8 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Colin McCabrey, Economic Development Manager, ext 3805

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to recommend a funding contribution of £8,000 towards the delivery of the Belfast Technology Conference 2017 (BelTech).
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Committee is asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider and approve the request for sponsorship of £8,000 to support the BelTech conference to be held in Belfast on 5–7 April 2017. Note that Officers are adopting a process for assessing sponsorship requests aligned to the Belfast Agenda targets and outputs. A future report will be brought to Committee for endorsement.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that one of the key priorities of the Belfast Agenda is Growing the Economy. Central to this pillar of activity is the commitment to increase business start up, build support for business growth and encourage additional investment in the City.</p> <p>Belfast's economic growth in recent years has been driven by technology-focused</p>

3.2	<p>businesses operating across a range of sectors. These companies are both FDI businesses and small, indigenous companies that are developing products and services here that are being exported worldwide or have the potential to do so.</p>
3.3	<p>Over the course of the last few years, there have been a number of annual tech-focused business conferences and events that have sought to showcase best practice, encourage collaboration between businesses and encourage young people to become engaged in the tech sector. The growing support for the Smart City Agenda means that the Council and the City are now looking at technology not only as a business product but also as a way of changing the way we all do business.</p>
3.4	<p>Belfast City Council supported the inaugural Belfast Technology Conference event which took place in April 2014 and the subsequent conferences in April 2015 and 2016. Sponsorship from the Council was reduced from £15,000 to £10,000 in 2016 with the view to reducing the reliance on Council funding each year as the conference grows and becomes self-sustaining.</p>
3.5	<p>The 2016 conference took place at Titanic Belfast and brought together tech and business leaders as well as politicians from Belfast, USA and Europe including Jascha Franklin-Hodge, Chief Information Officer for the City of Boston's Department of Innovation and Technology, and Doug Safford, Vice President of Technology Innovation at Allstate in Chicago.</p>
3.6	<p>The conference helped inform technology professionals and businesses of the emerging technologies and approaches that allow them to innovate and compete effectively at a global level and it also helped educate and inspire kids/parents/teachers about the potential of a career in Digital Technology, thereby building the digital skill base and reinforcing Belfast's global lead in this area.</p>
3.7	<p>BelTech 2016 attracted a total of 649 attendees, which is an increase of 250 since its inception in 2014. BelTech 2017 will now incorporate an extra day to the conference and will feature a strategic digital marketing campaign to attract more attendees from ROI and beyond.</p> <p>The 2017 conference will again be held at Titanic Belfast and will target technology professionals, tech business owners and those interested in establishing a business, as</p>

3.8	<p>well as post primary school children, teachers and university students.</p>
3.9	<p>Key thematic areas for this year's conference include Software Engineering, which will be led by Kainos and Liberty IT and Machine Learning, Connected Learning and Immersive Technology which will be driven by input from the UK Digital Catapult.</p>
3.10	<p>BelTech 2017 will now run over 3 days and will feature the following:</p>
3.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 & 6 April: Days 1 and 2 will focus on technology professionals and businesses and will feature curated conversations on the themes identified above. The Lord Mayor of Belfast will be invited to open the event and a global expert will present the initial session. The conversation sessions will be moderated by a Belfast entrepreneur and will feature respected Belfast and Global experts. • All sessions will be recorded and, ideally, be broadcast live via the conference website to a global audience. The emphasis of attendees will be on business networking and discussion of success stories and potential of technology. • 7 April: Day 3 will focus on Post Primary school children and teachers and will feature a mix of engaging technology demos and conversational sessions as above. The emphasis for attendees will be engaging technology demos for kids and discussion of career pathways and opportunities. • Exhibition: Throughout the 3 days, an exhibition of leading NI and Global high tech organisations will run to allow attendees to get a more detailed understanding of the people, products and innovations covered in the Conference. Education providers will also be among the exhibitors to provide advice and guidance to students. <p>The overall aims and benefits of the BelTech conference include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining an awareness of emerging technologies and practices that will improve participants' effectiveness and career development • Interacting with highly successful tech/business leaders and role models • Building personal networks and enhancing career prospects • Contributing to building a vibrant technology community and culture in Belfast and NI that can compete effectively on a global scale • Contributing to the NI Innovation Strategy • Informing students and young people about the types of technology careers

	<p>available and advising them on routes into employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring students and young people by successful role models and their stories • Supporting teachers to provide quality careers guidance and advice on future employment opportunities for students in this field • Developing awareness among key international companies of Belfast capability as a source of technology talent.
3.12	<p>The finance requested from Council is £8,000, a reduction of £2,000 from the previous year. Sponsorship of the event will provide Council the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full page advertisement in conference magazine (includes editorial); • Primetime positioning of Council logo on all materials including website and all promotional materials • Prime exhibition space • 10 Delegate passes.
3.13	<p>It is proposed that the delegate passes will be offered to small businesses located at the Innovation Factory. A number of Council Officers will also attend to staff the exhibition stand. Should Members wish to attend the event, they should advise Officers and arrangements can be made to enable them to do so.</p>
3.14	<p>Members will be aware that Business Support activities delivered by the Council's Economic Development Unit concentrate primarily on starting a business, growing a business and investing in Belfast as well as supporting employability and skills work.</p>
3.15	<p>The range of initiatives delivered or supported in each of these areas is developed based on research and engagement with partners to identify what will make the most significant contributions to the outcomes set out in the Belfast Agenda.</p>
3.16	<p>In addition to programme activity, there are also opportunities to engage with local events – such as Beltech – that are aligned to the Council's strategic priorities. At present, there is no objective approach by which decisions can be taken on approaches for funding that are made to the Council, outside of a broad assessment as to the ways in which they can contribute towards delivery of the Belfast Agenda outcomes.</p> <p>However, in order to take a targeted approach to supporting inclusive economic growth and ensuring participation by the most disadvantaged and under-represented groups in</p>

3.17	<p>our community, it is proposed that a more objective process is established in the future when assessing funding requests. This will ensure that the Council is seen to align itself to relevant activities to support its ambitions for inclusive economic growth – particularly those that involved ethnic minorities, persons with a disability or persons that are long-term unemployed/economically inactive.</p>
3.18	<p>It is therefore proposed that Officers will develop an assessment process by which decisions can be taken about how to best invest Council resources in events of this type. This will enable a more objective assessment of any funding or sponsorship requests. It will also create greater transparency around funding decisions. An update on this will be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.</p>
3.19	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The total budget requested is £8,000 which will be met from Economic Development Budgets. This has already been set aside in the 2017/18 estimates.</p>
3.20	<p>Organisers are forecasting an additional £32,000 in sponsorship from other private and public sector partners. They consider that, in the longer-term, the event will become self-funding.</p>
3.21	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>No specific equality or good relations considerations.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	None

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Subject:	City Centre Living
Date:	8 th March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nuala Gallagher
Contact Officer:	Alice McGlone

Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 Committee on work underway to identify the key issues around liveability and increasing the residential population in the city centre.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: Note the contents of the report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>The City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) recognises that a residential population is an important element for a successful and vibrant city centre. Belfast's city centre residential market is currently under-developed. CCRIS identifies the need for 400 additional units each year (6,000 by 2030), but feedback from agents suggests that only a small fraction of this target is coming forward. Additionally the Belfast Agenda outlines the need to grow the population by 70,000 by 2035. A portion of this growth will be accommodated within the city centre.</p>

3.2	<p>It is important to recognise that there are also established residential communities within the city centre estimated, at 2014, to have a population in the region of 9,000-10,000. In addition to areas of social and affordable housing, there a number of apartments in private ownership and private rented tenures at locations such as Adelaide Street, Castle Street/King Street and Victoria Square. The City Centre boundary is defined in Appendix 1.</p>
3.3	<p>In recent years student housing has also contributed a growing component to the mix of residential accommodation in the city centre. The relocation of Ulster University has been a major catalyst and to date, approximately 5,000 units have been consented. The student population will add a much welcomed vibrancy to the city centre which has to be balanced with other housing tenures to ensure an inclusive and balanced city.</p>
3.4	<p>Members have also raised issue of housing in the city centre and the following motion was supported at Council on 1st September 2016:</p> <p><i>“This Council notes that there is high social housing need in Belfast, with over 10,000 households on the waiting list and 6,000 households¹ in housing stress, and that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) is developing a city centre waiting list for site specific developments.</i></p> <p><i>The Council believes that, together with the NIHE and other partners, there exists a unique opportunity in the city centre, to create social, affordable and private housing schemes and mixed income communities to increase the residential population and build shared, balanced and sustainable communities.</i></p> <p><i>The Council agrees, as part of the Local Development Plan process and City Centre Regeneration Scheme, to develop with the NIHE and other key partners a City Centre Liveability Plan, which will set out plans to grow the City centre population through an expansion of the housing offer. This plan will include the development of social, affordable and private housing and seek to encourage more families living in the City centre. The plan will also look at the quality of the places and buildings, the need for private and communal open spaces/parks and access to schools essential for family living in the City centre.”</i></p> <p>Some of the issues around defining liveability are discussed in Appendix 2.</p>

¹ The actual figure quoted by NIHE is in fact now higher than this at 7,134.

<p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p>	<p>Work Underway or Undertaken to date</p> <p>A Population and Housing Growth Study was completed in October 2016 to help inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan (LDP). Once adopted, this LDP will replace the existing development plan which comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 (adopted September 2014); and • Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) Subject Plan (adopted December 2008). <p>This research makes comparisons between Belfast’s population and other similar sized cities in England and the role of city centre in meeting increasing housing need. At a whole population level, it represents a robust and more up-to-date assessment of housing needs than that included in CCRIS. However, to inform the production of the Plan Strategy, this research will be supplemented with a more detailed breakdown of housing need.</p> <p>Department of Communities</p> <p>The Department for Communities is currently engaged in the second stage of a Review of the Role and Regulation of the Private Rented Sector. The Council’s response is scheduled to be reported to the People and Communities Committee on 7th March 2017. The Review sets out proposals on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply • Affordability • Security of Tenure • Tenancy Management • Property Standards • Dispute Resolution <p>It promotes the following proposals in respect of housing supply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply Proposal 1: Commission work to gauge the appetite of institutional investors with existing portfolios of private rented sector properties in Great Britain to invest in Northern Ireland and the conditions needed to support such investment; • Supply Proposal 2: Explore opportunities to use money available for shared housing through the Fresh Start agreement to incentivise the development of more mixed-tenure housing areas, including private rented accommodation, underpinned by a shared ethos; • Supply Proposal 3: Scope the opportunities with housing associations for greater involvement in the private rented sector.
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3.9	<p>Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)</p> <p>NIHE have stated that there is a high social housing need for Belfast which has grown over recent years. In December 2016, 10,818 households were on the waiting list, of that approximately 7,134 were considered to be in housing stress. They note that Housing Associations are finding it increasingly difficult to acquire land for social housing development. The Housing Executive strongly advocates that additional land should be made available to Housing Associations to develop much needed social housing. If land is excluded to social housing providers, this will seriously affect the ability to meet housing need for all citizens of Belfast, a fundamental human right.</p>
3.10	<p>The Housing Executive believes that the City Centre can provide an opportunity to support mixed tenure developments, which will help ensure that the aim of the City Centre as a shared space can be achieved. NIHE would like to see affordable housing included within the city centre: affordable housing includes social rented homes and well as co-ownership housing and NIHE’s Shared Future Housing Programme (Appendix 3).</p>
3.11	<p>Co-Ownership Housing</p> <p>Co-Ownership is a Do It Yourself Shared Ownership scheme (DIYSO) exclusively for Northern Ireland. For people who want to own their own home but can’t quite afford it, Co-Ownership may help. Co-Ownership is more affordable than a mortgage or private rent and a deposit is often not required. Purchasers take as large a share as they can afford to start with, between 50% and 90% (known as the ‘starter share’) and pay rent on the remaining share. They can then increase that share at any time (‘staircasing’). More details of the Co-Ownership Scheme are set out in Appendix 3.</p>
3.12	<p>Proposals by the Private Rented Sector</p> <p>There has been recent interest from private developers in bringing forward Private Rented Sector (PRS) apartments, specifically the creation of build-to-rent PRS blocks. These are established in other cities as part of stand-alone blocks or as a leading element of a multi-tenure development.</p>
3.13	<p>The target group typically comprises key workers, often young urban professionals, who are looking for a comfortable and affordable place to stay for a secure length of tenure where the right life-style setting is important. Added amenities such as a concierge are part of the PRS life-style formula and this is where PRS distinguishes itself from the Build for Sale</p>

	<p>sector. Types of life-style facilities can include workspaces, communal roof terraces and gyms. Additional income can be generated from these facilities, although the prime objective is the contribution they make to place-making and community building.</p>
3.14	<p>In certain markets, a multi-tenure scheme can be led by a PRS block rather than private individual units where it can “de-risk” a development, with front-loading income for the scheme to potentially allow a broad range of tenures to be offered. While the nature of PRS requires a stand-alone block from an investment and management perspective, good design can enable the block to be integrated into a mixed tenure scheme and remain tenure blind. PRS investors usually require a quantum of units to make a development viable. This is normally in the range of 100+ units depending on the area and size of overall scheme, the demand in the area and project viability.</p>
3.15	<p>Proposals for Private Housing for Sale</p> <p>Recent developments such as “The Gallery”, an apartment block at Dublin Road, suggest there is some interest developing in housing for private sale. This might be expected to continue as other sites, for example, Sirocco, come forward for development. Housing for sale is another important residential element in a successful and vibrant city centre and home ownership is an integral element within new housing areas which can create balanced and sustainable communities.</p>
3.16	<p>Key Workstreams</p> <p>The identification of key issues around liveability and increasing the residential population in the city centre and the development of potential options to address them will require joint working across Council and with a range of statutory agencies, in particular, DfC and NIHE. Additionally it will involve the private sector, housing associations and those developing the co-ownership model. The following work streams are particularly relevant.</p>
3.17	<p>Local Development Plan</p> <p>The Local Development Plan (LDP) is one of the key opportunities for the Council to influence residential development in the city by supporting residential use in areas with the best supporting infrastructure and ensuring that supporting facilities and services are planned to serve the growing population. In addition to the detailed Population and Housing Growth Study, a series of Topic Papers have also been prepared that relate to Population Change and Housing and the City Centre, which offer an opportunity to examine the contribution the City Centre can make to meeting Belfast’s housing needs.</p>

3.18	<p>The Preferred Options Paper notes that there are underused, derelict sites and significant areas of brownfield land which we are encouraged to redevelop by regional policy and which lie within the city centre. There are huge opportunities for our city centre, not least given its shared sense of ownership by all communities and the access it offers to employment and other services and amenities, notwithstanding the contribution it would make to the wider economy. Belfast has a rich and varied built heritage, and there are clear opportunities to re-use of vacant buildings to accommodate housing needs in the city centre.</p>
3.19	<p>Extensive public consultation on the preferred options and engagement with key stakeholders is underway with a closing date of 20th April. Alongside this, a series of additional research is to be completed to help inform the next stages of the LDP preparation process. This will include detailed housing market needs analysis to consider the mix of housing to be supplied in terms of the size of units, types, and tenures of housing needed to meet the population and housing growth proposed.</p>
3.20	<p>A report to Planning Committee on 14th March will propose that an Urban Capacity Study will be completed by summer 2017 to consider where new housing can be accommodated, including the contribution that the City Centre can make through the re-use of vacant buildings on upper floors and housing as a component of mixed use developments. The responses to the POP consultation will be brought together with the additional research being undertaken, to help inform the drafting of the LDP documents.</p>
3.21	<p>The timetable for the adoption of the LDP is set out in Appendix 4. It is anticipated that the draft high level Plan Strategy is published for consultation at the end of 2017 and will be subject to an independent examination before adoption. Following adoption of the Plan Strategy, a Local Policies Plan will then be prepared during 2019/20 with a final date for adoption in late 2020.</p>
3.22	<p>Developing an Approach to Housing in the City Centre</p> <p>Increasing the residential population within the city centre is a key objective of the City Centre Investment Strategy and the Belfast Agenda, and is an integral part of the Local Development Plan. As major development sites within the city centre come forward with opportunities for residential use, and in advance of the LDP and local plan strategy being adopted, it is important that a measured approach to housing is established across the city</p>

	<p>centre to promote inclusion, sustainability, cohesion and balance.</p>
3.23	<p>The objective is to produce high quality, sustainable developments with a mix of tenures that reflect the economic, social and environmental patterns of the city. The mix of tenures could include private for sale, PRS, social and affordable, including co-ownership, in addition to the student housing that is now coming forward. On larger schemes with capacity for significant amounts of residential units, integrated, mixed and blind tenure options should be considered.</p>
3.24	<p>The quality of residential developments has long-term impacts, both on the communities they house, and on the surrounding neighbourhoods. The location and how well they knit into the fabric of existing neighbourhoods and the city-scape are factors will have long term positive and negative implications for the city. Having the necessary physical and social infrastructure alongside the facilities to support development will be important in creating a sustainable and vibrant community. This will include the integration with existing provision combined with access to employment, amenities and effective public transport linkages. It is equally important to consider potential implications for the successful night-time economy and how this important element of the city centre economy and vitality can be maintained.</p>
3.25	<p>High quality design standards are paramount to the success and sustainability of housing development with issues such as space standards, orientation, storage, treatment of communal areas, access to open space etc. requiring careful consideration.</p>
3.26	<p>Key to all of this is viability of the projects, ensuring that high quality schemes come forward in the right location to meet demand. There is potential to look at different sources of funding and financing to assess how they may be combined to achieve a viable and mixed solution.</p>
3.27	<p>Proposed Actions</p> <p>Belfast City Council will work to determine the contribution that the city centre can make to growing Belfast's population and increasing housing supply and seek to establish a balanced approach to housing as developments come forward. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing ongoing areas of work with DfC and NIHE and the private sector to develop an agreed approach to the development of a sustainable model for housing of mixed tenure and type in the city centre. This will include private housing for sale; PRS,

social housing and other forms of affordable tenure including co-ownership and opportunities for the Shared Future Housing Programme;

- identifying suitable mixed use sites and housing sites;
- collaborating with potential PRS providers to try to ensure that the type, nature and location of proposals are in line with CCIS and are financially viable;
- examining the re-use of vacant space, particularly on upper floors, in city centre buildings and the fiscal policy approaches to encourage their re-use;
- collating intelligence with regard to the local housing market including supply, demand and price points;
- examining the market demand for various tenure types and their viability ;
- considering options and the viability of mixed and blind tenure housing;
- working to support the 'liveability' of the city centre, including the need for community infrastructure to support new housing and the potential for developer contributions to support the provision of such physical and social infrastructure;
- consider the requirements to ensure a balance between City Centre living and existing commercial uses, including those that form part of the night-time economy;
- establishing a network of public open spaces and standards of provision;
- exploring the potential for ensuring quality design approaches for residential and other development to underpin the development of a liveable city centre;
- establishing transport and other infrastructure requirements;
- ascertaining information and funding available from the "Fresh Start" programme in the context of a possible pilot housing project to promote opportunities for shared housing through the development of more mixed-tenure housing areas, underpinned by a shared ethos;
- working with DfC to promote new opportunities to stimulate the growth of the Private Rented Sector;
- ensuring integration with the outputs emerging from the "100 Resilient Cities" project pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Future Cities Catapult project.

Equality and Good Relations Implications

Equality and good relations screening will be conducted as required, in parallel with any future proposed consultation process.

3.28

3.29	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no additional resource implications associated with this report</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1: City Centre Boundaries</p> <p>Appendix 2: Liveability</p> <p>Appendix 3: NIHE Comments on Affordable Housing</p> <p>Appendix 4: LDP Timetable</p>

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Appendix 1

City Centre Boundary



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Appendix 2

Definition of Liveability

Belfast does not have an agreed definition of “liveability” either for the City Centre or its neighbourhoods. Cities have chosen to define liveability in various ways. For example:

“Liveability is the sum of the factors that add up to a community’s quality of life—including the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity, and cultural, entertainment and recreation possibilities”.

Partners for Livable Communities

Washington DC

The term “liveable” city has emerged over the past three decades as part of a surge in discourse on two inter-related ideas, “the future of cities” and “future cities”, generating themes and associations of specific phrases such as:

- **Smart Cities** typically refers to enhanced city systems which use data and technology to achieve integrated management and inter-operability, but can also take on wider meanings to reflect social and political forms of smartness;
- **Sustainability and Sustainable Cities** tends to focus on cities designed to minimise environmental impact, and is often associated with low-carbon consumption;
- **Intelligent Cities** is an idea sometimes used interchangeably with ‘smart cities’, although some of its origin can be traced to the idea of ‘virtual cities’ in the 1990s. Often ‘intelligent city’ is used to describe the use of communication infrastructure and digital spaces to strengthen local innovation systems, solve problems and create more responsive public services;
- **Liveable Cities**¹ is a discourse that typically centres on how cities manage growth effectively, to ensure that commuting, the cost of living and the urban environment all meet rising citizen expectations (*note: The discourse on liveable cities described above has a different starting point in the Belfast context in that the city centre has experienced significant depopulation over the last fifty years*);
- **Resilient Cities** is a concept growing in use, and has taken on a dual meaning. It is used both in reference to a capacity to withstand external environmental and social ‘shocks’, but also in relation to an area’s economic adaptability and agility. It has both strong technical and engineering dimensions, but also can refer to qualities that individuals in a city ought to possess or acquire.

¹ What are Future Cities? UK Government Office for Science, June 2014

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Appendix 3

Comments from the Housing Executive

The Housing Executive believes that the City Centre can provide an opportunity to support mixed tenure developments, which will help ensure that the aim of the City Centre as a shared space can be achieved. The Housing Executive strongly supports mixed tenure housing development in all locations, including the City Centre and is of the view that provision of affordable housing as an integral element within new housing areas can create balanced and sustainable communities. NIHE believe that it is important that the City Centre is a location where affordable housing is available; to increase housing choices and to promote equality of opportunity. The Housing Executive would like to see the Council adopt development policies that entail an element of social and intermediate housing within residential developments.

The Housing Executive supports emphasis on good design and would like to see more imaginative and high quality schemes encouraged throughout the City. NIHE believe that a well-designed place can be economically attractive, improve well-being and enhance the environment. They believe that plans for the City Centre should incorporate the principles contained in 'Living Places' Urban Stewardship and Design Guide. The Housing Executive believes that adherence to these principles can allow the public and private sector to jointly develop a vision for Belfast which will enhance the City's environment and image.

The Housing Executive supports the reuse of vacant or under used heritage buildings for housing. They strongly support town centre living initiatives such as 'Living Over the Shop'. These initiatives have been successful in towns across Northern Ireland, in bringing life and vitality to town centres.

NIHE - Shared Future Housing Programme

NIHE have established the Shared Future Housing Programme. The central purpose of this programme is to develop neighbourhoods where people choose to live with others regardless of their religion or race, in a neighbourhood that is safe and welcoming to all, and threatening to no-one. It also aims to support and protect existing areas where people of different backgrounds live together. The Housing Executive has adopted a twin track approach to developing shared areas; firstly through the social new build programme and secondly through existing housing areas. NIHE currently have plans in place for an

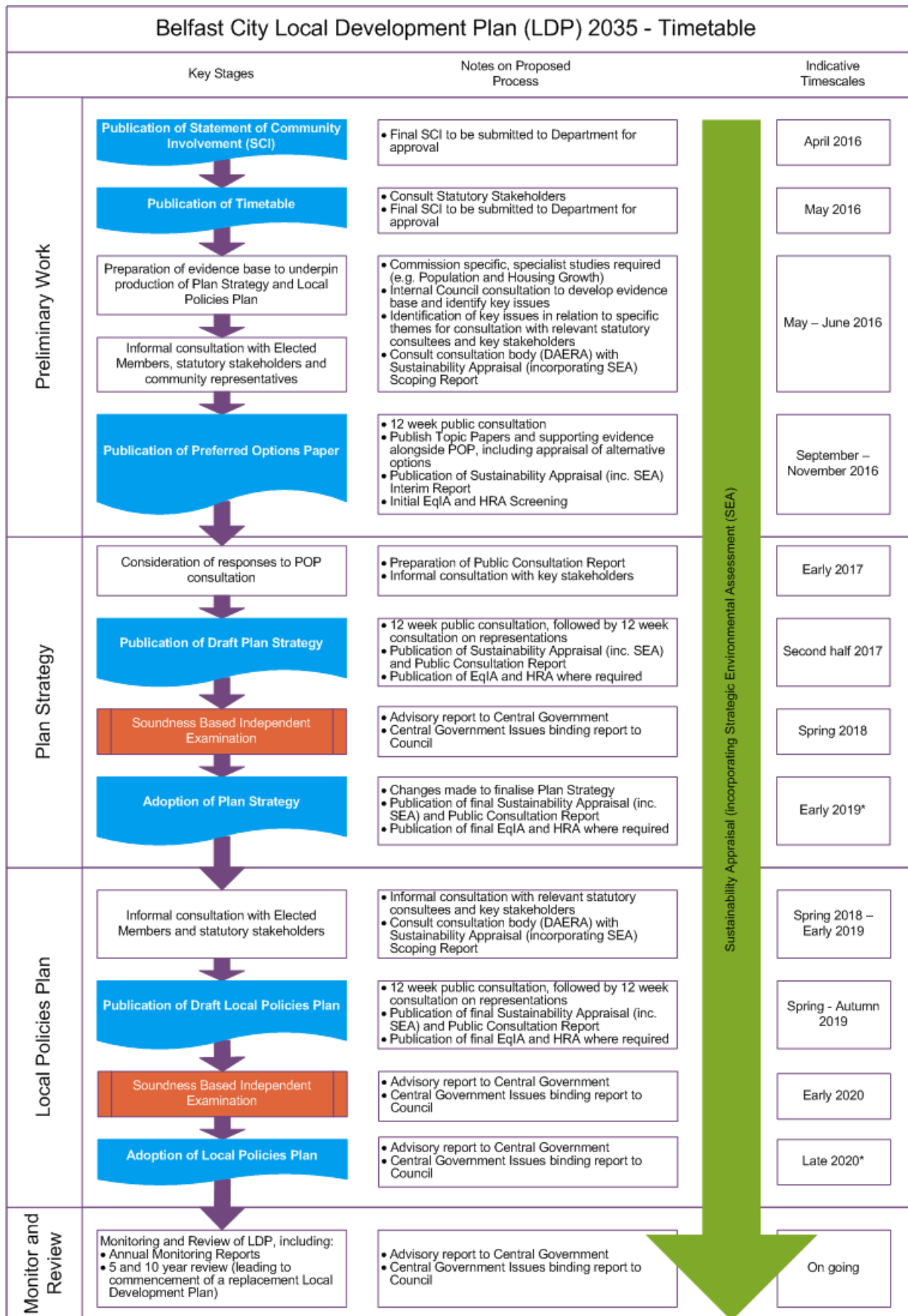
expansion of Shared Future new build schemes as well as an extensive Shared Neighbourhood Programme for existing estates.

Co- Ownership Housing

Co-Ownership is a Do It Yourself Shared Ownership scheme (DIYSO) exclusively for Northern Ireland. For people who want to own their own home but can't quite afford it, Co-Ownership may help. Co-Ownership is more affordable than a mortgage or a private rent and a deposit is often not required. Purchasers take as large a share as they can afford to start with, between 50% and 90% (known as the 'starter share') pay rent on the remaining share. They can then increase that share at any time ('staircasing').

A mortgage is required to pay for the share of the purchase price with an ability to buy more shares any time after you become the owner. The current cap on the purchase price of the house is £150k. This under review and there may be the flexibility to increase this in certain housing markets such as a city centres. Co-Ownership Housing also provides a complimentary product called Rent to Own which allows people who cannot currently get a mortgage to rent for 3 years with an option to purchase the house after that period. People pay a market rent, but 25% of the rent they pay is saved towards a deposit on the purchase. BCC officers have met with Co-ownership housing and will continue to work with them to see how this could be integrated into appropriate city centre housing and a mixed use model.

Appendix 4



* May require a longer period depending on changes required following Independent Examination

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Agenda Item 7a



Subject:	Financial Reporting – Quarter 3 2016/17
Date:	8 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	David Orr; Business Manager, Development Department

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	This report presents the quarter 3 financial position for the City Growth Regeneration Committee including a forecast of the year end outturn. It includes a reporting pack which contains a summary of the financial indicators and an executive summary (Appendix 1). It also provides a more detailed explanation of each of the relevant indicators and the forecast outturn for the year.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> note the report and the associated financial reporting pack.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Current and Forecast Financial Position 2016/17 The Quarter 3 position for the Committee is an under spend of £343k (2.8%) (which includes additional income), with the forecast year end position being an under spend of £289k (1.8%) which is well within the acceptable tolerance which is 3%.

3.2	The main reasons for the Committee under spend relate to vacant posts across a number of services, receipt of additional income in Off Street Car Parking and an under spend of programme costs in Development Directorate and Parks Estates.
3.3	Members will recall that the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee decided at its meeting on the 18 November 2017 to cap in year departmental cash limits at the Quarter 2 forecast levels to offset the rates clawback advised by the Land and Property Service (LPS). Therefore there will be no reallocation of this money.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Quarter 3 Performance Report



City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Quarterly Finance Report

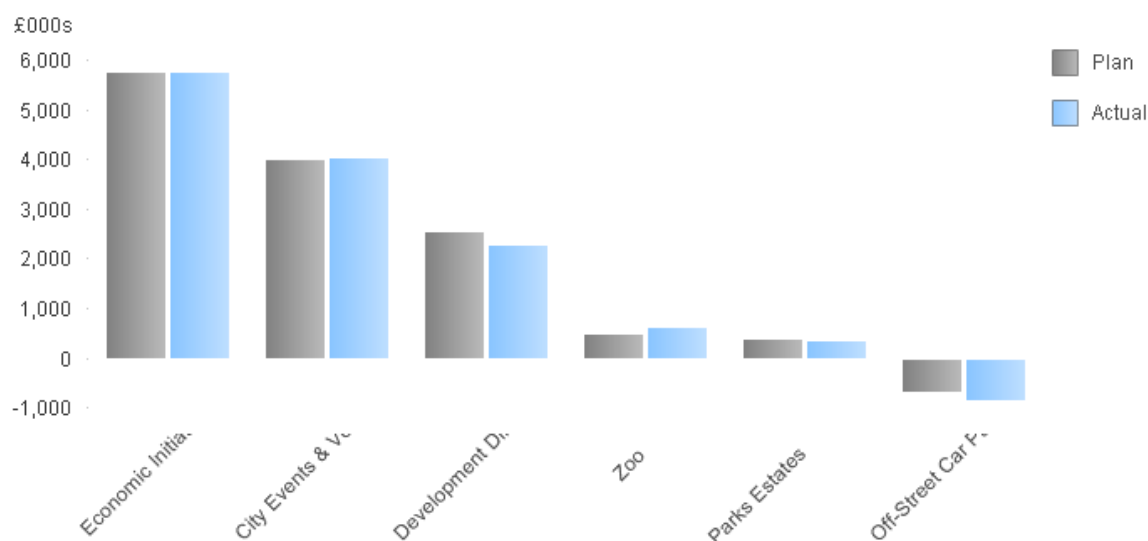
Report Period: Quarter 3, 2016/17

Dashboard

Quarter 3, 2016/17

Revenue Section							Page
Level 3 YTD							
Committee	YTD	YTD Var £000s	Var %	Forecast	Forecast Var £000s	Var %	
Economic Initiatives & Internat Devpt		(2)	(0.0)%		(9)	(0.1)%	
City Events & Venues		30	0.7%		78	1.7%	
Development Directorate		(269)	(10.7)%		(358)	(10.4)%	
Zoo		121	25.7%		130	13.5%	
Parks Estates		(54)	(14.9)%		(30)	(7.9)%	
Off-Street Car Parking		(168)	25.9%		(100)	10.8%	
Total		(343)	(2.8)%		(289)	(1.8)%	3 - 5

Committee Net Revenue Expenditure: Year to Date Position



The **City Growth and Regeneration Committee** budget is under spent by £343k, or 2.8% of its net budgeted expenditure of £12.4 million, at the end of quarter three.

The Committee's budget is made up of the following profit centres:

- ✚ **Economic Initiatives** (DEV):- Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts; Economic Development; Markets; European Unit and International Relations
- ✚ **City Events and Venues** (DEV): City Events; Belfast Waterfront; Ulster Hall
- ✚ **Development Directorate** (DEV): Urban Development; Business Research and Development; Directorate
- ✚ **Estates Management** (PKS/CNS): Malone House; Belfast Castle; Stables Restaurant; Adventure Playground
- ✚ **Zoo** (PKS/CNS)
- ✚ **Off Street Car Parking** (H&ES/CNS)

Economic Initiatives & International Development (EIID) is under spent by £2,422 (0%), Development Directorate is under spent by £269,261 (10.7%); Parks Estates Management is under spent by £53,911 (14.9%); and Off Street Car Parking is under budget by £167,838 (25.9%) whilst The Zoo is over budget by £120,683 (25.7%) and City Events are over budget by £29,695 (0.7%) at the end of Quarter 3.

There are four main areas that give rise to the current overall £343k (2.8%) under spend within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee budget at the end of Quarter 3. These are as follows:

1. Gross income was £24k more than budgeted income to the end of December 2016. Whilst more income was received than planned in Economic Initiatives and International Development (£61k); Parks Estates (£20k) and Off Street Parking (£224k) this was offset by less income being received than planned in the Zoo (£193k); Development Directorate (£86k) and City Events and Venues of (£2k).
2. Employee costs are £190k less than budget with under spends in Development

Directorate (£201k), Parks Estates (£15k) and EIID (£83k) as a result of vacant posts which are offset by additional employee costs in the Zoo (£54k); City Events and Venues (24k) and Off Street Car Parking (£31k).

3. Premises expenditure was £97k above budget with over spends in EIID (£22k); City Events and Venues (£44k); Parks Estates (£6k) and Off Street Parking (£25k). With the exception of City Events and Venues these are primarily profiling issues which will self correct during the financial year
4. Supplies and Services expenditure was £220k below budget. This was primarily due to under spends in Development Directorate (£154k); City Events and Venues (£22k); the Zoo (£116k) and Parks Estates (£24k) which are then offset by additional expenditure in EIID (£96k). These are primarily profiling issues which will self correct during the financial year.

Service Analysis

**EIID are under spent by £2,422 at the end of Quarter 3.
(Budgeted Net Expenditure: £5,723,220; Actual Net Expenditure: £5,720,797).**

EIID is under spent by £2k. There is increased income of £61k received within City Markets for additional stallage hire fees and there is an under spend of £83k in employee expenditure as a result of vacant posts. These under spends are offset by an over spend in Supplies and services (£96k) which is mainly profiling and will self correct during the financial year; by an over spend in premises (£22k) in relation to the Innovation Factory and an additional unforeseen cost incurred for a compensation claim of £24k within City Markets.

**City Events and Venues are over spent by £29,695 at the end of Quarter 3.
(Budgeted Net Expenditure: £3,989,302; Actual Net Expenditure: £4,018,998).**

City Events is over spent by £30k as a result of increased unbudgeted major event programme costs. City Venues is on budget at the end of period 9.

**Directorate are under spent by £269,261 at the end of Quarter 3.
(Budgeted Net Expenditure: £2,523,243; Actual Net Expenditure: £2,253,982)**

The under spend within Directorate is attributable to decreased spend within employee costs of £201k and supplies and services reduction of £154k in regards to less than anticipated spend within Urban Development unit. These are offset by reduced income of £86k in relation to decreased Belfast Bike subscriptions and usage fees.

The Zoo is over spent by £120,683 at the end of Quarter 3.

(Budgeted Net Expenditure: £469,336; Actual Net Expenditure: £590,019)

Net expenditure at Quarter 3 is £121k over budget due primarily to reduced income of £125k against budget. The Zoo shop is £58k under budget due to the impact of Easter falling outside the financial year being greater than anticipated. Utilities and supplies and services expenditure have been tightly controlled to offset some of these issues.

Parks Estates are under spent by £53,911 at the end of Quarter 3.

(Budgeted Net Expenditure: £361,500; Actual Net Expenditure: £307,589)

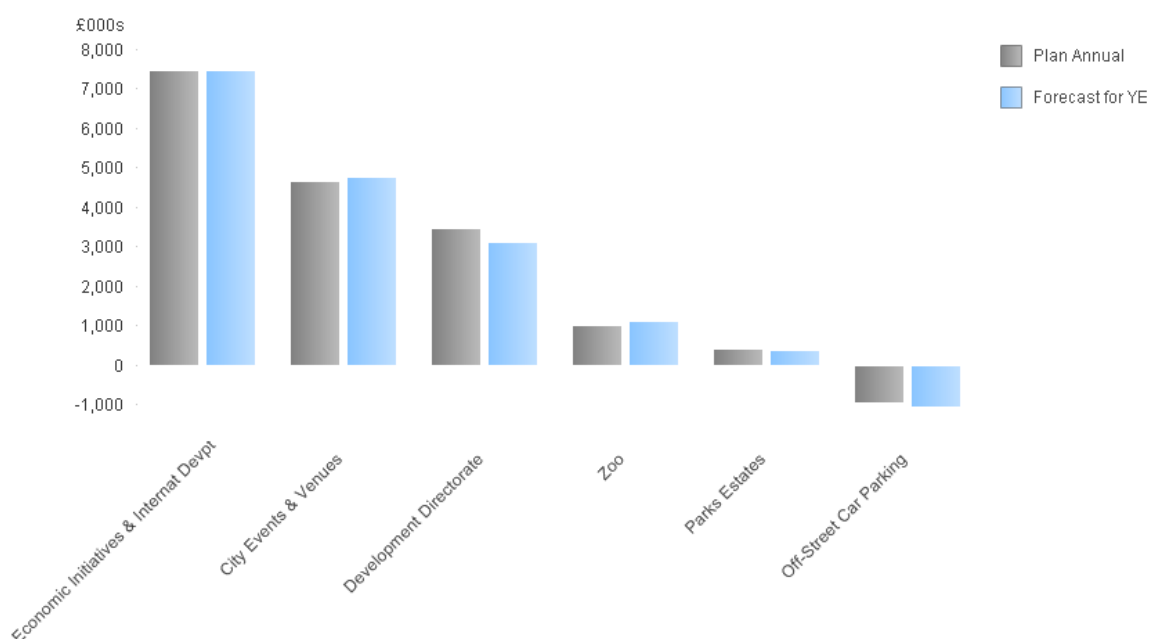
Parks Estates net expenditure at quarter 3 is under spent by £54k (14.9%) and is due to under spends due to vacant posts, utility contracts and reduction in advertising which will be addressed by year end with the new caterer now in place. Rental income has also exceeded budget by £19k.

Off Street Parking is under budget by £167,838 at the end of Quarter 3.

(Budgeted Net Expenditure:-£648,654;Actual Net Expenditure: -£816,492)

Off Street Car Parking is under budget at the end of quarter 3 mainly due to increased income of £224k (PCN, pay and display, season tickets and fees) which has been offset by additional employee costs £31k and premises costs of £25k. It should be noted that approximately one third of the additional income relates to Christmas 2016 charges for parking against Christmas 2015 which had no charges.

Committee Net Revenue Expenditure: Forecast for Year End



It is forecast that the **City Growth and Regeneration Committee** budget will be under spent by £289,000, or 1.8%, of its budgeted net expenditure of almost £16million at year end.

The Economic Initiatives and International Development unit are forecast to be under spent by £9k (0.1%) in relation to vacant posts.

The City Events and Venues unit are forecast to be over spent by £78k (1.7%) at year end as a result of increased unbudgeted major event programme costs.

Directorate are forecast to be under spent by £358k (10.4%) at year end due to a reduction in programme costs and vacant posts within the Urban Development Unit offset by reduced income within the Coca-Cola Belfast Bike Scheme.

The **Zoo** is forecast to be £130k (13.5%) over spent at year end as the income impact of Easter on the shop has been underestimated and other income generating opportunities were not in place as early in the financial year as expected

Parks Estates is forecast to be under spent by £30k (7.9%) at year end due to under spends in utilities and supplies and services.

Off Street Car Parking

It is forecast that Off Street Car parking will be £100k (10.8%) under budget as a result of increased income.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Section Expenditure Budgetary Analysis & Forecast

	Plan YTD £000s	Actuals YTD £000s	Variance YTD £000s	% Variance	Annual Plan 2016/2017 £000s	Forecast for Y/E at P9 £000s	Forecast Variance £000s	% Variance
Economic Initiatives & Internat Devpt	5,723	5,721	(2)	(0.0)%	7,426	7,417	(9)	(0.1)%
City Events & Venues	3,989	4,019	30	0.7%	4,631	4,709	78	1.7%
Development Directorate	2,523	2,254	(269)	(10.7)%	3,442	3,084	(358)	(10.4)%
Zoo	469	590	121	25.7%	961	1,091	130	13.5%
Parks Estates	362	308	(54)	(14.9)%	382	352	(30)	(7.9)%
Off-Street Car Parking	(649)	(816)	(168)	25.9%	(928)	(1,028)	(100)	10.8%
Total	12,418	12,075	(343)	(2.8)%	15,914	15,625	(289)	(1.8)%

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Subject:	Commercialisation Opportunities at the Council's Markets
Date:	8 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives & International Development, ext 3427
Contact Officer:	Clodagh Cassin, Markets Development Manager, ext 5455

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advise the Committee of work that has been underway to explore additional opportunities for commercialisation at the Council's Markets, principally St George's Market - Secure approval from the Committee to move forward with securing sponsorship to support the delivery of the Twilight Market.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the impending opportunities to pursue sponsorship for the upcoming Twilight Markets and agree to move forward on these, within agreed parameters - Note the proposals to move forward with the development of a sponsorship policy across the Council as a means of increasing income from the private sector.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that St George's Market is now firmly established as a popular weekend venue that attracts both residents and visitors to the city. It attracted over one million visitors last year.
3.2	The venue has won numerous awards over the course of the last year. These include "Best

	<p>Market” at the Observer Food Awards in October 2016 and UK’s Best Market as voted by NABMA – the National Association of British Market Authorities in February. The latter award recognised the additional work being carried out to animate the venue and widen its appeal.</p>
3.3	<p>In the course of the last year, the venue has been used increasingly for mid-week events and conferences. These include the Digital DNA conference in June 2016 and the Young Enterprise Market in November 2016. The Markets Management team is actively pursuing opportunities to secure new business for mid-week events.</p>
3.4	<p>As part of the rates setting process, Members make a commitment to secure additional income in the coming financial year. This frames the discussion for a more commercial approach to venues such as the Market. The success and brand recognition of the venue means that it could be a useful pilot for a more commercial approach across other venues and to support wider events.</p>
3.5	<p>One of the most significant areas of opportunity that has emerged in the last year is the Twilight Markets. The first of these took place on one evening on 11 November 2015. The event was so successful that people were queuing up to get in. The subsequent events have taken place over two mid-week days/evenings (Tuesday and Wednesday). The last event attracted more than 30,000 people over the two days. Since the events started, they have attracted in excess of 70,000 people.</p>
3.6	<p>The social media coverage at these events is significant. The Council’s Communications Team supports a social media-focused campaign (alongside other media such as billboards and flyers) and each event has attracted television coverage. Traders and attendees have also engaged in the social media activity – and this has very successfully raised the profile of both the event and St George’s Market as a venue.</p>
3.7	<p>In December 2016, the City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreed to support at least three Twilight Markets for the coming year. Indicative dates have now been set. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 , 9 May • 1, 2 August • 7, 8 November <p>Officers have identified the potential to explore sponsorship opportunities for the Twilight</p>

3.8	Market in order to offset the running costs associated with the event. There will also be income from stall holders at the event as is the case at present.
3.9	<p>In the absence of a sponsorship policy which sets parameters around issues such as the types of companies that might be appropriate to approach for sponsorship, it is proposed that preliminary engagement will be with companies that may already have a relationship with the Council or that align to the values currently being developed as part of the work on place positioning.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.10	<p>The sponsorship income for the Twilight Market will need to be market-tested. However, there is an opportunity to cover most if not all of the costs associated with running the events.</p> <p>Recruitment will soon get under way for a new staffing complement at the Market. This will include additional front-facing staff as well as Duty Managers.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>No specific equality or good relations implications. The Good Relations Team has advised on access issues at the Twilight Market.</p>
4.0	Appendices
4.1	None

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Subject:	Request to approve licence applications for external markets
Date:	8 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Clodagh Cassin, Markets Development Manager

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of the report is to seek approval from Members to grant a licence for a Market to be held in the Titanic Exhibition Centre as part of the Local Women Magazine – Titanic Food Festival in June 2016. Approval is also being sought to grant a licence for a monthly market to take place in Crumlin Road Gaol, starting in April 2017.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Approve the granting of a licence for the Market to be held at Titanic Exhibition Centre on 24 June 2017; – Approve the granting of a licence for monthly markets to be held in Crumlin Road Gaol, commencing in April 2017.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has exclusive rights to hold markets in Belfast. Anyone wishing to operate a market must apply to the Council for permission to do so.
3.2	The Markets Rights Policy, endorsed by the Development Committee in 2013, delegated authority to the Director of Development to approve some markets (e.g. those with less than

	<p>20 stalls, markets run solely for charitable purposes). All other requests require the approval of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.</p>
3.3	<p>Local Women is a magazine that is produced and distributed across Northern Ireland. The magazine is working with a range of local partners to organise a one-off market in the Titanic Exhibition Centre on Saturday 24 June 2017 from 9am-3pm.</p>
3.4	<p>Plans for the market are currently being finalised but the organisers are suggesting that there will be between 30 and 40 stalls taking part in the market part of the event. The focus will be predominantly on local food produce.</p>
3.5	<p>The Crumlin Road Gaol Market is scheduled to commence April 2017 and organisers are suggesting that there will be between 27 and 30 stalls taking part in this market. If successful, the organisers intend that it will take place on a monthly basis.</p>
3.6	<p>According to the Markets Rights Policy, one of the factors to be considered when granting a licence is whether there is the potential to clash with and detract from the key city markets. These two proposed markets will coincide with the operating hours of St George's Market. However, given that the Market at Titanic Quarter is to be a one-off, and also taking account of the fact that neither of these is in close proximity to St George's, Officers do not consider that these events will have a detrimental impact on St George's Market.</p>
3.7	<p>Members should note that it is the intention that the Markets Rights Policy will be reviewed in the course of the coming year. This review will look at whether the Policy is still valid and whether the approach is conducive to the Council's ambitions to support tourism development and small business growth. There will also be an opportunity to look at how the markets can support city animation and align to the new Festival and Events Strategy for the city.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications:</u></p> <p>The applicants for the Titanic Market will pay a one-off fee of £50 for the market licence and there will also be a £6 charge for each stall. The Crumlin Road Gaol applicant will pay a licence fee of £100 given that it is the intention that these Markets will happen on a monthly basis. The £6 fee per stall will also apply.</p>

3.9	<u>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</u> No specific equality or good relations implications.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.

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Subject:	Draft Belfast Bicycle Network 2017 Consultation Document
Date:	08 March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Anne Doherty, Planning & Transport Officer

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	<p><u>Draft Belfast Bicycle Network 2017 Consultation Document</u></p> <p>The Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) has prepared a Draft Belfast Bicycle Network Consultation Document which aims to guide the development and operation of the bicycle infrastructure in Belfast for the next 10 years. The Draft Belfast Bicycle Network 2017 is a progression from the Northern Ireland Bicycle Strategy published in 2015 which identified building a comprehensive network for the bicycle as one of its main pillars. Members can access the full consultation document at the following link:</p> <p>https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/consultations/draft-belfast-bicycle-network-2017-consultation</p>
1.2	The suggested response to the Draft Belfast Bicycle Network 2017 Consultation Document is attached in Appendix 1, for consideration.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the proposed response to the Draft Belfast Bicycle Network 2017

	<p>Consultation Document (Appendix 1) and, if appropriate, agree this response for submission to Dfl.</p>
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>The Department for Regional Development (DRD) published the Northern Ireland (N.I) Bicycle Strategy in 2015 with a vision of establishing a cycling culture in Northern Ireland to give people the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle, and where all road users can safely share space with mutual respect.</p>
3.2	<p>The N.I Bicycle Strategy outlined a three pillar approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build – a comprehensive network for the bicycle; - Support – people who choose to travel by bicycle; and - Promote – the bicycle as a mode of transport for everyday journeys.
3.3	<p>Under the Build pillar, the Strategy highlighted the importance of developing urban networks as a key element of developing a comprehensive network. The Draft Belfast Bicycle Network represents the public consultation on the first urban network – a bicycle network for Belfast.</p>
3.4	<p>The Council is currently consulting on its first Community Plan – the Belfast Agenda. Relevant to the Bicycle Network Plan, the Belfast Agenda identifies the following outcomes by 2035:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everyone in Belfast experiences good health and wellbeing; and - Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally friendly city.
3.5	<p>It is proposed that the percentage of all journeys which are made by walking, cycling or public transport and number of miles of cycle lanes, footways and footpaths will help measure progress towards the Belfast Agenda outcomes. In addition within the next 4 years under the “City Development” priority, the Belfast Agenda aims to develop the city’s infrastructure and improve connectivity.</p>
3.6	<p>The Council acknowledges that the development of a Bicycle Network for Belfast will be key to delivering aspects of the Belfast Agenda and to giving those who would like to cycle freedom and confidence to do so. However the Council would highlight that the capital build element is only one element of encouraging an increase in cycling and a series of behavioural change programmes and positively framed public awareness campaigns will</p>

	be required to provide feelings of freedom and confidence.
3.7	The Bicycle Network is intended to guide the development and operation of the bicycle infrastructure in the city for the next ten years. The Council recognises that the timeframe for the delivery of the network will be dependent on the resources available and it is critical that adequate resources are allocated to the implementation of the plan. The Council would welcome a more collaborative working approach on the prioritisation and implementation of the Bicycle Network Plan.
3.8	The Council would highlight the success of the Belfast Bikes scheme and the high demand to expand the scheme outside the city centre which is currently underway in parts of the City. In order to support this scheme, there is an urgent need to improve the overall cycling infrastructure across the City for current and future users.
3.9	It is proposed to develop different types of routes depending on the user needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of experience - inexperienced, casual, experienced; and - Trip purpose – utilitarian (cycling for a particular purpose e.g. commute, run an errand) or recreational.
3.10	The Council is supportive of this approach as each route will be different in terms of potential users and mix of travel modes. The use of a mixed network of routes would provide options for cyclists of various abilities and for commuting as well as leisure.
3.11	In addition, different types of infrastructure (cycle tracks, mandatory cycle lanes, contraflow cycle lanes, bus and cycle lanes, shared streets, and traffic calming measures) are identified and it is suggested that the network would consist of a range of these depending on the circumstances at each location. The Council would encourage that consideration be given to ensuring the highest levels of safety (traffic-free cycle routes and protected bike lanes) are appropriately employed along routes i.e. highest level of safety near schools and along routes where motorised traffic may be faster flowing).
3.12	The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has recently announced a 12 week trial to allow Class A taxis access to bus lanes from Monday 20 th February. The trial will apply to the bus lanes on the East and West Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) routes and the 12 hour bus lanes in the city centre, which link the two routes. There is concern that the use of the bus lanes by taxis will reduce the level of safety for cyclist and be in contradiction of the aims

	of the N.I Bicycle Strategy.
3.13	<p>Building on the themes outlined in the Bicycle Strategy, the Draft Belfast Bicycle Network identifies the following network requirements in defining the general character of the proposed bicycle network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coherence; - Directness; - Attractiveness; - Safety; and - Adaptability
3.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guiding Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cycling must be planned for mass transport; - Facilities need to be designed for growing numbers; - Bicycles should be segregated from pedestrians where possible; - Bicycles should have space separated from volume motor traffic; - Quiet and lower-traffic speed streets should be used; - Interventions need not be attempted on every road; - Routes need to flow and take account of how users behave; - Routes need to be intuitively understandable by all users; - Provision needs to be consistent and routes need to be planned as a network; - Capital infrastructure may be necessary; - All designers of cycle schemes should cycle the proposed route; and - Routes need to be maintained.
3.15	<p>The Council considers maintenance of the network to be important to ensure its continual usage and would encourage that the network is regarded as a significant part of the local traffic infrastructure and should be seen as an extension of the road network. In this regard it should be given due priority with relation to maintenance, removal of debris, treatment in winter, etc. The Council would require clarification around potential financial issues relating to both the capital build and ongoing maintenance of the network.</p>
3.16	<p>A Primary Network consisting of 8 arterial/radial routes and 3 orbital routes (Appendix 2) has been identified. A Secondary Network will reach further into communities and provide access to services and other key destinations. The Council supports this approach</p>

	building upon the existing infrastructure across the city.
3.17	The Council considers the omission of a number of the main arterial routes which service high density residential areas from the primary network as a major oversight. In particular, the Lisburn and Ormeau Roads suffer from heavy traffic congestion as highlighted by a recent study and the opportunity to develop high quality cycle infrastructure along these routes to encourage a modal shift is paramount. In addition, the south and north of the city will not benefit from the Phase 1 of Belfast Rapid Transit, therefore priority should be given to promoting other sustainable modes such as walking and cycling routes.
3.18	The Council also proposes that consideration is given to an additional community greenway route to service the south west of the City. The alignment of the route would link the proposed Transport Hub and Belfast City Centre along the busway to the Westlink, Bog Meadows, along the M1 Motorway corridor to connect with the Lagan Towpath and Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park. This route has the potential to link high density residential areas in the west of the city to the Lagan Towpath and the city centre. It would provide a safer environment in which to encourage greater uptake of cycling, improve accessibility, improve health and well being and support greater bio-diversity.
3.19	While the Council welcomes the plan and agrees to it in principle, we would require clarification on the impact on Council land in terms of access, pathways, lighting and gates. The Council would also suggest that discussions take place with the relevant Council officers in relation to the specific proposed routes in relation to design, build and ongoing maintenance. As previously suggested, the Council would welcome a more collaborative working approach on the planning and implementation of the Bicycle Network Plan with the potential to improve elected member engagement through a presentation to committee.
3.20	Members should note that a Strategic Review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme is underway. Part of this review is to look at options for expansion of the scheme to other parts of the city and this will be examined in line with the proposals coming from the DFI in respect of the Belfast Bicycle Network.
3.21	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> None.

3.22	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> No specific equality or good relations implications.
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 - Response to the Draft Belfast Bicycle Network 2017 Consultation Document Appendix 2 - Proposed Routes

Appendix 1 – Response to Draft Belfast Bicycle Network 2017 Consultation Document

Question 1:

Do you agree that producing a Bicycle Network for Belfast is an important element of developing a more bicycle-friendly city? What time frame do you think it should cover?

Yes - producing such a plan will be important when addressing the barriers which deter people from cycling across the city. The BikeLife Belfast (2015) reported that almost 1 in 3 people in Belfast do not ride a bicycle but would like to. Addressing the bicycle infrastructure will be a key priority to realising the potential that travelling by bicycle can make to people's lives and the city in general. This is recognised within the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland and the Belfast Active Travel Action Plan.

We would encourage that while an initial timeframe to create the Bicycle Network for Belfast should be in the region of ten years, the Network should be seen as 'ever improving' with development, maintenance and adaptation to meet demand and advances in technology considered on a continuous basis.

The timeframe for the delivery of the network will be dependent on the resources available and it is critical that adequate resources are allocated to the implementation of the plan. The Council would welcome a more collaborative working approach on the prioritisation and implementation of the Bicycle Network Plan.

We would highlight the success of the Belfast Bikes scheme and the high demand to expand the scheme outside the city centre which is underway in parts of the City. In order to support this scheme there is an urgent need to improve the overall cycling infrastructure across the City for current and future users.

Question 2:

Do you agree that these five criteria from the BMTP are still valid for the development of a network for Belfast? If not, what do you consider the criteria should be? Please explain.

Yes - the 5 criteria listed are still valid for the development of the Bicycle Network for Belfast. We would encourage that consideration is given to re-ordering the criteria to reflect the priority and potential of each criteria i.e. safety is listed as the fourth criteria, however, perceptions of safety would be the key barrier preventing more people from cycling. Without safe, practical, and continuous routes in urban areas it is unlikely that the increasing levels of cycling can be sustained. We would encourage the list to be re-ordered as follows: safety, coherence, directness, comfort and attractiveness.

Question 3:

Do you agree that the development of a Belfast Bicycle Network is a key element in giving those who would like to cycle (but currently don't) the freedom and confidence to do so?

Yes - the development of a Bicycle Network for Belfast will be key to giving those who would like to cycle freedom and confidence to do so.

However the capital build element is only one element of encouraging an increase in cycling and a series of behavioural change programmes (including cycle training) and positively framed public awareness campaigns will be required to provide feelings of freedom and confidence. It is also key that there is an enforcement campaign to ensure that cycle lanes are not misused by other road users.

Safety is a concern for people in Belfast, when it comes to cycling. Belfast BikeLife (2015) reported only 29% of people surveyed rated cycling safety in Belfast as good or very good. The development of high quality infrastructure will be required to increase this figure.

Question 4:

Do you agree that the objectives in 3.9 should be applied to the network? If not, what objectives do you think should be set?

3.9 Objectives

- *To develop a comprehensive bicycle network for commuter, amenity and recreational cycling through the expansion of cycling infrastructure and cycling facilities;*
- *To bring good quality cycle routes within the reach of most people within the city;*
- *To ensure a consistent level of service in the design of safe infrastructure – providing dedicated infrastructure where there are large volumes of higher speed vehicles and shared facilities where the volume and speed of traffic is low;*
- *To encourage use of the bicycle and promote safe cycling through increasing the amount of bicycle parking, providing more cycling education programmes for both young people and adults, supporting events to promote cycling.*

Yes – the objectives outlined cover the main points for consideration. We would encourage that consideration be given to phrasing the objectives in the language of outcomes, to match the direction being set by the draft Programme for Government and the draft Belfast Agenda.

Question 5:

Do you agree that the primary network should be based on the concept of arterial and orbital routes?

Yes – the development of the Bicycle Network for Belfast should be pragmatic and make the most of the existing traffic infrastructure across the city. The use of arterial and orbital routes fits with the current infrastructure for motorised traffic and provides flexibility when planning bicycle journeys.

Question 6:

Do you agree that the network should be developed in Primary and Secondary stages as outlined in 3.13? If not, how should it be developed?

Yes – the use of primary and secondary stages for development is again a pragmatic approach. Development of the Network should maximise existing infrastructure improvement schemes and future city developments. We would encourage focus to be given to routes which offer the greatest potential to increase the number of people using the bicycle, including consideration of areas which are to see an increase in population numbers.

Question 7:

Do you agree that we should consider requirements of likely users on a scheme by scheme basis, for example routes which will primarily be used by children on the school journey may be best served as shared track?

Yes – while the planning of all routes should follow the same guiding principles, each route will be different in terms of potential users and mix of travel modes. The use of a mixed network of routes would provide options for cyclists of various abilities and for commuting as well as leisure.

We would encourage that consideration be given to ensuring the highest levels of safety (traffic-free cycle routes, shared pavements and protected bike lanes) are appropriately employed along routes i.e. highest level of safety near schools and along routes where motorised traffic may be faster flowing).

Question 8:

Are there any other kinds of bicycle infrastructure that should be considered? What are they? Do you have any views on which types of infrastructure, if any, should be favoured in developing a network for Belfast?

The Council would support innovative forms of cycling infrastructure provision and the development of segregated cycle routes /junctions similar to match the quality of best practice in Europe. In other areas, Authorities are currently trialling innovative cycling infrastructure such as:

- segregation within carriageway, side road crossings and separations methods;
- Dutch style roundabouts (kerb-segregated cycle track at carriageway level, orbiting the roundabout, with priority for cyclists across the entry and exit lanes);
- Traffic signals for cyclist – high and low level; and
- bus stop by passes.

We would encourage that where possible the infrastructure providing the highest level of safety be used and where this is not possible consideration is given to the use multiple options i.e. the best suited physical infrastructure coupled with appropriate traffic calming measures.

Question 9:

Do you support the use of the network requirements as detailed at paragraph 5.1?

Para 5.1 Building on the themes agreed in the Bicycle Strategy we have drawn up a number of network requirements to assist in defining the general character of the proposed bicycle network in

Belfast. In order to develop and maintain a coherent and consistent network it is important that the requirements are referred to:

- *at the time of route selection;*
- *during the design and implementation of individual routes within the network;*
- *when changes to the network are being contemplated;*
- *in other relevant planning documents; and*
- *when the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan is reviewed and updated.*

Yes – the network requirements are appropriate.

Question 10:

Do you agree with the addition of ‘Adaptability’ as a network requirement? What other requirements would you like to see included?

Yes – routes along the network need to be adaptable to ensure bicycle users of all abilities have the opportunity to experience the freedom and confidence to cycle, as set out within the ‘vision and objectives for cycling’.

Question 11:

Do you agree that the routes should be planned and facilities designed with the achievement of increasing numbers of people cycling in mind?

Yes – the development of the network should primarily be focused on increasing the number of people cycling. Changes to the physical infrastructure which slows or removes motorised traffic from a space may promote the use of that space for a variety of other uses. The network could allow for increases in other sustainable travel modes including walking and scooting.

Question 12:

What are your views on segregation between people who walk, people who cycle and people who drive? What are your views about physical segregation between motorised traffic and non-motorised traffic? Do you agree that there are levels of traffic (footway or carriageway) below which physical segregation is not always necessary – such as quiet routes and residential areas?

Segregation of people who walk, cycle or drive should be considered on the basis of potential speed of travel and volume of usage. The higher the potential speed or volume of traffic, the greater risk of serious incident. We would encourage that consideration is given to how infrastructure interventions are designed to prioritise the most vulnerable users i.e. where motorised traffic exceeds 20mph segregation is introduced, where people cycling have the potential to cycle above 5mph segregation is introduced. For quiet / residential areas which have effective traffic calming measures, physical segregation is not always required.

The Council would like to highlight the potential for shared use paths to create conflict between the pedestrian and cyclists. Busy pedestrian routes such as the shared path from Alfred Street to Cromac Street could benefit from some type of segregation such as demarcation or contrasting surfaces which could lead to a greater sense of safety, user confidence and comfort.

Question 13:

How important is the requirement that ‘routes need to flow’? What kind of signage should be provided? What facilities should be provided?

If the network is to encourage more people to cycle, then routes should provide an end-to-end journey for users and potential users. We would encourage that consideration be given to the type of journey most likely to take place across each route and appropriate signage and facilities be installed to match i.e. secure bicycle parking available at the end of each short route and within longer routes at points of interest is essential.

We would encourage the use of mixed signage throughout the network including directional signage, distance / time of travel signage, strong road markings, tourism signs / points of interest signs, etc.

Where required, the Council would suggest providing opportunities to rest / stop off (i.e. seating or shelter) on longer routes. The Council would also suggest including monitoring and traffic counters.

Question 14:

What is the relative importance between construction of a route and its maintenance? What other guiding principles would you suggest? Please explain.

Maintenance of the network will be important to ensure its continual usage. We would encourage that the network is regarded as a significant part of the local traffic infrastructure and is given the due priority with relation to maintenance, removal of debris, treatment in winter, etc. The network should be seen as an extension of the road network, a supplementary alternative that supports the better flow of people across the city. We would ask that the Council’s cleansing section is consulted during the design phase to ensure that consideration is given to allowing access for the mechanical sweepers which will be used to sweep the routes.

Question 15:

With reference to the appendices please set out your views on the proposed routes. We are interested in the positives or negatives associated with the various sections of the proposed routes.

General points for consideration would be to:

- Whilst we welcome the plan and would agree in principle, it does impact on Council land therefore we would require clarification on the impact on our land in terms of access, pathways, lighting and gates.
- We would require clarification around potential financial issues relating to both the capital build and ongoing maintenance.
- Maximize the existing network
- Incorporate the network within planned infrastructure improvements
- Prioritise the most vulnerable users of the network
- Align the highest level of safety infrastructure to parts of the network that carry the greatest risk of incident.

Question 16:

What are the specific issues that may arise if bicycle infrastructure was constructed along the proposed route?

As there is currently limited detailed on the proposed routes it is difficult at this point to identify what specific issues might arise. We would suggest that discussions take place with the relevant Council officers in relation to the specific proposed routes in relation to design, build and ongoing maintenance.

Question 17:

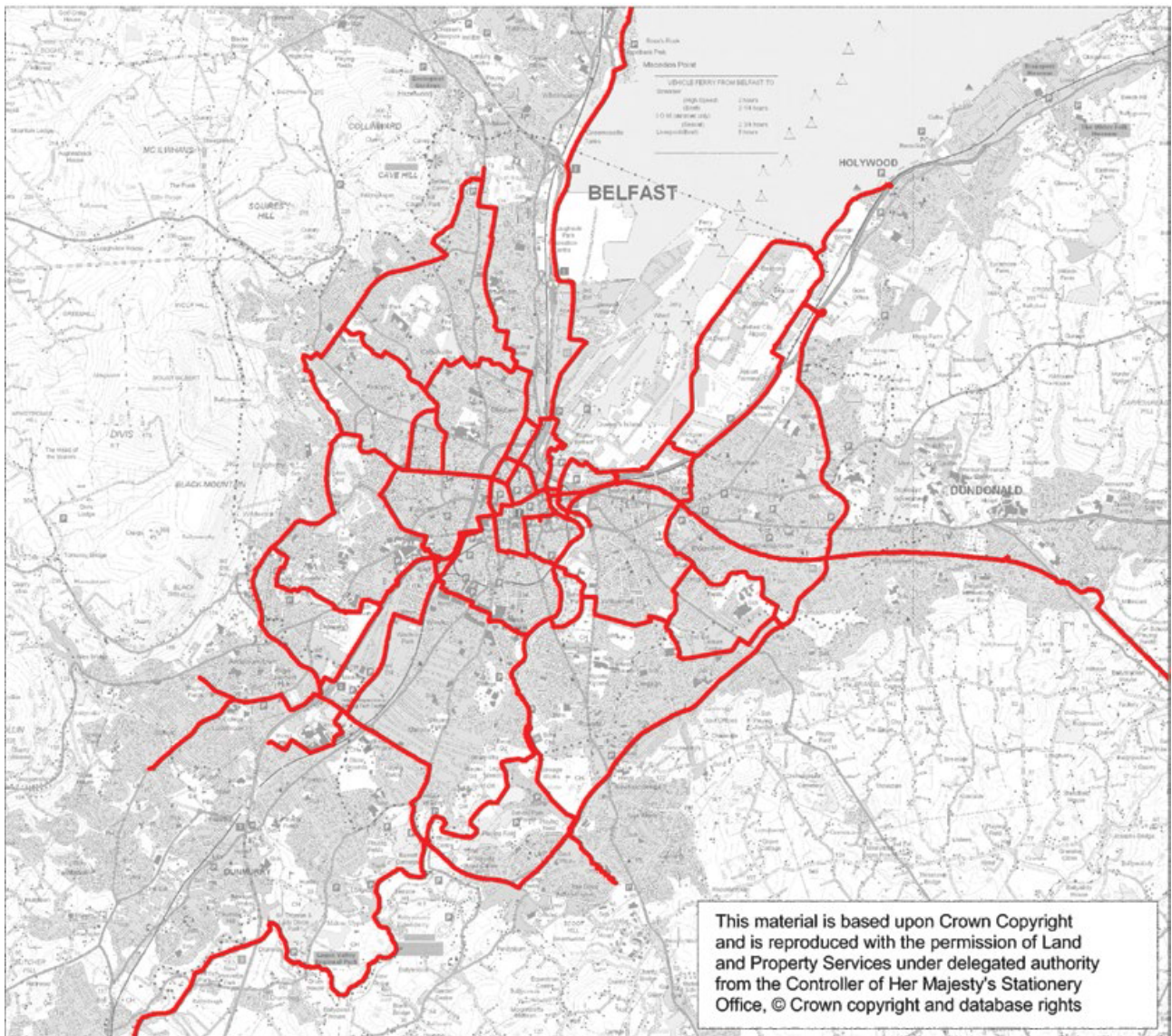
What other alternative routes are available?

The Council would request consideration is given to including a number of the main arterial routes in city which service high density residential areas as part of the primary network.

In particular, the Lisburn and Ormeau Roads suffer from heavy traffic congestion and the opportunity to develop high quality cycle infrastructure along these routes to encourage modal shift is paramount. In addition, the south and north of the city will not benefit from the Phase 1 of Belfast Rapid Transit therefore, it is considered that priority should be given to promoting other sustainable modes such as walking and cycling routes.

The Council would also propose the creation of a community greenway to the south west of the City from the City Centre along the M1 Motorway to connect with the Lagan Towpath and Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park. The proposed southern arm of the West Route extends from the Bog Meadows along the M1 motorway to Kennedy Way where it then travels west towards Andersonstown Leisure Centre. It is suggested that a new community greenway is developed so the route continues south alongside the motorway to connect with the Lagan Towpath. The additional extension would provide an opportunity for a sustainable travel option to the south west of the city, provide a safer environment in which to encourage greater uptake of cycling, improve health and well being and support greater bio-diversity. Council officers would request to meet with the Cycling Unit to discuss in more detail.

Appendix 2 – Proposed Routes



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Subject:	Zoo - Long term Options
Date:	8th March, 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw Director City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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	At City Growth & Regeneration Committee on 12 th October 2016 the long term options for the Zoo were presented for consideration. After discussion it was agreed that the closure of the Zoo and the status quo would not be pursued as options. A date for the Workshop with Members was agreed for 2nd December to enable Members to develop a range of criteria to be applied and weighted for each of the operating options. Members also asked to include in the workshop what the Zoo would contain, or focus on, initially.
1.2	<p>The Members' workshop focused on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The value of the Zoo from a conservation and education perspective ▪ Whether there are options to change the focus and scale of the zoo – for example moving to European species only/smaller in scale ▪ The main themes Finance, staff, investment and associated risks were assessed
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Note the feedback from the workshop and Members' written submission ▪ Note that other stakeholder engagement is ongoing ▪ Provide decisions on the key issues outlined to allow consultants to carry out further work on the options and weight these options for evaluation

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Appendix 1 sets out the output from the Members' working group. The Members participating gave an indication that the priorities for change included;</p> <p>The need to get the balance right between;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welfare ▪ Research and Conservation ▪ Education ▪ Visitor experience (excitement, entertainment and value for money) <p>Supporting operations that provide opportunities for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Volunteers ▪ Students (schools to post graduates) ▪ Researchers <p>Providing Zoo facilities that have;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved attractions for visitors ▪ Features which appeal to teenagers ▪ An experience which is constantly improving and changing to ensure it remains attractive for repeat visits by local people <p>Written submission from a Member;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reassignment of the Zoo to move away from a focus on exotic animals to be replaced with animals from Northern Europe in particular native species. This is a less expensive option ▪ The priority is the physical and mental welfare of the animals ▪ There is an opportunity to focus on native species breeding and link in the education and conservation elements to become world renown ▪ Redirection of our breeding programme to focus on animal releases back into the wild ▪ The costs of the Zoo are prohibitive and should be funded by the Northern Ireland Assembly rather than Belfast City Council
3.2	<p>Other engagement is ongoing with HLF, TNI and Friends of the Zoo generally but they will also be involved in discussions on the preferred options put forward by Committee.</p>
3.3	<p>Key issues to be considered by Committee include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain in-house business operating model or agree an alternative model? ▪ Maintain the Zoo on the existing site or relocate? ▪ Reduce the size and animal collection at the Zoo? ▪ Reassign the Zoo to focus on Northern European animals and native species? ▪ Dependant on answers to the forgoing points, what are capital investment implications?

3.4 In considering the above issues, the below table sets out a range of potential business operating models against which Consultants could develop greater detail and identify weightings to assist with evaluation of a preferred option going forward.

	Option	Brief description	Risks / Benefits
1	Transformed In - House	This would involve a challenging transformation process that would have to extend to a change in the way central services support the operation of the Zoo. It would require flexibility and a move towards new ways of working.	Change may be slow to deliver and may meet strong resistance from some staff and from staff representatives. All risks remain with the Council
2	Council owned Company	This would involve a transformation in the ways of working and a change in the way that the Zoo is governed. A new company would have its own board of directors and this would bring new expertise to assist the management team and staff.	Trading risk remains with the Council – at least for the early years following transfer.
3	Public / Private Partnership – including possible Joint Venture	This could take many forms and could involve the creation of a new Joint Venture Company	There are complex procurement issues and the arrangements are likely to involve shared risk alongside complex formal agreements
4	Market Solution – possibly involving a competition for the granting of a Concession and Lease	This would involve the Council testing the market and then using the feedback to help shape a Prospectus; setting out an opportunity to the market that is structured as a concession with an associated lease or license.	Although there would be a full trading risk transfer (contractually fixed price), the Council would be still be required to provide a level of funding – probably tapering over a number of years. The Council could benefit from some form of agreement in which funding is returned to the Council if a level of income is achieved.
5	Market Solution – involving a competition for a Management Contract	This is similar in some respects to the granting of a Concession and Lease as above, but the Council would define its requirements in a far more prescriptive form	Although there would be a full trading risk transfer (contractually fixed price), the Council would be still required to provide a level of funding – probably tapering over a

			number of years. The Council could benefit from some form of agreement in which funding is returned to the Council if a level of income is achieved.
6	Hybrid Solution – possibly involving the establishment of a local “Trust” and the letting of a Concession / Management Contract to an Operating Partner	This could take various forms and ideas might emerge from an early market engagement	This might involve shared risk / reward, a two tier structure that is tax efficient and an agreement with a specialist operator (visitor attractions) aligned to a Zoo specialist.

3.5 Financial & Resource Implications

Currently the direct operating costs of the Zoo are approximately £1m per annum with capital depreciation, centrally held property maintenance budgets and internal support costs are additional to this. At the workshop in December Members highlighted that investment was needed in the Zoo in terms of addressing the condition of the Floral Hall, improving transport options and enhanced visitor attractions. There is currently no financial commitment to the Zoo Improvements in the Capital Programme. Management are currently exploring options for possible investment and engagement on improving the Zoo.

3.6 The Zoo Trade Union Forum nominated through JNCC has been set up. Staff and Trade Unions will be vital for the communication and engagement around the options and will be part of the stakeholder engagement.

3.7 There are no asset implications at this stage although the final phases of the project will include an assessment of capital assets investment required.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

3.8 There are currently no equality or good relation implications however this will continue to be reviewed as the project is developed.

4.0 **Appendices – Documents Attached**

	Appendix 1 – Zoo workshop findings

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1. Introduction by Zoo Manager

The Zoo is many things to many people, but has core functions that include;

- Conservation
- Education
- Welfare
- Scientific Study
- Research and care of Native Species and habitats
- Community activities

Conservation

The Zoo is involved in 61 local or global captive breeding programs, and has a long history of supporting a number of “in-situ” conservation projects including species native to Northern Ireland including;

- Barn Owls
- White tailed Sea Eagles
- Red Squirrels

From Asia, the Zoo supports conservation projects for;

- Asian elephants
- Visayan Warty Pigs
- Francois Moloch Gibbons
- Tree kangaroos
- Red Pandas

Other species include Madagascan and African Primates including Sifaka, Lemurs, and Lowland Gorillas and South American primates (Brazil and Colombia)

Zoos such as Belfast Zoo do important work in terms of education and captive breeding programmes.

Many of the resident animals came to Belfast Zoo for welfare reasons. Belfast Zoo is a retirement home for elephants, including one female which belongs to the German Government. She had been badly treated by a German circus, and was living in terrible conditions before being cared for by dedicated staff at Belfast Zoo who have cared for both her physical and psychological needs. The original Sea Lion group came to Belfast Zoo from the Californian Marine Rescue Sanctuary as they had all been blinded from shootings by local fishermen. One of the original group lived in Belfast Zoo for 23 years.

Belfast Zoo has always provided placement opportunities for students involved in animal related studies and other students involved in environmental studies. The Zoo has traditionally supported activities for people with long-term employment issues, as well as people with disabilities and learning difficulties. In the period September to November 2016 the Zoo provided around 50 placement opportunities.

Native Species - The Zoo has had a very proactive native species group for many years. We have our annual native species weekend and work closely with many local groups, trusts and government bodies (NIEA, Ulster Wildlife, NI Bat group, Belfast Hills, Ulster Museum etc.)

The zoo has helped to rehome injured hedgehogs and re-homed confiscated red squirrels and Barn owls. The zoo through donations has helped with surveys of wild Barn owls providing educational material and nest boxes. The zoo is part of the Red Squirrel Forum and through this organisation working with other interested partners has been able to release Red Squirrels back to the wild. We are privileged to have one of only two junior bat clubs in the UK based at Belfast Zoo; this is run by the NIbat group. We have many exciting native species projects with Bees coming in 2017.

Research - The Zoo has always encouraged academic research both locally and globally, and in the last three years there has been 26 animal related research projects conducted at Belfast Zoo.

2. Discussions related to presentation by V4

Recognising the wider value to multiple organisations (and potential funding partners)

- a) Tourism Northern Ireland / Visit Belfast etc.
- b) Local businesses
- c) Education sector

Future Vision

A Zoo to be proud of and which offers the highest possible standards of animal welfare. Making a major contribution to the wider Belfast Agenda

Financial requirements

- a) A Zoo that is affordable and sustainable, and is capable of generating enough income to fund a re-investment programme to deliver the Future Vision
- b) Connected to the City Offer
- c) Accessible for transport
- d) Very low secondary spend at present
- e) Benchmarks indicate relatively low numbers of visits for Zoo of this size with low income generally
- f) Benchmarks show high levels of operating costs (staffing as %age of income etc.)

Need to get the balance right between;

- a) Welfare
- b) Research and Conservation
- c) Education
- d) Visitor experience (excitement, entertainment and value for money)

Operations that provide opportunities for

- a) Volunteers

- b) Students (schools to post graduates)
- c) Research

Zoo facilities that have;

- a) Improved attractions for facilities
- b) Features which appeal to teenagers
- c) An experience which is constantly improving and changing to ensure it remains attractive for repeat visits by local people

Customer comments

Generally, very good reports of customer experience (Trip Advisor etc.)

Frequent adverse comments about;

- a) the steepness (for young children etc.)
- b) poor catering facilities
- c) empty enclosures (perception)
- d) poor signage and interpretative materials
- e) need for more guides / volunteers
- f) need for investment generally
- g) poor public transport to Zoo

Frequent positive comments about;

- a) Friendly staff
- b) Value for money – low admission fees
- c) Some very rare species

Improvement ideas

- Better internal transport – up the hill and around the Zoo – like the old train
- Marketing the benefits of the hill – tremendous views over the zoo landscape
- Important to recognise that a successful Zoo requires a constant programme of investment and improvement (refreshing the offer every year)
- More "experiences" – keeper for the day etc.
- Better programming of feeding times (higher visibility for visitors)

Welfare considerations

- Need to recognise that not everyone agrees with keeping exotic animals in captivity
- Some argue that the Zoo should evolve into a facility that only keeps native European species and is re-focused on returning animals to the wild and protecting species which are endangered in the region
- Welfare and conservation must be of the highest possible standards
- Need to demonstrate level of activities in programmes that relate to species in their natural habitats

Floral Hall

- Eyesore in current condition – at the entrance to the zoo for all to see
- Fantastic facility with real heritage and cultural significance to Belfast

NOTES from members' workshop – Belfast Zoo

- In need of major investment
- Can be a highly valuable asset to the Zoo in the long term
- With major investment, could provide first class facilities for conferences, celebrations and events



Subject:	Car Parking Strategy – Public Consultation
Date:	8 th March 2017
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Anne Doherty, Planning & Transport Officer

Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 Members on the outcome of the public consultation on the Council's draft Car Parking Strategy, seek endorsement from Members on the proposed final Strategy and outline next steps for implementation.
1.2	The Strategy makes recommendations relating to Council owned car parks as well as car parking provision outside our ownership. A key component of the Strategy is to facilitate and encourage stakeholders to work together to achieve the vision and objectives. The Council wishes to provide a strong civic leadership role for the promotion of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system for the city of Belfast and its wider regions.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the main issues raised during the public consultation process; • agree the Council's recommended position on how these will influence the final Strategy content; and • endorse the final Strategy for publication and note the proposed next steps for the

	implementation of the action plan.
3.0	Main report
	Public Consultation
3.1	The draft car parking Strategy was published for public consultation on the Citizen Space platform from the 30th August 2016 to the 21st November 2016 and received 84 consultation responses with 11 additional responses received outside the Citizen Space platform. A public consultation event was held in City Hall on the 4th October 2016 which was open to Members, key stakeholders and members of the public and was attended by over 30 representatives.
3.2	The overall response from the public consultation has been supportive of the strategy in particular the strategy objectives and the Council priorities. The consultation requested views on the Council's vision outlined in the strategy <i>"Belfast is a city offering sufficient, high quality and appropriately located parking which supports economic development and regeneration within the city by balancing the requirements of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors."</i> 42% of respondents agreed with the vision whilst 38% disagreed. The general comments relating to the vision showed that car parking is a highly divisive issue with respondents either requesting that there should be increased car parking provision at lower cost or that car parking provision should be restricted in the city centre to improve the amenity for residents and visitors to the city. It is suggested that the vision remains unchanged as we are advocating a balanced approach to car parking provision in the city. The strategy recognises that car parking in suitable amounts and locations is vital for the city centre to function properly. A balance is therefore necessary between car parking and other transport modes and between the needs of short-stay and long-stay parking users.
3.3	It is clear that the relationship between parking availability, cost, length of stay and its effect on retail trade is a complicated and emotive one. Evidence from Christmas 2015 suggested that the Council's offer of free car parking increased congestion, reduced accessibility and may have had a negative impact on footfall and retail trade. The Council's decision in 2016 to work with Translink to improve and incentivise public transport as an alternative to free car parking whilst controversial has proved highly successful with BCCM reporting average sales up by 7.8%, footfall up by 4.8% and Translink reporting ½ million extra passengers travelling into Belfast over the Christmas period.

3.4	<p>There is currently a high volume of commuters (people going to work and parking all day) travelling by car to Belfast which is leading to problems of increasing congestion and associated emissions resulting in poor air quality in a number of areas in the city. It is recognised that there is limited capacity in the city's highway network and therefore the promotion of public transport along with appropriate provision for cars and a rationalisation of car parking is part of a balanced approach is outlined in the strategy. The Strategy also puts an emphasis on access for consumers and short business use.</p>
3.5	<p>The public consultation responses showed strong consensus on the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to introduce residents' parking schemes in areas affected by all day commuter parking (a responsibility of DFI); • the proposal for consolidation of low quality surface car parking sites into multi storey/underground car parks with the caveat that adjacent local communities are consulted on the location and design; • the setting up of a Parking Forum with a number of groups expressing a willingness to participate in the Forum; • the need to improve quality, safety and security of car parking provision and to encourage car parking operators to achieve Park Mark standard; • the need to improve the information on parking availability and use of smart technology; and • measures to deter all day commuter parking in free car parks at district centres to allow turn over and provision for shoppers.
3.6	<p>A number of areas were highlighted that were missing from the strategy or needed more emphasis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to consult with local communities on any proposals to consolidate surface car parks and develop multi-storey provision; • improved enforcement to prevent parking at bus stops, parking across dropped kerbs, parking on pavements and to prevent potential fraud and misuse of Blue Badges; and • parking initiatives to promote the evening economy and provision to cater for overnight/weekend visitors to hotels travelling by car.
3.7	<p>The response from the Department for Infrastructure is generally supportive of the strategy and action plan, however, they would advocate for a clearer message on the need to reduce</p>

	<p>the supply of long stay commuter car parking in the city to support more efficient and cost effective public transport. They call for a more collaborative working approach on a number of issues which would be welcomed by the Council.</p>
3.8	<p>The response from the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce outlined a number of areas of agreement in principle which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support for control of commuter parking in residential areas; • support for the extension of regulated on-street parking in the city centre; • turnover of on-street car parking by better enforcement and appropriate charging and appropriate long stay car parking being provided; • development of surface car parking sites; • development of smart signage and parking app; and • provision for coach parking.
3.9	<p>However, BCTC have outlined a wide number of concerns in particular to any measures that will deter car access to the city. Their view is that a large number of shoppers and business users use the car to access Belfast and any steps to deter car access would be detrimental to city businesses. In addition, it is the view of BCTC that the current public transport system does not provide an adequate alternative. Council officers met with representatives from the BCTC to discuss the areas of concern raised. It was highlighted that the strategy recognises that car parking in suitable amounts and locations is vital for the city centre to function properly. However it is considered that a balanced approach is necessary between car parking and other transport modes and between the needs of short-stay and long-stay parking users. The strategy is in line with the Council's Regeneration & Investment Strategy and the Belfast Agenda which focuses on supporting vitality, jobs, shoppers, tourism and successful businesses in the city centre and therefore our approach is to support this, whilst acknowledging that there is a need to manage demand and in particular reduce all day commuter parking in the city. It should be recognised that a large number of city centre car parks are used all day by commuters and this reduces the availability of short term spaces for shoppers and visitors.</p>
3.10	<p>The strategy acknowledges that investment in public transport infrastructure and sustainable modes is necessary if car dependency is to be reduced and the Council is working jointly with DfI and Translink to support projects such as the Transport Hub, Belfast Rapid Transit and the implementation of the Belfast Bicycle Network Plan.</p>

3.11	<p>The Department for Communities response supported the Council’s vision, objectives and priorities for action. DfC would concur that car parking is an important resource that supports the economic and social vitality of the city, but as the strategy emphasises, the high proportion of all day commuter parking in the core of a city centre uses up valuable space that could be used for broader regenerative purposes and restricts parking opportunities for shorter term uses such as shopping, business and leisure activities, all of which are key to the future regeneration of the city centre.</p>								
3.12	<p>Appendix 1 provides further details on the main comments emerging from the public consultation process and our suggested response. Appendix 2 contains the proposed final strategy and action plan. It is proposed an executive summary will be devised for the final version.</p>								
3.13	<p>Implementation</p> <p>The City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy identified car parking as a major issue for Belfast City Centre and recommended that the Council works with the Department for Infrastructure to develop and implement a strategy for car parking for Belfast. Representatives from DfI have been involved in the project steering group and the process has involved engagement with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. The strategy has outlined a number of objectives and priorities for action which are dependent on external bodies such as DfI, Translink and private car operators to deliver. It is proposed the delivery of the action plan will be cross departmental with the City Centre Development Team taking the lead and involvement from the City & Neighbourhood Services department, Planning & Place and Property & Projects.</p>								
3.14	<p>The proposed next steps include:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="272 1462 1380 1966"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="272 1462 828 1514">Key next steps</th> <th data-bbox="828 1462 1380 1514">Lead Department</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 1514 828 1666">Publication of final Car Parking Strategy and action plan including timeframe for implementation</td> <td data-bbox="828 1514 1380 1666">City & Neighbourhood Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 1666 828 1921">Review of Council’s off street parking provision to consider issues such as pricing, operation and naming through the internal Parking Order Working Group</td> <td data-bbox="828 1666 1380 1921">City & Neighbourhood Services (already underway)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 1921 828 1966">Establish joint working arrangements</td> <td data-bbox="828 1921 1380 1966">It is proposed that the governance and</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Key next steps	Lead Department	Publication of final Car Parking Strategy and action plan including timeframe for implementation	City & Neighbourhood Services	Review of Council’s off street parking provision to consider issues such as pricing, operation and naming through the internal Parking Order Working Group	City & Neighbourhood Services (already underway)	Establish joint working arrangements	It is proposed that the governance and
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Publication of final Car Parking Strategy and action plan including timeframe for implementation	City & Neighbourhood Services								
Review of Council’s off street parking provision to consider issues such as pricing, operation and naming through the internal Parking Order Working Group	City & Neighbourhood Services (already underway)								
Establish joint working arrangements	It is proposed that the governance and								

	with Dfl and consider priorities such as the review of the current city centre car parking provision/location and options to progress the implementation of residents parking schemes	delivery will be raised at the Transport Workshop meetings chaired by the Chief Executive with involvement from elected members, Council officers and senior officials from Dfl and Translink.	
	Establish the Parking Forum - Agree terms of reference and membership; and - agree priorities for action such as improved parking information/smart technology.	City Centre Development	
	Provide guidance to inform the development of the Council's Local Development Plan in terms of transport policy and the review of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan.	Planning & Place / Dfl	
	Review of Council owned surface car parking provision to consider options for consolidation and redevelopment	City Centre Development & Property & Projects	
	Report to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to outline resources required for the implementation of the car parking strategy action plan.	City Centre Development & City & Neighbourhood Services	
3.15	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>If endorsed the recommendations will have future implications on Council revenue such as the potential loss of parking revenue, asset rationalisation of some car parks, costs of some improving some car parks or capital to build new ones and the introduction of charging in some free car parks in district centres and the introduction of free disabled car parking in Council owned off-street car parks. These have not been quantified in the research and will be reported to a future Strategic Policy & Resources Committee once the strategy is finalised.</p> <p><u>Equality & Good Relations Implications</u></p>		

3.16	Equality and good relations screening was conducted in parallel with the proposed consultation processes.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Summary of public consultation responses Appendix 2– Proposed Final Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan

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Appendix 1 – Car Parking Strategy

A summary of the main comments and our suggested response is outlined below:

Comments	Suggested approach
<p>DFI is generally supportive of the strategy and action plan, however it is the Department's view that there is too much commuter parking in Belfast and the Council's strategy missed the opportunity to provide a clear message on this issue.</p>	<p>The strategy acknowledges that there is spare car parking capacity in the city and it is proposed going forward to review the current car parking provision with DfI to ensure appropriate provision is in the right location to promote accessibility and reduce congestion in the city.</p>
<p>BCTC stated that it was incorrect to state that there is surplus supply of car parking in the city as many of the spaces are located in areas where there is low demand, whereas in areas of high demand there is an under-provision of spaces. Views were expressed that the proposals do not include forecasts of future parking demand and that a number of new office, hotel and other developments will generate a considerable demand for new parking.</p>	<p>Surveys have indicated that there is currently spare capacity in excess of 10,000 spaces for car parking in and around Belfast City centre. However the strategy recognises that some individual car parks operate at capacity whilst there is spare capacity in the overall provision. As stated above, the strategy proposes to review the current car parking provision with DfI to ensure appropriate provision is in the right location and this will include measures to improve the quality of parking and information on parking availability. The review will also take account of new development planned for the city.</p>
<p>BCTC expressed the view that if the City is to grow, there will be more car journeys to, from and within the City. These will require an increase in parking provision and the strategy's aspiration of maintaining levels is inadequate and will damage the City's prospects of future success.</p>	<p>The strategy highlights that there is a high volume of commuters travelling by car to Belfast which is leading to problems of increasing congestion and associated emissions resulting in poor air quality in a number of areas in the city. It is recognised that there is a limited capacity in the city's highway network and therefore the promotion of public transport along with the appropriate provision for cars as part of a balanced approach is outlined in the strategy.</p>
<p>The Strategy should not prohibit long term parking. Provision for commuter parking will be essential to promote future office developments.</p>	<p>The strategy proposes that long stay parking should only occur in off-street sites away from central areas of the city centre, on the edge of the Inner Ring. Central areas should be prioritised for short stay parking and for Blue Badges holders.</p> <p>The need to reduce all day commuter parking is in line with the Programme for Government Indicator 25: Increase the use of public transport and active travel. It states that "achieving a shift from the car to bus or rail services for longer journeys and to walking or cycling for shorter journeys will reduce demand on the road network allowing it to work more efficiently; assist in the better movement of freight; reduce emissions and improve health by increasing levels of physical activity. Public transport also contributes to economic growth, competitiveness and supports social inclusion. Cycling and walking have significant health and social benefits for individuals".</p>
<p>Using parking policy to discourage the use of the private car</p>	<p>The strategy is proposing a step change and acknowledges that investment in</p>

<p>before having a modern public alternative is irrational, counterproductive and economically damaging to our city.</p>	<p>public transport infrastructure and sustainable modes is necessary if car dependency is to be reduced. The Council is working jointly with DfI and Translink to support projects such as the Transport Hub, Belfast Rapid Transit and the implementation of the Belfast Bicycle network plan.</p>
<p>The Council's strategy stated that all on-street parking in the city core area should be restricted. DfI stated that this is a considerable undertaking and will involve the introduction of residents parking zones. It is suggested by DfI that they progress proposals to extend current controlled parking zones incorporating residents schemes in partnership with BCC.</p>	<p>It is suggested that the wording in the strategy is changed to state 'extend current controlled parking zones incorporating resident schemes in partnership with BCC' This will be in line with the proposal in the PfG to reduce demand 'Extend the Belfast City Centre Controlled Parking Zone and increase enforcement'.</p>
<p>What is the source of parking figures?</p>	<p>Belfast Parking Survey (BPS) 2013 Report, carried out by Transport NI's partnering consultant Amey was used. This reports the results of the biennial parking survey within the centre of Belfast, with the data collected during October 2013. Additional survey work was carried out by consultants on BCC sites outside the city centre which were not included in the 2013 report.</p>
<p>A number of comments were received stating that car parking tariffs are too expensive in Belfast in particular for all day commuter parking.</p>	<p>The baseline review found that parking is affordable in Belfast in comparison to similar cities. An aim of the strategy is to influence choice of travel mode through demand management measures such as parking supply and pricing policies. It is suggested that future changes to parking tariffs should be discussed jointly by DfI, BCC and private operators.</p>
<p>In addition the following comments were made in relation to pricing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for a pricing structure that prioritises shoppers and visitors for day trippers and weekend trippers • Parking costs in the core city centre should reflect the convenience of the location; however, on-street parking time should be extended to perhaps 3 hours; • Increase in effective enforcement by Traffic Attendants would deter meter feeding etc and increase turnaround of on-street car parking 	<p>The strategy proposes that the core city centre area should only be used for short stay parking and suggests that measures to cater for day/weekend trippers is discussed at the Parking Forum.</p> <p>BCC have no remit in relation to pricing, duration and enforcement of on-street parking however it is suggested joint working with DfI to identify measures to tackle the issue.</p>
<p>The strategy proposes that there is a review of on-street and off-street tariffs. DfI suggested that where practical, future changes to on and off street tariffs should be discussed jointly by DfI and BCC and private sector operators.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Council suggest that the Parking Forum could provide a mechanism to discuss parking tariffs and enforcement.</p>
<p>The Strategy must identify new multi-storey car parks that will address the future need generated by a cluster of individual new developments.</p>	<p>The Strategy does identify areas where new multi-storey provision may be appropriate subject to the planning process.</p>

Consideration needs to be given to a pricing structure in MSCPs that encourage day trippers; weekend trippers and day shoppers	Agreed this will be considered in more detail through the proposed Parking Forum
The development of new Multi-Storey car parks should make provision for secure cycle parking on their premises, particularly on lower-storeys to act as an incentive for people to cycle.	Agreed
A number of respondents queried what criteria will be used to identify the sites for Multi Storey Car Parks? Will communities be consulted on this matter? How is traffic flow, air quality and visual aesthetics taken into consideration	The Council will amend the action to ensure any proposal for consolidation of low quality surface car parking sites into multi storey/underground car parks will be carried out in consultation with adjacent local communities on the location and design issues.
One of the proposed multi-storey car parks should be placed in the heart of the Linen Quarter rather than based at the "outer ring".	For clarification the strategy does not propose multi-storey provision based at the outer ring. A key thrust of the Council's Linen Quarter study is the reduction of car movements in this area. The strategy proposes that long stay parking should only occur in off-street sites away from central areas of the city centre, on the edge of the Inner Ring and this is in a short distance from the Linen Quarter area.
Better enforcement against potential fraud and misuse of Blue Badges	BCC have no remit in relation to enforcement but recognise that there is an issue of misuse of blue badges. It is suggested joint working with DfI to identify measures to tackle the issue.
Support for free Blue Badge use at Council car parks however the access to these car parks must be considered	Noted and the access point will be added to the strategy
Measures to prevent parking at bus stops, parking across dropped kerbs and parking on pavements Any consideration of parking demand must include cars parking on unrestricted streets and pavements rather than just those parking in allocated on-street spaces	It is suggested that the issue of pavement parking should be tackled by better enforcement and improved information systems on parking availability. It is proposed that the issue of pavement parking should be discussed jointly by DfI, PSNI and BCC.
Proper consideration must be given to how car parking at district centres is controlled so free long stay spaces are not taken up by owners / employees of surrounding commercial premises and as a consequence not available for shoppers / visitors.	The Strategy acknowledges that BCC parking sites outside of the city centre are predominantly free. There is high occupancy of these sites with a significant number of all-day parkers. If capacity is to be managed, this level of all day parking needs to be reduced. It is suggested that a modest charge per hour is considered to deter all day commuter parking. This would free up spaces for people making short trips to the area for shopping, leisure, or business/ personal reasons.
Translink would have major concerns around the practicality of an Inner Ring Shuttle Bus given our experience with the old Centre Link service which had to be funded by both the	The Council would agree with this approach and will modify the action.

private and public sector. However modifications of the existing network(s) to provide an inner ring shuttle bus service may well be possible.	
The area defined as the core city centre area extends over too large an area and should be confined within the four points of Shaftesbury Square, Castle Street, Fredrick Street & Oxford Street;	It is not the remit of this strategy to review the city centre boundary. However, the comment is noted and for information the boundary of the core city centre area will be reviewed by the Council under the Local Development Plan process.
Visit Belfast is particularly pleased to see the inclusion of Coach Park provision. It should be close to the City Centre, attractions, hotels. in an area away from high crime rate	The criteria for the location are noted.
Visit Belfast stated that there needs to be flexibility in pricing of car parking such as hotels being able to offer reduced car parking for day, overnight and multiple night stays. Most car travelling overnight visitors for a city break or part of a touring holiday will want parking for 24 hour plus. How to deal with this has not been flagged in the report Parking initiatives to promote the evening economy are needed.	Agreed. The Council suggest that the Parking Forum could provide a mechanism to discuss how these needs can be catered for.
Section 2.3.11 refers to a range of key relevant policy documents which have shaped, and will continue to shape transport, parking and planning policy. Department for Communities would respectively submit that their Regeneration Masterplans should be added to the list and that, as far as possible, their respective strategies should be complimentary	Agreed
Belfast Harbour Commissioners stated that the Corporation Street/Sailortown area is subject to all day commuter parking congestion and going forward has the potential to be exacerbated by the opening of the new UU campus and therefore consideration should be given to the redistribution of underutilised space. BHC welcomed the reference to the continued engagement of stakeholders and communities to develop and improve sustainable transport alternatives.	This will be considered under the review of provision and location of car parking with Dfl.

Citizen Space responses

The table below outlines the results from survey questions relating to the main sections of the draft strategy.

Draft Car Parking Strategy	Strongly agree/ agree	Strongly disagree/dis agree	
Vision for the Strategy <i>“Belfast is a city offering sufficient, high quality and appropriately located parking which supports economic development and regeneration within the city by balancing the requirements of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors”</i>	42%	38%	The general comments relating to the vision showed that car parking is a highly divisive issue with respondents either requesting that there should be increased car parking provision at lower cost or that car parking provision should be restricted in the city centre to improve the amenity for residents and visitors to the city. It is suggested that the vision remains unchanged as we are advocating a balanced approach to car parking provision in the city. The strategy recognises that car parking in suitable amounts and locations is vital for the city centre to function properly. A balance is therefore necessary between car parking and other transport modes and between the needs of short-stay and long-stay parking users.
Understand the rationale for developing the strategy	74%	6%	The approach of the Council in preparing the car parking strategy was welcomed by respondents.
Key issues, challenges, opportunities identified	50%	14%	There was general agreement on the key issues with comments requesting more effective enforcement of parking infringements mentioned.
Objective 1: Ensuring appropriate provision and location of car parking to support and improve the economic vitality of the city centre and district centres.	66%	8%	Comments related to this objective showed support for the proposal to consolidate low quality surface car parking sites into multi storey/underground car parks with the caveat that adjacent local communities are consulted on the location and design. Other comments requested improvements to the public transport system and support for residential parking schemes.
Objective 2: Ensuring car parking provision encourages sustainable commuter travel, especially for journeys into the City Centre and supports access by public transport, cycling and walking.	61%	19%	Comments relating to this objective requested improvements to the public transport system, the need to provide secure cycle parking and the need to restrict traffic levels in the city centre.
Objective 3: Minimising the potentially negative impacts of parking on residential communities in the city particularly in inner city areas.	67%	10%	There was strong support for the introduction of resident parking schemes with a number of comments highlighting the negative impact of commuter parking on residential areas.
Objective 4: Work with stakeholders to improve the quality of parking and information available, ideally	72%	4%	There was strong support on the need to provide better information on parking availability in the city along with improvements to the overall quality of car park provision.

<p>through technology and in particular develop a new parking signage and information system that supports parking and wider applications.</p>			
<p>Complementary Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote sustainable commuter travel, especially for journeys into the city centre and support access by public transport, cycling and walking • Identify opportunities to provide secure bicycle and coach parking in appropriate city centre locations • Ensuring appropriate provision for taxis within the city centre 	<p>62%</p>	<p>12%</p>	<p>A number of respondents requested the need to improve the cycle infrastructure in the city and expressed the view that public transport needs improvement to offer a suitable alternative to the private car.</p>

Belfast Parking Strategy and Action Plan



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Executive Summary

(To be completed)

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The city of Belfast is changing. It is growing and continues to seek more investment, more jobs, more opportunities, and to be a better place to live. The city's transportation network and in particular it's parking have a key role to play in achieving a vibrant competitive city which can compete on a global scale.

In recognition of the role of parking in contributing to the success of the city, and as outlined in the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy published in September 2015, a strategy for city centre parking is needed. The actions and interventions proposed here will complement the Regeneration Strategy's following core principles: increasing the employment and residential population; managing the city's retail offer; maximising tourism opportunities; creating a green, walkable and cyclable city centre; create regional learning and innovation centres; and promoting shared space and social impact. The actions and interventions within this document include the innovative use of technology to make parking 'smarter' and promote better use of city centre space to provide the right environment for investment and for city user's and while enabling further city development.

On 1st April 2015 the Department for Regional Development (now renamed as the Department for Infrastructure – DfI) transferred all of its off-street car parks (excluding Park and Ride/Park and Share) to local councils as part of local government reform. The Council is therefore now responsible for the operation of 30 car parks that were previously operated by the DfI, however on-street car parking remains under DfI's control along with other transport responsibilities.

Local Government Reform also provided local councils with a range of new place-shaping and economic powers including developing a new Local Development Plan as part of the wider planning function and community planning. This Strategy will seek to inform the development of future statutory plans and policies developed under the Council's new powers.

The current city centre parking strategy is set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) which continues as the statutory transport plan for Belfast. It was developed to manage the transportation issues and is currently under review.

1.2 Vision

As outlined in the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, fundamental to Belfast's success will be the city's ability to continue to attract investment and retain a competitive advantage over other cities. This means being competitive in terms of tax, rates, skills and incentives. But it also means having a lifestyle offering that will attract and retain people. The role of transport and car parking is clear: they are key elements of how a city functions, not only in terms of business but including the broader 'lifestyle' offering.

Car parking clearly is an important resource that supports the economic and social vitality of the city, however, it also can have some negative impacts that need to be effectively managed and addressed. Primarily these issues are associated with inappropriate parking provision. For example, a high proportion of all day commuter parking in the core of a city centre uses up valuable space that could be used for broader regenerative purposes and restricts parking opportunities for shorter term uses such as shopping, business and leisure activities. Similarly, the ability of commuters to park for free in predominantly residential areas prevents those residents from parking and negatively impacts on the quality of the area and can undermine on the viability of local businesses that depend on a turnover of parking spaces.

Our vision for this strategy is as follows:

“Belfast is a city offering sufficient, high quality and appropriately located parking which supports economic development and regeneration within the city by balancing the requirements of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors.”

This Strategy was developed through close working relationships between Belfast City Council (BCC), DfI and Transport NI (as the highway authority), as well as consultation with Elected Members, members of the public and other city stakeholders. A joint approach with these stakeholders will be needed in order to achieve the objectives within the Strategy that Belfast needs to continue growing and in order to fulfil its role as the capital city and the economic driver for the region.

2 Context & Baseline Review

This chapter firstly considers why people need to park as this is fundamental to understanding how the issues should be addressed. It then moves on to consider the impacts that peoples' parking choices have, as many parking issues are common in numerous towns and cities. It then considers parking within Belfast city centre, examining parking supply, location and the current approach to policy. This chapter also details the consultation that has taken place in preparation of this strategy.

2.1 Why People Park

For many people the private car is an important means of accessing Belfast, particularly for trips to work, shopping and leisure. Most of these trips result in an act of parking near to or at the intended destination. The availability of somewhere to park is therefore a key consideration for these users, however, parking cost and convenience are also significant influences as is the availability of practical alternatives including use of public transport.

Some users may only need to park for a few minutes or for a few hours, such as if they are attending a meeting, using their car as part of their job, going on a shopping trip or visiting a tourist attraction. However people who park for work often need to make use of a single parking space for upwards of eight hours per day.

Any consideration of parking needs to take into account the various reasons why people need to park their vehicles. It also needs to consider whether these parking acts need to be made at all if other transport options offer the user a viable alternative. A careful balance is needed between the level of parking provided and the comparative viability of using other forms of transport to make the same trip.

“A careful balance is needed between the level of parking provided and the comparative viability of using other forms of transport to make the same trip”

Within cities, it is the movement, connectivity and transportation of people that can be key drivers to promoting and sustaining economic growth. Parking is a crucial strand of delivering a 'joined up' city transportation strategy, and Belfast is no exception. As the city continues to grow, both in terms of population and employment, pressures on the transport network will increase and therefore careful ongoing management and planning are required.

2.2 The Impacts of Parking

Whilst an efficient city parking system can help to sustain a local economy, there are a number of considerations needed in order to reduce the adverse impacts that parking often creates. These can be attributed to a combination of user behaviour and the level of infrastructure provision. For example, some users may have always parked in particular locations as they have been able to, yet there may now be unacceptable local impacts associated with this activity. In other areas, an over-supply of free or cheap parking can increase traffic congestion on adjacent roads.

When excessive demand materialises on a road network with limited capacity, it results in congestion for all road users. This impacts on journey time reliability, delivery timeframes for goods and services and adds to driver frustration. There are also impacts on the environment through increased air and noise pollution.

Cities typically experience large demands on their transport systems, and an abundance of parking supply can create high competition for limited road space due to large numbers of drivers looking to park their vehicles. As can be seen at many out of town shopping centres, there is an intrinsic link between abundant parking provision and large private car demand. Yet in comparison with such out of town sites, cities offer more viable travel alternatives to the private car through public transport provision.

“Cities typically experience large demands on their transport systems, and an abundance of parking supply can create high competition for limited road space due to large numbers of drivers looking to park their vehicles.”

Careful consideration of parking supply within cities is needed in order to achieve an appropriate balance that meets demand yet does not encourage less sustainable travel, particularly for commuters. As city economies grow, working and resident populations both increase and this causes additional pressure on existing transport networks. In order to maintain the

effectiveness and lifespan of a city's transportation system, people need to be able to make an informed choice on their method of transport to work/study, and ideally users should see mass transit systems such as bus or rail travel as their preferred choice from both a cost, convenience and travel time perspective.

As such, parking price within cities needs to be at a level sufficient to sustain the market yet also at a level that does not induce excessive demand, thereby undoing efforts to increase use of more sustainable transport modes. It also needs to be sufficiently competitive so that it does not disadvantage and price out certain users for whom sustainable modes are not currently a viable option. This balance can be difficult to achieve when the majority of the parking provision is in the hands of the private sector.

“...parking price within cities needs to be at a level sufficient to sustain the market yet also at a level that does not induce excessive demand, thereby undoing efforts to increase use of more sustainable transport modes.”

A close link between land use and transport planning is essential. This means that new development is located in areas that have suitable means of access by a variety of transport modes and ensures prime development land is not inappropriately used by low quality surface-level car parking. As the transport impact of land uses are examined by the type of development being proposed and the proximity to the transport network, this reduces the adverse impacts of private car use and parking.

Many city buildings such as offices provide their own parking spaces, such as basement parking or lock-up car parks mainly for employee use. Such spaces are typically not publically available and are termed 'Private Non Residential' (PNR). Whilst this provides additional parking capacity within cities to accommodate the demand which is arising from development, the level of PNR parking needs to be carefully considered in order to avoid inadvertently maintaining car dependence and adding to traffic congestion. In city centre locations where public transport access is good, the need for large numbers of PNR spaces is questionable.

Parking space also needs to be provided for tourist coaches, preferably close to attractions so that passengers can be dropped off. Lack of coach parking space can cause tour operators to think twice before planning city excursions, however, it can be difficult for local authorities to find suitable parking locations within heavily built up city centres. Similarly, tourists and other visitors arriving by car can often be unaware of parking locations and a lack of signage and information can compound this issue.

All day parking, where a vehicle is continuously parked in the same spot, can take place in inappropriate locations. This includes commuters who park in mainly residential areas; preventing local residents from parking, adding to the cluttered feel of individual streets, decreasing perceived safety levels and reducing access for the likes of emergency service vehicles.

A high proportion of all day parking can also use up valuable space for people who need to park in the city for short durations such as for business meetings or for shopping. Typically this is more an issue with on-street rather than off-street parking spaces, but the result is that the turnover of high value spaces is low which means that people spend time circulating to find a space or are ultimately dissuaded from visiting an area altogether.

“A high proportion of all day parking can use up valuable space for people who need to park in the city for short durations such as for business meetings or for shopping.”

The majority of parking acts require some sort of enforcement system to ensure effectiveness. Enforcement can assess whether parkers have stayed beyond the maximum time limit stipulated on the adjacent signage, or if they are parked on urban clearways or on double yellow lines, etc.

However it is virtually impossible to enforce all parking acts within any given city, and limited enforcement resources can only deal with a certain amount of parking infringements. City areas are generally split into those with parking restrictions and those where parking is unrestricted. Typically the areas with restrictions are city or local centres; however any restrictions are reliant on enforcement.

Aside from not abiding by parking regime rules, users have been known to abuse the system in other ways such as 'feeding the meter' which enables users to stay in the same space beyond the time limit stated. Similarly, misuse of Blue Badges (which is a nationwide problem) enables people without genuine disabilities to park on-street all day for free. The effects of this behaviour

are reduced space turnover, impacts on traffic progression, circulating traffic looking for a parking space as well as annoyance to local residents and businesses.

Increasing volumes of cyclists are being seen throughout the UK and Ireland, with many cities also implementing bike hire schemes. In order to sustain this recent level of growth the overall offer to cyclists needs to be improved, and this includes provision such as dedicated cycle lanes and cycle parking. In the absence of suitable and secure parking, cyclists often have to lock their bikes to street furniture which adds to the feel of cluttered streets and leaves their bikes exposed to the elements.

“In order to sustain the recent level of growth in cycling, the overall offer to cyclists needs to be improved, and this includes provision such as dedicated cycle lanes and cycle parking.”

This lack of good quality parking provision for cyclists can add to crime levels and perceived safety fears, which can also be apparent in low standard car parks. If such sites are located in areas of high vehicle or personal crime, are poorly lit and unsurfaced or unmanned and without CCTV, users feel unsafe and therefore park elsewhere. A lack of provision for disabled users and adults with children can also decrease car park attractiveness. Disabled or limited mobility users in particular are often dissuaded from paying for parking off-street when they can park for free on-street and closer to where they want to go to.

Taxis perform a vital public transport service within cities. They offer convenient door to door transport at all times of the day. To ensure this availability to customers, public hire taxis need sufficient on-street rank space to be able to wait and private hire taxis also need parking space while they await instruction on customer pick up.

Where the public hire rank space provided is not commensurate with taxi supply, overcrowding occurs and this can impact on the local area and impinge traffic flow. This detracts from the overall taxi offer, ultimately affecting the local economy.

2.3 Parking in Belfast

2.3.1 Parking Supply and Demand in the City Centre

The first consideration is how much parking supply and demand there currently is within Belfast. Within the city centre's Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), which is divided into core and fringe sub-zones, there are approximately 28,300 publicly available parking spaces, split as 45% on-street and 55% off-street. These zones are shown in **Figure 1**.

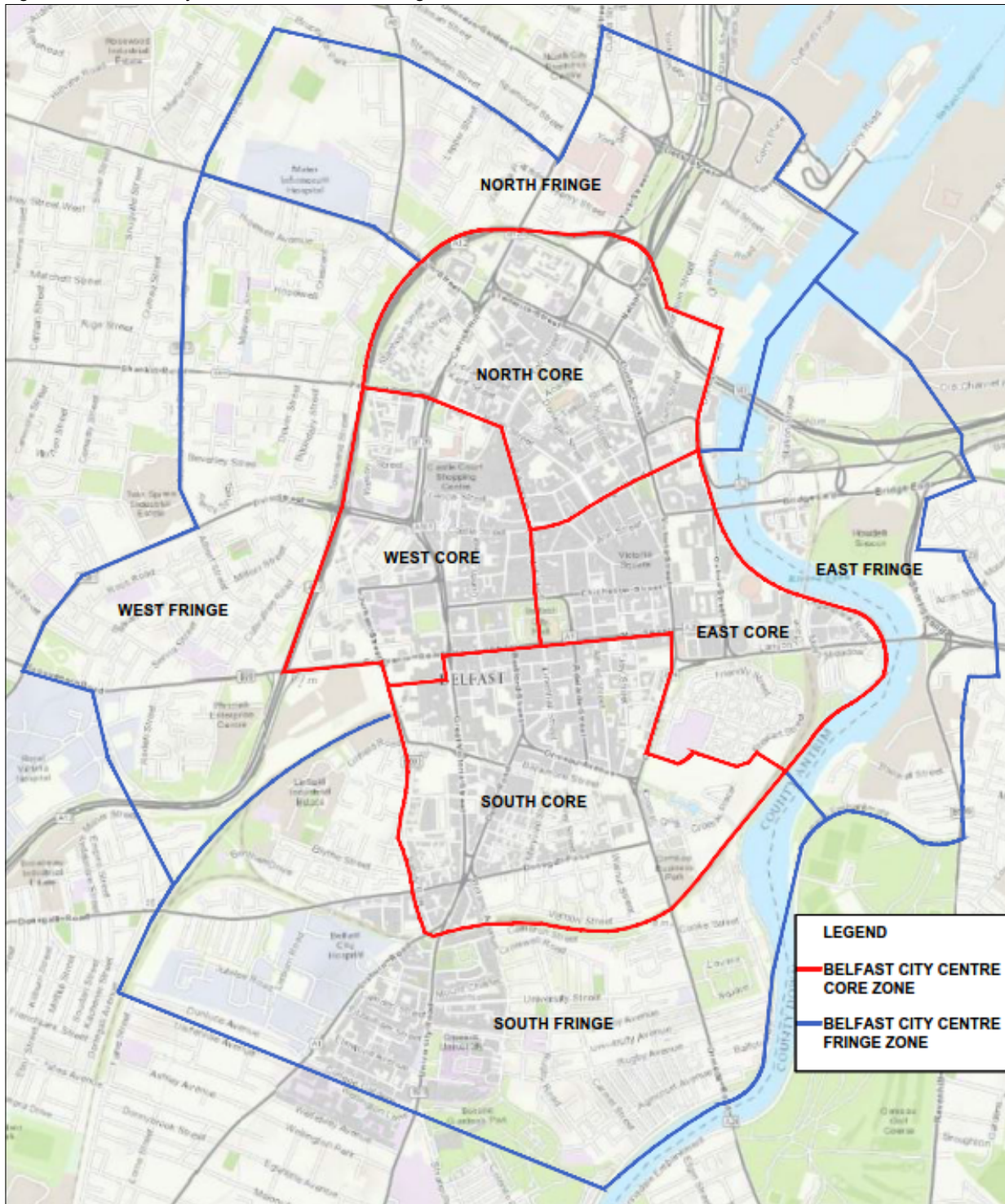
Within the core and fringe zones there are 12,800 spaces where on-street parking can take place, of which only 14% are currently 'controlled' i.e. have an enforced time limit or payment regime, predominantly located within the core zone. This means that there are 9,100 (80%) uncontrolled spaces located in fringe areas such as the lower Shankill and Crumlin Roads as well as Donegall Road and Lower Ormeau. There are also nearly 1,900 spaces within the core that remain uncontrolled.

There are a further 15,465 off-street spaces within the core and fringe provided in 58 car parks. The city council recently received responsibility for 1,476 of these off-street spaces within 17 car parks (two of which are free), with the remaining 13,989 being provided within 41 car parks predominantly provided by private sector operators.

Fourteen multi-storey car park (MSCP) sites provide around 58% of the total number of off-street spaces within the core and fringe, again predominantly provided by private sector parking operators although a small number are provided by public sector bodies.

The remaining 44 sites are small surface level car parks which typically provide fewer than 100 spaces each. The condition of some of these sites is low quality, with poor signposting on approach. It should be noted that some of these surface sites could be redeveloped; therefore the use of these sites for parking purposes could be seen to be on a temporary basis. If redeveloped, these sites could be put to more appropriate uses.

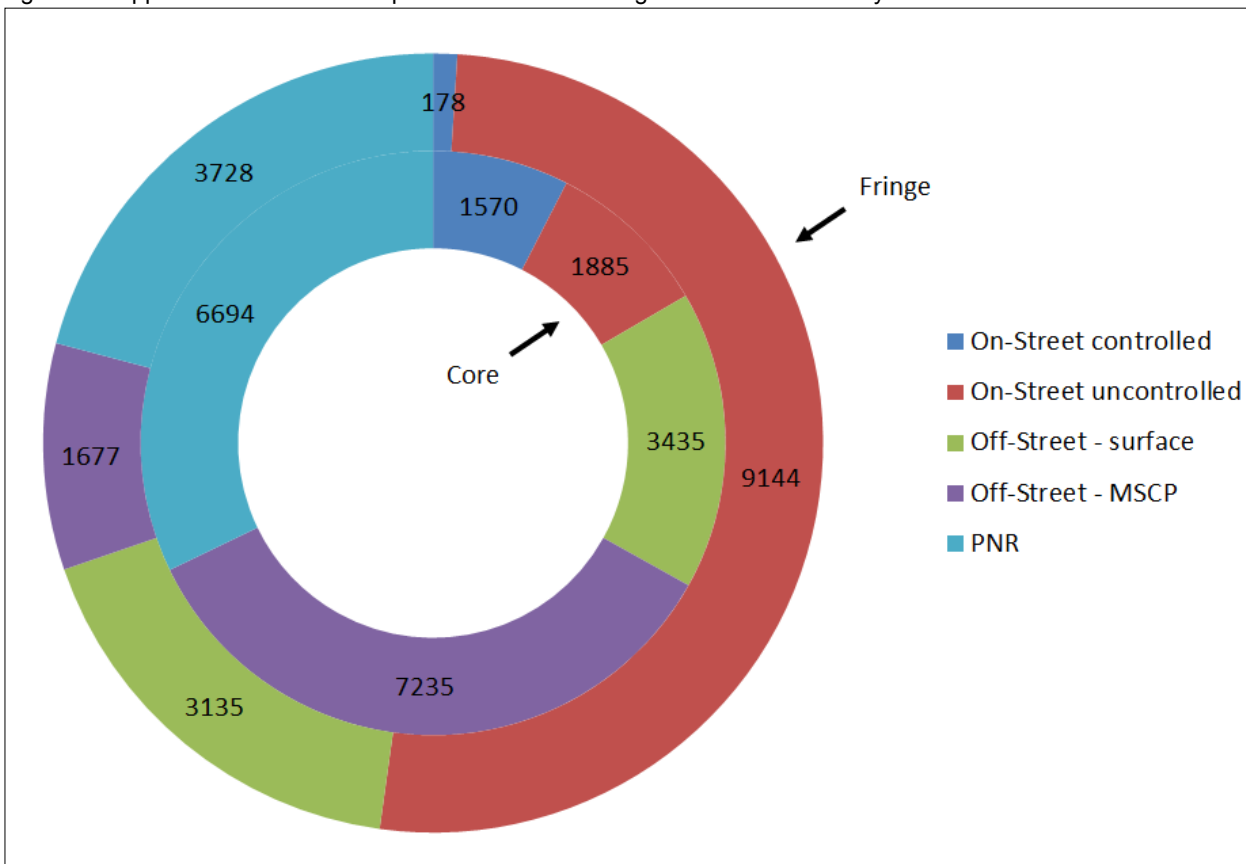
Figure 1 – Belfast City Centre Controlled Parking Zones



There are also a number of car park sites that are not generally publicly available but privately owned or contract operated. Often these are associated with businesses and offices and are termed as ‘Private Non Residential’ (PNR) spaces. Within Belfast city centre’s core and fringe zones there are over 10,400 PNR spaces, split as around 6,700 within the core and 3,700 in the fringe.

This gives a total parking supply of 38,681 spaces within the city centre core and fringe. Note this excludes those provided at supermarkets and out of town shopping centres. The breakdown of spaces in the core and fringes respectively is shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2 – Approximate Number of Spaces in Core and Fringe Areas of Belfast City Centre



Day to day demand for off-street parking spaces typically uses up 50-60% of capacity at any one time, according to biennial surveys undertaken by Dfl that have taken place over the last decade. On-street spaces typically have higher occupancies at between 70-80% on average, with around 90% of spaces in the core and 70% of spaces in the fringe being used. Demand also changes throughout the year, particularly in the run up to Christmas when demand is high.

According to the Dfl surveys, the level of parking in the city centre has remained relatively constant over the last decade. This means there are around 18,000 parking acts within the city centre at any one time on a typical day. This equates to around 9,000 parking acts in each of the core and fringe areas, and this excludes PNR usage figures.

“According to Dfl surveys, the level of parking in the city centre has remained relatively constant over the last decade. This means there are around 18,000 parking acts within the city centre at any one time on a typical day... and this excludes PNR usage figures.”

It should be noted that the south fringe area shows the highest level of on-street parking of all of the areas considered (~4,000 acts at any one time). This includes areas around Queens University and City Hospital where no parking regime is currently in place. Within the core, the level of off-street parking is relatively equally spread out however the demand for on-street spaces in the south core area (which includes the likes of the Linen Quarter, Donegall Pass and Sandy Row) is double that of other core areas. This is considered to be due to the majority of city centre offices being located in this area and limited parking regime implementation.

Figures for the use of PNR spaces are not available; however anecdotal evidence would suggest reasonably high use of these spaces since many are provided by businesses and public sector bodies for employee use.

It is therefore apparent that with typical demand for around 18,000 spaces and a supply of 28,300, there is sufficient overall public parking supply within the city centre. Occupancy in core areas, which are largely subject to parking charges is around 65%, whereas in fringe areas where costs are significantly lower, occupancy is around 70%.

It is acknowledged that some car parks are full however others sit with lower occupancies. Also it means that there are areas of on-street provision completely saturated, largely as a result of the lack of any parking regime in those areas. It is therefore clear that the provision of parking is fragmented and imbalanced across the city centre.

“It is clear that the provision of parking is fragmented and imbalanced across the city centre.”

In addition to the abundance of free parking opportunities on the edge of the city centre, the provision of PNR spaces provided is also considered to add to the attractiveness of driving into the city centre as these spaces are often offered to employees at no or modest cost. This also guarantees that people will always get a secure parking space upon arrival and therefore entrenches behaviour.

“In addition to the abundance of free parking opportunities on the edge of the city centre, the provision of PNR spaces provided is also considered to add to the attractiveness of driving into the city centre as these spaces are often offered to employees at no or modest cost.”

The proportion of PNR spaces provided in Belfast is considered to be high in relation to other similar size cities; in Belfast there is one PNR space per 46 people, whereas in Cardiff it is one space per 50 people and in Newcastle-upon-Tyne it is one space per 70 people.

The number of spaces provided overall in Belfast is considered to be high compared to other cities of similar size. In Newcastle-upon-Tyne city centre there are around 9,500 off-street spaces provided, compared to 15,482 in Belfast. Provision in Cardiff is even lower, with an estimated 6,860 public parking spaces in the city centre.

This demand for parking affects the city centre in a number of ways. Most obviously it adds to traffic volumes and therefore congestion at key locations. This has impacts on noise and air pollution. Users often circulate in their vehicles looking to find a space. On-street spaces are highly valued yet it is more difficult to find a free space and users do not appear to be as familiar with nearby off-street alternatives.

It also means that some people park in unsuitable areas such as streets within city centre residential areas. Many of these streets, while sitting within the existing Controlled Parking Zone, do not have any time limits or parking regime. Despite there being parking capacity in dedicated sites nearby, commuters can park all day for free, just a short walk from the city centre. Consultation feedback and observations have shown that these areas fill up very early in the morning with commuter parking.

Belfast also experiences the typical parking enforcement issues whereby some parkers stay beyond their time limits, do not pay for parking when they should or feed the meter. This means that some on-street spaces are used for longer than they should be which reduces parking opportunity for others and ultimately could have an impact on the viability of the local economy.

Blue Badge holders are able to park for free on-street and there is evidence to suggest that this is a common practice in the city centre and it means users can often park much closer to their destination. Since Blue Badge holders also have to pay to use off-street car parks, there is currently little incentive for them to use them.

2.3.2 Parking Duration in the City Centre

The volumes of people parking in the city centre suggest a significant proportion of long stay, all day parking. This is mainly associated with work related trips which normally arrive early morning and then leave in the evening.

The current on-street parking regime is designed to prohibit all day parking by limiting stays to one, two or up to four hours, depending on location, for any one parking act. This aims to maintain space turnover which increases parking opportunities within the core of the city centre.

High quality off-street sites are better suited to all day parking, particularly those located outside of the central area, with multi-storeys offering the most efficient use of space in this regard. Recent surveys of the City Council's surface car parks have shown that nearly 90% of the total number of spaces are occupied at around midday, which appears the busiest time of day for parking at these sites. The surveys have also shown that some sites have very high turnover whilst others have low turnover and therefore a high proportion of all day parkers.

However there is no clear pattern apparent between the distance from the centre of the city (i.e. City Hall) and the proportion of all day parkers. An efficient system would have a lower proportion of all day parkers the closer towards the city core. This appears to be the case for car parks located on the edge of the city centre such as Corporation Street and Corporation Square where up to half of parkers park all day, however car park sites that are much closer to City Hall such as Cromac Street and Charlotte Street show up to 30% all day parking (i.e. around one in four spaces at these car parks are used all day, reducing availability for short stay parkers). Other sites nearby such as Hope Street North and Bankmore Street have less than 5% all day parkers, however all four sites are a similar distance from City Hall.

“There is no clear pattern apparent between the distance from the centre of the city (i.e. City Hall) and the proportion of all day parkers. An efficient system would have a lower proportion of all day parkers the closer towards the city core.”

It would appear that the convenience and modest cost of parking at the likes of Cromac Street and Charlotte Street all day is the reason for this behaviour. Tariffs therefore need to be re-examined to ensure that all day parking takes place in appropriate locations. This is particularly important as the Cromac Street and Charlotte Street sites are located within an Air Quality Management Area.

A number of privately operated car parks also operate contract and season ticket parking. This means that a proportion of the overall spaces within a car park are set aside for this purpose, however for some of these sites the number of contract/season tickets offered is in excess of that stated within planning conditions.

2.3.3 Facilities & Payment

A review of each of the individual car parks has shown significant differences in terms of quality; for example only around one in five car parks have provision for parents and children, with less than half providing dedicated spaces for disabled users.

Some car parks are completely unmanned and have no CCTV. In certain areas of the city centre there are high instances of vehicle crime and this inevitably has an impact on parking behaviour.

This means that car parks located within some areas of the city centre are not attractive to use and may be a reason for lower occupancies in these areas. At the other end of the scale, a number of the large city centre multi-storey car parks have achieved the 'Park Mark' standard, which is a scheme aimed at reducing crime and the fear of crime in parking facilities by encouraging car park operators to raise standards.

“Only around one in five car parks have provision for parents and children, with less than half providing dedicated spaces for disabled users.”

Current payment technologies for parking in Belfast include cash, credit/debit card, pay by phone, web and smartphone 'app'. Traditional cash pay and display machines are also provided on-street and off-street, however more modern systems are now available which could be further investigated.

Use of the 'parkmobile' service, which can currently be used at all Dfl on-street and BCC off-street sites, has shown an increase in popularity recently and this is considered to be associated with the ease of use and payment that it provides. Ease of payment assists operations and maximises usage and revenue for providers. Some city centre residents and businesses also rent out their parking spaces to commuters via websites, often at attractive rates.

"Use of the 'parkmobile' service, which can currently be used at all Dfl on-street and BCC off-street sites, has shown an increase in popularity recently and this is considered to be associated with the ease of use and payment that it provides"

The average cost of parking across the city centre is largely commensurate with cities of similar size or characteristics such as Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Nottingham; however Dublin, Manchester and Cardiff all have higher parking costs. For the Council's car parks, which were recently inherited from Dfl, tariffs have remain largely unchanged for a number of years and there does not appear to be a strategic approach to the pricing of each car park.

2.3.4 Parking information

Belfast does not currently benefit from an integrated city-wide parking signage system. While there are some localised areas that provide modern electronic signage upon approach to car parks such as Victoria Square and Titanic Quarter, fixed plate signage is used in most locations to advise users of parking locations as they approach them.

"Belfast does not currently benefit from an integrated city-wide parking signage system... There is an absence of information for users as they approach the city from further afield."

There is an absence of information for users as they approach the city from further afield; therefore those who are unfamiliar have to rely on signage information which is located just a few metres from individual car parks. This results in people circulating the city centre looking for parking spots.

Integrated parking guidance and information systems monitor individual parking locations electronically. Data is then fed through to a communication system which advises motorists of the availability and location of parking via a network of variable message signs. Allowing the public to access this parking information before they start their journey can help them make a more informed decision and also influence their modal choice.

This could result in better management of demand and supply, potentially reducing environmental impacts through lower vehicle emissions. It would also raise the overall attractiveness of the city, leading to improved revenue generation, better utilisation of off-street car parks and improved accessibility to short stay on-street parking areas.

2.3.5 Coaches / Tourism

The tourism industry and in particular the coach tourism industry is vital to both sustaining and growth of the Northern Ireland economy. Local coach operators invest millions in vehicles and bring much needed revenue both in terms of what they spend and the numbers of tourists brought into the country.

"There is a need for off-street coach parking facilities and convenient signage for coaches and passengers, so that visitors keep coming back and attract further visitors."

There is provision for 19 coach parking bays in the city. While these are essential to have for short term city centre parking particularly for day time parking, demand regularly exceeds supply. There are a lack of facilities in Belfast and also a perceived lack of enforcement of the existing facilities. Furthermore, there is a need for off-street coach parking facilities and convenient signage for coaches and passengers, so that visitors keep coming back and attract further visitors.

2.3.6 Cyclists

DfI data has revealed that there are over 700 cycle parking locations in Belfast city centre. However with the increase in the popularity of cycling both from users using their own bikes and the recently implemented Belfast Bikes hire scheme, there is a need to enhance the quality and volume of cycle parking.

This should ideally include weather-protected and secure cycle parking in the locations where people want to park their bikes, and the implementation of additional Belfast Bikes docking stations at key attractors such as transport hubs, shopping centres and centres of employment.

2.3.7 Taxis

Public hire taxis in Belfast benefit from a number of ranks from where they can pick up customers. However it has been acknowledged that there is significant competition for kerb space across the city centre and that ranks need to be better distributed across the city centre so that they more closely align with footfall in particular areas.

There are particular areas where localised issues occur due to taxi supply being in excess of the rank space provided. This pressure is likely to increase with the introduction of single tier licensing whereby private hire taxis will also be able to use ranks.

2.3.8 Outside of the city centre

The Council also provides a further 720 spaces in 14 car parks outside of the city centre. Ten of these car parks are located in east Belfast and four are located in south Belfast. The East Belfast sites are primarily located off the Newtownards Road.

Recent surveys have shown that the average weekday occupancy of these 14 sites is 78%, with six sites having occupancies of 90% – 100%. Only two of the 14 sites have a form of charging.

Surveys have also shown that between 30% – 80% of people parked for more than four hours at eleven of the sites. Therefore nearly all of these free sites are showing high levels of all day parking and this may be due to people parking due to their involvement in local activities but it may also include people parking before catching the bus into the city centre.

“Nearly all of the free sites are showing high levels of all day parking and this may be due to people parking due to their involvement in local activities but it may also include people parking before catching the bus into the city centre.”

Many of these car parks are located adjacent to key arterial routes. The all-day parking that occurs at these sites has impacts on adjacent shops and businesses by reducing opportunities for customers to park. It is clear that the lack of charging at these sites encourages longer duration parking, which reduces space turnover and availability.

2.3.9 Residents Parking

There are some areas within the Controlled Parking Zone such as The Markets, Sandy Row etc where the level of driveway parking provision is not generally commensurate with car ownership levels in these areas. The lack of an on-street regime encourages commuters to park in these predominantly residential areas.

The impacts on residential communities also extend further out of the city centre. Areas such as the Lower Malone, Stranmillis and College Park Avenue / Rugby Road also experience issues from people who work and therefore park in the area but who do not live locally, as well students utilising the surrounding education institutions. This results in excessive parking demand throughout the day.

Compared to the city centre residential areas these outer areas only generally benefit from historic on-street parking provision.

“Areas such as the Lower Malone, Stranmillis and College Park Avenue / Rugby Road also experience issues from people who work and therefore park in the area but who do not live locally, as well students who live in the area but in dwellings that have multiple occupants. This results in excessive parking demand throughout the day.”

This means that when space is occupied by workers or students, local residents find it difficult to park outside or near to their houses. Parking is also at a premium for local businesses in these areas. There is also reason to believe that commuters are travelling into these areas from further afield and then getting the bus or walking into the city centre.

These largely residential areas, in addition to those within the city centre, have been subject to consideration for Residents Parking Schemes in the recent past. Residents Parking Schemes assign on-street spaces to residents and local businesses by way of a permit, thereby preventing use of the space by non-residents and businesses outside the area.

However, none of the Belfast schemes have been implemented to date. It is considered that in the absence of such schemes, these issues will remain and there is reason to believe that as the city grows the problem will intensify and expand to other areas.

2.3.10 Park and Ride

Parking on or adjacent to the major radial routes into the city centre has received attention in part due to the implementation of the Quality Bus Corridors. On-street parking provision on the likes of the Ormeau Road and Newtownards Road is enforced by the use of Urban Clearways and bus lane operation restrictions during peak periods.

A large number of Park & Ride sites have been implemented in the last decade by Translink and DfI. These provide parking nodes for users to avail of bus and rail services into the city centre and include sites at Dundonald, Cairnshill and Sprucefield. Parking is free and users only pay for the cost of travel, thereby removing car traffic from radial routes and the city centre.

“...careful consideration of the comparative costs for users is required. This could be addressed in a number of ways... for example it could provide improved bus journey times through implementation of further priority measures, or if city centre parking is made less cost attractive this could attract users over to Park & Ride.”

However there are some disparities between the cost of onward public transport travel from these sites and the cost of city centre parking. If it is possible to park in the city centre for less than it would cost to take a bus from a Park & Ride site, users will be unlikely to make the switch. For example, users who currently make use of free on-street parking in city centre residential areas such as the Markets or who benefit from a cheap city centre PNR space or would, in either instance, be highly unlikely to start using Park & Ride.

Whilst DfI has developed a Park & Ride Strategy for the city, careful consideration of the comparative costs for users is required. This could be addressed in a number of ways rather than just making public transport fares cheaper; for example it could provide improved bus journey times through implementation of further priority measures, or if city centre parking is made less cost attractive this could attract users over to Park & Ride.

Similarly, some radial routes into the city centre such as Castlereagh Road do not benefit from significant Park & Ride provision, yet this could influence the proportion of car journeys made along this corridor.

2.3.11 Policy

Key relevant policy documents which have shaped, and will continue to shape transport, parking and planning policy include the following:

- Regional Development Strategy 2035;
- Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012;
- Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015;
- Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015;
- Belfast City Council Transport Policy;
- DOE Parking Standards;
- Belfast Air Quality Action Plan 2015 – 2020;
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland; and
- Planning Policy Statements (PPS3 and PPS13).

These policies, which the strategy aims to support, are typical of those implemented in many other UK and Ireland cities, and in relation to

“[Current] policies are typical of those implemented in many other UK and Ireland cities, and in relation to parking they are generally in accord and include concepts such as managing demand, reducing supply of all day parking, having parking controls and areas of restraint, and influencing parking behaviour.”

parking they are generally in accord and include concepts such as managing demand, reducing supply of all day parking, having parking controls and areas of restraint, and influencing parking behaviour.

Specific actions include reducing the supply and increasing the cost of commuter and long stay parking in Belfast city centre; reducing the reliance on the private car; introducing strategic Park & Ride sites at key locations; restraining the level of (PNR) parking provided for new city developments; introducing residents only parking schemes; cycle parking.

Of particular note is the Air Quality Action Plan which sets out measures to be implemented throughout Belfast to attain compliance of the nitrogen dioxide EU limit under a clear timetable. As such Belfast City Council identified four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) namely:

- M1 Westlink;
- Cromac St & Albertbridge Rd;
- Upper Newtownards Rd; and
- Ormeau Road.

As such it is noted that a number of car parks are located within or adjacent to these four areas. As traffic volumes and congestion have a direct bearing on air quality, the role that these car parks have on these individual areas should be of significant concern.

The Parking Standards applied to new developments also have a significant bearing on the level of parking provided. Whilst on the whole the current policy is similar to that employed in many other UK and Ireland cities, the standards applied within areas of parking restraint are generic and not specific to the development type. This means that in some instances the level of parking required in the standards is not actually suitable for the development being planned. Therefore adding greater clarity to the parking standards could result in more appropriate levels of parking associated with new developments.

3 Key Issues and Challenges

3.1 Key Issues

The baseline review has indicated that there is sufficient parking stock in Belfast and this should be maintained and closely monitored. There are 28,300 spaces publicly available (45% on street and 55% off street) and demand indicates a requirement for 18,000 on average per day in Belfast. The Council has responsibility for 17 of the 59 off street car parks containing 1,476 parking spaces. The number of car parking spaces provided in Belfast is considered to be high compared to other cities of similar size.

Whilst there is currently sufficient parking stock in terms of overall spaces the provision is fragmented and imbalanced across the city centre. The current location of car parking spaces, particularly surface car parking, is not necessarily aligned to either existing nodes of demand or to future redevelopment proposals, particularly in the context of the City Centre Regeneration Strategy. The provision and location of parking should reflect the changing shape of regeneration across the city.

There is a high level of all day commuter parking in specific areas of the core city centre area that is inappropriate. This reduces the amount of short stay opportunities for shoppers, business meetings and other visitors.

There is a high level of private non-residential parking (10,422 spaces) provided in the core and fringe city area which encourages the use of the private car as the mode of transport. This is generally free car parking provided to employees as part of public and private office developments.

The review has found that parking tariffs in Belfast are comparable with cities such as Newcastle and Nottingham, but generally cheaper than cities such as Manchester, Dublin and Cardiff. Council site tariffs were found to be generally lower than those in adjacent private sites.

There is a lack of information for visitors as to where available parking is located resulting in circulating traffic looking for available spaces contributing to congestion in the city which could be more efficiently managed. Site audits have identified that some car parks are of low quality in terms of facilities and provision for users which leads to security and crime issues impacting on parking behaviour in the city.

Commuter parking in city centre residential areas is a known issue and individual Residents Parking Schemes have been developed by DFI, however to date none of these schemes have been implemented.

There are a number of low quality surface car parking sites in the city centre where consideration should be given to maximising their wider regeneration potential particularly in the context of the City Centre Regeneration Strategy and redevelopment proposals. Consolidation of existing parking or alternative provision could potentially be facilitated as part of any new development or consideration given to the provision of new multi storey/underground car parks. This would allow better use of valuable city centre land and bring wider economic and regeneration benefits, as well concentrating traffic movements to fewer parking sites.

Parking is not seen as a major decision factor by investors, particularly as other cities do not have significant city centre parking although it was noted that many other cities have a range of alternative sustainable transport options.

Potential solutions that could be implemented through the introduction of new technology include more efficient enforcement, development of a Belfast parking website and app, improving parking information as you approach the city (city wide Intelligent Transport System, innovative wayfinding and upgrading payment methods).

Accessible parking in Belfast City Centre is limited in comparison to the number of standard spaces available. Blue badge holders can park for free on street if the blue badge is on clear display. A review of the existing provision of accessible parking has indicated that Blue Badge provision could also be considered within Belfast City Council off street car parks.

Issues of parking in some district centres outside the city centre has been raised in particular the use of free car parks for all day commuter parking in areas such as East Belfast.

The progression and promotion of sustainable travel options should also be considered in parallel including further Park and Ride facilities on both radial and high frequency public transport corridors; enhancement of the quality and volume of cycle infrastructure and parking; improved taxi facilities and coach parking and the development of the Belfast Transport Hub and the Belfast Rapid Transit system. Belfast has recently had success in relation to cycling with the introduction of Belfast Bikes aiming to provide low cost and accessible travel throughout the City. Usage is increasing and additional docking station locations are currently being developed, however improved parking opportunities and knowledge of their location hinders usage throughout the City.

There is an immediate need to look at setting up a city centre coach park. It is one of the key elements of the city's tourism infrastructure that is missing and would fit very well within BCC's current city regeneration plans.

Although positive steps have been taken to address the environmental issues caused by vehicle traffic in the City, some areas still experience issues. The Council currently has four Air Quality Management Areas and has noted reductions in some pollutants, however parking activity in these areas may be contributing to the issues.

3.2 Challenges and Opportunities

Major Masterplans, regeneration projects, highways schemes, planning applications and development proposals have been considered in terms of loss/gain of parking provision within the city. Despite possible forthcoming losses of parking provision (i.e. over 1,000 spaces overall across the city), these projects will add to the overall attractiveness of the city. They will also change the use of some current surface parking sites to more appropriate uses.

Development proposals do include additional parking, largely in the form of multi-storeys which will be publically available (i.e. around 2,000 spaces), however it should be noted that this will primarily accommodate the additional traffic generated by these developments.

In particular it is anticipated that there will be a net loss of provision in the north of the city centre due to a number of development and transport scheme proposals in that area. These will result in the loss of around 850 existing spaces however this could be compensated to some extent by provision of around 1,390 spaces, although these will primarily serve development. Ulster University is relocating to the northern side of the city centre which will cause an influx of students to the city therefore consideration should be given to the impact on parking and public transport. The opportunity exists to influence travel behaviour at the onset, away from private car use and parking via further investment and upgrade to existing public transport facilities in that area.

It has also been identified that electric vehicle (EV) use is increasing in Northern Ireland and additional charging points could assist in wider EV uptake, with associated air quality benefits arising as a result.

The need for Residents Parking Schemes is evident however their delivery has stalled. While there are still intentions to implement these schemes, it is clear that a revised approach is needed in order to gain stakeholder support. This needs to consider a number of factors and leadership is required on all sides.

The upgrade of Great Victoria Street Station as part of the £120m Belfast Transport Hub proposals will provide additional services for both bus and rail travel in the city, making the use of other modes to travel more attractive and therefore encouraging the use of more sustainable transport modes other than the private car.

The implementation of the £98.5m Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) system, which is a new bus-based public transport service will help to address the current and future transport needs in Belfast and support sustainable economic growth and regeneration. BRT will provide a modern, safe, efficient and high quality service which will encourage people to travel by public transport. It will help to integrate communities and link people to jobs, shops, leisure, health and education services.

The BRT network will initially include three rapid transit routes, which will link East Belfast, West Belfast and Titanic Quarter via the city centre. Construction of the BRT infrastructure commenced in 2014 and should be complete by 2018.

DfI recently published their Bicycle Strategy which seeks to transform cycling in Northern Ireland over the next 25 years. Its three pillar approach seeks to build a comprehensive bicycle network, support people who choose to cycle and promote the bicycle as a mode of transport for every day journeys. An integral element of the delivery of the bicycle network is cycle parking, and surveys have shown that public awareness of bike routes and parking is currently low, particularly amongst local residents. The opportunity therefore exists to assist with delivery of this key element of the Bicycle Strategy and increase cycling levels amongst the resident population.

4 Objectives

4.1 Vision

Our vision for this strategy is as follows:

“Belfast is a city offering sufficient, high quality and appropriately located parking which supports economic development and regeneration within the city by balancing the requirements of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors.”

To enable this to happen, a number of objectives have been developed that the strategy should meet. These are based on the wider aspirations and goals of Belfast City Council and also follow the analysis of the issues and challenges identified and discussed in the previous two chapters.

4.2 Objective 1

Ensuring appropriate provision and location of car parking to support and improve the economic vitality of the City Centre and district centres

The appropriate level of parking within the city has a crucial part to play in its economic vitality. However, an overabundance of parking will add to the current traffic congestion problems, which will detract from the attractiveness of the city from an investment perspective as well as being detrimental to the urban environment.

The location of parking also has a crucial part to play. One large multi-storey parking site performing the same function of four or five small surface sites is a better use of valuable city centre land and more efficient in terms of traffic movements and it also frees up those surface sites for regeneration and development.

Council priorities

- Review current provision to ensure an appropriate provision in the right location to support economic vitality.
- Consider how optimal use can be made of surface car parks to best support city centre regeneration in terms of alignment of provision with re-development and maximising valuable city centre land to deliver on wider regeneration outcomes.
- Identify opportunities to consolidate existing parking or alternative provision as an integral part of new development and consider provision of new multi storey /underground car parks where appropriate. Adjacent local communities will be consulted on location and design.

4.3 Objective 2

Ensuring car parking provision encourages sustainable commuter travel, especially for journeys into the City Centre and supports access by public transport, cycling and walking

Parking availability, cost and ease of use have a direct impact on people's choice of mode of transport and therefore there is potential to cause traffic congestion and to undermine the viability of sustainable transport options. The level of parking provision is therefore a key demand management tool, as managing the amount of parking provides a form of restraint that can help to limit traffic levels and also strongly influence modal shift.

Council priorities

- Work with stakeholders to consider how parking tariffs in the city centre core can be reviewed to ensure sufficient short-stay parking facilities to support commercial and leisure activities and deter long stay commuter parking.
- Work with stakeholders to develop and improve the sustainable transport modes for travel to and within the city, in particular to deter all day commuter parking.

4.4 Objective 3

Minimising the potentially negative impacts of parking on residential communities in the city particularly in inner city areas

Commuters use inner city residential areas in Belfast to park in order to avail of effectively free parking facilities within walking distance of a workplace. This has negative effects on residential communities in terms of accessibility to residents' homes, area safety and access for services e.g. ambulances. These latter schemes have been investigated throughout the city but none have been implemented to date. A review of criteria for implementation, scheme design, operational times and community support should be considered in order to increase the potential for delivery.

Council priorities

- Work with DfI and local communities to consider parking management for these areas, either through the implementation of on-street parking regimes or Residents Parking Schemes.
- Identify surface car park sites suitable for consolidation and redevelopment in order to improve the built environment for inner city areas.

4.5 Objective 4

Work with stakeholders to improve the quality of parking and information available, ideally through technology and in particular develop a new parking signage and information system that supports parking and wider applications

The provision of high quality and safe car parks is an important element as it is often the first impression for visitors to the city. Better provision in terms of parking information and quality should be sought and importantly the need to ensure parking is sufficiently attractive to those with limited mobility or with families.

Council priorities

- Bring forward technological solutions to make it easier to navigate and park in the City Centre.
- Work with key stakeholders to ensure that key destinations have appropriate levels of disabled parking and family friendly provision.
- Encourage car park operators to invest in their facilities to the extent that they will achieve the Park Mark standard.
- Reduce supply of poor quality surface level space and replace with higher quality well-managed space.

4.6 Complementary Objectives

There are also a further three complementary objectives:

- C1. Promote sustainable commuter travel, especially for journeys into the City Centre and support access by public transport, cycling and walking**
- C2. Identify opportunities to provide secure bicycle and coach parking in appropriate city centre locations**

C3. Ensuring appropriate provision for taxis within the city centre

5 The Strategy

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a high level overview of the key features of the strategy that are priorities for the Council. Specific actions are then detailed in Chapter 6, including those associated with the complementary objectives.

5.2 Parking Provision

Parking provision has a significant impact on economic vitality and should also not encourage less sustainable commuter travel. The strategy addresses three broad areas in relation to parking provision within the city:

i. Parking Supply:

- a. The current level of city centre parking supply will be maintained in order to provide opportunities for short stay parking, however demand will be regularly monitored.
- b. All on-street parking in the city centre core should become restricted.
- c. City centre surface parking sites should be redeveloped for other uses and parking acts migrated into multi-storey sites located alongside the Inner Ring.
- d. New car parks within the city will only be provided where they replace existing spaces or where they are an essential part of new development proposals.
- e. Parking standards for new development across the city should not encourage car commuting and the associated overspill onto neighbouring streets.
- f. The amount of private non-residential (PNR) parking provided across the city will be more tightly controlled in order to influence traffic demand in the city centre
- g. Parking initiatives to promote the evening economy and provision to cater for overnight/weekend visitors to hotels.

ii. Parking Location:

- a. Long stay parking should only occur in off-street sites away from central areas of the city centre, on the edge of the Inner Ring.
- b. Central areas should only be used for short stay parking.
- c. On-street parking should only be used for short stay parking and for those with Blue Badges.

iii. Parking Price:

- a. Tariffs for on and off-street parking should be reviewed, including consideration of variable pricing.
- b. Pricing should reflect the desirability of central areas.
- c. Long stay parking in suburban areas should be charged in order to increase turnover and maintain space for local activities.
- d. Pricing should encourage space turnover in desirable areas.
- e. Parking cost should be comparable with other transport options such as public transport.

5.3 Residential Communities

The need to support the city's residential communities through parking interventions is also an important objective. As part of the strategy, a review of criteria for implementation, scheme design, operational times and community support should be considered in order to increase the potential for delivery.

The Council will work with the relevant agencies and stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of residents parking schemes within applicable areas of the city centre.

5.4 Parking Information and Quality

In order to improve the quality of parking and information available, the strategy will address the following:

- Investigate options for utilising technology to improve ticketing and payment systems.
- Provide more information for visitors via electronic media including a dedicated website and app.
- Assess the feasibility of an integrated signage system for the city centre and wayfinding for individual areas.
- Look to integrate parking payment and management technologies with information systems within a single comprehensive city wide system.
- Raise the standard of parking facilities, including those with families or limited mobility.
- Encourage car park operators to invest in their facilities so that they can achieve the Park Mark standard.

6 Strategy Actions

This chapter identifies specific actions and measures that will underpin the strategy and support each of the objectives. The actions are those that are priorities for Belfast City Council, although some of the actions themselves rely on delivery by and cooperation from other stakeholders. A further set of complementary measures are identified in section 6.4, and these are to be considered by other stakeholders.

6.1 Parking Provision

6.1.1 On-Street

In terms of on-street spaces, within the city centre core, there are still a number of locations where un-controlled parking remains (in fact there are still more uncontrolled than controlled spaces). While responsibility for on-street parking still lies with DfI, the Council will work with this organisation to seek to achieve delivery of the following actions.

All on-street parking spaces within the core should become controlled, either through the implementation of parking regimes or residents parking schemes. This will help to remove the bulk of all day parking from these areas and open up space for short term parking. It will also help to rebalance demand across the city centre.

Within the city centre fringe, parking studies should be undertaken to assess whether a form of parking restriction is required in each of the four sub-zones.

Furthermore, tariffs for on-street parking could be examined at a more strategic level. It is apparent that parking costs within Belfast are competitive compared to other similar sized cities, and the premium nature of on-street spaces should be reflected in the cost.

For example, charges could be based on the distance from City Hall, with an increasing cost based on proximity. This would ensure that turnover of the most valuable spaces would increase and the increased costs would deter users who might want to feed the meter.

It is apparent that there is particularly high demand for charged on-street spaces in the south core area (Linenhall Quarter). Consideration of tariffs in this key business district should be heavily biased towards short stay parking in order to free up spaces for others.

Variable pricing should also be examined in order to influence parking demand at key times of the day or year. Similarly the operational hours of on-street spaces should be reviewed with a view to achieving a better match with demand. For example this could mean lowering tariffs during late afternoon hours in order to stimulate the evening economy (most on-street and BCC sites are free after 6pm anyway).

The ticketing and payment systems should be reviewed to assess whether further investments could improve revenue raising. This would be in addition to the current provision delivered via 'parkmobile' for DfI on-street and BCC off-street sites.

For example, a cashless and ticketless payment system could result in improved revenue taking and reduced waste. Users would purchase their parking act via phone or mobile app and provide their location and vehicle registration number. This could facilitate more targeted enforcement by enabling officers to only target those vehicles with registration numbers that the system was telling them had overstayed their time limits.

Similarly, parking bay monitors are a more efficient way of managing high demand spaces. They detect when a vehicle is parked in an individual bay and can alert the parking provider when the parking act has extended beyond its time limit. This means that instances of 'feeding the meter' can be reduced and it also means the enforcement can be more targeted. As such, **DfI should consider a pilot of parking bay monitoring for the areas of highest on-street demand i.e. Linen Quarter** as this is the type of area that is most likely to justify any such investment.

Free on-street parking for Blue Badge holders should remain. As such, these should be the only 'long stay' parkers parking on-street. Providing free parking for blue badge holders in off-street car parks is discussed in the next section.

The actions are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 – On-Street Actions

No.	On-Street Action	Meets Objective(s)
1	Extend controlled on-street parking spaces within the core. DfI to undertake parking studies within the city centre fringe in consultation with the council.	1 2 3
2	Tariffs for on-street parking to be examined at a more strategic level	1
3	Variable pricing to be examined	1
4	Review of ticketing and payment systems	1 4
5	DfI to consider a pilot of on-street bay monitoring	1 4
6	Free on-street parking for Blue Badge holders to remain	1
7.	Improved enforcement to reduce inappropriate parking such as pavement parking	1 3

6.1.2 Off-Street – Public Parking

It is evident from parking surveys over the last few years that, while some individual car parks operate at capacity, there is ample spare capacity in the overall provision.

More recent surveys have indicated a slight increase in parking demand in the last couple of years, and this may continue however the historic trend has been flat. It is apparent that there are key areas where charged on-street demand is high and at capacity. On-street users who are parking for significant durations need to be encouraged, where possible, to move to off-street sites in order to free up capacity.

Future proposals also need to be factored in. These include the impacts of the closure of some car parks due to development, transport schemes and regeneration initiatives. The extension of charged on-street parking areas within the CPZ in tandem with the implementation of Residents Parking Schemes in the city centre core, fringe and also in areas of South Belfast could result in commuters relocating their parking acts into the city centre.

Whilst the opportunity is evident for these users to switch to more sustainable transport, Northern Ireland has traditionally been highly car dependent and the increasing proportion of jobs that Belfast offers in relation to the rest of the country may see an increase in parking demand. Other localised factors such as the relocation of Ulster University to the north of the city centre need to be factored in. A seemingly high proportion of local university students nowadays live at home while studying and therefore have to travel to campus on a daily basis.

As such it is proposed that the current parking stock is maintained, although with demand levels regularly monitored.

As the development market continues to improve, individual surface sites (in both private and public ownership) may become available for development, and these will be considered on a case by case basis to determine the impact on the overall parking stock.

It is clear that the overall parking experience needs to improve for users. Four out of five car parks in Belfast are surface car parks which offer very limited capacity and a lower quality experience than multi-storey car parks (MSCPs). In comparison with many other cities, the majority of Belfast's current MSCPs are modern. They also represent a good use of city centre space in terms of the number of spaces they provide for their area.

There should therefore be a shift away from surface car parking into multi-storeys. There are currently 14 MSCPs in the city centre compared to 45 surface sites. The vast majority of these surface sites, irrespective of individual ownership, represent development opportunities. Most of the MSCPs are already located on or near to the Inner Ring; however there are some gaps in provision in certain areas such as the north of the city at North St and Donegall St; in the south-east at Cromac St and Ormeau Rd. These areas already experience parking demand or will soon experience more of it due to forthcoming development. There are already plans in the pipeline for additional MSCPs in certain locations, however these will be constructed to accommodate a mix of development and non-development associated parking.

It is therefore recommended that additional MSCPs are provided to complete the 'ring' of sites around the Inner Ring. These should only be provided when a number of adjacent surface sites are closed. It is evident that large additional capacity is not needed from a demand perspective, therefore providing additional MSCPs is for strategic rather than demand based reasoning. This will 'mop up' these individual areas and concentrate traffic movements to fewer parking sites. It will also free up these surface sites for development. Parkers using these MSCPs will be able to make the short walk or cycle into the city core.

The individual BCC car parks should be gradually 'migrated' to these MSCPs as opportunities arise, however the Council should seek to maintain a level of influence in the patterns of usage at these MSCPs.

MSCPs located on the main radial routes will catch traffic before it enters the city core, after which users can walk or hire a bicycle through to their destination. This reinforces the area within the Inner Ring as being considered to be the 'walking zone'. As this understanding develops, perceptions will change and there will be gradual acceptance that the core is primarily for people rather than for parking.

The selection of individual MSCP locations will require careful consideration in order to avoid any detrimental impacts on air quality within the vicinity and impact on the local residents areas. However, advocating that surface car parks are eventually rationalised into MSCPs should result in reduced traffic volumes from fewer circulating vehicles. This will have benefits of reducing air pollution and improving road safety, particularly in those areas that are within AQMAs.

Furthermore the freeing up of city centre space for other use offers the potential to further 'green' the city and make it more liveable and walkable. The removal of unsightly swathes of surface parking will improve the feel of individual areas and encourage activity, permeability and footfall.

To add to the overall quality of the parking offer and thereby increase the willingness of users to pay, **BCC should encourage car park operators to invest in their facilities to the extent that they will achieve the Park Mark standard.** This will include examining how car parks can be improved to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and should also consider how provision can be improved for disabled users and parents with children. This will include increasing the number of dedicated spaces set aside for disabled users and families.

As a minimum, this will be expected to be achieved for all 14 MSCPs in order to enhance attractiveness. Given the gradual shift away from surface car park use to MSCP sites, operators should be able to see the value in such investment.

It is acknowledged that migrating parking out towards the Inner Ring would result in greater walk distances to key shopping and employment areas. While the intention is that this would provide health benefits for car park patrons, it is acknowledged that some users may have more limited mobility such as parents with young children. To address this, **an Inner Ring Shuttle Bus could be considered with Translink which would connect all of the Inner Ring MSCPs and the main shopping and employment areas.**

This would operate at a high frequency and short journey time throughout the day and be free for car park users on presentation of a valid ticket. The costs for this service would be met by the participating car park operators who would see the added value that it would bring. The service could also connect into city centre transport hubs such as Europa and Great Victoria St in order to promote public transport use.

Key to the delivery and management of parking across the city centre is the dialogue and cooperation of car park operators. While the vast majority of parking is provided by the private sector, there needs to be acknowledgement that parking requires careful management. For example, reducing parking prices could just encourage traffic back into the city centre and therefore add to congestion.

For this reason it is recommended that a Parking Forum is developed which will include stakeholders from both the private and public sector. This will help to ensure a partnership approach to parking and achieve consensus as part of the overall transportation strategy for the city.

As BCC has a stake in off-street parking, participation in the Parking Forum will ensure that influence can still be exercised with regards parking pricing, as well as ensuring an increased likelihood of delivery of the actions detailed in this parking strategy.

Collaboration within the Forum will result in greater clarity and information for users, encourage compliance with planning conditions, raise standards and manage parking prices.

A key action of the Parking Forum could be the development of a parking 'app' which could encompass all off-street parking sites within the city centre. Building on the popularity of existing apps such as 'parkmobile' (which is already in use at various sites), the dedicated city parking app could include information on the location of car parks (including Park & Ride sites), their typical occupancies at certain times of the day and their costs. This would provide information at the fingertips of users, enabling them to decide before they start their journey on where they would like to park. The system could also be used to pre-book and pay electronically for parking, increasing user confidence about parking availability.

This app should be developed through a public-private sector partnership and could utilise local software development expertise. The app could then be marketed widely, enabling tourists to make use of it as they plan their trip to the city. Some parking apps include GPS routing to individual sites, thereby wastage mileage while users try to find a site, and this could also be included subject to users obeying traffic laws regarding mobile phone use while driving.

Private sector parking providers should be encouraged to consider investing in parking technology. For example, CCTV camera systems at the entrance to car parks can be used to record vehicle number plates on entry and exit, with the parking fee then drawn down directly from the user's online account. This would provide efficiencies in terms of back office systems and provide a better service for customers.

The potential to extend free parking for Blue Badge holders to off-street sites was recently considered by DfI however with the transfer of these sites to local councils it was recommended that councils take this matter forward. **As such the extension of free parking for Blue Badge holders to off-street sites should be considered by the Council** in order to weigh up the potential impacts.

6.1.3 Off-Street – Parking for Development

The level of PNR parking within the city centre is considered to undo many of the efforts being made to promote sustainable transport and the mass movement of people into and out of the city. If users can avail of free or cheap work-based city centre parking, they will inevitably continue to commute by car.

Whilst the level of PNR provision between older and newer developments has gradually declined as a result of planning policy, there still remains extensive provision. Some of this is provided by public sector bodies, yet this goes against broad government policy which seeks to reduce the dependence on the private car. **Government and local authority bodies should therefore lead by example and seek to remove PNR spaces or charge users for use of the PNR spaces that they provide.**

This will encourage users to consider other modes or parking opportunities, resulting in benefits to the city in terms of reduced congestion and therefore improved economic vitality. It is apparent from consultation that the provision of city centre parking for employees is not a critical factor in foreign direct investment decision making.

The level of contract parking offered by some existing city centre parking operators is over and above that stipulated within development planning conditions and the **enforcement of these conditions needs to be improved** in order to manage parking demand.

Whilst the level of parking stipulated for new development within the current Parking Standards is broadly in line with that requested in other UK and Ireland cities, **it is recommended that the current Parking Standards for development within areas of parking restraint should be re-examined in order to provide greater clarity by development type.**

Table 2 lists the Off-Street actions for public parking and that provided for development.

Table 2 – Off-Street Actions for Public and Private Parking

No.	Off-Street Public and Private Parking Action	Meets Objective(s)
7	Maintain current parking stock, although with demand levels regularly monitored	1 2
8	Additional MSCPs are provided to complete the 'ring' of sites around the Inner Ring. These should only be provided when a number of adjacent surface sites are closed	1
9	BCC should encourage car park operators to invest in their facilities to the extent that they will achieve the Park Mark standard and improves spaces available for disabled and family parking	4
10	Inner Ring Shuttle Bus to connect all of the Inner Ring MSCPs and the main shopping and employment areas should be considered in consultation with Translink	1 2 4
11	Establish a Parking Forum	1 2
12	Development of city parking app	1 4
13	Private sector parking providers should be encouraged to consider investing in parking technology	1

No.	Off-Street Public and Private Parking Action	Meets Objective(s)
		4
14	Extension of free parking for Blue Badge holders to off-street sites should be considered	1 4
15	Government and local authority bodies reduce or remove PNR space or charge for use	2
16	Enforcement action against car parks operating outside their planning conditions to be improved	2
17	Parking Standards to be re-examined by development type	2

6.1.4 Off-Street – BCC sites

6.1.4.1 City Centre

Whilst all of BCC's 17 city centre car parks are surface car parks, recent surveys have shown that they are well used on the whole; indeed only three sites show peak time occupancy of less than 80%. The parking costs at these sites are generally lower than adjacent private sites and there is therefore the opportunity to re-examine the tariffs at each site. BCC has recently invested in re-surfacing and provided disabled parking and family friendly provision in some of these sites, therefore localised demand may increase in the short term.

Similarly some of the car parks have a high proportion of all day parkers despite their close proximity to central areas. This means that there is a lack of parking space for those who need to make shorter visits. **The tariffs and permitted parking durations at these sites should be re-examined to relocate long stay parkers to areas further out.** This will ensure that the most desirable car parks return the highest revenues and will encourage the 'walking city' approach whereby all day parkers can park on the edge and either walk or cycle into central areas.

Season tickets can currently be purchased at seven of the BCC operated city centre car parks, although the majority of these sites are on the edge of the city core. **However BCC could potentially remove the season ticket provision at the Cromac St site in order to further discourage long stay parking in this area.**

Some of the BCC car parks may be removed as part of upcoming schemes. These include the likes of Corporation St, Frederick St, Dunbar St, Station St and Bankmore St. Provision in BCC's city centre car parks totals under 1,500 spaces and given historical observations it is considered that demand for these sites can be accommodated by adjacent car parks (particularly MSCPs) and through the delivery of additional MSCPs where the case is strong.

In the meantime it is proposed that all other BCC city centre car parks remain operational, although with a view to being incorporated and replaced by MSCP provision. In most towns and cities, local authorities provide a degree of parking themselves (either directly or via sub-contracts) and this helps to maintain influence within the market. Parking strategy guidance recommends that local authorities should seek to have increasing (rather than decreasing) influence over parking within their jurisdictions, as this assists wider aims for the overall transportation system such as promoting public transport use.

This action will maintain BCC's stake in parking and permit a level of influence that would diminish if all sites were disposed of. This will help to ensure that the objectives for the city's multi-modal transportation system are not compromised.

This will be on the proviso that each of the individual BCC car parks at least cover their costs and perform a strategic parking function. Demand and revenues will be monitored at individual sites and if it becomes apparent that some sites are unviable and there are nearby opportunities for MSCP provision then disposal should be considered in order to realise development and regeneration opportunities.

In the north-west of the city centre, the Little Donegall St, Kent St and Smithfield sites could be subsumed within nearby existing MSCP (Castle Court, City Car Park) creating new provision if required. Similarly in the south-west, the Hope St and Little Victoria St sites could be considered in the same way given current MSCP provision at Dublin Rd and Great Northern Car Park.

In the north/north-east, the Lancaster St, Corporation Square and Exchange St sites and other privately operated sites could be considered collectively. The general level of activity in this northern area will increase which may require additional MSCP provision over what is currently provided (St Anne's and Tomb St), particularly around the North St and Donegall St area, however this will be agreed according to planning department requirements. It should also be noted that the assessment of development proposals in this area to date have not assumed the closure of BCC's car park sites.

The area to the south-east, on the approach from Ormeau Rd is considered to be a MSCP 'gap' which could subsume the Charlotte St and Cromac St sites and other privately operated surface sites.

It is acknowledged that BCC cannot decide on how privately operated surface sites are taken forward however through engagement with stakeholders there is potential to achieve buy in on more strategic objectives that will further promote the economic vitality of the city centre.

6.1.4.2 Outside of the City Centre

BCC parking sites outside of the city centre are predominantly free. There is high occupancy of these sites with a significant number of all-day parkers. If capacity is to be managed, this level of all day parking needs to be reduced.

This would free up spaces for people making short trips to the area for shopping, leisure, or business/ personal reasons. **As such it is proposed that parking remains free in all sites for up to two hours. After this a modest charge per hour would apply in all 14 car parks except for Shaw's Bridge which does not show any degree of all day parkers as it is primarily for leisure use.**

This will ensure that the running costs of the car parks can be recouped and will ensure the ongoing vitality of these local areas. It is acknowledged however that such action could cause the relocation of all day parking to adjacent residential streets; **therefore a comprehensive plan for these areas should be developed in collaboration with DfI before implementation of this regime.**

Table 3 lists the Off-Street actions for the BCC sites.

Table 3 – Off-Street Actions – BCC sites

No.	Off-Street BCC Site Action	Meets Objective(s)
18	Re-examine tariffs and permitted parking durations at all sites	1 2
19	Remove season ticket provision at certain sites (i.e. Cromac St)	1 2
20	Retain all BCC sites but with a view to incorporation within MSCP provision	1
21	Introduce a modest charge after two hours at all non city centre BCC sites apart from Shaw's Bridge. Parking to remain free for up to two hours.	1 3
22	Consider impact of above on adjacent areas and develop plan prior to implementation.	1 3

6.2 Parking in Residential Areas

The Council recognises that numerous inner city residential communities are affected by commuter parking. Commuters' consideration of pricing and car park location are key factors in their decision to avail of free parking areas in residential communities. Providing residents parking schemes in city centre areas and adjacent to arterial routes would alleviate significant commuter parking issues which currently deny local residents parking opportunities at their properties. It would also assist with wider integration with the aims of the city's multi-modal transportation system.

Although residents parking schemes have been considered for various city residential communities consensus was not reached on various aspects of the proposals including appropriate permit considerations and availability. BCC in principle supports the implementation of residents parking schemes and acknowledges that further work is required to achieve consensus.

It is important to note that in both consultations the majority of residents felt commuter parking was an issue that should be addressed through residents parking schemes. Previous consultations regarding the schemes were initially unsuccessful due largely to the cost of a Residents Permit and also the limitations of Visitors Permits. Enforcement of permits and schemes were also considered to be key to success. It was also found that different issues were pertinent in different areas.

Therefore the Council will work with local communities and stakeholders to help facilitate delivery of residents parking schemes in the near future that are specific to the areas of concern.

Table 4 lists the Parking in Residential Areas actions.

Table 4 – Parking in Residential Areas Actions

No.	Parking in Residential Areas Action	Meets Objective(s)
23	Support DFI to deliver Residents Parking Schemes in specific areas of city	3

6.3 Parking Information

The clear disparity between the perceived and actual level of parking supply needs to be overcome. This strategy has given clear evidence for this; however the public's perception that space is at a premium needs to be changed.

This can be achieved by raising the awareness of wider parking opportunities within the city. This should also include notification of other transport modes available. Far more can be achieved nowadays with the likes of electronic media and **it is recommended that in addition to the parking app, a dedicated parking website for the city is provided and linked to social media.**

The website will raise wider awareness of parking and tackle the perception that parking spaces are hard to find. Car Park Operators could contribute to the provision of this system as part of their involvement in the Parking Forum.

The city centre still lacks an integrated signage system, and **it is recommended that the feasibility of implementing such an integrated signage system should be investigated.** This should include consideration of the specification required, the technology currently available as well as procurement and running costs.

However there is the opportunity to provide a similar level of information in the digital sphere, and as vehicle technology progresses there may be the opportunity to provide in-car information and guidance systems. As such this would negate the traditional large costs associated with signage infrastructure and the associated management systems. **Therefore the feasibility of integrating parking payment and management technologies with information systems within a single comprehensive city wide system should be examined.**

It is also recommended that a wayfinding signage scheme is developed for individual areas of the city centre. This could comprise colour-coded fixed plate signage which directs users to parking areas within the likes of the Cathedral or Linenhall Quarters. This would lead users straight to these areas, thereby boosting these local economies. It would also provide better information for users seeking to park in the early evening or attending one off events in these areas, and include signage along cycle routes.

Table 5 lists the Parking Information actions

Table 5 – Parking Information Actions

No.	Parking Information Action	Meets Objective(s)
24	Dedicated Parking Website for city	4
25	Investigate an Integrated Signage System	1 4
26	Investigate integrating parking payment, management technologies and information systems in a city wide system	4
27	Wayfinding signage scheme for individual areas of city centre, including cycling routes	4

6.4 Complementary Actions

This section details the range of actions which have a complementary role within the parking strategy. These are considered complementary because they are either (1) indirectly associated with parking per se, or (2) are not distinct priorities for BCC themselves yet they may assist in the overall delivery of the parking strategy. As such they would be dependent on agencies and organisations other than BCC such as DfI, Translink and car park operators.

It is acknowledged that in some instances there is significant overlap between the agencies responsible for delivering these actions. Also, the organisation responsible for developing or financing a particular action may not be ultimately responsible for the day to day delivery or operation of it.

6.4.1 Promoting sustainable commuter travel

The provision of a new rail halt at Gamble Street in the north of the city centre would reduce parking pressures in that area via modal shift. This would be particularly important given the ongoing university relocation and adjacent new development. As well as providing a convenient access point for education and work trips, the new halt would also provide convenient access to the likes of the Cathedral Quarter.

The provision of new Park & Ride sites would reduce the amount of traffic entering the city centre and parking. A high level analysis has identified a number of locations where there are gaps in the Park & Ride offer, and these could include:

- Park & Ride sites earmarked within BMTP but not yet implemented
- Additional Park & Ride on Belfast radials e.g. Castlereagh Road
- Additional Park & Ride on M2 & M5 Corridor

Improve parking at train stations (including for cycles) makes the train more attractive to use thereby reducing parking pressure in city centre. A lot of investment in train station parking has been made in the past few years and this has proved popular, however further provision will be required as the city's attractiveness grows.

Minimising traffic in the BMTP core Reclaims core for sustainable modes, congestion and pollution benefits. Parking relocated to outer areas, closing of streets, removal of parking spaces, triggers regeneration.

6.4.2 Coach and Cycle Parking

A number of potential city centre coach parking sites that have been considered by various parties to date. Such a site should be located sufficiently close to the city centre, yet away from areas of high crime. **It is recommended that further work is carried out to confirm the preferred location of site and that it is provided as a matter of urgency.** This should include consideration of associated provision for tour operators such as coach parking maps.

Many of the Belfast Bike docking stations are within walking distance of city centre car parks. **The location of further docking stations will facilitate the gradual shift of off-street parking out towards the Inner Ring.** Coverage from the current 33 city centre docking stations is good however more opportunities may arise to provide additional stations at new MSCPs.

To further promote cycling BCC should investigate the feasibility of providing a Cycle Parking Hub, located within the core of the city centre. This should be located in a high visibility location and provide security for cyclists and biking equipment. Similar sites provided elsewhere offer ample parking provision; CCTV and on-site attendants and some even include free pushchair loans for parents.

BCC should also undertake a review of the level of cycle parking provided for new developments in order to maximise the potential for cycle use for a variety of land use types. BCC now have a planning role, and this should ensure that there is sufficient high quality cycle parking provided in order to encourage modal shift to and from workplaces, shops and leisure complexes.

6.4.3 Taxi parking provision

Parking for taxis needs to be examined citywide. Ranks should be located in appropriate locations, where there is sufficient space and near to where customers are. The Council will support efforts to provide suitable locations for taxi parking, acknowledging the competing demands for kerb space, in order to maintain the vitality of the city centre.

Table 6 lists the Coach and Cycle Parking actions.

Table 6 – Complementary Actions

No.	Complementary Actions	Meets Objective(s)
28	Gamble Street Halt	C1
29	New Park & Ride sites	C1
30	Improve parking at train stations (including for cycles)	C1
31	Minimising traffic in the BMTP core	C1
32	Review Park & Ride costs versus city centre parking charges	C1
33	Confirm location of off-street coach park and provide facility	C2
34	Provide additional Belfast Bikes docking stations associated with parking facilities	C2
35	Examine feasibility of a Cycle Parking Hub	C2
36	Review the level of cycle parking provided for new developments	C2
37	Examine taxi parking provision citywide	C3

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