

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

14th January, 2020

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Wednesday, 15th January, 2020 at 5.15 p.m., 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. Schedule of Special Meetings 2020 (Pages 1 - 2)
3. Presentations
 - (a) St. George's Market Development Plan
4. Restricted Items
 - (a) Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2020/21 (Pages 3 - 14)
5. Tourism, Events and International Relations
 - (a) Update on City Tourism Performance (Pages 15 - 18)

6. Growing Businesses and the Economy
 - (a) Social Enterprise and Co-operative Support (Pages 19 - 40)
7. Issues Raised in Advance by Members
 - (a) York Street Interchange Project (Councillor O'Hara to raise)
 - (b) Dogs on Public Transport - Response from Translink (Pages 41 - 44)



Subject:	Schedule of Special Meetings 2020
Date:	15th January, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer, ext. 6311
Contact Officer:	Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer, ext. 6311

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To advise the Committee of the dates of special meetings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee taking place during 2020.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to approve the following schedule of special meetings for 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday, 26th February • Monday, 30th March • Wednesday, 22nd April • Tuesday, 30th June • Tuesday, 29th September and • Wednesday, 21st October.

	In line with monthly meetings, it is proposed that these meetings should commence also at 5.15 p.m.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Committee will recall that it grants approval on a regular basis for organisations to attend future meetings to provide presentations on their work etc.
3.2	The Committee will recall also that it granted approval previously to schedule, where possible, an additional meeting each month to keep up-to-do-date with those presentations and had agreed that no other business would be considered at that meeting.
3.3	The special meetings set out above will only be held if required and will be cancelled in a timely manner if not needed.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.4	There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>
3.5	None
4.0	Documents Attached
	None

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Subject:	Update on City Tourism Performance
Date:	15th January, 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Senior Manager, Economy

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on city tourism performance and to provide details of Visit Belfast’s marketing, sales and visitor servicing activity to date.
1.2	The report also seeks authority for Visit Belfast to attend the Committee meeting in March to present its business plan and a request for financial support for the financial year 2020/21.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the contents of the report and the progress to date; and • agree to receive a presentation on Visit Belfast’s 2020-21 Business Plan at the Committee meeting in March 2020, including a request for Council support towards the work programme for the coming financial year.

3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	Members will be aware that Visit Belfast is the city’s Destination Marketing Management Organisation (DMMO) dedicated to marketing Belfast as a city break, conference, day-trip and cruise ship destination. It also, in its visitor servicing role, manages the operation of three gateway Visitor Information Centres (VICs) including Visit Belfast Welcome Centre, the Arrivals Desk at George Best Belfast City Airport and the Arrivals Desk at Belfast International Airport and a range of visitor servicing initiatives on behalf of Belfast City Council.
3.2	Visit Belfast represents over 500 tourism businesses and services across the tourism industry and its core purpose is to welcome and service visitors for Belfast and Northern Ireland in order to generate an economic benefit for the city, creating jobs and wealth.
3.3	The role of Visit Belfast is to drive visitor numbers and increase visitor spend. As a public-private partnership, it provides a singular delivery mechanism for co-ordinating marketing investment and market engagement for the city. The organisation has a portfolio of marketing, sales and visitor servicing activity across both leisure and business tourism.
3.4	2020-21 is the third year of Visit Belfast’s four-year operational strategy (2018-22). Over the course of the four year plan, the ambition is to deliver a cumulative 1.6m bed nights, welcome 953,000 cruise visitors, service 3.7m enquiries and attract £546m into the local economy. Visit Belfast is on target to achieve the key performance indicators set at this stage of the four-year strategy.
3.5	Visit Belfast’s strategy is a key part of our commitment to grow the visitor economy in Belfast and Northern Ireland and, in particular, in achieving the Belfast Agenda commitment to increase the value of out-of-state tourism to £500million and welcome 1.9m overnight stays by 2021.
3.6	City tourism continues to drive tourism on a global basis and Belfast continues to increasingly lift Northern Ireland tourism, contributing up to half of the NI visitor economy. Belfast continues to receive positive media and travel industry feedback – Conference and Incentive Travel Magazine voted Belfast their Best Events Destination for 2019 whilst Cruise Critic UK Editors’ Picks Awards named Belfast as their Best UK & British Isles Port of Call.

3.7	<p>Tourism, and in particular out-of-state tourism, has become a key economic driver for the city region, generating revenue and contributing to job growth. Private sector investment in hotel development saw a thousand hotel rooms come online in 2018, increasing hotel room capacity by almost a third and delivering the 5-year stretch target set in the Belfast Agenda.</p> <p>An overview of performance to date this year is set out below:</p> <p><u>Belfast Hotel Performance (January-October 2019)</u></p>
3.8	<p>Between January-October, room occupancy stood at 74.1%, down 5 percentage points on the same period of 2018. It is important to note that hotel room supply was 12.3% higher than in 2018 and as a result the volume of room sales increased by 6.7% year-on-year. August continues to be the peak month for hotel occupancy – with 85.7% of rooms occupied that month.</p> <p><u>Destination Interest and Visitor Servicing (January-October 2019)</u></p>
3.9	<p>Interest in Belfast as a destination of choice continues to rise. This is demonstrated by figures from Visit Belfast which show that their visitor servicing team handled 802,664 enquiries and welcomed 293,554 visitors through the doors in the period January-October. The profile of these visitors is broken down as 37% from Europe, 23% from GB, 21% NI, 6% North America, 9% Rest of the World and 4% from the Republic of Ireland. Visitor service support is also provided at core events in the city and beyond, most notably the 148th Open which was held at Royal Portrush in July.</p> <p><u>Cruise Belfast</u></p>
3.10	<p>The City welcomed unprecedented numbers of cruise ships this year. 146 ships arrived into Belfast Harbour, carrying an estimated number of 275,000 cruise visitors to the city, an increase of 46% from 2018. The economic benefit from cruise tourism is estimated to be £12.5 million. During the 2019 season, a new dedicated cruise terminal, the first in Ireland, was opened by the Lord Mayor of Belfast providing a more focussed visitor welcome facility. Planning is already underway for 2020, and it is expected that 2019 cruise visitor numbers will be surpassed.</p> <p><u>Conferences in Belfast 2019</u></p>
3.11	

	<p>Conference wins from Visit Belfast brought 91 conferences to the city in the year to date, generating an estimated 68,905 bed nights. The economic benefit is estimated to be in the region of £31.5 million. Given the long lead-in times, Visit Belfast is also working on attracting future events. They have achieved conference wins for the city worth £33.1m in the year to date. These conferences will take place over the coming years, and will deliver a cumulative total of 74,000 bed nights.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Leisure Tourism and Marketing</u></p> <p>Since April 2019, six marketing campaigns have been delivered by Visit Belfast, worth a combined investment of £743,500. These have targeted potential visitors in the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain as well as supporting the City Recovery Campaign in the domestic market. The aim of these campaigns is to generate 255,000 leisure bed nights. Importantly, these campaigns allow Visit Belfast to lever significant partner income: £2 for every £1 of its investment in out-of-state marketing. Additionally, web and digital marketing has generated 1.8m visits to the visitbelfast.com website.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no specific financial or resource implications attached to this report. The financial request from Visit Belfast is likely to be in the region of £1.9million for the coming financial year. This allocation will have to be approved by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, as part of the estimates and rate-setting process for 2020/21.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no specific equality or good relations implications. Visit Belfast also works with neighbouring councils to support tourism development and those councils are also investing in tourism development and marketing within their respective areas.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	None



Subject:	Social Enterprise and Co-operative Support
Date:	15th January, 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Cathy Keenan, Economic Development Manager (Local Economic Development)

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
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Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on a range of issues discussed at the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 11th September, 2019. The specific request included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an update on the motion on Small and Medium Enterprises which had been referred to the Committee by the Council on 4th July 2016; • exploring the feasibility of establishing in the next financial year a co-operative development fund for Belfast; • providing details of the work of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) around regeneration and community development, of officers' work with CLES to date and how

	<p>the Council's membership of CLES could add value to the Council's work in this area; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing information on the Council's engagement with Preston City Council and with the city of Cleveland, Ohio, which had each developed successful co-operative initiatives, and learning from these initiatives.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the progress to date to support the social enterprise and cooperative sector; • agree the proposed activities to take forward the key issues raised at the meeting on 11th September 2019; and • approve an additional allocation of £15,000 to enhance the support available to support the growth of the co-operative sector in Belfast, building upon the existing delivery. It is recommended also that the budget to support the social enterprise and co-operative sector is uplifted in the next financial year, which will be brought to Committee for approval in March 2020.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>As Members will be aware, the commitments within the Belfast Agenda are based on a fundamental principle of enabling inclusive economic growth. To deliver on this commitment, the Council has developed a Draft Inclusive Growth Strategy, currently out to public consultation, which aims to ensure that the success of the city reaches every citizen. The consultation closes on 24th January and an updated and final Inclusive Growth Strategy will be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee following this.</p>
3.2	<p>In order to deliver on this commitment, there is a need to focus on a review of internal processes and practices, as well as considering how we directly support and influence other stakeholders to support our inclusive growth commitments. Key levers at the Council's disposal to deliver on this strategy include its procurement, human resources, planning and wider decision-powers through which inclusive growth can be embedded as part of service delivery. We can develop targeted employability and skills interventions, utilise the planning system to generate developer contributions and support the growth of key sectors including social enterprises and co-operatives. Recognising that inclusive growth is not the job of a few but of the many, a key area of focus within the draft strategy involves working with others</p>

	<p>(including the private sector, anchor institutions, wider public sector and community and voluntary sector) to create an inclusive city, through the establishment of an inclusive growth city charter.</p>
3.3	<p>Members will be aware that the economy in Belfast is dominated by micro and small businesses. More than 95% of businesses in the city employ 50 people or less. Since 2015, the Council has had statutory responsibility for a range of functions relating to business start-up and growth and our Economic Development team leads on the delivery of support services to increase the number of new businesses and to help existing businesses to grow, become more competitive and employ more people. From a wider Council perspective, there are also opportunities to explore how we can help local businesses to provide services to the Council through our procurement opportunities and supply chain development, and we can also provide support to skill up employees and make businesses more productive.</p>
3.4	<p>At the Council meeting on 4 July 2016, former Councillor McVeigh raised a notice of motion regarding support for small businesses, which was referred to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. The notice of motion included four key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a substantial citywide investment fund to incentivise start-up and growth for example, through low interest loans; • engaging with the Department for Finance and Land and Property Services on the potential to offer rates incentives, such as time-limited rates holidays, to start-ups or expanding SMEs; • engaging a number of experts e.g. dealing with legal/financial issues, who can be loaned to a start-up or expanding SME free of charge for a 12 month period. Again, the Council will engage with the Executive to see if they will match fund this particular initiative; and • appointing a full-time Belfast Small Business/Social Economy Commissioner who will proactively work to help grow this crucial sector of our economy. This person must have extensive knowledge and direct expertise of SME creation and expansion.
3.5	<p>The motion was responded to at the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 10th August 2016, the recommendations within the report were agreed, an update is included in Appendix 1. Since the introduction of the motion, there have been significant changes to the operating environment in this area of work in Northern Ireland. With the transfer of start-up, social enterprise and business growth functions to councils in</p>

2015, officers have been working to enhance the offer to new starts and existing businesses. The commitments within the Belfast Agenda to supporting 4,000 new business starts by 2021 and creating 15,000 new jobs mean that we have developed close working partnerships across the public, private and community/voluntary sector to ensure delivery of these ambitions. Progress against each of the individual points within the notice of motion is detailed in Appendix 1. However, as a snapshot, members are advised that the work of the Council in this financial year in the areas of business start-up and growth will help support the promotion and creation of more than 820 jobs and more than 350 new business starts. The development of the Enterprise Framework means that there is now a shared and agreed approach to supporting business start-up and growth. This includes a commitment to share resources and undertake research to ensure that the interventions supported continue to make a positive impact on the businesses and individuals engaged.

Exploring the Feasibility of Establishing a Co-operative Development Fund for Belfast

- 3.6 As Members will be aware, officers have undertaken research to understand what specific support is required from co-operatives and social enterprises and to inform the support provided by the Council. At the Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 27th November, Members received a presentation, which outlined the support in place currently to support the growth of the sector and the future plans to enhance this provision. The breadth of the Council support has recently been externally validated as Belfast City Council won the “Council of the Year” award at the Social Enterprise NI Awards.
- 3.7 The focus of the Council resources is on raising awareness of the social enterprise and co-operative sectors in the city, ensuring that specialist one-to-one mentoring support is in place to help new starts and growing businesses and helping businesses to explore and develop solutions to social issues through sustainable business concepts.
- 3.8 The concept of a co-operative fund to further enhance the Council’s support has been raised on a number of occasions. To establish whether there is a need for such a fund in Belfast, officers have undertaken research across other cities that have implemented co-operative development initiatives in order to review their effectiveness and we have also engaged with the sector and co-operative partners locally. These have included Preston and Cleveland as well as Edinburgh and Glasgow. This research has identified that Glasgow is the only city that has operated a dedicated co-operative and enterprise fund. This fund enabled local co-operatives and social enterprises to apply for funding up to £25k to help them with their operational needs, skills, marketing, business development, governance, finance controls,

	<p>service development and new markets. The delivery of this support is met with a budget of £500k per annum and a co-operative development unit based in the Council.</p>
3.9	<p>This approach has worked well in Glasgow, however, it has been enhanced by a range of other activities, such as the use of Council assets to support co-operative development, in addition to capacity building support and consistent messaging to promote the sector. Recent research undertaken by Glasgow identified that the issue for co-operatives was not in accessing finance, but in fact managing the day-to-day finances of the businesses, in addition to sales, marketing and HR support. The research has recommended that while there is good feedback on the Glasgow's fund, the Council can add more value with this type of softer support.</p>
3.10	<p>The approach that Belfast City Council has taken is to package together business advice and financial support to ensure that co-operatives get a wrap-around support service that takes account of their business growth needs while providing access to small amounts of finance to address any growth challenges. Taking account of members' ambitions to enhance the level of support, it is proposed that an additional budget of £15,000 is added to the current programme delivery. This will enable existing support to be enhanced and will cover a number of elements that are not currently eligible for support, such as the registration fee that co-operatives have to pay (can be up to £600).</p>
3.11	<p>With regard to funding support, the Committee has recently approved a crowd funding pilot with Crowdfunder UK. This pilot will provide support for developing and running a crowdfunding campaign for up to 10 social enterprises or co-operatives in the city. Belfast City Council will offer match funding of up to £5,000 for each of the organisations that deliver a successful campaign and meet the required eligibility criteria. As set out in Appendix 1, there is also significant support available through both UCIT and UNLTD and they work closely with the Council and its delivery partners to ensure that those requiring access to financial support can access it in the most effective manner.</p>
3.12	<p>In addition to this, the finalisation of the Inclusive Growth Strategy and a cross organisational approach and corporate focus to inclusive growth will lead to further improvements in the Council's approach to the social enterprise and co-operative sector.</p> <p><u>Details of the work of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) around regeneration and community development, outlining officers' work with CLES to date and how the Council's membership of CLES could add value to the Council's work in this area</u></p>

3.13	<p>Belfast City Council is a member of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). Officers have worked with the team at CLES on a number of issues, particularly relating to access to procurement, maximising local spend and measuring impact of local economic interventions.</p>
3.14	<p>One of the most significant areas of engagement between Belfast City Council and CLES has been in the development of the Local Multiplier Model (LM3). The principle of this model is to measure and track the scale and impact of Council spend in a local area, taking account of spend on both goods and services (through procurement) and also on salaries and wages. This methodology is also used in a number of other local authorities (including Preston, Manchester and Salford) and this allows for comparisons and learning across a range of comparator cities. Belfast City Council has been using the LM3 model for the last four years to track the impact of our spend in the local area. Officers have also used the findings to target activity on certain categories in which Belfast-based businesses are currently under-represented.</p>
3.15	<p>CLES has also worked with the councils listed above to develop their respective approaches to enable inclusive economic growth and community wealth building. Recently representatives from Preston City Council visited Belfast to share their experiences and their methodology drew on the work that they had developed with CLES. We will continue to learn and work with CLES to develop our approach. Council officers can now run the LM3 model independently but the links with CLES will enable us to learn from other cities and benchmark our performance with these progressive cities. We have also engaged CLES to support with the development of Council's Employability and Skills framework and in the work that we are doing with Anchor Institutions.</p> <p><u>Information on the Council's engagement with Preston City Council and with the city of Cleveland, Ohio, which had each developed successful co-operative initiatives and learning from these initiatives</u></p>
3.16	<p>Belfast City Council recently hosted a visit to the city by representatives from Preston City Council, working in conjunction with our local partner Development Trusts NI (DTNI). Preston's approach is based on a principle of community wealth-building focusing on how income can be held and recirculated within a local economy. This is achieved through a number of approaches including:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting a more diverse blend of ownership models within a local economy, encouraging the creation and growth of small business, social enterprises and co-operatives; • increasing flows of investment within local economies by harnessing the wealth that exists locally. For example, Preston are utilising local authority pension funds to redirect investment from global schemes into local, commercially viable investment projects; • supporting fair employment by working with anchor institutions and large to explore approaches such as targeted recruitment from lower income areas, commitment to pay the living wage and building progression routes; and • adopting progressive approaches to procurement delivering social value and promoting inclusive procurement practices such as building capacity for smaller organisations and social economy enterprises.
3.17	<p>The key activities delivered through the Preston approach include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an anchor institution strategy, which has large placed-based institutions in Preston and Lancashire with a combined spend of nearly £1 billion per annum increasing spending to local suppliers to benefit the community; • a £100m place-based investment by their local government pension fund in student flats, hotel and office space. Through their City Deal, they want to explore a potential Lancashire Wealth Fund; • the expansion of worker-owned co-operative businesses through an innovative partnership with Mondragon Co-operative Corporation, University of Central Lancashire and Preston Co-operative Development Network. This work is currently in its infancy; • working with the Living Wage Foundation to make Preston one of the UK's first Living Wage Places; • exploring municipal ownership of a major city centre development; and • using their planning policies to encourage locally-based suppliers and labour on both public and private sector developments in the wider Preston economy.
3.18	<p>The approach adopted by Preston is similar to that of Cleveland, Ohio. Cleveland's initiative exists due to the unique partnership between the public sector, North-East Ohio's philanthropic community and University Circle's anchor institutions. This partnership leveraged the joint 3 billion USD of annual purchasing power of these anchor institutions in</p>

	<p>order to help catalyse and build community-based businesses that create jobs and ultimately drive economic stability for local low-wealth communities.</p>
3.19	<p>Preston City Council emphasised that it has been a long process to develop their current model, taking almost eight years. They consider that the secret to their success has been in pulling together the support and activities that are already taking place in order to achieve impact on a significant scale, as well as taking a partnership approach to this work. The BCC Inclusive Growth Strategy will also take this approach – seeking to work with partners and at scale to maximise impact.</p>
3.20	<p>While the work that Preston are undertaking is very impressive, it is clear that Belfast City Council is already engaging in or exploring the majority of the elements of Preston’s approach. The ongoing implementation of the inclusive growth strategy and the development and shaping of the Council’s ambitions year-on-year will ensure that Belfast City Council develops a strong and inclusive economy. At its meeting on the 17th December the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee agreed the Revenue Estimates and District Rate for 2020/21. This included a budget of £611,500 to support inclusive growth. Specific proposals will be brought back to the Committee relating to how this budget will be utilised.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.21	<p>The activities outlined within this report will be resourced from the 2019/20 Economic Development budget agreed by this Committee on 6 March 2019. The additional work to support the co-operatives and social enterprises will require an additional budget of £15,000. We also recommend that the budget to support the social enterprise and co-operative sector is uplifted in the next financial year, this will be brought to Committee for approval in March 2020.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.22	<p>Each of the proposed projects referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. The unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of each project.</p>

4.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Details of progress against the July 2016 motion to support small businesses Appendix 2 - Headline Inclusive Growth Commitments

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Update on the Motion on Small and Medium Enterprises referred to the Committee by the Council on 4th July, 2016

The notice of motion included four key points:

1. creating a substantial investment citywide investment fund to incentivise start up and growth for example, through low interest loans;
2. engaging with the Department for Finance and Land and Property Services on the potential to offer rates incentives, such as time limited rates holidays, to start ups or expanding SMEs;
3. engaging a number of experts e.g. dealing with legal/financial issues, who can be loaned to a start-up or expanding SME free of charge for a 12 month period. Again, the Council will engage with the Executive to see if it will match fund this particular initiative; and
4. appointing a full-time Belfast Small Business/Social Economy Commissioner who will proactively work to help grow this crucial sector of our economy. This person must have extensive knowledge and direct expertise of SME creation and expansion.

1. Create a substantial investment citywide investment fund to incentivise start up and growth for example, through low interest loans

Since the initial response to the notice of motion in August 2016 which identified a range of support available to new and small businesses seeking finance to start and grow their business, the financial support available for business has increased. This includes a range of options such as grant funding, low interest loans, and investment options. An overview of the available finance options is included in this appendix. Officers have further developed relationships with stakeholders such as Invest NI, Enterprise NI, local banks, Prince's Trust, Catalyst, Techstart NI among others to ensure that we are able to appropriately signpost new and existing businesses to the available financial options.

Our view is that there is sufficient access to funding in the market place and that there is no gap in the market for the council to provide low interest loans at this point.

2. Engage with the Department for Finance and Land and Property Services (LPS) on the potential to offer rates incentives, such as time-limited rates holidays, to start-ups or expanding SMEs

Members will be aware that LPS currently operates the Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) Scheme. The SBRR scheme came into effect in April 2010 initially for a term of five years, but has since been extended annually on review. SBRR is available based on the Net Annual Value of the businesses property, businesses that meet the following criteria can access relief:

- Business properties with an NAV of £2,000 or less will receive a reduction of 50 per cent relief;
- Business properties with an NAV of more than £2,000 but not more than £5,000 will receive 25 per cent relief;
- Business properties with an NAV of more than £5,000 but not more than £15,000 will receive a 20 per cent relief.

Business rates is the primary source of income for the Council. The District Rate makes up 44% of the rates bill, with the rest, 56%, being the regional rate. Approximately 78% of our income comes from the District Rate, of which 64% comes from non-domestic (Business) Rates, and 36% from Domestic Rates.

LPS has recently concluded a consultation on business rates. Following a presentation on the key issues to the SP&R Committee, the Council submitted a response highlighting a number of factors. These included:

- Need to give consideration to how local authorities can be given the power to introduce reliefs to reflect the specific circumstances of their locality and local economy
- Need to consider how the rating system can be aligned to support growing the economy.
- Need to consider how the rating system can be used to support city centre living
- Need to introduce mechanisms to eliminate any form of tax avoidance or evasion
- Need to improve the collection and administration of rates
- Need to consider the use of technology to maximise the collectable rate
- Need to consider how the rating system can integrate the ability to pay and individual business circumstances as part of rates assessments

- Need to consider the possibility of introducing new revenue-raising powers
- Need to conduct a fundamental review of reliefs, exemptions, and exclusions
- Need to consider the introduction of a business growth accelerator
- Need to review the effectiveness of the rates hardship scheme
- Need to consider how the rating system can be aligned to support specific sectors.

Since 2016, there has been a significant increase in co-working space in the Belfast City Council area, with the introduction of Ormeau Baths, the Fintech Hub, Glandore Belfast and the Foundry. Each of these locations have strong occupancy levels each averaging at around 80%.

In 2016, Belfast City Council in partnership with ERDF and Invest NI, launched the Innovation Factory providing a workspace and business support service for small, growth-focused businesses. Working towards target occupancy levels of 71% by March 2020, the current occupancy rate is 68%.

In 2019, Invest NI launched the flexible workspace loan scheme. The scheme was introduced in response to a limited availability of start-up and early stage move-on workspace across Northern Ireland and a lack of funding to support development of new workspace. The scheme was open to developers with plans to develop accommodation of this nature - this includes private developers, social enterprises and Local Enterprise Agencies. The budget for the scheme is £5.5m and will be funded through Financial Transactions Capital. It offers loans up to a maximum of 40% of total development costs – commercial rates will apply after the initial loan period. All proposals which apply with the scheme must align with Council and Invest NI Strategic priorities and the council endorsed each of the expressions of interest prior to submission.

This scheme closed for applications in August 2019 and we are aware of 2 Belfast-based applications that have moved to the second stage in the process.

In summary, the council continues to engage with DoF and LPS to explore how the rates regimes can be used as an enabler to encourage more local businesses and to support business growth. The business support and workspace environment has changed significantly since the notice of motion and there are new models for encouraging business growth that involve different ways of working, involving a sharing of overheads and a “full service” cost covering not only property overheads but also business growth support.

3. Engage a number of experts e.g. dealing with legal/financial issues, who can be loaned to a start-up or expanding SME free of charge for a 12 month period. The council will engage with the Executive to see if they will match fund this particular initiative

Through the delivery of our business growth support, Belfast City Council has put in place a range of specialist mentors who provide support to business as and when required to deal with financial and legal issues (as well as other business growth challenges). In addition to the council's support, Invest NI and Intertradelreland now have available a range of financial supports for companies to access finance to support salary costs. In addition to this the Federation of Small business membership includes legal and financial advice and support. Obviously there has not been an opportunity to engage with the NI Executive on this issue but, should the Executive come back in place, officers will explore the potential to secure additional support for this work.

4. Appoint a full-time Belfast Small Business/Social Economy Commissioner who will proactively work to help grow this crucial sector of our economy

Since the response to the notice of motion was submitted in 2016, there has been a significant amount of progress in this area. While the council has not directly appointed a full-time Small business/Social Economy commissioner, we have appointed a commissioner for resilience whose role is to help the city prepare for potential scenarios which could challenge the city's ability to function and progress as a sustainable economy and good place to live.

As part of the response to the previous notice of motion, officers looked to Dublin City Council who, at the time, had just put in place a Dublin Start Up Commissioner. The main focus of the role was to promote Dublin as a great place to do business, attracting new investment and supporting new tech start-ups. This role has now been wound down and some of the services are integrated as part of the work of Dublin's Digital Tech Hub.

In 2018, Invest NI commissioned an enterprise champion for the region. Eleanor McEvoy was the CEO of Budget Energy Ltd and panellist on RTE's Dragons' Den. Eleanor's role aims to provide an advisory to entrepreneurship stakeholders, promote entrepreneurship and acting as a role model, encouraging networking and collaborative working.

Social Enterprise NI have also put in place a Young Ambassador, Aimee Clint of Books by Stella, in order to raise awareness of Social Enterprise models among younger people and encourage them to consider it as a career choice. Through the delivery of our social enterprise and co-operative support programme, we are currently recruiting a number of area champions to raise awareness and promote social enterprise and co-operatives in our local communities.

In summary, it is proposed that Council officers continue to engage with the local business community and key stakeholders to ensure that the pipeline of support to encourage new business start and growth is relevant to meet their needs.

Details of available finance for local businesses and social enterprises/co-operatives

Start Up Incentives / Grants

PBelfast City Council, Kick-Start programme

Belfast based start-ups businesses trading for two years or less, or those that have the potential to start trading within six months can access a range of specialist mentoring and access to workshops. Through this initiative new businesses can also access up to £1,500 in incentives to overcome barriers to starting up.

For more information contact Economic Development: (028) 9027 0482

Bank Loans

9 out of 10 loans are accessed through NI banks and the approval rate is higher in NI (92%) compared to the rest of Britain (8/10)

The Competition Markets Authority (CMA) carry out regular surveys among SMEs on the business banking service quality in NI. The table below represents SME satisfaction levels in overdraft and loan services where businesses are asked how likely they would be to recommend their provider's SME overdraft and loan services to other SME's. Note that Nationwide is entering the market to offer bespoke services to SME businesses.

Ranking



Loan Funding
<p><u>Northern Ireland Start Up and Small Business Loan Fund</u></p> <p>Fund Manager: Ulster Community Investment Trust</p> <p>An £8m loan fund for NI based individuals, private companies and social enterprises in the SME and micro enterprise size range and in the start-up or growth phases of development. Loans are typically unsecured and range between £10k and £100k (maximum £15k for start-up businesses).</p> <p>For more information visit:</p> <p>www.nisblf.com</p>
<p><u>Growth Loan Fund II (ERDF)</u></p> <p>Fund Manager: Whiterock Finance</p> <p>A £30m loan fund designed to support export focused NI SMEs demonstrating growth or strong growth potential. Loans are typically between £100k and £500k.</p> <p>For more information visit:</p> <p>www.whiterockfinance.co.uk</p> <p>This fund is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the EU Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 – 2020.</p>
<p><u>Growth Finance Fund</u></p> <p>Fund Manager: Whiterock Finance</p> <p>A £30m loan fund designed to support export focused NI SMEs demonstrating growth or strong growth potential. Loans are typically between £500k and £2m.</p> <p>For more information visit:</p> <p>www.whiterockfinance.co.uk</p>
Equity Funding
<p><u>Techstart NI (ERDF)</u></p> <p>Fund Manager: Techstart Ventures</p> <p>A collection of funds providing support to NI based entrepreneurs, seed/early stage SMEs and university spin-outs. Support includes a £30m SME equity fund, investing between £50k-£750k in any one round and up to £2m over a series of funding rounds, and a £4.5m Proof of Concept Grant Fund.</p> <p>For more information visit:</p> <p>www.techstart.vc</p> <p>This fund is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the EU Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 – 2020</p>

Co-Fund NI II (ERDF)

Fund Manager: Clarendon Fund Managers

A £50m equity fund for SMEs based in Northern Ireland. The fund co-invests alongside business angels and other private investors. The fund can provide co-investment in deals typically valued between £150k and £1m and up to £1.25m over a series of investment rounds, at a ratio of up to 50%.

For more information visit:

www.cofundni.com

This fund is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the EU Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 – 2020.

Crescent IV (ERDF)

Fund Manager: Crescent Capital

A venture capital fund with the potential to invest £54m in innovative, high growth potential SMEs within the technology, life sciences and manufacturing sectors. Individual investments will range from £500k to £2.5m with an upper limit of £5m over a series of investment rounds.

For more information visit:

www.crescentcapital.co.uk

This fund is part-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the EU Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 – 2020.

HBAN

Fund Manager: Clarendon Fund Managers

HBAN (Halo Business Angel Network) is the all island Business Angel network, a joint initiative between Invest NI, InterTradeIreland and Enterprise Ireland. The HBAN programme encourages business angels to operate within syndicates and it also provides a matching service between companies seeking investors and business angels.

For more information visit:

www.hban.org

Finance for Social Enterprises and Co-operatives

Ulster Community Investment Trust (UCIT)

A loan fund exclusive to Community organisations, charities and social enterprises, both large and small, located in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. UCIT provide loans between £25,000 - £500,000 to finance the following buildings and equipment, working capital, cash

shortfalls, bridging finance against delayed grants or other confirmed income and restructuring of debt.

For more information visit <https://www.ucitltd.com/loans> or the lending team can be contacted on Tel: 028 90315003.

UNLTD

Unltd offers grant funding to support new social enterprises. This includes grants of £500, £5,000 or £15,000, subject to a competitive application process with specific eligibility criteria for each amount.

For more information visit - <https://www.unltd.org.uk/our-support/starting-up/>

Cooperative and Community Finance

A UK-wide lender who are owned and democratically controlled by their members, who are usually employees, customers or members of a community. Loans are available to employee or community-owned social enterprises, including co-operatives, community businesses, development trusts and businesses developed from the charitable and voluntary sector from £10,000 to £75,000 are available, they can also lend up to £150,000 using other funds.

For more information visit - <https://coopfinance.coop/borrow/>

Crowd Fund Belfast Pilot

In January 2020 Belfast City Council will launch a crowd funding pilot with Crowdfunder UK. This pilot will provide support for developing and running a crowdfunding campaign for up to 10 social enterprises or co-operatives in the city. Belfast City Council will offer match funding of up to £5,000 for each of the organisations that deliver a successful campaign and meet the required eligibility criteria.

For more information contact the Economic Development Unit on (028) 9027 0482

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Corporate Procurement

Social Value Procurement Framework & Toolkit

Environmentally sound procurement

Understand our demand, impact and supply chain

Develop local supply base, remove barriers and increase capacity of underrepresented suppliers

Support development of co-operatives or new business to meet demand

Inclusive growth framework for capital projects throughout City

Corporate Employment

Offer public sector apprenticeships

No exclusivity in casual contracts

Ring-fence entry level posts and provide pre-recruitment support

Pay real living wage

Review and enhance our community outreach programme

Develop a Volunteering Strategy

Mainstream equality, diversity & inclusion

Civic Leadership

Co-design Inclusive Growth City Charter & assessment

Align partner CSR activity

Establish a digital innovation and tech inclusion group

Developer contributions framework & affordable housing policy

Design & deliver Belfast Workplace

Improved civic & CVSE voice

Connectedness – BRT II

Social Enterprise Action plan

Promote use of SVP

Create a Living Wage City

Accountability

Living document – yearly action plan (1st published with plan)

Setting targets, through committee, as we build evidence base and expertise

Develop an Inclusive Growth Monitor & Dashboard

Oversight Group

Best practice – members & officers

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Subject:	Dogs on Public Transport - Response from Translink
Date:	15th January, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer, ext. 6311
Contact Officer:	Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer, ext. 6311

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider a response from the Group Chief Executive of Translink outlining the company's policy for the carriage of dogs on public transport.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the response and take any such action as may be determined.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The Committee will recall that, at its meeting on 11th September, it agreed, at the request of the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McReynolds), that a letter be forwarded to Translink, recommending that it review and amend its policy covering the carriage of dogs on buses and trains, to allow for more dog owners to avail of public transport.

3.2	A response has now been received from Mr. Chris Conway, Group Chief Executive of Translink, a copy of which is attached.
3.3	Mr. Conway explains that, following the Committee's request, Translink had benchmarked its policy against those of other public transport companies in Ireland and Great Britain. That had found that its policy of allowing assistance dogs on all of its services at all times was in line with those companies, as was its policy of permitting all dogs to be carried on its services. However, in the latter case, Translink gave staff and drivers discretion to refuse entry in circumstances, for example, where dogs were unclean or poorly behaved or where other passengers had legitimate grounds for objecting, on account of allergies, phobias etc.
3.4	<p>Mr. Conway concludes by pointing out that Translink was of the view that its current policy balanced the aspiration for open access with the requirement for some mechanism to assess what was appropriate in protecting the needs of other passengers.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Document Attached
	Response from Group Chief Executive of Translink

26 November 2019

Mr Henry Downey
Democratic Services Officer
Belfast City Council
Chief Executive's Department
City Hall
BELFAST
BT1 5GS

Dear *Mr. Downey*

Thank you for your letter in relation to Translink's policy on the carriage of dogs on bus and train services.

At the request of the Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee, a review of our policy was carried out.

We benchmarked our policy with that applied by other public transport companies in Ireland and Great Britain. Similar to all other companies, assistance dogs are permitted on all of our services at all times.

In line with other bus and rail companies, Translink's policy allows for all dogs to be carried on our services, however we do give discretion to our staff and drivers. There are sound operational reasons for using discretion. Not all dogs are clean or well behaved and other passengers can have legitimate grounds for objecting, such as phobias or allergies.

We believe our current policy balances the aspiration for open access with the need for some mechanism to assess what is appropriate and protect the needs of other passengers.

I hope you will find the foregoing information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Chris Conway
Group Chief Executive

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