Public Document Pack

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

17th June, 2020

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet remotely via Microsoft Teams on Friday, 19th June, 2020 at 9.30 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

(c) SMART Belfast Update (Pages 91 - 110)

(d) Update on Dublin - Belfast Economic Corridor (Pages 111 - 198)

(e) Invitation to join UK100 Resilient Recovery Taskforce (Pages 199 - 202)

4. **Governance**

(a) Annual update of the Scheme of Delegation (Pages 203 - 254)

5. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

(a) Physical Programme Update (Pages 255 - 266)

(b) Asset Management (Pages 267 - 272)

6. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

(a) Contracts Update (Pages 273 - 278)

7. **Equality and Good Relations**

(a) Dual Language Street Signs Policy (Pages 279 - 316)

8. **Operational Issues**

(a) Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 317 - 320)

9. **Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

(a) Race Equality Champion for Belfast City Council - Councillor Nicholl (Pages 321 - 326)

(b) Disabled People and Older People - Councillor McMullan (Pages 327 - 328)

(c) Celebration of Donar's Day - Councillor McLaughlin

This council wishes to acknowledge the fantastic work done by many families and individuals in relation to blood/platelet donation, stem cell donation and organ donation across Belfast and beyond. On January 31st 2020 Belfast City Hall hosted events for the first ever Donor’s Day, which was celebrated across the North. Following on from the great success this Council will agree to light the City Hall in pink on the 31st January to celebrate Donor’s Day. Furthermore this council will work with the Blood Transfusion Service, NHS Organ Donation Service, Public Health Agency and Anthony Nolan Trust to host an information and donation session in Belfast City Hall on Donor’s day. Finally this council will also write to the Assembly Commission to request that Stormont is also lit pink to celebrate Donor’s Day.

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Agenda Item 2b

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Agenda Item 2c

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Agenda Item 2d

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STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	Recovery Programme
Date:	19 June 2020
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Finance & Resources Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Some time in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**		**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to inform Elected Members of the high level proposals that the Council is both delivering and coordinating on behalf of other partners in order to support the city and its communities to recover from the Covoid-10 pandemic.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to:

	(i) note that the Committee will receive a presentation on the key elements of the Council's recovery plan for the city as set out within this report; (ii) note the immediate focus and energy on supporting the safe reopening of the city (iii) note the reopening of St George's Market on Friday 3rd July and Smithfield Market on Monday 22 June; and (iv) note work is underway with central government to identify potential funding available to support recovery efforts.
3.0	**Main report**
	<u>Context</u>
3.1	In the midst of the pandemic, authorities are rightly focused on minimising the human cost, providing relief to their communities and delivering essential day-to-day services. Another major challenge for the Council and city partners is to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on their local economies, so that businesses can once again thrive and provide employment opportunities and vibrancy to local communities and the city centre.
3.2	It is evident that there will be lasting structural changes to the city's economy, its infrastructure, its environment and to its communities, and will likely result in financial and economic uncertainty for some time. To thrive, we must reimagine the future now and act together to deliver it.
3.3	The crisis has shone a spotlight on vulnerabilities within key systems and the structures of our economy and society, however, some benefits will be felt by the city from the behaviour change required by the response to the crisis (such as less car usage, flexible working arrangements, more community interaction, support for front line workers). It is important that we understand what these are, and how feasible it is to sustain these behaviours, appropriately, and over time.
3.4	The Covid 19 crisis presents a reset moment for Belfast's economy and society, and whilst we will seek to build upon our strengths as a city, we will seek to be innovative, explore the art of the possibility and try to mobilise and reposition for a sustainable and inclusive future.
3.5	The Covid-19 crisis has mobilised and energised the community and voluntary sector who have been providing community support over the past 12 weeks. Knowledge of the sector, relationships and networks have strengthened significantly in a short space of time and there

	is a real opportunity to build upon this and reimagine our neighbourhoods as the city plans its response, rebuild and recovery.
	NI Executive – five phase plan
3.6	The overarching context for the council interventions is the "Pathway to Recovery" issued by the Northern Ireland Executive on 12 May 2020. This incorporates a five step decision-making framework towards relieving all of restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The framework covers a number of areas including retail; work; education, family and community; travel and sport, culture and leisure activities.
3.7	The council is only one of a number of organisations that has a stake in the recovery planning. While we have a direct delivery role in some areas, we also have a significant place shaping and leadership role in ensuring that there is a resourced and coordinated response to the recovery plans. In this context, we have been leading on an integrated approach to city recovery with the key government partners and wider statutory, community and business partners.
3.8	The recent announcements made by the NI Executive has heightened the urgency in relation to bringing forward proposals and practical interventions (e.g. introducing social distance measures, signage and wayfinding etc) to support the safe reopening of the city.
3.9	This reports outlines the immediate work and planning underway as well as the medium-longer term ambitions to support the rebuild and recovery of the city in a sustainable way.
	Guiding Principles
3.10	Officers from across the Council have been working to develop a Council recovery plan which is underpinned through by a set of guiding principles. ▪ Ensuring public health and safety ▪ Adopting a phased and managed approach to the transition through emergency response, rebuild and sustained recovery. ▪ Adopting a place based approach to the re-opening of our neighbourhoods. ▪ Accelerating economic recovery and enabling businesses to reopen effectively ▪ Accelerating elements of the Belfast Bolder Vision, which seeks to take forward a shared approach to creating a more attractive, accessible, safe & vibrant city centre. ▪ Enhancing civic pride to attract local people and visitors

	Council's Approach to Recovery
3.11	At the meeting of the Party Group Leaders on 5 June 2020, a report was presented to all members, setting out the proposed approach to city recovery on a phased basis, namely Response: Rebuild: Recovery. This acknowledged the need for an immediate response – which -- kicked in immediately following lockdown – as well as the requirement to rebuild a new economy in a very different economic climate, maintaining a focus on sustainable and inclusive growth.
3.12	In addition to the phased approach, a series of complementary interventions are to be delivered in each of the- phases, across a number of work areas, namely: (i) City Reopening (ii) Social and community development (iii) Economic development (iv) Environmental development (v) Digital transformation, Innovation and Smart Belfast
3.13	Additionally, there is significant programme of work underway to support these interventions and ensure organisational and operational readiness in terms of our staff, services, assets, facilities and processes.
3.14	While the final shape of the recovery plans is still emerging, and will clearly be shaped and informed by Elected Members, some emerging areas of work and initial emerging plans on a page is attached at **Appendix 1**. The following sections of the report outlines the emerging programme of work for Members' consideration.
	(i) Reopening the City
3.15	City & Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with officers from City Regeneration and Development, Economic Development and Corporate Communications are progressing the delivery of a number of initiatives that will support the re-opening phase of recovery, while also contributing to longer term regeneration objectives for the city that will ensure sustainable and resilient recovery.
3.16	It is proposed to reopen St George's on Friday 3rd July and Smithfield Market on Monday 22 June this takes account of traders views and demand and the mobilisation work required at both venues to ensure social distancing measures are in place.

3.17	The immediate focus of reopening the city is being taken forward in conjunction with key city statutory and business partners, and it is this collaboration and political will that is required to re-establish confidence in the city to support business to reopen and to contribute to the longer term resilience and inclusive growth of the city. There are a number of strands of work being taken forward in parallel including:
3.18	**Clean, Green, Attractive and Safe** ▪ Working with DfI and DfC to provide additional public spaces through the re-allocation of road and civic spaces to facilitate social distancing, queueing and for the provision of businesses to operate effectively outside their own footprint. ▪ Providing enhanced city cleansing regimes focusing on cleaner city streets, touch points and public infrastructure such as benches, bins and public toilets; ▪ Imaginative use of open and civic spaces particularly those in public ownership to support retail and hospitality sectors. ▪ Consideration of temporary use of public spaces in the short-term for cafes, restaurants and outdoor space to facilitate SDM. ▪ Providing city ambassadors to provide information to the public and to assist in managing public spaces and pinch points. ▪ Ensuring the continued consideration and delivery of infrastructure & measures to take account of equality for vulnerable users of the city. ▪ Expanding this approach to arterial routes, urban villages and local communities; ▪ Marketing and branding to provide clear messaging and city marketing, implementing a city confidence mark (**Appendix 2**) and a unified approach to the visual quality of the temporary interventions.
3.19	**Enabling access and supporting connectivity** ▪ Consideration of adopting our current Belfast Bikes model and reinstating the scheme with initial focus on prioritising the busiest sites and introduce enhancing cleansing and sanitising regime at doc stations. ▪ Provision by DFI of temporary pop-up cycle lanes and additional cycling infrastructure and storage facilities to encourage sustainable transport and to trial potential longer term interventions, the implementation of 20mph zones, and working closely with Translink to ensure the delivery of an effective public transportation system;

- Progressing with the work of the Bolder Vision for Belfast Connectivity Study; promoting active and sustainable travel, removing severance to neighbourhoods and the domination of the car, and providing a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment.
- This work will also enable the delivery of the ambitions of the DfI Minister, and council officers are working closely with the newly appointed DfI Walking and Cycling Champion to develop short, medium and long term interventions to realise these ambitions.

3.20 **<u>(ii) Supporting and Enabling Community Recovery</u>**

While there clearly remains an immediate need to continue to provide emergency support, looking ahead it will be important that we work collaboratively and harness the energy of our communities and city partners, ensuring greater co-ordination and innovation in addressing the specific issues that communities face across the city. As we move forward, there is a need to build community confidence, capacity and resilience across neighbourhoods through a range of programmes of support.

3.21 The benefit and potential impact of this approach is clearly demonstrated through the community response hub established by the Council to support residents during the coronavirus pandemic. Working with DFC and a range of community, voluntary and statutory partners the hub provides assistance to Belfast residents, including the coordination and distribution of 40,000+ food parcels to shielded and vulnerable people across the city. In addition, we provide advice on jobs and benefits, practical assistance such as collecting prescriptions and offering emotional support to anyone who may be feeling anxious during these uncertain times.

3.22 The community hub is also helping to coordinate the distribution of £965,000 funding (£479,300 from the Council and £485,700 from the Department for Communities) to support vulnerable individuals and families within communities across the city.

Area Working Model & Developing Area Recovery Plans

3.23 Close ongoing engagement throughout the COVID-19 response has demonstrated the value of our newly established area-working model and has resulted in strong and meaningful relationships between Council officers and community partners. As we move forward, there is a need to build upon this, capturing emerging needs and priorities within Area Recovery Plans, jointly developed and implemented with partners, which inform future investments, utilisation of assets, service provision and thereby support community recovery and the delivery of improved outcomes for people at a local and citywide level.

3.24	The strength of Belfast's vibrant communities and supporting sectors has been at the forefront in many respects, with many examples of partnership working to address urgent community needs, in localities and across the city. There has been significant learning as a result of the Covid-19 emergency response both internally within Council and based on feedback from community partners, which should be considered as we plan our recovery: - Ability to be responsive to need and empowering communities; - Meaningful and highly effective relationships between Council and community partners to aid agile service delivery; - Creating opportunities for engaging/supporting more volunteering in communities; - Ability to share information quickly between different statutory and C&V organisations; - Opportunity to embed area-working concept both internally/externally with partners.
3.25	The emerging recovery plan also seeks to explore and accelerate key enabling and supporting interventions including, for example: ▪ Explore opportunities to align grant funding streams to support recovery efforts subject to members consideration and approval ▪ We need to collectively understand community capacity and structures and how partners in the community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors will need to be supported to maximise their contribution to community recovery and wellbeing improvement. ▪ Maintain focus over the coming months to enhance our community-services provision. ▪ Working with partners to explore how we can maximise the social value of our procurement spend and encourage 'buying local' initiatives. ▪ Implementation focused employability and skills programmes including, reskilling and employment academies to enable local people to access job opportunities. ▪ Support local enterprise/business models including social enterprises and co-operatives. ▪ Supporting local tourism development across the city. ▪ Engage with Departments, SEUPB (Peace Plus), and others to develop our connected communities' pathways model. ▪ Continue to work with DFC and other partners to overcome obstacles to housing development across tenures and to identify financial models to unlock housing market.

- Work with partners to develop a long term revised and sustainable funding model for VCSE sector.

(iii) Economic Recovery

3.26 Officers have been revising some of the planned activity to support new start-ups and existing small businesses as well as our employability and skills support. This work has not only been about re-focusing some areas of activity but also reviewing how the activity is delivered, given the inability to undertake any face-to-face engagement. Emerging areas of work in order to take account of the economic changes include:

3.27

Response Phase (first six months)

- Focus will be on job retention and business survival
- Pivoting our business support offer to include a greater focus on support for digital transformation and business resilience/recasting business models and will develop a supporting information campaign to increase awareness of the offer.
- Developing a new business information line (launched 8 June 2020) to support businesses that have any queries around re-opening in particular – engagement between environmental health and economic development teams to ensure a coherent approach.
- Seeking to secure additional support from the Northern Ireland Executive to support businesses to re-open safely, particularly retail businesses.
- Prioritising the mapping and zoning of the city centre and the arterial routes to identify targeted interventions required to support business recovery while ensuring that social distancing can be managed in the public realm.
- Developing and implementing an enhanced cleansing regime and develop signage and wayfinding information. This will include the "confidence mark" to be rolled out.
- Exploring the potential of deploying "business ambassadors" in core areas as a first point of contact for the public, providing information on issues such as operating times; additional cleansing provision and provision of sanitising equipment; specific measures being undertaken to help the public stay safe
- Working with DfI to explore opportunities to undertake environmental enhancements in the public realm, and to deploy additional street furniture to potentially facilitate access to additional facilities for local businesses, taking account of social distancing both in-store and on the street.

	- Working with businesses and city partners to consider imaginative uses of open and civic spaces, taking account of the need for ongoing management. - Exploring opportunities to enhance access and connectivity to our key retail and business locations and work with businesses to co-ordinate opening hours etc, taking account of ongoing challenges with public transport - Maintaining focus on educational underachievement, we will work with the Department for Education and the Education Authority to re-scope our GCSE support programme, in line with the changed school timetable. - Re-scoping employability interventions to enable remote delivery and to take account of the changing demand across sectors.
3.28	***Rebuild phase (up to 12 months)*** - Development of a targeted marketing campaign for “staycations” – focusing on the domestic audience – working in collaboration with Visit Belfast, Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland - Exploring the potential for an employer incentive scheme to focus on the long-term unemployed/economically inactive. This is likely to focus on key and emerging growth sectors. - Ongoing flexible support programme for business resilience: scaling-up of existing support, with move away from job creation to job retention in first instance. Ongoing focus on digital support, including alignment to emerging City Deal Digital strand. - Development work to re-model business start-up support: assuming an increase in demand as a result of redundancies–packaging support including services and facilities at the Innovation Factory. Also expanding current start-up support programme for economically inactive, working in conjunction with DfC. - Investment in digital re-reskilling programme: developing targeted initiatives across the board to take account of general technical skills as well as vocational-specific skills, in line with the changing job market. - Continue support for social enterprises and cooperatives, taking account of reductions in grant funding and supporting community organisations to explore new business operating models. - Working with DfE and colleges to support and encourage apprenticeships, particularly in new vocational areas, linked to the city’s growth.

	- Developing a culture and tourism recovery plan – ensuring that the economy recovery work is balanced with investment in quality of life for residents and attraction for visitors. - Revamping the employment academies programme to target new growth areas including logistics, green recovery and upskilling in social care. - Scaling up educational underachievement investment support, with a view to reducing the attainment gap for young people in our schools. - Working with DfC to mobilise the principles around the Employability NI model, focusing on the "local labour market partnerships"–this means taking an agreed approach to helping move people back into employment, ensuring that a focus is maintained on address inequalities in the labour market. - Informing and shaping the regional economic strategy - Building capacity among local businesses to avail of City Deal support and to inform future delivery.
3.29	***Recovery phase (up to 36 months)*** - Working on a long-term restructuring/reset of the economy – to be informed by the work of various institutions and areas of work including the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission; City Deal; Climate Commission; Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor. - Move forward on the plans for development and delivery of the proposals for 2023 and the UNESCO City of Music. - Supporting delivery of the Belfast Destination Hub and wider City Deal projects – including alignment of skills and business engagement opportunities. - Developing a new model of business tourism, taking account of changing patterns of attendance and engagement (integrating digital and onsite conferencing). - Developing a long-term tourism development plan for the city including economic modelling, experience-based product development and local tourism framework. - Developing a new model for the delivery of business start-up and growth, ensuring enhanced co-ordination and leading to the creation of more innovative and export-focused businesses. - Leading the work of the local labour market partnership to ensure co-ordination of employability and skills investment, helping more people into better jobs. - Progressing the Strategic Sites Assessment work to help deliver on increased city centre living and wider housing and city growth ambitions.

- Exploring with partners the potential to bring forward proposals around potential free port. Working with the Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner and the Digital and Innovation Partnership to prepare a joint response to the UK government consultation on the potential to establish freeports, that are innovative hubs, boost global trade, attract inward investment and increase productivity.

(iv) Environmental Recovery

3.30 The current pandemic has demonstrated the importance of good planning for major risks to our city. One such risk is climate change. To this end, we've set up an internal Climate Plan Programme Board, chaired by Commissioner for Resilience, Grainia Long. This group will be responsible for working together to take forward our work on sustainability and climate.

3.31 The city's draft Resilience Strategy has a vision to 'transition Belfast to an inclusive, low-carbon climate resilient economy', so it's critical that council plays its part. The programme board brings together colleagues from across council to agree ways to improve the organisation's impact on the environment and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

3.32 As a Council we are adapting to a 'new normal', we want to rebuild and recover in a more sustainable and inclusive way. Being resilient to climate change, reducing our carbon footprint stimulating a sustainable economy is going to be critical and are key priorities moving forward. Some areas of focus include:

- Explore with partners the potential to bring forward a housing retrofit programme to address energy efficiency and fuel poverty.
- Accelerate the development of a climate mitigation and adaptation plan and identify and progress immediate quick wins.
- Develop options paper to minimise the impact of air and noise pollution post Covid-19 to inform the development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast.
- Incentivise reduced car use, promote & support use of public transport.
- Accelerate site assessment in support of the One Million trees programme in context of wider NI Executive commitment to 18 million trees.
- Commence and complete energy review for Council.
- Work with partners to explore opportunities to accelerate sustainable/smart transport and mobility programmes (including electric vehicle infrastructure).

	(v) Digital Transformation, Innovation and Smart Belfast
3.33	Digital innovation has been critical in addressing many of the challenges emerging from the pandemic. We must acknowledge the role of the public sector in helping to support local innovation. It is also important that we build upon the digital and innovative strengths of both our universities and the active role of their new (and existing) research centres. as well as the programmes of work linked to Smart Belfast, Belfast Region City Deal and the recently appointed Digital Commissioner for the city
3.34	The Covid-19 crisis has not negated the economic and technological challenges previously identified by partners. In fact the crisis has amplified these challenges and accelerated the time scales against which they need to be addressed.
3.35	There exists an opportunity to accelerate elements of the city's digital and innovation roadmap and seek to bring forward a pipeline of catalytic projects (e.g. Innovation/smart districts, potential free super ports, a revised approach to supporting tourism and green stimulus through use of new technologies) that will strengthen the city's foundations and support our recovery efforts going forward.
3.36	Working with partners, the Council seeks to accelerate opportunities emerging from the Belfast Region City Deal and Smart Belfast to support our recovery efforts. We are investing in digital reskilling, upskilling and business transformation initiatives which is crucial to ensure that all of society benefits from this investment and opportunity. In conjunction with partners we have designed an ambition programme that will: ▪ Proactively address digital skills gaps experienced within the general economy to optimise economic recovery (targeted reskilling programmes) ▪ Support businesses to utilise digital technology to adopt business model; minimise the economic impact of Covid-19 by helping them to normalise their business operations, where possible, through remote working and developing approaches to generate income i.e. e-commerce. ▪ Develop the digital skills capacity of residents to improve their future employability and create a more resilient workforce aligned to an increasingly digitalised economy. ▪ Targeting approaches to ensure those sectors and/or communities/client groups at most risk are prioritised and supported through ours actions.

	(v) City Regeneration and Development
3.37	While the full impact of Covid-19 is yet to be fully understood, council officers are continuing to engage with a range of stakeholders to progress previously agreed prirotiires and programmes of work to establish the city to continue to grow in line with our inclusive growth agenda. A number of key strands of work are already established that will facilitate effective recovery and position the city for longer term sustainable, inclusive growth. These work strands will be continually reviewed and adapted as required, and include;
	City Centre Living
3.38	Prioritising the delivery of the Strategic Sites Assessment Phase 1 to bring forward residential-led, mixed use, mixed tenure opportunity development sites within the city centre as previously approved by Council in December 2019 and 2020. Officers continue to work to bring forward the first opportunity as part of Phase 1 of the SSA work Phase 2 of the SSA work aims to identify residential led opportunities across the city wide public sector estate.
	Progress the Future City Centre Programme
3.39	In February 2020, Members of the CG&R committee approved the emerging 'Future City Centre Programme' (FCC) which builds on the key findings and recommendations outlined in the Belfast City Centre Retail Analysis, and aims to create a dynamic and experiential destination for users of the city centre and bolster Belfast as NI's dominant retail and leisure destination. The Programme included a number of priority themes including Physical Regeneration & Environmental Improvements, City Centre Vitality, Positioning the City Centre to Compete, Addressing Vacancies and Policy & Legislation
3.40	The programme is however being recast in the context of Covid-19 to ensure that it addresses not only challenges to the retail and leisure sector but the city centre as a whole. Some specific projects being progressed include: ▪ Public realm catalyst projects- historic developer contributions have been committed to 5 city centre streets through the 5C's scheme (design team appointed), while other catalyst projects are being developed in conjunction with DfC and DfI including the Fredrick Street, York Street Junction, and Belfast Streets Ahead (BSA) phases 3 & 5 (design team procurement commenced May 2020). ▪ Entries & Lanes- work is continuing to transform a number of city centre pedestrian lanes. The work, due to complete late summer 2020, will enhance permeability and wayfinding through the city centre and promote local heritage and culture.

	▪ Cathedral Gardens - work is continuing on site to deliver a multi-functional family-friendly pop up park and is expected to complete during summer 2020. ▪ Lighting Strategy - work is almost complete on a Lighting Strategy for Belfast which will guide future delivery of all types of lighting across the city. A number of innovative lighting pilot projects have also been designed, with installation due to complete summer 2020. ▪ Addressing vacancies- mapping out and tracking vacancy levels across the primary retail core, and bringing forward proposals for meanwhile use to support independents, community infrastructure, and the cultural and arts sector; as well as supporting the longer term establishment of a retail, leisure and tourism narrative to understand the emerging market behaviours and specifically the medium and long term impact of Covid-19. ▪ Digital Innovation- it is recognised that digital innovation is likely to be a key enabler of recovery and consideration is being given to how data, analytics, complementary digital platforms and marketing can be used to aid short-long term recovery for businesses.
  3.41 3.42 3.43	<u>Financial and resource implications</u> Members will note that the Department for Communities intend to shortly bring forward a ‘Revitalisation Plus’ £10million regional fund to enable councils to bring forward specific proposals to support city centre recovery. Whilst the specifics of the fund is still to be released council officers are working with departmental colleagues to identify the potential scale of funding for Belfast and the potential to align with the emerging recovery plans outlined above. Officers are also continuing to lobby the Executive Departments for funding to assist with recovery and in particular to align with funding that is available for local authorities in England. This includes the UK £50million High Street Fund to support the safe reopening of high streets. The UK government has also recently made an urgent call for ideas of ‘shovel ready’ infrastructure projects in England to aid economic recovery. Suggestions for projects include modernising town centres, road, rail and cycle infrastructure and skills and training. When further clarity becomes available on funding to be made available a report will be brought back to Committee for Members consideration. Additional Council funding to support the recovery plan will need to be considered as part of the proposed financing strategy which is also being considered at this meeting.
 3.44	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> Equality screening will be undertaken as part of the ongoing workplans and delivery activity.

4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	▪ Appendix 1 Emerging draft recovery programme – plans on page ▪ Appendix 2 Draft City' Confidence Mark'

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Belfast City Council

City Recovery Programme

Emerging Plans (Draft & Live)

Belfast WORKING TO HELP YOU #Stay Safe

Community **'A Plan on a Page'** priority areas of focus

Belfast City Council

	Phase 1: Response -Up to 6 months-	Phase 2: Rebuild -Up to 12 months-	Phase 3: Recovery -Up to 24-36months-
Social / Community	• Deliver public services during pandemic; distribute food, provide community based services etc. • Building Confidence, Capacity and Resilience • **Accelerate Consider alignment of any residual grant / funding allocations for 2020/21** • Imaginative use of open and civic spaces • **Accelerate community provision work** • **Accelerate Area Planning (transformational places)** • Enhance Area Support Team model • Enabling access and enhancing connectivity • Enhance cycle infrastructure connecting city • Improve links - neighbourhoods & city centre • Extended Footways / Pedestrian priority streets • Residential streets-prioritise walking& cycling • Digital provision/support for children / vulnerable groups (e.g. laptops). • Consider & introduce measures to enhance health & safety of our neighbourhood assets. • Undertake BCC assets review and consider interim alternative uses • Consider changing our Belfast Bike model - prioritise the busiest sites and employ cleaners to hand out and receive bikes	• Redesigning/retrofitting the city to enable social distancing • **Building confidence, capacity and resilience within communities** • **Consider** new delivery community support models • **Develop place-making neighbourhoods investment programme.** • **Progress Strategic Sites Assessment & land assembly opportunities** • Support local economic models co-operatives, social enterprise etc. • Civic engagement to shape recovery plans. • **Embed Area based working / expedite Community Provision work** • **Community Greenways and enhanced sustainable movement** • Accelerate Social Value Procurement & **'Buying local' initiatives** • Develop and implement neighbourhood investment programme. • Investment in Community Infrastructure and Assets • Development of a culture and tourism recovery plan • Delivery of 2020/21 local tourism programme & capacity building • Embed Area based working / expedite Community Provision work • Potential to create 'playable streets' in neighbourhoods (DFI). • Proactive approach (with partners) to provide holistic family support Work with partners to support community preparations for any second wave / cycles of lockdown which may emerge • Engage with Departments, SEUPB (Peace Plus), and others to develop our connected communities pathways model. • Consider and identify opportunities for greater integration of VCSE delivery as part of mainstream delivery.	• Long term change in connectivity- how people move around the city, and spend time together • Targeted work to reduce inequalities (health, income, educational.) • Support the re-building the capacity of community organisations & community networks. Opportunities to invest in new delivery models & partnerships- co-operatives, social enterprise • Implement neighbourhood investment programme. • Supporting and investing in local tourism. • Supporting and enabling social enterprises & co-operatives. • Support 'buying local' initiatives • Progress Strategic Sites Assessment and land assembly opportunities • Working with DFC to overcoming the obstacles to housing across all tenures and to identify financial models to unlock the housing market. • Work with partners to develop a long term revised and sustainable funding model for VCSE sector.

Economic **‘A Plan on a Page’** priority areas of focus

Belfast City Council

Economic

Phase 1: Response
-Up to 6 months-

- Focus will be on job retention and business survival
- Pivoting our business support offer to include a greater focus on support for digital transformation and business
- Launch new business information line (8 June 2020)

Reopening City (& Community)

- Developing public trust and confidence – comms & ‘**confidence mark**’
- Funding to support business reopening (NI Exc)
- Business Advice Line.
- Mapping/Zone retail & economic hotspots
- Operational and logistical planning (e.g. social distance measures, signage, wayfinding etc)
- Enhanced /visible cleaning /sanitising regime
- Signage and wayfinding
- Ambassadors ‘feet on the street’
- Environmental improvements
- Street furniture thinning to support pedestrian flows and SDM
- Imaginative use of open and civic spaces
- Create an attractive environment
- Licensing (on-street vendors)
- Enabling access and enhancing connectivity

Phase 2: Rebuild
-Up to 12 months-

- Marketing campaign (Holiday at Home)
- Employer incentive scheme to encourage recruit LTU/economically inactive
- Business start-up and growth (e.g. Innovation Factory Support Programme)
- Enterprise pathway programme
- “Go for It” start-up support programme
- Digital Support Programme for Businesses
- Digital re-reskilling programme
- Supporting social enterprises and cooperatives
- Supporting and encouraging Apprenticeships
- Development of a culture and tourism recovery plan
- City Animation Programme – experience lead approach
- Meanwhile uses programme
- Academies Programme (e.g. Green Recovery, upskilling in social care, logistics)
- Education programme for year-11 & 12 students (Halloween)
- Educational Underachievement Programmes (e.g. GEMS, Belfast Youth Support Programme); Employment Academies
- Employment programmes & support for “newly unemployed”, long-term unemployed and economically inactive through programmes/ academies
- Enterprise Research Centre at Aston Business School to re-model start-up offer

Phase 3: Recovery
-Up to 24-36months-

- Long term restructuring/ reset of economy- Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission; City Deal /Climate / Housing / Innovation / Dublin Economic Corridor
- Influence stimulus and investment for inclusive & sustainable recovery
- Stimulus & Investment Plan – Green, Digital, innovation
- Permanent changes to city landscape
- Move forward on the plans for development and delivery of the proposals for 2023 and the UNESCO City of Music.
- Belfast Destination Hub and City Deal
- Develop a new model for business tourism, taking account of changing patterns of attendance and engagement (integrating digital and onsite conferencing).
- 10 year Tourism Plan for the city including economic modelling, experience based product development and local tourism framework
- Developing a new model for the delivery of business start-up and growth.

Environmental ‘A Plan on a Page’ priority areas of focus

Belfast City Council

Environmental

Phase 1: Response
-Up to 6 months-

- Improved air quality, reduced noise pollution due to reduced economic activity. High temperatures a risk as summer approaches.
- Locking in new behaviours
- Air Quality Assessment
- Develop options paper to minimise the impact of air and noise pollution post Covid-19 to inform the development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast

Phase 2: Rebuild
-Up to 12 months-

- Incentivise reduced car use , promote & support use of public transport
- Partner with Translink on re-design of network to support environmental improvements
- Detailed review of air quality PM 2.5 for city and new Air Quality Action Plan for Belfast
- Accelerate electric vehicle infrastructure project and other sustainable/smart transport and mobility programmes
- One Million Trees programme -– accelerate site assessment and widen to include city centre
- With DFI, consider opportunities for sustainable urban drainage to reduce environmental risks and align with tree planting
- Finalisation and publication of Resilience Strategy
- Commence and complete energy review (BCC)
- Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission to produce ‘think piece’ to position Belfast for short term stimulus programmes
- Scoping work for Academies Programme on green technology
- BCC Climate Plan – accelerate immediate ‘quick wins’
- Focus on supporting food sustainability
- Participation in NI Executive lead ‘Green Growth Forum’

Phase 3: Recovery
-Up to 24-36months-

- One Million Trees at scale including wider ‘greening’ of city, e.g. rooftops programme with private sector
- Wider roll out of EV-PV hub to support electric vehicle infrastructure
- Options for major energy programme: infrastructure and market
- Mini Stern implementation- retrofit programme for social housing
- Investor prospectus for decarbonisation of commercial and public buildings (Belfast Climate Commission- Finance workstream)
- Investment in sustainable energy / Zero carbon projects / Community energy networks– BCC in partnership
- Partnership to deliver Living with Water Programme (Physical)
- Support Increase local renewable energy generation.
- Increase recycling of domestic & commercial waste streams (circular economy)
- Investment in biodiversity to improve for health and wellbeing.
- Contribute to review of building regulations
- Smart buildings/ healthy buildings/ resilient buildings- partnership with industry on smart metering
- Accelerate with partners sustainable/smart transport and mobility programmes (including electric vehicle infrastructure)
- Foundation programmes with DEARA as part of Green Growth Strategy
- Final report Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission
- Belfast Climate Commission work on community capacity (energy)

Digital Innovation **'Plan on a Page'** priority areas of focus

Belfast City Council

Belfast Digital Innovation Strategy

Phase 1: Response
-Up to 6 months-

Economic
- Develop Digital Innovation Strategy to maximise impact in post COVID recovery
- Identify BRCD projects or programmes that could be accelerated for early implementation
- Assess potential for short-term programmes to operate across all City and Growth Deals
- Develop Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership Programme focus on accelerated recovery program.
- Identify Smart Belfast Projects that can be adopted or accelerated for early implementation
- Develop strategies and implementation plan to utilise fiscal levers under UK Governments "Levelling Up" strategy

Citizen
- Deliver Digital reskilling, upskilling and inclusion programs.
- Broker digital innovation expertise of local businesses with immediate societal needs through Covid Connect NI website
- Adoption of Smart technologies to support

Business
- Champion Belfast Start-up community re: funding support- InnovateUK
- Marketing "Belfast Digital Resilient Businesses"
- Support Increased business economic resilience & productivity through digital training /support services, infrast. investment, enabling greater digitisation
- Deliver Digital transformation program for on-line retail
- Develop the plans for the Smart District Sandbox to support rapid innovation

Phase 2: Rebuild
-Up to 12 months-

Economic
- Deepening engagement with BRCD Innovation OBC and Digital Pillar to maximise economic impact.
- Strengthen relations with UK Gov. Digital Innovation key stakeholders to ensure Belfast voice and special status is integrated in UK wide economic levelling up approach. (British Business Bank, InnovateUK).
- Develop BRCD challenge fund programme to tackle economic, societal and environmental challenges as part of digital programme OBC
- Progress Freeport plan in enabling digital innovation eco-system

Citizen
- Develop updated BRCD employability & skills programme reflecting post Covid need
- Development of innovation and digital lighthouse projects to maximise the economic, social , environmental impact of BRCD funding
- Adoption of Smart technologies to support citizen and smart city operations

Business
- Deliver Smart District Sandbox to support rapid innovation
- Stimulate increased industry collaboration with key innovation sectors and public /private sector co-investment through the Challenge Funds

Phase 3: Recovery
-Up to 24-36months-

Economic
- Deliver co-investment and collaboration across industry, academia and Government
- Deliver on Smart Belfast program to include Innovation District, Smart District and Smart Port
- Build upon our strength sectors to increase productivity and economic growth across the Belfast region.
- Implement first tranche of BRCD capital investments

Citizen
- Deliver Healthy Urban Living neighbourhoods
- Deliver sustainable urban mobility solutions
- Implement reskilling for the Digital economy and HealthCare
- Implement BRCD E&S programme and inclusive growth framework

Business
- Deliver enhanced digital infrastructure in gigabyte fibre and next generation wireless
- Deliver Energy Innovation District
- Develop Global HealthCare cluster
- Accelerate Digital Economy cluster
- Use Smart District to re-imagine High street

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Appendix 2: City Confidence Mark

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STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	City Region Growth Deal – update
Date:	19 June 2020
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Some time in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	This report is to provide an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) in the context of the Covid-19 emergency and the importance of the Investment Programme to the region's long-term recovery plans.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked: • Note the announcement of the £350m match funding for BRCD from the Northern Ireland Executive. • Note the update in respect of each of the pillars and the governance and resourcing arrangements in light of the Covid-19 emergency.

	• Note the update in respect of the BRCD Council Panel. • Note the key strategic challenges ahead when the immediate crisis has passed its peak and the importance the BRCD Programme will play in the region's recovery from the Covid-19 emergency.
3.0	**Main report**
 3.1	**Programme Update** Due to the emergency pandemic and the increased pressure on partners, in particular local councils, in the early stages of the response to the pandemic the meetings of the BRCD Executive Board, Advisory Boards and the BRCD Council Panel were cancelled. Plans for enhanced stakeholder engagement were also postponed.
3.2	The BRCD Team however continued to engage with partners virtually to understand the immediate implications for progressing work relating to the BRCD and to seek to support continued progress in the development of business cases where practicable. Virtual meetings have now resumed although the BRCD team is mindful of the significant pressures still faced by partners in ensuring the continuation of essential services, supporting the emergency response to the crisis and ensuring the safety of their staff, customers and citizens.
3.3	The Covid-19 pandemic has had a monumental impact on people all across the world. Beyond the immediate impacts, the widespread societal and economic impact, the full extent of which isn't fully known at this stage, will create a number of challenges for the BRCD, including in relation to timelines and some areas of planned investment. However, the BRCD was developed based on a robust industrial strategic framework which aligns key economic strengths with resilient and growing areas of the economy. The BRCD is therefore well positioned to play a key role in supporting long-term economic recovery across Northern Ireland.
3,.4	The aim of developing OBCs for all the capital projects that were outlined in the Heads of Terms document by end of May 2020 has understandably had to be reviewed and will be addressed as the situation evolves and greater clarity is known. Discussions are ongoing with the NI and UK Governments and BRCD Partners in relation to the timeline to sign a 'Deal Document', with previous target being to have a Deal Document ready by end September 2020.

	NI Funding and Governance Arrangements
3.5	On 4th May 2020 the NI Executive announced £350m match funding for the BRCD, confirming the commitment to an overall investment package from the UK and NI Governments and the BRCD partners of £850M. This was a clear recognition of the role that the BRCD can play in the long-term recovery from the effects of Covid-19.
3.6	As well as announcing the match funding the Executive has also agreed to provide up to an additional £100 million for complementary projects where partners can demonstrate a viable capital project which is complementary to the City/Growth Deal proposals. The BRCD Team will liaise with officials to clarify the details of the Executive agreement including the reference to the £100m for complementary project.
3.7	The NI Executive also confirmed a commitment to match fund other City and Growth Deals in Northern Ireland and agreed NI Governance Structures for City and Growth Deals.
	Investment Priorities
3.8	The BRCD Programme Management office has continued to engage and conduct business online with partners across all pillars, and an update on progress to date is provided below.
	Tourism and Regeneration
3.9	Checkpoint sessions for Tourism and Regeneration strategic cases have proceeded during April, with strategic cases being circulated to all relevant partners for review and comment to enable progress on OBC development to continue. Progress continues to be made but the impact of Covid-19 is creating real challenges in the Tourism & Regeneration pillar given the severe implications for the tourism, hospitality and retail sectors. Engagement is ongoing with partners to achieve progress where possible and to support the further development of OBCs. The Tourism & Regeneration Advisory Board have begun to discuss the implications of Covid-19 with among others, colleagues from the Department for the Economy, Tourism NI and the Tourism Alliance, however more time will be needed before the overall impact on the sector is understood and also how the BRCD projects can best support the long term recovery.
	Innovation
3.10	The Innovation Advisory Board, is overseeing the development of plans for five global centres of excellence in the digital and creative industries, life and health sciences and advanced manufacturing growth sectors. Business cases have now been drafted following engagement with over 250 businesses and government stakeholders. The first three draft OBCs, Advanced

	Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC), Global Innovation Institute (GII) and Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare (i-REACH) were submitted to UK and NI government departments for consideration and review in February 2020. Feedback from the Department for the Economy and Invest NI, has been provided and is now under consideration. A fourth OBC, the Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology (CDHT) has also been submitted in June for review. Due to the Covid-19 response, feedback from the UK Government has been delayed and there will undoubtedly be a delay in completing the business cases. There is a desire nevertheless to progress the completion of the OBCs as soon as possible as there is a recognition in both government and industry that these projects are potentially more important than ever, as they seek to strengthen innovation and research capability in sectors that have proved resilient during the current crisis and which are well positioned to continue to grow after the pandemic. **Digital**
3.11	The BRCD Team has been engaging with the Department for the Economy and the UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport to discuss the proposed approach to development of the digital pillar to ensure that the ambitious digital programme is sufficiently flexible to respond to the rapid nature of technological development. This will include an increased use of challenge funds to support industry innovation. The Covid19 crisis has highlighted the fundamental importance to the economy and society of the increased investment in our digital capabilities that is planned as part of the BRCD.
3.12	The Fraunhofer/BABLE Institute, a global leader in digital innovation and smart districts/testbeds, has been working with partners to develop an implementation plan for the main elements of the digital programme. There have been impacts from the travel restrictions imposed as a result of Covid-19 and due to the limited opportunity for detailed business engagement during the current crisis. As a result, the BABLE timetable has been revised and business engagement postponed. The outputs from BABLE, which will feed into the programme business case, will now be available at the end of June.
3.13	Jayne Brady has been appointed as the Digital Innovation Commissioner for Belfast and has now taken on the role of Chairperson of the BRCD's Digital Advisory Board. Jayne will be engaging with partners in the coming weeks to help shape the planned BRCD investments

	so that they are effective in both tackling major societal challenges, such as digital exclusion, and boosting the digital innovation capabilities of businesses across the region.
	Infrastructure
3.14	As the Department with responsibility for the delivery of the infrastructure projects, the Department for Infrastructure is leading the Infrastructure investment pillar. Engagement with the project leads to ensure the OBCs identify opportunities to integrate with the overall BRCD programme has been delayed but will recommence in the next few weeks. Key areas of integration include social value and employability & skills, recognising the critical importance of these in contributing towards inclusive growth.
3.15	As a result of Covid-19 the Infrastructure Advisory Board (IAB) planned for March was cancelled. A virtual meeting will be scheduled within the next few weeks at which interim OBCs are expected to be submitted for consideration.
	Employability and Skills (E&S)
3.16	The Employability & Skills Pillar work programme has been realigned in light of Covid-19 to focus on those areas in which progress could be achieved in the current context. Significant progress continues to be made in developing programme interventions in priority areas, specialist consultants have been commissioned to develop programme proposals in a number of areas and an inclusive growth framework has also been developed for consideration by the Employability & Skills Advisory Board. Detailed engagement with partners and with industry which was postponed during the Covid crisis will start to recommence in June and will continue over the summer.
3.17	There has also been initial discussions about the potential for fast-tracking proposals for digital skills/inclusion to support the immediate COVID-19 recovery and a specific task and finish group involving all council partners has been established to progress this.
	Communications & Engagement
3.18	Communication and engagement continues to be a priority both at a project and programme level. However, planned work on strategic engagement, including both business and political engagement has been postponed due to the Covid-19 crisis. Briefing documents outlining key economic and social benefits of each project and overall BRCD programme will be prepared to support the engagement activities that will take place after the current crisis.

	BRCD Council Panel
3.19	Members will be aware that the BRCD Council Panel provides a joint forum for members from all six councils to meet to jointly discuss issues, progress and benefits of the BRCD. Each council has four members on the Forum and as agreed by this committee the four nominees from BCC are the party group leaders (or their nominees) of the four largest parties. As highlighted due to the emergency pandemic, the April meeting of the BRCD Council Panel was cancelled.
3.20	The next meeting of the panel, which was due to be held in June will also be postponed and an update report has been provided to Panel Members. The BRCD team will liaise with Council partners to identify an appropriate date for rescheduling the postponed meetings and whether a virtual meeting could be scheduled.
	Strategic Challenges & Next Steps
3.21	The BRCD Executive Board and the Advisory Boards for each of the investment priorities are in process of reviewing and challenging the BRCD programmes and projects to ensure that they are effective in delivering the partners ambitions for inclusive economic growth in what is likely to be a very challenging economic climate. On completion of this work revised timelines will be developed for OBC completion and developing the associated financial and implementation plans.
3.22	The work that has been completed to date has identified a very strong alignment between planned investments in innovation, digital and skills with what is required for an inclusive economic and social recovery. The scale of the current crisis has also further emphasised the need for strong collaboration between partners across the public and private sector and our anchor institutions. Such collaboration is a fundamental strength of the BRCD. Also, whilst is by its nature a transformative and medium to long term programme, there have been opportunities identified to aid the short-term recovery, specifically in digital capacity building, skills and inclusion. The aim of this short-term work is to align the resources of the City Deal with the plans of partners and investment from government to improve digital literacy, support the development of new digital business models and develop skills for the future economy.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.18	All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.

	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.19	The Approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that; *'BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.'*
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	None

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STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	Smart Belfast update
Date:	19 June 2020
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Deborah Colville, City Innovation Manager Mark McCann, City Innovation Programme Lead

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Some time in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	'Smart Belfast' encourages city partners to work together to exploit leading-edge technologies (such as AI, robotics, wireless networks, data science and industrial service design) in order to address urban challenges in more innovative ways. And at the same time, fostering a creative environment in which start-ups and established businesses can adopt digital technologies to create new products and services. The approach is likely to become increasingly important as Belfast emerges from the Covid-19 crisis. As a powerful contributor to increased productivity, digital innovation will be vital to

	Belfast's economic recovery. Smart Belfast will have a role to play in this. This paper sets out the current work of the team and a number of forthcoming opportunities.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked: 1. To note the launch of the Covid Connect platform and that proposals for future developments will be presented to Committee in August. 2. To note the award of €680,431 to Belfast under Horizon 2020's 'Entrepreneurship for the Transformation of Historic Urban Areas' project, and the commencement date of autumn 2020. 3. Members are asked to note the contents of the attached Smart District booklet. 4. To approve Belfast City Council's membership of the World Economic Forum & G20's Smart Cities Alliance. 5. To approve the Council's participation in the ESCR/IRC Data Driven Societies project application. 6. To note the award of £100,000 for Phase Two of Amazing Spaces: Smart Places. 7. To approve the Council's participation in a €250,000 bid to Horizon 2020's nature-based solutions call to address urban air pollution. 8. To approve the Council's support for a £500,000 Urban Mobility project bid to Innovate UK's Smart Grant.
3.0	**Main report**
3.1	**Covid Connect platform** During the first phase of the Covid-19 crisis, the City Innovation team were approached by a number of digital companies seeking to offer help in response to challenges faced by government and community and voluntary sector organisations. And at the same time the team had also been approached by organisations, including teams within the Council, seeking technical support.
3.2	In response the team rapidly established the www.covidconnectni.com online brokerage platform over a three-week period. (It was officially launched by the Lord Mayor on 18th May and received publicity locally and nationally.) The platform connects companies offering mainly digital support (often on a pro bono basis) with public, community and voluntary sector bodies. The platform builds on a European funded project the team had already been part of, led by local SME Xpand Group.
3.3	To date, over 80 organisations have signed up to the platform (including EY, Deloitte, Amazon, BT, Microsoft, Kainos, etc.) The brokerage service has already led to a number of

	projects including data analysis on business sectors in the city; solutions for organisations seeking to engage remote with vulnerable client groups; and using sentiment analysis tools to track the update of social distancing guidance to support health organisations.
3.4	The team are currently developing proposals for a longer term role for the platform once the initial crisis response period is over. For example, the platform can be re-purposed to support better collaboration between organisations across the city on a wide range of digital innovation projects. Members are asked to note the work on the platform and that proposals will be presented to Committee in August.
3.5	**Entrepreneurship for the Transformation of Historic Urban Areas (Hub-In)** Committee had previously approved Belfast City Council's participation in a €7.5 million consortium bid to Horizon 2020 for a project that proposes to work with local communities to develop entrepreneurial skills in relation to opportunities arising from the transformation on historic urban areas.
3.6	The European Commission has informed partners that the bid was successful. Belfast will receive €680,431 of the award over four years commencing autumn 2020. EU partners accepted that Belfast's Maritime Mile met their 'historic urban area' criteria and the Council therefore onboarded the Titanic Foundation as a key local delivery partner. (Other partners we have onboarded included Catalyst Inc, Ulster University, Dept for Finance's Innovation Lab and Future Screens NI.)
3.7	Under an MoU with Titanic Foundation, the Council will recruit a funded staff member and manage the grant finances. Titanic Foundation will be primarily responsible for co-ordinating the designing and deliver of the on-the-ground programme with local communities – connecting the wider maritime mile developments with entrepreneurial innovation programmes with local community.
3.8	Members are asked to note the successful application and that the project is due to begin in Autumn 2020.
3.9	**The Belfast Smart District and post-Covid recovery** Building on the Smart Belfast approach, work is now under way with the Vice-Chancellors of both local universities, Belfast Harbour and Catalyst Inc, to develop a shared narrative that makes the case for Belfast as a globally significant place for innovative businesses to invest.

3.10	The narrative is constructed around the investment opportunities of the 'Belfast Smart District'. Members will be aware of Belfast Harbour's existing commitment to invest £254 million over the next five years and the plans for digital and innovation investments under the Belfast Region City Deal. Partners are considering opportunities to promote these investments alongside complementary plans for an FDI-focused innovation district at Titanic Quarter; and a Belfast City Council-led 'Smart Core' that focuses on the revival of our city centre.
3.11	As Belfast prepared plans for economic recovery, the importance of place-based digital innovation, that builds of the city's indigenous research and sector strengths, will be an important element of this work. The attached leaflet is a first attempt to share this ambition with both local and international business.
3.12	Members are asked to note the contents of the attached Smart District booklet.
3.13	**G20 Smart Cities Alliance membership** Following discussions at the Smart Cities World Congress in Barcelona in November 2019, we have been asked to join the World Economic Forum and G20's Smart Cities Alliance. https://globalsmartcitiesalliance.org
3.14	This Alliance is bringing together 20 global cities to establish standards and practice on the ethical development of Smart Cities. There are no charges or fees associated with membership, just a commitment of Officers to engage on the development of the standards. As part of the Belfast group we have also suggested the involvement of Daithí Mac Síthigh, Professor of Law and Innovation at Queen's University Belfast, to take part as an international academic expert on data ethics. Professor Mac Síthigh has agreed in principle to be part of the work, pending Committee approval.
3.15	Members will probably be well aware that digital technologies raise issues of trust and privacy – and that city councils around the world are beginning to take a leadership role in ensuring that emerging smart city projects are designed around a shared ethical approach. Belfast's involvement in this global framework places the city at the forefront of this debate, something which will prove attractive to innovators and technologists.
3.16	Members are therefore asked to approve Belfast City Council's membership of the Alliance.

3.17	**Data Driven Societies: Enabling Public Engagement** In a similar vein, Belfast has been asked to take part in a bid led by Maynooth University to the Economic and Social Research Council & Irish Research Council to develop a learning network between Dublin, Edinburgh and Belfast that aims to strengthen the potential of data driven innovation and Artificial Intelligence to have a positive impact on individuals and society.
3.18	If successful, Belfast City Council Officers would be asked to contribute to an international multi-stakeholder network for social science, civil society and public sector organisations across the UK and Ireland.
3.19	Members are asked to approve Belfast City Council's participation in the project if the funding application is successful.
	Amazing Spaces, Smart Places update
3.20	The Council has received confirmation from the Department for the Economy that a final £100,000 has been agreed for phase two (April 2020 to March 2021) of the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) project, *'Amazing Spaces, Smart Places'*. This is a joint project with the Department of Justice to support SMEs to work with council to develop innovative methods to help manage the safe use of our parks and open spaces. This brings the total funding received to a total of £320K.
3.21	The City Innovation team and officers from City & Neighbourhoods department will be working with two local companies who are now through to phase 2, Civic Dollars and SparroWatch, to further develop proto-types in a real-world park environment. Engagement will continue with park users, communities and Members. The work takes on a renewed significance in the light of the current social distancing challenge as emerging learning will inform how parks are used.
3.22	Members are asked to note this next award of £100,000 for Phase two of Amazing Spaces,: Smart Places.
3.23	**Upsurge: Air Quality and nature-based solutions** Smart Belfast was approached by a consortium of European cities wishing to develop a substantial Horizon 2020 bid to trial nature-based solutions to urban air quality problems.

3.24	The bid is being led by Slovenia's E-Institute and administration of the project locally would be delivered by Queen's University's School of Built Environment working closely with the Council's Resilience team and the City Innovation team.
3.25	If successful, up to €250,000 would be available to Belfast over a four year period to test interventions seeking to reduce local air pollution levels. An outline phase 1 proposal has just been accepted by the European Commission. Partners will now work together to develop a more detailed phase 2 proposal prior to the September deadline. If successful funding will be awarded from December 2020.
3.26	Members will note the opportunity that the project represents in relation to the city's draft Resilience strategy, our Climate Emergency agenda, and the city's Blue and Green strategy.
3.27	Members are asked to approve the Council's participation in the phase two bid development process.
	Covid-19 and Urban mobility
3.28	As cities emerge from lock-down many analysts have noted that there are likely to be a series of urban mobility challenges as well as new opportunities to support active travel (eg) walking, cycling, e-bikes or scooters. Understanding existing travel behaviours will be important for new plans and interventions – and the use of digital technology is playing an increasingly important role.
3.29	Smart Belfast are involved in a number of projects to support digitally-enabled mobility. The Council were recently involved in a successful bid to the Department for Finance's Open Data NI competition. This seeks to use a combination of publicly available data and commercial data to explore the impact of new mobility solutions on local SMEs.
3.30	Building on this work, the lead company, Xpand Group, has invited the Council to participate in a more ambitious application to Innovate UK's Smart Grants. This fund is making £25 million to industry to deliver ambitious or disruptive R&D innovations that can make a significant impact on the economy.
3.31	The Belfast bid will focus on mobility solutions in relation to SME survival during in the months after the Covid lockdown. The duration of the project will be between 6 to 18 months with a project value of between £250,000 and £500,000.

3.32	Members are asked to approve Belfast City Council's support for the bid. Further details will be presented to the Committee in August.
4.	**Financial & Resource Implications**
3.33	All costs associated with this work have been identified within existing departmental budgets.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.34	None.
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 - Smart Belfast Booklet

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Belfast

Putting our citizens at the heart of Urban Innovation

Our ambition

Belfast is a city of creators and inventors. Innovation is in our DNA. Down the generations we have demonstrated a resilience and an ingenuity firmly grounded in grass-roots entrepreneurship.

We are home to a vibrant and engaged community of businesses, researchers, corporations, SMEs, start-ups and incubators. Together, supported by a determined city leadership, we are collaborating on shared global challenges such as healthy urban living, mobility and sustainable energy.

Our collaborative approach draws from a deep well of research excellence and strong digital economy clusters in areas such as fintech, cyber security, bioscience and artificial intelligence. We have exciting emerging clusters in life and health sciences focusing on data-driven and connected technologies that will transform the health of our citizens.

Smart Belfast is a statement of our collective intent to harness knowledge, assets and investments to drive a transformative once-in-a-lifetime innovation and inclusive economic growth programme. This ambition will be greatly accelerated by a forthcoming £1 billion Belfast Region City Deal investment in research excellence, digital connectivity, skills and economic and regeneration initiatives.

Key strengths

Belfast's knowledge economy sector is the engine of our ambition. Our fintech, cybersecurity, software and IT sectors are amongst the fastest growing in the UK.

Across the region over 40,000 people are employed in the knowledge economy sector with 7,000 employed in research and development.

Data science is an important sub-sector, with companies building strengths in AI technologies. Between them, our two universities are home to six major clusters of AI research excellence including hardware, core data science, medicine and robotics.

Our region's life and health sciences sector generates more than £800 million in sales each year. Our universities are among the UK's top ten locations for bioscience research.

By 2030, Belfast's knowledge economy sector has the potential to deliver an additional £3 billion of GVA and generate 80,000 new jobs.

#1 international investment location for **USA cybersecurity development** projects

#1 global destination for **financial technology investment**

#1 European city for new **medical software development**

One of the fastest **growing creative industry** clusters in the UK

2nd fastest growing **knowledge economy** in the UK

Our foundations for digital innovation

Belfast Digital Innovation Partnership

A city leadership group established by Belfast City Council, Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University, Belfast Harbour and Catalyst, with a collective ambition to weave digital innovation into all aspects of our economy, our infrastructure and urban and healthcare services for the collective benefit of our citizens.

It is an action-orientated group focused on decision-making and delivery. Belfast's first **Digital Innovation Commissioner** works with the group to drive this ambition globally.

The Belfast Innovation Challenge Fund

An initial £60 million fund aimed at industry and researchers to help generate innovative solutions to major urban challenges in areas such as health, mobility and decarbonisation. It will encourage new forms of collaboration between industry, academia, government and wider society.

Centres of Research Excellence

Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University are establishing new centres of research excellence that build on their existing strengths and offer a unique resource to drive economic recovery and urban transformation. These centres are in the heart of Smart Belfast:

- **The Global Innovation Institute:** Offering co-innovation between research and industry, harnessing AI and big data research expertise to deliver a One Health agenda.
- **Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology:** A world-class space for researchers, industry and clinicians to innovate in Life and Health Sciences solutions including connected health and tele-medicine technologies.
- **Institute of Research Excellence for Advanced Clinical Healthcare (iREACH):** A unique ecosystem driven by researchers, industry, the NHS and government to test new drugs and support their integration into health care pathways.
- **Screen and Media Innovation Lab:** Seeking to exploit and embed bleeding edge technologies in the creative industries.
- **Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre:** Supporting industry to adopt rapidly maturing, disruptive technologies such as AI, robotics and next generation wireless networks.

Digital fabric

Industry has committed to making Belfast one of the first UK cities to offer 5G services. The city is enhancing this with additional investments in gigabyte fibre and next generation wireless. Enhanced connectivity will include:

- 10 Gbps fast fibre, additional LTE and WiFi coverage
- Internet of Things networks for urban services
- 5G network densification to support Industry 4.0
- A unique urban data platform for infrastructure and data sharing.

Digital Innovation Office

Providing technical expertise to the partnership, industry, researchers, start-ups and communities to support the design and initiation of programmes. It offers:

- An 'Urban Sandbox' to lower infrastructure, regulatory and other barriers to innovation.
- A Belfast Data Trust for ethical data sharing, analytics and routes to commercialisation.
- Ready access to connectivity, research excellence, innovators, SME networks and industry.
- A vehicle for joint financing and investment.

Smart District

We have strategically selected three initial locations that offer particularly rich environments for our innovation community to collaborate on research; for businesses to form and scale; for investments to flourish; and for next generation urban services to emerge.

Collectively, these locations represent a global showcase of our wider city ambition.

The Innovation District

Built on the foundations of Belfast's engineering excellence, resiliency and creativity, the Innovation District will be a flourishing world-class hub for research, innovation and entrepreneurialism.

The district forms a sweeping arc from Ulster University's new £250 million purpose-built campus, running through City Quays and the Odyssey pavilion, and north along Titanic Quarter to the Catalyst Campus where Queen's University's proposed Global Innovation Institute will be located.

It covers almost 400 acres of the city, with the capacity to create homes for 10,000 people, employment space for over 30,000 jobs and educational space for 25,000 academics and students.

This will be a community for creative innovation where entrepreneurs, innovators, start-ups, researchers and large enterprises collide in a rich, mixed use, digitally connected waterfront environment.

The Smart Core

Belfast's city centre is undergoing a generational transformation as partners look to create an integrated cultural, retail and living environment for the coming decade. Major new investments are planned by both the private and public sectors to meet this ambition. The successful emergence of a transformed city centre is a key priority in the city's recovery.

We have plans to greatly increase the area's residential population, grow new businesses and deliver new forms of urban services.

As the world's urban population grows, the demand for advanced urban services has created a rapidly expanding market, worth an estimated £2.5 trillion by 2025.

The Smart District is an unique opportunity for companies to design and deliver innovative urban services in a supportive real-world environment; one that offers an 'urban sandbox' that reduces the complex barriers to in situ innovation.

The Smart Port

Belfast Harbour is the second largest port on the island of Ireland, handling 70% of Northern Ireland's trade and 20% of that of the entire island of Ireland.

The 2,000 acre Harbour Estate is the largest in the UK and is a key economic hub for the region. It is home to 760 businesses across a vibrant sectoral mix including a number of leading tourist attractions and the largest film studios in the UK, outside of Pinewood Studios.

With substantial investments in infrastructure and digital technologies, Belfast Harbour aims to become a Smart Port and Green Port, as well as the world's best regional port.

Key Investments

Innovation District

1) Global Innovation Institute
A £54m AI hub drawing together the leading-edge skills of three research institutes: The Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology, The Institute of Health Sciences and The Institute of Global Food Security.

2) Catalyst
A 25-acre site providing 300,000 sq ft (with plans to increase to 1 million sq ft) of agile workspace for 3,000 people and 130 companies including Microsoft, IBM, SAP, Philips and Citi Group. Catalyst is a community of like-minded innovators in an entrepreneurial ecosystem, helping to drive the knowledge economy.

3) Titanic Film Studios
One of Europe's largest film studios, attracting producers such as HBO and Universal. Main studio and post-production facility for HBO's fantasy series, Game of Thrones.

4) Titanic Belfast
The world's largest Titanic visitor experience, attracting over six million visitors since it opened in 2012.

5) Belfast Metropolitan College
One of the largest colleges in the UK, providing further and higher education for 40,000 students, with qualifications in areas such as cybersecurity, immersive technology, visual effects and computer games development.

6) Olympic House (P)
150,000ft^2 of Grade A office space offering a quality, efficient and sustainable working environment.

7) W5's Digital Skills Academy (P)
Microsoft is investing £1 million in a new academy, creating a DreamSpace digital skills experience for school-age young people.

8) Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (P)
The £86m AMIC will work with industry to develop new manufacturing technologies, including design work at the Advanced Composites and Engineering Centre in Belfast.

9) Belfast Waterside (P)
A £450 million development on 16 acres of prime riverfront land, providing places to live, play, work and stay. It will feature BEON, a space dedicated to training and generating talent, a place where ideas can be tested, developed and shaped.

10) City Quays
A £275 million, eight hectare, office-led waterfront regeneration project located on former docklands.

11) Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Headquarters of Belfast Harbour since 1847.

12) Ulster University campus
£250m investment in Ulster University's new Belfast campus, delivering a world-class facility to 15,000 students and staff.

13) Centre for Digital Health Technologies (P)
A £45m Ulster University centre for digital healthcare and associated living labs in the areas of cardiology, diabetes, respiratory and stroke.

14) The Sixth
A £80m mixed-use scheme with 30,000m^2 of commercial space, including state-of-the-art workspace and active ground floor uses such as cafés, restaurants and retail.

15) Screen and Media Innovation Lab (P)
A £40m world-leading research and innovation centre to accelerate the creative industries sector in Belfast, already one of the fastest growing creative clusters in the UK and home to over 1,600 companies employing 20,000 people.

Smart Core

16) Belfast Destination Hub (P)
A signature cultural visitor destination in the heart of the city featuring: the Belfast Story contemporary visitor experience; the Belfast Film Centre; creative and digital skills spaces; inspirational architecture and civic spaces.

17) Tribeca Belfast (P)
A prime 12-acre city centre regeneration scheme, investing £500m to deliver 1.5 million sq ft of residential, office, retail, hospitality and cultural space.

18) Belfast Streets Ahead
A major public realm improvement scheme, including surfacing, lighting, landscaping, street furniture and public art.

19) Inner North West
A 42 acre city centre site incorporating residential, commercial, retail and leisure, together offering a sustainable and integrated urban living environment.

20) BT Ireland Innovation Centre
A £28m R&D centre with Ulster University, focused on advanced research in IoT, AI, 5G and data analytics.

21) Ulster Bank Accelerator Hub
Based at Ulster Bank's iconic Belfast headquarters, the hub is home to Entrepreneur Accelerator companies.

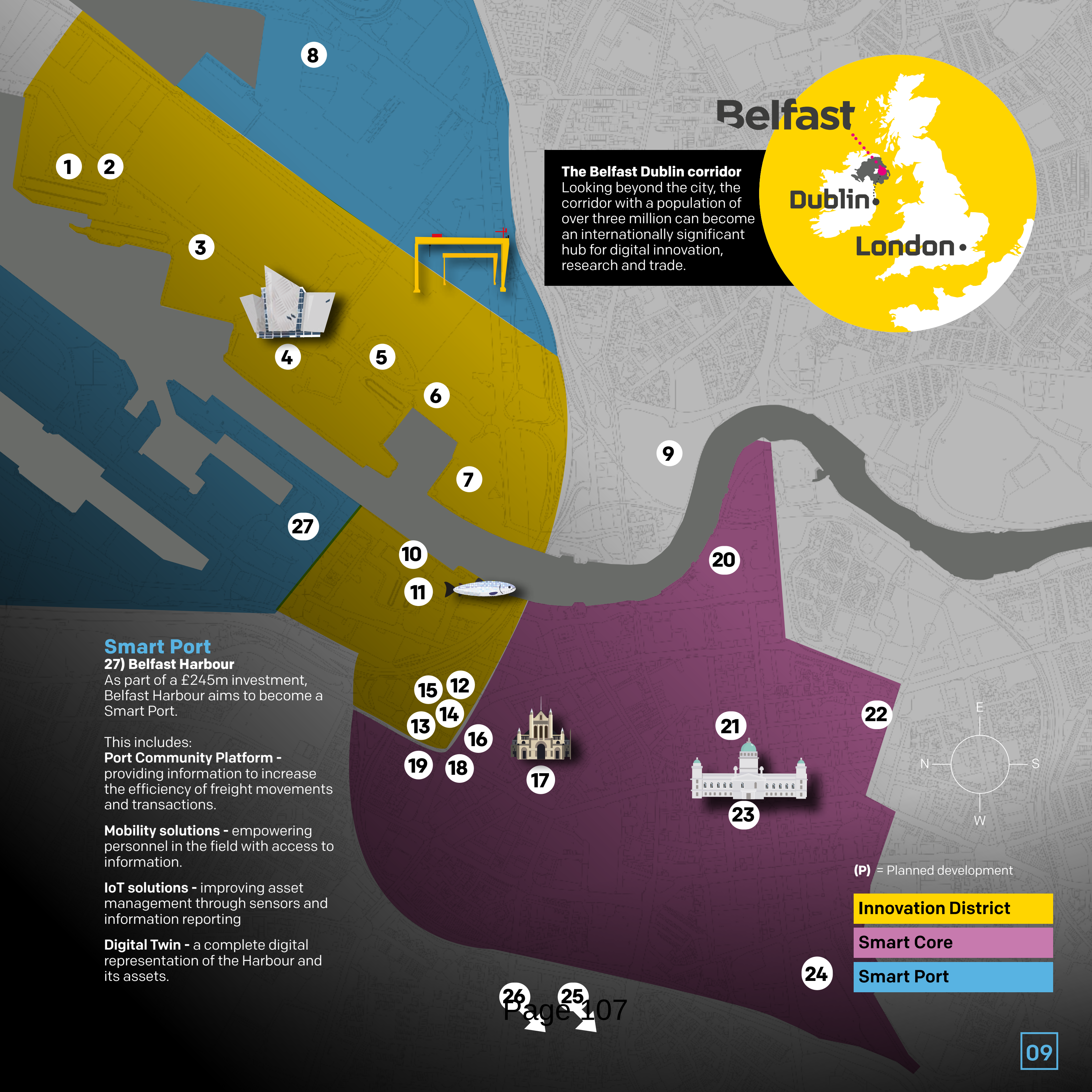
22) Ormeau Baths
Originally a Victorian bathhouse, now an award-winning co-working space for some of our brightest and best tech start-ups. Supported by over 20 global partners and home to Ignite NI, Energia and Digital Catapult NI.

23) Catalyst Belfast Fintech Hub
A partnership with Danske Bank and Catalyst, this co-working space is dedicated to our early stage tech companies that have ambitions to scale in the global finance space.

24) Weaver's Cross (P)
A £380m transport led regeneration project which will link a new high capacity transport hub with mixed-use development opportunities.

25) I-REACH (P)
£49m state-of-the-art, integrated clinical research facility, leading large scale clinical trials, supported by real-world, real-time data.

26) King's Hall Health and Wellbeing Park (P)
A £100m project to create one of the UK's most innovative health and wellbeing hubs, aiming to transform the provision of integrated healthcare.



The Belfast Dublin corridor
Looking beyond the city, the corridor with a population of over three million can become an internationally significant hub for digital innovation, research and trade.

Smart Port

27) Belfast Harbour
As part of a £245m investment, Belfast Harbour aims to become a Smart Port.

This includes:
Port Community Platform - providing information to increase the efficiency of freight movements and transactions.

Mobility solutions - empowering personnel in the field with access to information.

IoT solutions - improving asset management through sensors and information reporting

Digital Twin - a complete digital representation of the Harbour and its assets.

The Opportunities

As the city responds to the challenges and opportunities of the post-Covid period, we believe the Smart District is well-placed to be an innovation multiplier for the digital transformation of our city.

Accelerate our digital economy cluster

The Innovation District is already part of the success story that has made Belfast the number one centre for global FinTech investments. Building on this success and our research excellence in cyber security, coupled with our world-leading AI research, we now are ready to become a world class digital economy cluster.

Global health care cluster

Drawing from the research excellence of our universities and utilising the investments in the Global Innovation Institute, the Centre for Digital Health Care Technologies and i-REACH, we aim to make Belfast a global centre for AI-enabled healthcare technologies.

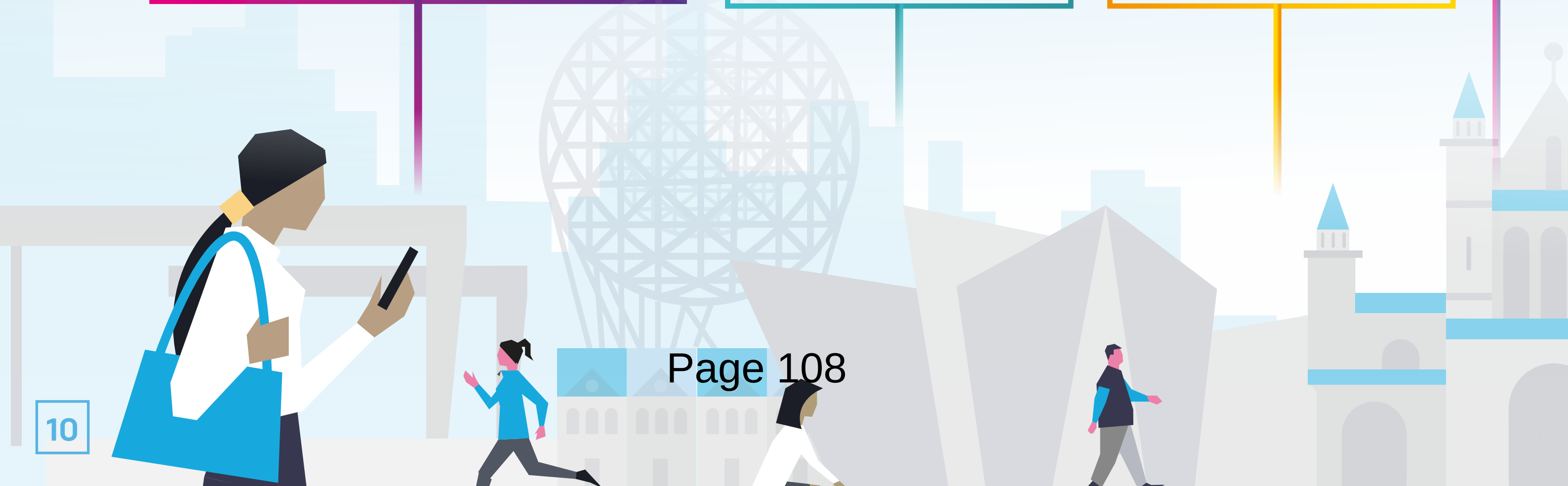
Industry, government and our universities will work together to foster a dense cluster of 500 life and health sciences companies employing over 20,000 people.

Reimagining our high street

Major retail, residential and public space investments are planned for the city centre over the coming decade. As online retail transactions continue to grow, the Smart District will provide access to technological innovations to support retailers, businesses and city planners, to successfully navigate to a new form of high street.

Healthy urban living

We aim to grow the residential population of our city centre with major investments in student housing and multi-generational homes. As the city balances sustainable densification with post-Covid social distancing challenges, we have the opportunity to work with planners, investors and our life and healthcare innovators to rethink the design of our urban neighbourhoods.



Reskilling for the AI economy

Working with communities, our universities, colleges, schools and industry to deliver programmes to prepare our citizens for the challenges and opportunities of an AI economy. The recovery, including the leap to remote-learning, presents an opportunity to rethink how we design and deliver vehicles for education and training.

AI is expected to impact on 70,000 jobs across the region. The District, home to Belfast Met - the regional college for digital skills and W5's new DreamSpace - offers an opportunity to work hand in glove with partners to design, test and deliver courses that ensure growth is felt across communities.

Gateway to Europe and beyond

With the UK exiting the European Union, a successful Belfast Port is a critical element of the Belfast and regional economy. With substantial investments in infrastructure and digital technologies, Belfast Harbour aims to become a Smart Port and Green Port, as well as the world's best regional port.

Energy transition

Northern Ireland has enviable levels of installed renewable energy generation, particularly from wind and we have potential for much more. Our challenge is transmission, storage and better energy management. We have the opportunity in the district to test and scale new technologies, including district scale hydrogen networks. And to work with transport agencies, water management bodies, industry and planners to bake-in renewables for a sustainable Belfast.

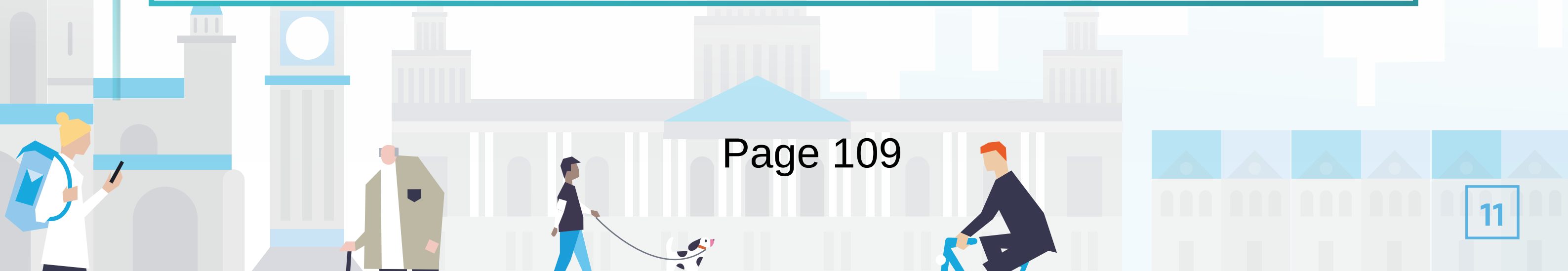
Active Belfast

Our city remains overly dependent on the private car, particularly for the work commute. The whole district, from City Hall and along the shores of the maritime mile to Titanic Quarter, is ready to make the transition to active modes of travel; last mile delivery solutions; and to prepare for the large scale usage of EV.

Digitally-enabled urban mobility solutions can support the city in this transition – whilst also offering opportunities for new businesses to develop services in a smart mobility market valued at £20 billion globally by 2024.

Belfast Destination Hub

We are developing a new contemporary visitor experience to complement the global success of Titanic Belfast. We have the opportunity to ignite collaboration between state-of-the-art experience designers, the Screen and Media Lab, the NI film and screen industry and the city's cultural sector to explore how we can tell our stories in new and innovative ways. Contemporary cultural tourism expectations requires us to think deeply about how digital innovation can help us tell the story of Belfast to the world and improve the attractiveness and liveability of the city as a leading destination.



BCC910 v5 Published June 2020

Energising
Belfast

If you want to hear more or invest in Belfast's digital innovation ambition, we would like to talk to you.

smartbelfast@belfastcity.gov.uk
www.smartbelfast.city
#smartbelfast

One of the major sources of funding for the Belfast Digital Innovation ambition is the Belfast Region City Deal which aims to secure a transformational change in the city region's economy.

Read more: **www.belfastcity.gov.uk/belfastregioncitydeal**

Belfast City Council
Belfast Harbour
Queen's University Belfast
Ulster University
Catalyst
Fuelling Opportunity

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor
Date:	19 June 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Cathy Keenan, Economic Development Manager

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Some time in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on progress to date on work to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to: • Note the outcomes from the research paper undertaken by UU Economic Policy and Dublin City University
3.0	**Main report**
3.1	Members will be aware that Belfast City Council and Dublin City Council have a longstanding working relationship built up over many years and focused principally on issues relating to economic development and city growth.

3.2	A partnership has been established including four councils in Northern Ireland and four in RoI. The council partners are: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Belfast City Council; Dublin City Council; Fingal County Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council; Louth County Council; Meath County Council; and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.
3.3	In order to shape the future direction of the partnership and identify economic opportunities along the corridor, Dublin City University and Ulster University were commissioned to carry out research on behalf of the councils. The research paper has now been completed and is included in Appendix 1. The partnership have agreed that the research paper will be provided to the North South Ministerial Council for consideration and further discussion.
3.4	The report details the current economic performance of the Corridor and the future prospects for the region based on current trends. The report also begins the work of identifying potential areas for cooperation which could create a stronger trajectory for growth.
3.5	<u>Future prospects for the Eastern Economic Corridor</u> The report highlights a number of population and employment forecasts which are based upon 'baseline' or 'current trends' assumptions, while adjusting for potential impacts of Brexit, although developed prior to Covid 19. The 'baseline' scenario to 2040 pointed to the current divergence in growth rates between NI and Ireland continuing. It also found that the Corridor would continue its trajectory to becoming the location for a third of the island's population, perhaps reaching a total of 2.5 million people by 2040.
3.6	<u>Strengths of the corridor and sector priorities</u> The report also identifies the general strengths of the Corridor as it is currently functioning, highlighting demographic trends, skills levels and connectivity. These strengths hold even in light of the current events and public health crisis. Sectoral concentrations and strengths include tradeable services (including ICT, Professional Services and Financial Services), as well as high tech Manufacturing and Construction. Another sector that is important in every Council area is tourism with 68,000 jobs across the Corridor. Over 10 million trips were made in the Corridor in 2017, with access onto the island being especially beneficial. A high proportion of these numbers are in Belfast and Dublin.
3.7	The report concludes by proposing a number of broad areas for government-led collaboration which aim to deliver additional economic value to the region and the island more generally.

	These includes promotion of the corridor area to attract investment from both inward private and domestic and public sources, in addition to investment in infrastructure in areas such as transport connectivity as well as research and innovation centres, Smart Cities initiatives, and investment in environmental and energy management projects.
3.8	<u>Financial and resource implications</u> No specific resource requirements associated with this work at present.
3.9	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> The Economic Development 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.
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 - The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor: Current Profile, Potential in Recovery & Opportunities for Cooperation Final Report Appendix 2 - Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor Logo concepts

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The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor: Current Profile, Potential in Recovery & Opportunities for Cooperation

Final Report

June 2020

Neale Blair, Jordana Corrigan, Eoin Magennis & Deiric Ó Broin

Contents

Foreword

We believe that the time has come for fresh impetus to be given to the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. There have been some successes along the Corridor since the 1990s, particularly in terms of employment opportunities, peace-building and the removal of barriers, and the rolling out of new transport infrastructure. Much of this success is due to cooperation at both the all-island and more local cross-border levels.

As we enter a new decade we believe that much more collaboration is possible for mutual benefit between the cities of Dublin and Belfast and the regions between. In 2018 a network of the eight Councils located along the Corridor and two universities came together to work collectively to find ways of realising the potential benefits of further development of the Corridor. This report is the first output of this collective work.

We are conscious that this report and the work of the local government network does not exist in a vacuum. As we finalise this report the COVID-19 pandemic has provided a severe shock to economies and communities across the globe. The impacts of having to shutter large parts of the economy and asking people to stay at home, in order to assist with public health, are only beginning to work their way through our systems. The role of local government in providing key frontline services and offering an important point of contact between central government and citizens has rarely been more obvious. The need for greater collaboration has also been highlighted.

There is also the still-unresolved final outcome of Brexit, which adds further to the need for the Corridor and the island as a whole to remain competitive in a changing world. The climate emergency is another factor which must shape our thinking about the future development of a region, almost all of which bounds the East coast.

As Councils each of us are involved in regional, county and community spatial and inclusive strategies. All of these identify the challenges and the possibilities attached to demographic changes, housing pressures, and the need to secure employment opportunities for all of our populations. In some areas we will compete with one another but we also hold a shared recognition of the potential benefits attached to any initiative to develop the Corridor.

These potential benefits associated with the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor are regularly mentioned by central governments, most recently in *Ireland 2040* and *New Decade, New Agreement*. We recognise the crucial role that will be played by government departments, economic development and other agencies and many other stakeholders from across our communities, including the voluntary and private sectors. We are publishing this report as our contribution to the wider conversation that will be necessary in developing any larger strategy to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

Our immediate objective, as members of a local government and higher education network, will be to leverage the network's resources in areas which we believe can have a positive impact and add significant value to the economic development of the Corridor at a time of great economic and social uncertainty. To this end, we have already established a partnership steering group of the Chief Executives and heads of the two universities committed to meet quarterly and a working group of local government and university staff tasked with developing a series of cooperative initiatives and projects which can begin to realise this objective.

We commend this report to you as an initial contribution to this work.

To be signed by
8 Council CEOs and UU/DCU

Executive Summary

1. The concept of a Dublin-Belfast or Eastern Economic Corridor is one that has been in circulation since the early 1990s when the ideas of high growth zones, regions or corridors were emerging. Since then economic corridors entered mainstream policy and they have also developed from purely transport infrastructure into more complex economic zones attractive to inward investment and a potential tool to tackle regional disparities.

2. In this report the geographical definition used for the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor is intended to combine both administrative and functional geography. The administrative boundaries reflect the eight Councils gathered in a local authority network who have driven the idea of looking afresh at the economic profile of the Corridor. The functional geography is intended to reflect a region which contains the significant road and rail infrastructure links between Dublin and Belfast.

3. The report has been commissioned by a local government network formed by eight Councils located in the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, who then asked staff from Ulster University and Dublin City University to research and write the profile in cooperation with the Councils.[1] The network came together with a shared recognition of the potential benefits that could arise from such an initiative and the challenges that might face it in the coming years, not least the outcome of a UK exit from the EU. In the course of its work the COVID-19 pandemic struck and the economic trajectory has shifted significantly.

4. This report sets out the recent strong economic performance of the Corridor and some idea of the significant impacts that COVID-19 is likely to have on local labour markets. The report also begins the work of identifying potential areas for cooperation which could create a stronger trajectory for growth.

5. As noted above a key reason for the appearance of the report at this time is that the Corridor faces some significant risks. There are also opportunities which present themselves. Not least, the initiatives and investments which will flow from the Belfast Region City Deal and the *Ireland 2040* plans.

Reflections from other economic corridors

6. Examples of economic corridors in other places, from other parts of the island of Ireland to GB, to continental Europe and further afield in emerging economies, offer a variety of rationales for deeper cooperation and collaborative initiatives on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

7. Learning from elsewhere is useful in identifying next steps for the Corridor. Although it is important to note the caution that 'no one-size fits all approach for achieving good governance in establishing partnership among towns, cities

and rural regions' (ESPON, 2015), a case does exist for exploring further dimensions of partnership. Looking specifically at the experience of promoting cross-border economic corridors, two key success factors suggest themselves:

1) *Know the cross-border territory, know each other within the territory* – both the strengths, weaknesses, and complementarities of the different sides of the cross-border territory, but also economic and knowledge flows that characterise it.
2) *Organise the governance of cross-border economic development* and involve all relevant territorial stakeholders active within the cross-border territory including all levels of government

8. The examples of economic corridors in Oresund, the Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford and East Asia all have one thing in common: the need ***for a clear vision of what additional economic growth might arise from the development of regional and local inter-governmental collaboration***. This ranges from aspirational doubling of additional economic output growth by 2050 in the case of Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford, to the realized growth in the share of strong economic growth in the case of the corridors of the Mekong region in Asia.

9. The lessons from other corridors also help to identify a number of ingredients for successful cooperation:
   - It is important to agree upon the current stage of development of any corridor. ***The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor project currently <u>looks like</u> it is at the 'Know the cross-border territory, know each other within the territory' stage***.
   - Cooperation among actors on a corridor needs (consistent) time, energy and support to be nurtured and to grow.
   - Local actions can deliver strategic objectives in a practical way, particularly in areas such as innovation centres and skill strategies.
   - A medium- to long-term perspective, less 'big bang' than 'slow burn', is critical, in particular around developing governance and securing resources.
   - Early wins can help cement the partnership, give support to the agreed governance and ensure sustainable cooperation.

Recent performance in the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and COVID-19

10. In terms of population, the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor has experienced strong growth in recent decades. Since 2006 alone there has been a 12% increase and, at the time of the 2016 Census in Ireland, more than 2 million people were living in the eight Council areas. Growth in the working age population (16-64 year olds) is also strong, and stands at 1.4 million people. There are high levels of diversity within this population, with 15% born outside the island.

11. Dublin city dominates the skyline when we think of population with more than 1 in 4 of the population in the Corridor living in the capital city. However, with Belfast and Fingal (between them more than the population of Dublin) to act as counter-balances this dominance lessens somewhat and perhaps points to how the Corridor, if treated as a region, might lessen some of the emphasis or pressure on the capital.

12. The labour market in all parts of the Corridor has been very buoyant in recent years. By late 2019, unemployment rates were close to or at historical lows, between 3% and 5% in most places. This was due to recent strong growth in employment numbers. On the eve of the COVID-19 pandemic, close to 1 million residents of the Corridor were in work. An even larger number of jobs are located on the Corridor, pulling in numbers of commuters, particularly to Belfast and Dublin at either end.

13. It has been a different story for the economically inactive, those not participating in the labour market due to ill health, caring duties or for other reasons. Across the Corridor there are pockets of high levels of inactivity, particularly in the Belfast, Dublin, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon (ABC) and Newry, Mourne & Down (NMD) council areas. This problem is often correlated with high levels of people with no formal qualifications and difficulties faced in retraining, and this poses the question of how to improve employability opportunities for up to two fifths of residents in some places. In any recovery from a COVID-19 recession, these issues will never be far away.

14. More than a third (34%) of residents of the Corridor have educational attainments greater than NVQ Level 4, a share of the population ahead of other parts of the island. Although this share varies from 40% in Dublin or Fingal to less than 30% in ABC and Louth, and the share also varies within individual Council areas, ***the overall picture is of a well-educated and available population***.

15. The presence of such a population – young and relatively well-educated – is certainly ***a strength for the Corridor as skills (or the availability of these) is regularly cited by businesses – both large and small – as a key challenge***. However, in every Council area on the Corridor, the demand for NVQ level 4 and higher skills has been greater than the supply. As the economy slowly recovers from the shock in 2020, this demand/supply imbalance is likely to return unless an opportunity is taken to address it. The voracious appetite of businesses for talent will not slacken, even at a time when we might be looking at high levels of unemployment. The current recognition of this issue by local authorities across the Corridor, many of whom have developed skills strategies or skills fora to address the challenge of future skills, is work that will continue to be important in order to stay out in front of competing regions.

16. Currently, the question of the ready supply, access and shortage of advanced and intermediate skills on the Corridor is being answered by commuting patterns and in-migration from off the island. At present, more than 5% of the million plus jobs on the Corridor are filled by commuters onto the Corridor from other parts of the island, often with an even higher skills profile than its residents.

17. The demand for skills has partly been a result of ***a strong pipeline of inward investment jobs in recent years***. This has been especially the case in Belfast, Dublin, Louth and, to a lesser extent, Meath. These location choices are supported by the recent results from FDI Intelligence which found that the two cities feature prominently among the cities of choice globally. Dublin is No.1 among the 'large cities' locations, while Belfast is No.2 among 'mid-sized and small cities'. Both cities score highest on what is called 'business friendliness', but less so on connectivity, suggesting one challenge to future potential.

18. Of course, the inward investment pipeline is one that cannot be taken for granted. The Corridor faces different challenges at either end: an uncertainty surrounding future plans due to Brexit for the NI locations; and internal competitiveness issues, in particular around suitable property availability and the costs of these.

19. Beyond FDI, the enterprise base on the Corridor has been a buoyant one. Almost 2 in 5 (38%) of the island's businesses are located there and the rates of firms per capita are strong too. The Corridor, as a whole, has a higher share of mid-sized businesses (with between 50 and 250 employees) than elsewhere, which may point to the successful scaling-up processes there.

20. However, the ***business demography patterns mirror the economic divergence between North and South***. There are much higher birth rates and enterprise stocks in Council areas in the southern end of the Corridor than in Belfast and others, reflecting other findings around entrepreneurship and appetite for risk. The scaling-up processes also appear on first look to be differing between North and South, which may reflect other issues of innovation and export intensity and levels of productivity.

21. Alongside the recent positive performance, there have been challenges facing the Corridor before the public health crisis. These are associated with demographics and will remain after the Coronavirus. There are particular challenges around housing provision (which could worsen in the short term), affordability of this for the 'adult' life cycle group, in particular, and slower population growth in Belfast city than in its neighbouring Council areas. In line with elsewhere, rising dependency ratios (ratio of the young and old on the working age population) pose healthcare and employment issues for local and central government. These trends pose questions for future planning, service provision and measures to deal with increasing congestion.

Future prospects for the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor?

22. Before the COVID-19 emergency began it is was proposed that this report would include a section outlining a series of population and employment forecasts, which would be based upon 'baseline' or 'current trends' assumptions, while adjusting for potential impacts of Brexit.

23. Such a 'baseline' scenario[2] out to 2040 contains some trends that remain useful to consider. The forecasts pointed to the current divergence in growth rates between NI and Ireland continuing. They also found that the Corridor would continue its trajectory to becoming the location for a third of the island's population, perhaps reaching a total of 2.5 million people by 2040. And, even allowing for the severe shock of COVID-19 the 'baseline' scenario identifies the possibility that 35% of the island's jobs – nearly 1.3 million jobs – could be located on the Corridor by 2040.

24. ***None of this underestimates the certain economic impact of a COVID-19 related recession***. The estimates of impact on GDP/GVA in both parts of the island, at time of publication, hover at a 12% decline in 2020 – and this could worsen – with a high level of uncertainty about the shape of any recovery. In the meantime the early indicators are that perhaps as many as 45% of the jobs in the Corridor could be impacted, temporarily or otherwise, by furloughs and lay-offs.

25. Expectations for the most positive scenario (a V-shaped recovery) have weakened in recent weeks with many forecasters not expecting economic output to recover to 2019 levels until 2022 at the earliest. The extent to which the economy in the Dublin-Belfast Corridor can act as a driver to the island's economies may help dictate the speed and sustainability of the recovery.

26. Allowing for the impacts of COVID-19 it is clear that all cohorts of the population will increase with working age population providing a strong labour force into the future. One pattern to note is that there will continue to be stronger growth demographically in the southern part of the Corridor, when compared to the northern section. Another is that the growth patterns in the two cities are likely to continue to be outstripped by neighbouring areas, pointing again to the need for sustainable transport options.

27. Although we are likely to avoid a tight labour market for a number of years again, there will be a continuing strong demand for skills. Between expansion demand and replacement demand (as measured in a future skills assessment), there may be an annual net requirement of 30-40,000 people from education and net migration for the Corridor.

28. Much of this net requirement or demand will be in the professional occupations, such as science & technology professionals, health professionals

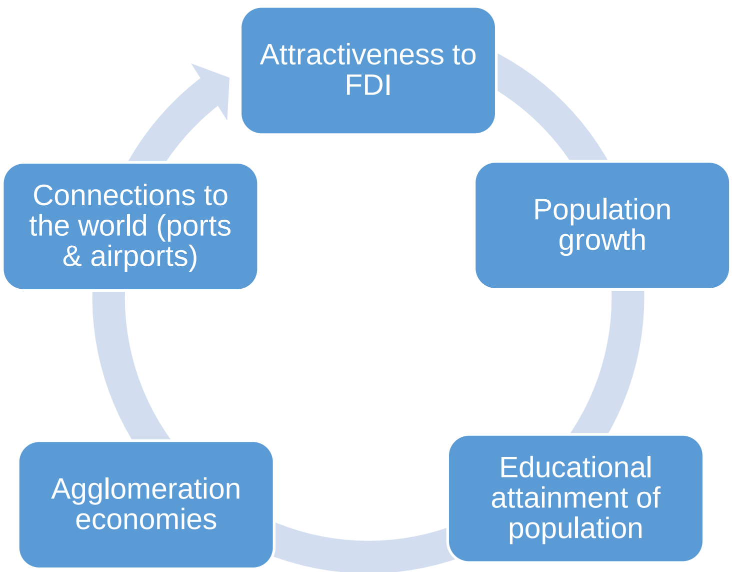
and business & service professionals. This points to ***the need to create a higher educational attainment profile than exists at present in the Corridor***.

29. While this report did develop a 'baseline' or 'current trends' scenario before COVID-19, there are at least two alternative scenarios which should be developed in any subsequent research:
    - One alternative is to hold the all-island population and employment totals constant but to propose different types of spatial development, where the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor accounts for or takes a greater (or smaller) share of total growth than in the 'current trends' scenario. This might arise due to planning policies or an industrial strategy based principally on further developing agglomeration or high growth regions (Katz & Wagner, 2014).
    - Another alternative is that the forecasts would include the additional impacts of any infrastructure investment or other policy interventions on the Corridor. There is an argument that these would create higher growth not only for the region but the island as a whole. An alternative scenario like this would require details on the proposed investments or interventions, which could then be built into the modelling of a 'high growth' scenario.

Strengths of the Corridor and sectoral priorities

30. Figure 1 summarises the general strengths of the Corridor as it is currently functioning, highlighting demographic trends, skills levels and connectivity. These strengths hold even in light of the current events and public health crisis.

Figure 1: Summary of the strengths of the Corridor



31. The report identifies the sectoral concentrations and strengths in the Corridor, particularly across tradeable services (including ICT, Professional Services and Financial Services), as well as high tech Manufacturing and Construction. Concentration analysis show how the services sectors are particularly strong in individual Council areas such as Dublin, Fingal and, to a lesser extent, Belfast. Manufacturing also has its local concentrations in ABC, Louth and Meath.

32. Alongside these concentrations the Councils themselves have identified sectoral priorities for their areas, based on current strengths and aspirations around capturing emerging sectoral trends. The aim here is to develop networks and clusters of firms and related research strengths. These typically reflect the concentrations in tradeable services, though at a more granular level the likes of cyber security (Belfast), creative industries (Dublin and Belfast), 'digital' (ABC, Louth and NMD), all feature. Showing the general importance of Agri-Food, in spite of threats from Brexit, Louth, ABC and Meath all regard this as a priority sector for them.

33. ***One sector that is ubiquitous and important to every Council area is Tourism with 68,000 jobs currently located across the Corridor. In 2018, over 10 million trips were made in the Corridor***, with access onto the island being especially beneficial. A high proportion of these in the two cities but opportunities also for the development of niche tourism packages in areas in between. This sector is likely to be a key one for impact from COVID-19 given the social distancing measures required. Supporting the sector through the difficult 2020 season and assisting it to refocus on the domestic market is probably key in the short term.

34. Figure 1 also identifies the importance of agglomeration economies or the benefits of location in a same area/city, or in proximity to firms in your sector or related sectors (Duranton and Kerr, 2016). The advantage of these agglomeration economies is the opportunity to promote areas in certain ways as *the location* for certain activities or to build research, innovation and capabilities infrastructure to support current economic growth and find sources of future accelerated development.

35. Development plans for Corridors often begin with a plan to mobilise key 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure assets in order to support such agglomeration economies. The first category includes physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, ports and so on, while the second are enabling institutions, such as education and health structures or organisations.

36. The report includes a short assessment of the current state and performance of the transport assets (detailed in Box 1) and the importance of national and EU investment programmes for these. This assessment shows how the Corridor has a varying level of transport connectivity depending upon the mode of travel. Connectivity off the island, through five different ports and

three airports, is well-served although access to some or all of these assets is an issue, as is the performance of public transport along the Corridor.

37. 'Soft' infrastructure refers less to physical engineering projects and more to the institutional, educational and research supports which could enable economic development. The Corridor is well-endowed in these with five university campuses, a technological university and an Institute of Technology are located on the Corridor, all bar one of these in Dublin and Belfast alone. Almost 110,000 students were enrolled in these institutions in the 2017/2018 academic year, but the potential goes wider than that. Research contributions from the HEIs can act a particular asset for the Corridor, as they house numerous research and incubation centres, and facilitate public and private collaborations through their Technology Transfer Offices.

Potential areas for cooperation

38. The final section of the report proposes a number of broad areas and possible actions which might be used as a beginning of a discussion of potential cooperation along the Corridor. These arise from different sources: proposals from the Councils and universities involved in the network;[3] areas identified in the research, such as 'soft' and hard' infrastructural improvements, which have underpinned successful interventions in other economic corridors; and areas which the current profile and future prospects of the Corridor suggest, such as skills development. All of the areas are included on the basis that ***they could deliver additional economic value to the region and the island more generally***.

39. The potential areas in this final section are organised under two key themes for cooperation, which reflect both the priorities identified by Councils and which have been successfully used in other corridors. These are:

- ***Promotion:*** Many of the economic corridors have pursued the gaol of successfully branding and promoting their *location*. This is often done for the purposes of attracting investment from both inward private and domestic public sources. The focus for promotion differs from place to place but there is a tendency to promote the presence of a highly skilled workforce and population, of sectoral strengths (eg: Medicon Valley in Oresund), of supports for innovative and entrepreneurial firms.

- ***Infrastructure:*** Some economic corridors (such as Oresund or the proposed Oxford/Milton Keynes/Cambridge arc) the emphasis is increasingly on the 'soft' forms of infrastructure, such as research and innovation centres, Smart Cities initiatives, and investment in environmental and energy management projects. Growth corridors in East Asia and examples such as the Basel Tri-national

Agglomeration and the 'Cascadia' Seattle/Vancouver Corridor have all based cooperation on networks of research institutes, knowledge transfers and joint research programmes in order to benefit the larger region. 'Hard' infrastructure, such as transport connectivity, has also been crucial to corridor development and will involve advocacy by the network partners at a regional and national level for further investment.

1. Introduction

1. The concept of an Eastern (or Belfast/Dublin) Economic Corridor is not a new one and was first circulated by Sir George Quigley in the early 1990s. The argument then was that such a Corridor could develop with improved transportation infrastructure, more intense interaction between firms in the region and stronger linkages between the universities located there, and between these and industry.

2. In the early 1990s three interlocking priorities were identified by the business bodies CBI and IBEC:
   - Embracing the growing forces of economic globalisation and the emergence of the (then) new Single European Market, which would reduce barriers to trade and investment and open new opportunities for the whole island of Ireland.
   - Promoting the combined scale of Dublin, Belfast and the region between the two cities to allow the island to compete in global export and inward investment markets, at a time of growing competition between regions.
   - Improving interaction along the corridor – through investment in infrastructure, and enhanced political, business and community cooperation – in order to benefit different parts of the island.

3. Sir George Quigley's argument can be summarised by the quote below and provides the basis for much of what follows in this paper.

> …THE ISLAND'S POTENTIAL WILL NOT BE REALISED UNTIL THERE DEVELOPS BETWEEN BELFAST AND DUBLIN THE NORMAL ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS INTERACTION WHICH ONE WOULD EXPECT TO SEE BETWEEN CITIES ONLY 100 MILES APART… AND IT NEEDS TO BE GENUINELY AN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR AND NOT SIMPLY A TUNNEL, WITH NOTHING HAPPENING IN THE SPACE BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES.

Source: Sir George Quigley, 'Developing the North/South Economic Corridor' (1995)

4. Significant progress has been made in realising the ambitions of the 1990s for an economic corridor. Economic growth, the numbers in employment, improvements in transport connectivity and greater levels of interaction have all been realised.

5. However, almost a quarter century on, the concept of a Dublin/Belfast Economic Corridor needs re-energising. This raises the question 'Why Now?'. The first reason is the continued aim of both governments on the island to see further development of the Corridor. This is captured in National Policy

Objective 46 in *Ireland 2040*: 'In co-operation with relevant Departments in Northern Ireland, to further support and promote the sustainable economic potential of the Dublin-Belfast Corridor and enhance its international visibility' (NPF, 2018). The agreement to restore a power-sharing Executive in NI (*New Decade, New Approach*, 2020) echoes this with mention of a 'Better Dublin Belfast Connectivity strategy as an infrastructure funding priority (p.52) and that the Irish Government will support 'serious and detailed joint consideration' of the feasibility of high-speed rail connections between Belfast, Dublin and Cork (p.59).

6. Fresh energy has also arisen out of a series of meetings since 2018 between the local authorities along the Corridor. This network of Councils decided that a profile of the current state of the economy along the Corridor and the potential for further development and cooperation was needed. The network approached Dublin City University and Ulster University to work with a steering group and produce a report which could include such a profile and draw out the lessons from other economic corridors on the development of further cooperation.

7. The geographical definition of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor which is used in this study is an attempt to reflect both the administrative geography of the local authority network behind the profile, and the functional geography based on the areas through which the road and rail links between Dublin and Belfast pass. It is a compact area of just over 7,300 km^2 (or 8.7% of the island).

8. A second answer to the question 'Why now?', lies in the risks and challenges facing the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor due to the current economic and political uncertainty. This arises from two events, the most immediate of which is the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus has not only led to an enormous public health crisis with tragic consequences across the island but it has also changed the economic trajectory of the Corridor from one of probable slowing growth in 2020 to one of a deep recession. And the shape of a recovery in 2021 and 2022 remains very unclear.

9. The other event is Brexit, which seems set to change both UK-EU and Anglo-Irish relations in fundamental ways. The existing and potential flows and inter-connections along the Corridor will certainly feature in any efforts to minimise the resulting cross-border and all-island frictions which are likely to arise from Brexit. Minimising such frictions in movement of goods, knowledge or people is key to all parts of the Corridor remaining competitive.

10. At the same time as risks there lie opportunities and pressures linked to the success of the Corridor, and particularly Dublin and Belfast, in attracting significant levels of inward investment in recent years. This success emphasises the need to ensure ongoing and future-proofed competitiveness in areas such as skills, infrastructure and entrepreneurship. It also points to

the need to develop a counter-balancing source of indigenous growth on the Corridor, in both established sectoral concentrations and emerging clusters, in order to create new start-ups and businesses of scale.

11. The final part of this answer to 'Why Now?' lies in the potential for fresh policy alignment and impetus for cooperation at all levels of government along the Corridor. Some progress has been made in the new structures arising from the National Planning Framework for Ireland (seen in the Mid & East Regional Assembly), the Belfast Region City Deal and initial work on a growth deal for the Mid, South & West region of NI.

12. A framework for this cooperation is already in place (DRDNI/DOELG, 2013) and is outlined in *Ireland 2040*. The reconfiguring of local authorities and the addition of fresh planning powers provides a basis for local leadership in the Corridor in three key areas:
    - Regional cooperation arrangements or the exploring of opportunities to achieve larger ambitions through collective strength.
    - Local initiatives, which could include joint branding of sectoral strengths (eg: tourism).
    - Coordinated spatial planning, specifically around developing a critical mass along the Corridor which can compete with other major city regions.

13. The final of these three areas points to the competing needs, which have to be balanced in any call to promote or develop the Corridor. The call for balanced regional development in both NI and the Republic of Ireland has remained strong in the 25 years since Sir George Quigley first developed a Dublin-Belfast Corridor concept. Therefore, the case remains to be made that a concentration of growth in one place can benefit other places. This point holds equally true for those benefits which can be gained by the parts of the Corridor between Belfast and Dublin.

14. There are other pressing issues for the coming decade on the Corridor. First, the need to manage environment and landscape, while at the same time seeking to deliver economic growth in all its parts. Second, the changing shape of the economy and the importance of factors such as digitalisation and automation, mean that support for current sectoral strengths will need to be accompanied by a focus on emerging sectors with their disruptive impacts on incumbent businesses.

15. One final point is that the Corridor, as a concept, is both outward and inward-looking at the same time. To successfully present the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor as a global proposition which can attract inward investment, there is a requirement for practical cooperation by local authorities and other stakeholders along the Corridor. The next section looks at the lessons that can be learned from other Corridors when pursuing this aim.

2. Lessons from other Corridors

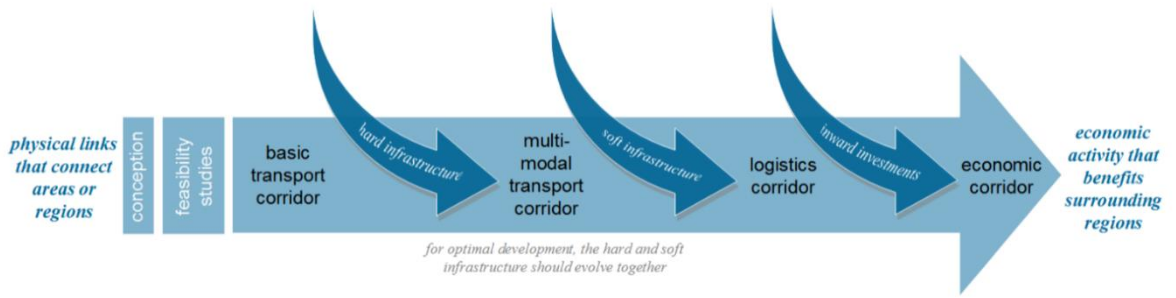
1. This section of the report explores the concept of corridors with reference to definitions and international exemplars, before turning to the ingredients (conditions) for successful development of these.

2.1 What exactly is a corridor?

2. Corridors feature globally as a tool for the spatial management of regions and associated dynamics that impact across society, economy and environment. The term 'corridor' is used variously to explain actual (observed) patterns of development, and describe future (aspirational) forms of growth. Form can vary, for example as a transport route, or evolution into a more complex economic corridor.

3. As noted above, the World Bank refers to transport, trade, or freight corridors, which can consequently *contribute toward* economic development (Hope and Cox, 2015, p.1 emphasis added). Indeed, at the heart of any successful corridor must be the 'presence of inherent economic potential' that serves as a platform by which public and private sector investment is maximised in order to 'multiply economic returns and benefits' (Kunaka and Carruthers, 2014, p.21). Mature development corridors not only impact on immediate urban areas, but can also benefit surrounding regions (see Figure 1 below).

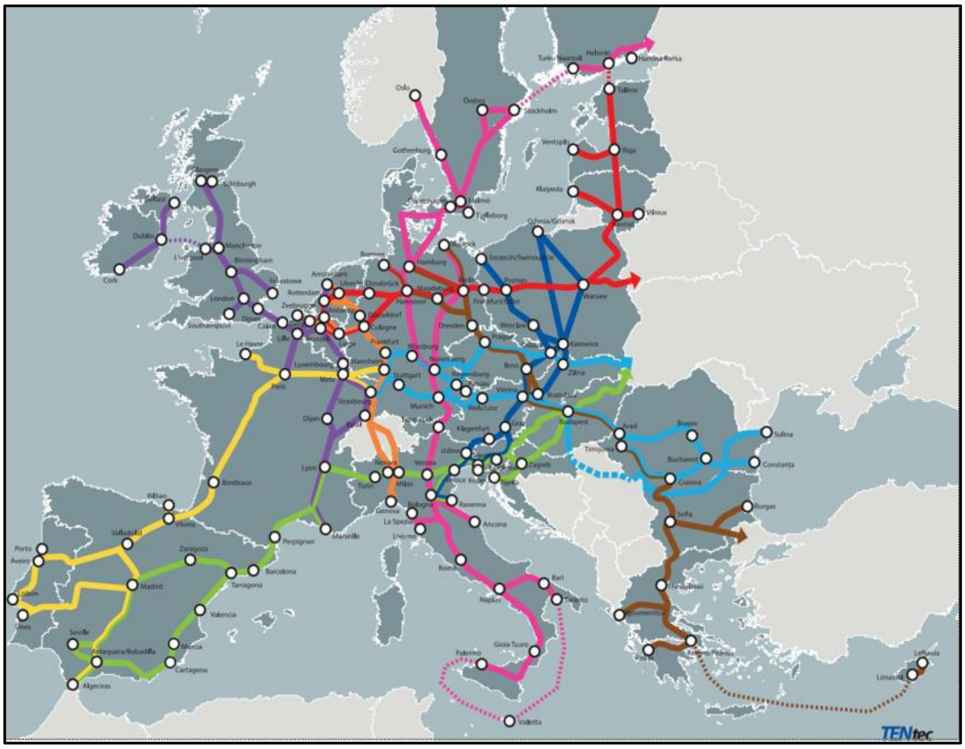
Figure 1: Evolution of a development corridor



Source: Hope and Cox, 2015, p.3.

4. The focus on freight and transport, linked to both economic growth and regional political cohesion, is core to the Nacala Corridor (southern Africa) and is mirrored in the aspirations of corridor development across Europe, underpinned by the various European Regional Development Funds and Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) initiatives. Figure 2 shows how the geography of the TEN-T core networks actually includes the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.

Figure 2: Core Network Corridors



Source: European Commission, 2019

5. Across Europe, gateways and corridors exist for economic, social and territorial cohesion and are considered as "key delivery vehicles to achieve … strategic intra- and inter-regional spatial rebalancing" (Pain, 2011, p.1160). This featured particularly strongly in both the *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS, 2002) for Ireland and in the *Regional Development Strategy* (RDS, 2001 and 2012) for Northern Ireland.

6. The latest spatial plan for Ireland – *Project Ireland 2040, National Planning Framework* (2018) – continues to refer to corridors as a tool for encouraging balanced regional development through the *Atlantic Economic Corridor* (AEC – see Figure 4) and the *Dublin-Belfast economic corridor* (see Figure 3). Indeed, in the case of the AEC funding for a network of Enterprise Hubs and Digital Spaces was announced in April 2019.

Figure 3: Strategy Map, Ireland 2040 (showing the Eastern Corridor)

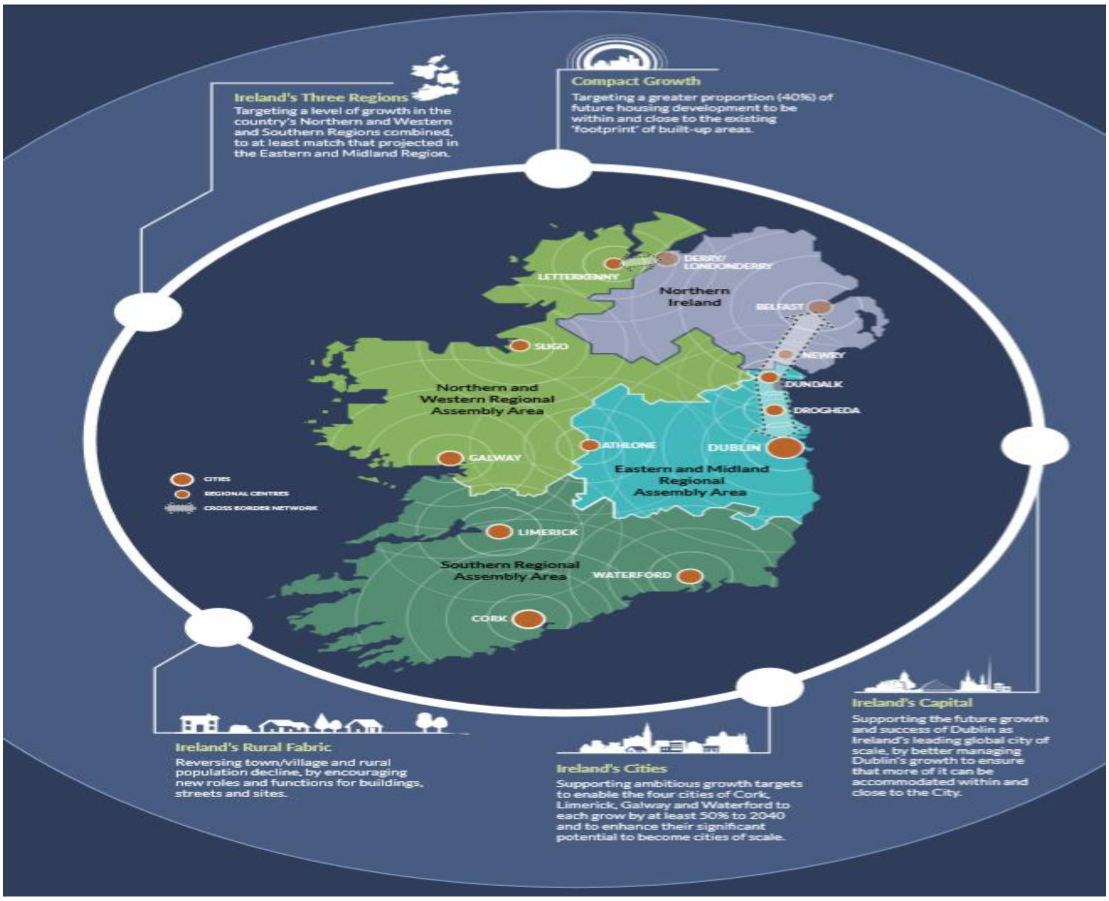
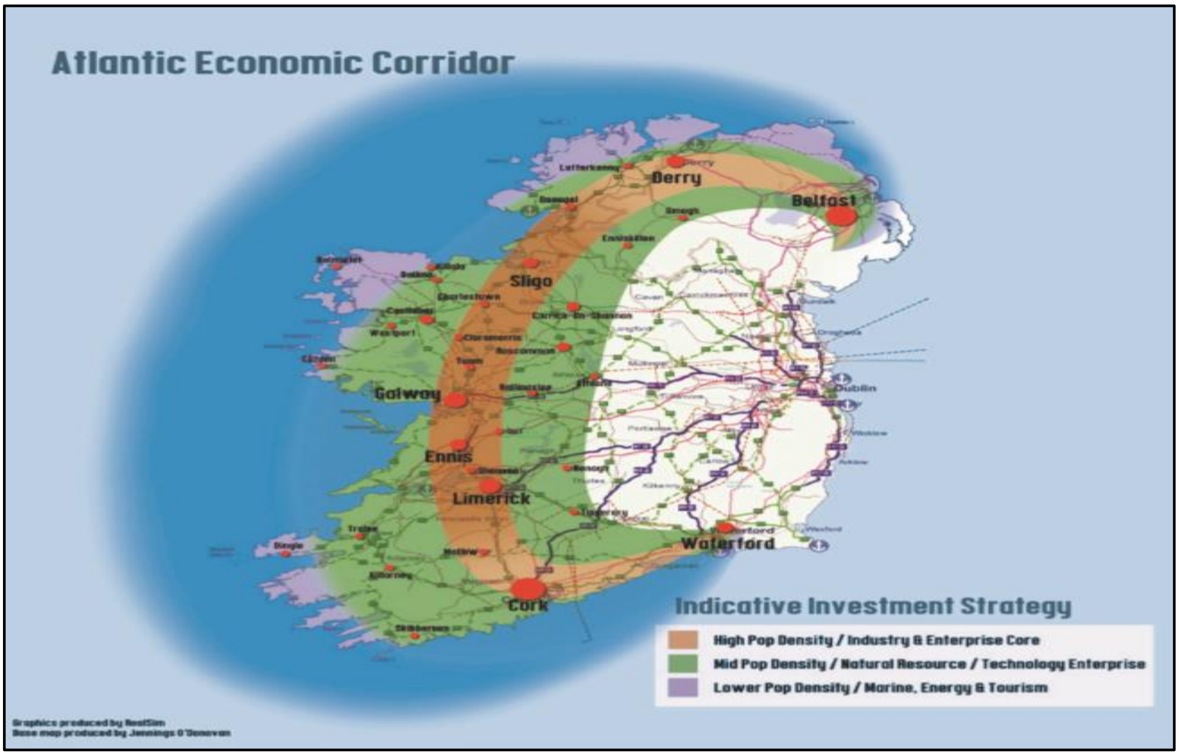


Figure 4: Map of the Atlantic Economic Corridor (showing the Western Corridor)



2.2 Ingredients (conditions) for success

7. Having scoped the corridor concept, and briefly located contemporary strategic spatial policy on the island of Ireland, the focus turns now to identification of ingredients (or conditions) for success. Experience shows there is no guarantee that designation of a corridor, for example in public sector policy, will lead to generation – or indeed implementation – of a formal plan or strategy. That said, the existence of two key factors – potentiality and partnership – are critical factors for success; the latter is more often where the gap lies in corridor development. Potentiality has been demonstrated through earlier economic analysis in this report; attention turns now to consider the partnership strand.

8. Experience elsewhere highlights that cooperation across and between public and private sector actors and agencies is essential for successful corridor development (Kunaka and Carruthers, 2014). More precisely, multi-sectoral representation and participation of the private sector are "*sine qua non* conditions for successful trade and transport corridors" (p.23). What this looks like in relation to corridor development requires more detail.

Stakeholder participation and commitment

9. Partnership can take many forms, and weak partnerships occur where there is varying buy-in from stakeholders. Consequently, cross-jurisdictional corridors thrive when linked "not only geographically but also by the same willingness and commitment to develop the corridor" (p.14, Kunaka and Carruthers, 2014).

Definition of corridor is necessary

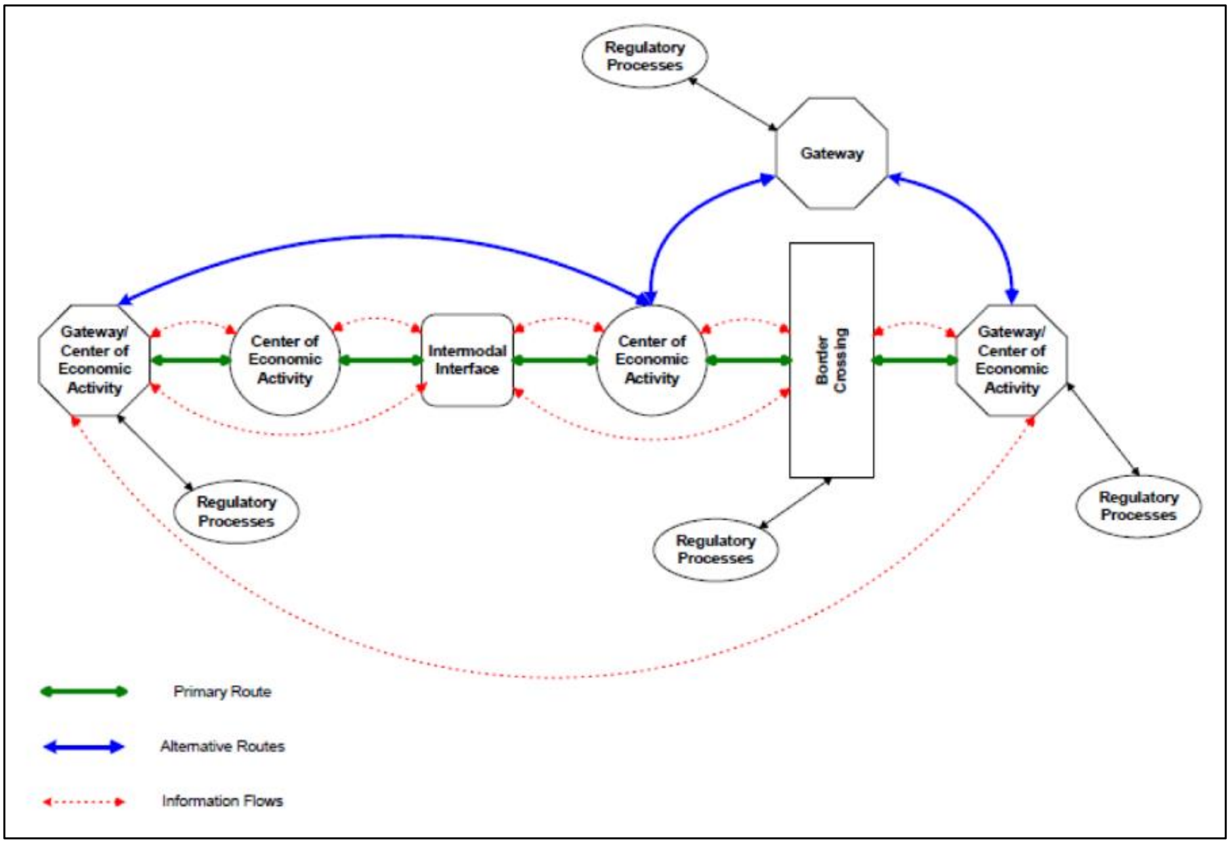
10. Designation of corridor geography, alongside identification of local and regional government administration, is required as a framework for strategy or plan development. This will help ensure development is not limited to gateways but that the benefits are more widely distributed. Figure 29 over is an example of the complex interconnectedness of corridors, which requires management both formally and informally through agreed strategy and other interventions.

Government involved locally, regionally and nationally

11. All levels of government need to be involved in corridor development. This is recognised in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc where realising the vision is dependent on "effective leadership" at national and local levels (NIC, 2017, p.3). This is to ensure enabling processes including strategic policy-making, infrastructure investment, and fiscal leverage (where appropriate) are coordinated for maximum effect. Such reciprocal multi-level cooperation is, however, not a given. With the *Oresund* initiative, for example, Danish and Swedish national authorities have been criticised for a lack of dedicated

engagement and joint actions (Nauwelaers et al, 2013, p.37-38). Central government is absent from the Oresund Committee (see details below). Furthermore, the OECD reported "mixed" commitment to the Oresund at regional and local level. One regional authority – Skåne – highly values the bridge as a "necessity" for economic survival, whereas the Danish Capital Region, with a stronger economic profile, considered cooperation as positive though not essential.

Figure 5: Components of a corridor



Source: Hope and Cox, 2015, p.2.

Corridor Governance is key

12. Good governance, with hallmarks of stakeholder inclusivity and transparency in decision-making, is another essential component of partnership. Substantial literature exists on international best practice. Preparedness amongst stakeholders to innovate can assist the corridor achieve development goals. This may require new forms of partnership. Examples here include the Oresund Committee, a forum of local and regional authorities established in 1993 for voluntary political cooperation. The Committee acted as driver for development of a vision for Oresund in 2020, and enabled local and regional authorities to develop joint land use, transportation, and environment strategies. Additional structures, including a Secretariat and external organisations, support collaboration in Oresund.

That said, arrangements in Oresund have been criticised for being overly-reliant on local and regional government, with other key actors – such as universities – not included in core structures, detrimentally impacting on strategy delivery (Nauwelaers et al, 2013).

13. Not all locations have the institutional capacity or available time to devise new governance structures. Considerable resource is required where strategy development follows a co-creation pathway to "effective inclusive planning" (Atlantic Economic Corridor, p.8). This is not a short-term action. Therefore, a trade-off may be necessary between optimal governance arrangements and leading, rather than reacting to, strong development dynamics as experienced in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford arc:

> *"It is important that debate on new governance structures does not divert partners' attention from work to develop a powerful arc-wide vision and supporting plans. It is equally important that partners avoid changes to governance structures that would introduce delay, disruption and unnecessary cost."* (NIC, 2017, p.79)

Purpose and vision

14. A central tenet of corridors is creation of a purpose and vision for development, common in spatial planning, around which strategy, actions, administration and management will coalesce. This is evident across a variety of case study examples: Oresund; Basel Tri-national agglomeration; and Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford. The Oresund Committee (see above) vision for the region in 2020 is "*By maximising the benefits of integration and cross-border dynamics, the Oresund Region will stand out as the most attractive and climate-smart region in Europe*". Whilst certainly ambitious, the vision was criticised (Nauwelaers et al, 2013) as there was no prioritisation given to twelve objectives contained in the Oresund Regional Development Strategy published in 2010. In realising a vision, coherency and continuity is necessary:

> "*Corridor development is not a single project. It is a complex combination of hard and soft infrastructure projects with different durations, often overlapping and interacting… throughout the stages of a corridor's evolution*." (Hope and Cox, 2015, p.30)

15. In summary, corridor development reflects the five key dimensions of territorial governance:
    - Coordinating actions of actors and institutions;
    - Integrating policy sectors;
    - Mobilising stakeholder participation;
    - Being adaptive to changing contexts;
    - Realising place-based/territorial specificities and impacts (ESPON, 2015).

2.3 Island of Ireland

16. Learning from elsewhere in Europe is useful in identifying next steps for the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. A case exists for exploring further dimensions of partnership, with the caution that "there is no one-size fits all approach for achieving good governance in establishing partnership among towns, cities and rural regions" (ESPON, 2015). Based on experience of promoting cross-border economic development, MOT (2019) identifies two key success factors applicable to the island of Ireland context:

> *Know the cross-border territory, know each other within the territory*
>
> "For public authorities, a joint assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, and complementarities of the different sides of the cross-border territory, and of the economic flows that characterise it, can demonstrate the interest of developing cooperation, for example around cross-border research or competitiveness clusters or centres."
>
> *Organise the governance of cross-border economic development*
>
> Involve all relevant territorial stakeholders active within the cross-border territory including all levels of government

17. Local authorities should reference *Framework for Co-operation–Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland the Republic of Ireland*, published June 2013. This provides opportunities for local government in both jurisdictions to work together and is noted in *Ireland 2040* as the enabler for cross-border collaboration in spatial planning.

2.4 Concluding points

18. It is clear from Oresund, the Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford Growth Corridor or Arc and from the emerging corridors in East Asia, such as the Northern Corridor Economic Region in Malaysia,[4] that a clear vision of *additional* economic growth is critical. In the case of Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford Arc some initial modelling refers to baseline growth doubling over a 35 year period if the interventions around transport, housing and research infrastructure are in place (NIC, 2017).

19. The ingredients for successful cooperation along other economic corridors can be summarized into the following points:
    a. Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor project <u>*looks like*</u> it is at the 'Know the cross-border territory, know each other within the territory' stage
    b. Cooperation needs (consistent) time, energy and support to be nurtured and to grow
    c. Local actions can deliver strategic objectives in a practical way

d. Not a ‘big bang’ but rather a ‘slow burn’: medium- to long-term perspective
e. Early wins can help cement the partnership and ensure sustainable cooperation

3. The Island Economy: Two Places, One Crisis

1. The start of 2018 saw an important milestone for the all-island economy when it passed the previous three million employment peak seen in 2008. As the table below shows this employment growth has continued for another year and, by late 2019, there were nearly 3.3 million jobs in the economy. The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will send many of these gains into a rapid reverse.

2. However, before we come to this point, it is important to note that during the last recovery a significant change has occurred in sectoral structure of the island's economy. Sectors such as Construction lost large numbers of jobs, with Manufacturing (a sub-set of Industry) also shedding employees over the decade. The big sectoral gainers, in terms of jobs, have been (the ever-growing) Health, ICT, Accommodation (Tourism) and Professional Services.

Table 1: Change in employment by sector, All-island, 2008-2019

	2008 Q4	2019 Q4	Change	% share in 2019
Agriculture	144,200	131,300	-12,900	4.0%
Industry	404,600	403,200	-1,400	12.3%
Construction	280,700	215,300	-65,400	6.3%
Wholesale and retail	474,700	448,700	-26,000	13.8%
Transport	123,400	141,100	+18,700	4.3%
Accommodation and food	186,200	234,900	+48,700	7.2%
ICT	107,600	159,200	+52,600	4.8%
Finance	141,700	134,700	-7,000	4.1%
Professional services	159,000	192,000	+33,000	5.8%
Administration	144,900	174,100	+29,200	5.3%
Public administration	163,000	168,800	+5,800	5.1%
Education	216,100	264,700	+48,600	8.1%
Health	357,400	435,400	+78,000	13.3%
Other	147,600	174,600	+28,000	5.2%
All sectors	**3,055,000**	**3,282,000**	**+227,000**	**100%**

Source: ONS Workforce Jobs; CSO Labour Force Survey; UUEPC analysis

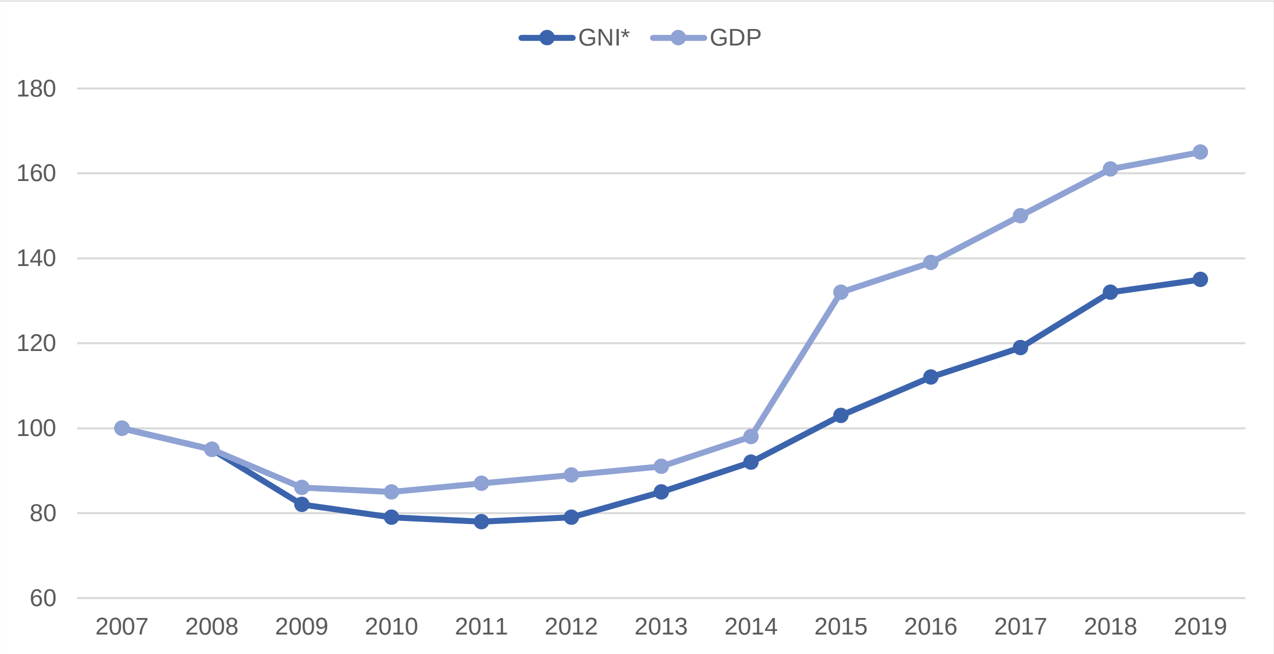
3. This ongoing restructuring in the economy is critical to the future development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, raising a key question about the types of jobs, workforce skills and living environments needed in the next two decades. The development of the Corridor is complicated by a second feature: the divergence in economic growth rates between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. These are issues returned to later in the report.

3.1 Republic of Ireland: Recent growth but severe recession ahead

4. The December 2019 ESRI *Quarterly Economic Commentary* described how 2019 had been another year of strong growth (possibly 5.5% growth in GDP), driven by both domestic and external sources of demand (ESRI, 2019). Even allowing for the difficulty in measuring GDP in the Irish economy, the recent trend has been for very strong growth.

5. Figure 6 shows the sharp recovery since 2012 that has made the Republic of Ireland one of the strongest growth performers in the Eurozone. Reflecting this underlying strength, the Gross National Income (GNI) growth rates in for each of the four years to 2019 have been between 3% and 5%.

Figure 6: Index of GDP and GNI, RoI, 2007-2019 (2007=100)



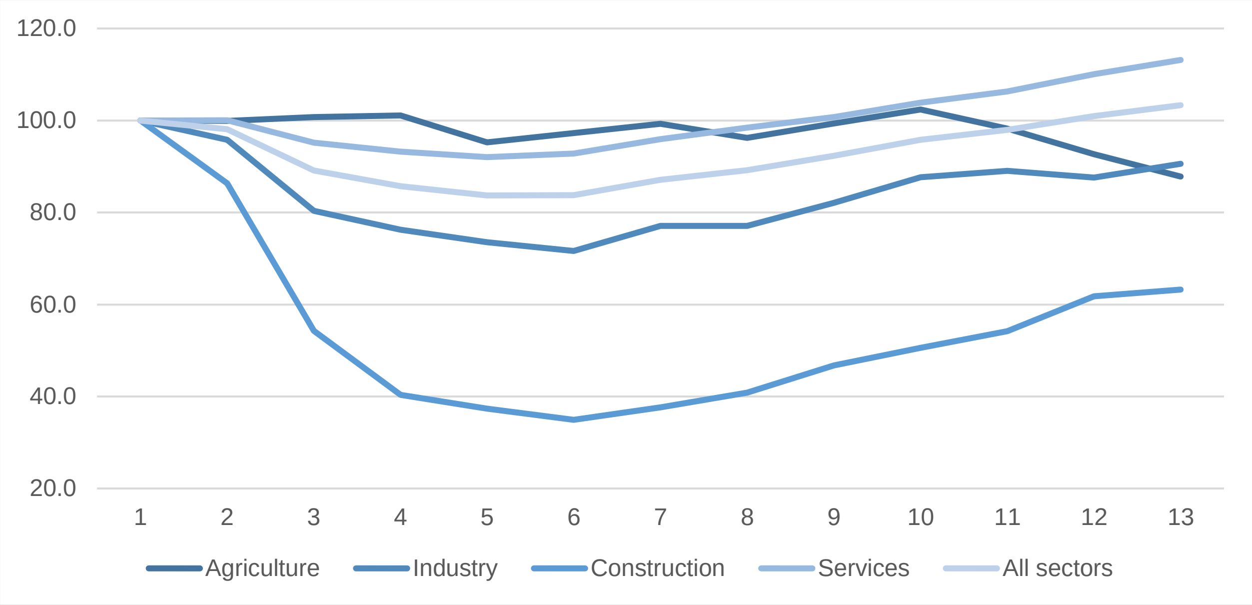
Source: UUEPC analysis

6. It is little surprise, then, that the Irish labour market performed strongly in 2019, adding on almost 80,000 jobs over the year to reach a new record of 2,261,200 people in employment. At the same time, earnings and incomes both experienced growth and inflation remained low.

7. Figures 7 and 8 show two quite different aspects of the buoyant labour market. Figure 7, looking at sectors, shows how much of the recovery has come in Services and, to a lesser extent, Industry. While Construction jobs have been increasing (an annual rise of 2.1% to Q4 2019), the numbers remain well

below the peak of 2007. This suggests that a lack of skilled and available people may well be one factor holding back the supply of new housing.

Figure 7: Index of employment by sector, RoI, 2007-2019 (2007=100)



Source: CSO Labour Force Survey (Q3 2019); UUEPC analysis
Note: Index based on 2007=100 with values taken from Q3 2007 on an annual basis.

8. Figure 8 shows how employment growth has been quite evenly distributed across Ireland's regions with most showing that 'V'-shaped trend of recession and recovery. However, two regions – Border and the South-East – are exceptions to this, and had not yet, by late 2018, returned to the levels of 2008.

Figure 8: Total employment, RoI by region, 2008-2018

Source: CSO Labour Force Survey (Q3 2018); UUEPC analysis

9. At the end of 2019 the outlook for the Irish economy was one of growth with some uncertainty (ESRI, 2019). The key factor was the many 'unknowns' about the final shape of a new UK/EU trade relationship after Brexit. The baseline growth scenario was one of slowing growth but still above 3% per annum, with the potential for Brext to reduce these rates between 2.6% and 5.0% (this being in the case of no trade deal being reached in 2020) (Bergin et al, 2019).

10. By the time this report is being published all of this has changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to stop its spread. The forecasts from the ESRI in Table 2 offer a sense of the likely economic impact of the public health crisis and social distancing measures under three scenarios: Baseline, where social distancing measures last until the end of 2020; Benign, where the measures ease more quickly than that; and Severe, where restrictions are re-applied perhaps in light of a second wave of the virus (ESRI, 2020). In each case, the impact is very severe with unemployment rates ranging from 15% to 19%, a trebling or quadrupling of the rates in 2019.

Table 2: Economic forecasts, Republic of Ireland, 2020

	2019	2020 Baseline	2020 Severe	2020 Benign
GDP (% p.a. growth)	6%	-12%	-17%	-9%
Unemployment (% of Labour Force)	5%	17%	19%	15%

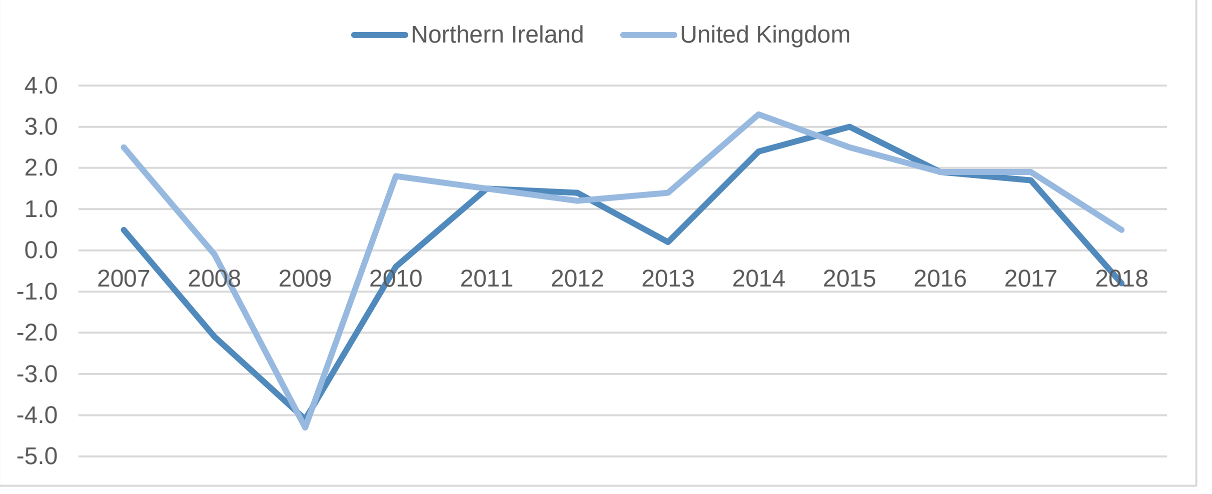
Source: ESRI (May 2020)

3.2 Northern Ireland: Risks ahead in an historic recession

11. The recent NI economic indicators have presented a mixed picture as shown in Figures 9 and 10. There are record levels of employment and historical lows for unemployment but, with a weaker productivity performance and lower income levels, a sizeable transfer from Westminster is necessary.

12. Figure 9 shows how annual Real GVA growth rates in NI since 2007 have generally been lower than the UK average. In the recovery since 2013 total GVA in NI is now 7% larger while the UK figure is 11%. This means, in effect, that NI has been falling further behind UK growth and not closing the gap with the Republic of Ireland either.

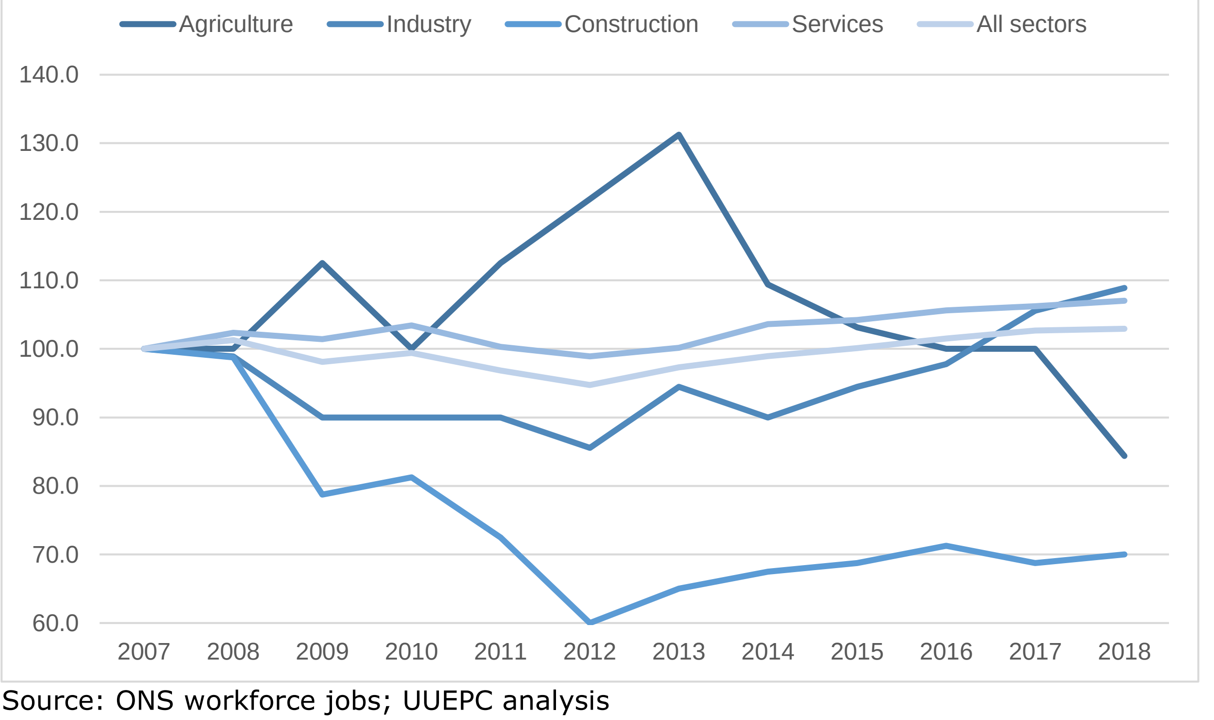
Figure 9: Annual GVA growth rates, NI and UK, 2007-2018



Source: ONS Regional GVA (Dec 2019)

13. Figure 10 shows the recovery in the labour market which is a more positive story. Between 2012 and 2019 almost 90,000 jobs were created in NI, with the previous peak (in 2007) being passed in 2015. This has resulted in record low levels of unemployment in NI, a full point below the UK average, even if rates of economic inactivity remain stubbornly high. Figure 12 shows how the recession was sharpest in Construction, which remains well below peak, while recovery has been driven mainly by Industry (Manufacturing has added more than 17,000 jobs since 2012) and Services.

Figure 10: Index of employment by sector, NI, 2007-2018 (2007=100)



Source: ONS workforce jobs; UUEPC analysis
Note: Index based on 2007=100 with values taken from Q3 2007 on an annual basis.

14. The outlook for the Northern Ireland economy, like that for the Republic of Ireland, is shaped by the same uncertainty and severe shift since late 2019. At that point Brexit was the key factor likely to affect not only future trade prospects for NI, but also consumer decisions, business investment and government spending decisions. Forecasts from the UUEPC at that point looked to very modest growth in GVA of 1.5% or less for the years to come.

15. This has all changed with COVID-19. The NI economy is now expected to enter a deep recession in 2020 and while some forecasters expect to see growth in 2021 this would still leave a smaller economy than existed in 2019. A sense of the negative direction of travel since March 2020 can be seen in Table 3 below, suggesting that there could be a similar 12% of greater decline in GVA in NI as is likely to be experienced in the Republic of Ireland.

Table 3: Estimates of GVA growth rates, NI, 2020

Forecaster and month of forecast	EY 03/20	UUEPC 04/20	Danske Bank 05/20	EY 04/20	UUEPC 06/20
GVA (% p.a. growth)	-6.7%	-9.6%	-7.5%	-9.0%	-12.7%

Sources: UUEPC, EY, Danske Bank

3.1 COVID-19: Economic impacts and prospects

16. The COVID-19 pandemic is a true "Black Swan event",[5] something completely random with enormous impacts that, in this case, could be completely unlike anything from recent experience. Thus we have seen the development of a policy framework as events have unfolded, with radically new responses to economic fallout.

17. The steps taken to date to restrict social interaction and the knock-on effects on economic activity will almost certainly keep deaths lower than they might otherwise have been. However, from an economic perspective, the impacts of more than 80% of the world's economies being affected by government containment and public health measures are still being assessed.

18. The economic shock comes in a number of forms. The pandemic containment measures have meant that employees either work from home (where they can) or have been laid off or placed on government-supported furlough or wage subsidy. Unemployment numbers have increased rapidly and many businesses have been shuttered.

19. The economic prospects are affected by the length of the shutdown and then the way in which restrictions are likely to be eased. The discussion, North and South, is now centred on 'roadmaps' to 'unfreeze' national, regional and local economies in order to minimise the economic and societal damage. However, there are also debates on the impact that loosening and then re-imposing controls may have on economic activity (the potential of a 'second wave' of the virus).

20. The local economic impacts of COVID-19 will take some time to become clearer (UUEPC, 2020). Looking at the labour market impacts only we can see that every part of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor has been impacted.

21. By late April 211,000 people in Counties Louth, Meath and Dublin were in receipt of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (these numbers may have fallen slightly in May), 36% of the total number in the Republic. The same counties accounted for 36% of the employers and 44% of the employees covered by the Wage Subsidy Scheme. In NI we have not got the same breakdown of figures but the UUEPC have estimated that 54% of the 250,000 jobs furloughed and/or laid off are located in the four council areas in the Corridor (UUEPC, 2020).

22. These numbers alone – upwards of 490,000 people and jobs – which have been impacted by COVID-19 gives a sense of the size of the shock. Excluding those working in essential services, those who can work remotely and the self-employed – who face very different and difficult challenges – this could be around 45% of the active labour market impacted by lay-off or adoption of a government jobs retention scheme. The challenge in any recovery will be to prevent as many people as possible from entering unemployment and then stimulating the economy to ensure the large numbers of those that do, can find work relatively quickly.

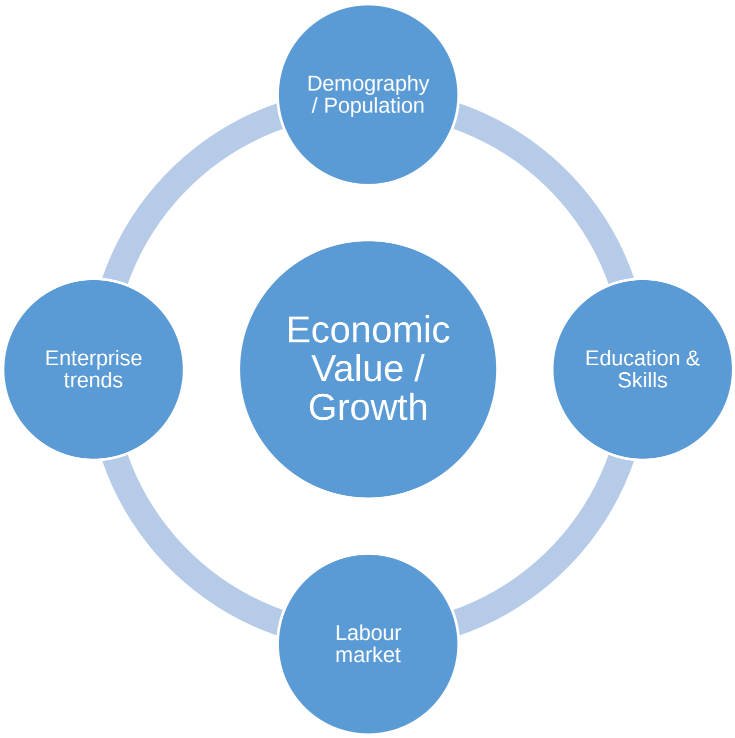
4. Profile of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

1. This section of the report contains the current economic profile of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. This offers readers the best possible estimate of the economic value of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and, in turn, provides an evidence base which can be used to support potential local government-led cooperation along the Corridor.

2. The profile offers a picture of the available data at the level of local government districts just before the first Coronavirus cases appeared. The profile includes a series of insights (through workshop and consultations) on key assets and business sectors along the Corridor.

3. The sections that follow will provide detail on five different groups of indicators shown in Figure 11. The five groups of indicators have been developed with the twin goals of providing the best possible overview of the economy of the Corridor and utilising the best-available sets of sub-regional data in both NI and the Republic of Ireland. They follow the indicators used in the recent Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, drawn up in the Republic of Ireland by Regional Authorities, and those used at local Council level in Northern Ireland for community planning purposes. The indicators have also been chosen to allow the greatest measure of cross-border comparability.

Figure 11: Indicators of the Corridor's economy



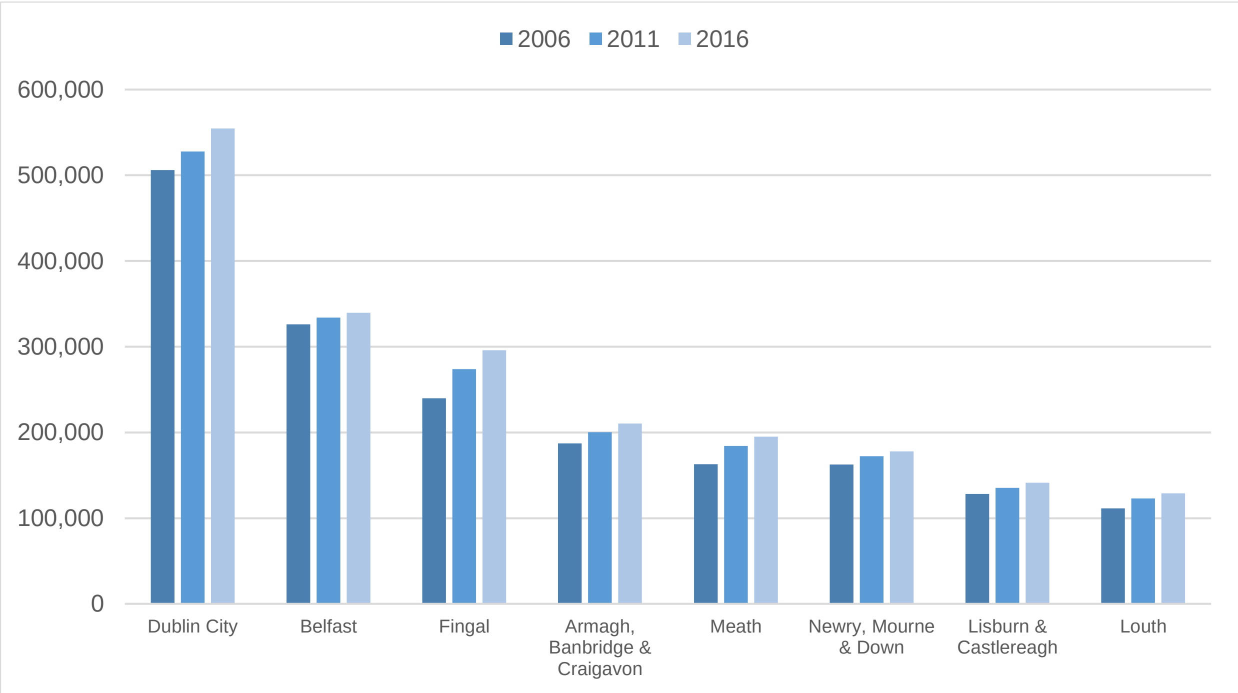
Source: UUEPC

4. The profile and the economic case for the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor will undoubtedly change in light of the COVID-19 crisis. As noted in the previous chapter, the effects of this are likely to be most striking in the labour market and enterprise trends where the question will be one of how quickly we can return to the levels seen in 2019. All of this depends not only on the shape of the recovery but also on the supports and mitigating measures that occur on the Corridor, the island and the global economy more generally.

4.1 Demography / Population

5. In 2016 there were 2.04 million people living in the eight Council areas which make up the Corridor.[6] Given the island's two largest urban centres, Dublin and Belfast, are at either end, it is little surprise that the Corridor contains 31% of the total population. Figure 12 shows these cities' primary importance, with close to half (44%) of the Corridor's population living in Dublin or Belfast.

Figure 12: Total population by LGD, 2006, 2011, 2016



Source: Census data and Mid-Year Population Estimates from CSO & NISRA

6. Table 4 shows the actual population growth between the 2006 and 2016 censuses There was an increase of nearly 93,000 people, and annual rates of growth of 1.1%. This growth rate is a little ahead of all-island growth rates over the past decade (1.0%) and therefore the Corridor's share of total population increased slightly (+0.5%) since 2006. One possible reason for this small increase in share is that, while the two major cities have continued to grow, they have done so more slowly than their average respective rates, as shown in Table 4. This also means that the share of the Corridor's population living in the two cities fell slightly (by just over 1%) in the decade since 2006.

Table 4: Population growth by numbers, % growth and annual growth rates, 2006-2016, by LGD

Geography	Total Population	Numerical Increase	% change	CAGR*
Dublin City	554,554	26,942	9.5%	0.9%
Belfast	339,579	5,684	4.2%	0.4%
Fingal	296,020	22,029	23.3%	2.1%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	210,260	9,962	12.3%	1.2%
Meath	195,044	10,909	19.8%	1.8%
Newry, Mourne & Down	177,816	5,540	9.3%	0.9%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	141,181	5,901	10.1%	1.0%
Louth	128,884	5,987	15.8%	1.5%
Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor	**2,043,338**	**92,954**	**12.0%**	**1.1%**
Northern Ireland	1,862,137	47,819	6.8%	0.7%
Republic of Ireland	4,761,865	173,613	12.3%	1.2%

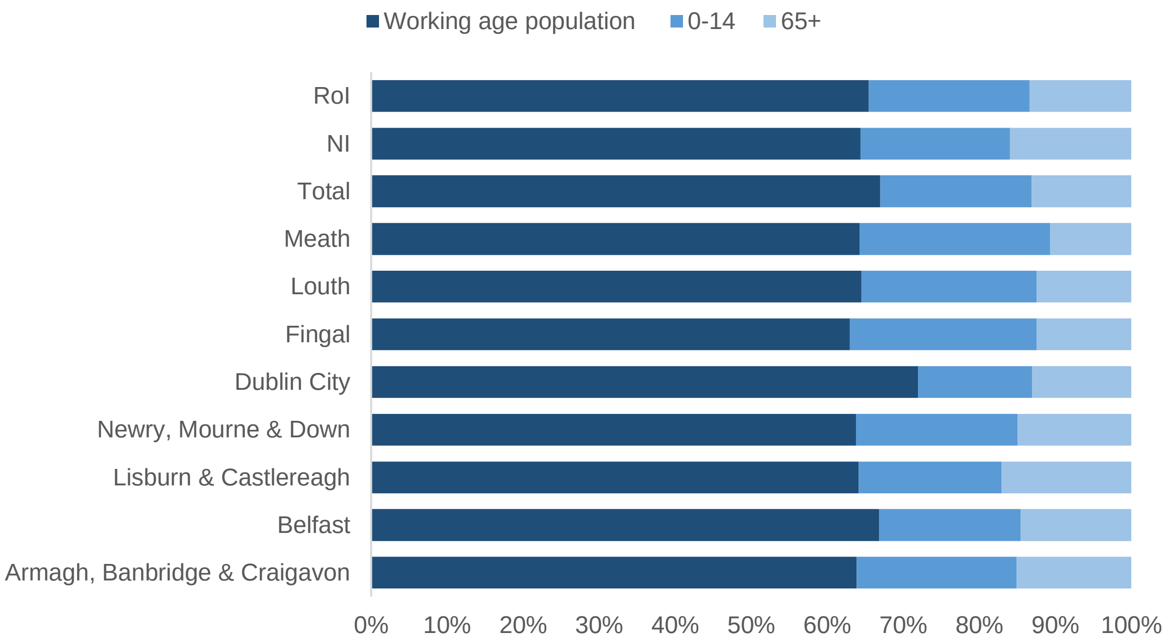
* CAGR stands for Compound Annual Growth Rate
Source: Census data from CSO & NISRA; UUEPC analysis

7. The working age population (15-64 year olds) of the Corridor has grown alongside the total population to stand at 1.4 million people in 2016. Of particular note is that the largest shares of total population taking up by those of working age exist in the two cities, especially in Dublin (72% of the total). The numbers of young people (15-23 year olds) has also grown to just over 400,000. However, the rate in growth of the 65+ year olds (to 270,000 people) has been highest as life expectancy increases.

8. The growth in older age cohorts has seen a changing dependency ratio (of the young and old on the working age population) over time. Figure 13 shows the different shares of age bands in 2016 and shows that the dependency ratio is now 2:1. The proportion of dependent people is growing on the Corridor but is behind ratios in other parts of the island, largely because Dublin and Belfast, to a lesser extent, are a magnet for residents of working age.

9. One final point on age bands is that at a more granular level of stage of life cycle (for example 'adult' and 'empty nest' as described by the CSO), very high shares of 25-44 year olds – the 'family stages' – can be found in Dublin City (37% of population) and Fingal (33%). In Louth and Meath and on the Northern side, the shares are much closer to the state averages of 29% and 26% (NI).

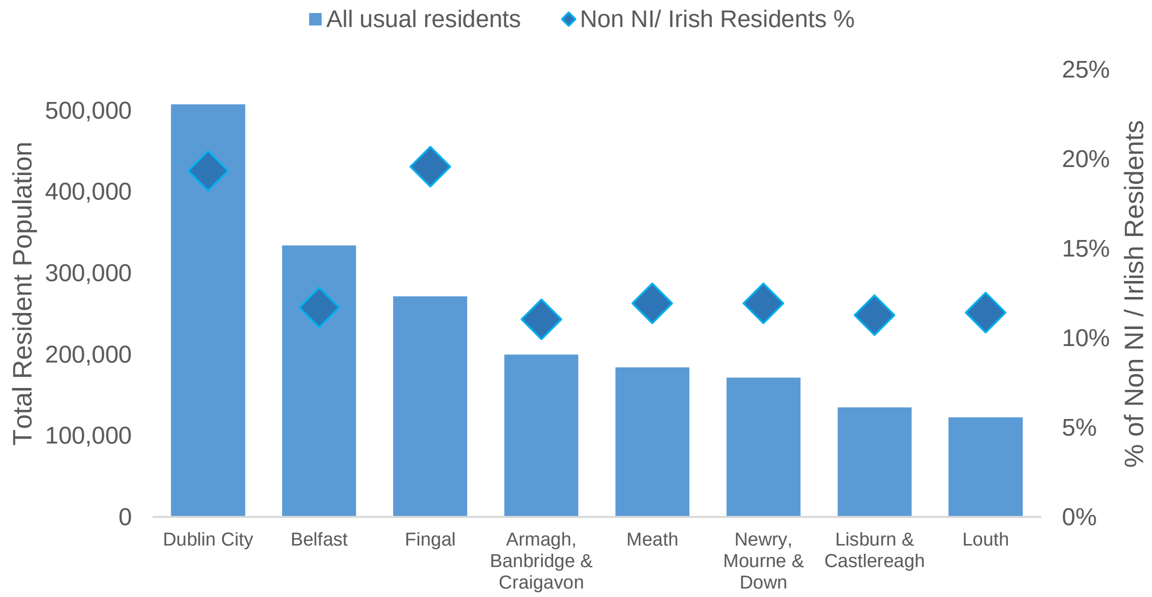
Figure 13: Shares of total population, 2016, by age bands and LGD



Source: Population data from CSO & NISRA; UUEPC analysis

10. Another sign that the Corridor acts as a population magnet is the higher proportion of residents born outside the island of Ireland. Data from the 2011 censuses shows that 15% of the residents on the Corridor had been born off the island, compared to 11% for NI and 13% for the Republic. Figure 14 shows the highest share to be living in Dublin and Fingal (both around 19%), with other parts of the Corridor closer to average.

Figure 14: Resident population and shares of those born outside the island, D-BEC, 2011



Source: Population data from CSO & NISRA; UUEPC analysis

11. In summary, the trends show that the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor continues to be the location of almost a third of the population of the island of Ireland. Nearly 42% of the population increase on the island since 2006 – either natural or due to migration – has occurred on the Corridor.

12. Dublin and Belfast have accounted for a third of the increase since 2006, more if the growth in neighbouring council areas is included by being related to the availability of affordable housing in the cities. However, growth has occurred throughout the Corridor in both urban centres and rural hinterlands. The highest growth rates since 2006 were actually recorded in Fingal, Meath, Louth and Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, while Newry, Mourne & Down has seen similar growth rates to Dublin. This has an impact on the pattern of population density, as research from the ESRI shows, with much of the southern part of the Corridor becoming increasingly urban (Morgenroth, 2018: 49-51).

13. The population trends (covered here) and projections (dealt with in Section 4.1) raise several questions around the sources of future growth and the consequences of this. First, will population growth come from natural increase or from migration to the Corridor from other parts of the island or from off the island? Second, how will the changing nature of the population pyramid – where dependency rates are increasing, albeit more slowly than elsewhere on the island – impact on the broader environment? Third, what do the demographic trends mean for housing provision and planning for future supply of this?

14. The population trends present both opportunities and challenges, in particular for the two cities. Without a major shock, the Corridor will continue to slowly grow its share of the island's population, especially of its working age population. On current trends this population growth will be spread along the Corridor with increasing density in various urban centres: Drogheda, Dundalk, Newry and Craigavon. However, there is a challenge to increase density and grow the two cities by making these places sustainable ones to live in and raise families in. Will policy address issues of affordability and attractiveness, especially for those renting or seeking to buy a first home within the cities, in order to increase metropolitan population? Will this be undertaken as part of an attempt to make the two cities and the Corridor as a whole attractive to future economic growth? And what does this mean for the lives led by those working, settling, starting family life or moving into other stages on the Corridor?

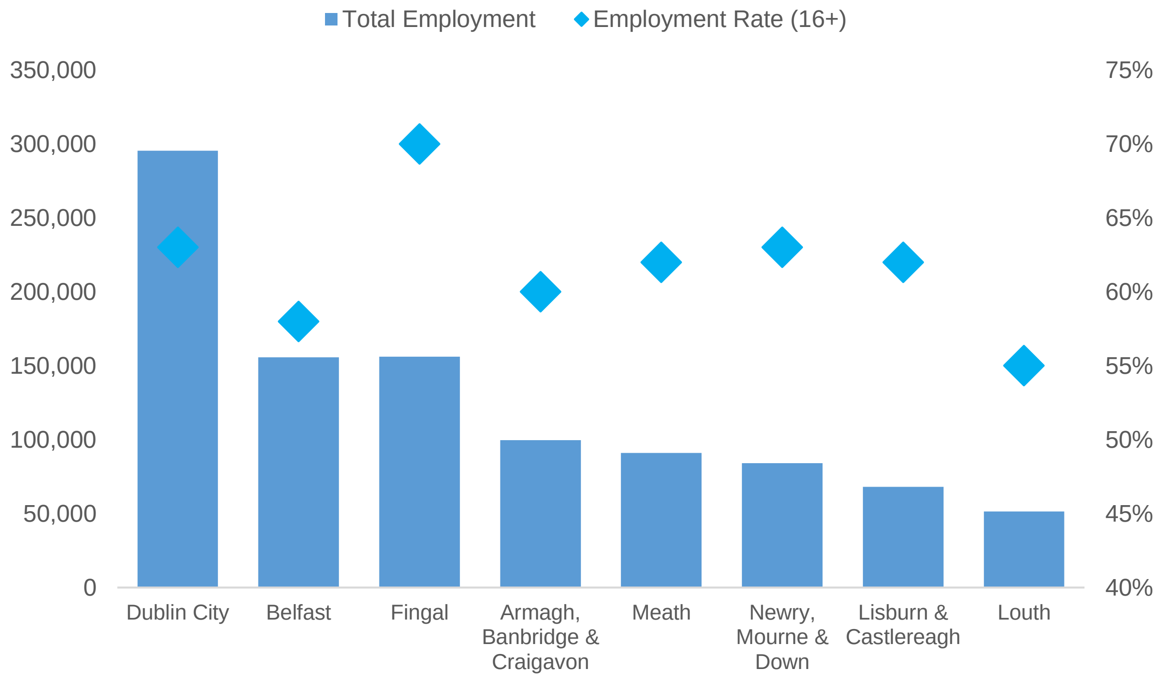
4.2 Labour Market & Commuting

15. The labour market on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor is the most buoyant it has been since the crash of 2008. Several years of strong growth has seen a new record in employment: more than 3 million people across the island. This growth has also occurred – perhaps at its most intense – on the

Corridor. Almost a third (just over one million residents) of the total of those in employment in 2019 were living (and possibly) working in the Corridor.

16. Therefore, employment rates on the Corridor (64% of residents over 16 years old) are slightly higher than the NI and Republic of Ireland rates. Figure 15 shows the highest resident employment rates in those Council areas closest to the cities – Fingal, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Newry, Mourne & Down – with lower rates in Belfast and Dublin. This shows the commuting effect.

Figure 15: Total employment and employment rates, D-BEC, 2019

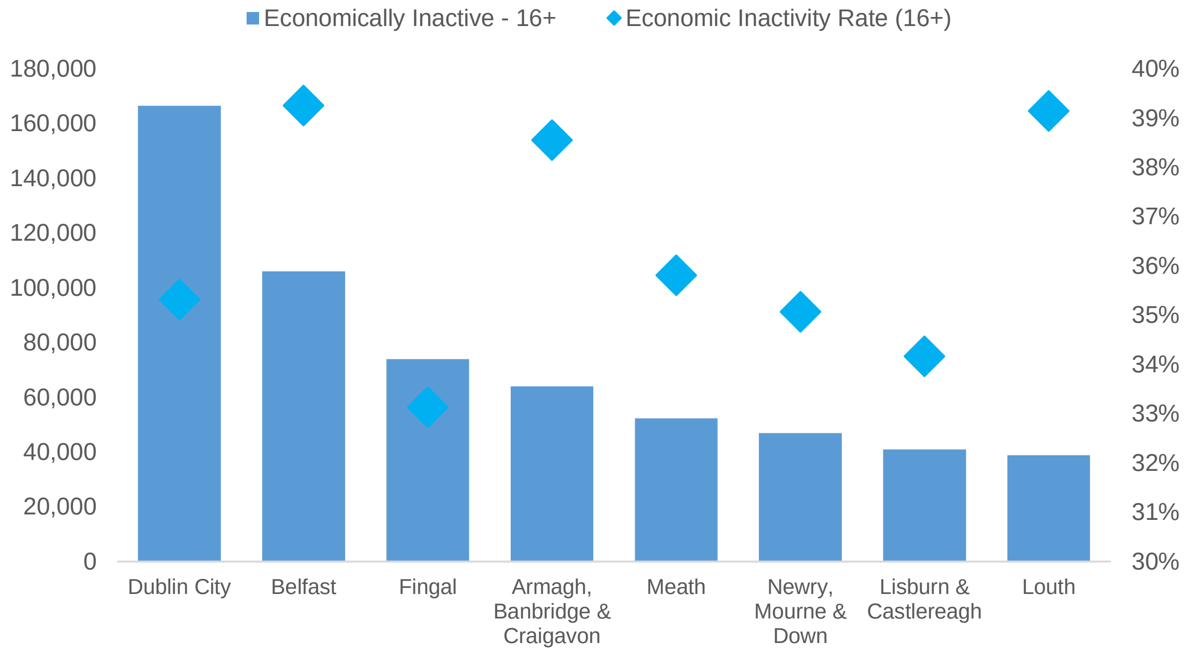


Source: Labour Force Survey data from CSO & NISRA; UUEPC analysis

17. An obvious consequence of the buoyant labour market is the falling rate of unemployment. These have been falling steadily throughout the Corridor since the peak years (2011 in RoI and 2012 in NI) and are now heading towards 4% in Southern end (a 10 year record) and 2% in NI (an historic low).

18. The fall in unemployment is welcome news, but there remains a long-standing challenge to get economically inactive people into the labour market. This is particularly the case in some parts of Belfast and Dublin, and in other towns where the economy has significantly changed over time. Figure 16 shows the 2018 numbers and rates for economic inactivity (or those of working age who are not in the labour force for health, education, caring or other reasons). This is a problem often correlated with high levels of no qualifications and difficulties faced in retraining.

Figure 16: Inactivity rates, D-BEC, 2018



Source: QNHS data from CSO & LFS data from NISRA; UUEPC analysis

What do people work at?

19. This question is answered in more detail in Section 5.2 below which looks at both resident[7] and workplace[8] employment by sector in order to identify sectors with significant growth potential and where the Corridor has some specialisation. What we will see below is that the Corridor has particular sectoral concentrations, not only in tradeable services sectors (such as ICT, Professional Services and Financial Services) but also, more locally in Manufacturing, Agriculture and Construction.

20. However, it is important to remember that the two most jobs-rich sectors remain, unsurprisingly, Retail and Health. Between them, the two sectors generate a third (32%) of all jobs based on the Corridor. They are also the sectors that close to a third (29%) of residents work in.

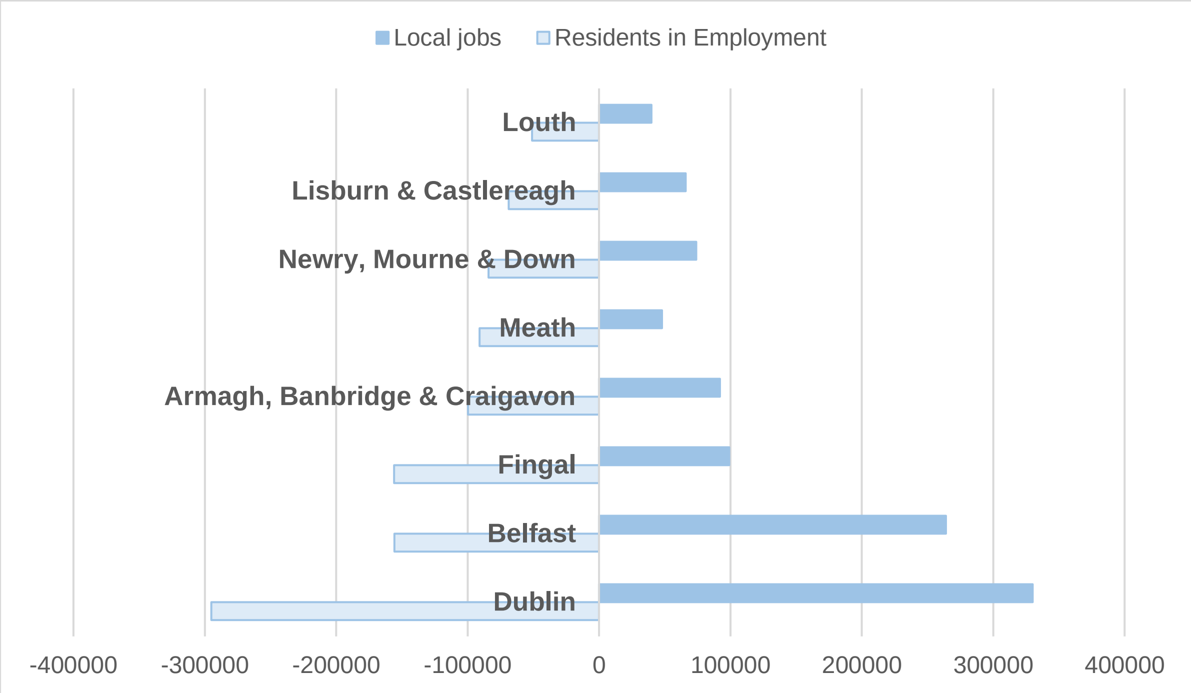
Where do people work?

21. According to Labour Force Survey data, one million residents of the Corridor are in employment, while the workforce data gives us a figure of over 1.1 million jobs in the same Council areas. Therefore, in 2016, the Corridor had almost 100,000 more jobs than residents in employment. Commuters from outside the Corridor will fill the gap, often some of the higher skilled ones which people will travel to do.

22. Figure 17 shows the differences at Council level between the numbers of local jobs and that of employed residents. The two cities have more jobs than

employed residents, while, the other six Council areas see more residents employed than local jobs. This balance produces the significant amount of commuting along the Corridor to either end of it that we see currently.

Figure 17: Residents in Employment vs Local jobs, EEC, 2018



Source: Census data from CSO & LFS/Workforce data from NISRA; UUEPC analysis

23. Turning to the commuting patterns, the census data for NI (2011) and Ireland (2016) provide an earlier snapshot of this very picture. Table 5 and Table 6 show how more than a third of the residents of Fingal and Lisburn & Castlereagh commute into nearby Dublin City and Belfast. This percentage falls to around 12% of residents of Louth and Meath travelling to Dublin and around 10% of the residents of NMD and ABC going into Belfast.

Table 5: Commuting patterns (by place of residence) in RoI, 2016

County of Workplace	Dublin City	Fingal	Louth	Meath	NI part of Corridor	Elsewhere
Resident County						
Dublin City	58.3%	7.6%	0.1%	0.4%	0.08% (210)	33.5%
Fingal	34.1%	36.1%	0.5%	1.6%	0.08% (109)	27.6%
Louth	7.7%	5.6%	57.2%	5.5%	1.5% (707)	22.5%
Meath	16.2%	12.3%	4.5%	36.2%	0.1% (85)	30.7%

Note: Percentages based on declared places of work only and excludes those who are mobile workers.

Table 6: Commuting patterns (by place of residence) in NI, 2011

County of Workplace	Belfast	ABC	L&C	NMD	RoI part of Corridor	Elsewhere
Resident County						
Belfast	83.9%	0.9%	6.1%	0.6%	0.1% (110)	8.4%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	9.2%	74.0%	3.9%	3.7%	0.3% (254)	8.9%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	37.4%	3.4%	49.4%	1.7%	0.1% (67)	8.0%
Newry, Mourne & Down	11.1%	4.5%	4.0%	76.6%	1.9% (1300)	1.9%

24. Another key feature revealed in the tables is the different levels of mobility and self-containment between the two parts of the Corridor. In other words, the levels of people moving outside their own LGD and *within* the Corridor, is much higher in the Southern part of the Corridor than in the Northern part (with the exception of Lisburn & Castlereagh). Also, the share of residents in the Northern part of the Corridor travelling to other parts of the North is less than 10%, compared to between a fifth and a third of residents on the Southern side commuting to other parts of the Greater Dublin and Mid East regions.

25. A final point on the commuting data is that cross-border commuting numbers are very small. Less than 3,000 people say they daily cross the border to work in the Corridor, though this may underestimate the numbers in construction and other trades doing so for work on a more irregular basis. Much of the daily commuting is local, with Louth and NMD acting as origin and destination for almost half of the cross-border movements along the Corridor.

26. In conclusion, the labour market on the Corridor shows signs of being a tight one. The last two years have seen some large announcements of new jobs in the pipeline, particularly from the multinational, technology-based services sectors. The IrishJobs.ie tracker of vacancies show that Dublin, Meath and Louth have all high vacancy levels, as has Belfast. Given the higher than average employment rates on the Corridor, recruitment in many sectors is problematic.

27. However, a tight labour market can also suggest that there exists a mismatch between jobs on offer and the skills of the labour force available to fill them. The next section will look further at the skills base, increasingly the most critical element for a growing regional economy.

4.3 Educational Attainment and Skills

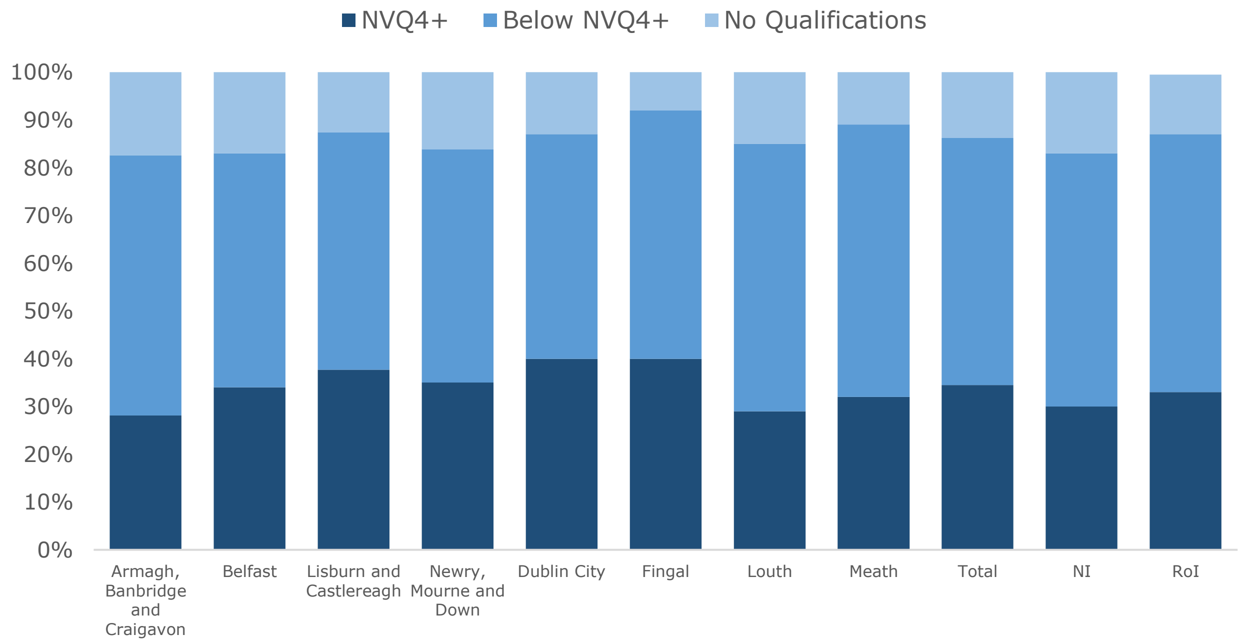
28. The current and future ready supply of skilled people is a necessary foundation for a competitive economy. In particular, availability of suitable skills is directly tied to attractiveness to investment from both outside the country and by businesses already located there.

29. At the present time, private, public and third sector organisations on the Corridor – as in many other parts of the island – often argue that a lack of available skilled people is ***the*** key issue preventing their growth. At the same time, however, there are significant levels of economic inactivity among residents of the Corridor, as noted above. Given that a significant number of the economically inactive express a wish to take up employment opportunities, there is a need to ensure that people can be brought closer to the labour market.

30. These concurrent challenges are well recognised by stakeholders on the Corridor. Local government across the Corridor is involved in the skills area and similar messages come from various local skills forums, including:
    - The need for better alignment of educational qualifications to the necessary skills for current and future workplaces; and
    - The desire for a better clarity around what we mean by 'missing ***employability*** (or people) skills', and a pathway to improving these.

31. Figure 18 shows that the Corridor, as a whole, has a higher than average percentage of the resident population with third level qualifications. There are particularly high shares of those with third level educational attainment residing in Dublin, Fingal and Lisburn & Castlereagh (all close to 40%).

Figure 18: Educational Attainment (16-64 year olds), D-BEC, 2016



Source: Data from CSO & NISRA; UUEPC analysis

Note: The figures are for 2016 at the time of the latest Census in Ireland.

32. The share of the general population with above NVQ4 or third level qualifications has been rising over time but the share varies both between and within regions. For example, ABC, Louth and Meath have lower shares of residents with above NVQ4 qualifications. Within Council areas there are also spatial concentrations. In Meath, for example, the county's 32% share reaches over 40% in commuter towns such as Dunboyne or Ratoath, but falls below 25% in Kells or Duleek.

33. There is also a strong pipeline in terms of HE enrolments along the Corridor. In the 2018/19 academic year, the percentages of 15-24 year old residents enrolled in HE (25% for the island as a whole) ranges from a high of 29% in NMD and 27% in Dublin and Fingal to the lowest level (22% of Belfast's residents) with the other five Council areas closer to the island's average share. These levels may be helped by proximity to an institution. Given the location of the island's HE institutions, with five university campuses and a technological university in Dublin and Belfast alone, it is little surprise that almost half of the 280,000 students currently enrolled in HE on the island are studying at institutions based on the Corridor.

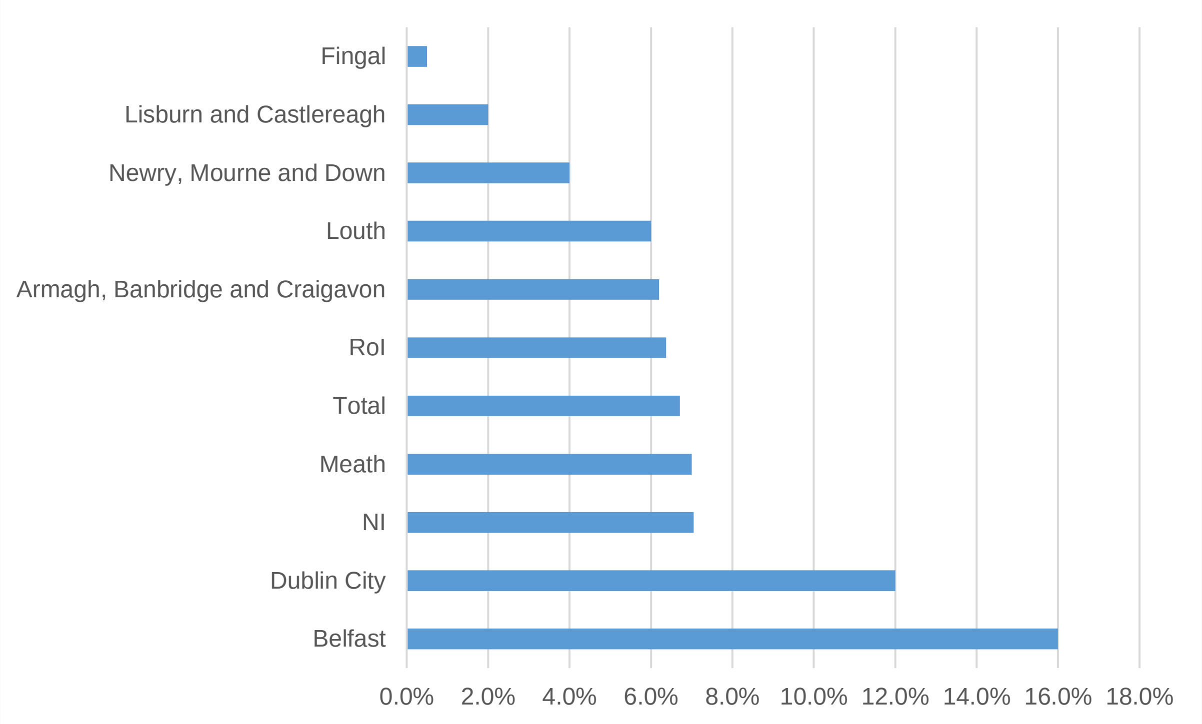
34. These participation rates will help increase the share of the population with third level qualifications, which is a key part of the puzzle in ensuring future economic growth. This concentration is especially strong among 25-55 year olds where it reaches over 50% of the population. It also bears out a point made by research that people tend to settle close to where they studied in HE and that areas with high stocks of skills tend to have pipelines to replicate these (Audretsch et al, 2005).

35. There is a similar variety between Councils in the share of the population with 'No Qualifications' (14% for the island). As Figure 19 shows, ABC, Belfast, Louth and Newry, Mourne & Down all show higher than average levels. Age may be one key factor in this, mirroring a general picture where a higher share of 55+ year olds are without formal qualifications, when compared to those below that age. However, living in an area of social or economic deprivation is probably more critical. For example, both Dublin and Belfast have places where the levels of residents with No Qualifications can be 50% higher than the Council average.

36. In terms of the availability of skills on the Corridor there are two important considerations, both connected to commuting flows along and into it:
    - In every Council area (see Figure 19), the skills profile of the workforce means that there are more jobs requiring graduates than there are residents with HE qualifications. This is especially the case for Belfast (16% deficit) and Dublin (12%). This necessitates in-flows of skilled people into the Corridor from elsewhere on the island as well as flows along the Corridor in order to fill the skilled jobs.

- This is supported by other research (UUEPC, 2019), which has shown that commuters along or onto the Corridor usually have higher skills profiles than residents of the individual Council areas. In the Northern part of the Corridor 32% of residents have NVQ Level4 or higher qualifications, while 41% of commuters into those Council areas are qualified to that level.

Figure 19: Difference in workplace vs resident NVQ level 4 qualifiers, EEC, 2016



Source: Data from CSO and ONS; UUEPC analysis
Note: The figures are for 2016 at the time of the latest Census in Ireland.

4.4 Future Skills

19. The broad sectoral trends can be used to take a view of what future economic activity might look like, albeit allowing for the reshaping that may take place in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Future skills forecasts can provide a useful insight into the likely skills demand on the Corridor and in this section we draw on other recent research from different parts of the Corridor (UUEPC, 2019; Fingal, 2019).

20. The research points to additional growth in the numbers of jobs in the Corridor (called expansion demand) as well as demand created by people leaving their jobs (called replacement demand). Some of this demand will be filled by those presently within the labour market (for example, people moving from one job to another), but there will be a net requirement from education and migration.

21. This net figure is often much larger than the additional jobs referred to in the forecasts. The UUEPC research for the Belfast City Region found that between 2017 and 2027 there would be an *annual* expansion demand of 5,950 people

but an annual net requirement of 18,080.[9] If this pattern was repeated across the Corridor, the respective annual figures would be approximately 13,000 in expansion demand and between 33,000 and 40,000 in net requirement.

22. The replacement demand figures emphasise the continuing importance of sectors with large numbers of employees, as these will create large numbers of job opportunities, especially from replacement demand. The Corridor, like elsewhere, will see continued demand of this type from sectors such as healthcare and the public sector, as well as tourism and retail as these slowly recover.

23. The occupations which are forecast to grow fastest are the professional ones, such as science & technology professionals, health professionals and business & service professionals. Even allowing for this process perhaps slowing after COVID-19, there will be a need to create a higher educational attainment profile than exists at present in the Corridor. In the Belfast City Region, 33% of the net requirement to 2027 will be associated with third level qualifications and only 10% with lower than NQF level 2 (UUEPC, 2019: 52).

24. The profile above noted a mismatch between the (lower) skills levels of residents of the Corridor and the demands of the jobs located there. In the case of both the Belfast City Region and Fingal the research points to this situation continuing and perhaps worsening unless action is taken. In the case of Fingal this has been quantified into annual skills gaps up to 2023 numbering 7,600 and 40% of these in professional occupations (Fingal, 2019: 15).

25. The recent research points to two clear skills challenges on the Corridor:
    - The supply pipeline of those entering the labour market will not meet the net requirement to fill all of the vacancies in the next decade. As noted above, this is likely to impact on some occupational groups more than others, but it can be applied across almost all groups.
    - There is also a misalignment between the skills in the pipeline and the requirements for the future. This imbalance changes from place to place. In some places (eg: Belfast, Fingal and most likely Dublin) the numbers of graduates and higher qualified being produced will undershoot requirements. In other places, the additional requirements are for those with intermediate skills and skilled trades.

26. To date, the answer to meeting the demand for skills has been a mixture of ensuring an improving profile of the skills of residents, facilitating commuting to the places of highest demand and an openness to net international migration. All three have certainly played a role in ensuring that the Corridor has been able to promote the availability of a skilled workforce.

27. The pressures to continue to supply such a workforce are likely to intensify into the future, given the skills profile of job opportunities. Much of the attention is likely to be on the continued supply of labour market entrants with

third level and higher qualifications by the higher education institutes. There will also need to be attention paid to the housing, connectivity and planning consequences of commuting flows along the Corridor and of internal migration from other parts of the island and international migration from further afield.

28. However, finally it is clear how those individuals with low levels of qualifications are increasingly disadvantage in the labour market. The need to minimise the numbers of those entering the labour market with less than NVQ level 2 qualifications must be an imperative for any idea of inclusive growth. Breaking that particular cycle will be equally important to meeting the future skills needs of the Corridor.

4.5 Enterprise trends

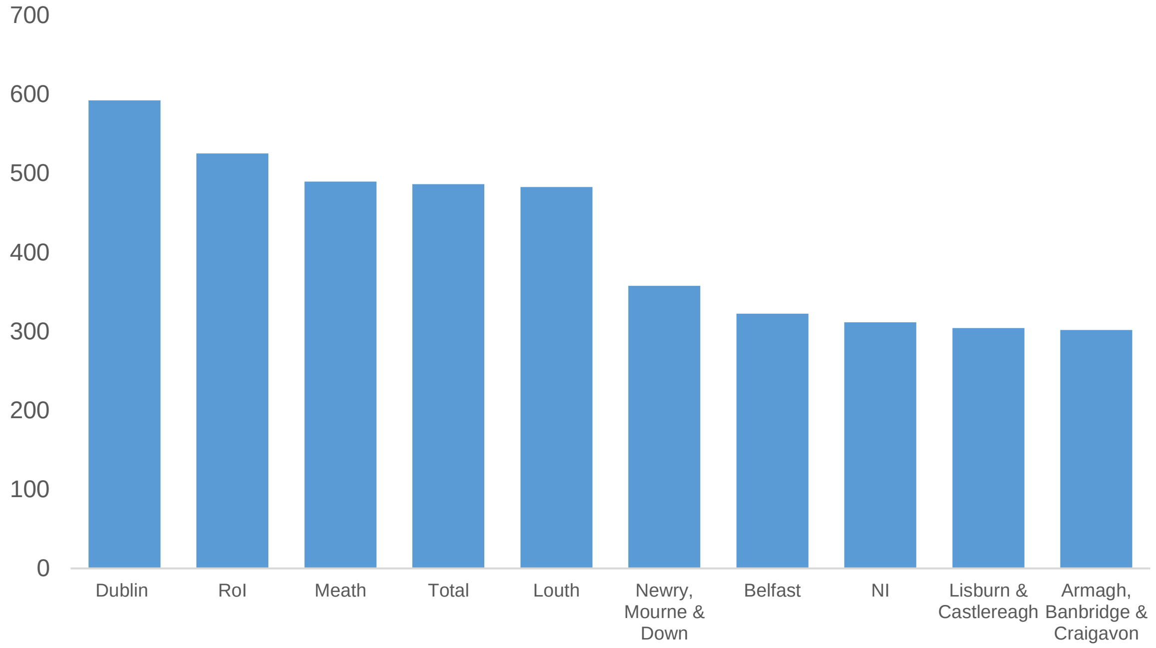
29 The trends in entrepreneurship, business births and survival rates are all important to economic and employment growth. Whilst large jobs announcement, both by multinationals and indigenous firms, are very important, the evidence from across the EU suggests that most jobs continue to be created in smaller lots by small and medium-sized enterprises or SMEs.

30 Therefore, the rate of business formation is a key sign of the future health of a region (McCoy et al, 2018), as they show how business decisions are based upon current incentives and circumstances, rather than just past performance. Entrepreneurs and new businesses also contribute to levels of competition or innovation in an economy, which can lead to both productivity improvements and employment growth. For all of these reasons, understanding the nature of the enterprise trends along the Corridor is critical to the economic profile.

31 In terms of the stock of businesses, 38% of the island's firms are located on the Corridor, a significantly higher proportion than population share (31%). This suggests a concentration of firms in a region with both a large locally-traded market (for example, for retailers) and access to export markets.

32 However, Figure 19 shows a strong North/South variation in the stock of businesses per 10,000 people. County Dublin[10] has the highest numbers (592), with Meath (490) and Louth (482) a distance behind this but close to the Corridor average of 486. All Northern Council areas and the NI average of 312 tail well behind the other parts of the Corridor, a further sign of the divergence between NI and a more vibrant economy in Ireland.

Figure 19: No. of Businesses per 10,000 people, D-BEC, 2017



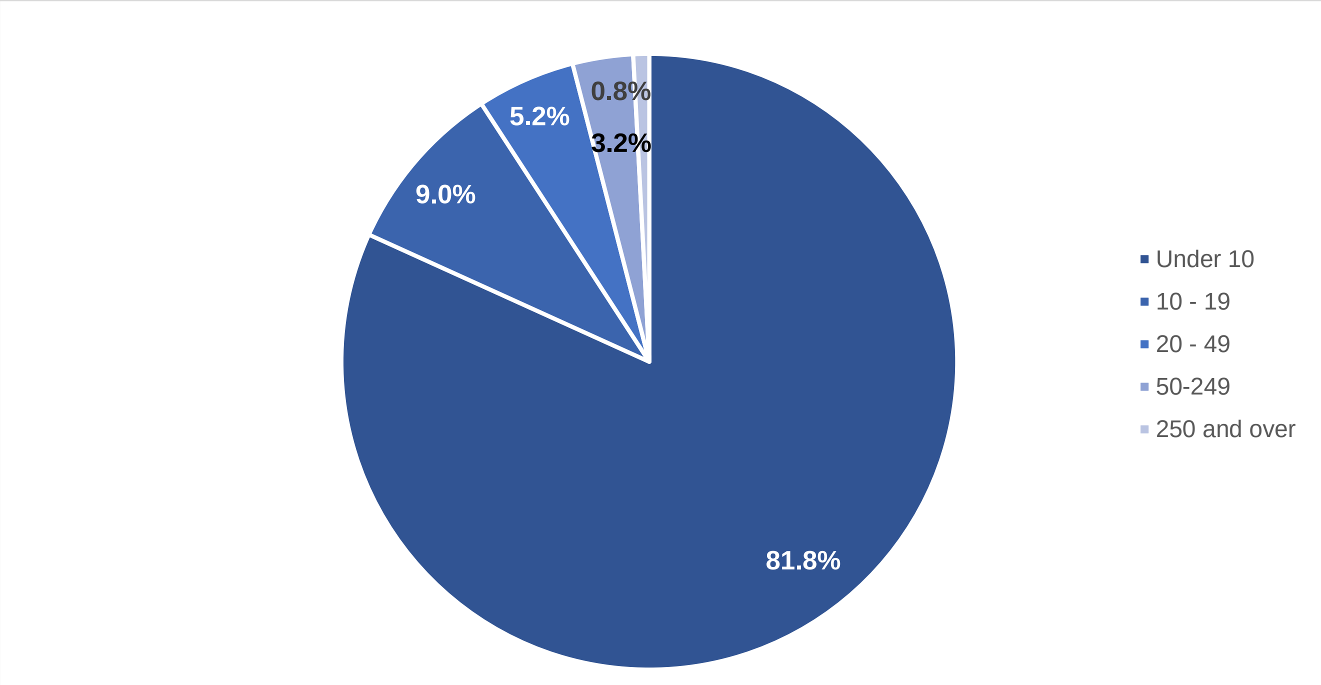
Source: Data from CSO & ONS; UUEPC analysis

33 Business birth rates follow a similar pattern. The most recent figures show more than 8,000 business births on the Corridor, more than third (34%) of the island's total. The birth rates vary from the highest in Dublin (48 per 10,000 people) to the lowest rates in ABC and Lisburn & Castlereagh. In NI, only NMD came close to the Southern rates.

34 Section 5.2 looks at enterprises by sector on the Corridor, where, as expected, it has a higher share than nationally of Professional Services and ICT businesses, through these concentrations vary significantly within the Corridor.

35 The size profile of businesses (as shown in Figure 20) on the Corridor is also slightly different to the all-island one. On the Corridor micro-enterprises account for 82% of firms, compared to 88% on the island. There tend to be more larger SMEs – employing between 50 and 250 people – on the Corridor (17.4%) than on the island generally (11%). The share of large firms employing more than 250 people is similar (at 1%).

Figure 20: Enterprises by size, D-BEC, 2017

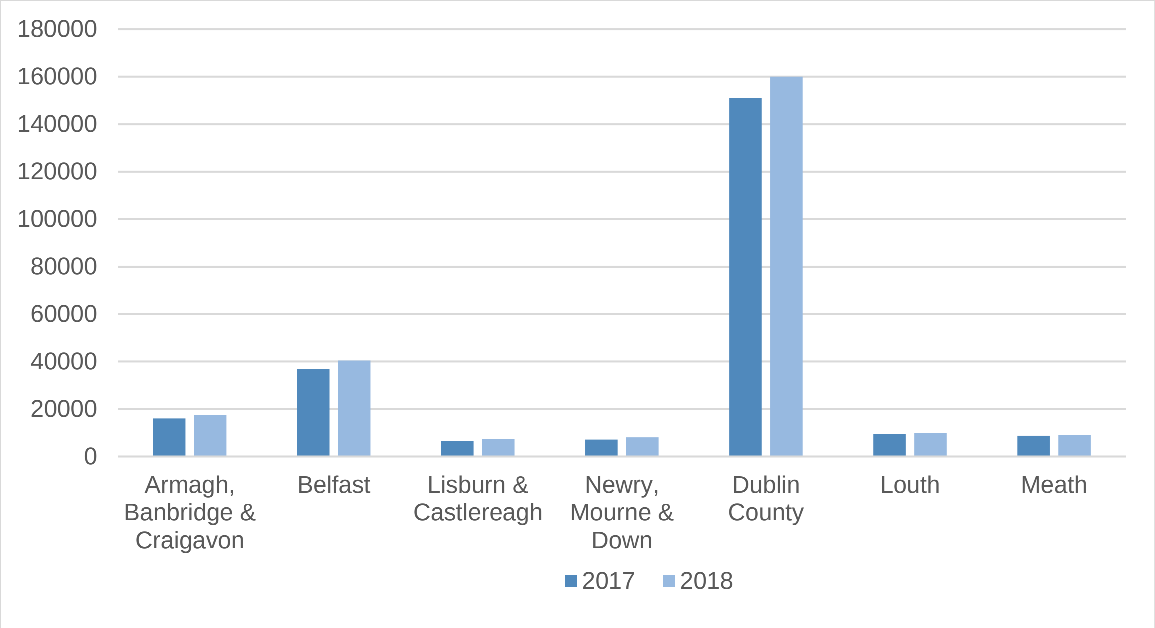


Source: Data from CSO & ONS; UUEPC analysis

36 Two other enterprise patterns of note stand out on the Corridor. First, in some of the Council areas with the highest levels of business births – Louth, Meath and NMD – more than 96% of firms employ less than 20 people. This may be due to a satisfaction with running a successful micro-enterprise and desire to keep this manageable.[11] Or there may be an unfulfilled desire to grown and therefore a potential pool of firms with ambition to build greater scale.

37 Second, in Dublin and Belfast and, to a lesser degree ABC, the large businesses employ a much higher share of the total number of workplace employees – closer to a half than a third – than is normally the case across NI and Ireland. The hunger of these firms for talented people necessitates larger labour markets. Related to this, the Corridor is not only a key location of larger businesses and those in the internationally-trade services (including ICT) but it also where almost half (48%) of employees in agency-supported firms work. Figure 21 shows the dominance of Greater Dublin as the location along the Corridor for these export and innovation-intensive firms.

Figure 21: Employment in agency-supported firms, LGD, 2017-2018



Source: Data from DBEI & INI; UUEPC analysis

5. Strengths of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

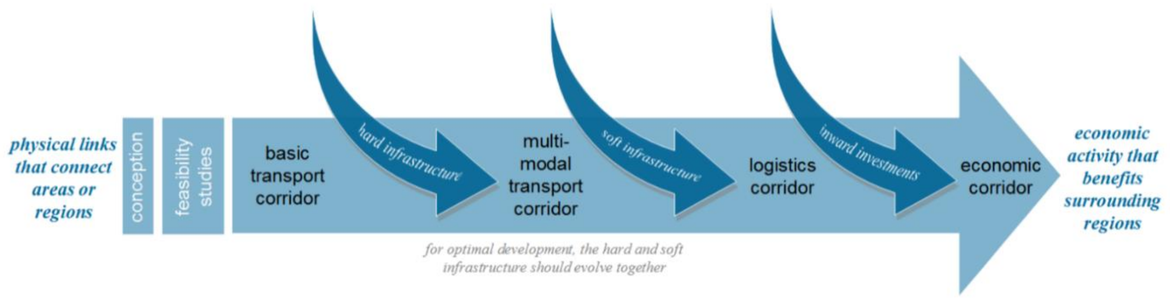
5.1 Key assets on the Corridor

1. Development plans for Corridors often begin with a plan to mobilise key 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure assets. The first category includes physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, ports and so on, while the second are enabling institutions, such as education and health structures or organisations.

2. Transport infrastructure, usually designed to increase internal cohesion or connect exporters to international markets, is a key 'hard' form in many corridors. In Canada, for example, transport is at the heart of both the existing east/west corridor (hinging on the Trans-Canada Highway and the Canadian Pacific Railway) and the new, putative 7,000 km Northern Corridor. In Asia, the emerging corridors focus on freight and transport, while, in Europe, the plans are underpinned by a combination of European Regional Development Funds and the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) initiative.

3. As noted above in section 2.1, the World Bank has chosen not to refer to transport, trade, or freight corridors, rather than 'economic corridors'. The idea that corridors consequently *contribute toward* economic development (Hope and Cox, 2015, p.1) is a growing one. For the purposes of this part of the report, Figure 22 shows the evolution of corridors and the expected role of infrastructure assets.

Figure 22: Evolution of a development corridor



Source: Hope and Cox, 2015, p.3.

4. Figure 24 notes how 'hard' and 'soft' forms of infrastructure take a corridor along the development from purely physical links between two places or nodes to a growth region with benefits for the surrounding area. Our register of assets in the Corridor therefore encompasses both forms of infrastructure.

‘Hard’ infrastructural assets

5. In the case of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, the ‘hard’ infrastructure around transport connectivity has been critical to growth. Given the island location of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, the intent behind this infrastructure has been as much about connectivity off the island as about cross-border connections between NI and the Republic of Ireland. To take the current TEN-T plan (2014-2020) as an example, this includes investment in Cork and Dublin ports as well as upgrades to the Cork to Dublin and Dublin to Belfast rail network. The island of Ireland is part of a TEN-T Corridor, the North Sea-Mediterranean one, which connects Ireland and GB, through the Channel, with France, the Netherlands and Belgium.

6. The results of national and EU investment can be seen in the current state and performance of the transport assets detailed in Box 1. This shows how the Corridor has a varying level of transport connectivity depending upon the mode of travel. Connectivity off the island, through five different ports and three airports, is well-served although access to some or all of these assets is an issue.

Box 1: Transport Assets on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

Road Infrastructure: M1/A1

The key arterial road between Dublin and Belfast is the 166km M1/A1 route with an average journey time (according to the AA) of 2 hours 10minutes (or 76km/h). The table below shows the average daily traffic numbers at different points along the main route. As might be expected, the three busiest points are at either end, closest to the two city centres and all are in the top ten busiest junctions on the island. Evidence for the economic recovery can be found in the increase in traffic volumes since 2013 at every point along the route, with the highest increase (57%) at the M1/M50 junction.

Table 7: Average traffic counts on the M1/A1 road, 2013-2017/19

Junction	2013 (%HGV)	2017/2019 (%HGV)
M1 Stockman’s Lane, Belfast	82,740 (5.1%)	91,610 (4.5%)*
A1 Hillsborough	40,980 (7.2%)	42,699 (7.6%)*
A1 Banbridge	27,110 (10.3%)	31,485 (10.1%)*
Dublin Road, Newry	20,260 (11.9%)	25,076 (13.6%)*
M1 Jn20 Jonesborough	23,444 (11%)	27,298 (10.6%)
M1 Jn14 Ardee	33,352 (9.3%)	39,647 (9.1%)
M1 Jn7 Julianstown	32,536** (8.4%)	35,193 (9.1%)
M1 Jn5 Balbriggan South	52,228 (6.4%)	60,399 (6.5%)
M1 Jn2 Dublin Airport	90,276 (5.4%)	101,715 (5.8%)
M1/M50 Jn1	86,056 (5.1%)	135,440 (5%)

Sources: DfI, Northern Ireland and TFI, Ireland.

Notes:

* 2017 data the most recent for NI

** 2017 data the earliest available

Rail: Belfast-Dublin Enterprise Service

The Enterprise service has been a significant addition to connectivity along the EEC since the 1990s. However, the officering of 8 bi-directional services (5 on a Sunday) is similar to the provision from Dublin to Waterford and Galway and the journey time of 2 hours 15 minutes is no quicker than driving. The most recent numbers for passenger use (from 2016/17) show that 850,000 journeys were made on the Enterprise service, which marks an 18% increase on the previous year in 2016/17. Most journeys involve joining the service at intermediate stations (in particular Dundalk and Drogheda) to travel into Dublin. Therefore, just over a fifth of all Enterprise journeys are inter-city. In 2015 the 21% share of end-to-end journeys between Dublin and Belfast was lower than the Limerick (24%) and Cork (27%) (Arup, 2018; NTA, 2017).

Airports

Annual passenger numbers at Dublin Airport have increased by 45% since 2014 making it one of the fastest-growing large airports in Europe. It recorded 31.5 million passengers during 2018, with continental Europe the largest market, though transatlantic traffic has doubled since 2014 and EMEA numbers are now just over 1 million annually. Such is the growth that the Dublin Airport Authority is reviewing a capital investment plan to improve airfield and airport operational works.

In 2018 Belfast International Airport recorded passenger numbers of 6.27 million passengers and Belfast City handled 2.51 million, both more than 10% increases on the year before. For both the GB market is key, with around two thirds of passengers travelling there.

Looking at the Corridor as a whole there are now close to 40 million passengers using the three airports, three quarters of these going through Dublin given the range of available routes and connections. In 2017 there were newspaper reports that as many as 600,00 people had crossed the border to fly from Dublin Airport (McDonnell, 2018). More importantly, for inward passengers, 60% of non-British Isles tourists come to NI via an air or sea port in Ireland (NISRA, 2019).

Air freight traffic is also an important and growing part of the business of the three airports, with close to 200,000 tonnes (usually high value goods) being flown in 2017, 70% of this via Dublin Airport (CSO, 2019).

Ports

The region is home to seven of the island's ports (Belfast, Dublin, Dundalk, Drogheda, Greenore, Larne and Warrenpoint), among them three and the five busiest. The ports act as strategic assets for trade, logistics, tourism, and offshore renewable energy. Between them, the six handled 51.5 million tonnes in 2017 (+3.8% on 2016), almost two thirds (64%) of the island's total (CSO, 2018; NISRA, 2018). Unsurprisingly, the city ports managed the majority of traffic on the Corridor - Dublin Port (43%) and Belfast Harbour (35%). Warrenpoint is the next largest, followed by the Port of Larne, Drogheda and Greenore.

Although imports constitute over 60% of overall tonnage for the ports, exports have increased from 2016. More than three quarters of the total tonnage of goods handled in the seven ports was accounted for by trade with Great Britain (48%) and other EU countries (30%).

Ports are crucial for tourism, given the access for passenger ferries (Dublin, Belfast and Larne) and a growing number of cruise ships calling into Dublin and Belfast, For example, the numbers of passenger visits from cruise ships has grown by 50%, from 97,316 in 2014 to 146,429 in 2018. These cruise ships not only have knock on impacts along the Corridor for visitor attractions but have also provided access for a further stop into Belfast. However, the redevelopment of Dublin Port and a reduction in the capacity for cruise ship berths during the work presents a challenge which has been recognised.

Finally, ports and harbours provide economic opportunities for offshore renewable energy (ORE) generation which can contribute towards meeting EU and national emissions reduction targets (Irish Maritime Development Office, 2018). A recent report has found that there is an interest from energy companies to invest in the construction of offshore wind farms, and that emerging new technology could then lead to subsequent investment in wave and tidal energy. For example, the D1 facility at Belfast Harbour is already creating the combination of facilities, infrastructure and support services, and access to engineering skills which could facilitate the development of these ORE technologies.

7. *Ireland 2040* has identified the need for a focus on improving and protecting key road networks, in particular the 'key strategic function of the Dublin to Belfast road' (p.110). One planned improvement is the Southern Relief Road, near Newry, which will both improve connectivity between the two cities and also access to Warrenpoint Port for the high numbers of HGVs using the road network. Proposals from the IBEC/CBI Joint Business Council has identified the need for an entire inter-urban motorway or high quality dual carriageway network for the island (JBC, 2016).

8. The shortcomings of the Enterprise service – in terms of frequency, journey times, reliability and onward connections from Belfast Central and Dublin Connolly – are all well-known (Arup, 2018). The provision of a more frequent (hourly) service with a small reduction in journey time has made a significant change to the Dublin/Cork service and research suggests that this might be a positive choice for the Enterprise also (Morgenroth, 2011). There is a commitment in *Ireland 2040* to examine the feasibility of high-speed rail connections right along the eastern seaboard, from Belfast to Cork.

'Soft' infrastructural assets

9. The idea of 'soft' infrastructure refers less to physical engineering projects and more to the institutional, educational and research supports which could enable economic development.

10. Five university campuses, a technological university and an Institute of Technology are located on the Corridor, all bar one of these in Dublin and Belfast alone. Almost 110,000 students were enrolled in these institutions in the 2017/2018 academic year.

11. The importance of HEIs as a 'soft' asset in the region goes beyond their role of providing an educated and skilled workforce. HEIs generate knowledge and build social capital which are key determinants in regional growth and prosperity. McCoy et al. (2018:524) found that 'both inverse drive-time to the nearest third-level institute and the proportion of the population with third-level qualifications are significant factors in new foreign and domestic firm formation'.

12. The research potential for wider contributions from HEIs is a particular asset for the Corridor, not only in promoting the Corridor itself, but also to address specific challenges, for example, Brexit and climate change. This reflects the fact that the HEIs along the corridor are home to numerous research and incubation centres, and facilitate public and private collaborations through their Technology Transfer Offices.

13. The most recent mapping of research centres on the island showed the alignment which exists between Irish and Northern Ireland authorities in supporting research centres in similar fields such as ICT, life sciences, nanotechnology, agri-food and aerospace (InterTradeIreland, 2007). Almost half (104 of 222) of the research centres were located on the Corridor, many of these in the fields noted. This research, if repeated today, could capture the level of potential for complementarities and collaboration on an all-island basis. While there will be differences in funding structures and exact agendas, bringing together research actors with complementary expertise and different networks and markets could be an opportunity of mutual benefit (Nauwelaers et al. 2013:7).

14. Finally, telecommunications assets are regarded as being neither 'hard' nor 'soft' infrastructure and Box 2 provides some detail on those available in the Corridor. Typically, these assets are strongest in urban centres with plans on both sides of the border to tackle remaining rural 'blackspots'.

Box 2: Telecommunication Assets on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

The Corridor has a cross-border fibre route and direct international fibre connectivity. The presence of these off-shore fibre routes has been key in attracting data centre services to the region. The demand for such facilities is set to grow. There is therefore an opportunity to develop this sector within the region .The demand for additional facilities will also incentivise investment in new renewable technologies to meet the energy demands of such facilities.

The EEC is well served by mobile broadband and telecommunications infrastructure with mobile operators continually investing and upgrading in their networks to meet the exponential demand for data services. Mobile operators have stated their commitment to maintaining roaming agreements regardless of the outcome of Brexit.

It is important to note that in terms of broadband as an asset, McCoy et al. (2018:530, citing Mack, 2014) found that the benefit of broadband for increasing new businesses is greater in areas of higher educational attainment. Therefore it is important to view the relationship between the assets of the region, where broadband is a key factor in dispersing knowledge intensive firms but is not the only factor.

5.2 Key sectors on the Corridor

15. One element of the terms of reference for this study was to explore the degree to which there were sectors in common along the Corridor. This section begins this work by first outlining the existing ***sectoral concentrations*** and then the ***sectoral priorities***, as identified by the eight Councils.

Sectoral concentrations

What sectors do people work in and where?

16. The most recent labour force data suggests that close to a million residents along the Corridor are in employment in different sectors. The last Census figures for the island (2011) show higher than average shares of Corridor residents working in the tradeable services sectors, especially ICT (+1.4%), Professional Services (+1.4%) and Financial Services (+2.8%). The same data shows lower-than-average shares in Manufacturing (-3.2%), Agriculture (-3.1%) and Construction (-1.7%).

17. Within the Corridor different places have different concentrations. Three Council areas accounted for a third of the Corridor's residents working in Manufacturing: ABC, Louth and Meath. And, while every Council area has residents working in Agriculture, three (ABC, NMD and Meath) account for almost three quarters (71%) of the Corridor's residents working in that sector.

18. Workplace data[12] shows the actual location of jobs on the Corridor. The higher-than-average shares are slightly different for the Corridor using this data: Administration Services (+2.1%), Financial Services (+1.8%), ICT (+1.1%), Professional Services (+1.1%) and Construction (+1.2%). There are some similar lower-than-average shares – Manufacturing (-4.0%) and Agriculture (-3.8%) – while Arts & Entertainment (-2.1%) and Education (-2.0%) also show up on the negative side. However, the share of high-tech manufacturing jobs is higher on the Corridor (33%) than in Ireland (28%) or NI (19%).

19. We have used the workplace jobs data for a location quotient analysis which can identify sectoral concentrations by Council area. The results are shown in Table 7 and suggest that each Council area in the Corridor has its own concentrations. For ICT, Financial Services and Professional Services Dublin

City (including Fingal) has strong concentrations, while Belfast has weaker but still positive concentrations (ie: =or>1.0).

20. Equally importantly there is a diversity of sectors with strong concentrations in Manufacturing (in Louth, ABC and Meath) and weaker ones in NMD and Lisburn & Castlereagh. Construction also shows positive concentrations in every one of the eight Council areas bar Belfast. A similar story can be found for jobs in Education with the exception this time Dublin City.

21. The workplace data also reveals that 70% of the Corridor's jobs are located in the two cities. This can, for some sectors, mean scale without a large share of local jobs. For example, a quarter of all Manufacturing jobs on the Corridor are located in Dublin City and Fingal, but Table 7 shows a negative concentration.

22. The data suggests that some sectoral location preferences are clearly towards the cities. For example, 93% of the Corridor's Financial Services jobs and 92% of ICT are located in Dublin City, Belfast City and Fingal.

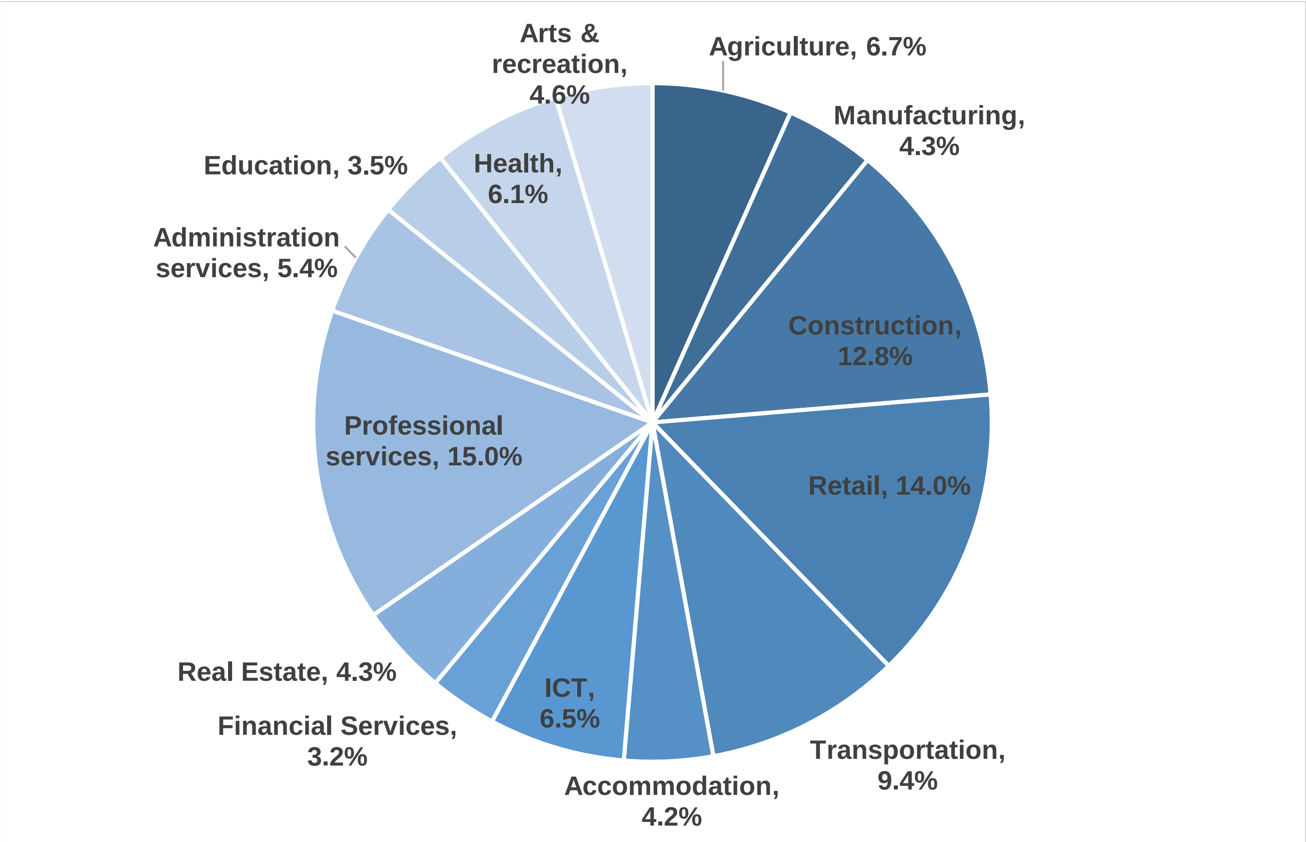
Table 7: Sectoral Location Quotients (by workforce jobs), EEC, 2016

LGD	Dublin (inc Fingal)	Louth	Meath	NMD	ABC	L&C	Belfast CC	Total employed	% of island's total
Sector									
Agriculture	0.1	0.6	**1.7**	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.0	**10,600**	**10%**
Mining	0.2	1.3	**2.3**	1.0	1.2	0.6	0.1	**1,000**	**17%**
Manufacturing	0.6	**2.3**	2.1	1.7	**2.3**	1.4	0.7	**66,300**	**22%**
Construction	1.1	1.1	**1.8**	1.4	1.0	1.2	0.5	**63,300**	**41%**
Retail	1.1	**1.2**	1.0	**1.2**	1.1	**1.2**	0.7	**162,900**	**33%**
Transport	1.1	**1.2**	1.1	0.7	1.1	0.5	0.7	**48,900**	**40%**
Accommodation	1.2	**1.3**	1.2	1.1	0.6	0.8	1.0	**67,800**	**30%**
ICT	**1.7**	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.1	**50,800**	**40%**
Financial Services	**1.8**	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	1.0	**57,100**	**48%**
Professional Services	**1.6**	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.2	**67,700**	**41%**
Administration Services	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.7	**1.5**	**83,900**	**44%**
Public Administration	1.5	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	**1.6**	1.3	**75,500**	**43%**
Education	0.7	1.2	1.0	**1.6**	1.2	1.1	1.4	**60,600**	**26%**
Healthcare	0.8	1.2	0.7	1.1	1.2	**1.6**	1.1	**127,900**	**37%**
Other Services	0.6	**1.7**	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.5	1.6	**28,400**	**39%**

23. One final point to note is that the workplace data show that the two most jobs-rich sectors are, unsurprisingly, Retail and Health, which generate a third (32%) of all jobs based on the Corridor. As a result they are the sectors that close to a third (29%) of residents work in. Both are key sectors for providing employment at all levels and for all qualifications so that their condition needs to remain a matter of priority.

24. Figure 23 shows the sectoral profile of firms on the Corridor. This is quite different to the island as a whole. The Corridor has a higher share for Professional Services (15% vs 11%) and ICT (7% vs 4%), but lower for Agriculture (7% vs 19%). Along the Corridor, Dublin has a higher than average concentration of ICT firms, while Meath, Louth and NMD have bigger shares of Construction businesses. Finally, Council areas outside the cities have more manufacturing firms than average. This supports the picture provided by the workplace jobs data.

Figure 23: Enterprises by sector, D-BEC, 2017



Priority sectors

25. As part of the research the eight Councils identified sectors which they see as a priority for local economic development strategies, community plans and other initiatives. This prioritisation is based upon a combination of knowledge of local business growth and some foresight into areas where future economic growth may come from.

26. The identification of priority sectors is useful in offering a view from the ground up, but also one of potential and emerging sectors for the next decade. Councils have clearly related this to wider digitisation processes taking hold across our economy and society or and societal challenges, such as environmental and demographic change.

Tradeable Services

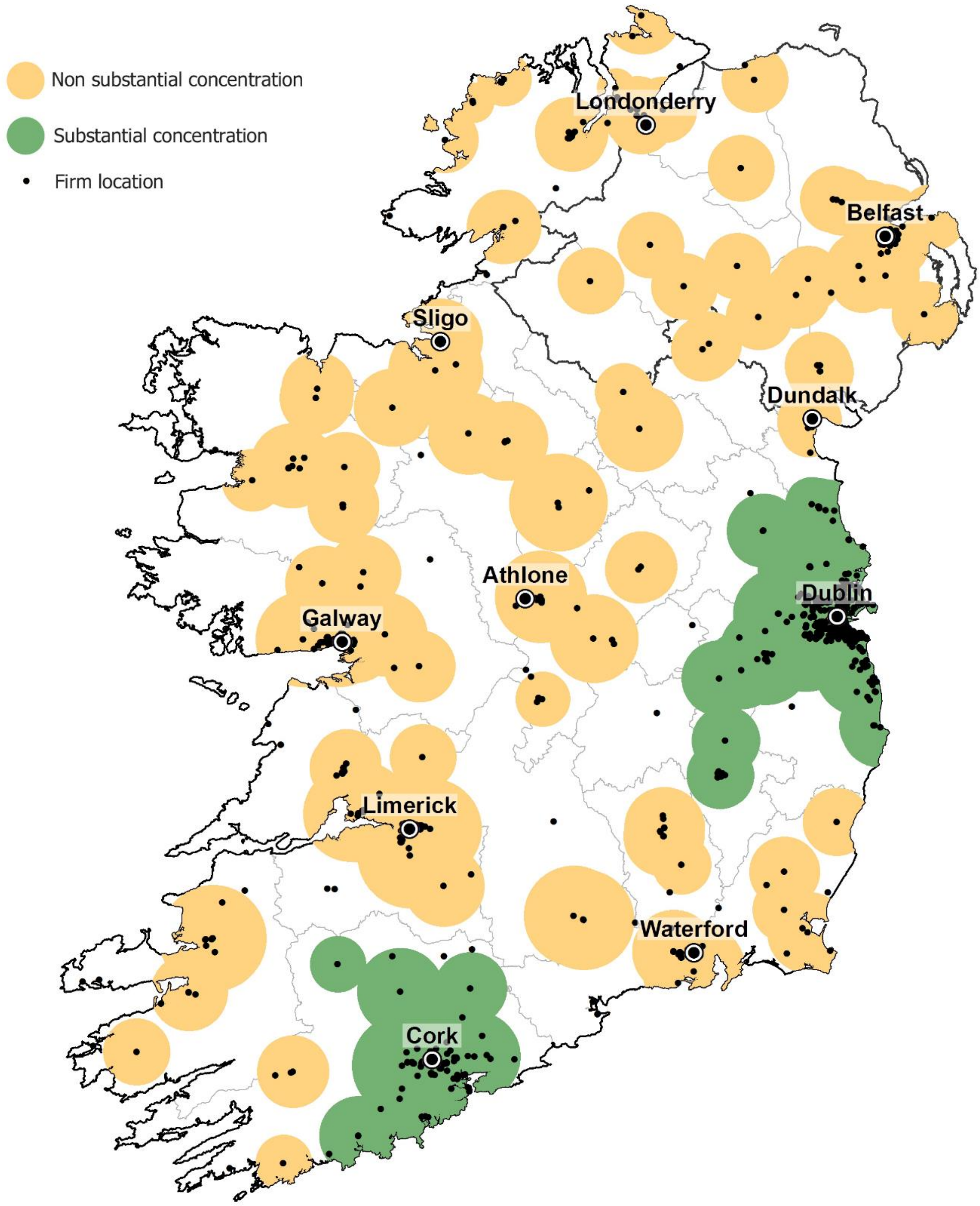
27. Given the growth in employment in ICT, Financial Services and Professional Services in recent decades and the expectation that further opportunities are likely to arise, both through inward investment and local start-ups, there are two Tradeable Services priorities for not only the two cities but in many other Council areas.

28. ***Digital*** – many of the Councils recognise the importance of ICT and what is increasingly seen as a 'digital sector'. In part, this is a recognition of the importance of the digitisation process to almost every business and organisation across our economy and society. It also reflects the fact (as seen in Table 7 above) that more than 50,000 jobs are in the ICT sector (40% of the island's total). Thus we find Council priorities in areas such as the development of fintech, sports technologies, creative industry (such as immersive technology, games, etc), data content/ analytics, etc. Councils in Dublin, Belfast, Louth, ABC and NMD are all keen on pursuing a strategy which would make 'digital' a priority, in the knowledge that enterprise supports, and indeed workspace, are likely to be quite different for new start-ups in this area.

29. ***Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS)*** – this catch-all normally includes existing areas such as Professional Services, Financial Services and other Business Services. Table 7 shows how the more than 150,000 KIBS jobs on the Corridor are most concentrated in the two cities, but can also be found in weaker concentrations in Louth and Lisburn & Castlereagh. KIBS can also include growing areas, such as Logistics, where the Corridor has some strengths, attached to its airport, port and transport assets generally.

30. Research from InterTradeIreland looked at sectoral concentrations across the island of Ireland and provides some support for these sectoral priorities. In the case of some of the KIBS – management consultancy, financial services – there were significant concentrations in both Belfast and Dublin and, less so, in the area between. In the case of Software Development (see Figure 24), or those activities attached to computer programming, the concentrations stretch along the Corridor to Louth with less significant concentrations north of that.

Figure 24: Spatial concentrations in Software



Source: InterTradeIreland, *Sectoral Ecosystems on the Island of Ireland (2015)*

Manufacturing

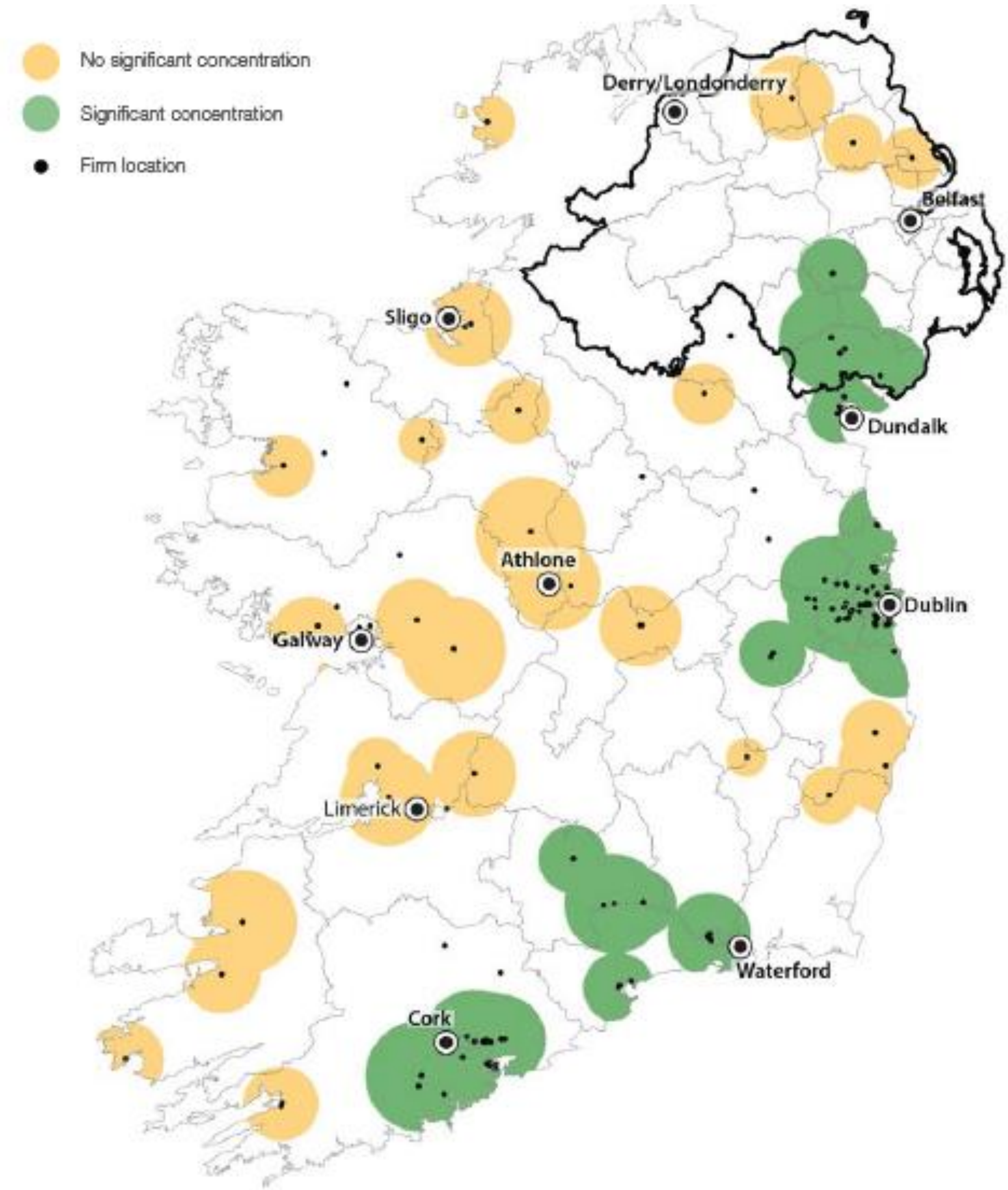
31. Although tradeable services are a central focus, the Councils are also keenly aware of existing Manufacturing strengths and the presence of some critically important firms and 66,000 jobs in the Corridor. Given this the Councils have identified three Manufacturing priority sub-sectors.

32. ***Agri-food Production*** – with 23,000 jobs (or 35% of the total) Agri-Food is certainly ubiquitous across the Corridor as across the island. The sub-sector ranges from large dairy and meat processors (such as Dale Farm, Kerry Group and ABP) to smaller, often artisan, food producers, and everything in between. The priority placed on Agri-Food can be seen in the two Council-led brands: the Food Heartland (ABC) and the Boyne Valley Food Network (branded Boyne Valley Flavours, an initiative of Meath and Louth County Councils). The sector faces a great deal of uncertainty, due to Brexit, but is also looking to new markets and building a growing link with the tourism offering to both domestic and overseas visitors.

33. ***Advanced Manufacturing and Materials*** – this is a collection of Manufacturing activities, from Transport Equipment to Materials Handling, as well as the use of new forms of high technology materials, from plastics through to composites. Merging a number of sub-sectors under Advanced Manufacturing sees 22,000 jobs on the Corridor. This is a particular focus in some or all of the Councils in NI, most notably ABC, as well as Fingal and proposals for Advanced Manufacturing Centres are emerging in City Deal plans. The focus here is increasingly on the fundamental transformation occurring in manufacturing and the impacts of automation on both products and processes). This transformation will mean potential losses in the numbers employed, but also growth in those parts of the sector driven by the development/adaption of technology at both the product and process level. There are also emerging elements here, such as Cleantech or Greentech, which is one area where Louth (and Dundalk IT) has made a focus.

34. ***Life and Health Sciences*** – the sub-sectors under this heading and the 7,000 jobs on the Corridor are normally captured under Advanced Manufaturing. However, there are also particular concentrations or single, large Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices firms (often, but not exclusively, in FDI plants) in Meath, Louth, Fingal, NMD and ABC. this sector access to HE institutions and regulatory bodies is of key importance. The Pharmaceuticals map from InterTradeIreland – see Figure 25 – reveals significant concentrations in an area around Dublin and less significant ones in Newry/Dundalk and Belfast.

Figure 25: Spatial concentrations in Pharmaceuticals



Source: InterTradeIreland, *Sectoral Ecosystems on the Island of Ireland (2015)*

Tourism

35. Each Council has identified Tourism or the 'Visitor Economy' as a sector which they would like to prioritise. Tourism, like Agri-Food, is found everywhere on the Corridor and there are almost 68,000 jobs in this sector in the Corridor. This also means that there is likely to be as much competition for numbers and spend as cooperation around promotion in this sector.

36. Although COVID-19 is likely to mean a much-curtailed tourism season in 2020 and a reliance on domestic visitors, there are still several reasons to expect further growth in this sector on the Corridor:
    - The trend has been for the numbers of trips onto the island of Ireland and the eight Council areas to increase in recent years leading to significant investment in accommodation, attractions and the 'wrap-around' food and hospitality offerings.
    - Table 7 shows that the Corridor has a below-average share of jobs in the Tourism sector, suggesting potential for growth also.
    - As air travel recovers the access to the Corridor, given the number of air and sea routes in particular through Dublin Airport, brings the promise of more overseas visitors.

37. Table 8 provides data by Council area within the Corridor and shows how Dublin and Belfast dominate the numbers of visitors (84%) and revenue (91%). This supports the market being increasingly led by 'city breaks' and events, a market in which Belfast and Dublin are already competing and must continue to look at new attractions, accommodation and food offerings that can attract repeat business. Other markets, such as conference business, is another area in which the two cities are trying to attract custom.

38. In most other Council areas along the Corridor, the challenge is slightly different. In Council areas, such as ABC, Louth or Meath, there is an emphasis on what might be seen as niche areas of tourism, such as heritage attractions, water-based and other activities and food trails. There is a challenge not only to increase the average number of nights spent but also improving the share of trips made by holidaymakers as opposed to 'visiting friends and relatives', which can reduce the amount of accommodation and hospitality used.

39. This can lead to a tension between promotion of local places and their attractions and a more general and perhaps joint profile-building, perhaps using the "Ireland's Ancient East" brand as a counter to the very successful "Wild Atlantic Way".

Table 8: Tourism figures by LGD, 2018

	No of trips	Revenue (€m)	Average no of nights	% trips = holidays
Dublin	7,400,000	€2,200m	4.28	53%
Belfast	1,500,000	€374m	3.39	44%
Newry, Mourne & Down	590,000	€103m	2.81	51%
Meath	380,000	€73m	3.61	25%
Louth	350,000	€85m	3.71	27%
Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon	230,000	€38m	3.42	20%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	150,000	€31m	4.1	27%
EEC	10,600,000	€2,811m	3.88	45%

Source: Data from Fáilte Ireland and Tourism NI; UUEPC analysis
Note: Dublin here is the four Council areas in County Dublin.

The potential for clusters

40. When thinking about the potential for clusters to develop in the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor, it is useful to heed a call for developing an evidence base which moves away from specialisation-based measures to measures that identify substantial concentrations (Van Egeraat and Doyle, 2018). In other words, this suggests looking away from concentrations within set geographies (eg: the LQ-based analysis of Council areas in Table 7) and looking towards significant concentrations of numbers of firms with substantial areas around them from which they draw staff and skills (InterTradeIreland, 2015). Examples of the second approach can be seen in Figures 24 and 25 above.

41. One cautionary note, repeatedly made by economists who have explored the potential for further development of this Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor or other corridors, is that clusters are more often proclaimed to exist, rather than the messy reality of building trust and vertical collaboration with suppliers and customers only (Yarwood, 2006).

42. Clusters develop around deep cooperation between competitor firms, development agencies (including Councils) and, very importantly, further and higher education institutions. The latter will be key as sources of innovative knowledge (from research centres) and for current or planned supply of undergraduates and postgraduates for employees. Thus local or regional cluster development will, by necessity, involve a whole of ecosystem approach.

43. Accordingly, there is potential to develop cluster policy at different spatial levels. An all-island approach is likely to best serve some sectors a number of concentrations in different places across the island. For example, Pharmaceuticals has significant concentrations around Cork, Waterford and Dublin as well as less significant concentrations in other parts of the island, including places along the Corridor. A sectoral forum organised by InterTradeIreland, with the involvement of Science Foundation Ireland, IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Invest NI, is currently identifying sectors and opportunities where all-island interventions might deliver greater economies of scale and scope.

44. At a different spatial level, 'locally or regionally focused cluster policies and actions are suitable for a more limited set of locations, sectors and activities' (Van Egeraat and Doyle, 2018). The Corridor may present an opportunity for the local or regional approach. Agreement on a common understanding of what we mean by 'clusters' and on a number of sectoral priorities – from among those identified by different Councils – might be the most suitable starting point for the Corridor.

6. Areas for cooperation on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor

1. This section outlines a number of potential areas for cooperation along the Corridor and some possible actions which might be used as a beginning of discussion. These arise from a number of sources. First, the Councils and universities involved in the network identified a number of common priority areas at a number of workshops.[13] The common priorities, including innovation, enterprise supports and environmental management, arise from Community Plans, City Deals under development in NI and Community and Enterprise Strategies across the southern part of the Corridor.

2. Second, the research identified a number of areas for cooperation, in particular 'soft' and hard' infrastructural improvements, which have underpinned successful interventions in other economic corridors.

3. Third, the current profile and future prospects of the Corridor suggest a number of cooperative areas, such as skills development, which could deliver economic value to the region and the island more generally.

4. This section lists a number of potential areas under the headings of ***Promotion*** and ***Infrastructure*** and begins the early process of suggesting a rationale for cooperation and some possible actions. These will be subject to further development by the network of Councils and universities, before being tested with a wider group of stakeholders.

6.1 Promotion

5. Many economic corridors have pursued the gaol of successfully branding and promoting their *location*. This is often done for the purposes of attracting investment from both inward private and domestic public sources. The focus for promotion differs from place to place but there is a tendency to promote the presence of a highly skilled workforce and population, of sectoral strengths (eg: Medicon Valley in Oresund), of supports for innovative and entrepreneurial firms.

Skills

6. The rationale to include skills among the potential areas for cooperation comes from both the pressing need to always improve in this area, and the expertise and remit of the partners involved in the Corridor's network. As noted above the supply of sufficient numbers of people with relevant skills to meet demand is a necessary foundation for a competitive economy, especially for a region aiming to be attractive to inward investment.

7. In addition, the local authorities and universities along the Corridor are well aware of and involved in meeting the twin challenges of a supply of high skilled workers, and of minimising the numbers coming into the labour market with low levels of skills. There is already a great deal of activity at local authority and regional levels along the Corridor, specifically in the work of various statutory and voluntary skills fora.

8. Some initial ideas 'floated' as possible actions in the skills development area include:
    - Developing means of engaging employers in greater levels of skills development among their workforces (with an emphasis on small and micro-enterprises).
    - Rolling out mechanisms involving education providers and employers alike to improve employability prospects and 'soft skills'.
    - The completion of a Skills Barometer – monitoring the changing needs of the labour market and future demand and supply of skills – for the Corridor as a whole.

Sectoral strengths

9. The rationale behind promoting sectoral strengths is that all regions are expected to have not only a level of sectoral specialisation (a concentration of business and employees in certain sectors), but also strong networks or clusters of firms and research in particular sectors. The Oresund region, with its focus on medical devices and the wider life sciences industry, is a case in point.

10. The profile identifies the expected sectoral specialisations in different parts of the Corridor, most particularly in ICT, financial services, pharmaceuticals and professional services. However, there are also localised specialisations in parts of the Corridor in the agri-food sector, tourism and transport/logistics, some of which occur in a number of Council areas. There are also plans afoot to further develop some of these strengths, for example in food and tourism, as well as supporting emerging industries including cyber-security, financial technologies high-tech creative or greentech.

11. Some initial ideas 'floated' as possible actions in the sectoral development area include:
    - Branding of both the existing strengths (eg: in food) and promotion of segments of these, such as heritage, water-based ('blue ways') or other activity tourism.
    - Development of further innovation and research 'hubs' such as Belfast's financial technology centre, the data analytics centre in DCU (INSIGHT), the energy research hub in Dundalk, and those centres proposed in the Belfast Region City Deal (for example in life sciences – the Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology).

Enterprise supports

12. The profile shows a varied performance both in the level of entrepreneurship at the start-up stage (with business birth rates much lower in most NI Council areas) and also in the amount of scaling-up among microenterprises. There is a strong rationale for cooperation among the Councils and universities in this space because of the current provision of supports to individual entrepreneurs, to start-ups and to other businesses by all of the partners.

13. Some initial ideas 'floated' as possible actions in the enterprise supports area include:
    - The Councils and universities already provide enterprise supports and have a remit for further development of these along the Corridor, through the network of LEOs and the joint operation of 'Go for It' in NI by 11 Councils and Local Enterprise Agencies. There is certainly potential for shared resources, learning and perhaps celebration of success stories.
    - The existence of collaborative ventures between the Council partners – such as NMD, Louth and Meath on a precursor to the InterTradeIreland Co-Innovate programme – points to opportunities to develop other offerings in partnership with the economic development agencies working on the Corridor.
    - Potential to pursue some niche areas, such as access to finance and so on for 'tech starts' and HE spin-outs (in partnership with the universities and ITs).

6.2 Infrastructure

14. In some economic corridors (such as Oresund or the proposed Oxford/Milton Keynes/Cambridge arc) the emphasis is increasingly on the 'soft' forms of infrastructure, such as research and innovation centres, Smart Cities initiatives, and investment in environmental and energy management projects. Growth corridors in East Asia and examples such as the Basel Tri-national Agglomeration and the Seattle/Vancouver Corridor have all based cooperation on networks of research institutes, knowledge transfers and joint research programmes in order to benefit the larger region.

15. 'Hard' infrastructure, such as transport connectivity, has also been crucial to corridor development and, as noted above in Section 3.3 on Key Assets much remains to be done. This will certainly involve advocacy by the network partners at a regional and national level for further investment.

Research & Innovation

16. The role of the state in fostering research and innovation-led economic development has been relatively successful, though the institutions of the local government across the island of Ireland and their role as drivers of

innovation is not as developed as other EU member states. This is now improving, with new competences being allocated and greater expectations placed upon local authorities. However the consequences of earlier constraints can be seen in the emphasis on the provision of enterprise space, the recent bedding down of economic development and planning powers, and a continuing underappreciation of the localness and place-based nature of innovative economic activity.

17. Given this set of critical challenges facing local authorities, the rationale for cooperation and indeed partnership with other key institutions on the Corridor (e.g. HE institutions) is strong. The need for cooperation also arises from the need to shift the focus of attention from an individual place or individual firm to a region and clusters or networks of businesses (Rosenfeld, 2007:20).

18. A final challenge in this area for local government relates to managing a variety of relationships, between HE institutions, Councils and businesses. Although these relationships often tend to rely on individuals, there are examples of successful institutional partnerships, for example the Green Way in Dublin, that indicate that successful private sector, local authority and university partnerships are possible.

19. Some initial ideas 'floated' as possible actions in the research and innovation area include:
    - The further expansion of the specific Smart Cities initiative involving Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) challenges. In recent years this has involved Dublin and Belfast, including the joint 2018 project looking at redesigning the delivery of goods in urban areas.
    - The provision of incubation space by various HE institutions along the Corridor (Alpha in DCU, the RDC in DkiT, etc) offers an opportunity for the development of networks and shared programmes and offerings between the centres and their tenants.
    - The development of some new and the expansion of existing research centres – some with a sectoral focus such as advanced manufacturing, software development or clinical trials and others which have a more general application, perhaps modelled on accelerator centres in Fingal or Belfast's Innovation Factory.
    - The development of measures to facilitate the testing of new digital technology applications, for instance by creating innovation testbeds, regulatory sandboxes, and state-of-the-art facilities and expertise, all of which will aid the diffusion of innovation beyond large firms.

Environmental resilience and management

20. The challenge and rationale could not be clearer as both the UK and Ireland have declared a climate emergency' as global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate. The

findings of successive IPCC reports are stark 'climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security, and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5°C'.

21. Moving to the Corridor, the climate modelling simulations suggest the greatest increase in mean annual temperatures in the east of the country, mean annual spring and summer precipitation levels are projected to decrease, and heavy rainfall events will increase in winter and autumn. Storms affecting Ireland will decrease in frequency but will increase in intensity thus bringing an increased risk of damage and coastal flooding.

22. These challenges will only be met by collective methods of environmental resilience or effectively adapting and planning so that the negative climate impacts can be reduced, while also taking advantage of any positive outcomes, either allowing the system to return to its previous state of to adapt to a new state. Environmental management is equally important and will involve the protection of natural assets, human welfare, local distinctiveness of places, productivity and livelihoods, food security and reputation for stable and secure environments for investment in the Corridor.

23. The alignment of the adaptation frameworks North and South in the Corridor offers the opportunity for collaboration to collectively address these shared challenges which are not confined by spatial or administrative boundaries. Some initial ideas 'floated' as possible actions in the environmental resilience and management area include:
    - Protection of existing critical infrastructure, including energy, communications, roads, public transport, water and coastal and inland flood defence systems.
    - Supporting the harnessing of the potential for the development of new regional renewable energy (wind – onshore and offshore – and wave).
    - Further development of green infrastructure on the Corridor through the provision of long distance cycling and walking routes.
    - Provision of mechanisms to continue the management of the Corridor's offshore resources (energy generation, marine transport and fishing and aquaculture) in light of the particular challenges with Brexit.
    - Developing collaborative frameworks in the areas of information sharing, researching new technologies and shared learning in public sector energy efficiency efforts and developing the circular economy.

7. Notes & References

[1] The network currently has Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Belfast City Council, Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Lisburn & Castlereagh Borough Council, Louth County Council, Meath County Council and Newry, Mourne & Down District Council as members.

[2] The scenario used forecasts/projections out to 2040 from UUEPC's Summer 2019 Outlook for NI and from the long-term forecasts for Ireland from the ESRI (Bergin et al, 2016).

[3] An initial workshop in September 2018 for Council officers from across the Corridor identified a number of priority areas shared in common. These were revisited at a later workshop held in May 2019 which discussed the draft final report. The common priorities arise from Local Economic Development and Community Plans, as well as the City Deals under development in NI.

[4] Economic corridors in Malaysia (Athukorola and Narayanan, 2018) and the Mekong region (Ishida, 2009) are among the most studied phenomena and centre on a mix of investment in transport infrastructure and in innovation and R&D assets.

[5] Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The impact of the highly improbable* (2007).

[6] There are various population estimates. A figure of 2.5 million in the Arup report arises from the population of the entire Dublin region (ie: Fingal, Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown and South Dublin County Council areas) being included. A different figure, from a 60 minute drive-time from midway between Dundalk and Drogheda, gives an estimate of 2.25 million or 34% of the island's total population (courtesy of Louth LEO).

[7] Resident employment deals with the sectors which residents of the eight Council areas declare themselves to be employed in. This data is taken from the Census.

[8] Workplace employment deals with the sectors assigned to the various workplaces across the eight Council areas and the numbers employed in these. In this case a person may be counted in one or more workplace. The data is taken from POWSCAR commuting data for the South and ONS Workforce data for the North. Agriculture and Public Administration are not included in the dataset.

[9] The skills demand analysis is based upon a 'high growth' scenario whereby expansion demand is three times higher than in the 'current trend' of baseline scenario (UUEPC, 2019).

[10] The business demography data from the CSO is by county with 'Dublin' taking in the four Council areas in the county, including Dublin City and Fingal.

[11] Research from the Enterprise Research Centre found that 77% of micro-enterprise owners in NI were happy to keep their firm 'similar to how it operates now', a higher figure than 71% in Ireland.

[12] The data is taken from Census POWSCAR commuting data for the South and ONS Workforce data for the North. Agriculture and Public Administration are not included in the dataset. This data – estimating 962,000 jobs – excludes the 50,000 jobs growth since 2016.

[13] Workshops held in September 2018 and May 2019 allowed Council officers from across the Corridor to identify a number of priority areas shared in common.

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Newry, Mourne and Down
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Economic Corridor

21.05.2020

McCadden

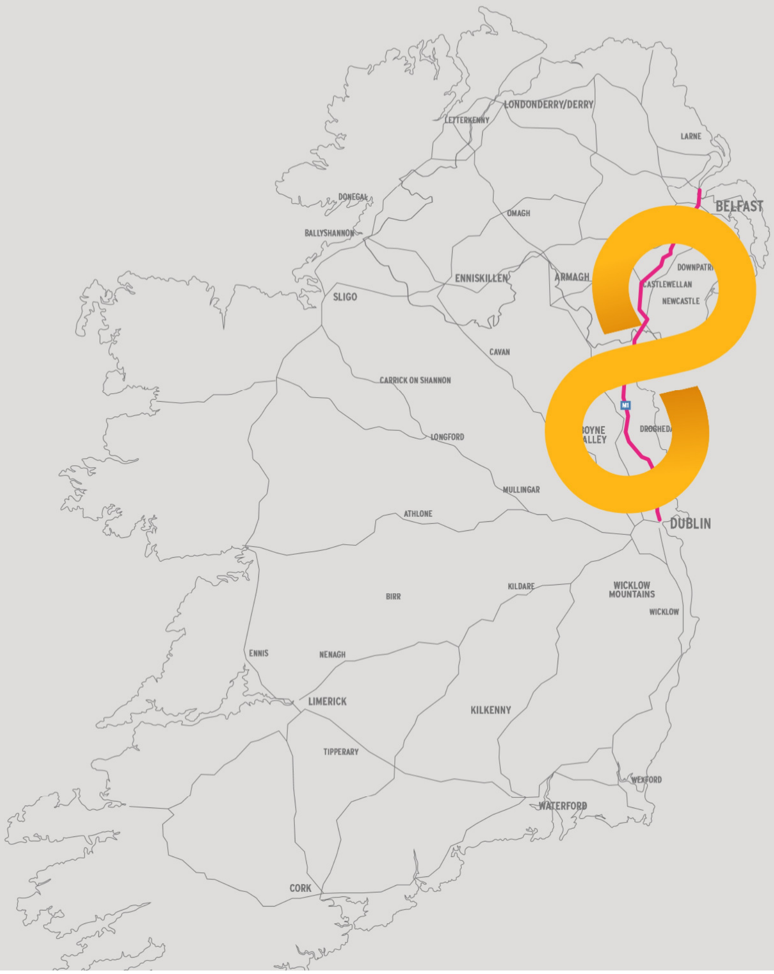
Concept 1

dublin belfast

ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

dublin belfast

ECONOMIC CORRIDOR



DUBLIN BELFAST
ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

dublin belfast
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eight councils
working together

dublin
belfast
ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

boosting growth

dublin belfast

ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

boosting innovation

dublin belfast
ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

boosting opportunity

dublin belfast
ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

boosting connectivity

dublin belfast
ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	Invitation to join UK100 Resilient Recovery Taskforce
Date:	19 June 2020
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Grainia Long, Commissioner for Resilience

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Some time in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	To seek committee approval for Belfast City Council to accept an invitation to join the UK100 Resilient Recovery Taskforce, and agree that the Chair of Strategic Policy & Resources Committee should represent Council on the Taskforce, with officer support from the Commissioner for Resilience.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to • Approve BCC membership of the Resilient Recovery Taskforce, and that the Chair of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee represents Council.

3.0	**Main Report**
	Key points to note
3.1	UK100 is the network for UK local authorities, urban, suburban and rural, focused on climate and clean energy policy. It connects local leaders to each other, to business and to national government, enabling them to showcase their achievements, learn from each other and speak collectively to accelerate the transition to clean energy. It works closely with elected representatives, policy experts and grassroots campaigners to make the clean energy transition a reality. This involves developing solutions to challenges faced by each and all of our local leaders, whatever their geography, history or makeup, so as to influence national government and building public support for clean energy solutions. It has a close working relationship to 'Core Cities' of which Belfast is an active member.
3.2	UK 100 has written to Belfast City Council to invite it to join a newly formed Resilient Recovery Taskforce. The Taskforce is 'designed to bring the expertise and experience of local leaders to bear on how to rebuild our economy in a way that meets the challenges of climate change.' It follows guidance written to government from the UK Committee on Climate Change on a resilient recovery, which highlighted the importance of accelerating action on de-carbonisation and adaptation, given the lessons learned from Covid-19.
3.3	While the specific actions will be agreed by the Taskforce over the coming months, it is expected that it's programme of work will include, action to: - Communicate the opportunities of placing the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change at the heart of resilient recovery, by using our collective voices and individual actions to ensure that the UK Government supports local government and the investments needed locally. - Establish a process of engagement with national government that enables local leaders to help develop constructively the design, format, content and delivery of an economic recovery package, or packages, that create resilience in our communities and reduce carbon emissions.. This should be complementary to any existing engagement that exists currently. - Agree a shared set of broad priorities, in the form of a declaration, that reflects how we want to achieve collective goals and that helps Task Force members in securing support for specific projects and programmes for their local areas.
3.4	In the first instance UK100 have agreed to perform the necessary secretariat duties, with the support of Core Cities, and there is no expectation of a financial contribution for participation.

3.5	Belfast City Council has already undertaken to support and shape a potential future 'green stimulus' as part of our broader work on 'Response, Rebuild and Recovery' from Covid-19. The UK100 Resilient Recovery Task Force is a useful opportunity to make the case for investment in this area, alongside other cities.
	Resource & Resource Implications
3.6	Membership of the Taskforce does not involve a financial contribution- other than officer time, no other financial resource are expected to be required.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.7	None arising from this paper.
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	None

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	Annual update of the Scheme of Delegation
Date:	19 Jun 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Sarah Williams, Governance & Compliance Manager; Susan McNeill, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Some time in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to submit for approval the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	It is recommended that Members: • note the amendments made under the delegated power to the City Solicitor to make minor amendments • note the changes made to reflect organisational and legislative changes • approve the updated Scheme of Delegation
3.0	**Main report**
3.1	Key Issues The Scheme of Delegation has been updated to reflect:

	• The transfer of powers relating to the termination of service in respect of persons declared medically unfit (and the amended terminology) from the Director of Finance & Resources to the Director of City & Organisational Strategy • Following the retirement of the Director of Property & Projects, the transfer of those delegated powers to the Chief Executive • The addition of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations 2020 to Appendix B, which has been made pursuant to the minor amendment power delegated to the City Solicitor in Section 3.3.13.
3.2	Members are asked to note the amendments made under the delegated power to the City Solicitor to make minor amendments to the Scheme of Delegation. These are all noted in the Version Control section.
3.3	Financial & Resource Implications None.
3.4	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment None.
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 – Updated Scheme of Delegation

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL
2020

Scheme of Delegation

to Chief Officers

Ratified by Council in July 2020
Last minor update May 2020

Version 3.4

Version	Changes	Date	Author
1.0	New version of Scheme of delegation	March 2015	Russell Connelly / Sandra Donnelly
1.1	Updated with: • Organisational and legislative changes • Planning-related changes • Licensing-related changes	November 2016	Sarah Williams
1.2	Updated with amendments relating to: • BWUH Ltd • Innovation Factory • Building Control • Cleansing Services • Environmental Health • Parks & Leisure • Planning	November 2016	Sarah Williams
2.0	Updated with amendments relating to: • Director of Planning & Place as recommended by Planning Committee in March 2017 and Licensing Committee in December 2016 • Recent organisational changes agreed at SP&R in November 2016 and January 2017 • A new clause to provide clarity on Building Control powers related to dual-language street signs • An amended clause to enable Environmental Health to cancel the registration of a number of food businesses as required under the new Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland) 2016 Approved at Strategic Policy and Resources on 19th May and ratified by Council on 1st June 2017	April 2017	Sarah Williams
2.1	Updated with clause relating to special events on roads - 3.8.8 (o). Two minor amendments made: - move Pavement Café legislation reference from Appendix C to Appendix B - reference to Appendix B in 3.8.2 changed to Appendix C Approved at Strategic Policy and Resources on 22nd September and ratified by Council on 2nd October 2017	October 2017	Sarah Williams
2.2	Appendix B updated to include: - The Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015	January 2018	Sarah Williams

Version	Changes	Date	Author
	- The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 As per email request from Joanne Delaney (27/10/17) and Siobhan Toland 30/10/17. Minor amendments made using delegated power 3.3.12 (as it then was).		
3.0	Updated with amendments relating to: - Recent organisational changes - The addition of a provision to clarify what powers cannot be delegated from Chief Officers to Operational Directors (1.7) - The Connswater Greenway as agreed by P&C on 12/04/18 (3.6.24 and 3.6.25) - Houses of Multiple Occupancy as agreed by SP&R on 24/11/18 (3.6.27 the word 'material' has been added to reflect corresponding changes agreed to the Standing Orders) - Remove a provision (3.6.24) which is already provided for in the General Delegated Functions (2.4.3) - Added a new provision to reflect the Single Tender Action process which is approved through the Commercial Panel (2.5.4) - Moving a provision relating to the City Solicitor which was included under the former Director of Planning and Place (3.3.12) Appendix B updated to include: - The Sea Fishing (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018 - Consumer Rights Act 2015 - Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 - The Waste (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 - The Cremation (Belfast) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1961	February 2019	Sarah Williams
3.1	Minor amendment made using delegated power 3.3.13: 3.4.1 Approving event and activity requests for the use of the parks and open spaces along the Connswater Community Greenway ~~in 2018/19~~, delivered by the CCGT in partnership with the Council.	March 2019	Sarah Williams
3.2	Multiple amendments made to section on delegated authority on Planning (3.7). (A summary of the amendments is included in the Planning Committee report dated 10 December 2019).	January 2020	Russell Connelly
3.3	Minor amendment using delegated power 3.3.13:	May 2020	Susan McNeill

Version	Changes	Date	Author
	Appendix B updated to include The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020		
3.4	To move from Director of Finance & Resources to Director of City & Organisational Strategy: 2.6.5 Taking action, including terminating (excluding termination of service in respect of persons declared medically unfit) or varying contracts of employment in respect of employees below Head of Service level within their departments following consultation with the Director of City and Organisational Strategy and the City Solicitor as appropriate. Add new provision for clarity of terminology (is already covered by clause above): 3.4.10 Approving termination of service in respect of persons declared medically unfit 3.3.13 to remove references to the Director of Property & Projects and to delegate the exercise of functions previously held by such to the Chief Executive or Director of Finance & Resources as appropriate.	June/July 20	Susan McNeill

Contents

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

SECTION 1:

PURPOSE AND INTERPRETATION

Section 1: Purpose and Interpretation

Purpose of the Scheme of Delegation

1.1 Part 8, paragraph 49(2) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 requires local authorities to maintain a list:

(a) specifying those **powers** of the council which are **exercisable by officers** of the council; in pursuance of arrangements made under this Act or any other statutory provisions for their discharge by those officers; and

(b) stating the **title of the officer** by whom each of the powers so specified is so exercisable

except in cases where the arrangements for discharge by officers are for a specified period not exceeding six months.

1.2 In addition Section 31(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 also requires a council to produce a separate Scheme of Delegation detailing planning application decisions that can be delegated to officers; planning applications that must be decided by Committee and; arrangements for requesting applications to be brought to Committee that might otherwise be delegated. The delegations to the Licensing and Planning Committees are contained within the Committee terms of reference in the Council's Standing Orders documentation.

1.3 By delegating responsibility for specific duties to Chief Officers, Members will have more opportunity to concentrate on the most important strategic decisions of council policy including both corporately significant decisions and service delivery issues. This will allow officers to deal with operational issues in a more expedient way and reduce the overall administrative burden on the political process. Delegated authority is designed to aid the integrated management of the organisation, the effective deployment of resources and the efficient delivery of services and this Scheme should therefore be considered in that light.

1.4 The purpose of the Scheme is, therefore, to set out the decisions and authorisations which Members agree Chief Officers can make or grant without any further reference to Council or Committees. This authorisation will be conditional upon Committees receiving regular assurance on the application of the Scheme as set out in the reporting section ahead.

1.5 Decisions made by officers under delegated authority are not subject to reconsideration under 'Call-in' Part 7, paragraph 41 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, which applies only to decisions made by the Council or a Committee of the Council, the procedure for which is detailed in Standing Orders paragraph 47.

1.6 The delegations in this Scheme should be interpreted widely to assist with the smooth running of the organisation, the effective deployment of resources, the efficient delivery of services, and the achievements of the Council's goals.

General Principles of delegation

The Chief Executive and Chief Officers are empowered, through this Scheme, to make decisions on behalf of the Council in accordance with the following general principles:

Chief Officers - Rules on application of the Scheme of Delegation

1.7 The term 'Chief Officer' includes those titled officers as defined in Appendix A. Chief Officers may sub-delegate any of their delegated powers to their deputies or such other officer(s) as they may consider appropriate except powers 2.2.4, 2.2.7, 2.4.4 and 2.5.2 (the award of contracts below £100,000 can be delegated). Such delegations need not be evidenced in writing. Chief Officers will remain accountable for decisions taken by their deputies.

1.8 In the absence or unavailability of the officer to whom a function is delegated, the function may be exercised by the officer(s) responsible for the performance of their duties during such absence.

1.9 In a case where the exercise of a delegated power involves considerations within the remit of another Chief Officer, the Chief Officer exercising the power shall consult with that other Chief Officer prior to taking any final decision.

1.10 A Chief Officer may only exercise a delegated function under this Scheme subject to, and in accordance with -

- the agreed plans (including but not limited to Community, Corporate, Departmental and Improvement Plans), strategies, policies, programmes and objectives approved by the Council
- the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Equality Scheme, Codes of Conduct and other relevant governance policies contained within the Council's Constitution
- the agreed estimates for their Department.

1.11 In exercising these delegated powers the officers concerned shall have broad discretion to use the most efficient and effective means available, including the deployment of staffing and other resources within their control and the procurement of other resources as considered necessary.

1.12 Authority to exercise any delegated power includes the authority to take all reasonable necessary actions of an incidental or consequential nature and to take all operational decisions, within agreed policies, in relation to the services for which they are responsible.

1.13 Chief Officers may, if they choose, and notwithstanding their power of delegation, refer any delegated matter to the relevant Committee in any case. Any decision which would otherwise be delegated under the Scheme should be reported to the relevant Committee it if is politically contentious, sensitive, significant or if it is otherwise in the public interest to do so.

1.14 Any reference in the Scheme to a statutory enactment should be taken to include any subsequent modification, re-enactment, regulations or subordinate legislation made thereunder.

1.15 Chief Officers shall consult with the Chief Executive in respect of agreeing any city partnership arrangements.

1.16 Chief Officers shall maintain a record of delegations and any sub-delegations pertaining to each of their Departments.

Members – Assurances on the application of the Scheme

1.17 The Council and its Committees shall retain authority for decisions on matters of **significant strategic policy**.

1.18 The Scheme does not delegate to Chief Officers –

- any matter reserved to full Council and which by law may not be delegated - that is, the power of setting the district rate, or of borrowing money or of acquiring, holding or disposing of land;
- the adoption of any new policy, or major change to an existing agreed Council policy.

1.19 Delegation to deal with any matter shall not supersede the Council's power, or that of relevant Committees, to call for a report on any decision or action taken under the Scheme.

1.20 Where the exercise of a delegated function requires consultation with the Chairman of a Committee, the Deputy Chairman may act in the absence or non-availability of the Chairman.

1.21 The City Solicitor shall be responsible for ensuring that assurance is provided to Members on the use of the Scheme of Delegation and that any developments and amendments to the Scheme are correctly recorded so that it remains relevant and up to date.

1.22 The Council has an Assurance Framework in place which provides information on compliance with the various elements of the Council's governance framework, including performance reports, health and safety reports, finance reports, internal audit reports and risk management reports. The various 'in year' and 'year end' reports arising from the Assurance Framework are reviewed and approved by both the Audit & Risk Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee annually.

1.23 Delegated matters are governed by robust policies covering financial regulations, procurement, human resources, IT etc. The assurance framework covers these areas and policy owners are responsible for ensuring that there is a framework in place for compliance monitoring, with any instances of non compliance being reported to the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources and to Members. Key policy areas are subject to periodic internal audit and external audit review. In addition the governance framework is reviewed and reported annually in the Annual Governance Statement which forms part of the published financial statements. Chief Officers will also be required to provide assurance on the implementation of this Scheme within their departments. A more detailed assurance process will be developed requiring Chief Officers to sign quarterly assurance statements with a review against compliance recommended after year 1.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

SECTION 2:

GENERAL DELEGATED FUNCTIONS

Section 2: General Delegated Functions

All Chief Officers, as listed in Appendix A, have delegated authority to exercise the following general functions:

2.1 General management

All of the delegations listed below should be exercised in line with relevant Council policies.

2.1.1 Taking all necessary action for the effective day-to-day management, administration and supervision of the department, services and land and property assets for which the Chief Officer is responsible.

2.1.2 Implementing those strategies, programmes, actions, events and initiatives which the Chief Officer is responsible for, as set out in agreed Council plans (as outlined in paragraph 1.9).

2.1.3 Responding on behalf of the organisation, to consultation documents on operational and service specific matters that *do not* have corporately significant policy or financial implications.

2.1.4 Making initial applications for grant funding from external bodies (provided there is no financial commitment from the Council) where time constraints prohibit Council approval.

2.1.5 Developing and implementing specific promotions, schemes and events, waiving fees, offering refunds and taking other such action as may be required to take account of market conditions and/or to promote and protect the reputation of the Council.

2.1.6 Instructing the City Solicitor, where necessary, to take legal proceedings in relation to the recovery of debt, the enforcement of contractual rights, the service of notices, the prosecution of statutory offences and the instituting and defending of claims and proceedings affecting the Chief Officer's department.

2.1.7 Entering into arrangements with other public authorities or bodies for the provision of services subject to this Scheme and the Financial Regulations.

2.1.8 Approving the use of marketing and promotional measures to attract and retain users and members of Council's services as considered useful.

2.2 Finance

All of the delegations listed below should be exercised in line with relevant Council policies and in particular should take account of the requirements of the Financial Regulations which reflect best practice and provide a practical source of advice to assist all Officers in the discharge of their duties.

2.2.1 Each Chief Officer should consult the Strategic Director of Finance & Resources in relation to any matter within his/her area of responsibility which is likely to have a material impact on the finances of the Council before either incurring any commitment or liability, whether provisional or otherwise, or by reporting the matter to a Committee in accordance with paragraph A9 of the Financial Regulations.

2.2.2 Each Chief Officer is responsible for ensuring that their Department receives all income and that it does not spend more than the amount of expenditure it has estimated in accordance with paragraph G1 of the Financial Regulations.

2.2.3 Chief Officers will exercise control over estimates at the level of both services and cost**/**profit centres. Chief Officers may incur any expenditure on matters for which the Council approved the estimates in accordance with Paragraph G2 of the Financial Regulations.

2.2.4 Chief Officers are responsible for agreeing in-year virements within their service revenue accounts within delegated limits as set out Paragraph G23 of the Financial Regulations.

2.2.5 Chief Officers must submit proposals for virement to the Strategic Director of Finance & Resources who may either approve the request or refer it to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in accordance with the guidelines contained in Paragraph G23 of the Financial Regulations.

2.2.6 Paying the cost of an employee's professional fees where it is legally necessary for the employee to perform their duties.

2.2.7 Writing off any loss of money (including bad debts) and loss of stores and obsolete equipment and materials in accordance with the limits outlined in the Financial Regulations.

2.2.8 Authorising employees to attend training and development events, technical visits and courses, including conferences, exhibitions, workshops and seminars and meetings of appropriate professional associations.

2.2.9 Authorising appropriate payments to employees in their department in respect of telephone, travel and subsistence allowances, standby and call out allowances, overtime, additional duties, costs of study courses and removal and relocation expenses.

2.2.10 Granting of small scale hospitality pursuant to section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 subject to the financial limits set.

2.2.11 Authorising spend of available funding in accordance with the requirements of an external funder where time constraints would not allow advance notification to be made to the relevant Committee, subject to reporting at the next Committee meeting.

2.2.12 Fixing new charges (where none previously existed) subject to statutory provision, in consultation with the relevant Committee Chair.

2.3 Emergencies and cases of urgency

All of the delegations listed below should be exercised in line with relevant Council policies.

2.3.1 Taking such measures, including incurring expenditure[1] and initiating legal action, as may be required in emergency situations or cases of urgency, subject to advising the appropriate Chair.

2.3.2 Where such measures involve the Council incurring expenditure of an amount that is likely to result in the Committee's expenditure exceeding its approved estimate, then the Chief Officer should advise the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources.

2.4 Management of Land & Property Assets

The exercise of the following delegated powers is in relation to the management of the land and property assets (e.g. leisure centres, community centres, parks and open spaces, Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoo) but excluding the City Hall for which the City Solicitor has responsibility. The use of these delegated powers is subject to Para 1.7 above that there is no disposal, holding or acquisition of land involved.

All of the delegations listed below should be exercised in line with relevant Council policies.

2.4.1 Permitting the use of such assets by Council departments and services and outside organisations.

2.4.2 Varying the opening times of, or restricting access to, or closing such assets in special circumstances (for example to permit maintenance or other operational reasons) in consultation with the Chairman of the relevant Committee.

2.4.3 Approving the holding of non-controversial events, conferences and promotions in such assets and applying any necessary hire and/or admission charges or discounted pricing.

[1] In accordance with Paragraph G16 of the Financial Regulations.

2.4.4 Following consultation with Party Group Leaders and Chairs of the relevant Committee, approving requests received in respect of potentially controversial events and activities in such assets where there is not sufficient time for Council approval to be obtained.

2.4.5 Granting temporary licences for the use of Council assets for the purpose of events/car parking or other temporary uses on appropriate commercial terms, subject to consultation with the [Chief Executive]and the City Solicitor.

2.5 Procurement

The exercise of the following delegated powers is subject to consultation with the [Chief Executive or Director of Finance & Resources?]to ensure that decisions are taken in accordance with any relevant Council policies and protocols, including Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations.

Under Standing Order 60(a) any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000 {exclusive of VAT}) needs to be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b) the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council.

All of the delegations listed below should be exercised in line with relevant Council policies.

2.5.1 Procuring goods, services or works under the statutory limit of £30,000 where the procurement

(1) is in relation to matters of a routine or recurring nature; or

(2) is in relation to the operational requirements of the Department provided that it is not of an unusual or controversial nature; or

(3) is contained within an agreed Council plan.

2.5.2 Authorising a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works **over** the statutory limit of £30,000, following a tender exercise, where the Council has approved the invitation to tender and the award of the contract is made in accordance with the predetermined award criteria. Chief Officers should approve the authorising of contracts over £100,000.

2.5.3 Authorising a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works **up to** the statutory limit of £30,000.

2.5.4 Certifying Single Tender Actions (STA) where appropriate and, in so doing, ensuring STAs are compliant with Standing Orders and any STA procedure adopted by the Council.

2.5.5 Approving the changing of sureties by contractors provided the Council's interests remain fully protected.

2.5.6 Determining a contract awarded by the Council where the contractor is in breach of contract and unable or unwilling to proceed therewith, subject to prior consultation with the Chairman of the relevant Committee and the City Solicitor.

2.5.7 Taking action to ensure contract compliance and negotiating claims and contract variations.

2.5.8 Signing maintenance agreements subsequent to capital acquisitions agreed by the Council subject to consultation with the City Solicitor.

2.5.9 Subject to the Procurement rules, making arrangements for the supply of goods and services pursuant to Section 105 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.

2.5.10 Negotiating an interim arrangement with a supplier in circumstances where a contract is being terminated.

2.5.11 Signing of certain contracts which are not subject to Sealing.

2.6 Human Resources

2.6.1 Appointing successful applicants to agreed establishment posts below Head of Service level as
2.6.2 recommended by the selection panel.

2.6.2 Agreeing to a one month overlap period for the appointment of employees, provided that this can be accommodated within budget.

2.6.3 Allowing or disallowing all requests for leave, of any kind, in accordance with the Schemes of Conditions of Service adopted by the Council.

2.6.4 Approving other paid or unpaid leave of absence.

2.6.5 Taking action, including terminating (excluding termination of service in respect of persons declared medically unfit - for this see 3.4.10) or varying contracts of employment in respect of employees below Head of Service level within their departments following consultation with the Director of City and Organisational Strategy and the City Solicitor as appropriate.

2.7 Small Grant Schemes

2.7.1 Approving the allocation of small grants in line with the award criteria (up to a maximum level of £10,000), where the Committee has established and/or administers a scheme and has authorised the Chief Officer to manage its implementation.

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

SECTION 3:

SPECIFICALLY DELEGATED FUNCTIONS

Section 3: Specifically delegated functions to individual Chief Officers

3.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive acts as the Council's principal advisor on policy matters and has responsibility for ensuring that all delegations are consistent with Council policy. Anything delegated to a Chief Officer is also delegated to the Chief Executive who has authority to act on their behalf and to exercise any relevant function accordingly.

In addition to the above the exercise of the following functions, **in line with relevant council policies,** is therefore delegated to the Chief Executive:

3.1.1 Undertaking all matters associated with the professional management of the Council.

3.1.2 Allocating or reallocating responsibility for exercising particular powers to any officer of the Council in the interests of effective corporate management as she sees fit.

3.1.3 Authorising a Chief Officer to act in respect of a function, power or responsibility that has not been specifically reserved to the Council or Committee and lies within his or her remit to act.

3.1.4 Authorising any Chief Officer to act on behalf of any other Chief Officer as required in order to discharge their delegated functions as authorised in this Scheme.

3.1.5 Taking any operational decision, within agreed Council policies, in relation to the services for which any Chief Officer is responsible.

3.1.6 Requiring any officer of the Council to refer a matter to a Committee and/or Council even in instances where the officer may have delegated authority to deal with that matter.

3.1.7 Issuing a direction, as he or she considers appropriate, that any officer shall **not** exercise a delegated function.

3.1.8 Making a decision on the applicability of any delegated power in any specific case.

3.1.9 Acting, or nominating a Chief Officer to act, in instances where there may be doubt over responsibility for the exercise of any particular delegated power.

3.1.10 Developing and implementing appropriate city partnership arrangements to take forward the Council's plans and objectives (including establishment, membership, operation and committing of resources).

3.1.11 Settling, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and City Solicitor, any points requiring interpretation or clarification on the practical application of this Scheme.

3.1.12 Signing legal documents on behalf of the Council and authorising the affixing of the Corporate Seal as required.

3.1.13 Invoking, and making whatever arrangements are necessary, for action under the Council's Emergency Plan.

3.1.14 Confirming the decisions of any Categorisation Panels or Joint Appeals Boards established under any of the Council's procedures.

3.1.15 Making purchases of artefacts or other items deemed appropriate for display within the City Hall up to a limit of £10,000 per annum.

3.1.16 Approving the provision of hospitality up to a limit of £500 per occasion.

3.1.17 Approving the attendance of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman (or nominees) of any of the Committees at any conference or seminar held in Northern Ireland where there is insufficient time for Committee approval to be obtained.

3.1.18 Approving the attendance of the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor or the High Sheriff at events or visits on receipt of invitations.

3.1.19 Acting as the Deputy Returning Officer for local elections in the Belfast City Council area with responsibility for making the arrangements for Council elections in Belfast.

3.1.20 Consenting to lessees' requests for assignments, sub-lettings, permission to mortgage or charge, changes of use, new buildings, alterations, signage and other matters requiring the Council's consent under the terms of existing leases and amendments of covenant affecting premises and the granting of utility wayleaves and short term licences/temporary easements (in the event that a licence or easement of more than six months in duration is sought, same will require to be brought to Committee for approval) in respect of all Council sites or properties.

3.1.21 Approving the affixing of the corporate seal to any documents to record formally the Council's consent to assignments, sub-lettings, permission to mortgage or charge, changes of use, new buildings, alterations, signage and any other matters requiring the Council's consent under the terms of the existing leases and amendments of covenant affecting premises, granting of utility wayleaves and short term licences/temporary easements and rent reviews at all Council sites or properties.

3.1.22 Approving adjusted rents in respect of leases at Council sites or properties, following the completion of the rent review process in accordance with the provisions of the leases.

3.1.23 Agreeing terms in relation to the lettings at Smithfield Market, including prior possession in cases of urgency, subject to consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

3.1.24 Agreeing reduced charges for the acceptance of clays and soils associated with the development works of the North Foreshore.

3.1.25 Appointing arbitrators/independent experts as appropriate in the case of disputes arising in regard to rent reviews and other property matters.

SECTION 3 - SPECIFICALLY DELEGATED FUNCTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL CHIEF OFFICERS

3.2 Deputy Chief Executive

The exercise of the following functions, **in line with relevant council policies,** is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive:

3.2.1 Exercising, in the absence of or at the request of the Chief Executive, any of the delegated powers for which he or she has responsibility as listed in Section 3.1.

SECTION 3 - SPECIFICALLY DELEGATED FUNCTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL CHIEF OFFICERS

3.3 City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services

The exercise of the following functions, **in line with relevant council policies,** is delegated to the City Solicitor:

3.3.1 Defending all claims made, or legal proceedings instituted against the Council, including the power to compromise or settle them, as appears necessary or desirable in the best interests of the Council.

3.3.2 Conducting of appeals to the Planning Appeals Commission and planning-related public inquiries.

3.3.3 Instituting legal proceedings on behalf of the Council, acting on the instructions of Council or of the relevant Chief Officer.

3.3.4 Authenticating of documents pursuant to Section 124 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.

3.3.5 Signing legal documents on behalf of the Council and authorising the affixing of the Corporate Seal as required.

3.3.6 Briefing Counsel and taking Counsel's opinion.

3.3.7 Engaging external legal assistance as required.

3.3.8 Engaging such expert witnesses or commissioning such expert reports as may be required.

3.3.9 Authorising venues deemed as suitable places at which marriage ceremonies can be held.

3.3.10 Agreeing the involvement of outside agencies in any fraud investigation.

3.3.11 Taking any steps or measures necessary in an emergency or other situation of urgency, and in consultation with the Chief Executive, to preserve or defend the Council's legal interests.

3.3.12 The City Solicitor, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Place and Economy or the Director of Planning and Building Control, may refer a decision back to Committee for reconsideration.

3.3.13 Making minor amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to reflect organisational, functional or legislative changes.

3.3.14 Approving, when necessary, the use of the Reception Room by the Lord Mayor to cater for groups of visitors to the City Hall which may be too excessive for the Lord Mayor's personal suite of offices.

3.3.15 Permitting the use of the City Hall and the City Hall grounds by Council departments or service units.

3.3.16 Approving, in consultation with the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, urgent requests for the use of the City Hall, its grounds and the Cecil Ward Building, where these are considered to be within the established criteria approved by the Committee.

SECTION 3 - SPECIFICALLY DELEGATED FUNCTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL CHIEF OFFICERS

3.4 Director of City and Organisational Strategy

The exercise of the following functions, **in line with relevant Council policies**, is delegated to the Director of City and Organisational Strategy .

3.4.1 Undertaking service reviews and approving all establishment changes proposed by the relevant Director, in respect of posts below the level of Head of Service, including the deletion of permanent posts and the creation of new permanent posts provided that there is no increase in the Department's approved staffing establishment and/or staffing budget for permanent posts[2].

3.4.2 Dealing with requests for the payment of honoraria for all posts.

3.4.3 Approving, in consultation with the City Solicitor, requests for approval of outside interests or employment made by employees.

3.4.4 Dealing with requests for the extension of half pay entitlement under the various occupational sick pay schemes.

3.4.5 Considering requests, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources, to extend the twelve month time limit for members of the Local Government Pension Scheme to make an option to aggregate two periods of LGPS membership, where it is in the employers' interest to do so or in circumstances where an LGPS member missed the time limit for reasons beyond their control.

3.4.6 Undertaking, in consultation with the relevant Chief Officer and the Chair of the relevant committee, the long listing and short listing of candidates for Chief Officer and Head of Service, prior to interview and appointment by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

3.4.7 Authorising recruitment and retention incentives, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources, including relocation expenses schemes and approving other arrangements that allow flexibility in the recruitment process, (for example, extend timescales, relax criteria etc) subject to satisfying Inland Revenue requirements where Tax and NI deductions are concerned.

3.4.8 Determining requests for the release of pension benefits on compassionate grounds in consultation with the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources.

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[2] Staff management changes resulting in an increase in approved Departmental staffing establishment and/or staffing budget for permanent posts and/or those which effect any changes to posts at third tier and above (Head of Service level) are subject to approval by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

3.4.9 Determining requests for early and flexible retirement in consultation with the Strategic Director of Finance and Resources.

3.4.10 NEW: Approving termination of service in respect of persons declared medically unfit. *[this is covered by existing clause above but adding clause for clarity]*

3.4.11 Determining essential and casual car user status for all Council employees*.*

3.4.12 Creating new temporary posts provided that there is no increase in approved staffing establishment and/or staffing budget.

3.4.13 Determining the grading of posts.

SECTION 3 - SPECIFICALLY DELEGATED FUNCTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL CHIEF OFFICERS

3.5 Strategic Director of Finance and Resources[3]

The exercise of the following functions, **in line with relevant council policies,** is delegated to the Strategic Director of Finance & Resources.

3.5.1 Making safe and efficient arrangements for proper administration of financial affairs pursuant to Section 1 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

3.5.2 Due administration associated with the issue of mortgages including the fixing of interest rates to reflect prevailing market conditions.

3.5.3 Due administration of all unfunded pensions to former employees of Belfast Corporation and Belfast City Council.

3.5.4 Due administration of Council reserves.

3.5.5 Approving increase in sums of a capital scheme as provided for under the Financial Regulations.

3.5.6 Making appropriate transfers between the various bank accounts of the Council.

3.5.7 Approving the transfer of funds from one budget heading to another within Committee in accordance with Financial Regulations.

3.5.8 Approving requests for car loans to approved car users.

3.5.9 Authorising employees, in liaison with the relevant Director to attend international training and development events, technical visits and courses, including conferences, exhibitions, workshops and seminars and meetings of appropriate professional associations.

3.5.10 Making payment of expense claims to Council Officers in line with the Council's Travel and Subsistence Policy and in accordance with paragraph V1 of the Financial Regulations.

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[3] The Strategic Director of Finance & Resources is, for the purpose of Section 1 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, the designated Officer responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. The Strategic Director of Finance & Resources may, subject to Standing Orders and any resolutions of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee or the Council, do all things necessary to secure the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.

3.5.11 Approving travelling and subsistence expenses for employees in excess of those generally approved by the Council in special circumstances where expenses in excess of allowances are unavoidable.

3.5.12 Making payments to Members, including co-opted Members of the Council or its Committees of travelling or other allowances in accordance with paragraph V3 of the Financial Regulations.

3.5.13 Reviewing from time to time the rates of subsistence allowances paid to elected Members and employees attending conferences etc both within and outside the United Kingdom.

3.5.14 Reimbursing Member or employee expenses on an actual cost basis, in exceptional circumstances, subject to the submission of vouchers or receipts, where this exceeds the relevant allowance.

3.5.15 Reviewing, from time to time, the limits for small scale hospitality.

3.5.16 Effecting (but not cancelling nor refusing to effect) registrations and maintaining a register of small lottery societies.

3.5.17 Making arrangements for the supply of computer software and services to other persons pursuant to Article 20 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

SECTION 3 - SPECIFICALLY DELEGATED FUNCTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL CHIEF OFFICERS

3.6 Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services

The exercise of the following functions, **in line with relevant Council policies**, is delegated to the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services who may delegate his/her relevant powers to his/her deputies, the Directors (Operational) of City and Neighbourhood Services:

3.6.1 The functions listed at (a) to (o) below in relation to the legislation set out in Appendix B and to the legislation made thereunder:

(a) enforcing all regulations, orders and bye-laws made under the said legislation;

(b) issuing and serving certificates and notices;

(c) granting (but not withdrawing, suspending or refusing) authorisations, approvals and consents;

(d) exercising all powers in relation to the issue (but not refusal) of certificates, permits and licences;

(e) effecting registrations and maintaining statutory registers;

(f) instituting legal proceedings, in consultation with the City Solicitor, and making legal applications on behalf of the Council;

(g) authorising persons and officers pursuant to relevant legislation for the purpose of exercising statutory powers;

(h) executing works where the responsible party is in default of compliance with any notice or Order and in an emergency where empowered by statute;

(i) generally enforcing all other statutory powers conferred on the Council or pursuant to any arrangement made under Section 104 or 105 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972;

(j) Making Orders for the charges to be paid in connection with the use of an off-street parking place;

(k) Appointing such persons as may be necessary for the superintendence of parking spaces;

(l) Making Orders for the use of any parking place and the conditions on which it may be used;

(m) Making Orders restricting the use of a specified parking place;

(n) Making Orders to authorise the use of a part of an off-street parking place or places for the collection of recyclable material, for advertising or for displaying information to the public;

(o) Making Orders for the suspension of the use of a parking place or any part of it for specified occasions or circumstances and in consultation with the City Solicitor, entering into arrangements for the use of the said parking place;

3.6.2 Authorising under Article 22 (2)(c)(i) of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 on behalf of the Council, suitable persons to accompany inspectors who have been appointed by the Council under Article 21 of the said Order.

3.6.3 Arranging burials and cremations under Section 25 of the Welfare Services Act (Northern Ireland) 1971.

3.6.4 Detaining a dog or causing a dog to be disposed of, sold or destroyed in accordance with Articles 23 or 48 of The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983.

3.6.5 Approving exceptions to the imposition of charges for the collection of commercial waste where such waste appears to be arising from premises occupied for charitable purposes and the temporary nature of occupation prevents the granting of relief from the payment of rates under Article 41(2)(C) of the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.

3.6.6 Applying an appropriate charge for the collection of commercial waste where traders require an evening or weekend collection.

3.6.7 Revising the prices and charging structure for the commercial waste collection service.

3.6.8 Agreeing any transfer or assignment of enforcement responsibility under Regulation 7 and Regulation 8(1) of the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999.

3.6.9 Exercising powers under Article 18 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 in relation to the removal or obliteration of graffiti, placards or posters.

3.6.10 Authorising persons, other than officers of the Council, for the purposes of Section 10(2) of the Noise Act 1996.

3.6.11 Signing on behalf of the Council, licence agreements for the use of lands to be utilised for the installation of mini-bring recycling facilities.

3.6.12 Enforcing all bye-laws made for the protection of the Council's parks and other amenity facilities.

3.6.13 Allocating allotment plots and terminating lettings and providing financial or ‘in kind’ support for the development or running of community gardens or allotments in line with Council policy in consultation with the City Solicitor.

3.6.14 Purchasing, selling and exchanging animals for the Zoological Gardens up to a limit of £30,000 for each transaction.

3.6.15 Approving variations to the agreed work plan and agreements with the leisure trust and its strategic operating partner, in line with the politically agreed objectives of the associated agreements and managing the operation of the Trust of a day to day basis.

3.6.16 Enforcing The Burial Grounds Regulations 1992 and The Cremation (Belfast) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1961.

3.6.17 Maintaining a Register of Burials.

3.6.18 Allocating grave spaces and issuing grants of right of burial.

3.6.19 Undertaking cremations at the City of Belfast Crematorium.

3.6.20 Making arrangements for the appointment of a medical referee to the city of Belfast Crematorium in line with Council policy and procurement practices.

3.6.21 Protecting public rights of way and generally enforcing the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983.

3.6.22 Enforcing the provisions of the High Hedges Act (NI) 2011 and carrying out a series of functions associated with performing the Council’s statutory role under the High Hedges legislation. These are:

- Enforcing all Regulations or Acts made and remedial notices under the High Hedges Act (NI) 2011
- Issuing and serving remedial notices
- Exercising all powers in relation to the High Hedges Act (NI) 2011
- In conjunction with Legal Services, instituting legal proceedings and making legal applications on behalf of Belfast City Council
- Authorising individual officers for the purpose of exercising any statutory power under the High Hedges Act (NI) 2011.

3.6.23 Approving of the repeat hosting of an annual event for a specified number of years subject to the event remaining broadly similar over time.

3.6.24 [removed Feb 2019].

3.6.25 Approving event and activity requests for the use of the parks and open spaces along the Connswater Community Greenway, delivered by the CCGT in partnership with the Council.

3.6.26 Approving event and activity requests which may include licensing arrangements such as trading or the selling of alcohol at the main event spaces along the Connswater Community Greenway including the C.S. Lewis Square, Orangefield Park and Victoria Park. Please note an entertainment license is already in place for the Connswater Community Greenway.

3.6.27 Exercising all powers in relation to the issue, but not refusal, of Houses in Multiple Occupation licences, excluding provisions relating to:

- applications for the grant, renewal, transfer or variation of licences where material objections are received:
- applications where officers believe there may be an issue in relation to the fitness of the applicant to hold a licence;
- approving any guidance documents;
- setting of licence fees;
- revocation of licences, except where in the public interest, the Director, in consultation with the City Solicitor, considers that there are particular circumstances which make it necessary to suspend a licence immediately

SECTION 3 - SPECIFICALLY DELEGATED FUNCTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL CHIEF OFFICERS

3.7 Strategic Director of Place and Economy

The exercise of the following functions, **in line with relevant Council policies**, is delegated to the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, who may delegate his/her relevant powers to his/her deputies unless otherwise stated, namely Director (Operational) of Economic Development, Director (Operational) of Planning and Building Control and Director (Operational) of City Regeneration and Development:

Planning

3.7.1 An elected Member of the Council may request that an application that relates to a site within their District Electoral Area or within an adjoining District Electoral Area or within the City Centre[4] is referred to the Planning Committee provided that the request is made in writing or by email to Democratic Services within 21 days of the application being publicly advertised in the newspaper. The Member shall clearly state their reason/s for requesting referral of the application to the Planning Committee, which must be material planning considerations. The Strategic Director of Place and Economy shall determine whether the reason/s are material planning consideration/s and of sufficient importance for consideration by the Planning Committee. Democratic Services will advise the relevant Member of their decision. If the decision is not to refer the application to the Planning Committee, then the decision shall be delegated to the Strategic Director of Place and Economy. Democratic Services will notify the Member that made the request of the outcome of their request to refer the application to the Planning Committee. Where the application is to be referred to the Planning Committee, Democratic Services will notify all Members. Where an application is referred to the Planning Committee under this provision the planning service shall notify the applicant at least five calendar days before the application is discussed by the Planning Committee.

3.7.2 The functions listed below in relation to the legislation set out in Appendix C and legislation made thereunder for which the Planning Committee has responsibility. The thresholds set out at paragraph 3.7.2 (a) only apply where a representation[5] has been received which conflicts with the Planning Officer's recommendation. Where no representations have been received that conflict with the Planning Officer's recommendation, the thresholds do not apply and the decision is delegated to the Strategic Director of Place and Economy.

(a) determining applications for the following categories of local developments[6] , including building, engineering and other operations and material changes of use:

- **i.** housing schemes up to and including 12 units other than proposals for change of house type on an approved scheme below 50 units;

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[4] City Centre as defined by the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015

[5] Representation means a consultation response received during the consultation period including, but not limited to, responses from technical consultees, neighbours and the public. Conflict must be related to material planning considerations. Correspondence from an applicant is not deemed to be a Representation.

[6] The definition of local development is provided for by section 25 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

- **ii.** retailing below 500 square metres gross floor space outside the City Centre or District Centres; or below 2,500 square metres gross floor space within the City Centre or District Centres;
- **iii.** office space below 5,000 square metres gross floor space;
- **iv.** business, light industry, general industry and storage and distribution below 2,500 square metres gross floor space;
- **v.** community-related scheme up to 500 square metres gross floor space;
- **vi.** recreation and culture below 1,000 square metres gross floor space outside town centres or below 5,000 square metres gross floor space within town centres;
- **vii.** hotels and hostels below 30 beds.

(b) determining applications for landscaping, car parking and minor works ancillary to the main use of the land which they are to be located; works required for the purposes of providing disability access; the erection of smoking shelters etc.;

(c) determining applications for alterations and extensions to residential property and ancillary and incidental residential development within the curtilage of residential property;

(d) determining applications for change of use but excluding those relating to student accommodation and amusement arcades;

(e) varying **or** removing conditions except when the variation **or** removal relates to, or constitutes, a major development;

(f) refusing any application, other than an application for major development, where all of the necessary supporting documentation has been reasonably requested but not provided to the Council within 28 days from the date of the request;

(g) determining applications for discharge of conditions;

(h) determining applications for a non-material change;

(i) determining applications for works to, or demolition of, buildings or structures in conservation areas and areas of townscape character, except where it involves full demolition of a main building (excluding buildings which are ancillary or incidental);

(j) determining applications for listed building consent, excluding partial or full demolition

(k) determining applications for the display of advertisements;

(l) determining applications for certificates of lawful development (existing and proposed);

(m) determining Pre-Application Notifications;

(n) exercising the Council's powers in relation to the preservation of trees;

(o) the making of a screening opinion or scoping opinion in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment[7]; Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal[8]; Habitats Regulations Assessment[9]; and Rural Needs Impact Assessment[10]

(p) enforcing all regulations and orders made under the said legislation and issuing and serving of notices;

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[7] Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

[8] Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (EAPP)

[9] Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended)

[10] Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland 2016

(q) executing works in default of compliance with any notice or order and in an emergency where empowered by statute and recovering the costs of so doing;

(r) temporary listing of buildings including the issuing of building preservation notices and listing in urgent cases;

(s) instituting legal proceedings, in consultation with the City Solicitor, on behalf of the Council;

(t) authorising officers pursuant to relevant legislation for the purpose of exercising statutory powers;

(u) lodging representations including objections, in consultation with the City Solicitor, in relation to planning applications where the Council has been notified as part of the statutory process or where the Council's interests are likely to be affected;

(v) responding to consultations from neighbouring authorities in relation to their Local Development Plan;

(w) administering statutory registers;

(x) registering and removing notices and charges in the Statutory Charges Register, in consultation with the City Solicitor;

(y) conducting of planning related appeals to the Planning Appeals Commission, Public Examinations and other planning related public inquires;

(z) responding to planning related consultations from Government Agencies unless the Strategic Director of Place and Economy considers that the consultation raises a significant planning issue for the Council, relates to a matter which is controversial or likely to be of significant public interest.

3.7.3 In relation to planning related Public Examinations, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy may, in consultation with the City Solicitor / Chief Executive where it is considered necessary, carry out the following functions:

(a) agree minor, typographical or factual changes or modifications to the Council's Local Development Plan Documents; and

(b) agree changes to the wording (but not the trigger points) of the operational policies which may change the emphasis but not the overall objectives of the policy.

3.7.4 Negotiating financial contributions from developers in respect of those agreements in which the contribution is equal to or less than £30,000.

3.7.5 The delegated functions set out above do not apply to the following planning applications:

(a) Those made by elected members of the Council;

(b) Those made by Council staff at senior management grade (PO12) or above and all staff in Place and Economy Department and Legal Services;

(c) Those made by the Council;

(d) Those in which the Council has an estate;

(e) Proposals for major development;

(f) There is an objection from a statutory consultee and the recommendation of the Planning Officer is to approve

(g) Purpose built student accommodation

3.7.6 All other applications, permissions or provisions of the legislation which are not specifically listed above shall be deemed to be delegated unless otherwise provided for within this Scheme.

3.7.7 Where a function is normally delegated but raises issues which the Strategic or Operational Director believes should be considered by the Committee, that matter will be referred to the Committee.

Building Control and Licensing

3.7.8 The functions listed below in relation to the legislation set out in Appendices B and C and legislation made thereunder for which the Strategic Director of Place and Economy has responsibility:

(a) Enforcing all regulations, orders and bye-laws made under the said legislation;

(b) Issuing and serving certificates and notices;

(c) Granting, withdrawing, suspending and refusing authorisations, approvals and consents and rejecting plans;

(d) Exercising all powers in relation to the issue (but not refusal) or permits and licences;

(e) Refusing any Entertainments Licence application where all of the necessary supporting documentation, including a Fire Risk Assessment, has not been provided to the council within six weeks from the date of receipt of that application or if the application is otherwise incomplete, inaccurate or falsified;

(f) Effecting (but not cancelling or refusing to effect) registrations and maintaining statutory registers;

(g) Instituting legal proceedings, in consultation with the City Solicitor, and making legal applications on behalf of the Council;

(h) Authorising persons and officers pursuant to relevant legislation for the purposes of exercising statutory powers;

(i) Dispensing with or relaxing, or refusing to dispense with or relax, Building Regulations and inviting representations thereon;

(j) Executing works where the responsible party is in default of compliance with any notice or Order and in an emergency where empowered by statute;

(k) Generally enforcing all statutory powers conferred on the Council or pursuant to any arrangement made under Section 104 or 105 of the Local Government Act 1972;

(l) Exercising all powers in relation to the issue, but not refusal, of pavement café licences, excluding provisions relating to:

i. applications for the grant, renewal or variation of licences where adverse representations are received;
ii. compulsory variation of licences;
iii. revocation of licences;
iv. setting of licence fees;
v. suspension of licences except where in the public interest the Strategic Director, in consultation with the City Solicitor, considers that there are particular circumstances which make it necessary to suspend a licence immediately;

(m) Refusing any Dual Language Street Sign application where all necessary survey actions have been carried out, the application does not receive the support of two thirds of those on the electoral register in the street as set out in the Street Naming Policy, and no exceptional circumstances have been submitted by the applicant.

(n) For any Dual Language Street Sign application which does not meet the two thirds quota an applicant may provide exceptional circumstances why the quota was not met. Where these circumstances relate only to the processing of a survey, the Strategic Director, in conjunction with the City Solicitor, will determine whether such exceptional circumstances exist to refer the matter to Committee. Where exceptional circumstances relate to matters other than the processing of a survey the matter will be presented to Committee.

(o) Exercising all powers in relation to the making of an Order restricting or prohibiting temporarily the use of a public road in connection with special events, excluding provisions relating to:

i. applications for an order where adverse representations are made
ii. the recovery of costs incurred by the Council as a consequence of making an Order and such other matters as the Director deems appropriate

3.7.9 Lodging objections, in consultation with the City Solicitor, in relation to notices of applications received under the following (and any other subsequent amending or substituting) legislation:

- The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 196
- The Registration of Clubs (Northern Ireland) Order 1996

3.7.10 Issuing Property Certificates.

Economic Development

3.7.11 Allocating stalls and pitches at St George's Market and any other Council run markets.

3.7.12 Approving a 'Grant of Licence' to markets in the case of -

(1) Car boots sales with less than 20 persons trading

(2) A market which is considered to be de minimus and/or

(3) Any market which is carried out solely for charitable purposes

3.7.13 Approving the holding of a market in special circumstances where there is not sufficient time for the procedural requirement of four months notice under the Markets Policy.

3.7.14 Enforcing all bye-laws made for the protection of Council's markets.

3.7.15 Approving variations to the agreed Business Plan and agreements with Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Limited, in line with the politically agreed objectives of the associated agreements.

3.7.16 Making, or referring to Committee as appropriate, any decisions relating to Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Limited, which may be required in respect of reserved matters.

3.7.17 Approving variations to the agreed Business Plan and agreements with the Innovation Factory operator, in line with the politically agreed objectives of the associated agreements.

3.7.18 Entering into contracts on appropriate commercial terms in relation to the Innovation Factory.

City Centre Regeneration

3.7.19 Negotiating, , contributions from developers, insofar as it relates to city centre development, subject to obtaining Committee consent in respect of those agreements in which the contribution exceeds £30k.

3.7.20 Managing the City Centre Regeneration Fund and developing and bringing forward funding applications where required

3.7.21 Commissioning specialist services to support the implementation of the city centre regeneration framework

3.7.22 Undertaking masterplanning to support proposals for city centre regeneration

SECTION 3 – SPECIFICALLY DELEGATED FUNCTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL CHIEF OFFICERS

3.7.23

Appendix A – Definition of Chief Officer

In this Scheme the expression Chief Officer means:

- Chief Executive
- Deputy Chief Executive
- Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
- Strategic Director of Finance & Resources
- Strategic Director of Place and Economy
- City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
- Director of City and Organisational Strategy
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Appendix B – Legislation in respect of which functions are delegated to Chief Officers

Note that these are the principal pieces of legislation under which the Council derives its functions. This list is not exhaustive.

Any delegation to an officer to take action under a particular statutory provision, or relevant local authority bye-law, shall be deemed to authorise action under any statutory re-enactment or amendment of that provision, and any statutory regulations, order, or direction made under that provision both before and after the date of this Scheme. References to statutory requirements in this scheme include relevant European legislation and directives as applicable.

The Anti-social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004

Belfast Corporation Act 1911

Belfast Improvements Act 1878

Belfast Local Acts 1845-1948

The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Northern Ireland) Order 1985

The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 1979

The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012

The Burial Grounds Regulations 1992

Bye-laws made by Belfast City Council pursuant to Section 90 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 for:

- Control of the Business of Tattooing 1987
- Control of the Practice of Acupuncture 1987
- Control of the Business of Ear-piercing and Electrolysis 1987
- Regulation of Parks 1992
- Regulation of Playing Fields 1993
- Regulation of Open Parks 1994
- Regulation of Small Neighbourhood Parks and Open Spaces and Public Walkways 1994
- Childrens' Playgrounds 1997Good Rule and Government – City Hall Grounds 1997
- Belfast Zoological Gardens 1998

- St George's Market 2000
- Control of Business of Semi-permanent Skin-colouring 2007
- Control fo Business of Cosmetic Piercing 2007
- Consumption of Intoxicating Liquor in Designated Places 2012

Bye-laws made by Castlereagh Borough Council pursuant to Section 90 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 for:

- Consumption of Intoxicating Liquor in Designated Places 1996

Bye-laws made by Castlereagh Rural District Council pursuant to Section 36 of the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898

- Pleasure Grounds 1969

Bye-laws made by Lisburn Borough Council pursuant to Part VI of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972 for:

- Lisburn Leisure and Activity Centres 1989
- Regulation of Small Neighbourhood Parks, Open Spaces and Public Walkways 1998
- Regulation of Enclosed Parks 1998
- Recreational Facilities and Aberdelghy Golf Course 1996
- Regulation and Management of Playgrounds 1988

Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) (Northern Ireland) Order 1991

The Cinemas (Northern Ireland) Order 1991

Clean Air (Northern Ireland) Order 1981

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Consumer Protection Act 1987

Consumer Rights Act 2015

Control of Greyhounds etc. Act (Northern Ireland) 1950

The Cremation (Belfast) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1961

Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001

Dangerous Dogs Compensation and Exemption Schemes Order 1991

The Dangerous Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1991

Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003

The Dog Control Orders (Prescribed Offences and Penalties, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012

Dogs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2001

Dogs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983

The Dogs (Guard Dog Kennels) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

The Dogs (Specified Maximum) (Belfast) Order 2012

The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008

The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002

European Communities Act 1972

Explosives Act (Northern Ireland) 1970

Food and Environment Protection Act 1985

Food Hygiene Rating Act 2016

The Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991

The Fouling of Land by Dogs (Belfast City Council) Order 2012

Free Printed Matter (Belfast) Designation Order 2012

The General Product Safety Regulations 2005

Hairdressers Act (Northern Ireland) 1939

Health Act 2009

The Health (2009 Act) (Commencement No.1) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012

Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1978

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978

Health & Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009

High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1992

Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981

The Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996

The Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994 – Excluding Article 10

Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 - excluding provisions relating to the issue of all sex establishment licences and those entertainments licences where adverse representations have been made.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 – excluding provisions relating to street names.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 2002?

The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005

Noise Act 1996 (as amended)

Licensing of Pavement Cafés Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Petroleum (Consolidation) Acts (Northern Ireland) 1929

Petroleum (Transfer of Licences) Acts (Northern Ireland) 1937

The Petroleum (Consolidation) Act (Amendment of Licensing Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012

Poisons (Northern Ireland) Order 1976

Pollution Control and Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 1978

The Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

The Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

Psychoactive Substances Act 2016

Public Health Acts 1878 to 1967

Public Health and Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1949

Rats and Mice Destruction Act 1919

The Registration of Clubs (Northern Ireland) Order 1996

Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978

The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993

Roads (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010

The Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997

The Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

The Sea Fishing (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018

The Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997

The Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

Street Trading (Regulation) Act (Northern Ireland) 1929 (repealed in part)

Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001

The Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (but only where permitted by Memorandum of Understanding in force between Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Services and Belfast City Council).

Sunbeds Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002

Tobacco Retailers Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015

The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016

Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847

The Traffic Management (Northern Ireland) Order 2005

Volatile Organic Compounds in Paints, Varnishes and Vehicle Refinishing Products 2012

The Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997

The Waste (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

Welfare Services Act (Northern Ireland) 1971

Appendix C – Legislation in respect of which functions are delegated to Director of Place and Economy

Note that these are the principal pieces of legislation under which the Council derives its planning functions. This list is not exhaustive.

Any delegation to an officer to take action under a particular statutory provision, or relevant local authority bye-law, shall be deemed to authorise action under any statutory re-enactment or amendment of that provision, and any statutory regulations, order, or direction made under that provision both before and after the date of this Scheme. References to statutory requirements in this scheme include relevant European legislation and directives as applicable.

Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995

The Enterprise Zones (Northern Ireland) Order 1981

The Land Acquisition and Compensation (Northern Ireland) Order 1973

The Land Compensation (Northern Ireland) Order 1982

The Land Development Values (Compensation) Act (Northern Ireland) 1965

Lands Tribunal and Compensation Act (Northern Ireland) 1964

Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011

The Planning Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

The Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

Planning (Compensation, etc.) Act (Northern Ireland) 2001

Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991

The Planning and Building Regulations (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1990

The Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1982

The Planning Blight (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1981

The Planning (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1978

The Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972

Planning and Land Compensation Act (Northern Ireland) 1971

The Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980

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Belfast City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	19th June, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Michelle Bagnall, Programme Manager

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Some time in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**
1.1	The Council's Capital programme is a rolling programme of investment which either improves the existing Council facilities or provides new Council facilities. This report provides: - An overview of capital projects recently completed - An update on Covid 19 implications and key actions - Capital programme 2020/21 project update movements
2.0	**Recommendations**

2.1	The Committee is requested to – - note the update on the Physical programmes completed projects as at 3.1 below and in Appendix 1. When appropriate, as per Covid 19 public health guidance, the Department is happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed. - note the update on impact of Covid 19 on the capital programme for 2020/21 - agree to include 2 new IT projects under the council's IT Programme due to business criticality and to ensure ongoing business continuity **– a new Backup platform infrastructure, and new Uninterruptible Power Supply** - and **move to Stage 3 Committed** with **a maximum £100,000 and £150,000 (respectively) budget allocated**. - Agree that the **Belfast Zoo Health and Safety** project is moved to **Stage 3- Committed** with **a maximum £1.6m budget allocated.**
3.0	**Main report** ***Physical programmes update***
3.1	The Council's Physical Programme includes Council's rolling Capital Programme is a significant regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves the existing Council assets, or provides new council facilities; it also includes funding streams (BIF, LIF and SOF) and acting as a delivery agent for other government departments (UV, SIF, DfC). 3.2 below provides an update on the current impacts of Covid 19 on the delivery of physical projects, however over the last 6 months a number of projects have been completed including: - ***Leisure and sports facilities:*** The new Andersonstown Leisure Centre (LTP); 3G carpet replacement at LORAG Shaftesbury centre and Cregagh; 3G pitch at Hanwood (BIF); new MUGA and outdoor facilities at John Paul Youth Club (LIF/UV); - ***Upgrades to parks, open spaces and playgrounds -*** playground refurbishments at Omeau Park (lower Ormeau/Ravenhill playground), Geeragh Community Centre at Finaghy; Rev. Robert Bradford playground and new MUGA (UV/DfC); - ***Community facilities:*** Cancer Life line facility (BIF/DfC); PIPS Suicide prevention facility refurbishment (SIF); New Diamond project facility (UV). Photos of the completed projects are attached in Appendix 1. When appropriate, as per Covid 19 public health guidance, the Physical Programmes Department is happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed.
3.2	***Covid – 19 impact update*** In the April Physical Programmes update report, Members were advised that an analysis and ongoing monitoring exercise on the impact of the pandemic on the delivery of the Council's

wider Physical Programme was being carried out by the Physical Programmes Department, working closely with Financial Services and Legal Services. Some 24 projects were at an On Site stage of delivery when Covid 19 restrictions took effect in March. Almost all projects temporarily ceased works - with the exception of essential works projects, such as Waste Transfer Weighbridge improvements. 18 projects are now live with remaining projects working through return to site measures and any outstanding issues to starting on site.

The key Covid 19 impacts are: delay to completion dates/ change of delivery programme; Return to Site costs and subsequent ongoing Covid 19 related costs that are additional to budgeted costs. Of the 24 live projects, half are projects with either external funding (eg DfC, SEUPB) or projects being delivered on behalf of external funders (UV and SIF), which means that funding agreement commitments needed to be assessed. We have been liaising closely with all funders to regularly update and review Covid 19 impacts, with the view to seek additional costs via funder budgets. The final cost implications are not yet known and are still being monitored and reviewed. In additional, with regards to Covid 19 cost implications on projects on council's capital programme, a claim will be made to DfC under the DfC assistance fund for Council's to seek reimbursement. Officers continue to engage with contractors and external stakeholders to closely monitor this evolving situation.

Capital programme 2020/21 - Project movements

3.5 *IT Programme – a new Backup platform infrastructure, and new Uninterruptible Power Supply*

Under the Council's IT Programme of work, two projects have been identified as being business critical and required to ensure continuity of service provision -

- *New Backup platform infrastructure*: With the recent home working demands and subsequent capacity constraints, coupled with the ever increasing risk of cybersecurity attacks, there is an urgent need to re-evaluate the systems back up architecture. The purpose of this project is to replace the current backup environment with one which is capable of providing a standardised, scalable solution enabling the council to meet its backup needs for the next 5 years, whilst making use of the advancement in backup technologies to improve the efficiency of our business continuity options. This should result in quicker, more space-efficient backups on storage separate to the current live storage environment.
- *New Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS):* to protect equipment in the server rooms from power surges – it ensures the seamless transition to standby generators in the case of a mains power failure; and also allow time for a graceful shutdown of sensitive IT equipment in the event of a backup generator failure, protecting equipment from damage

and preventing data loss. The UPS in the secondary server room is nearing end of life and requires replacement, and there are no UPS in place to protect network equipment in several key communications cabinets that are an important part of the corporate data network. The network team have been experiencing issues with distributed network equipment being damaged and losing their configuration when the power supply to different buildings is interrupted either as the result of a power cut or as the result of maintenance work. UPS in communication cabinets would protect network equipment during power outages, thus avoiding service outage associated with power cuts. This project will ensure resilient access to the Council backup server room and prevent damage to network equipment elsewhere in the council in the event of a power outage**.**

3.6 Members are asked to agree that **each project moves to Stage 3 Committed in order to expedite the necessary procurements and it is recommended that a maximum budget of £100,000 and £150,000 respectively is allocated**. The Director of Finance & Resources has confirmed the affordability of these projects due to the corporate criticality requirements and to ensure business continuity is maintained.

3.7 *Belfast Zoo Health and Safety*

Members are reminded that the Belfast Zoo Health and Safety programme of work is an agreed Stage 2- Uncommitted project on the council's Capital Programme. This emerged from a number of independent reports which included measures required to safeguard animals, zookeepers and the public. Since then a number of key activities have been completed: an outline business case examining a new Large Cats enclosure, and Water Treatment in the Sea Lion Pool – both of which are required to eradicate immediate health and safety issues. Additional measures were assessed and scored according to their impact on health & safety, visitor experience and strategic priorities. It is therefore recommended that works associated with new Large Cats enclosure, Water treatment of Sea Lion pool, wider enclosure and access improvements (health and safety specific), and Zoo wall/landscape issue at car park, are included within the current health and safety capital programme for the Zoo. Any further or additional capital-related health and safety requirements will be kept under review.

3.8 **Members are asked to agree that the Belfast Zoo Health and safety project is moved to Stage 3- Committed but each health safety measure being held at appropriate Tier to reflect readiness to proceed on site and satisfactory tender**; with **a maximum £1.6m budget allocated.** The Director of Finance & Resources has confirmed the affordability of these projects due to the health & safety requirements and the need to protect the public, zookeepers and the animals.

BIF/LIF/SOF Updates

3.9 At the last round of Area Working Group meetings in January 2020, an update on the status of projects allocated under LIF, BIF and SOF programmes was provided. It was agreed by each AWG that a letter would be issued to those groups where there had been no information or progress for some time (seven in total), with a deadline of 22 April set where information on project was sought and/or confirmation the group wished to remain in the funding programme process. Given the Corona pandemic this was subsequently extended to 3rd June 2020. Members are asked to note the following updates in respect of these projects

Project	Funding amount	
Braeheid (Ulster Scots Hub) – BIF31	£500k (BIF)	Confirmation of withdrawal from the Programme
Intercomm Antrim Road NLIF2-13	£75k (LIF)	Confirmation of withdrawal from the Programme
Holy Family Church NLIF2-18	£15k (LIF)	No response received – assumed withdrawal from Programme
Mercy Primary School NLIF2-05	£15k (LIF)	Information received and project progressing
The Dock Café ELIF1-14	£15k (LIF)	Confirmation of withdrawal from the Programme
Castlereagh Presbyterian Church BIF38	£382k (BIF)	Information received and project progressing
Royal British Legion BIF29	£500k (BIF)	Confirmed remaining in the Programme and attending next AWG to present project

Members are asked to note that an update on the above will be brought into the next round of AWGs so that the AWGs can consider their projects and agree on any re-allocations of monies to be recommended back into SP&R. BIF and LIF were agreed on an area basis and therefore any allocations remain within these areas to be reconsidered.

3.10 **Financial & Resource Implications**

Financial –-

- IT Programme - a new Backup platform infrastructure, and new Uninterruptible Power Supply – maximum £100,000 and £150,000 budget allocation.
- Belfast Zoo Health and safety projects; and a maximum £1.6m budget allocation.
- BIF/LIF – to be considered by the AWGs

Resources – Officer time to deliver as per project requirements.

3.11 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment**

All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.

4.0 Appendices – Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Photos of completed projects

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Appendix 1 – Photos of recently completed projects

LTP- Andersonstown

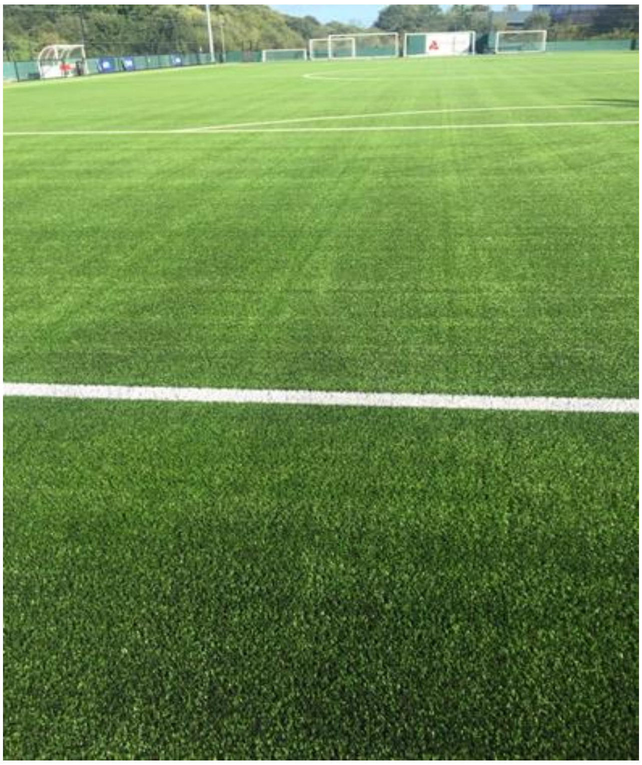
Cregagh & Shaftesbury 3G pitch carpet replacement

Playground Refurbishment Programme – Lower Ormeau/ Ravenhill playground

Playground Refurbishment Programme – Geeragh Community Centre

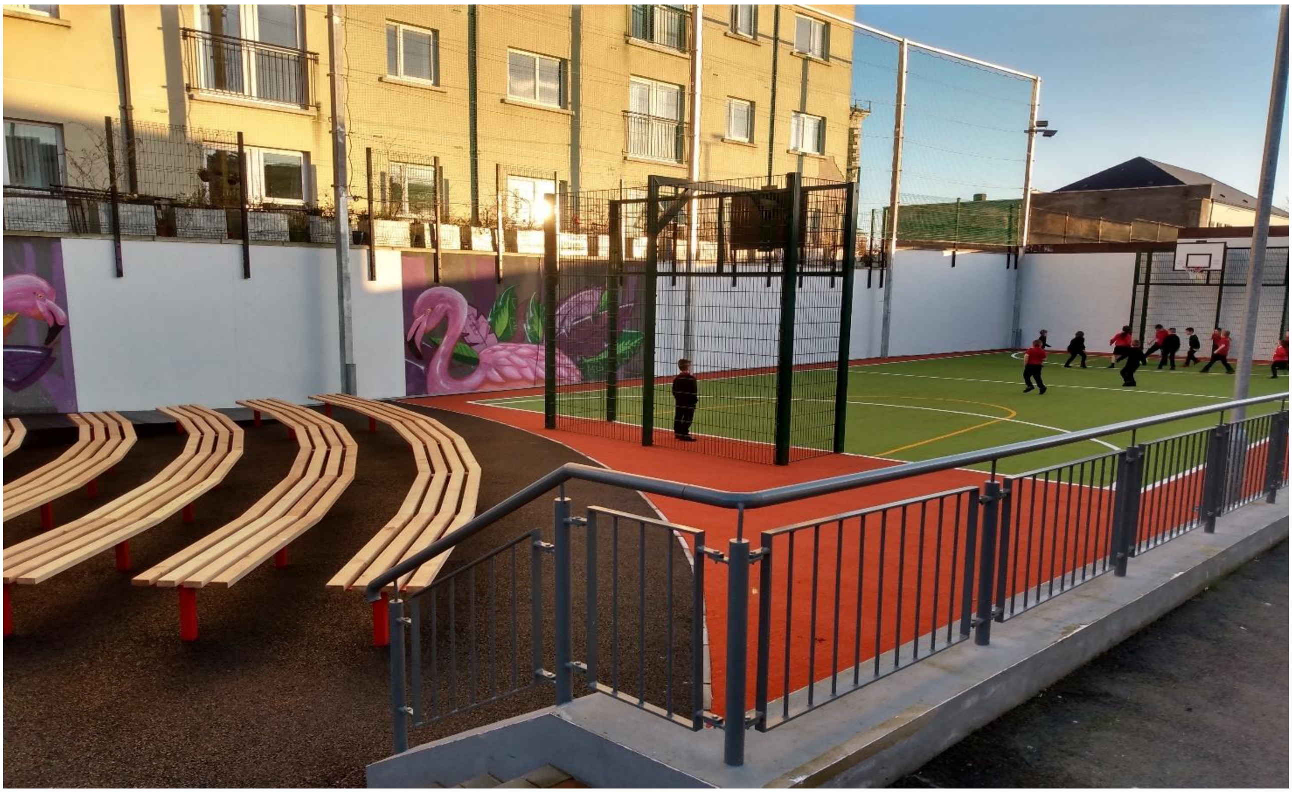
BIF/ DfC - Cancer Lifeline

BIF – Hanwood 3G pitch



SIF – PIPS Suicide Prevention Ireland

Urban Villages/ LIF – John Paul Youth Club



Urban Villages – The Diamond project

Urban Villages – Rev Robert Bradford Playground + MUGA

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	I. Lock Keepers Cottage Visitors Centre - Lagan Valley Regional Park Lease Renewal II. Ulster Hall - BBC Recording Studio Lease Renewal
Date:	19 June 2020
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
Contact Officer:	Pamela Davison, Estates Team Leader

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Some time in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members to asset related disposal, acquisition and estates matters.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	**I. Lock Keepers Cottage Visitors Centre - Lagan Valley Regional Park Lease Renewal** Members are asked to approve renewal of the lease for the offices occupied by Lagan Valley Regional Park at Lock Keepers Cottage Visitors Centre for a term of 3 years from 1st April 2020 at a rent of £ 5,000 per annum.

	II. Ulster Hall - BBC Recording Studio Lease Renewal Members are asked to approve the renewal of the lease of c. 350 sq ft of accommodation situated on the 3rd floor of the Ulster Hall to the BBC for a term of 5 years from 1 July 2020 at a rent of £3,500 per annum.
3.0	**Main report**
3.1 3.2	I.**Lock Keepers Cottage Visitors Centre – Lagan Valley Regional Park Lease Renewal** <u>Key Issues</u> The Lock Keepers Cottage Visitors Centre transferred from the former Castlereagh Borough Council (CBC) to Belfast City Council on 1 April 2015 under Local Government Reform. The offices at Lock Keepers Cottage Visitors Centre are currently let on a 3 year Lease from 1 April 2017 to Lagan Valley Regional Park Limited, subject to the payment of an annual rental of £4,500. Lagan Valley Regional Park Limited is currently holding over on a month to month basis subject to the Lease renewal with the Council being finalised. The offices are used as by staff members from Lagan Valley Regional Park Limited as a base from which to manage the Lock Keepers Cottage and Exhibition Space, the Industry Barge as well as the Lagan Valley Regional Park. It is proposed to enter into a new 3 year lease with Lagan Valley Regional Park from 1 April 2020, subject to the payment of an annual rental of £5,000. This has been agreed with Lagan Valley Regional Park Limited. <u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> Rental income of £5,000 per annum. Staff resources from the Estates and Legal Services will be involved in the completion of the proposed new lease. <u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None **II. Ulster Hall - BBC Recording Studio Lease Renewal** <u>Key Issues</u> BBC currently lease c. 350 sq ft of accommodation on the 3rd floor of the Ulster Hall for a term of 10 years from 1 July 2010 with current rent of £3,040 per annum. The current lease is due to expire on 30 June 2020. Following discussions with the BBC's agent, Lambert Smith Hampton, it is proposed that BBC renew the lease for a term of 5 years from 1 July 2020 at a rent of £3,500 pa

	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> The proposed rent of £3,500 p.a. is in line with market rents for similar accommodation in the city centre and represents an increase of c. 15%. Estates and Legal Services resource required to complete the lease. <u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 - Map showing the Lock Keepers Cottage Visitors Centre outlined in red.

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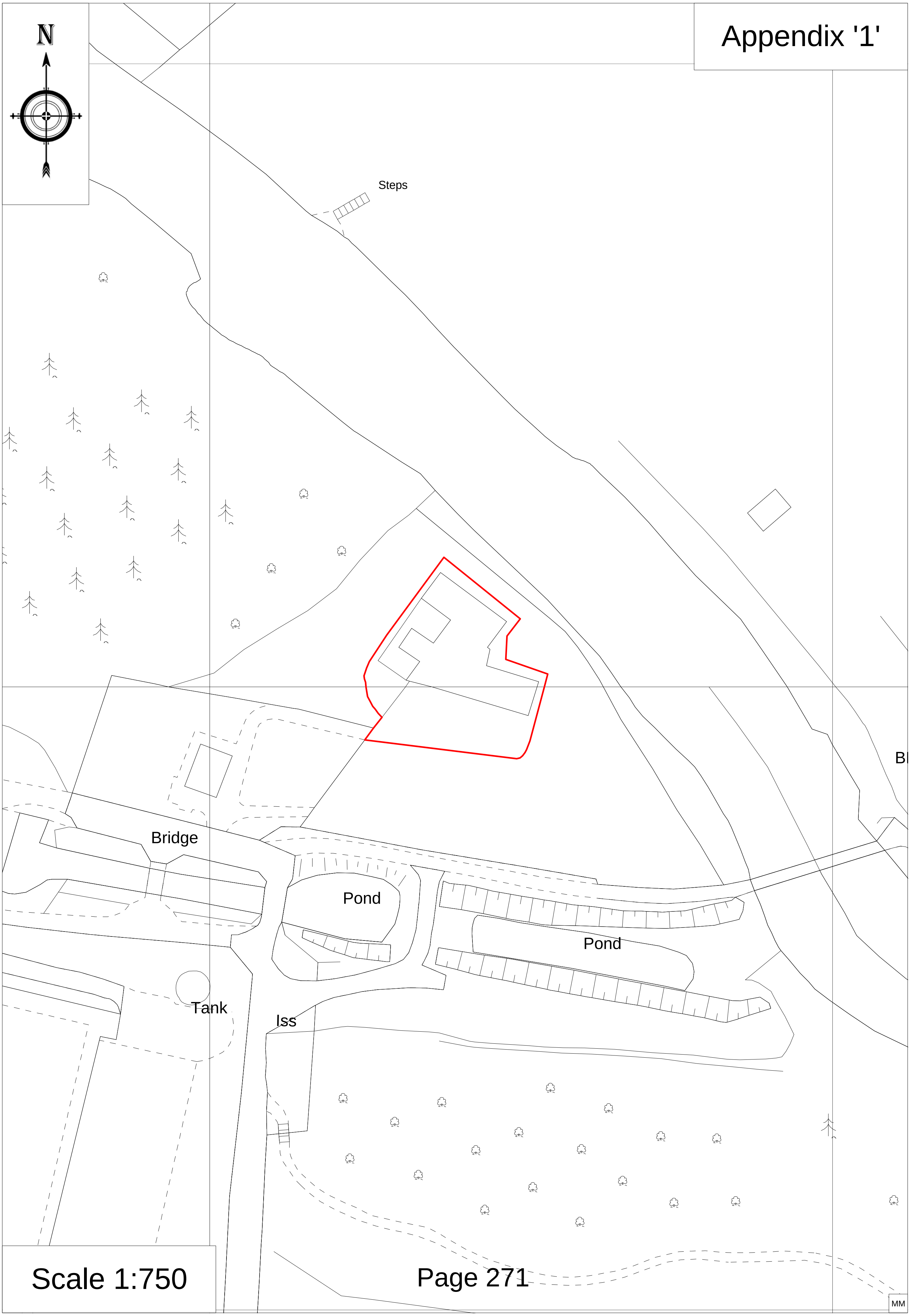
Appendix '1'



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Agenda Item 6a

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	Contracts Update
Date:	19 June 2020
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is to: • seek approval from members for tenders and STAs over £30,000
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to: • Approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 **(Table 1)** • Approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 **(Table 2)** • Note the award of contracts by Arc 21 on behalf the council **(Table 3)**
3.0	**Main report**
3.1	Publically Advertised Tenders Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states Chief Officers have delegated authority to authorise a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works over the statutory limit

	of £30,000 following a tender exercise where the council has approved the invitation to tender Standing Order 60(a) states any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000) shall be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b) the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council. Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.
3.2	<u>Single Tender Actions (STAs)</u> The following STAs are being submitted for approval: • Provision of consultancy services to provide a five year strategic plan, including creative programming approach, for the Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival. The tender was publicly advertised in October 2019 but all suppliers who submitted a response failed the evaluation. This work aligns with the Council's new ten-year cultural strategy for Belfast, approved by Members in August 2019. Urban Scale Intervention were identified as a supplier that can complete the work • Delivery of Research to Inform Provision of Enterprise Support. This tender exercise approved in October 2019 resulted in no suitable bidder being appointed. • 12 month extension of contract with BT for data connectivity for remote sites. This extension is required to assist with the implementation and handover of the new data connectivity service provider which has been impacted by COVID-19. • 15 month extension of contract with Bryson Recycling from 1st August 2020 until 31st October 2021 for the continued provision of kerbside collections. This extension is required until a strategic decision on the future of the service is finalised and a procurement strategy developed in line with the Waste Framework 2017. • 12 month extension of T1612 contract with Signtime for the provision a wide variety of signage (information and H&S) that the Council requires in parks, open spaces, depots, recycling centres etc from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. This STA will regularise this expenditure whilst a formal procurement exercise is completed. • 12 month contract with an approved contractor for the removal, treatment and disposal of seasonal/contentious waste during this 2020 financial year as agreed at the Bonfire Project Board in February 2020.

3.3	The Committee is also asked to note that a 6 month extension of contract has been agreed with our supplier for the continued treatment and disposal of residual waste.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.4	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.5	None
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 Table 1 Publically Advertised Tenders Table 2 Direct Award Contracts Table 3 Contracts awarded by Arc 21 on behalf of the council

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Appendix 1

Table 1 – Publically Advertised Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	Senior Responsible Officer	Short description of goods/ services
Provision of a Sustainability Audit on Belfast City Council	Up to 9 months (31st March 2021)	£60,000	Grainia Long	Belfast City Council has agreed to develop a Climate Plan and the first stage of this is to establish a baseline and evidence base from which to identify priorities and actions.
Supply & Delivery of Goods for Resale at Belfast Zoo	Up to 4 years	£460,000	Nigel Grimshaw	The tender is required for goods for resale for the souvenir shop at Belfast Zoo. This generates additional income for the zoo.
Provision of a Christmas Lighting Scheme for Belfast City Centre from Christmas 2020 onawards	Up to 5 years	£800,000	Alistair Reid	5 year lease costs for replacement of Christmas lighting. Current lighting managed by BCCM and near end of life
Provision of an Active Travel project to increase journeys by foot or cycle - PEACE IV Shared Space and Services Theme	Up to 16 months	£150,000	Nigel Grimshaw	EU Funded project to increase journeys taken by foor or cycle along the Forth Meadown Community Greenway.
Provision of a community engagement project - Civic Education PEACE IV Shared Space and Services Theme	Up to 16 months	£80,000	Nigel Grimshaw	EU Funded project to engage with 600 young people along the Forth Meadow Community Greenway.
Provision of the delivery of 3 Community Events - PEACE IV Shared Space and Services Theme	Up to 16 months	£120,000	Nigel Grimshaw	EU Funded project to engage with 600 participants and hold 3 public events along the Forth Meadow Community Greenway
Provision of the delivery of an Intergenerational Project - PEACE IV Shared Space and Services Theme	Up to 16 months	£80,000	Nigel Grimshaw	EU Funded project to encourage community participation along the Forth Meadow Community Greenway

Provision of recruitment, delivery and accreditation of Volunteer Training - PEACE IV Shared Space and Services Theme	Up to 16 months	£124,000	Nigel Grimshaw	EU Funded project to recuit 60 volunteers from Forth Meadow Community Greenway and deliver and achieve certification in mediation training.
Supply and delivery of a range of fruit and vegetables for Belfast Zoo	Up to 3 years	£225,000	Nigel Grimshaw	The tender is required for the supply of fruit and vegetables for Belfast Zoo.

Table 2- Direct Award Contracts (Single Tender Action)

Title of Tender	Supplier	Total Value
Provision of consultancy services to provide a five year strategic plan, including creative programming approach, for the Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival	UrbanScale Intervention	£80,000
Contract for the provision of data connectivity for remote council sites	British Telecom (BT)	£35,000
Delivery of Research to Inform Provision of Enterprise Support	Aston Enterprise School	Up to £100,000
Kerbside recycling collections (T1200)	Bryson Recycling	£2.4m
Supply and Delivery of Installation of Signage (T1612)	Signtime	£75k
Seasonal/ contentious waste removal	Confidential	Confidential

Table 3- Contracts awarded by Arc 21 on behalf of the council

Contract Title	Period of Contract	Senior Responsible Officer
Municipal Waste Disposal Contract – Lot 1	Up to 3 years	Nigel Grimshaw

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	Dual Language Street Signs Policy
Date:	19 June 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aidan Thatcher, Director of Planning & Building Control

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? **Yes** ☐ **No** X

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision ☐
After Council Decision ☐
Some time in the future ☐
Never ☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? **Yes** X **No** ☐

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the Notice of Motion in relation to the Dual Language Street Signs Policy.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to: • Consider the Notice of Motion in relation to the Dual Language Street Signs Policy. • Consider a minimum response threshold in respect of the survey requirement. If Members are minded to change the policy, a revised policy will be drafted in accordance with your decision and presented for adoption with an equality screening carried out at your next meeting. Committee to note that other revisions could be made to the current policy to address issues which have arisen since it was first adopted, for example new streets or streets which have no occupiers, and

	accordingly these revisions could be incorporated within any new policy should you choose to adopt one. • Following discussions at Party Group Leader's Consultative Forum a protocol for managing engagement with consultees will be developed for consideration by members at a subsequent meeting
3.0	**Main report**
  3.1	Background The Council adopted a Street Naming and Buildings Numbering Policy in February 2009 which incorporates a Dual Language Street Signs Policy. At Council on 3 February 2020, Councillor Walsh proposed the following Notice of Motion: "This Council has one of the most restrictive policies of any council in the North in regards to Irish Language Street Signage Policy. Currently, the policy is that you need a 1/3rd of the eligible electorate in a street to sign a petition which starts the process. Once the process has been initiated, a letter is sent to everyone in that street who is on the electoral register asking if they consent to have bilingual signage installed. The resident has three options, namely, Yes, No and Don't Care. For the process to come to a successful conclusion, 2/3rds of the total electorate in the street need to consent to yes. If a letter is not returned, it is considered by the Council as saying that they don't consent for the bilingual signage. Furthermore, where residents send the survey back saying 'Don't Care, this is also considered to be a negative response. If we, as Elected Members were held to the same standard as this policy in the Local Government elections, not one Member would have been returned to serve on this Council, as we would not have met those restrictive parameters. The Council's Language Strategy refers to increasing the visibility of the Irish Language in our City. However, it is essential not to impose the Irish language on residents if the majority of them in a street do not consent to it. Therefore, this Council will amend its Irish language street signage policy to the following: i. continue with the 1/3rd of the eligible electorate in the street to initiate the process; ii. change the policy to reflect that it will be the majority of respondents to the survey that will decide if the process has been successful. Therefore, it will be 50% +1 of respondents that will determine if the petition to erect bilingual

	signage has been successful. Non-respondents will not be considered as a negative response; and i. those respondents who respond as ‘Don’t Care’ are not considered to be a negative response and will be treated as a void vote.”
3.2	The motion was seconded by Councillor McLaughlin. In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion was referred, without discussion, to the People and Communities Committee.
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.3	The motion sets out a proposal to move from the current arrangements (⅓ expressing an interest by petition and ⅔ indicating a preference in a subsequent survey to erect a dual language street sign) to a simple majority of respondents. The proposal would mean that non-respondents are not considered in the context of any final decision on dual street naming. The proposal retains the current trigger through a petition to initiate the process. Given that no minimum response threshold is established Members may wish to consider that if you support the motion to change the current policy, whether a minimum threshold of those on the electoral register responding should be met through the survey before the matter is referred to committees for consideration. For example that the respondents to the survey would equate to a minimum of ⅓ (or such other figure as you may agree) to those on the electoral register in that street.
3.4	Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995 requires the Council to take into account the views of the occupiers in a street.
3.5	The current Council policy was subject to a legal challenge which was successfully defended. A copy of the judgement is attached for information. This does not affect the ability of the Council to adopt a different policy should it choose to do so.
3.6	Some political concern has been expressed as to how the process is undertaken in terms of engagement relating to the consultation required to inform the decision. A protocol to sit alongside the policy could establish principles underpinning that process. The rationale for this approach, in terms of the political view expressed, is to ensure the integrity of the process.

3.7	Financial & Resource Implications Any change to the policy to the extent suggested is likely to result in a greater number of applications and a greater number of signs to be erected.
3.8	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment This change of policy will need to be equality screened.
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 – Street Naming and Buildings Numbering Policy which incorporates a Dual Language Street Signs Policy Appendix 2 - Judgement

Street Naming and Buildings Numbering Policy

Building Control Service

Approved by Council: February 2009

Current policy

Contents Page

1.0 Introduction

1.1 It is the policy of Belfast City Council (the Council), as implemented through the Building Control Service (the Service), to provide the City of Belfast with adequate street naming and numbering of buildings to help way-finding by the inhabitants, visitors and people who work in the City and to assist the easy identification of premises by emergency services, postal services and utility providers.

1.2 Signage and street naming provision will be delivered in an equitable and fair manner.

This policy is prepared in line with Council's Good Relations Strategy and Equality Scheme in order that the Council fulfils its statutory duty and responsibilities under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

1.3 Through the provision of new street names, numbering of buildings and continual updating of the corporate gazetteer and Pointer NI database, we will ensure that each property in the Council area will be correctly addressed and have a unique property reference number (UPRN).

1.4 In undertaking these functions the primary consideration for the Council is public safety, ensuring that street names are not duplicated and that streets and properties are named and numbered to facilitate easy identification in the event of an emergency.

2.0 Service Delivery

2.1 An ability to readily identify properties and being confident that buildings are properly numbered and streets are properly named plays a key role in the efficient and effective value for money services provided by the Council.

2.2 A properly administered system for addressing in Belfast also is crucial in enabling the delivery of an equitable property taxation system such as the current system for rating.

2.3 The allocation of statutory addresses has an important role in relation to the Government's commitment to improved service delivery through the linking of various organisations' datasets with a common infrastructure based on a definitive list of national addresses. Many service providers require address details before customers can access products.

3.0 Legislation

3.1 The statutory basis for this function is contained within Article 11 of the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.* This Order repealed all earlier statutes related to the provision of street names and the numbering of buildings in Northern Ireland.

3.2 Article 11 of this Order provides for the naming of streets, numbering of buildings and the council's responsibility to provide street signs.

3.3 This provision also gives the Council powers to erect dual language street signs or secondary nameplates in a language other than English. In exercising these powers the Council is required to have regard to the views expressed by the occupiers of premises in that street.

3.4 The legislation governing this policy also provides the Council with enforcement powers. In discharging any enforcement powers the Service will have regard to the principles of the Enforcement Concordat and the Building Control Service enforcement policy.

4.0 Policy Implementation

4.1 When Building Regulations applications are commenced, the Service will advise applicants or their agents if the application creates the need for a new street name. The Service will refer to the Planning Approval list to ascertain new developments in Belfast. If these new developments have been approved by the Planning Service, the Service will send out a street naming and building numbering information pack to the responsible person.

4.2 This is particularly relevant on large developments where sales promotion literature often includes names that have not been approved by the Council and may be unacceptable.

4.3 Builders / Developers / Estate Agents will be asked to provide a number (usually 2 as a minimum) of alternative names which should not duplicate or sound like existing names in the locality yet be linked to the characteristics of the area (social, historical or geographical).

4.4 Building Control will check its own records and will also consult with Royal Mail Address Management to check for duplication of names within the Postcode areas, which may not follow City boundaries.

The Service will also consult with the emergency services to obtain their views if the application may involve duplication of an existing street name; these exercises provide a third party check on the registration of names within the City.

4.5 For new street names, changes of street names, major re-numbering, and erection of dual-language street name plates the matter will be considered by the Council's Health and Environmental Services Committee whose decision will be subject to approval at a subsequent council meeting. If an application is not approved it will be referred back to the applicant for alternative suggestions.

4.6 Following ratification by Council a notification will be issued to all stakeholders within 7 working days of Council approval being given.

4.7 A numbering schedule will then be developed. When possible this information will be included in the initial notification letter and sent to all stakeholders for the numbering of new developments, or communicated in due course.

4.8 All Council Members who do not sit on the committee which determines these applications will be notified of any applications made for their electoral areas relating to new street names and renumbering which are reported to committee.

When non-committee Members are notified of applications, they may send comments to the Service within 7 days of receipt of notification. Members will be notified of Council determinations made in respect of applications within their electoral area.

5.0 Building Numbering

5.1 There are occasions where the existing naming or numbering of buildings in a street may be unsatisfactory to either property owners/occupants or the Service.

5.2 If it is decided that re-numbering is necessary the Service will deal with the application if the re-numbering changes are relating to less than 5 properties.

If the re-numbering affects properties of 5 or more a report will then be brought before Committee for approval and subsequent ratification by full Council. The Royal Mail and other relevant agencies will be informed and advised of any changes in terms of postal numbering.

5.3 The Council will endeavour to number sites and premises as soon as it is aware that it is required. On receipt of a written request from the developer or agent a site visit will be made to help determine a suitable numbering scheme for the particular location in question. The Service will then notify the applicant of the correct postal-numbering.

6.0 Renaming a Street

6.1 The ability to rename streets is one which is allowed for in legislation governing the naming of streets and persons can make applications as such. The Council will carefully consider any application for renaming within its boundaries, as it is conscious that renaming of streets has profound implications on address management for the city, emergency services and the general public.

6.2 Therefore any application received by the Service for the renaming of a street which has the requisite support shall be presented to Council seeking it express approval before proceeding with the application. If approved by Council, the Service officers will then undertake surveys as set out below to progress the application.

6.3 The application/request for re-naming of a street should be accompanied by an initial petition of not less than one third of residents of the street showing a positive interest in changing the street name. A request from an individual without support of survey or signed petition will not be considered and the individual will be informed accordingly.

6.4 The opinions of all persons affected by a renaming proposal may then be sought. This shall be through survey of all residents listed under the electoral register for that street. All persons over 18 years of age shown as dwelling in a property on the electoral register will be written to requesting an indication of their support for or opposition to the proposed name change.

6.5 Only where the support of at least two thirds of occupiers aged over 18 and identified on the electoral register has been demonstrated in any street, will the Council consider a request for renaming. Royal Mail will always be consulted and if the renaming involves a duplicate street name then relevant emergency services will also be consulted as to their views on the proposed street name.

6.6 If the result of the survey shows that at least two thirds of the residents are in agreement with the proposed name change then a recommendation will be placed before the Health & Environmental Services Committee for agreement of the change of name.

6.7 If approval is granted a notification of the change of street name will be sent to the applicant and other stakeholders for information. The applicant will also be notified if the application for a change of street name is not approved.

6.8 Another request or re-application to change a street name which has been refused will not be accepted until a minimum period of 2 years has elapsed from the previous application date for change of the street name.

7.0 Dual Language Street Signs

7.1 Please refer to the policy of the Council in respect of dual language street signs which is attached as Appendix A to this document.

8.0 Enforcement

8.1 On occasion it is necessary to consider enforcement action to ensure the display of official street names and postal numbers. In line with our enforcement policy informal action will in all cases be pursued in an attempt to resolve the matter. If however, persuasion fails to achieve results action will normally be taken under Article 11 of the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995*.

(Article 11, paragraph 5) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 provides that:-

"Any person, who obscures, pulls down, defaces any official nameplate or erects in any street a nameplate showing as the name of the street a name different from the official street name or erects in any street any nameplate purporting to show the name of the street, without authorisation of the Council, shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale."

8.2 In addition the said Order provides that:-

Where the occupier of a house or building fails to ensure that it is marked with the number approved by the council – the Council may serve on him a notice requiring him to comply with the notice within 7 days from the date on which the notice is served.

If that person fails to comply with the notice they shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

The Council may do anything which he has failed to do and in addition may recover from that person summarily as a civil debt any expenses thereby reasonably incurred.

9.0 Finance

9.1 As the erection of street signs and registration of postal numbering are statutory functions the Council will not levy a charge in administering these functions. Where an application for written confirmation of Postal Numbering is made, a Numbering Certificate will be issued by the Council.

9.2 The existence and condition of street nameplates will be monitored by officers on a regular basis and repair or replacement carried out. Where signage has been subject to vandalism, repairs will be made or replacement signage erected.

10 Street Naming and Buildings Numbering Guidelines

10.1 The following guidelines will be used to support the operation of this policy.

Naming Streets and Buildings

(i) New street names shall not duplicate any name already in use in the City or in areas of neighbouring Boroughs close to the Belfast City boundary.

A variation in the terminal word, i.e. 'street', 'road', 'avenue', etc, may not be accepted as sufficient reason to duplicate a name, other than where streets are adjacent or within one development.

(ii) Subsidiary names (e.g. a row of buildings within an already named road being called '………….Terrace') should not be used.

(iii) All new street names should end with a suffix such as:-

Street	for any road
Road	for major roads
Way	for major roads
Road	for residential roads
Avenue	for residential roads
Drive	for residential roads
Grove	for residential roads
Lane	for residential roads
Gardens	(subject to no confusion with any local open space)
Mews	for houses around an open yard or along a laneway
Place	for a square with houses
Link	for a road linking two roads
Crescent	for a crescent shaped road
Close	for a cul-de-sac only
Square	for a square only
Hill	for a hillside road only
Circus	for a large roundabout
Terrace	for a terrace of houses (provided is not a subsidiary name)
Court	for apartments or houses around an open yard

The above list is not exhaustive and all decisions on names remain within the authority of the Council.

(iv) Names which could be viewed as detrimental to the surrounding area such as Abattoir Road, Tip Lane, or names capable of deliberate misinterpretation should not be used.

(v) The use of North, East, South or West (as in Alfred Road North and Alfred Road South) (or East, West) is only acceptable where the road is continuous and passes over a major junction.

(vi) Phonetically similar names within a postal area within the City, e.g. Euston Road, Houston Road should not be used.

(a) **The Numbering of Buildings**

(i) A new street should be numbered with even numbers on one side (left) and odd numbers on the other (right).

(ii) Small cul de sacs should be numbered consecutively and larger cul de sacs are split for numbering purposes.

(iii) Private garages and similar buildings used only for housing vehicles, etc. should not be numbered.

(iv) The number 13 is discretionary in its use. It is commonly included in developments unless requested otherwise.

(v) Buildings (including those on corner sites) are numbered according to the street in which the main entrance is to be found and the manipulation of numbering in order to secure a 'prestige' address or to avoid an address which is thought to have undesired associations will not be sanctioned.

(vi) If a building has entrances in more than one street, but is a multi-occupied building and each entrance leads to a separate occupier, then each entrance should be numbered in the appropriate road. Exceptions may be made, depending on the circumstances, for a house divided into flats.

(vii) A named building is not under the control of the Legislation and will be numbered onto the existing street.

(vii) Postcodes are the responsibility of Royal Mail Address Management.

(viii) In residential buildings (e.g. blocks of flats) it is usual to give a street number to each communal entrance.

The numbering of flats within a named or numbered building is outside the scope of these powers, but developers are requested to supply a layout plan and unit or apartment numbers to facilitate Council records.

On each floor the numbering should be in a clockwise direction where this is possible and they should be numbered not lettered e.g. Flat 2, 21 Smith Street, not, Flat A, 21 Smith Street.

(ix) When one large house in a road is demolished and replaced by (say) four smaller houses or in rural situations, where all available numbers are taken up, it may be necessary to include alpha-numeric references. E.g. 34A, 34B, 34C, 34D.

Appendix A

Dual Language Street Signs Policy

1.0 <u>Legislation</u>

The statutory basis for this function is contained within *Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995*. This Order commenced on 15 March 1995, it provides for street naming, street numbering and the provision of street signs. It also gives Councils the discretionary power to erect dual language street signs or secondary nameplates in a language other than English.

2.0 <u>Introduction</u>

The legislation requires the Council, in deciding whether and how to exercise its discretion to erect a street name in a language other than English, to take account of the views of the occupiers of premises in the street.

For the purposes of this policy occupiers shall be taken to be any person whose name appears in the current Electoral Register plus the owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises, but not employees in such premises.

These policy proposals were developed in close consultation with the Director of Legal Services and are designed to promote consistent and reasonable responses. However, the policy should not be applied in such a way as to prevent due consideration being given to the particular circumstances of each application. Having regard to the significant resource consequences of administering the implications of the policy, the policy should be reactive in nature.

3.0 <u>Procedure</u>

The procedures for seeking and assessing the views of occupiers and the criteria to be applied in deciding whether to erect a street sign in a language other than English are as follows:

(i) Only applications supported by a petition representing not less than one third of the people appearing on the Electoral Register of the street for which the application is made will be progressed.

(ii) Where the foregoing requirements have been met the Council will canvass by post all people appearing on the Electoral Register of that street and seek their views on the request to erect a street sign in a second specified language. This letter is designed so as to make the expression of views as simple as possible. Reply will be by way of a pre-paid envelope and should be returned within one month of receipt.

(iii) Where two thirds or more of the occupiers appearing on the Electoral Register have indicated that they are in favour of the erection of a second language street sign, then such a sign will be erected. People not returning a reply will be deemed not to be in favour of the application.

(iv) Consideration will to be given to "long streets" where majority opinion on whether to have a second language street sign may differ between readily identifiable, substantial lengths of the street. In these circumstances consideration will be given to the erection of dual language nameplates in those substantial portions of the street where the required majority of occupiers have expressed a wish for such a nameplate.

(v) When a decision has been taken to erect a street sign in a second language the translation from English to that second language will be carried out by an independent, competent Body such as the appropriate Language Department at Queen's University.

(vi) With regard to the design and placing of the street signs the second language sign shall be located immediately below the English sign and the size of lettering shall be smaller than the English version to avoid any risk of confusion to the emergency services.

4.0 Adoption by Council

This policy was adopted by the Council on 1 September 1998.

Neutral Citation No. [2014] NIQB 129

Ref: **HOR9455**

Judgment: approved by the Court for handing down

*(subject to editorial corrections)**

Delivered: **04/12/2014**

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION (JUDICIAL REVIEW)

____

IN THE MATTER OF AN APPLICATION BY EILEEN REID FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW

IN THE MATTER OF A DECISION OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

____

HORNER J

A. Introduction

[1] This is a challenge by Eileen Reid ("the Applicant") who lives at 13 Ballymurphy Drive, Belfast, to the decision of Belfast City Council ("the Council") to refuse to erect an additional street name plate in Irish at Ballymurphy Drive, Belfast. The application for such a street name plate had the support of 52 out of the 92 members living in the street who were eligible to vote. She claims that the decision to refuse to erect a street name plate is unlawful, as is the policy underlying it. As this is a judicial review, it is important to emphasise that the court is not concerned with the merits of whether there should be a dual street name plate at Ballymurphy Drive but rather on whether the process that ultimately determined that no additional street name should be erected, was lawful.

B. Background to the policy on dual language street names

[2] Article 11(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states:

> "A council may erect at or near each end, corner or entrance of any street in its district a name plate showing the name of the street; and a name plate erected under this paragraph –
>
> (a) shall express the name of the street in English; and
>
> (b) may express the name in any other language."

[3] Street names and dual name plates have been a source of discord in Northern Ireland over the years leading to community tensions. They have also been a contentious issue at local government as the minutes of the meetings of the council and its various committees testify. On 12 June 1995 the attention of the Health and Environmental Services Committee ("HES") of the council was drawn to Article 11 of the 1995 Order which had just come in to effect. At that meeting on 12 June the HES requested a draft policy be produced to deal with the erection of street name plates in a language other than English and that this should be presented to the HES after consultation with all the other party groups of the council. By 11 December 1995 a policy had been agreed but there were issues as to the resources required to make it work. It was estimated that the basic cost of providing second language street signs over a 5 year period would be in the region of £200,000. To that sum had to be added the cost of providing additional staff and the resources to establish administrative systems and procedures. It was considered that this would require expenditure of approximately £30,000 per year over a 5 year period. Implementation of the policy was deferred pending consultation on the funding issues with the Department of the Environment. The views of the Director of Legal Services were sought by the Director of Health and Environmental Services with regard to the feasibility of the council charging for the erection of dual language street signs.

[4] On 10 August 1998 HES reached a decision that the council should implement the draft policy for the erection of dual language street signs. At the full meeting of the council on 1 September 1998 the council ratified HES's decision and the policy came into effect. This was an open policy and one in respect of which councillors would have been aware. Any ratepayer on inquiry could have found out about it.

[5] The policy noted that Article 11 of the 1995 Order gave councils the discretionary power to erect dual language street signs or secondary name street plates in languages other than English. It records at paragraph 2:

> "These policy proposals were developed in close consultation with the Director of Legal Services and are

> designed to promote consistent and reasonable responses. However, the policy should not be applied in such a way as to prevent due consideration being given to the particular circumstances of each application. Having regard to the significant resource consequences of administering the implications of the policy, the policy should be reactive in nature."

[6] The process can be summarised thus:

(i) Only applications supported by a petition representing not less than one third of the people appearing on the electoral register of the street will be progressed.

(ii) Where that requirement has been met the council will canvass those persons appearing on the Electoral Register of that street and seek their views on their request to erect a street sign in a second specified language. They will be each given a pre-paid envelope to be returned within one month of receipt.

(iii) Where two-thirds or more of the occupiers appearing on the Electoral Register have indicated that they are in favour of the erection of a second language street sign, then such a sign will be erected. People not returning a reply will be deemed not to be in favour of the application.

(iv) The council retains an <u>overriding</u> discretion to take the particular circumstances of each application into account in deciding whether there should be a street name plate erected regardless of the numbers voting in favour of the application.

[7] On 2 March 2000 the UK Government signed the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority languages and ratified it in March 2001. The Charter was to come into force on 2 July 2001. The Policy and Resources Committee ("PRC") of the council considered the Charter and asked for a detailed report. This was prepared by the Assistant Chief Executive. At a meeting of 13 December 2002 various recommendations for compliance with the Charter were put forward. It is specifically recorded at paragraph 27 in respect of place names in Irish:

> "This issue is not expected to provide any difficulty for the Council, since it already has a policy of providing dual language street names in Belfast, if requested by two-thirds of the residents of the street."

This was then ratified by the full council on 6 January 2003. On 21 February 2003 the PRC considered the report of the Director of Legal Services which recorded that it had the force of international law but that "there is no specific domestic national legislation to compel District Councils to abide by the guidance coming from

Government". On 3 March 2003 the PRC minutes were ratified at the meeting of the council.

[8] The policy was then reviewed following a request by the PRC. It was reaffirmed by the HES Committee on 16 June 2007 and at a meeting of the full council on 1 May 2007 it was agreed that it should be taken back to the HES for further consideration.

[9] On 11 June 2007, after further consideration by the HES of the policy, a one year pilot scheme was introduced whereby applications for additional street name plates no longer required petitions with one-third support before progressing to a full survey. There was also discussion of the two-thirds approach. On 2 June 2007 the council approved the decision instituting the pilot scheme. On 3 September 2008 HES reviewed the policy again and agreed to end the pilot scheme. On 1 October 2008 the full council sent the policy back for further consideration. On 8 October 2008 HES reaffirmed the decision of 3 September 2008 requiring submission of a petition. On 3 November 2008 this decision was approved by the full council.

[10] On 5 December 2011 HES was asked to consider whether the policy should be amended so as to require two-thirds only of those who had returned a survey form. On 8 February 2012 HES considered the range of options, discussed the matters and reaffirmed the policy after a number of votes. On 1 March 2012 the full council ratified the HES minutes following a contested vote.

[11] The Policy has thus been the subject of considerable democratic scrutiny by the council and its committees over an extended period of time. It is clear that it has been the subject of considerable debate and dispute. But ultimately the policy in general, and the two-thirds majority of issued surveys rule in particular, has prevailed.

[12] The policy seems to have worked well. From 1998 until the end of 2013, 180 applications have been made to the council to erect a street name plate in a second language. 144 of those applications have been approved. 34 applications were not progressed as there were insufficient responses to the council's surveys. From 2009 until the end of 2013, all the applications which were submitted have been approved, save for two applications, both of which had an insufficient response to the council's survey. In the two years preceding the present application, that is 2011 and 2012, there was a 100% success rate in respect of applications received.

[13] Of the 25 councils in Northern Ireland, 14 councils have a dual language policy. For the 14 who have a dual language policy, three use a straight majority of surveys returned, four use a two-thirds majority of surveys returned, two use a two-thirds of issued surveys rule and the other five are not known. The other two councils with the two-thirds of issued surveys rule are Castlereagh and Strabane councils.

C. Background to the Application

[14] On 23 May 2013 an application was received for dual language street signs for Ballymurphy Drive, Belfast, from Glór na Móna, 195 Whiterock Road, Belfast. This is an Irish language group, one of whose aims is to promote the Irish language. The application included a petition that met the one-third requirement. Accordingly, under its policy the council had to carry out its own survey. A survey was sent to all those people who appeared on the Electoral Register for Ballymurphy Drive. Ninety-two surveys in total were issued with a deadline of 13 July 2013 for the return of the surveys. The letter accompanying the survey stated that following the questionnaire, based on the returns, Mr Martin, Head of Service, may make a recommendation to the council. It also indicated that as there were 92 people eligible to complete the survey the appropriate minimum for recommending approval was not less than 62 replies. Enclosed with the letter was a pre-paid envelope. The questionnaire contained 3 statements in respect of which the party surveyed was asked to tick their preferred answer. They were as follows:

(a) I wish to have a second street name plate erected at Ballymurphy Drive, the second one being an Irish translation.

(b) I do not wish to have a second street name plate erected at Ballymurphy Drive, the second one being an Irish translation.

(c) I have no preference either way. (As the policy states two-thirds of those surveyed must approve the request before recommendation is made, this answer is taken that you are happy with the current position regarding the sign.)

[15] The deadline was extended because it included a public holiday during the response period to the end of August 2013. There were 52 "Yes" responses received in total. There were 21 responses received on 17 June 2013, 25 responses on 4 July 2013, 11 responses on 10 July 2013. The remaining "yes" responses were received as follows, one response on 19 June 2013 and two responses on 20 June 2013. There seems to have been some organised campaign to obtain responses given that the vast majority of responses were received in three batches on three particular dates. These surveys are not confidential.

[16] On 5 November 2013 Mr Flanigan, Solicitor, wrote on behalf of the applicant asking the council to confirm that the application in respect of Ballymurphy Drive had been granted. The response from the Health and Environmental Services Department was from Mr Martin, Head of Service. He said:

> "I would confirm that the application in respect of Ballymurphy Drive has not been granted due to insufficient responses being returned to the Council …

In the case of Ballymurphy Drive 92 people were eligible for completing (sic) the survey and the appropriate minimum recommending approval is not less than 62 replies in favour of the dual language street sign. To date Building Control have received 52 replies in favour of the dual language street sign."

[17] In response to requests as to how many were against the dual language street sign the council replied on 19 November 2013 that one person had responded on the basis that he was not in favour.

[18] There followed a letter of 26 November 2013 from Michael Flannigan, Solicitor, complaining that the policy was Wednesbury unreasonable and ultra vires, as it was not consistent with the relevant statutory duty, it was not consistent with the council's position that it would act in accordance with its obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages and that it was an unlawful fetter on the council's discretion.

[19] On 15 January 2014 Mr John Walsh, Town Solicitor for the council replied dealing with the complaints that have been made and concluding as follows:

> "The policy requirement for two-thirds of residents to respond favourably is not unreasonable and properly falls within the exercise of the council's discretion as to the circumstances in which it will erect a second name plate."

[20] He denied the policy was unlawful and said that the council had taken legal advice. The solicitors responded by issuing proceedings on behalf of the applicant and seeking leave to apply for judicial review.

D. <u>The Grounds of Challenge</u>

[21] There were five grounds of challenge put forward at the hearing. They were:

(a) The refusal of the council to consider the proposal to erect an Irish language street name plate at Ballymurphy Drive was ultra vires, unlawful and of no effect because the respondent fettered its discretion in applying the policy in such a way as to prevent due consideration being given to the particular circumstances of this application. ("Ground 1")

(b) The council's dual language street sign policy is ultra vires, unlawful and of no effect because it requires two-thirds or more of the occupiers appearing on the Electoral Register to indicate that they are in favour of the proposal to erect a second language street sign before the respondent will consider the proposal and/or because it deems those who do not reply to the proposal as not being in favour of it because it is Wednesbury unreasonable to:

(i) deem those that do not respond to the proposal as being opposed to it, and/or

(ii) set the level of expressions of approval at the same threshold as that formally required to change the street name. ("Ground 2")

(c) The impugned terms of the policy are inconsistent with the terms of Article 11 of the 1995 Order, insofar as Article 11 requires the respondent to have regard to the views **expressed by the occupiers**, whereas the impugned terms of the policy allow those who do not respond to the proposal to be considered to have expressed opposition to it. ("Ground 3")

(d) The impugned terms of the policy are inconsistent with the council's commitment to act in accordance with its obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and in particular the Charter obligation under 10(2)(g) to the **use of adoption of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages**, which Charter should be used to interpret the statutory discretion available to the respondent under Article 11 of the 1995 Order. ("Ground 4")

(e) The policy is treated by the respondent as if it were of legislative force and expressed in mandatory terms, and as such amounts to an improper attempt by the respondent to exercise legislative powers where none exist. In particular, the impugned terms of the policy are ultra vires as an attempt to re-enact the substantive terms of (the repealed) Section 21 of the Public Health Amendment Act 1907, where no such legislative power exists. ("Ground 5")

As can be seen there is an overlap with some of these different arguments.

[22] At this stage I should record my thanks to both counsel who presented their respective cases both clearly and comprehensively. I have taken into account all the points which they have made in their detailed and nuanced skeleton arguments and oral submissions. The interests of brevity forbid me from rehearsing all of the arguments in full.

E. <u>Statutory Background</u>

[23] The relevant provision is Article 11(4) of the 1995 Order. It describes the discretionary power the council has to erect a second name plate:

> "In deciding whether and, if so, how to exercise its powers under paragraph (1)(b) or (2) in relation to any street, a council should have regard to any views in the matter expressed by the occupiers of premises in that street …"

[24] It is noteworthy that the requirement under the relevant provision is that the council "shall have regard to any views on the matter expressed by the occupier of premises …".

[25] Article 11(1) clearly gives the council a discretion whether or not to erect a second name plate. How that discretion is to be exercised is set out in 11(4). The words used and their context do not suggest that the council is only to have exclusive regard to the views expressed by the occupiers. In Sandford Ltd v New Zealand Recreational Fishing Council Inc [2008] NZCA 160 (this decision was subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court) the Court of Appeal found that a requirement to "have regard to" a matter requires the decision-maker "to give the matter genuine attention and thought but it remains open to the decision-maker to conclude that the matter is not of sufficient significance to outweigh other contrary considerations". The expression "to have regard to" is weaker than "to have particular regard to" and it is certainly much less constraining than "take into account" and "give effect to". So under this provision the council has a discretion. It must give genuine attention and thought to the expressed views of the occupiers, but it is still entitled to take into account other lawful considerations affecting its decision. I consider that this is the lawful way for the council to approach the discretion vested in it pursuant to Article 11(1).

F. Discussion

Ground 1

[26] The applicant says that the council fettered its discretion by requiring two-thirds of the Electoral Register at Ballymurphy Drive to approve the addition of a second street name in Irish. The council responds by stating that its discretion is not fettered. It could take into account other matters, but the applicant, for whatever reason, chose not to bring these matters to the attention of the council.

[27] There can be no doubt that the applicant and/or her solicitor and/or the local councillor for the area did not offer any reasons to try and persuade the Head of Service, HES or the council, despite not achieving 62 votes in favour of the proposal that there should be a second street sign in Irish erected at Ballymurphy Drive. However, subsequently the applicant has offered reasons which include:

(i) The proportion of the people in the lower Falls area with an interest in Irish is approximately 20%.

(ii) This street is within the Gaeltacht Quarter which is built on the traditional strengths of the Irish language and culture.

[28] The policy expressly states at Section 2 as follows:

"These policy proposals were developed in close consultation with the Director of Legal Services and are designed to promote consistent and reasonable responses. However, the policy should not be applied in such a way as to prevent due consideration being given to the particular circumstances of each application. Having regard to the significant resource consequences of administering the implications of the policy, the policy should be reactive in nature."

The policy then goes on to state at (iii) of Section 3:

"Where two-thirds or more of the occupiers appearing on the Electoral Register have indicated they are in favour of the erection of a second language street sign, then such a sign will be erected. People not returning a reply will be deemed not to be in favour of the application."

[29] The following points are of significance:

(i) The applicant complains that the application was not considered by the HES (or the full council) but was in fact dealt with by a council officer(s) and he operated as if he was in a self-imposed straitjacket.

(ii) The policy in relation to dual street signs was public, well-known and has been in operation for a number of years. It has been taken advantage of successfully by the occupiers of many streets in the Belfast area.

(iii) Mr Martin, Head of Services, "found no circumstances which warranted" it being put before the committee. Mr Martin, on the evidence adduced before this court, was legally entitled to reach such a conclusion.

(iv) The committee could decide that despite not reaching the two-thirds threshold that it wished to consider the matter in response to prompting by local residents and/or their solicitor and/or their local councillor or other councillors.

(v) The solicitor for the applicant was free to write in and make any submissions he wanted on the applicant's behalf. He chose not to do so. No satisfactory explanation has been given for this omission. Councillors have the right to sit in on any committee meeting. A councillor is able to write and make representations to any officer or member of any committee. The local councillor for Ballymurphy Drive could have made submissions on behalf of the application for a dual language street sign but chose not to do so. No explanation has been given as to why the council was not asked to exercise its residual discretion and permit a second street sign in Irish to be erected.

[30] An attack was also made on such a decision being taken by Mr Martin. However, Section 47A(1) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 states:

> "The council may arrange for the discharge of any of its functions, except the power of making a rate, or of borrowing money or of acquiring, holding or disposing of land by an officer with the council and any transferred provision regulating the exercise of a function by a council shall also apply to regulate the exercise of that function by an officer of the council."

In the circumstances and in the light of the evidence there is nothing objectionable in the role which was carried out by Mr Martin.

[31] The court concludes that there is no force whatsoever in the complaint that the council unlawfully fettered its discretion. The court does find that there is considerable force in the submission that the applicant and her advisors by their actions, or more properly, their inaction, precluded the council from exercising its discretion. They failed to put before it any of the grounds which might have persuaded the council to grant a second street name being erected at Ballymurphy Drive despite the failure to achieve the number required under the policy of 62 returned surveys.

Ground 2

[32] The policy of a two-thirds majority of those eligible is not Wednesbury unreasonable for a number of different reasons.

(i) The policy of providing an additional street name in another language can be socially and politically divisive. The level of discord can be gauged from the debates within the council. Unfortunately, in Northern Ireland's deeply divided society many on each side of the political and cultural divide, rightly or wrongly, see the other's language, whether it be Irish or Ulster Scots, as associating that community with a particular political view point. In those circumstances it cannot be unreasonable to require clear and convincing evidence on the part of those who occupy the street that they want an additional street name plate in another language, apart from English.

(ii) The amount of effort required to return a stamped addressed envelope, especially against a background where there does appear to have been a campaign to obtain the necessary approvals provides a good gauge to judge the groundswell of enthusiasm in favour of a second name plate.

(iii) The present rule allows the council to avoid a situation where the residents' preferred option could alter from time to time depending on movement of people within the street. There are obvious costs implications in providing or removing street furniture. The OFMDFM document ("A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland" (March 2005)) emphasises a need for authorities to take positive action to ensure that shared and neutral spaces remain shared and used by all sections of the community. As the council points out this supports a policy which requires a high level of demonstrated community desire for a dual name plate which, realistically, "might well be viewed as identifying a street clearly with one community and be construed as exclusive of other communities". This is especially so given that the surveys are not confidential. Those not wanting a dual street name need not nail their colours to the mast.

(iv) Finally, this is a view shared by two other councils who have adopted the same policy. They will have considered the issue and adopted the same policy of a two-thirds majority of those appearing on the electoral register. There is no suggestion that the councillors of Castlereagh and Strabane councils acted perversely.

In the circumstances the applicant has not begun to meet the high threshold necessary to prove "Wednesbury unreasonableness" on the part of the council.

Ground 3

[33] The applicant claims that the council is required to have regard to the views "expressed by the occupiers". Those who did not return the survey did not express a view and therefore should not have been taken into account. However, this argument is fundamentally flawed. No one who received the survey could fail to misunderstand the position and the consequences of not voting. It was crystal clear to everyone that in order for there to be a dual street sign, a two-thirds majority of those written to in Ballymurphy Drive must reply in favour of the proposal. Those who did not return their surveys can have been in no doubt as to the consequences of their inaction.

[34] In any event, as the court has already made clear in its interpretation of Article 11, the council is only required to "have regard to" views expressed and it retains an overall discretion. For the reasons set out elsewhere in the judgment, such a policy is not unlawful. The council is not bound to follow the majority of the views expressed by those who returned the survey or by a majority of those to whom the survey was sent.

Ground 4

[35] The applicant complains that the council has publicly committed itself to act in accordance with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages ("The

Charter") and in particular Article 10 of the Charter. The central and key provision upon which it relies is Article 10(2)(g) which states:

> "In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is as such to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:
>
> (g) the use or adoption, if necessary, in conjunction with the name in the official language(s) of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages."

[36] The applicant makes the case that the levels of Irish language use and interest in the locality are high. Further, that the two-thirds issued surveys rule in favour of a dual street name in Irish is inimical to the council's obligation under the treaty.

As a general proposition international treaties or agreements which, as here, have not been incorporated into the national laws are not enforceable: see <u>R v Secretary of State for the Home Department ex parte</u> <u>Brind</u> [1991] 1 AC 696 at 761-2.

[37] In <u>Re MacGiolla Cathain's Application for Judicial Review</u> [2009] NIQB 66 Treacy J said at paragraphs [31]-[33] of his judgment:

> "[31] In respect of the first ground of challenge grounded in the alleged breach of Article 7(2) of the Charter the respondent submitted that its provisions operate only on the plane of international law and create no rights or obligations in domestic law.
>
> [32] The distinction between international law and domestic law has long been accepted by the courts in the United Kingdom. Where it is intended to give domestic legal effect to obligations arising from international treaties the method of achieving this is by incorporating the relevant treaty into domestic law as for example was done by the Human Rights Act 1998 in relation to the principal provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights. This has not however been done in relation to the Charter.
>
> [33] This well established legal position reflects the constitutional principle that in the UK the Executive does not have law making powers unless these are conferred upon it by Parliament. The ratification of an international

treaty such as the Charter is an Executive action effected under prerogative power and involves no delegation of legislative power by the legislature. Moreover, unlike legislation, such an exercise does not require the assent of Parliament. The Crown cannot change unambiguous law by the exercise of prerogative powers. In this respect see the case of Proclamations (1611) 12 Co Rep 74 where at 75 it is stated that:

> "The King by his proclamation or other ways cannot change any part of the common law, statute law, or customs of the realm."

If the ratification of an international treaty had the effect of altering domestic law then the Executive would be able to supplant the legislature by making legislation without any form of Parliamentary consent or approval by the backdoor. This would clearly emasculate the constitutional principle that in the UK the Executive does not enjoy law making powers unless these are bestowed upon it by Parliament. See the House of Lords decisions in Rayner v DTI [1990] 2 AC 4 118 at 499-50, Brind [1991] 1 AC 696 at 747-748 and 762B-D and R v Lyons [2003] 1 AC 976 at [13] and [27]."

[38] Treacy J also rejected further arguments about the applicability of the Charter based on:

(a) The legitimate expectation it was claimed was created by the Executive action of ratifying the Charter. He rejected this as an impermissible attempt to bypass the constitutional principle referred to above.

(b) The Treaty should be used as an aid to statutory interpretation. However, in that case (as here) the wording was clear and unambiguous and its use was otiose.

[39] A public authority such as the respondent cannot be obliged to treat itself as bound to act in compliance with international obligation. Even where it does so it is clear from the authorities that the courts will adopt a very light touch review which will not extend to ruling on the meaning or effect of the International Treaty. This was considered by Weatherup J in McCallion's Application (No: 4) 2009 NIQB 45 at paragraphs [20]-[21] where he said:

> "[20] A domestic decision maker may purport to make his decision in accordance the terms of an unincorporated international treaty. Or he may merely take into account

> the terms of the treaty in making his decision. Or he may declare that, having taken account of the terms of the treaty, the decision that he has made is in accordance with the treaty. Or he may declare that he will make his decision without regard to the terms of the treaty. In the present case the decision maker concluded that a decision adverse to the applicant would not involve a breach of the Convention. Further, in the present case, the decision maker did not purport to exercise his discretion in accordance with the Convention provision but rather, in reaching his decision, he took into account the Convention and his conclusion that a finding adverse to the applicant would not involve a breach of the Convention.
>
> [21] The effect of Charter House Research is that in general the Court will not seek to interpret the terms of an unincorporated treaty nor will the Court adjudicate upon the correctness in law of a decision maker's conclusion on the meaning of the treaty. The Court may do so where there is no issue about the interpretation of the Convention and the Court is considering whether the interpretation is compatible with the terms of the treaty. The Court may do so where there is settled Convention jurisprudence which provides a particular interpretation. The Court will hesitate to do so where the treaty provides a forum for the resolution of a dispute as to interpretation."

In the present circumstances the court does not consider that the Charter adds anything valuable to the construction to be given to Article 11.

[40] Further, there is no evidence before the court that the number of users of Irish is such as to justify the measures sought. Of course there is evidence of interest. Certainly in the last census approximately 1 in 5 claimed to have "some knowledge of Irish". It is a fairly anodyne expression. Many people who could claim to have some knowledge of Irish could not be described as users.

[41] More importantly Baile Uí Mhurchú is the traditional name for the Ballymurphy Townland. However, Ballymurphy Drive never had an original Irish name. The street since its original creation has always been known as Ballymurphy Drive.

For all these reasons the application grounded on an alleged breach of council's obligations under the Charter, whether self-imposed or not, fails.

Ground 5

[42] The complaint here is that the policy for the erection of an additional street name in another language is the same as existed under Section 21 of the Public Health Amendment Act 1907 (now repealed) for the change of a street name. However, this argument carries no weight.

(i) There is no evidence of the provision of the 1907 Act playing any part in the deliberations of the council: see the affidavit of Mr Martin, and in particular paragraph 38.

(ii) If it was taken into account, there is nothing unlawful about the council looking at other related legislation in making a decision in this controversial area, especially if there was evidence that the operation of such provision had worked well in the past.

(iii) In any event, and conclusively, once it is accepted that the council retains discretion to erect a dual name plate without the two-thirds response generally required by the policy, the grounds for such a complaint disappear.

G. <u>Conclusion</u>

[43] For the reasons which are set out in this judgment, the applicant's claim for judicial review fails on all the grounds that have been advanced. I will hear the parties on the issue of costs.

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Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum
12th June 2020

Attendance

Members:
Councillor Christina Black
Councillor Ciaran Beattie
Alderman Sonia Copeland
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Tracy Kelly (for Alderman Dorrian)
Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Donal Lyons
Councillor Mal O'Hara

Apologies: Councillor Fiona Ferguson, Alderman George Dorrian

Officers:
Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Walsh, City Solicitor
Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Alistair Reid, Director of Planning and Place
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

1. Response to Recovery

The Chief Executive informed members that the SP&R Committee will receive a presentation on the key elements of the Council's recovery plan for the city, its communities and the organisation which would also be set out in a report. She outlined the key areas of focus of the plan and highlighted the importance of the work which is underway with central government to identify potential funding available to support recovery efforts.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services updated the Forum on the work that was underway to develop plans for the safe opening of council facilities including play parks, sports facilities, cemeteries and markets and an update on this would be presented to members the following week. A number of meetings had also been taking place with GLL and a report on the opening of Leisure Centres will be presented to the SP&R Committee in July. Following requests from members, the Director agreed to ensure that GLL communicated with the various user groups to keep them updated on emerging plans.

Members of the panel raised a number of specific queries including access to closed parks and pitches leading to noise and anti social behaviour, reports of anti social behaviour in the Holylands, car parking enforcement in the city centre, engagement with trade unions and issues around drug use and paraphernalia in communities and the city centre. The Director outlined some work underway to deal with these issues and agreed to follow up on the specific requests.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services then outlined the specific work that was underway with relevant government departments and outside bodies to open up the city. Members outlined the need to engage with local communities in developing local recovery plans to tackle poverty and deprivation. A report on Community Recovery will be brought to the next Party Group Leaders Recovery meeting.

2. Finance

Quarter 4 Finance 2019/20

The Director of Finance and Resources informed the Forum that the year end finance report 2019 / 20 which had previously been discussed would be presented to the June SP&R Committee for approval. The only change being the need to create a specified reserve of £400k to support the increase in the Council's rates bill due to revaluations. This would be financed through a transfer from the VR reserve.

Finance Update - Impact of Covid-19 2020/21

The Director of Finance and Resources presented to members details of the council's financial position in light of the Covid emergency, highlighting loss of income and increased spend relating to the emergency response. He also outlined the proposed finance strategy to manage the impact of Covid-19 including reviewing finances with members on a monthly basis. A detailed paper would be provided to the SP&R committee in June.

3. Core Multi-Annual Funding – Events and Festivals

The Director of Planning and Place provided an update to Members on the current status of festival and events, as funded through the Core Multi Annual Grants, in the context of Covid-19 and outlined proposals for the funding for the remainder of the financial year. A report on this including proposals for any underspend will be presented to the June SP&R Committee. The Director also highlighted that the previously approved allocation for groups from the PUL community was still available and undertook to engage with members on emerging proposals and bring back a report including timeframes for allocation of spend. The Parties were agreeable with the proposals for additional allocations of CMAF.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services outlined to the Forum that a separate report with proposals on alternatives to Summer Schemes will also be brought to June SP&R Committee

4. Dual Language Street Signs Policy

The City Solicitor outlined the content of the previously circulated report in respect of the notice of motion on Dual Language Street Signs Policy, which would be presented to the June meeting of the SP&R committee. A query was raised in relation to developing protocols around the consultation process and the City Solicitor agreed to include this in his paper.

5. Planning Update

The Chief Executive updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of the applications that were being considered this month. She also informed members that a note would be circulated to them on the ongoing issues at the Chinese Consulate building.

6. AOB

Belfast – Dublin Corridor

The Chief Executive informed the panel that an update on the Belfast – Dublin economic corridor outlining the research paper prepared by UU Economic Policy and Dublin City University will be reported to the June SP&R committee.

Council Webinars

The Chief Executive reminded members of the dates and arrangements for the upcoming webinars scheduled for the 22nd and 30th June 2020.

Annual Leave

In order to manage leave arrangements and support staff homeworking a note would be circulated to all staff recommending that they take at least two weeks leave by the end of September 2020.

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STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Belfast City Council

Subject:	Race Equality Champion for Belfast City Council
Date:	19th June 2020
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Good Relations Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision ☐
After Council Decision ☐
Some time in the future ☐
Never ☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	In light of current events and in response to a request by an Elected Member, the Committee is asked to consider the possibility of appointment of a Race Equality Champion.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to • Agree that a report be brought to a future Committee meeting which summarises the existing structures internal policies and action plans related to addressing equality of opportunity and promoting the inclusion of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities (BAME). The report would also include options which Members could consider to enhance its current arrangements with the purpose of promoting the equality and inclusion of BAME communities, their access to Council services

	and participation in civic life. It would also take into consideration the review of the Council's wider approach to championing diversity.
3.0	**Main report**
3.1	The current discourse around the events in America, and the reaction both locally and globally serves to both highlight the issue of racism and provides opportunities for public bodies to reflect on how they engage and include minority communities and provide a leadership role in championing race equality and inclusion.
3.2	From a Council perspective, The Belfast Agenda states that "In 2035, Belfast will be a City that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive."
3.3	The Council's Good Relations Strategy "Good Relations is Everyone's Business, launched in September 2019, sets out our vision and values for a shared, peaceful and reconciled Belfast. It states that good community and race relations are essential for a healthy and safe City and that it will set the standard for Belfast to aspire to be a place of welcome and diversity. It recognises that the most successful cities in the world are those that are the most diverse. The strategy outlines how we can play our part in building a better city for residents and visitors alike, where different identities can be a strength and our diverse cultural traditions can all be part of collective cultural wealth; a City where everyone has an equal place and where no-one is left behind.
3.4	Discussions with the BAME community as part of the consultation and subsequent good relations audit indicated that groups and people from the BAME community find it challenging to engage with official structures, particularly with those in decision making roles. They find it difficult to play a full and equal part in civic life and this position would be supported by statistics.
3.5	They report that positive relationships have been developed at community level with groups and individuals through particular Council programmes or through the relationship developed with particular officers. However, BAME communities have also reported that they find it difficult to engage in decision making structures and have their voice represented at decision making level.
3.6	Members will be aware that the Council has established a Shared City Partnership (SCP), which is a formal working group of Council. The role of the SCP is to assist the elected political leadership of the Council, staff, diverse civil society interests and partnering agencies

	to engage pro-actively on all Good Relations issues on behalf of citizens and be a collective voice, promoting a common vision for Good Relations in the City.
3.7	The SCP oversees the work of the Council's District Good Relations Programme and the PEACE IV Local Action Plan. Through these Forums, the Council facilitates a number of projects such as the Migrant Forum and the Diversecity Programme. Most recently, the Council has signed up to a 3 year Inclusive Cities Programme. The latter is a knowledge exchange initiative supporting UK cities and their local partners to achieve a change in their approach towards the inclusion of newcomers in the city. Support will be provided by the Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity which is the knowledge exchange arm of the Centre on Migration, Policy ad Society at the University of Oxford.
3.8	In addition, Council has already adopted a number of interdependent policies, frameworks and action plans and has developed specific internal and external programmes which address our Section 75 obligations, particularly in relation to gender, race and disability. Some of these plans are being developed through the Council's People Strategy to ensure that our workforce is more representative of the community we serve and to encourage more people from ethnic minority communities to apply and take up positions within the organisation.
3.9	Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) requires Belfast City Council to comply with two statutory duties: • *to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation, men and women generally, persons with a disability and persons without and persons with dependants and persons without.* • *to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.*
3.10	Members will note that racial groups are covered by both duties emphasising the synergy between equality and good relations.

3.11	Members will be aware that an Equality and Diversity Network has been established and is chaired by the City Solicitor, Director of legal and Civic Services to provide strategic leadership and direction for delivering the Equality and Diversity Framework/ Equality Action Plan across all departments. This group reports to the Corporate Management Team and onto Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for approval and resource allocation, where necessary.
3.12	Nevertheless, it is generally acknowledged that there is an underrepresentation of BAME communities within the structures of civic life at various levels. This hinders the ability of agencies to advocate for these communities or to ensure that policies meaningfully address issues and challenges which BAME communities face.
3.13	One way of addressing this issue may be to appoint a Race Equality Champion within the Council it is worth noting that this is the practice adopted by each Department within central government. Research suggests such champions should be nominated from senior officer or Elected Member level to deliver the maximum impact.
3.14	The Council has previously appointed Gender and LGBT Champions at officer and member level. This current position is being reviewed to examine how Council might have a wider champion approach to encompass all section 75 groups with a report in the first instance being brought to the Equality & Diversity Network prior to consideration by members.
3.15	In light of the above information, Members may wish to recommend that Officers bring a report to a future Committee meeting which summarises the existing structures and the internal policies and action plans related to addressing equality of opportunity for BAME communities. The report would also include options members could consider to enhance its current arrangements with the purpose of promoting the equality, inclusions and visibility of BAME communities, their access to Elected members and participation in civic life. This report would also take into consideration the review of the Council's wider approach to championing diversity and inclusion highlighted above.
3.16	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> None associated with this report.
3.17	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> Actions, which would promote the inclusion of BAME communities in civic life, would have a positive impact on equality and good relations within the City.

4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	None

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'An inclusive Covid-19 pandemic response and long-term recovery'
June 2020

This Council commits to delivering a Covid-19 pandemic response and long-term recovery that is inclusive of disabled people and older people. We further commit ourselves to put the resources required behind a further commitment to become a global leader in inclusion and accessibility in the delivery of our previous commitment in the Belfast Agenda to be an accessible for all by 2035 and no one is left behind.

This Council recognises that lockdown has created severe impacts on the day to day lives of many disabled people, older people, and carers, for example, the removal or reduction of access to key services and support for independent living and the impact of self-isolation on health and wellbeing. Social distancing will be with us for the foreseeable future and presents additional and serious challenges that need to be addressed in the measures taken by this Council and other stakeholders.

As we consider how we will reopen our City, we need to ensure that social and physical distancing does not lead to social and physical barriers. This Council believes we need to ensure that our short-term response in the decisions made on measures to adapt to social distancing are taken through direct engagement with disabled people, older people and carers.

This Council also recognises that for many disabled people, older people and carers the 'old normal' often did not work for them. We want to ensure that the long-term recovery of Belfast leaves no one behind and to ensure that the 'new normal' aspires to address the concerns and lessons of the 'old normal'. We recommit ourselves to the commitment made in the Belfast Agenda to be an accessible city for all by 2035, and to build back better than there was before in a way that is inclusive, accessible and sustainable.

To achieve these short and long term objectives, this Council believes we need a common, strategic vision of disability-inclusion and accessibility across all of our strategies and plans as we respond and recover from the Covid-19 pandemic through our functions and through our influence with our partners and other stakeholders. We call on Belfast City Council to:

1. Ensure disabled people, older people and carers are consulted as part of the 'Reopening the City' strategy and are active participants in the planning and delivery of this strategy, particularly through the Belfast City Council's Disability Advisory Panel.
2. Create a Reference Group for Disabled People. This will provide a forum for councillors, our Disability Advisory Panel, council officers as well as other relevant stakeholders and experts from time-to-time, to discuss and progress actions on Belfast City Council's commitment to becoming an accessible city for all by 2035.
3. Create an 'Access and Inclusion' senior staff role. This role would act as both an internal focal point for council staff to improve access and inclusion in the delivery of Council services and have a key role in strategic policy making to deliver a common vision of disability inclusion. It would also act as an external point of contact for residents, disabled people and external stakeholders on day-to-day queries on improving access and inclusion in the City, working with external stakeholders to deliver a more inclusive city.
4. Undertake an independent consultation report on models of best practice of accessibility and inclusion from other cities that will provide recommendations on how these could be applied within Belfast through this Council and its NI Executive partners.
5. Develop a strategic roadmap for delivering an accessible city for all by 2035 that leaves no one behind that provides a common strategic vision of disability access and inclusion across all its strategies and plans, and outlines how we will get there.

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