

Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast
City Council**

REMOTE MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE COMBINED PACK

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet via Microsoft Team on Wednesday, 9th December, 2020 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

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

2. Restricted Items

- (a) Finance Update (Pages 1 - 28)
- (b) Update on City Events Programme 2021/2022 (Pages 29 - 42)
- (c) Housing Led Regeneration Update (Pages 43 - 56)

3. Presentation

- (a) Northern Ireland Housing Executive - Housing Programme and City Centre Waiting List (Pages 57 - 58)

- Fiona McGrath, Head of Place Shaping Belfast Region
- Ailbhe Hickey, Acting AD Land & Regeneration
- Jennifer Hawthorne, Regional Manager, Belfast Region

4. **Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

- (a) Future City Centre Programme - Lighting Strategy (Pages 59 - 116)
- (b) Future of the City - proposed Members Workshop (Pages 117 - 118)

5. **Growing Business and the Economy**

- (a) Tourism Update - 10 Year Plan (Pages 119 - 128)
- (b) City Recovery - Update on key enterprise and employability initiatives (Pages 129 - 138)
- (c) Request for reduced off-street parking charges during Christmas (Pages 139 - 142)

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Housing Programme and City Centre Waiting List Presentation
Date:	9 th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Adrian Ferguson, Development Manager, City Regeneration & Development

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

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to bring to Members attention the key issues which will be covered in a presentation from Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to note;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the Northern Ireland Housing Executive will be presenting to Members with regard to the establishment of a new City Centre Waiting List, together with an update on their Housing Programme and their repairs backlog and retrofit programme.

3.0	Main Report
	<u>NIHE Presentation</u>
3.1	Members agreed at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 11 th November 2020 to receive a presentation from NIHE. Representatives from NIHE will attend to present primarily with regard to the establishment of a new City Centre Waiting List, as well as an update on their Housing Programme.
3.2	<p>Members further requested that this NIHE presentation included an update in respect of their repairs backlog and retrofit programme. NIHE have advised that their presentation will address the following housing related issues as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background to City Centre Waiting List • Mixed Tenure/Community Planning • Key housing issues and demand • Latent Demand Test (LDT) • Shared Future Schemes • Community engagement • Update on Housing Programme • Update on the repairs backlog and retrofit programme
3.3	Financial and Resource Implications
	There are no finance or resource implications associated with this report.
3.4	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
	There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices
	None



Subject:	Future City Centre Programme - Lighting Strategy
Date:	9 th December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Richard Griffin, Development 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	To update Members in relation to the Lighting Strategy in the context of the Future City Centre Programme Regeneration & Connectivity pillar, and to seek approval of 'Luminous City: A Lighting Strategy for Belfast'.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note progress with 'Luminous City: A Lighting Strategy' for Belfast, and approve the final document.
3.0	Main report
	Background
3.1	The Future City Centre (FCC) Programme has been developed in line with the Belfast Agenda, the Local Development Plan, the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Cultural Strategy (A City

	<p>Imagining), and has been informed by the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS). The Programme is continuing to evolve in the context of COVID-19 and given the range of challenges facing the city centre. The Future City Centre Programme was discussed and approved at the CG&R committee meeting of 12th February 2019.</p> <p>Among the pillars within the FCC Programme is 'Regeneration & Connectivity', which includes a number of cross-cutting work areas such as city centre living, the Bolder Vision Connectivity work, physical and environmental interventions including the Entries & Lanes Programme and Public Realm Catalyst Projects. This pillar also includes the Lighting Strategy.</p>
3.2	<p>Luminous City- A Lighting Strategy for Belfast</p> <p>'Luminous city – A Lighting Strategy for Belfast' was presented to CG&R Committee on 9th September 2020, with approval granted to proceed with public consultation via Council's online engagement platform Citizen Space for a 6 week period over October and November. Officers also engaged with key Section 75 groups through Council's Equality and Diversity Team.</p>
3.3	<p>Public consultation closed on 23rd November 2020 and final amendments have now been incorporated into the final document (Appendix A). Prior to the public consultation a robust internal and external engagement programme was carried out with key stakeholders involved in the delivery and maintenance of lighting across the city including; Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities, the three Belfast Improvement Districts, The Belfast Chamber, Visit Belfast, Titanic Foundation, HED, representatives from retail and cultural sectors.</p>
3.4	<p>Feedback from a range of sources has been overwhelmingly positive and constructive, with the majority of people 'strongly agreeing' that lighting has a key role to play in addressing our city and neighbourhood ambitions, and that the document will be a key driver to raise standards to a consistently high level across all delivery bodies, public and private.</p>
3.5	<p>In terms of delivery, lighting interventions are embedded across a range of projects currently being developed, with the strategy document informing and guiding these. For example, projects such as the 5C's public realm, Entries Phase 1 and Cathedral Gardens all have significant lighting elements which have been developed in line with the recommendations in the strategy document.</p>

3.6	Projects are also emerging through the DfC-funded Revitalisation Programme which incorporate lighting features at Castle Place, Adelaide Street, Brunswick Street, James Street South, Union Street and Exchange Place. Entries Phase 2 will also incorporate innovative approaches to lighting, for which designs are in development.
3.7	Work is also ongoing to bring forward stand-alone lighting projects in 2021-22 and beyond and officers will continue to profile the strategy to stakeholders as a key document to consult when designing and delivering any and all types of lighting across Belfast.
3.8	Members are asked to approve the final version of 'Luminous city – A Lighting Strategy for Belfast' (Appendix A).
3.9	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> N/A
3.10	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> The Future City Centre Programme is a high level regeneration plan. Projects taken forward within the plan will be screened in their own right by the lead delivery division. Where appropriate, emerging work strands will be individually screened for Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment. <u>Re Luminous City – A Lighting Strategy for Belfast:</u> A draft equality screening exercise and a draft rural needs assessment exercise were undertaken during the preliminary engagement process. Documents were shared on Citizen Space to help elicit views from respondents. During the public consultation process, officers engaged with key Council touchstone equality groups, namely the Disability Advisory Panel, the Equality Consultative Forum and the Seniors Forum.
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	Appendix A Luminous City – A Lighting Strategy for Belfast

This page is intentionally left blank

Luminous City

A LIGHTING STRATEGY FOR BELFAST

Page 63



Contents

	Introduction	p.5
1.	Aims & Objectives	p.6
2.	Area of Study	p.12
3.	Consultation Process	p.16
4.	Policy Context	p.22
5.	Delivery and Governance of Existing Lighting Infrastructure	p.28
6.	Case Studies	p.32
7.	Lighting Pilot Projects	p.46
8.	Analysis	p.60
9.	Considerations	p.84
10.	Lighting Design Guidance	p.96
11.	In Conclusion	p.102



Introduction

Belfast is an ambitious international city with a thriving business sector, a rich and eclectic cultural community and arts programme, a diverse built environment and a growing number of visitor attractions. As Belfast continues to develop and grow, the importance of creating a liveable city, with genuine shared space and environments that support and encourage people to live well together is critical. The potential of light to contribute to the creation and transformation of such environments, in both tangible and intangible ways, is well documented.

The Italian writer and philosopher Italo Calvino talked much about subtracting weight, sometimes from people, sometimes from celestial bodies and sometimes from cities.

The concept of removing weight from a city could translate into many of today's 'placemaking' methodologies. Our efforts to reduce clutter, to rationalise and make uniform multiple and competing elements in the urban landscape to limit visual noise, is to address the opacity of the city, making it more permeable, more pleasing, 'lighter'.

Contributing to the balancing of lightness and heaviness in a city, is the balancing of lightness and darkness.

Thoughtfully designed lighting positively contributes to, and even creates 'places'. Precinct lighting in Belfast has predominantly been delivered through various departments and agencies without being guided by an overall set of design principles or vision for the city. Consequently, the overall beneficial impact is less than if it had been designed through a shared ambition. In response, Belfast City Council has commissioned a lighting strategy for Belfast which has been guided by collaboration with an interdisciplinary group of cross sector city stakeholders.

The agreed methodology included the delivery of three pilot projects, the learnings from which have informed the recommendations in this strategy.

Luminous City - a Lighting Strategy for Belfast acknowledges the important role of existing delivery agencies, provides analysis of current delivery approaches, researches and identifies key considerations and methodologies, and presents best practice guidance for any agency or organisation delivering lighting in the public realm.

Belfast City Council
November 2020

1. Aims & Objectives



Aims

The aim of *Luminous City – a Lighting Strategy for Belfast* is to develop a well-designed, coordinated and coherent approach to Belfast’s lighting, so that lighting design becomes an intrinsic part of urban planning and is understood as a critical material in our work to enhance spaces and create ‘places’.

This strategy recognises and encourages lighting design which is both innovative and authentic, which does not compromise but increases community safety, security and existing urban amenity. This strategy presents best practice solutions to future proofing through; selection of materials, delivering adaptive design, minimising energy use and managing light pollution. This approach aims to support wayfinding, orientation and accessibility of and to Belfast for all people.

This strategy proposes ways to enhance the functional and aesthetic qualities of light in all its forms, in order to support and develop Belfast’s social, economic and sustainability targets.

The strategy builds on information gathered during the stakeholder consultation process which has shaped recommendations and guidelines.

Objectives

- Provide a more legible and accessible environment by improving the uniformity of light and reducing glare
- Balance, by reducing and enhancing where appropriate, the amount of light used, and improving both colour appearance and colour rendering
- Provide a more 'human scale' of lighting, and improve functionality and aesthetics through the repositioning of existing street and building lighting (i.e. optimising position for human use)
- Celebrate the city's character and create warm, friendly and exciting city experiences by highlighting; heritage buildings and sites, contemporary architecture of merit, iconic landmarks, public artworks and key thresholds and gateway points into and within the city
- Incorporate multi-functional infrastructure within schemes to encourage and support the use of innovative approaches and dynamic light for special events
- Increase safety by ensuring appropriate light levels in identified and perceived dark and dangerous areas to support the prevention of crime through surveillance
- Encourage, guide and inform lighting proposals made as part of new developments, as well as for interim lighting on development sites
- Balance the social and economic benefits of light with the environmental consequences, working with sustainable materials and approaches

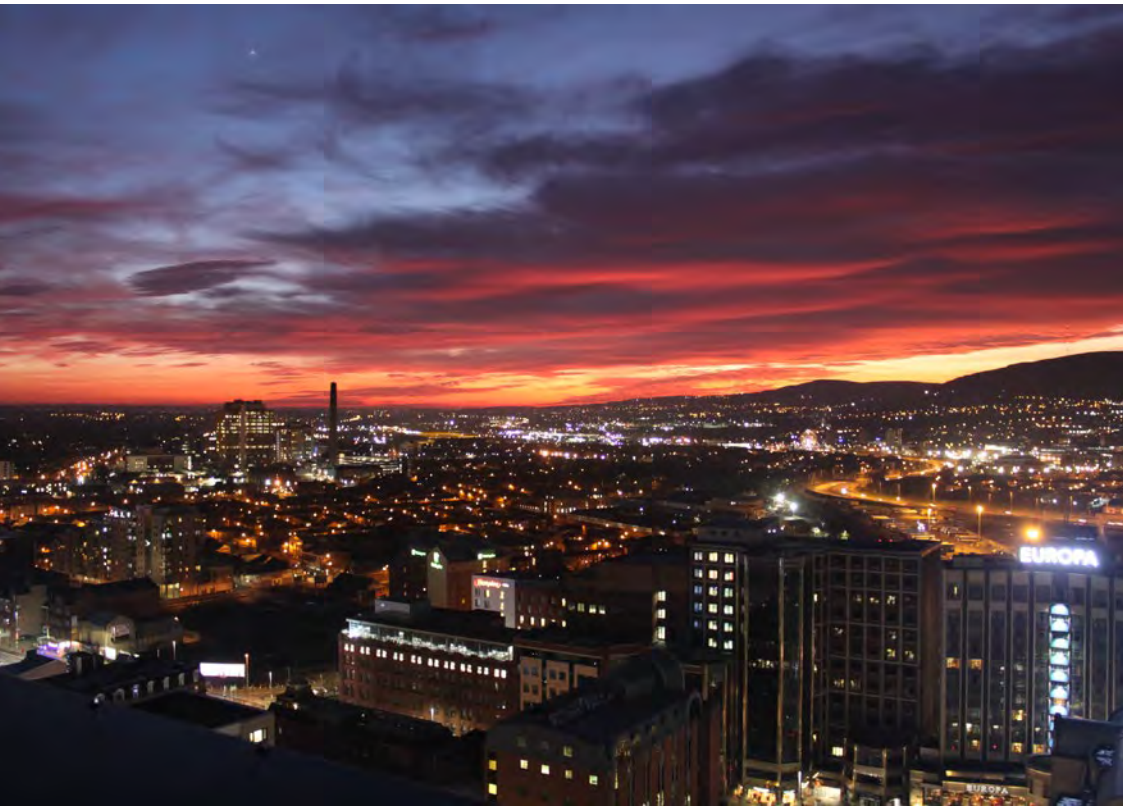
- Focus on minimising the use of artificial light and light pollution, and prioritising a balance between lighting proposals and retaining dark skies
- Identify avenues of funding and delivery of lighting in the city for input into a future action plan

This strategy presents research and observations, mapping current conditions in the city, including existing infrastructure, locations, and standards of lighting, who owns the assets and who maintains and manages them.

It provides a review of current policy documents relating directly and indirectly to lighting, including listing existing lighting guidelines.

To assist in identifying best practice, case studies will illustrate how lighting interventions have impacted in comparable cities. It then presents a series of considerations to build on existing lighting policy such as safety and security, accessibility, and sustainability, as well as a set of design guidance specific to varying urban contexts including: new build, heritage sites, temporary development sites, points of architectural or social interest, and types of public realm spaces such as streets, squares and entries.

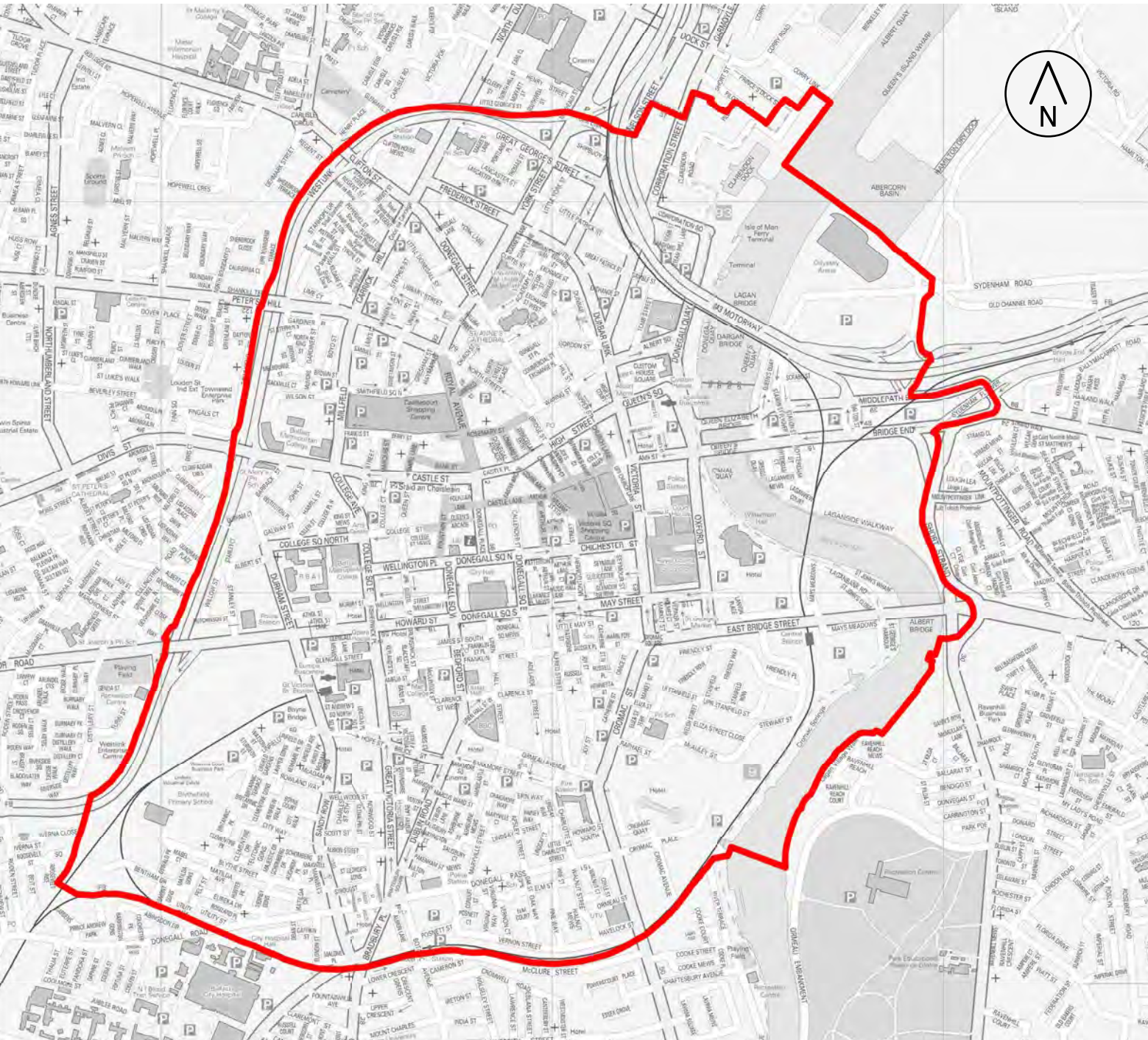
The strategy will act as a proposal for the enhancement of existing precinct lighting by statutory agencies and as guidance for lighting proposals made as part of new developments. It will also provide encouragement for innovative lighting programmes as part of festivals and celebrations and temporary 'meanwhile' projects.




2. Area of Study

Area of Study

The area of focus within this strategy is the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan’s city centre boundary line, although the strategy presents lighting design guidelines which will be applicable across the city.



 City Centre
Boundary dBMAP

3. Consultation Process

Consultation Process

Page 72
May 2019 Belfast City Council commissioned Urban Scale Interventions to develop a set of lighting design principles that would inform a lighting strategy for the city and be trialed through the delivery of pilot lighting interventions. The aims of this approach were to:

- go beyond providing standard street lighting, to create concepts that align with the city's regeneration ambition,
- develop concepts that create vibrancy and activity in Belfast by enhancing the physical and social fabric of the streets,
- create a holistic approach to street activation across the city that can be developed, iterated and evaluated through pilot projects.

The process of establishing a series of lighting design principles and testing them through pilot interventions was collaboratively designed with key stakeholders as well as citizens. Co-design is important to:

- establish site perceptions and uses to inform the wider strategy,
- understand cultural fit within Belfast,
- get community and stakeholder buy-in for strategy and pilot interventions,
- build an evidence base for behavioural uses of interventions,
- understand key metrics to measure effectiveness of outcomes,
- develop new narratives for spaces.

A stakeholder meeting took place with Belfast City Council departments, Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities, the three Belfast Business Improvement Districts, the Belfast Chamber and Belfast City Centre Management to discuss how lighting can be delivered differently. This meeting also addressed the benefits of taking a creative, co-designed approach that fits into Belfast's strategic goals as well as agreeing the pilot sites for intervention and identifying key priorities, concerns and initial ideas.

Belfast City Council also commissioned Urban Scale Interventions to run a public consultation hub in the city centre for six weeks in the summer of 2019 to engage with the city's people on the developing Cultural Strategy - 'A City Imagining'. Over the duration, 1100 members of the public and over 45 different community and interest groups gave their feedback on the cultural strategy, through creative engagement workshops and installations.

The consultation programme included discussions on the city's lighting and aspirations for the future of lighting in the city. As well as drop-in sessions and exercises within workshops, there were specific lighting focused workshops with people of all ages from a variety of backgrounds; a theatre company, young people and city stakeholders.





The following is a selection of feedback and comments regarding lighting in the city, gathered through both city stakeholder and public engagement:

Decreased footfall on streets at nighttime which is negative for the nighttime economy.

Safety, from the point of view of anti-social behaviour, crime, feelings of negativity and isolation, and also for active travel and cycling routes.

Quality of lighting poor when it could be more responsive and appropriate for each site. More site-specific and better considered lighting. Less basic, standard installations that fulfil the bare minimum criteria.

Engagement with existing landlords and shopkeepers on installing new, innovative, or something other than the norm. They can be hesitant to change and not fully support plans.

Current infrastructure is old and has little strategic thought. Some areas are too brightly lit and create a harsh environment, others are not lit at all.

Ownership of infrastructure is difficult to discern.

Current lighting says nothing about the city – there is a lack of creativity and theming.

4. Policy Context

Well considered lighting contributes to meeting our sustainable social and economic targets as outlined in the Programme for Government. Lighting currently informs both regional and local policy documents to varying degrees, as set out herein.

New Decade New Agenda

The Draft Programme for Government contains strategic outcomes which set a clear direction of travel to enable continuous improvement to the essential components of societal wellbeing.

Regional Planning Policy – Regional Development Strategy 2035

The Regional Development Strategy identifies spatial planning, transport and housing priorities to support regional economic and social goals. The Strategic guidance identifies the important role Belfast plays in generating regional prosperity and promotes sustainable approaches across all types of development to strengthen community cohesion and support urban and rural renaissance across Northern Ireland.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland – *Planning for Sustainable Development (SPPS)*, sets out regional planning policies for developing land in Northern Ireland under the reformed planning system. Material considerations that influence lighting decisions include; built heritage, residential amenity and landscaping.

The Belfast Agenda

The Belfast Agenda is our Community Plan and sets out a shared vision and commitment across the public, private and community and voluntary sectors to create a better quality of life for all. It was developed in consultation with the public which identified quantitative and qualitative targets for 2035.

The document acknowledges the importance of developing the city centre for all people, and the critical role of placemaking and urban design.

Belfast Local Development Plan 2035 Draft (LDP)

The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out the policy framework for delivering the physical infrastructure required to deliver on the ambitions within the Belfast Agenda, by 2035. The aim of the plan is to enhance environmental quality where possible and protect communities from materially harmful development. In assessing proposed development, the LDP considers issues of environmental quality, including those relating to ground contamination, air, water, noise and light pollution to support the development of more liveable and sustainable places. In respect of light, it acknowledges the need to balance light and dark, appropriate to specific uses and areas.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Belfast City Council is finalising a suite of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents which provide additional clarity and advice on how proposals can support Placemaking and Urban Design, Housing, Retail, Sensitive Uses and Evening and Night Time Economy. SPG is non-statutory guidance that supports the current planning policy framework, including development plans and regional planning guidance. The information set out in each SPG document should therefore be read in conjunction with the existing planning policy framework, most notably the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) for Northern Ireland and the Belfast Local Development Plan Strategy.

Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 / Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2014

Until the LDP is adopted with legislative powers, the current authoritative development plan for the majority of the Belfast district is the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001. Although intended to be formally superseded by the BMAP in September 2014, BUAP 2001 remains the statutory development plan for most of the council area.

Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS)

Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) sets out the council’s collective ambition for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and surrounds, up to 2030. It contains policies to guide decision making, projects to action and principles to underpin the approach, ensuring maximum social and economic impact. This is a key overarching strategy document with specific policies designed to create, manage and maximise the potential of the city centre to deliver on the ambitions of growing our population, growing our workforce and creating genuine shared, equitable space.

A Bolder Vision for Belfast – Reimagining the City / Connectivity Study

A Bolder Vision for Belfast – Reimagining the City / Connectivity Study examines how Belfast City Centre should develop in a way that is accessible, safe and welcoming for all, through a joined-up approach between the Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure and Belfast City Council. The study will focus on the city core and will present a vision of how traffic (pedestrian, cycle and vehicular) could better navigate the city. Considered and strategic lighting will help deliver on improving the connectivity and permeability of the city core.

A City Imagining – Cultural Strategy 2020–2030

A City Imagining, the council’s ten-year cultural strategy, supports the Belfast Agenda vision for 2035, which imagines a culturally vibrant city. The *A City Challenging* theme within the document focuses on how public space should support and strengthen diversity in the city by cultivating creative environments and creating opportunities for shared experiences.

This theme concentrates on increasing the sustainability and quality of the city’s urban environment through focusing on the relationship between infrastructure and programming, in which the provision of lighting plays a significant role

Belfast Open Space Strategy 2019 – draft for consultation 2019.

Underpinned by the Belfast Agenda, this Strategy aims to protect, create and improve accessibility and connectivity of our open space network. Seven principles have been formulated which include; create welcoming shared spaces, improve connectivity, health and well-being, support placemaking and enhance the built environment, increase resilience, protect and enhance the natural environment and enhance opportunities for hosting events, and educational ventures.

Future Proofed City – Belfast’s Resilience Strategy draft for consultation 2020

The purpose of the Belfast Resilience Strategy is to document the urban resilience capacity of the city to survive, adapt and develop in response to chronic stresses and acute shocks, and to make recommendations to transition Belfast into a more resilient city with an inclusive, low carbon, climate-resilient economy, within a generation. Lighting has the potential to contribute in a number of ways to this objective through projects that stitch together the urban fabric to enhance general city permeability, connectivity, and quality.

Living Places – An Urban Design Guide for Northern Ireland

The Living Places document forms guidance in the determination of planning applications and planning appeals for development affecting all urban places. It seeks to ensure that buildings and spaces combine to create places that are successful in physical, social and economic terms. The document utilises home grown case studies to illustrate good practice in terms of placemaking. High impact outputs and outcomes include; the upgrading of street lighting to perform more efficiently and effectively as both a safety tool and as infrastructure that can facilitate innovative and dynamic activities.

Creating Places

Creating Places is a design guide linked to the sustainable design of housing, which includes inner city residential developments. The guide stipulates the contributions to quality and sustainability that developers in Northern Ireland will be expected to make through the design of new residential developments. A key aim is the creation of attractive places in which people are happy to live, work and play. The considered lighting of these places will support the delivery of a liveable city that is well connected, safe and accessible.

Masterplans

Belfast has a series of Masterplans, each outlining a vision for a specific area in the city, often with its own lighting strategy to guide the development of the area. There are also large areas of privately owned land and property where emerging proposals may have their own lighting strategies and schemes which are submitted as part of the planning process.

Belfast City Council and the Department for Communities have a series of additional interlinking studies, policies, strategy documents and masterplans both finalised and in development, which support the delivery of their ambitions within the corporate strategies above including *Green and Blue Infrastructure, Smart Cities Strategy* and *Inclusive Growth Strategy*.

***Luminous City – a Lighting Strategy for Belfast* is intended to enhance the functional and aesthetic quality of lighting in all its forms in order to support and develop Belfast’s social, economic and sustainability targets, supporting and in line with all the above studies, policies and strategy documents.**



5. Delivery and Governance of Existing Lighting Infrastructure

There are several statutory bodies responsible for lighting Belfast. These include; Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities, Housing Executive and Belfast City Council.

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) provide and maintain streetscape and road carriageway lighting across Northern Ireland. They manage the majority of street lighting columns (c. 300,000), traffic signs, bollards, and belisha beacons on public roads and streets across the region (c. 3,400 within our Belfast city centre study area). All roads, car parks and footpaths managed by DfI in urban areas are lit, and the normal hours of operation are from dusk to dawn, with most light fittings controlled by photo-electric cells.

Designing road lighting systems, traffic and pedestrian safety at night is the main consideration and the fundamental element of DfI's remit. DfI base their design standards on the needs of road users and the characteristics of the road.

The current Policy and Procedure Guide (RSPPG) which DfI operate for street lighting is E072, and is available from DfI online.

The Department for Communities (DfC) has an important role in developing the inner-city area to look more attractive within their wider regeneration remit. DfC fund and deliver public realm and environmental improvement schemes, both directly and in conjunction with Belfast City Council and other statutory organisations, to improve public areas in residential neighbourhoods, along major roads and within and across Belfast city centre. For eg. DfC funds and delivers the Belfast Streets Ahead public realm programme which includes the installation of lighting columns. Following delivery of these works, responsibility for management and maintenance reverts to DfI.

DfC's main aims include the creation of high-quality public spaces designed and implemented to meet the needs of all section 75 groups and all users. They aim to create a high quality, sustainable public realm in the heart of Belfast City Centre that will improve linkages and connectivity and enhance existing and future commercial activities in the area, positioning Belfast as a premier European regional capital and the primary retail and leisure destination in Northern Ireland.

Belfast City Council (BCC) own and manage an estate which includes City Hall and several parks. BCC manage the lighting within these assets.

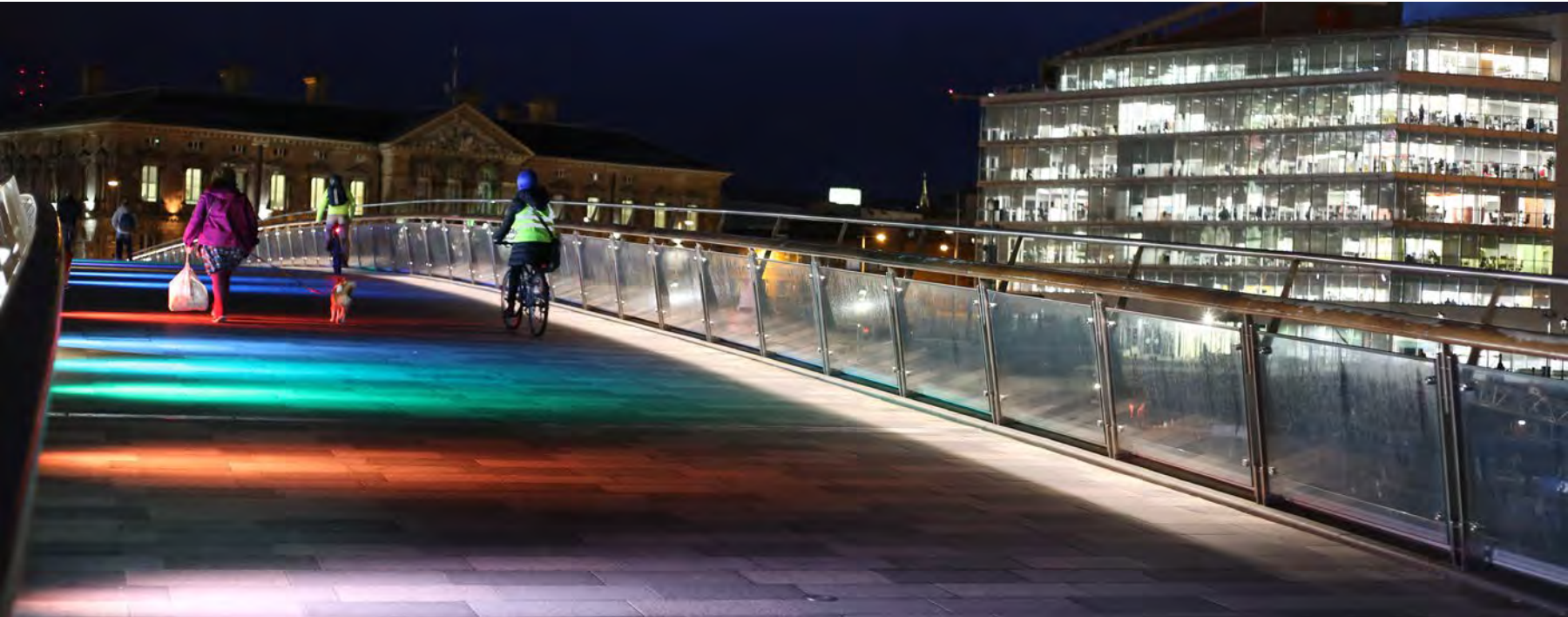
BCC is not directly responsible for the installation or management of street and public realm lighting in the city centre, however, The Belfast Agenda and the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) outline ambitions which include a Belfast that is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all, where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing and a city that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable. These ambitions are further supported by the draft Local Development Plan.

In progressing towards this vision lighting has become a focus for BCC and is understood as an important and integral element in regeneration and development. As such, BCC has commissioned this Lighting Strategy for Belfast with the recognition and support of delivery agencies in the city.

In addition to statutory bodies with responsibility for lighting, **Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM)** is a public private partnership company which has been funded by Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities and the private sector. The organisation assists in improving business life, public spaces and the safety of Belfast city centre. BCCM has maintained and managed Christmas lighting in the city for and on behalf of Belfast City Council.

Private Development
There are individual building renovations or new builds which, depending on use, scale and design approach, have their own lighting plans that come through as part of the planning process.

Management of Estates
There are numerous mixed-use estates, development sites and individual buildings across the city with their own management for lighting in place. These sites include; schools, universities, hotels, retail outlets, mixed use offices, residential and leisure developments. There are also larger bodies responsible for significant amounts of lighting over numerous acres, for example Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, Belfast Education & Library Board, etc.



Case Studies

Page 79

A series of case studies have been selected that cover a broad spectrum of how lighting has played a major role in the success of projects in other cities.

Coventry Streetscape Public Lighting

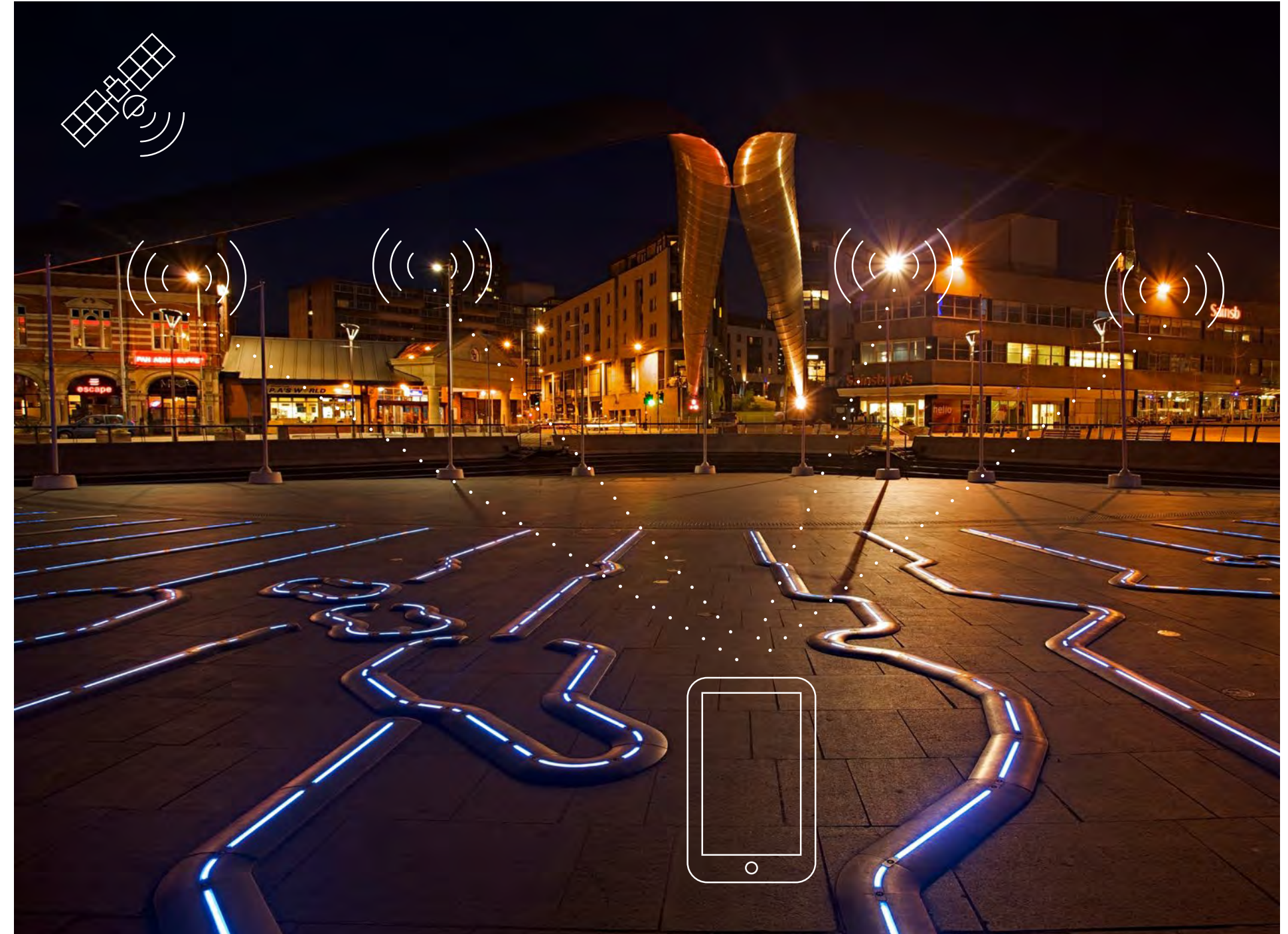
In 2010 Coventry City Council undertook a programme to modernise its lighting infrastructure for roads and footpaths in compliance with European Standards.

The project was a five-year programme of investment with a further twenty-year maintenance programme of electrical testing, structural inspections and lamp replacements.

The new technologies allowed for wireless remote monitoring technology, with lighting columns having greater control over their categories of road. In relation to the outputs, 45w or 60w lamps on 6ft high columns were used in residential areas whilst the wider roads had 90w on 8m high columns but maintained a comfortable atmosphere in the residential areas. More trafficked areas increased the outputs to 150w and 250w on 12m high mounting heights. (The lighting design was created to minimise light spillage).

The benefit of this new technology was that Coventry is believed to have been the first city in the UK to install a fully operational Controlled Management System (CMS), allowing the authority to dim light when and where required, whilst monitoring its performance and relaying data to operations to review and manage off site. This system highlights faulty lighting even before it malfunctions, and alerts the management teams accordingly, thus reducing the need for physical inspections.

The dimming system has meant that the authority has greatly reduced its energy consumption and fear of crime in the process. To ensure the CMS process was calibrated correctly the authority undertook three years of trials and assessments on the impact of dimming.



Penelope Wolstenholme Square, Liverpool

Page 81

During its heyday, areas of the Ropewalks in Liverpool were a hustling and bustling part of Liverpool's 18th Century rapid expansion. Merchant houses and warehouses occupied the quarter. During the early part of the 20th Century new developments replaced them, with numbers falling during the second World War. From the 1950s onwards the area took a further steady physical decline.

For the Liverpool Biennial celebrations in 2006, The Liverpool Ropewalks Partnership commissioned Jorge Pardo to create an art installation named *Penelope*, within Wolstenholme Square. For many years up until that point the area had only been occupied by people visiting a local nightclub.

With the art piece/lighting installation taking centre stage within the square, it became the catalyst for further private investment and is now a thriving area by day and night within Liverpool's city centre.



Cranhill Water Tower, Glasgow

Page 32

Cranhill was an area known for crime and vandalism. The local water towers were regularly broken into, windows broken and in extreme circumstances, water supplies contaminated. The problems were profound and the towers became an icon of the problems suffered by the area. Resented by many, the residents would have been happy to see the water towers demolished. Collective Architecture Ltd (formally Chris Stewart Architects), was approached to look at ways of regenerating the tower and its immediate surroundings. Community meetings were held and the design process was opened out to local people of all ages.

A sculptor joined the team and interpreted the communities ideas. The towers were painted white and broken windows were preplaced with durable glass.

Lighting trials experimented with cool shades of blue against green and red to reflect the theme of water. A launch event was held with some great PR and the transformed object became a focal point on the skyline and a catalyst for further regeneration in the area.



Garthamlock & Drumchapel Water Towers, Glasgow

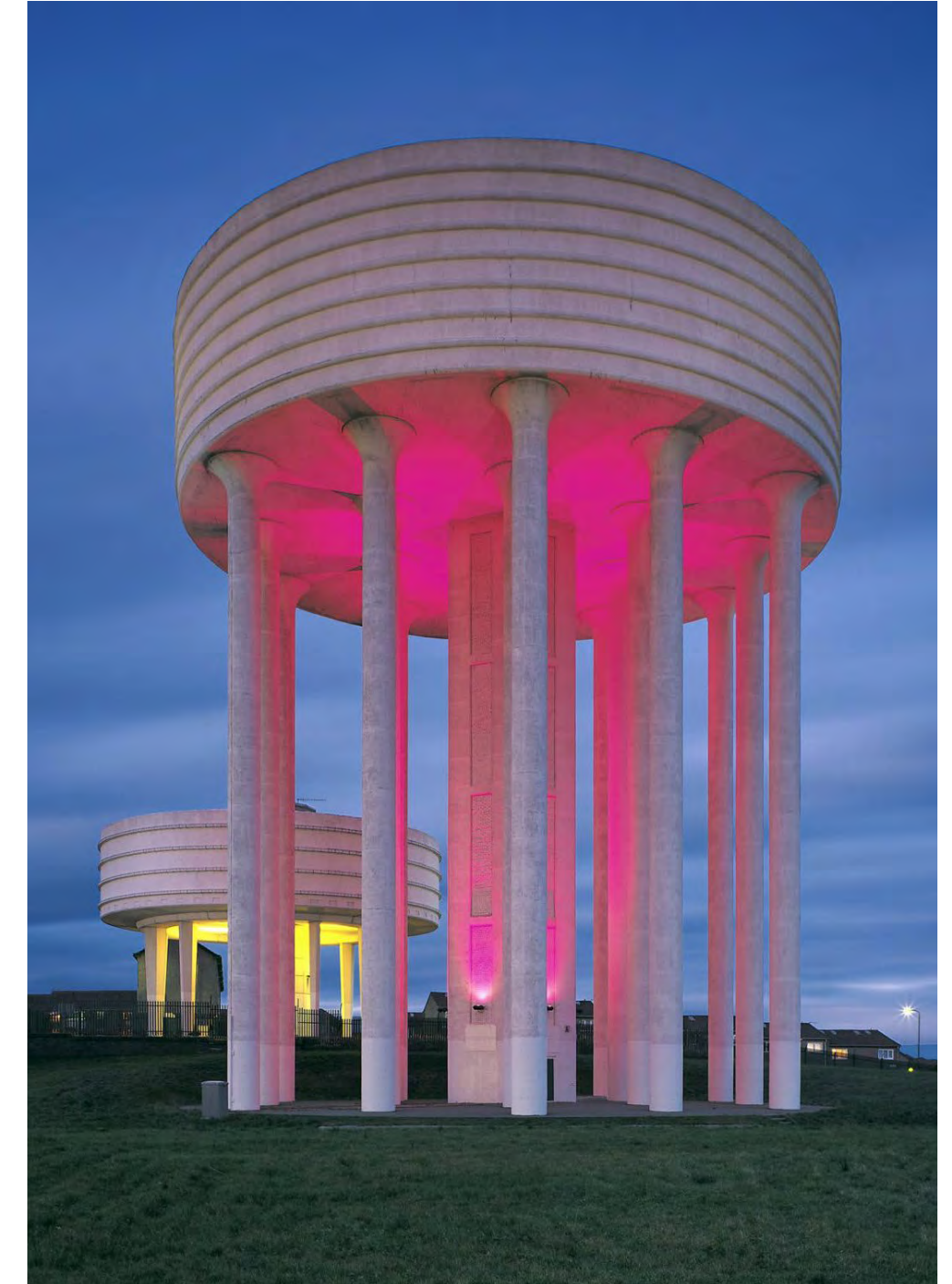
Page 40

The water towers are prominent landmarks on Glasgow's skyline and were identified as assets that could symbolise the regeneration of the areas of Drumchapel, Garthamlock and Cranhill, while encouraging a sense of pride and ownership with the local residents of the areas. Collective Architecture was approached again to engage the community and design lighting interventions at these locations to enhance them as beacons on the landscape.

The designs combined the use of strong white light visible from far away, with intelligent colour programming.

Once again, this was a community-led initiative with steering groups and workshops. "The water tower has brought many benefits to the community of Drumchapel, with the most noticeable being the positive attitude that it brings to many of our residents." Steering Group Chairperson

In addition, the B-listed Titan Crane in Clydebank has been transformed in a similar way through lighting.



Bloomberg European Headquarters London

Page 84

This building has been the winner of numerous accolades since its completion in 2018 including Winner of the Global Lighting Design awards 2020. In 2018 it was outright winner of the RIBA Stirling Prize. From a sustainability perspective the project achieved a 98.5% 'outstanding' rating against the BREEAM sustainability standard.

Accent lighting is located adjacent to the buildings fin design which projects from each floor, tilted towards the streetscapes below which provides a glow of soft white LED. Each optic has been selected for particular application, with the illumination from within the building providing light to the surrounding public areas and removing the need for external light fittings and issues with glare.



Lumiere Derry-Londonderry

The finale to a year of celebrations as the first UK City of Culture was a light festival across public realm areas, historic buildings, squares, bridges and parkland. The displays told the story of Derry-Londonderry's past and present against the backdrop of the city.

The Festival of Light attracted over 180,000 visitors across the city, bringing a fitting and spectacular end to a hugely successful year.



7. Lighting Pilot Projects

Page 86

To inform this strategy, Belfast City Council commissioned Urban Scale Interventions to develop a series of design principles relating to lighting, and various contractors to deliver pilot projects, to trial both the principles and new approaches to the delivery of lighting in the city.

Following on from the engagement with key stakeholders, community groups and the general public it was clear any future lighting interventions should contribute to:



Creating shared spaces with a positive balance for all street users



Promote and connect day and night economies by opening new routes and developing new uses



Create vibrant streets that support people and businesses and improve wellbeing



A network of safe and clean streets for everyone

3 lighting typologies have been created that helped to segment lighting types by location or occasion, ensuring lighting is consistently applied across the city. These are:



TRANSFERABLE

Solutions, such as on Castle Street, can be transferred to other locations across the city



SITE SPECIFIC

Solutions that take account of the social context, developed specific to that site eg. Castle Arcade



POP-UP

Solutions that pop up for specific events or festivals across the city

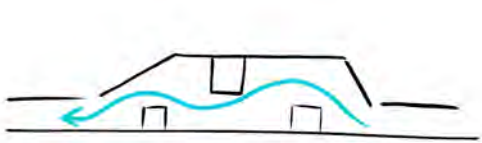


Mock up visuals of Castle Street lighting pilot, 2020. Developed by USI, delivered by C3 Productions.



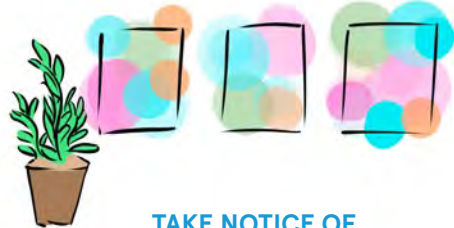
Furthermore, a series of seven design principles were created taking into account insights gathered from the workshops and engagement sessions with city stakeholders.

The co-developed design principles act as a 'checklist' when commissioning and delivering new lighting projects in the city, to ensure lighting is consistent whilst still responding to specific project aims. The seven principles are:



CONNECTING

How might we create spaces to slow down and meet, mix and mingle?



TAKE NOTICE OF PEOPLE AND HERITAGE

How might we create spaces where people can take notice of what is around them?



INTERACT AND PLAY

How might we create spaces people can have fun in?



EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES

How might we support live events happening in the city?



WAY-FINDING AND NAVIGATION

How might we help people navigate the city?



SAFETY

How might we create streets that are safe for all citizens?



DISTINCTLY BELFAST

How might we create something that speaks to the Belfast narrative?

Pilot 1

Castle Arcade

Output

The 'river runs beneath' neon was created as a short term solution responding to the principals outlined whilst improving the lighting throughout the arcade and adding a point of interest. This artwork was installed as an interim measure while designs were being developed for a permanent upgrade to the entry.

Outcome

Detailed behavioural findings from the installation are difficult because of time of year, weather conditions and Covid restrictions, however anecdotal evidence suggests that whilst the installation hasn't increased nighttime footfall through the space, it has made people think differently about the arcade. The brightness of the space has been considerably improved, which has perceived safety benefits, whilst the improvement work has helped to reduce the effect of the 'broken windows theory' by demonstrating that the area is cared for and has value, and lines up anticipation for the longer term entries upgrade.

Spot-surveys with pedestrians passing through the arcade indicated an overall positive response with many commenting on the improved brightness in the arcade and referencing the installation narrative of the rivers underneath. If implemented on a larger scale, with more creative 'wow-factor' installations that are integrated into an overall theme or narrative, the hypothesis is it will dramatically improve city centre spaces and connectivity, particularly at night.



Castle Arcade, interim installation (2019) while designs developed for permanent upgrade (2020). Concept by USI, fabrication and installation by AM LIGHT

Pilot 2 Royal Avenue

Output

Belfast City Council, as part the city centre Revitalisation Programme, produced and co-ordinated a number of initiatives to animate and attract footfall in the retail core of the city during Christmas 2019.

As part of this programme of activity, the council partnered with Belfast One Business Improvement District to develop a bespoke lighting mapping projection in the city centre. The animated story, written specifically for Belfast, was projected onto buildings on Royal Avenue using state-of-the-art projection and sound equipment suited to long-term outdoor use. The main feature animation was accompanied by a secondary projection across the hoardings at the Bank Building site where a large fire took place in August 2018. The animation was accompanied by a specially commissioned soundtrack orchestrated with a full brass band and choir from Belfast.

Outcome

This is the first time a projection of this scale and longevity was placed in Belfast, it was a significant success overall with over 94% of surveyed audiences saying it met or exceeded their expectations. However, there were learnings from this pilot project. Most significantly the effect of ambient light in the area as well as issues with the projection site itself and health and safety issues concerning traffic on Royal Avenue. The council will encourage further largescale lighting and video-mapping projection projects. Location, ambient light, access and road safety will be key considerations in producing future projects like this.



Creative concept by Imitating the Dog, installation by Galaxy Facilities Management



Pilot 3 Castle Street

Page 56

Output
The pilot on Castle Street responded to a range of site-specific issues including anti-social behaviour, darkness, a prevalence of non-perforated shutters after 6pm and perceptions of safety and security. This pilot is made of custom innovative projection technology. The 10 projectors are installed above vacant properties and hoarding to project artist generated content onto the facades underneath. The bespoke short-throw projector units also house sound and motion sensor technology to enable interaction with pedestrians. The default content was created by a local artist/coder and referenced Belfast themes – riverways and starling murmurations, and can be easily updated for city events and festivals.

Outcome
The concept allows the street to come alive at night, with immersive audio-visual interactive content, and creates a playful 'corridor' for pedestrians entering and leaving the city via Castle Street, whilst also significantly brightening the street and reducing the 'dead' feeling created by shop shutters.



Concept by USI, creative content by Robin Price, fabrication and installation by C3 Productions

Additional feature lighting was also installed as part of a project to upgrade entries throughout the city centre. The aim of the Entries Project is to enhance permeability through creative placemaking, reduce instances of anti-social behaviour by increasing footfall, promote connectivity, and ease navigation through the city centre. As part of the wider entries regeneration programme, Urban Scale Interventions were commissioned to deliver a series of feature lighting installations building on the lessons learnt through the design principles and pilot interventions.

Castle Arcade

A series of suspended lighting ropes drop down to pedestrian level, the rope lights are programmable, and with a changeable spectrum of colour, flows of lights will reflect off the facades responding to a series of murals that wrap the space. An abstract soundscape inspired by the history of this entry will compliment this bespoke lighting feature. The lighting can also be programmed to change colour in response to seasonal city events and the cultural life of the city.



Concept image of proposed intervention for Castle Arcade

Winecellar Entry

A series of organic ocean shapes cluster above this courtyard area where people dwell outside hospitality venues. The shapes reflect the rich maritime heritage of the city and are created entirely with 3d printed recycled ocean plastics. They also change through a spectrum of colours and have speakers embedded for audio programming. This lighting feature is an opportunity to engage the city with climate change and sustainability awareness.



Proposed installation for Winecellar Entry

Crown Entry

A neon strip light shaped as a thunderbolt compliments a punk themed mural that identifies with Belfast's historically rich punk music scene. The placement of the feature responds to architectural forms and functional servicing units that run along the entry. This creates a soft but conscious approach to wayfinding, drawing in passersby and giving a sense of safety, vibrance and 'place' to the hidden routes that connect the city streets.



Proposed installation for Crown Entry

8. Analysis

Page 93

A review of the existing lighting infrastructure within Belfast City Centre was undertaken between November 2019 and January 2020. Works involved visual inspections during day and night which allowed for review of both the aesthetics of the various fittings and the performance of the lighting itself to be observed and analysed.

Observations

Reviewed elements include: column design, wall mounted and surface mounted fittings, types of light such as SON-T, CDM -T, and LED, colour temperature and general light and design qualities.

Belfast’s buildings, road infrastructure and public spaces all form a coherent and legible city centre during the daytime, but the same cannot be said after dark. What does hold the character together during the night time experience is the well-ordered lighting infrastructure DFI manage and maintain that is threaded through the majority of the streetscape in the city centre.

Stepping out of the adopted areas managed by DFI, there are some wonderful alternative lighting schemes. For example, areas within the Cathedral Quarter have developed and grown through private/public investment and partnership arrangements. However, beyond this independent initiative and organic development, there is a need for a set of design principles to create a coherent nighttime experience that combines safe routes with ways in which to celebrate the architecture and cultural heritage of Belfast.

In addition to the below considerations, which should be addressed throughout all lighting projects, we’ve broken our site analysis and design guidance into three distinguishable urban areas – Streetscapes, Buildings and Points of Interest. This should give clarity on specific issues and solutions identified and recommended for distinct physical areas and elements of our built environment.

In many cases only subtle tweaks or adjustments to the lighting is required to deliver high impact outcomes. Many of the buildings, structures or streetscapes may already have lighting infrastructure in place although it may be currently switched off or require replacement and more robust maintenance regimes to keep them in good order. Alternatively, they may not be lit due to nothing more than economic reasons.

The creation of attractive urban residential environments with a genuine sense of place is necessary to achieve our growth and sustainability targets. The quality of where we live depends not just on the design of buildings, but on their layout, landscaping and how these developments look and feel at night in terms of safety and security. Improving the legibility of the landscape after dark, allows for the creation and development of the night time character of a city. Belfast has an opportunity to use lighting to enhance the growing number of schemes and sites under construction currently, where new builds and heritage restoration are being tied together with new and/or upgraded public realm, expanding the urban character.



Streetscapes

The elements of a street, including the road, surrounding buildings, footpaths, street furniture, trees and open spaces, etc. taking in retail, office, hospitality and residential areas. Appropriate lighting of the streetscape within each type of area has a huge impact on how we navigate and interact within it.

When LED lighting was first introduced and used within our cities and towns, the LED colour temperature was 6000k, as only at this colour temperature could enough output be viably generated.

A more 'comfortable' setting is used today as the performance of the LED has improved but is still further up the lighting spectrum towards blue than the lamp types previously used (SOX and Son-T). Currently the preferred DfI settings for colour temperature is 4000k. This is based on the fact that previously, the higher the colour temperature (6000k) the more efficient the LED was.

However, modern LEDs are able to achieve the same, if not better, output at much lower colour temperatures, which in effect means lower energy consumption and higher performance.

Generally, today, all DfI lighting schemes or private lighting schemes are designed to the standards recommended in BS5489.

The DfI requirements for lighting levels are categorised below. The categories are based on a range of different criteria which includes frequency of vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist movement. An evaluation and risk assessment and levels of crime and frequency of accidents all have a bearing on which category of lighting will be placed where. These categories are noted as C1: indicates a high level of light intensity, C2: a medium level of light intensity, P2/P3: a low level of light intensity.

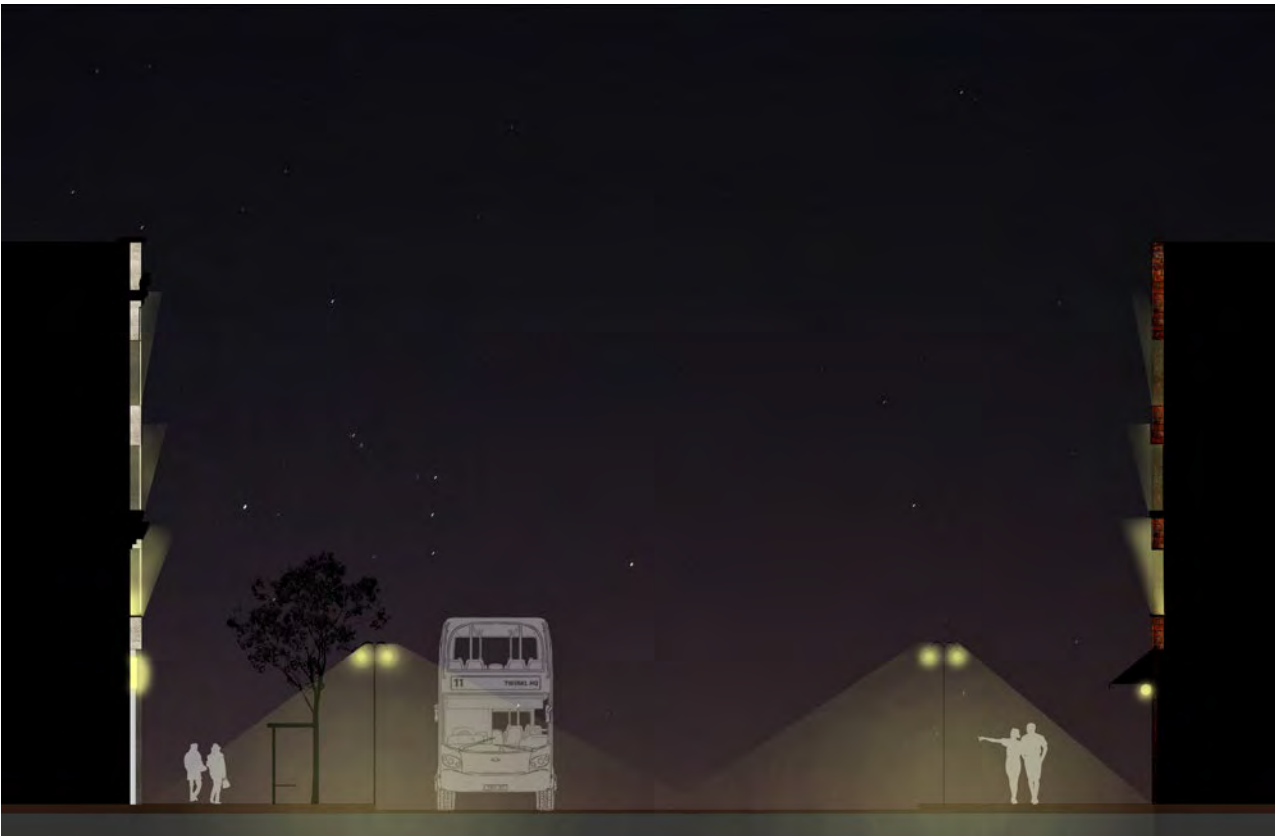
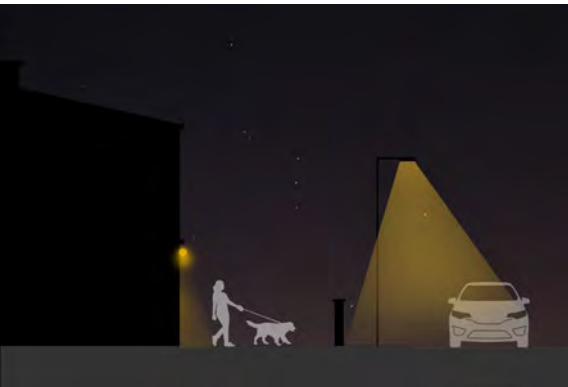
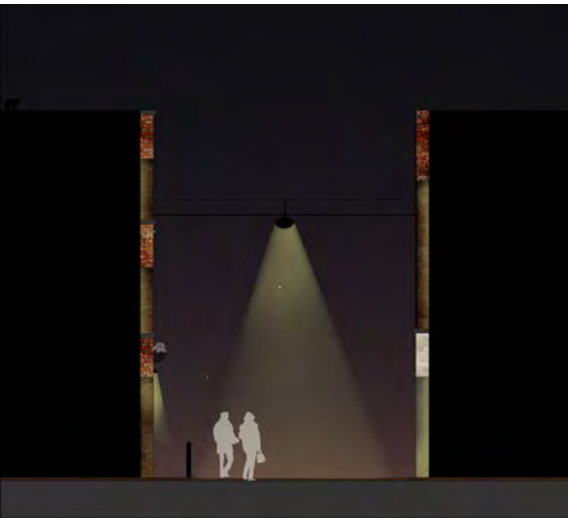
Further detail regarding the requirements and risk assessments involved in determining lighting classes can be found in BS5489.

DfI have strict guidance on attachments to their columns – banners, advertising assets and city dressing fixed to street lighting columns are not normally permitted, unless the design and fabrication of the column has the required structural integrity.

DfI do not permit third parties to connect into their power sources without prior written agreement.

Streetscape lighting is predominantly satisfactory throughout the city centre, the majority of sites are now fitted with LED fittings, with a few residential areas operating the softer SON-T type lighting. Concerns were identified regarding the location of lighting columns rather than the level or type of light itself, and in several areas, alternative arrangements could be developed to replace the existing columns with either wall mounted fittings or by expanding the catenary lighting which is operational within some of the streetscape of Cathedral Quarter, for example.

In addition, DfC have installed high quality feature lighting on their public squares, for example the Eagle Columns on Bank Square and the Hecklers on Custom House Square.





Fittings/Fixtures

There are a number of different fittings forming the current inventory of lighting types. Although not exhaustive, the range of lighting fittings include mock heritage style lamps, contemporary column mounted, ground level and building mounted fittings.

The fittings also vary in technology and therefore, colour temperature, aesthetics, replacement types and cycles for replacement. Some buildings were found to have different levels of white light which did not highlight the architectural merit and/or character of the building to its full potential.

Key routes through and around the city centre can be identified based on the mounting heights of street lighting columns. Typically, the lighting hierarchy is defined by the volume of traffic flow and the width of the streetscape.



Levels of Illumination

Several areas within the city centre appear to have high levels of illumination. This could be the result of a number of factors including the introduction of third-party lighting to adjacent buildings aimed at enhancing the building facades.

In some cases, the finish of light colour, tone or reflective cladding of the unit itself can also increase the lighting intensity and consequent glare, which is exacerbated when the surrounding surfacing is a light colour, and often emphasised further during rainfall.

In terms of unpleasant 'light spill', advertising screens and shop fronts were evident and play a major role in the dynamically lit streetscape. Many signs, media screens and advertising sites were also visually distracting and competing with the ambient lighting. Areas of dynamic lighting effects include Shaftsbury Square and the digital advertising hoarding along Bruce Street.

Refer to the guidance note from the Institute of Lighting Professionals 'Guidance Note 01/20'.

Buildings

Edifices large and small that make up our urban environment. Lighting buildings appropriately can have a huge positive impact on our city and how we live, work and play in it.

Ongoing development across the city centre is providing opportunities for enhancement to the built environment through high performance sustainable projects. Several developments have installed lighting schemes to their frontages which complement the existing streetscape lighting and ensure the two different sets of lighting do not conflict with each other.

Belfast has a high number of buildings with cultural and heritage value. Sensitive lighting schemes on historic buildings can, where undertaken sympathetically, present opportunities to enhance how the building is seen, understood and enjoyed. Many of these buildings are instantly recognisable landmarks and therefore also allow for incidental wayfinding through the city centre.

It is evident that a number of these buildings have more value to offer to the evening and night time experience and with some sensitive lighting schemes could dramatically enhance the city's skyline.

One such building which has embraced lighting design is the City Hall. City Hall provides an instantly recognisable setting and beacon of civic pride and stability for the city and its visitors. Adjacent to City Hall around Donegall Square are several historic buildings which would benefit from enhanced lighting to showcase their architectural features and compliment City Hall and its setting as a civic and cultural centre.

In relation to Belfast's heritage, historic buildings and landmark features, we take reference from Historic Environment Division's design principles.



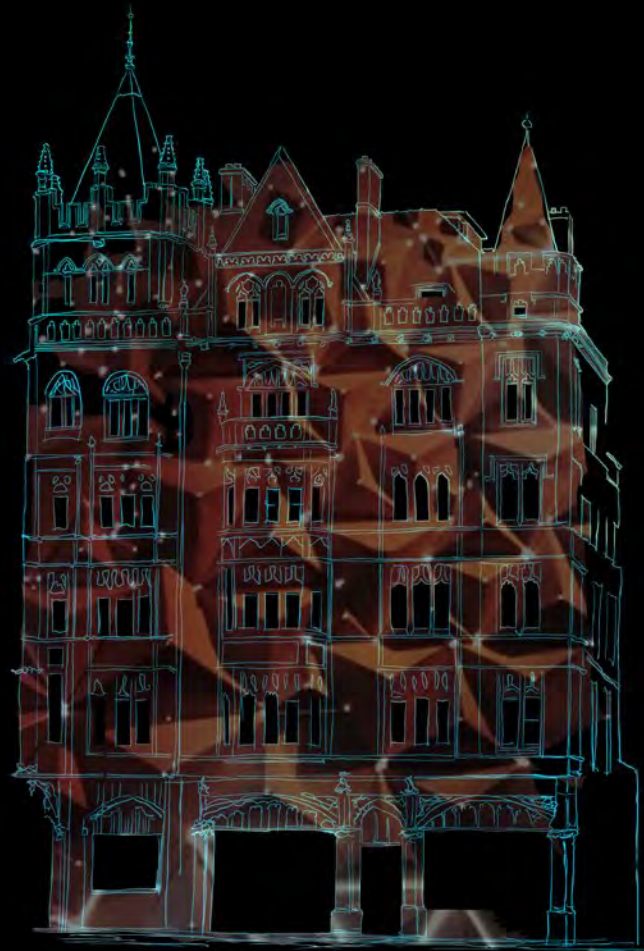
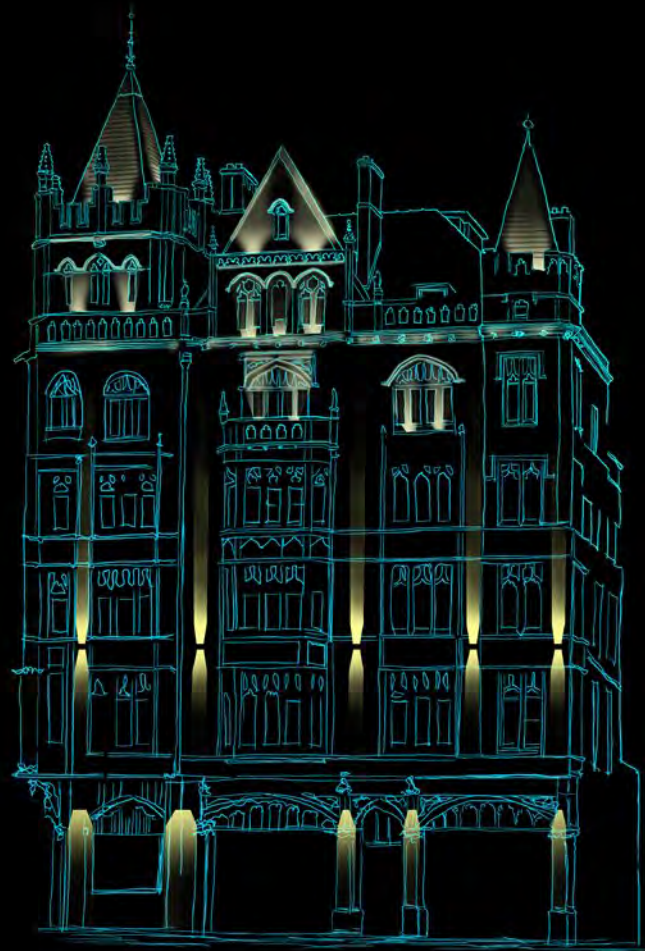
Belfast City Library

Belfast Central Library is an example of a beautiful heritage building which, with some rearrangement of the current external lighting could show off its features to more effect and have much more impact.



Ocean Buildings

Ocean Buildings is an example of a beautiful building which isn't lit at night. Some subtle lighting would highlight its façade and features and add value to this architectural asset in the city centre.



Points of Interest

Various spaces, places, objects and details that can be picked out of the urban landscape and lit to enhance character, encourage better connectivity and define an iconic skyline. Sensible and strategic lighting of these assets can address the legibility and permeability of our city and support orientation, navigation, and wayfinding.

Key Gateways

City gateways have an important role in defining arrival points to a city. They are gateway markers or landmark features that allow us to orientate ourselves and create a sense of anticipation as we approach a destination.

Belfast has its challenges in this respect due to a number of natural and infrastructural barriers around the city, but there are also opportunities to be explored.

Whilst the boundaries of the River Lagan, railway line to the south and arterial roads of the Westlink and M3 respectively define a compact and identifiable city centre. They can also be perceived as adding to the separation of some of the surrounding communities by restricting the city centre from expanding organically.

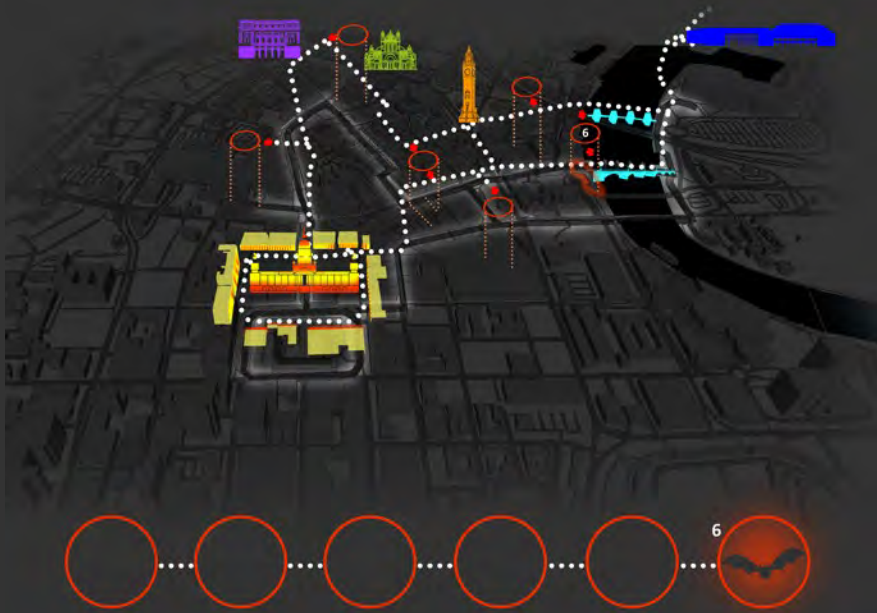
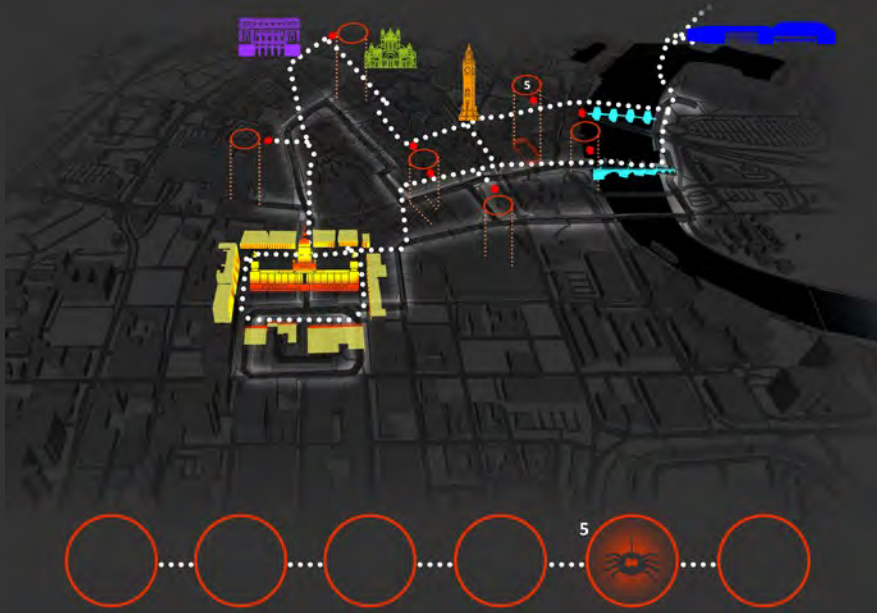
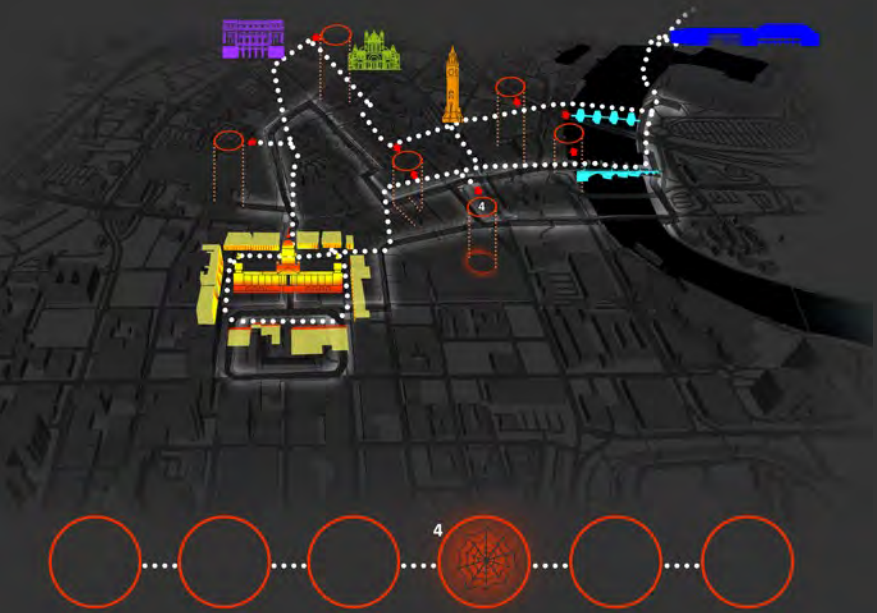
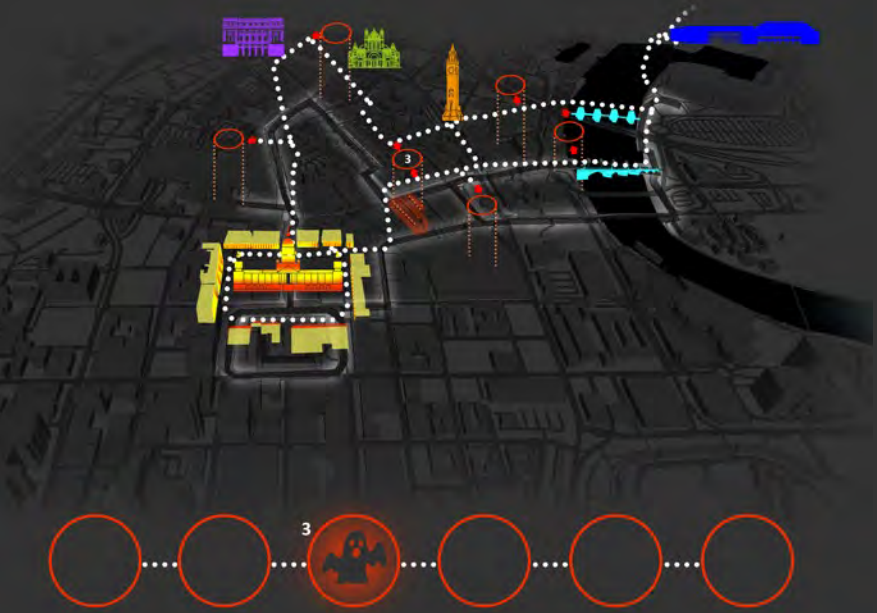
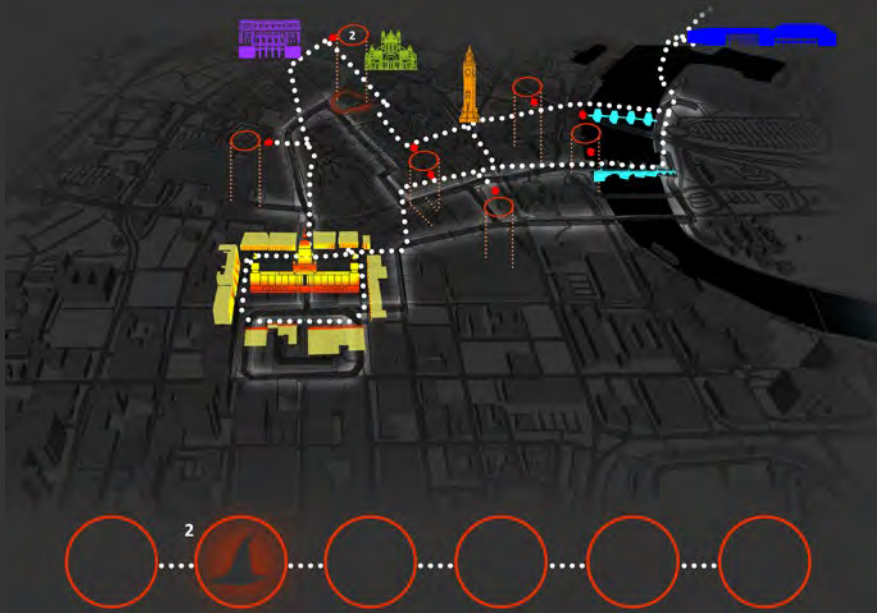
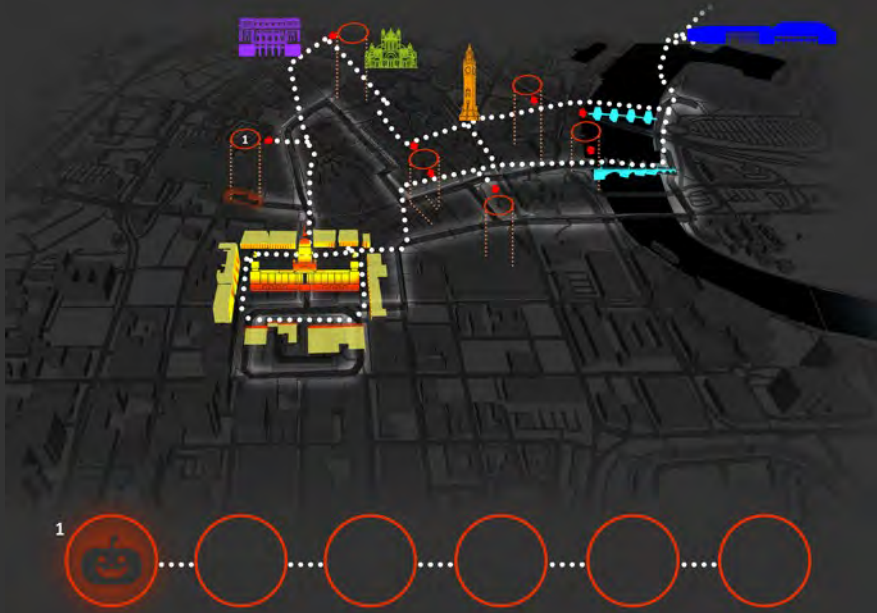
All major arterial routes in and out of the city centre are in need of lighting enhancement to increase visibility and define permeability.

However, the routes located to the west of the city namely along Grosvenor Road, Divis Street and Clifton Street are in need of particular focused consideration to create balance across the various approaches to the city.



Narrative Trail

An example of a Hallowe'en themed projection installation to create a narrative trail throughout the city. Temporary projects like these can be used to guide and generate footfall to certain areas of the city and can work as part of a wider festive celebration.



Landmarks

Cities are most often identified through their skyline and a skyline is most often made up of iconic landmarks. Buildings, architectural features, physical infrastructure and public art can help orientation and navigation as well as being great locations to try some creative visual effects through the use of light.

Selective highlighting of buildings on corners or those that stop views can help reinforce existing vistas and promote visual interest and intrigue whilst promoting and stimulating pedestrian movement.

Notable Belfast landmarks and their type of lighting include, City Hall (LED), Waterfront Hall (LED), Victoria Square's Dome (LED), Custom House (LED), St Patrick's Church (Halogen and LED), the Obel (LED), the Grand Central hotel (LED) the Titanic Building (LED), the lit masts along Donegall Place and the several bridges, which are lit with LED, halogen and CDM -T arrangements. Although the list is not exhaustive, it could develop further through a coordinated design approach to define a bold recognisable skyline for Belfast.

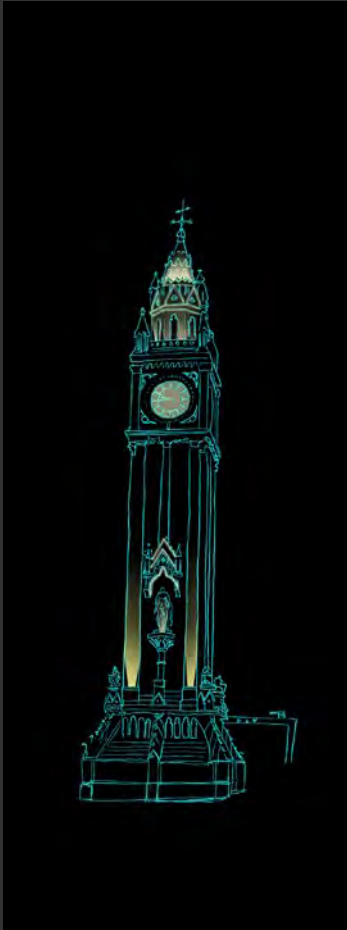
Other sites for consideration are unique destinations just outside the centre, e.g. the Crumlin Road Gaol, the Gaeltacht Quarter, Queen's University and the Botanic Gardens, Titanic Belfast, and Ormeau Park – addressing how these locations at the periphery of the city centre influence travel and experience encountered beyond the city's central district is key.

Public Art and Heritage Features

Several significant sculptures within the city have lighting incorporated to highlight their form, however, a review of existing arrangements should be considered with a view to improvements.

The Jaffe Memorial Fountain is lit well and is a fine example of how public art and heritage features can be sensitively treated.





Entries and Lanes

Belfast's entries have wonderful character that should be enhanced and expanded. Appropriate lighting can be used to present pathways and encourage curiosity, exploration and appreciation of these spaces as places.

Some entries and lanes have already benefitted from years of creative development, while others are still in the early stages of creating their own individual identity. There are opportunities to reference and reflect their historic significance and context further through research and design.



Such environments have a range of other complexities such as a wide variety of clutter like drainpipes and air conditioning units to play down, which can also be addressed through clever lighting.

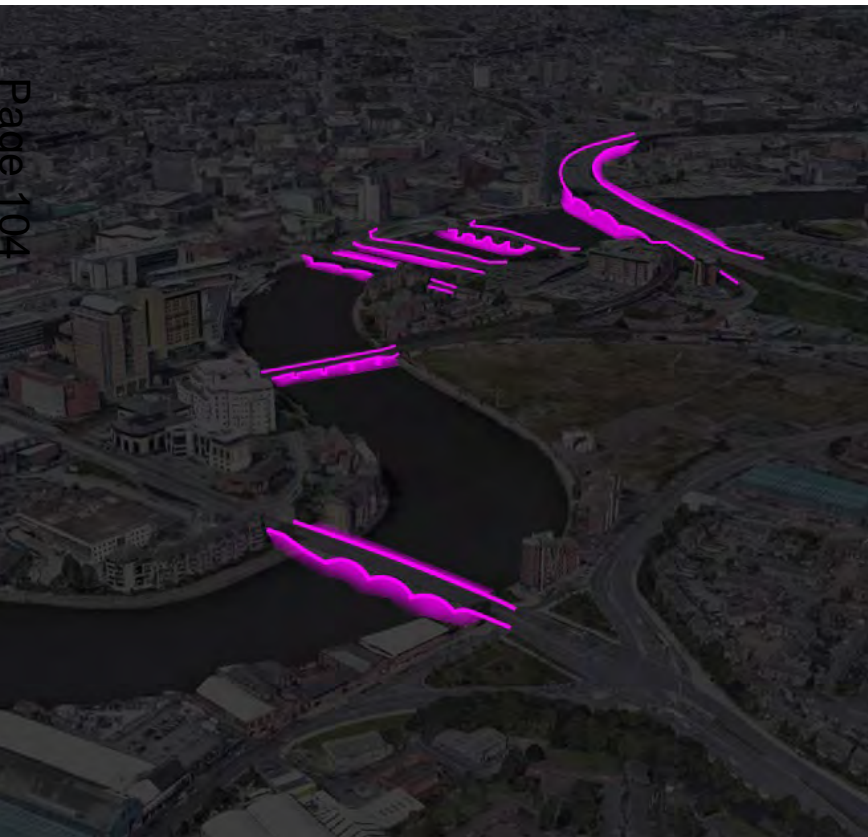
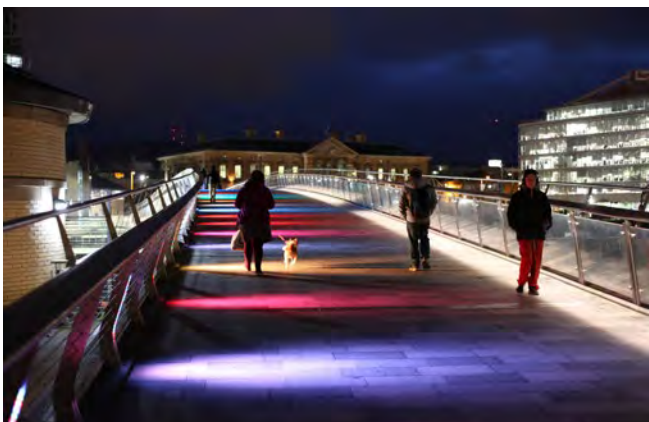
All are developing with public and private investment and to date this approach has been working well. In addition, Linen Quarter BID is currently working on proposals to provide creative lighting of various east-west connections in the Linen Quarter, including the highlighting of key architectural features.

Bridges

Belfast has a series of historic bridges and one significant contemporary pedestrian bridge – ‘The Lagan Footbridge’ which connects the city centre to Queen’s Quay.

Although the bridges are all lit, there is no consistency to the type of light tone used, what features on the bridges are being highlighted, or when they are lit. Each bridge has a range of significant architectural features that could be better displayed and presented at night.

With new bridges and upgrades to existing bridges planned there is opportunity to maximise on the potential of illuminating the riverway.



Underpasses

The underpasses of the M3 spanning the River Lagan are dimly lit and passive surveillance is limited leading to and from both the Harbour estate and on the other side of the river leading to the SSE Arena, Titanic Quarter and Scrabo Street.

With a lighting intervention these large physical barriers can become more welcoming, enhance the pedestrian experience and improve the pedestrian linkages to others areas of the city.

Pedestrian underpasses at Ann Street, and High street are regular routes for pedestrians passing under Victoria Street. The existing lighting is a mixture of LED strip lighting located into the corners of the ceiling and recessed lighting fixed into the walls of the step areas with the recent addition of a further cluster fitting of white LED lighting. The lighting currently installed does not alleviate safety concerns and there is an opportunity here to install creative lighting as a feature and transform the underpass into a more vibrant linkage and a destination in itself.

Vacant, Derelict and Construction sites

Prolonged vacant and/or ongoing construction sites can have a dramatic impact on the local environment both in the short and long term. Such sites can be perceived as unsafe, unwelcoming and can, for a period, of time have detrimental effects on an area, both economically and socially.

Sites under construction are bound by a Duty of Care obligation and through CDM Regulations NI (2016) to ensure they are secured appropriately with security hoarding. Within the city centre environment this often requires the developer to create underpass scenarios for pedestrians to access/egress below scaffolding, which can be intimidating particularly at night, as these routes are generally lit to the minimum compliance.

These interim sites often last for years at a time, severing existing pedestrian linkages from one area to another. Even with careful and considered planning of the hoarding, the public will often take alternative routes

9. Considerations

When carrying out our analysis and making our recommendations we acknowledged the potential of lighting to address and deliver on current concerns and priorities for the city, as detailed in the policy context section of this document, as well building on the design principals developed and taking learnings from the pilot projects delivered.

The following are a set of independent but interlinking considerations which have informed our holistic approach, recommendations and design guidance.

Connectivity

Being able to orientate and move through a city with the use of light after dark creates a safer city for all user groups. It is widely recognised that using light to reveal the hierarchy of streets, buildings and open spaces as well as their dimensions, materiality and detail, can greatly benefit a person's experience and use of the public realm.

Belfast's city core continues to evolve to address what has been for many years, isolation or disconnection with the surrounding areas. The expansion of an authentic city character was confined to suburban housing schemes, the Westlink and developments along the River Lagan which segregated it from the core.

The legibility of a city fundamentally improves by delivering lighting projects which define routes and pathways (both by lighting entire routes, or strategically lighting key points along a route), which in turn aids orientation and wayfinding.

This 'linking' or stepping stone approach to lighting both large and small routes and sites, creates the perception at least, of a more permeable city which is better connected both within its core and from its core to surrounding communities. To supplement this approach, variations in the quality of light (harsh, diffused, warm, cold) and levels of illumination can be used as tools to create texture and contrast in a city and differentiate between types of spaces and their uses.

Both large lighting schemes delivered by public authorities, and smaller independent lighting projects have a responsibility to understand and acknowledge the impact and potential of their project to contribute to reinforcing the unique character of the city, and to make it easier and more enjoyable to navigate.

Recommendations

- Any and all lighting installations should take cognisance of its potential impact on the visibility and perception of the wider landscape, and where possible and appropriate, orientate their lighting to maximise benefit.
- Ongoing regeneration and public realm work accompanying larger scale developments, should include lighting as an integral element. They should continue to extend and enhance the streetscape in the city and where at all possible expand outward into peripheral areas, to acknowledge and support them accordingly. This approach will create more cohesive linkage within the city core and the surrounding residential areas.
- Public statutory authorities should fund specific lighting projects to address issues of permeability, connectivity and accessibility.

Quality

Quality in lighting design and installation cuts across all elements. Quality of analysis, interpretation and design of the lighting, quality of the infrastructure, fittings and fixtures, and quality of the light itself. All elements must be carefully considered by the appropriate people, and the optimum decisions made based on both the objectives of the project and the wider aims and ambitions of the city.

Existing authentic character within an area can be highlighted, and new developments have the opportunity to develop or create new character which creates a sense of place through thoughtful lighting design and delivery.

Recommendations

- Commissioning the right people for each element of delivery is critical. People and organisations with a proven track record and best practice approach should be prioritised. This also extends to commissioning expert independent impact studies on health, environmental, heritage etc.
- All proposals for lighting which aims to highlight existing character should be based on a comprehensive and robust understanding of that site and/or area in terms of its history and how its evolved. HERoNI and PRONI hold industrial heritage archive material and records which can assist with research to inform and inspire appropriate lighting strategies.
- Engagement and consultation are important elements. Involving the right people (public, stakeholders, end users, clients) at the right time and throughout the process in both the design and implementation of lighting is key.

- Lighting fittings can have a major impact on the appearance of a development, both during the daytime and after dark and should be carefully selected in line with the character of the site and area.
- Lighting columns and wall-mounted fittings within our streetscapes and adoptable areas should always be acceptable to the adopting authority as it will ultimately assume responsibility for maintenance and management. The fittings should be durable, resistant to damage from vandalism, easy to maintain, readily available, located both to minimise inconvenience for all, and to minimise any risk of damage to equipment by vehicles.
- Expand the range of new column design for different quarters in the city centre. This allows for subtle styling within the scheme and has worked well in defining an identity or character for areas such as those upgraded through Streets Ahead, Laganside and Titanic Quarter. This approach needs buy in from key stakeholders.
- Utilise best practice from the most up to date credible sources when deciding on the type of light appropriate for each project taking into consideration all necessary external factors. Ensure designers with expertise in lighting are at the forefront of these decisions.

Character and Culture

A city’s character and culture are intertwined, and Belfast has a wealth of both. Our identities have developed historically through the arts, sciences and other forms of human achievement which are celebrated collectively. This uniqueness is represented, manifested and celebrated through our built environment and creative activities.

We have historic and contemporary architecturally significant buildings, monuments, artworks and other important points of interest as well as numerous cultural events that bring our city’s streets and public spaces to life. All this together contributes to the cultural character of the city and helps define a sense of place.

To expand on our cultural events offer and enhance our physical assets, there are opportunities to explore how creative, sensitive and spectacular feature lighting can become an integral part of our delivery, and in turn to bolster the overall experience and increase footfall and interaction. It is important to remember also that many heritage assets can be more sympathetically treated through retention of a dark sky environment, for example the Giant’s Ring on the outskirts of south Belfast and other areas of Significant Archaeological Interest.

There is also potential to integrate innovative lighting technologies, such as curated video-mapping projection onto building facades and selected sites. Narratives positioned thoughtfully across the city as a trail would encourage movement, and pathways can be created based on other agendas such as directing people towards certain sites at certain times etc. This type of public realm ‘theatre’ can also contribute to an enhanced evening experience and night time economy.

Recommendations

- Install the CMS to allow controlled isolation, so that individual and/or sets of lights can be controlled in response to special events, activities, celebrations and commemorations.
- Expand the range of column, fitting and fixture designs for different character areas within the city to support individuality and identity, following the lead of the former Laganside Corporation, Streets Ahead Programme and Titanic Quarter lighting columns.
- Ensure flexible and adaptable infrastructure is designed and built into public realm schemes to allow greater opportunities for events, e.g. pop-up power supplies, enclosed locations for the installation of temporary lighting or projection.
- Further review and audit needed to identify key cultural assets with a view to ensuring they are lit appropriately. Elements of the built environment identified in the ‘Points of Interest’ section of this document outline the type of features we should expect to pick out of the fabric of the city and highlight for their historical significance and/or contemporary value. We should also note key assets within the natural environment and be aware of the importance of retaining dark skies where appropriate.

Human Centric

Studies have shown that there is a discrepancy between natural light and artificial light with regard to intensity, colour and the very nature of lighting dynamics. Natural light is dynamic in that it changes from sunrise through to nightfall, whereas in Belfast, artificial lighting is fixed, in a state of high intensity permanence throughout the night.

Some research finds that artificial light with a strong blue component could affect human circadian cycles and the hormonal system, and could result in illness and disease.

The natural intensities for light are;
Morning- Cool light / Low intensity
Afternoon- White light / High intensity
Evening- Warm light / Low intensity

Recommendations

- Further research is required to establish the effects of the fixed permanent state of our street lighting, and generally the impacts of artificial light types on our health and wellbeing.
- The natural environment for humans, animals and plant life is to have darkness throughout the night. Darkness should be retained across the city in the deeper hours of the night, where sensible.
- Introduce a wireless Central Management System

Accessibility

People with disabilities, especially those with visual impairments, the senior population, and those with sensory/ neurological processing difficulties can struggle to use the city after dark.

Better consideration of the quantity, quality and uniformity of street and amenity lighting and the reduction of excessive contrast, glare and physical infrastructure itself, will help improve accessibility. Measures to use lighting to provide greater legibility after dark, such as improved lighting to signage and changes in lumen levels will also assist with orientation and ease of movement.

Recommendations

- Further research is required to understand better the impacts of lighting on people with conditions such as dementia, autism and people with learning difficulties.
- Agencies involved in the delivery of lighting schemes should, where appropriate, commit to engaging with people with lived experience of conditions such as those noted above, in terms of the design and implementation of the scheme.
- Avoid glare and high contrast.
- Design lighting on areas where level changes occur, like slopes, ramps and steps, so as to reduce shadow and ensure clear definition.
- Ensure lighting that is built into public realm is at an appropriate level or is angled/shielded to avoid sudden glare.
- Avoid any fast-moving light or repeated patterns of coloured light. If part of a special event, ensure appropriate notices are in place.
- Be aware of the effects of light on different surface types, e.g. the potential of bouncing light off mirrored or metallic surfaces and creating flashes.

Safety

Ensuring safety is a priority and key objective when it comes to lighting our city. The lighting of the main road network is an important layer as it lights both the carriageway and main footpaths, and provides appropriate light levels to highlight physical hazards where pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles traverse and meet.

Safety and the level of illumination should however, be appropriately balanced to ensure light levels are comfortable while being compliant. This is achievable with the use of new LED white light which can make spaces brighter without creating glare, making it possible to improve lighting and reduce illumination simultaneously. This can work particularly well in confined spaces such as entries, alongside locating and/or angling the lighting so as to avoid creating areas of shadow or darkness to avoid making pedestrians more vulnerable. Targeted lighting can also deter antisocial and criminal activity.

Recommendations

- Consider all road and street users in relation to lighting the carriageways so there is a more equal focus on cyclists and pedestrians.
- Light in relation to the topography of the area, taking into consideration changes in surface level, obstacles and light spill from surrounds.
- Provide innovative, responsive lighting control to fittings and maximize visibility and perceptions of safety for users.
- Carefully consider the positioning of lighting columns on the footpath to achieve required light levels but prevent unnecessary clutter and obstruction for all users, especially those with limited mobility, sight loss and/or push chairs. Explore wall mounting options in the first instance.

Security

Lighting plays a key role in the prevention of crime, deterring antisocial behaviour by promoting and assisting surveillance both passive and perceived. It provides the bright environment necessary for CCTV and for the PSNI to carry out their duties more safely after dark.

A reduction of contrast and glare, improvements in lighting uniformity and colour rendering, and the provision of better lighting control, all assist in enabling authorities to improve their response to incidents and safeguard against anti-social behaviour and street crime.

As the city’s population grows, lighting smaller connecting routes behind and between buildings is becoming more necessary to ensure people feel secure and confident to navigate and enjoy the city after dark. Likewise, with the increase in tourism, a sensitively, well-lit city encourages footfall and dwell time and ultimately enhances the overall atmosphere and experience of the place as a destination.

Recommendations

- Consult with relevant authorities and groups to identify conflict and vulnerable areas and take a collaborative approach to installing and managing lighting that fulfills both surveillance and placemaking needs.
- Future installations should reduce contrast and glare by use of LED.
- Focus on streets, laneways, alleys and entries surrounding residential and hotel areas in the first instance.
- Install the CMS with capacity to allow controlled isolation so that sets of lights, down to individual lights can be controlled and managed in response to incidents, changes in the area due to development, and learnings over time.

Technology

DfI are currently in the process of upgrading their street lighting to LED and from C2 class to C1. These new columns also have the capabilities of supporting a Central Management System (CMS).

There are multiple benefits to a CMS including the ability to change the light level and colour temperature throughout the night dependent on the activity or inactivity at any given time. This can be achieved by either pre-programming or by sensors which respond to movement on site. This in turn has proven to reduce energy outputs. A CMS also allows for off site monitoring, simplifying overall management.

This type of dynamic fitting and management system has been introduced across other cities’ pathways and river walks and where there are other environmental factors, concerns and ecological requirements, for e.g. disruption to existing nocturnal activity of bats and their flight corridors. An increasing number of Belfast’s DfI LED light fittings are installed with the capabilities to be linked to an intelligent management lighting control system. Reducing outputs when there is little or no activity greatly reduces energy consumption and CO2 emissions, while also protecting the wider ecology.

Recommendations

- Upgrade all public lighting in the city core to LED, incorporating a Central Management System.
- Provide infrastructure which can be dynamically responsive to incidents including movement and external light spilling into an area.
- Install creative and innovative lighting into public realm, as well as electric points for pop up temporary lighting.
- Review to consider use of renewable energies through procurement.
- The reduction of energy use and CO2 emissions is an ambition for the city, and lighting installations coming forward should be designed and approved with this in mind.

Sustainability

Sustainable lighting aims to balance the social and economic benefits of lighting with the environmental consequences, including energy use and light pollution.

Good lighting can encourage growth in a city’s resident population by providing safer, more liveable areas while acknowledging the need for dimmed, reduced light in these areas as to not affect sleep patterns. It can also contribute to a healthier more sustainable economy through providing appropriately lit retail and socialising areas, increasing social cohesion by providing safer and more pleasing environments for interaction.

Developments in technology have presented opportunities for reducing carbon emissions through both technical design and programming.

Recommendations

- The existing lighting infrastructure DFI maintain and manage has intelligent lighting management system (CMS) capability. These lighting management systems can monitor use and reduce energy outputs particularly when limited activity is evident. The same technology can also create dynamic lighting effects through the night to change from high intensity to low intensity at any given time and can monitor replacement and performance requirements. This capacity needs to be utilised.
- Reconsider quantity of lighting, and their mounting heights and positions to explore every opportunity to reduce quantity of fixtures, decrease carbon emissions and incorporate energy saving measures.
- Require, as part of the planning application process, that the applicant demonstrate clearly, measures for addressing sustainability targets and best practice with respect to lighting. Consideration should be given to the BREEAM accreditation aims when assessing these.
- Designs should be commissioned to prevent light pollution (note The Dark Skies Movement which promotes the benefits of minimising light spillage), unless it is agreed and where it is achievable and acceptable to do so, to consider light spill as a means of providing surrounding areas with ‘free’ light.
- Efforts should be made to establish the impact of light upon animal and plant life and mitigate accordingly.
- Consideration should be given to the selection of products, life cycle costs of materials and reduction of chemicals used in the manufacturing processes for lamps and columns.
- Ensure any upward lighting is directed at a surface and not into the sky.

Economic Impact

Belfast has a growing night time economy and was awarded Purple Flag status in 2019. The accreditation recognises towns and cities with well-run night-time economies. The city’s three business improvement districts, Belfast One, Destination CQ and Linen Quarter BID, all contributed to achieving this recognition.

Balancing the competing demands of economic development, public safety and quality of life is a challenge and requires the collaboration of statutory and community stakeholders with residents and local businesses.

In 2010, economists TBR valued the total night time economy across the UK at £66bn, employing 1.3 million people. The Night Time Industries Association’s (NTIA) latest reports highlight the significant economic and social contribution the night-time economy makes to the UK. According to the report, there were 1.5bn day visits to the UK in 2014, 300 million of which had a meal or night out as their focus. According to NTIA expenditure on night-time activities represented 21% of the £52bn spent on day visits. In 2010 Newcastle undertook an ‘Alive after Five’ campaign and drew 7.9m additional night time visitors to the city, increasing the city’s night time economic value to £350m.

There are many examples of how the night time economy has played a vital role in revitalising cities and communities and all involve a mixed cultural and retail offering to attract a diverse demographic including both locals and visitors, late into the evening.

Recommendations

- Working with key city and community stakeholders, collaboratively create a clear set of objectives focusing on increasing and maximising the night time economy.
- There is evidence to suggest that the most successful ventures and night time events are those that consider families and older people. Cities should consider expanding their evening offer to target these groups.
- Invest in bespoke feature lighting installation and spectacular lighting events which draw an international audience and celebrate and showcase the city as a destination.

Planning and Delivery

Clear policy and processes in respect of the delivery and governance of lighting in the city are necessary.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance specific to lighting, in terms of its aesthetic, environmental and amenity impact, and assist in the assessment process of proposals and applications involving lighting, where appropriate.

It is important to understand the management arrangements for lighting assets across the city to allow for quicker requests and responses to be made for creative lighting proposals, reporting of maintenance issues etc.

Recommendations

- Carry out engagement and consultations with DfI’s lighting and operations departments from the concept design stage of any scheme to understand DfI requirements.
- Improve communication and collaboration between statutory agencies and government departments to facilitate new, more efficient approaches to delivery and management of lighting going forward.
- Continue existing relationships between statutory agencies and with key city and community stakeholders to work together to fund, deliver and maintain innovative, creative and bespoke lighting to enhance the night time experience, for festive periods and for special events.
- Ownership, management and maintenance of statutory and non-statutory lighting/illuminations, (both standard and feature style), needs to be clearly established and agreed during the project planning process.
- Site-specific lighting strategies should be provided as part of the planning process, where appropriate.
- All new proposals involving lighting being submitted for planning consent (including buildings schemes, digital signs/ screens, bus stops) should refer to this *Luminous City, A Lighting Strategy for Belfast* document for information on considerations and best practice guidance in line with the city’s placemaking agenda, and should include a ‘design and access’ statement covering such, where appropriate.

Maintenance

Maintenance of both standard functional lighting and dynamic lighting infrastructure and features in the city has historically been an issue.

Much of our streetscape and many of our public assets have had good quality functional and/or feature lighting installed as part of their development, however many assets have little to no maintenance budgets for ongoing monitoring and upkeep.

Recommendations

- When public statutory authorities fund projects there is a need to determine who should own, manage and maintain them when the delivery of the project is complete. Allocating these responsibilities is critical and needs to be addressed and agreed through the budgeting and project planning process.
- In line with the recommendations under Technology, the installation of a Controlled Management System (CMS) would allow for off-site monitoring, simplifying and streamlining management and reducing need for visual inspections.

10. Lighting Design Guidance

Lighting Guidance for Streetscapes

- The mounting height of lighting equipment should generally be sympathetic to the height and width of a street or open area such that it either responds to the architecture or human scale.
 - The mounting height of fittings can have a visual impact on the streetscape in that the higher the mounting the wider spread of light, this also has an impact upon the building façade and could lead to light pollution. Mounting heights should reflect the scale of the streetscape and elements within the street, for example trees, sculptures etc.
 - Create distinctive column design and infrastructure that contributes to the local narrative and defines an area.
 - Introduce subtle lighting effects into new street furniture, do not rely solely on the street lighting. This will create a rich variety of complementary lighting across the streetscape.
 - Depending upon their use, open spaces should be lit through minimum ambient lighting and accent lighting should be applied when creating features of interest within those spaces.
 - No flash lighting should be used. However, subtle colour change, whereby there is a changing colour spectrum of lighting over several seconds (managed remotely as part of wider management programme) using DMX systems can enrich spaces with this dynamic approach.
 - The Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) has provided guidance on acceptable levels of illumination for light sensitive premises in specific environmental zones, e.g. urban location, town centre, city centre.
- With a city centre having a range of mounting heights it is possible to achieve differentiation of character by using lighting. This can be experienced by both vehicular and pedestrian users. Currently streets are typically lit using 10m+ high columns. This has an impact upon the streetscape with the alignment of lighting columns working with street furniture, trees and service kiosks.
- The streetscapes with a lesser volume of vehicular traffic are lit via < 6m high columns or wall mounted fittings which are commonly found at this height. This approach also frees up space on the ground. Wall mounted fittings can have an impact on the placement of the light fitting on the building façade.
 - It is generally accepted that light fittings should, where possible, be mounted on building facades. This will greatly reduce street clutter on the footway and increase the useable areas of footpaths. Consultations and agreement on wayleaves will always be required with landowners. Consideration also needs to be given to how mounting fixtures will affect the building.

Lighting Guidance for Buildings

- As development evolves across Belfast, developers and lighting designers should be preparing lighting strategies that complement their site context, embrace technology and maintain high quality performance.
 - The building lighting should consider light quality, light level, positioning, how to reduce visual clutter/external fixtures and ways of incorporating into the material of the building if appropriate, light glare, spill and reflection in relation to surrounding materials and context.
 - The building lighting should not clash with the existing adopted street lighting but provide complementary service and differentiation, using warmer white light where possible to showcase the architecture. The Bloomberg Headquarters in London is an example of how thoughtful design and installation can achieve high standards both practically and aesthetically. Rather than mounting fittings to their building, the designers used the facades to reflect lighting onto the streetscape below, complementing the street lighting.
 - Each light fitting should be insignificant in appearance during the day and night.
 - The lighting type should be a low energy source and output.
 - Building features should be selected to pick out their key features and attributes.
 - The buildings/ landmark should not be over lit to drown out the actual building feature being highlighted.
 - The light type and lighting levels should be consistent across the whole façade (same level of Kelvins).
 - Buildings that provide the opportunity to emphasise their depth should be promoted. Features such as inset window and building alcoves for example can create dramatic effects.
 - The use of column mounted lanterns should be considered where it can be clearly demonstrated that such an arrangement makes a positive contribution to the design of the public realm or no alternative strategy is possible or practical.
- Specific to: Heritage assets**
- There is a preference for lighting of listed building facades to be warm white light only.
 - Coloured lighting on listed buildings should be restricted where feasible and only on civic occasion and authority should it be applied with prior approval in place.
 - Wall mounted and surface mounted lighting should adhere to the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6): Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage – in terms of location, quality of materials and design. In addition, the installation of lighting fixtures and fittings should be carefully considered so that the historic fabric of building / structure is protected.
 - Light fittings should be mounted on building facades such that they respect the design and visual hierarchy of the building with site specific fixtures and brackets being considered in the case of important listed buildings or structures. Whilst spilling light onto the facades of buildings is often unavoidable lanterns should be specified so as to limit visually inappropriate scalloping or shadows.

Lighting Guidance for Points of Interest

- Each light fitting should be insignificant in appearance during the day and night.
- The lighting type should be a low energy source and output.
- Structure features should be selected to pick out their key features and attributes.
- The feature should not be over lit but lit to carefully emphasise the form and key attributes of the feature.
- The light type and lighting levels should be a consistent type across the whole façade (same level of Kelvins).

Page 113

Bridge lighting should respect the heritage fittings where possible and respectfully upgrade where feasible to do so. The undersides should have more flexibility to bring a colour change element into the design, whilst minimising the impact on local wildlife in the vicinity. The Maritime Mile (Titanic Foundation) and Back to the River (BCC) documents have additional info on the potential of illuminating bridges.

- Wall mounted and surface mounted lighting should adhere to the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6): Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage – in terms of location, quality of materials and design.
- Flashing lighting should be limited to specific locations and limited in most.
- Build on the success of recent pilot projects, festivals and events by creating a purposeful lighting trail around the city, linking the various quarters. This narrative could be told through lighting installations and the wonderful, dramatic effects video mapping can create.

Specific to: Entries

- To ensure creativity continues within these defined areas, the recommendation is to allow them to continue to develop through public and private initiatives. This approach will ensure each entry develops authentically, uniquely and appropriate to the users within them. Funding through arts programmes could expand this further.
- Much of the character of these entries relies on their long, narrow and dark pathways, which open up into small squares which provide a source of light. Lighting schemes should seek to reinforce this character, with subtle highlighting at the thresholds to encourage curiosity and footfall, softer dim lighting along the narrow entry and potential for some enhanced or feature pieces as the space opens up. Lighting levels, appropriate use of colour, positioning of fixtures and use of materials are important considerations.

Specific to: Vacant/Development/Construction Sites

- An approach that has worked well in Belfast and elsewhere is to transform these hoarding sites into temporary lighting features/artworks. Using the hoarding as spaces for projecting or installing onto creates interest, animation and addresses the issues of the hoarding being an eyesore and a deterrent to pedestrian movement. These could be interactive and tie into seasonal activities, festivals and special events.
- Through the planning stages of the development, agreements between Belfast City Council and the developer could be made regarding financing and delivery of creative, meanwhile installations which turn a potential inconvenience into a destination.



11. In Conclusion

Lighting has a major role to play in showcasing the character of the city by highlighting its key assets and landmarks, whilst providing safe night time routes.

To ensure the city centre achieves successful and dynamic lighting there is a requirement for strategic planning across Belfast City Council departments, Department for Communities, the Strategic Investment Board and the Department for Infrastructure, in collaboration with other stakeholders in the public, private and community sectors.

Through research and consultations, recommendations have been developed. They aim to bolster current policy and support authorities, developers, lighting designers and other key stakeholders to create cohesive, dynamic and considered lighting. The recommendations also aim to deliver on a comprehensive approach to improve lighting quality and experience across the city of Belfast.

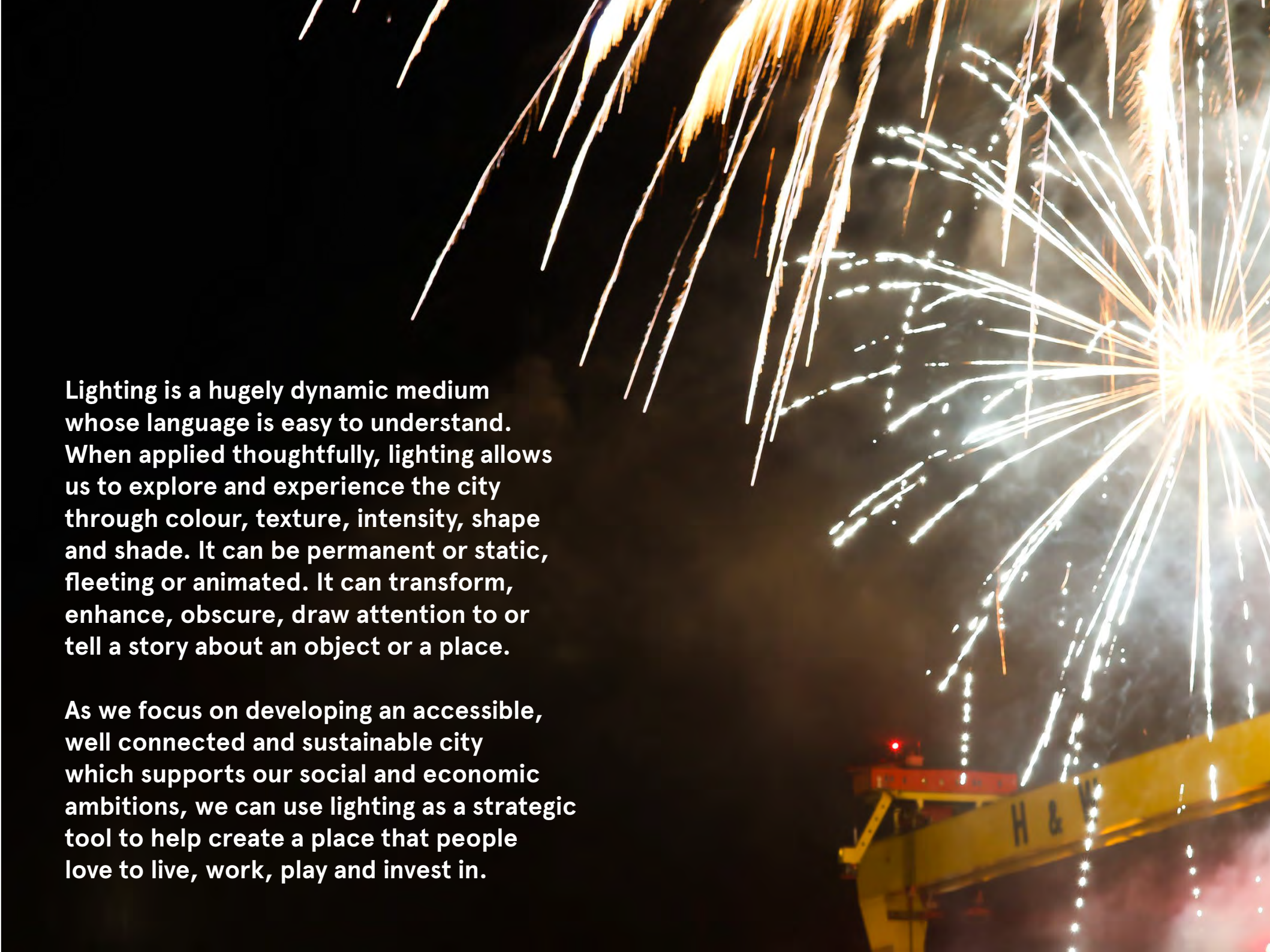
In many cases where significant, high impact improvements across the city could be achieved, only minor or subtle changes or adjustments to the existing lighting may be required. To what degree lighting plays a part in individual projects should be based on a series of contextual considerations including the project location, surrounding context, character, scale and use. These considerations help to identify whether a bold, or more subtle intervention will work best, and whether that intervention is classic in nature, e.g. sensitively lighting the architecture of a building, or more contemporary in nature, e.g. installing bespoke, feature lighting to be provocative and fun.

As previously highlighted during the site investigations, certain buildings and structures within Belfast have lighting infrastructure in place, although it may be currently switched off or require replacement. With support, owners of such properties or features could be encouraged as to the benefits of lighting their assets thoughtfully, in line with the recommendations within this strategy.

Some areas within Belfast have significant and very distinctive character. These character areas should be celebrated and protected. Other areas are in need of creating their own language and enhancing their existing identity further. The guidance within this lighting strategy allows for flexibility of interpretation and approach, while presenting clear recommendations.

Lighting is a hugely dynamic medium whose language is easy to understand. When applied thoughtfully, lighting allows us to explore and experience the city through colour, texture, intensity, shape and shade. It can be permanent or static, fleeting or animated. It can transform, enhance, obscure, draw attention to or tell a story about an object or a place.

As we focus on developing an accessible, well connected and sustainable city which supports our social and economic ambitions, we can use lighting as a strategic tool to help create a place that people love to live, work, play and invest in.



Published: Jan 2021

Should you require the document in a different format
please email belfasti@belfastcity.gov.uk with your request.



Belfast
City Council

Energising
Belfast



Subject:	Future of the City – proposed Members Workshop
Date:	9 December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development

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	Seek Members agreement for a proposed workshop in relation to the Future of the City.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to agree to a workshop for City Growth and Regeneration Committee and Party Group Leaders to consider the Future of the City in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated social, economic and environmental challenges. Further details of the proposed workshop to follow.
2.2	Members are asked to note the composition of a Retail Forum following the request of Councilor Heading agreed at Council on Tuesday 2 nd December 2020 to establish an All-Party Forum on City Centre Retail.
3.0	Main report

3.1	Members will be aware of the current challenges impacting on the city, brought about by the current Covid-19 pandemic.
3.2	The Covid-19 pandemic has opened up a debate around urbanisation and the future path cities will take. It is recognised however that how cities perform going forward will be critical, particularly in terms of responding to the current Covid crisis and the associated economic, social and environmental challenges. Recent research has highlighted that the coming years are likely to see significant disruption to cities and that there is a need for cities to consider now how they become 'future fit'.
3.3	In common with all other cities, Belfast has clearly been impacted by Covid. This impact is right across the city and in the context of the core city centre, recent announcements in the retail sector have exacerbated many of the issues that existed pre-Covid. The criticality of the city centre as a key economic and employment hub is well recognised.
3.4	Members will be aware of a number of priority areas of focus for the Council, as set out in the Council's Recovery Framework, including for example City Deal, the Future City Centre Programme, Housing Led Regeneration, Resilience, Digital and Innovation, Connectivity and Active Travel, Economic Led Programmes etc.
3.5	It is proposed that a workshop is held with Party Group Leaders and Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, on the Future of the City and the priority areas of focus, including the role that Council and other partners can play.
3.6	At the request of Councillor Heading at Council on Tuesday 2 nd December 2020 members agreed that an All-Party Forum on City Centre be convened. It is proposed that forum consists of representatives of each party through nominations from party group leaders, Trade Union officials, relevant business representative organisations and relevant departmental representation.
4.0	Finance & Resource Implications
	None associated with this report
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
	None associated with this report
6.0	Appendices
	N/A



Subject:	Tourism Update – 10 year plan
Date:	9 December 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager – Culture and Tourism

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2020, it was agreed that a ten year tourism plan for Belfast would be developed. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current status of the plan and direction of travel in advance of a full draft being presented in March 2020 for consideration and subsequent public consultation.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the contents of this report and agree the current direction of travel for the emerging ten year tourism plan.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2020 it was agreed that a new ten year tourism plan was to be developed. The purpose of this plan is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver on the tourism priorities set out in the <i>Belfast Agenda</i> recognising the importance of tourism to <i>Growing the economy</i> and <i>City Development</i>. - Align to the ten-year cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i>, in order to ensure that tourism development supports cultural development and is based upon an authentic and sustainable Belfast offer. - Support economic and social recovery in the context of COVID-19 including stabilisation, recovery and growth with the opportunity to build back better. - Provide strategic context to the Belfast Region City Deal that sets out wider city priorities to ensure Belfast's appeal internationally and ability to attract out of state visitors.
3.2	<p>Tourism Growth Pre Covid-19</p> <p>In August 2019 Belfast City Council agreed a new ten year cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining 2020-2030</i>, to drive transformation in the city. For the first time, the scope of this strategy brought together under one compelling vision a number of areas including tourism, culture, heritage, arts, events and festivals.</p>
3.3	<p><i>A City Imagining</i> acknowledges that whilst Belfast has enjoyed relative growth in tourism over recent years that in turn has supported regional development, it is necessary to continue to support sustainable tourism development and job creation. Belfast's first community plan, the <i>Belfast Agenda</i>, also articulates the importance of delivering a culturally vibrant city both for residents and visitors as well as acting as an attractive driver for inward investment. It is anticipated that citywide investment in a culturally vibrant place will support changing perspectives of Belfast as a place to visit, live, work and invest. In order to continue to build on the value of out-of-state tourism and welcome more overnight stays in our visitor accommodation it is essential that we collaborate with our tourism sector to evolve, broaden, deepen and expand the tourism offer currently available in Belfast.</p>

3.4	<p>Despite significant growth and the success of flagship projects such as Titanic Belfast there is still a gap in scale and maturity of the local industry when compared with other regions. Notably, Northern Ireland lags behind UK regions and Republic of Ireland with respect to tourism as a driver for job growth. However the positive trajectory in place before Covid-19 had identified tourism growth as both feasible and a necessary part of inclusive economic growth. The challenge of any tourism development plan will be to create a sustainable model that continues to support the growth that is essential for city success and the creation of jobs.</p>
3.5	<p>Belfast tourism and hospitality sectors directly supports 19,300 jobs, one third of the sector in Northern Ireland. Key tourism sectors such as Accommodation & Food Services, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Transportation will be impacted by COVID-19 however if Belfast's recovery from the pandemic is managed then the growth potential remains high. The hospitality sector is an employment-intensive one, supporting a disproportionate number of jobs compared with the average sectoral GVA: jobs ratio. Between 2013 and 2019 employment in Accommodation and Food Services in Belfast increased by 18.2 percent, compared with 8.5 percent growth in the city's total employment.</p>
3.6	<p>It was in this context that Tourism NI set the ambitious target of doubling the value of the tourism industry to £2 billion by 2030. A key element of this opportunity further reinforced by ambitions of the Belfast Region City Deal was getting a bigger share of the international visitors coming to the island of Ireland to travel to Belfast and the Belfast region.</p>
3.7	<p>Impact of Covid-19</p> <p>While the full impact of Covid-19 is as yet unknown what is clear is that recovery will require new and innovative approaches in an increasingly competitive market. As the regional driver, Belfast will be hugely significant to this growth ambition, both in terms of visitor spend and the creation of new jobs. It is therefore imperative that our city break destination is developed in a strategic way which maximises the economic benefits which can be derived from tourism for local industries, businesses and communities, as well as increasing visitor numbers and spend and improving overall satisfaction levels.</p>
3.8	<p>In advance of the development of the tourism plan, Ernest and Young were commissioned to assess the potential impact of COVID-19 on the city. The report recognises Belfast's role in regional tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast is an important attractor for international, high value tourists to the region.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast's share of out of state tourism spend has been significantly higher than the NI-wide share (83% v 72%). - Spending by tourists in Belfast has outpaced the NI average, growing by 20% year on year compared to 4.5% regionally. - Belfast has grown at a faster rate than the rest of NI mainly because of its attractiveness in two high value markets – city breaks and business tourism.
3.9	<p>The report also sets out a number of scenarios depending on the length of the pandemic and recovery trajectory. The most protracted scenario estimates that job losses could be as significant as 5,500 in 2020 and continuing into 2021, 2022 and beyond. From this report there are a number of short term actions aligned to Tourism NI's work, including more effective reach into all-island and GB markets and the need for a more flexible approach to supporting tourism businesses through the crisis. However below is set out a series of recommendations specific to Belfast and need for stabilisation, recovery and longer-term growth.</p>
3.10	<p>Develop tourism supply in Belfast to foster a sustainable economic model creating jobs and improving local quality of life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring forward renovations or upgrading of tourism facilities during quiet time to support the economy and improve the quality of the tourism offer in Belfast. 2. Pursue planned City Deal investments following a dynamic model based on regularly updated visitor numbers and visitor behaviours. 3. Focus on the development of resilient tourism attractions (e.g. mix of outdoor and indoor spaces, online content, attractive to locals) and mitigate the impacts for the most impacted sectors (e.g. business tourism). 4. Launch a wide consultation with key stakeholders and locals regarding the role tourism should play in a city like Belfast (e.g. urban regeneration, housing, sustainability, jobs, social inclusion, international attractiveness). 5. Identify ways for Belfast or specific attractions within the City to be distinguished internationally (e.g. awards, UNESCO, travel guides).

3.11	<p>Developing a ten-year plan</p> <p>The emerging ten-year tourism plan has taken into consideration these initial recommendations alongside the existing commitments outlined in the Cultural Strategy that identified the four areas where Council could make the most difference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing the coherency of the Belfast experience - Supporting quality authentic product - Developing skills - Improving how the city is marketed
3.12	<p>The approach</p> <p>The past two decades have given rise to a number of trends within tourism development. This has included the popularity of approaches such as cultural tourism, green tourism or local tourism. What each of these approaches and associated models have in common is an increasing awareness that sustainable forms of tourism must respect the local context and support the economic, social, environmental and cultural values of a place.</p>
3.13	<p>This ultimately leads to a more circular model. In the context of Belfast, even before COVID-19, this is a complex proposition. The city requires further growth with a clear international agenda and need to continue to attract and grow out of state visitors. The new 10 year tourism plan seeks to set out how this growth can be achieved in a sustainable and inclusive way recognising that the city's greatest asset is its people.</p>
3.14	<p>The plan will set out a shared vision for tourism in the city and will be supported by 4 strategic themes and a number of catalyst projects. The draft strategic themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grow Belfast - Experience Belfast - Position Belfast - Sustainable Belfast
3.15	<p>Each theme is supported by an evidence based body of work and research.</p>
3.16	<p><i>Strategic theme 1: Grow Belfast</i></p> <p>This theme will focus on the role of tourism in city recovery including the need for stabilisation of the tourism sector and the requirement for further growth in Belfast. This will include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic context and evidence based proposition that Belfast acts as a catalyst for the region. - Measurement of the attractiveness of the city as a destination and how this plays a key role in maximising the economic impact of each visitor by increasing average length of stay and daily spending levels. - Priority areas for investment e.g. catalyst projects. - Broadening of economic measures to include areas such as brand value. - Introducing social, cultural and environmental measures to better understand and advocate for the true value of responsible tourism growth. - Clear advocacy position on key challenges e.g. air access or visitor levy.
3.17	<p><i>Strategic theme 2: Experience Belfast</i></p> <p>Included within the ten year plan will be an interpretive development framework for tourism in Belfast that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - include experiences that can be brought to life through the development of an optimal mix of 'anchor' and ancillary products that get people into an area and keep them there - focus on encouraging international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interacting with people, engaging the senses and learning the history and stories of the places. - be about delivering immersive moments that inspire tourists not only to share their experience with others but also make them want to return to the city.
3.18	<p>How we will do this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete a mapping exercise which maps our existing tourism assets against the city's 'Belfast brand' and Tourism NI 'Embrace the Giant Spirit' brand. - Assessment of quality, market fit and sustainability of existing products. - Develop a combination of thematic and geographical clustering. - A gap analysis of potential experience based products. The gap analysis should review what is missing from the tourism offer generally taking into consideration issues such as seasonality, immersive experiences, events and festival animation, and opportunities to meet local people for instance.
3.19	<p><i>Strategic Theme 3: Position Belfast</i></p> <p>A critical dimension to any tourism development plan is understanding the market and how the brand operates in this space. In order to develop an effective strategy there also needs to be consideration of the brand architecture for the city and the region. The result should</p>

	<p>be clarity of roles and responsibilities for agencies working in this field including Council's own role and city partners such as Visit Belfast and Tourism NI. The ten year plan will set out a dynamic model for city positioning that can respond to key markets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Tourism and sub-sectors within this group. - Leisure tourism target markets including - geographic considerations and the visitor journey. - Belfast's position as a gateway destination.
3.20	<p>This theme will also take forward a new approach that pushes beyond traditional marketing methods towards enabling the people creating the Belfast experience to tell their story. Therefore the approach will be narrative driven and the new plan will set out areas of support on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we tell Belfast stories? How do we enable people to tell their Belfast story? - How do we create an emotional connection with visitors? - How do we make local stories resonate internationally?
3.21	<p>This plan will bring forward actions that support an effective way a working outlining how:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Branding is about relationship. Communications requires dialogue moving away from single direction channels. - It's no longer about a digital revolution, data is what drives the visitor economy.
3.22	<p><i>Strategic theme 4: Sustain Belfast</i></p> <p>This theme will be driven by recommendations emerging from the benchmarking completed as part of Global Destination Sustainability Index. Members will be aware that Belfast signed up to this benchmarking following Committee approval in August 2020. The Global Destination Sustainability Index is the world's leading benchmarking and performance Index for cities, their events and their visitor economy. Its purpose is to engage, enable and inspire cities to become more sustainable places to visit, meet and thrive in. In addition to benchmarking a city's environmental strategy and social sustainability performance, the GDS-Index assess criteria that are industry specific: industry supplier support (restaurants, hotels, conference centres) and convention bureau strategy and initiatives. Alongside benchmarking it helps destination management organisations, convention bureaus, key industry associations suppliers and clients to develop effective strategies and practices in support of sustainability goals.</p>

3.23	<p>Since 2019, over 60 cities have started the process of benchmarking and assessment. The goal is to have 300 cities collaborating by 2023. The Index is based on 69 Indicators broken down into four categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Environmental Performance - City Social Performance - Supplier Performance - Destination Management Performance
3.24	<p>Belfast has now completed initial benchmarking and a series of recommendations are in draft form and will be included in the 10 year plan. A number of these relate to Visit Belfast's role as the Destination Management Organisation (DMO). In addition to long-term plans, there are, however several short term recommendations that Council should consider including:</p>
3.25	<p><u>Council assets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting the ICC (as the city's Congress Venue) to achieve accreditation. - Embed tourism in city emergency planning.
3.26	<p><u>Supporting the supply chain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a tiered certification strategy for suppliers (this would be in partnership with TNI) and set goals for certification. - Funding support to help / incentivise suppliers achieve 3rd part accreditation - Food sustainability training for suppliers. - Provision of tools and templates to help suppliers create and implement their own sustainability policies.
3.27	<p>All four of these strategic themes will be underpinned by the need to support inclusive economic growth and to differentiate the Belfast offer in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. Therefore a fifth strand to the plan will consider the importance of key strategic opportunities that could bolster investment in the sector in order to support recovery and future growth. These will be catalyst projects or programmes such as:</p>
3.28	<p><i>Cultural Initiatives and Campaigns</i></p> <p>Commitment to long-term initiatives contained in cultural strategy including signature Belfast events, 2023 International Year of Culture and UNESCO City of Music.</p>

3.29	<p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Delivering the tourism pillar of the Belfast Regional City Deal including Destination Hub focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment to inclusive growth, ensuring the economic benefit of the Belfast Destination Hub development is spread across and connected into the rest of the city. - Commitment to the creation of secure and sustainable employment and skills development. - Commitment to local engagement and participation to ensure that Belfast residents are actively engaged and supported to access opportunities throughout the development and realisation of the project.
3.30	<p>Bringing the Belfast Experience to life</p> <p>Delivering a long-term fully integrated visitor experience model for the city that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopting a place-based approach to the development of our neighbourhoods through local tourism framework and investment that supports product development, jobs creation and destination management.
3.31	<p>Next steps</p> <p>A full draft plan will be presented to Committee in March 2021. Subject to approval this plan will then complete a public consultation.</p>
3.32	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no new financial implications. The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2020/21 budget for the Culture and Tourism section of the Economic Development division of the Place and Economy Departmental budget in line with existing approvals.</p>
3.33	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i> has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). The tourism plan will be subject to a further equality screening.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	None

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	City Recovery: update on key enterprise and employability initiatives
Date:	9 December 2020
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Cathy Keenan, Economic Development Manager (Local Economic Development) Sinead O'Regan, Economic Development Manager (Employability and Skills)

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in March 2020, the work programmes to support the delivery of targets under the Growing the Economy and Working and Learning pillars of the Belfast Agenda and the Inclusive Growth Strategy were agreed. Since then, the council has adopted its recovery plan "Belfast: Our Recovery" which sets out its guiding principles and key priorities to support the city to recover from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2	Given the current circumstances and the specific ongoing challenges for Belfast residents and local businesses, the purpose of this report is to update Members on the current status of a number of council-led initiatives to deliver against the priorities of the Belfast: Our Recovery plan.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the work undertaken to date by the Economic Development and Employability and Skills teams to deliver against the Council's recovery plan "Belfast: Our Recovery" Approve the budget to support the EmTech MIT conference in May 2021.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that, at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 4 March 2020, approval was given for the delivery of the Growing the Economy and Working and Learning work plans for the current financial year. These work plans were developed as part of the council's contribution towards the commitments identified under these themes within the Belfast Agenda, and to the corporate plan, as well as supporting the council's ambitions to deliver inclusive growth.
3.2	<p>This report takes account of the work that has been further developed to support the city recovery plan, Belfast: Our Recovery – focusing on job retention and creation, business support and skills development. The recovery plan highlights the ongoing impact that COVID-19 is having on our people and city in a variety of ways, with recent statistics highlighting the significant economic challenges for the city to overcome;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contraction in economic output for 2020 likely to be in the region of 12.7% (up from 9.6% in UUEPC's original forecasts in April 2020). At a local council level, the reduction in Belfast is expected to be around 10.6% The latest results from InterTradelreland's Business Monitor illustrates the impact of COVID-19 and how this has had an impact on growth plans and preparatory work in anticipation of EU Exit. Prior to the pandemic, 57% of Northern Ireland firms say they were in growth mode; this has now dropped to 22%. Meanwhile, the number of businesses that are in decline has jumped from 8% and now stands at 46%. The monitor reveals that only 18% of firms have made EU Exit preparations The latest results from the Ulster Bank PMI signalled a stagnation of business activity across the local private sector as new business, backlogs of work, and new orders from abroad and staffing levels all fell again. Meanwhile, business pessimism

	<p>increased in October with Northern Ireland again the only area of the UK to predict a fall in output over the coming year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sectors reporting the most significant decline in consumer spend include arts and culture, hospitality, leisure, tourism and transport sectors alongside professional and real estate and retail and wholesale • The impact on the labour market in Belfast and regionally is highlighted by redundancies being at their highest level since 2013 and 44,100 people furloughed in Belfast at its peak. Since January, there have been more than 1,100 redundancies from Belfast-based business, principally in the manufacturing and retail sectors • There have been significant increases in claims for unemployment benefits amongst Belfast workers aged 25-29 years old (157%), followed by 40-44 age group (146%) • 8,900 people in Belfast are claiming self-employment support allowance (SEISS) • In terms of labour market demand, there has been a 57% reduction in job vacancies from last year.
3.3	<p>The recovery plan highlights how the council will invest and work with city partners to protect and create jobs and support Belfast residents access much needed employment. The work of Economic Development and Employability and Skills teams cuts across a range of the pillars within the recovery plan, specifically addressing deliverables that contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Economy – supporting businesses to build resilience and protect and create jobs • Our City – supporting the safe reopening of the city centre and arterial routes • Our Communities – supporting businesses in our neighbourhoods and retaining jobs and reskilling residents for employment • Our Digital Innovation – developing the skills of individuals and businesses to support the City's economic recovery.
3.4	<p>As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, officers have been working closely with local residents, businesses and delivery partners across the city to adapt the support available to ensure that it remains relevant and effective. This report aims to provide some examples of how we continue to work to respond to the key areas affected by COVID-19, to ensure that businesses can once again thrive and provide much needed employment opportunities and vibrancy to local communities.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Supporting local businesses</u></p> <p>Local businesses have been significantly impacted by the macro-economic developments as a result of COVID-19. The Recovery Plan highlights our commitment to supporting these</p>

	businesses to build resilience to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 so that they can protect jobs can create new jobs in the future.
3.6	<p>Since March 2020, the council has pivoted all of our initiatives to ensure that businesses were able to get access to vital advice and guidance to support them through the pandemic. These supports include a range of one to one mentoring which is flexible to meet the needs of businesses across all sectors and access to webinars focussing on topics including business resilience, future planning, digital transformation, accessing procurement opportunities and preparing to deal with changes brought about as a result of Brexit. This year to date, 352 businesses have accessed this range of support. We have also put in place a range of financial support for new businesses (£120,000 allocated), social enterprises and cooperatives (£100,000 allocated) and have administered funding for existing businesses to adapt their operations to comply with COVID requirements and enable them to continue operating safely (£800,000 allocated, using resources secured from the Department for Communities (DfC)).</p>
3.7	<p>In addition to this, we recognise that with challenges come many opportunities, so we continue to work to encourage our entrepreneurs and innovators to start up during the pandemic and look for opportunities to grow and scale. This year to date, we have supported over 400 individuals to start a business.</p>
3.8	<p>From 16 to 22 November this year, we once again celebrated Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) by hosting a series of online events to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs and support existing businesses across the city. We put in place these events with our partners in a bid to inspire local entrepreneurs to take that first step to starting their own business, by providing honest and inspirational insights from successful entrepreneurs on their path to success as well as practical advice and guidance for start-ups to grow and build their presence online.</p>
3.9	<p>Across this week 280 individuals were engaged. Events included; Start Up Stories, Inspiring Entrepreneurs events, setting up an online shop, writing a great 60-second pitch, and sessions focussed on cooperative development including 'Co-operative Journey: from ideas to Co-operatives' and 'Funding Co-operatives: community shares and loanstock'.</p>
3.10	<p>Recognising the impact of the ongoing restrictions on local businesses, we have developed a new platform to enable them to promote their products and engage new customers online.</p>

	<p>During Global Entrepreneurship Week, we launched the Buy Belfast Christmas Market which will run until the 20th December. Over 180 businesses have virtual stalls through the platform to date and include those making sweet treats, arts and crafts, accessories and jewellery, beauty, antiques, theatre vouchers and much more.</p>
3.11	<p>The aim of the initiative is to support small businesses through this challenging time, giving them an opportunity to engage new customers. It's also good for consumers who want to shop local and provides one platform to enable them to do so. The virtual market will be used as an opportunity to test the appetite for and viability of a more permanent platform to support local businesses to sell their products online. In addition to managing the platform, we have also invested a significant amount of resources in raising awareness of the platform (search "Buy Belfast Virtual Christmas Market" on Facebook). The site went live on 20 November and by 25 November it had registered more than 3,700 users.</p>
3.12	<p>Based on research and engagement with our partners we know that many businesses have not made any preparations to deal with the operational implications of the UK's exit from the EU. Working with the team at the Innovation Factory, we are currently undertaking research to measure the potential impact of Brexit on businesses across the city, and to understand what the legislation means for businesses operating in different sectors. This will enable us to understand what support we may need to put in place to support our local businesses. This research is expected to be completed in early December. In the interim, we have put in place two Brexit readiness events to try and engage those businesses that haven't already started making preparations, and refer them to support services through Invest NI and IntertradeIreland. The first two events are focussed on services and goods movement and will include insights from key experts such as PWC, DfE, the Trader Support Service and Arthur Cox. Following the completion of the research, the committee will be provided with an update on recommendations and proposed next steps for this support.</p>
3.13	<p><u>EmTech MIT Europe conference 2021</u></p> <p>The Committee approval on 4 March 2020 included authorisation to support events and conferences across the city which contribute to the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda, raise the profile of the unit and increase the number of businesses across the city accessing support services.</p>
3.14	<p>EmTech is a series of live events brought forward by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where technology, business, and culture converge. They showcase emerging</p>

	<p>technologies with the greatest potential to change our lives. Above all, they provide access to the most innovative people and companies in the world. Aisling Events has recently acquired the EmTech MIT Europe franchise, which will bring the conference to Belfast in May 2021 virtually followed by live events in 2022 & 2023 with full conference at ICC Belfast. The virtual event in May 2021 will bring together Europe's brightest and best technology leaders, researchers, and innovators for inspiration, insight, and connection.</p>
3.15	<p>Bringing this conference to Belfast will enable unparalleled access to the most brilliant minds in science and technology from all across the world. Events in other areas have featured speakers such as Marc Benioff of Salesforce, Google's Yasmin Green and Reid Hoffman of LinkedIn. The conference is designed to give attendees the tools necessary to learn how to harness new technologies to build or maintain a competitive business advantage, increase revenue, ensure security, and make the best hires in a changing workforce and also to gain clear business insights in order to chart business strategy.</p>
3.16	<p>The conference is expected to engage 300 participants from an elite pool of local and global C-suite executives, Directors and research professionals. As well as providing opportunities for learning and development of our local talent and organisations, the combination of local content and leadership, with the best global content, will attract senior leaders from across Europe and beyond to Belfast and provide opportunities to position Belfast as a leading location for tech talent, leadership, and services, as well as enable opportunities for local companies to develop new partnerships and business across the globe.</p>
3.17	<p>Supporting this conference provides an excellent opportunity for Belfast City Council to highlight the work it is doing to develop the city's Innovation and Digital districts aligned with the ambitions of the Belfast Region City Deal, in addition to enhancing the city's start up culture and establishing Belfast as a centre of excellence for tech and, in particular, for Fintech.</p>
3.18	<p>The total cost of hosting the conference will be £120,000. Given the alignment with the ambitions set out in the Belfast Agenda and the Belfast Region City Deal, it is recommended that this is supported with funding of £20,000 from the council to maximise the take-up by Belfast-based businesses and to ensure appropriate levels of promotion of the city and its key investments. Other partners supporting the event include Invest NI, QUB, Ulster University and private sector partners.</p>

3.19	<p><u>Employability and Skills Support</u></p> <p>Since March 2020, officers have been working on a series of practical and policy initiatives in order to enhance the delivery of employability and skills support in the city. One of the key initiatives is Employability NI. A detailed report on this was presented to the November meeting of this committee. Officers consider that this approach has the potential to drive coordination and support resource alignment across government partners, and ultimately improve outcomes for participants and for employers engaging with the various interventions.</p>
3.20	<p>Members will also be aware of some of the key interventions that the council has designed and delivered in recent years. While the first six months of the pandemic have been extremely challenging in the labour market, there have been some successes in recent months as we have levered key relationships in order to generate employment opportunities, particularly focusing on those furthest from the labour market. Some of the key current and emerging opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for a series of opportunities. These include the design and delivery of a Nursing Assistant Employment Academy in preparation for open recruitment of Nursing Assistant posts. This Employment Academy was designed for those further back in the labour market who would otherwise not have applied, for example those with caring experience in an unpaid capacity or without the qualifications needed. Referrals for the Employment Academy followed targeted city-wide engagement with key employability stakeholders such as Council community services staff, ESF projects, community organisations, JBO frontline staff etc. who ensured that the right people were targeted with good initial job-matching to ensure a 'fit' between the job role and the aspirations and qualities of the person. As a result, 30 people completed this Employment Academy in mid-November and so far 20 people have been interviewed by Belfast HSC Trust, with interviews ongoing and outcomes expected in December • In addition to the Employment Academy route, officers have used a differentiated approach with for those who are newly-unemployed with relevant paid work experience and/or qualifications to apply for the BHSCT Nursing Assistant posts directly, given that there are 116 vacancies at present. This involved organising an employability stakeholders' workshop to provide providers with access to key HR and operational staff within Belfast HSC Trust who provided a walk-through of the job roles, details on how to support people to apply and the practicalities of what to expect at interview.

3.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers are now working with Belfast HSC Trust to schedule Employment Academies to meet the workforce needs of other occupational areas including the co-design of an Employment Academy aligned to recruitment of Social Care entry-level posts in early 2021 as well as upskilling academies for those at entry level positions to gain a 'better job' in Belfast HSC Trust as part of a skills escalator model. It is envisaged that a calendar of Employment Academies for Belfast HSC Trust – in tandem with the independent Social Care sector – can be identified across each year, providing a rolling programme of vacancies. <p>Officers are working with other Community Planning Partnership members to co-design Employment Academies for identified workforce demand. Emerging areas of work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast City Council: Officers are working with Corporate HR to ring-fence 25% of General Operative vacancies for an Employment Academy, targeting under-represented groups and leading to a guaranteed interview. These opportunities have an expected go-live timeframe of February/March 2021. Officers will also undertake brokerage to ensure the full spectrum of employability stakeholders in the city have an insight into these roles in the run-up to open recruitment so that they can match people within their programmes and prepare them for this recruitment exercise. Officers intend to use this as a platform to build further pathways to Council job opportunities such as through Employment Academies that target the residents of the city who would most benefit from this support while undertaking targeted brokerage for open recruitment exercises. In addition to this, work is underway to co-design an Upskilling Employment Academy for 10 Council staff which targets those at entry level positions with the opportunity to gain a lorry licence with the aim of gaining a 'better job' as a lorry driver Education Authority: Officers are re-visiting previous engagement with this employer, focusing on employment opportunities in a number of roles including bus driving jobs. In the initial phase of delivery, this workforce demand will be matched with those who are nearing the end of achieving their bus licence through a Bus Driving Employment Academy that we ran earlier in the year but who have not been able to access a job (primarily as opportunities were put on hold due to COVID-19). After this, opportunities will be widened out to target other groups including those who are newly unemployed and in precarious employment as well retaining a focus on Inclusive Growth target groups such as those who are currently economically inactive/long-term unemployed
------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers intend to undertake scoping with other CPP members to identify employment opportunities and create pathways for residents to access these jobs through Employment Academies and other relevant interventions including Jobstart (6 months paid work), Work Experience Programme (13 weeks with £10 per day benefit top-up), Apprenticeship Incentives etc.
3.22	<p><u>Logistics & Transport sector opportunities</u></p> <p>Officers have engaged with the full range of job brokerage services across the city to promote immediate higher-skilled vacancies for those who are newly unemployed. These include 40 Customs Officers posts required as part of Brexit preparations.</p>
3.23	<p>Sectoral engagement is also underway through Logistics UK and Road Haulage Association to confirm workforce support needs across the logistics sector. This sector is experiencing continued demand across warehousing and driving occupations due to COVID-19 and Brexit. Again, Officers have created the flexibility of differentiated approaches that meet the needs of both employers and residents, from those who are economically inactive to those who are newly unemployed or whose employment is precarious through to young people who are eligible for an Apprenticeship.</p>
3.24	<p><u>Social Care sector opportunities</u></p> <p>Work is ongoing with the wider independent Social Care sector to deliver bespoke Employment Academies to meet ongoing job demand. This includes residential care and domiciliary care for older people through to support work within organisations working with those who are experiencing disability, homelessness etc.</p>
3.25	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The EmTech MIT Europe conference will be resourced from the 2020/21 Economic Development budget associated with contributions to events and conferences, agreed by the Committee on 4 March 2020. This allocation was previously agreed by this Committee. All other activities outlined within this report will be resourced from the 2020/21 Economic Development and Employability and Skills budgets agreed by this Committee on 4 March 2020.</p>
3.26	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Each of the proposed projects referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. The unit is currently</p>

	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
	None



Subject:	Request for reduced off-street parking charges during Christmas
Date:	09 December 2020
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise of a recent request received from Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) on a proposal to reduce off-street parking charges in council run car parks during the Christmas shopping period.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Note the request from Belfast City Centre Management for discounted parking charges at council car parks, and to consider declining the request at this time based on the feedback and information provided within this report; 2) Recognise that city centre accessibility is a key priority going forward in terms of encouraging people to use the city centre, and to that end, it is proposed that a joined up

	<p>approach is agreed for the New Year, in conjunction with DfI, Translink, the Council, city centre businesses, Belfast Chamber, BIDs and BCCM.</p> <p>3) Agree, in accordance with Standing Order 47 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decisions would not be subject to call-in, on the basis that an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the Council's or the public's interest.</p>
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	<p>Belfast City Centre Management Company (BCCM) recently contacted the Council with a proposal to discount charges in Council run off-street car parks in the lead up to Christmas. BCCM suggested the move would signal "a positive message to support these (retail and hospitality) sectors" amid ongoing uncertainty and lock-down measures.</p>
3.2	<p>The letter also noted that off-street car park occupancy levels are well below what would normally be expected, mainly as a result of the home-working directives and that it was unlikely to cause the previous congestion issues that resulted after the discount incentive was introduced.</p>
3.3	<p>Officers have consulted various stakeholders, including retail and multi-storey private car park operators, to gauge the levels of support for reducing off-street parking levies. The feedback is summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The private sector will not be introducing additional parking discounts as they are down on income already this year. They pointed out that discounts typically lead to congestion issues and they are not in favour of off-street car park charges being discounted. • A DfI ministerial decision is required in relation to on-street car parking changes, although officials indicated that they are not supportive of the proposal due to previous congestion issues. DfI has also removed substantial numbers of on-street spaces to date to accommodate safe distancing and promote active and sustainable travel. However, there are ongoing discussions between DfI, Council and Belfast Chamber to discuss the 'red barriers' and the cordoned off on-street car parking. • Views expressed on behalf of businesses indicate they are not supportive of discounting public parking due to congestion issues and the potential impact on private MSCP operators. • Previously free parking on council car parks led to congestion, circulating traffic etc. and was therefore not subsequently encouraged. Council car parks are typically cheaper per

	Corporation Square	-11,264	-4,657
	Corporation Street	-8,166	-3,288
	Cromac Street	-10,224	-8,313
	Dunbar Street	-6,924	-4,966
	Exchange Street	-8,346	-5,733
	Hope Street North	-13,476	-9,717
	Kent Street	-8,115	-4,901
	Little Donegall Street	-10,219	-6,714
	Little Victoria Street	-22,791	-7,543
	Marlborough Avenue	-1,372	-1,056
	Smithfield Market	-22,721	-14,371
	Station Street	-14,643	-10,069
	Grand Total	-158,571	-95,850
3.9	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u>		
	None associated with this report.		
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached		
	None		