

# Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

12th May, 2026

## **MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall, and remotely via MS Teams on Wednesday, 13th May, 2026 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

1. **Routine Matters**
  - (a) Apologies
  - (b) Minutes
  - (c) Declarations of Interest
2. **Restricted Items**
  - (a) Vacant to Vibrant Programme Update (Pages 1 - 24)
  - (b) 2 Royal Avenue Update (Pages 25 - 52)
  - (c) Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme (Pages 53 - 78)
  - (d) Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Update (Pages 79 - 102)
3. **Request to Present**
  - (a) Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (Pages 103 - 106)
4. **Growing Business and the Economy**
  - (a) External Markets Approvals (Pages 107 - 110)
  - (b) Enterprise and Business Growth Support Update (Pages 111 - 118)



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

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<b>Subject:</b>	Request to Present – Belfast City & Region Place Partnership
<b>Date:</b>	13 May 2026
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Marie Miller, Marketing Manager, City Regeneration & Development

<b>Restricted Reports</b>													
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>												
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>													
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;"><b>After Committee Decision</b></td> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>After Council Decision</b></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Sometime in the future</b></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Never</b></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		<b>After Committee Decision</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>After Council Decision</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Sometime in the future</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Never</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>
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<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report / Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Committee to receive a presentation from representatives of the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership at the Committee Meeting in June 2026.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree to receive a presentation from representatives of the Belfast City &amp; Region Place Partnership at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting in June 2026.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	The Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) is a joint public–private initiative delivering a structured programme of work to attract inclusive investment that supports regeneration, infrastructure development, and a modern built environment for Belfast and the wider City Region.
3.2	The Partnership is supported by a broad coalition of public, private and anchor institutions, including Belfast City Council, all Belfast Region City Deal partner councils, Belfast Harbour, Translink, Queen’s University Belfast, and representatives from the local development and regeneration sector.
3.3	Governance is provided through a Taskforce comprising senior representatives from across the public and private sectors, including the Chief Executive and senior officers from Belfast City Council. The Taskforce is chaired by Marie Doyle, Belfast office senior partner, Deloitte.
3.4	Members will recall that, at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 4 June 2025, the BCRPP Taskforce presented an update on the previous year’s programme and outlined the proposed approach for 2025/2026. At the City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 25 June 2025 members approved Council investment as part of the wider public and private sector partnership contribution towards the delivery of the BCRPP

	2025/ 2026 programme, and to recommend to the BCRPP that a Community Forum/Reference Group be established to provide a mechanism for representatives from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sectoral Advisory Panel for Community Planning to engage with members of the BCRPP.
3.5	The 2025/2026 programme commenced on 1 September 2025 and is delivering a coordinated programme of work focused on attracting inclusive investment to support regeneration, infrastructure delivery and the development of a modern built environment in Belfast and the wider Region. This work contributes directly to the shared ambition of driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth.
3.6	For the Council, the Partnership represents an important lever within the wider Position the City to Compete proposition, which aims to promote and position Belfast globally to attract inclusive and sustainable investment. It also aligns with the International Relations Framework 2025-2028, ensuring coherent and positive messaging about Belfast as a vibrant trade and investment location. In addition, the proactive advocacy and engagement pillar of work undertaken by the BCRPP is supporting advancement of the Belfast Place-Based Growth Proposition, notably in relation to engagement with the Northern Ireland Executive.
3.7	Representatives from the BCRPP Taskforce have requested the opportunity to present the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in June 2026. This presentation will provide Members with an update on the current programme of work and outline proposed activities for 2026/2027, including priority issues and objectives for the Partnership moving forward. This will also include an update in relation to the Community Forum / Reference Group.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>
	None associated with this report.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
	None associated with this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None

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Subject:	External Markets Approvals		
Date:	13 May 2026		
Reporting Officer:	Keith Forster, Director of Economic Development		
Contact Officer:	Clodagh Cassin, Markets Development Manager		
<b>Restricted Reports</b>			
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"/>	
<b>Call-in</b>			
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>		
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval for two external markets, namely Titanic Quarter Night Market and Food Festival in August 2026 as well as a series of Sunday markets in Writers' Square.		
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>		
2.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve an external market at Titanic as part of the 2026 Fleadh</li> <li>• Approve a series of Sunday markets at Writers' Square.</li> </ul>		
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>		
3.1	Belfast City Council has exclusive rights to hold markets in Belfast. Anyone wishing to operate a market or car boot sale within Belfast must apply to Council for permission. The Markets Unit has recently received two applications for external markets.		

3.2	<p><u>Titanic Quarter Night Market</u></p> <p>An application has been received from Urban Events, working on behalf of the Belfast Maritime Trust, Titanic Belfast, and Titanic Quarter Belfast to deliver a programme of complementary activity at Hamilton Dock, located in front of the SS <i>Nomadic</i>, during Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026. They are hoping to have 40 stalls at the event.</p>
3.3	<p>This programme is designed to enhance the existing cultural offering within the Titanic Quarter across the Fleadh period, working alongside scheduled activity such as the Belfast Film Festival outdoor movies and walkabout entertainment. The intention is not to compete with the city centre programme, but to provide a high-quality, accessible alternative that supports the wider visitor experience.</p>
3.4	<p>The proposed activity will consist of a series of curated market-led events, programmed across four consecutive days, offering both daytime and evening engagement. These events are designed to serve multiple audiences, including visitors to the Fleadh, tourists and residents within the Titanic Quarter, residents of East Belfast, and those staying within the temporary Fleadh campsite. The programme will provide a welcoming, family-friendly environment and an accessible option for those seeking to engage with the atmosphere of the Fleadh without entering the city centre footprint.</p>
3.5	<p>In addition, the events will create a supported and structured trading environment for small businesses and independent producers. This is particularly important for traders who wish to benefit from the increased footfall associated with the Fleadh but may not be equipped to operate within the longer trading hours, access times and logistical requirements of city centre trading. The site at Hamilton Dock offers a controlled environment where access, parking, infrastructure, and operational support are facilitated. The use of Hamilton Dock has received landowner permissions, with ongoing engagement and agreement.</p>
3.6	<p>The event programme is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 &amp; 7 August – Titanic Quarter Night Markets Evening: focused markets operating in a vibrant, social environment, with an emphasis on food, music, and creative activity. These events will support the evening economy within the area while remaining accessible, inclusive, and appropriately managed within a controlled event environment</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 &amp; 9 August – Titanic Quarter Food Festival: a daytime food festival showcasing high-quality local producers and street food traders, celebrating the best of regional and artisan food offerings. The programme will include a live food demonstration kitchen and a dedicated “Meet the Maker” area, providing opportunities for visitors to engage directly with producers and learn more about their products. Programming for these elements is currently in development and is expected to feature guest contributors.</li> </ul>																								
3.7	<p><u>Regular Sunday Market, Writers’ Square</u></p> <p>The Markets Team has received another application from Urban Events, proposing a regular Sunday market in Writers’ Square. The proposed dates and times are as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="316 748 970 1370"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Time</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>28 June 2026</td> <td>12pm-5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 July 2026</td> <td>12pm-5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19 July 2026</td> <td>12pm-5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23 August 2026</td> <td>12pm-5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30 August 2026</td> <td>12pm-5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 September 2026</td> <td>12pm-5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13 September 2026</td> <td>12pm-5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18 September 2026</td> <td>Late night – 5pm-10pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 September 2026</td> <td>12pm-5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>27 September 2026</td> <td>12pm-5pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30 October 2026</td> <td>Late night – 5pm-10pm</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Time	28 June 2026	12pm-5pm	5 July 2026	12pm-5pm	19 July 2026	12pm-5pm	23 August 2026	12pm-5pm	30 August 2026	12pm-5pm	6 September 2026	12pm-5pm	13 September 2026	12pm-5pm	18 September 2026	Late night – 5pm-10pm	20 September 2026	12pm-5pm	27 September 2026	12pm-5pm	30 October 2026	Late night – 5pm-10pm
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3.8	<p>The markets will be operated on behalf of the Cathedral Quarter BID by Urban Events. The BID respects the importance of St George’s Market as a protected and established asset within the city, both historically and commercially. The proposed Writers’ Square market is not intended to compete with or detract from St George’s Market, but instead to respond to a separate and currently unmet need within the Cathedral Quarter.</p>																								
3.9	<p>The location, time of year (peak season), format and scale have all been designed with St George’s Market in mind, to ensure the proposal does not detract from or compete with it. The market is aimed at serving a different audience and part of the city, particularly visitors and footfall already within the Cathedral Quarter, rather than drawing from St George’s. In addition to supporting tourism, hospitality, commercial and residential activity within the</p>																								

	Cathedral Quarter and wider North Belfast, the market also plays an important role in increasing positive use of Writers' Square. This also helps address ongoing anti-social and problematic behaviour in the area, which the Cathedral Quarter BID, DfC and PSNI have been actively working to combat.
3.10	While the application references a weekly market, this is only for a defined seasonal trial period, not a continuous year-round offering. The programme is structured in blocks, with several weeks' break between operating periods, to avoid establishing a direct ongoing weekly alternative to St George's Market. The intention is to test demand and deliver targeted activation during peak periods, rather than replicate an established weekly market model. St George's Market operates on Sundays from 10am–3pm. The proposed operating hours for Writers' Square are 12pm–5pm, intentionally set to open later and extend beyond St George's trading window. This was a deliberate decision to avoid direct overlap and competition, while supporting afternoon and early evening activity within the Cathedral Quarter.
3.11	While the request is for a market that will attract up to 40 traders, a more realistic assessment is that the market will attract 20–25 traders on most market dates. The higher number has been included to allow flexibility for occasional increases around seasonal events, late night markets, and periods of higher demand, rather than representing the weekly norm.
3.12	The market is positioned as an outdoor, small-scale, curated variety/specialist market, focused on arts, crafts and a limited number of high-quality ambient food producers. This differs from the broader and more established offering at St George's Market and is intended to complement rather than replicate existing provision.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Resource Implications</b>
	These markets will bring an income to the council of £1,500.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b>
	No specific equality/good relations implications. No negative impact on rural areas.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	None



Subject:	Enterprise and Business Growth – update and forward workplan
Date:	13 May 2026
Reporting Officer:	Keith Forster, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Margie McKay, Enterprise & Business Growth Manager
<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> <span style="float: right;">                 Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                 No <input type="checkbox"/> </span>	

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise members of a range of activity undertaken in 2025/26 to support the development of new and existing businesses across the City. The report sets out key priority areas of work for the 2026/27 financial year, seeking approval of activity to support the delivery of the targets under the “Our Economy” pillar of the Belfast Agenda.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the work undertaken and outputs delivered in the financial year to date</li> <li>• Agree the priority work areas presented for the 2026/27 financial year and approve the allocations from the existing 2026/2027 Enterprise and Business Growth budget as set out in sections 3.4-3.10</li> <li>• Note and endorse the financial contribution to support the ongoing development of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (work to be coordinated through Newry, Mourne and Down District Council) up to a maximum of £45,000</li> <li>• Note and endorse the contribution to support the ongoing delivery of the Northern Ireland Entrepreneurship Support Service (Go Succeed) and the achievement of the Council’s statutory target up to a maximum of £317,415.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>2025/26 Update</u></b></p> <p>Members will be aware that within the 2026/27 period, the Enterprise and Business Growth team has been working to develop and deliver a range of activity to support the growth and development of new and existing businesses across the city, aligned with the “Our Economy” pillar of the Belfast Agenda.</p>
3.2	<p>Since April 2025, the team has been working with partners to develop and deliver interventions that address the City’s challenges in relation to low levels of business start-up, innovation, competitiveness, and productivity. Some of the key achievements in 2025/26 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enterprise awareness activity: engaged 1258 individuals through community outreach activity targeting under-represented groups including people with disabilities, individuals who are economically inactive, females and young people providing them with tools to overcome barriers to take positive steps to starting a business. We also enabled test trading opportunities for 48 new businesses through our dedicated start up space at St George’s Market and many of those are seeking to trade at the market on a more regular basis or are exploring alternative retail outlets for their products.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start a business activity: 900 individuals recruited onto the 'Start' stage of Go Succeed availing of nearly 5,000 hours of 1-1 mentoring support focused on business plan development and business fundamentals.</li> <li>• Support for Social Enterprises and Co-Operatives: 54 organisations were supported with one-to-one mentoring, advice, and guidance. We again delivered the Social Economy Incentive Fund in late 2025, with an available pot of almost £90,000 to support social economy businesses to bring forward their business growth plans. There were 49 eligible applications for the SEIF, with 22 applicants invited to pitch for funding, 17 applicants were successful with just under £90,000 awarded to support growth goals.</li> <li>• Growing a business: 435 existing Belfast businesses supported on the 'Growth' and 'Scaling' stages of the Go Succeed service availing of nearly 5,500 hours of 1-1 mentoring support tailored to support business growth aspirations. Through the service we have also successfully awarded and administered grants to businesses to remove barriers to growth, with 127 Belfast businesses receiving Go Succeed grants in the 26/27 year to a value of £285,220.57.</li> <li>• Innovation Factory: overall performance against targets at the centre improved significantly in the 2026/27 year. Centre occupancy is now at 94% occupancy (with a final average occupancy for the year at 72%) against a 90% target. Throughout the year we have been working through a reprioritisation change in the contract enabling performance targets to be amended to streamline reporting and to be more reflective of the current market.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p><b>2026/27 Business Plan</b></p> <p>Building on these achievements, the proposed work programme for the next financial year will include a number of new work areas including:</p>
3.4	<p><u>Starting a Business</u>: Key to meeting the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order of 2015 is the continued delivery of the Go Succeed service. The service aims to foster a culture of entrepreneurship, attract more people into the "pipeline" and to help more high-growth potential start-ups to get the help they need to grow and scale. The ability to attract more people into the "pipeline" will require innovative approaches, particularly where there is a need for cultural change amongst under-represented groups. It is expected that this will support the creation of 271 new businesses and 209 new jobs. To support delivery of the numbers highlighted above, Belfast City Council will make a payment of £317,415 in match funding towards service delivery.</p>

	<p><u>Community Outreach:</u> Crucial to the success of our business support interventions is the fostering of an entrepreneurial mindset and creation of a pipeline of entrepreneurs in Belfast. This activity involves actively targeting under-represented groups including people with disabilities, individuals who are economically inactive, females and young people providing them with tools to overcome barriers to take positive steps to starting a business. A budget of £80,000 is allocated to this area of work; activity will include delivery of our young entrepreneurs to watch initiative, our fearless event targeting people with a disability, as well as a range of female focussed interventions and Community partnerships. We will also continue with our test trading offering at St George’s Market.</p> <p><u>Social Enterprise and Cooperative Development:</u> In the next financial year, we will refine our social economy action plan based on research conducted in the 25/26 year and engagement with appropriate sector partners. A continued area of focus is the administration of the Social Economy Incentive Fund (SEIF) with a budget of £90,000 however we will also be working with a co-design group to develop a roadmap for the SEIF to progress against the strategic goals in the Belfast Agenda action plans. In addition to the SEIF, a budget of £90,000 has been set aside for dedicated social enterprise and co-operative support. This will cover a range of support interventions including mentoring, workshops, and events via our Go Social delivery. Go Social delivery is complementary to Go Succeed, encouraging a pipeline of social entrepreneurs progressing into Go Succeed support.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Growing a Business:</u> The Go Succeed Service has proven successful over the past two years in providing flexible, tailored growth support for existing businesses. It is expected that through the service we will engage with 323 businesses and directly lead to the creation of 102 new jobs. We will also work to deliver a series of workshops and events on issues such as financial planning and forecasting, E-commerce essentials, Sales and Marketing, accessing finance, Writing a Winning bid, Strategy and Business Planning and Employee legal considerations. Go Succeed grants will continue to support this stream of work with the target for 2026/27 to be confirmed.</p> <p>Whilst our main area of support for established businesses is Go Succeed, we also ensure we are responsive to the needs of our business community. Work is currently under way on a range of new development projects including support for high growth sectors, place-based activity where there is demand and a focus on the Fleadh Cheoil opportunities to businesses. Alongside our colleagues in Culture and Tourism, we are leading on the business engagement aspect of the Fleadh Cheoil. This includes ensuring businesses are fully informed on the</p>

	<p>opportunities available to them through the Fleadh but also of the aspects which may impact them including licensing and road closures. Activity to date has included information sessions disseminating relevant information to businesses in the City Centre and beyond as well as gathering information from the businesses on what they need to get 'Fleadh ready'. An overall budget for these additional "Growing a Business" support activities is set at £282,614. Where new interventions require specific approval, additional details will be brought back to the Committee for approval if required.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Supporting events</u>: The Enterprise and Business Growth Team is regularly asked to sponsor/financially support events and conferences in areas that – to a greater or lesser extent – are associated with the unit's priorities, as set out above. While these events can often act as a useful promotional vehicle for Council interventions and can help secure referrals to programme activity, many of these tend to be last-minute requests for relatively small amounts of money and provide little measurable return. In order to assess the impact of the requests, officers have developed a process to measure and score these requests based on their alignment to the "Our Economy" pillar of the Belfast Agenda, the contribution to the work of the team as set out in this report and the potential to profile the Council activities and generate interest and demand for the services. The total budget to support contributions to events and conferences in this financial year is £73,000 and it is proposed that each application for support will be capped at a maximum of £10,000. Objectives and outputs will be agreed through a funding agreement with the event organisers. This approach has been effective in the past and has helped ensure that our resources are focused on areas of maximum return. Any events that will have wider corporate impact will be brought back to the relevant Committee for consideration and endorsement.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Scaling Support and Innovation</u>: The 'Our Economy' pillar of the Belfast Agenda identifies the need to focus on educational inequalities, jobs and skills and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. A key part of sustainable economic growth is the focus on key growth sectors and emerging technologies; these include Creative and Digital (Virtual Production, Immersive), Fintech and AI.</p> <p>This year we will continue to build upon our work with the City Innovation and Culture and Arts team, working to build capacity among local businesses. Work will include supporting businesses to grow and scale, provide knowledge and connections within SMEs to access export opportunities, challenge funds and alternative funding sources, including those coming from the Belfast Region City Deal. We will also continue to work with key partners including</p>

	<p>Digital Catapult, Ulster University, Queen’s University and Invest NI to increase the number of innovation driven enterprises and businesses with scaling potential.</p> <p>This work also directly aligns with the DfE funded Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) within which proposed outcomes include higher productivity, wages and employment rates. Members agreed a series of activities to be take forward using LEP funding at the 11 March Committee meeting. Numbers of businesses in highest productivity sectors (aligned with those identified above with a focus on Studio Ulster), number of businesses who export and percentage employment in Invest NI supported companies will all be metrics used to monitor progress. A budget of £100,000 has been allocated to this area of work.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Innovation Factory</u>: Members will be aware that the Innovation Factory is the council-owned innovation centre located in Forthriver Business Park on Springfield Road. The Enterprise and Business Growth Team is responsible for the contract management of the Innovation Factory. This role includes management and monitoring of the performance of the Service Provider in operating the Innovation Factory in accordance with the performance regime of the Contract. On occasion this area of work requires guidance from subject matter experts on both contractual and commercial matters. A budget of £15,800 is allocated to this within the current estimates.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Research and development</u>: The programme of work set out in this report is informed by an ongoing series of research and insights work, undertaken in collaboration with our Business Research and Development team. This ensures that our programmes are receptive and responsive to the changing needs of the local economy and helps track the impact and outcomes against high level strategic commitments. This will include continued research of the key growth areas, gaps in existing provision and challenges in the local economy as well as a continued subscription to the Beauhurst platform ensuring informed intelligence. A budget of £50,000 is allocated to this area of work and individual research and services will be commissioned appropriately as part of this overall budget allocation.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Belfast Business Promise</u>: The inclusive growth city charter is a key commitment in the Council’s Inclusive Growth strategy and the Belfast Agenda. Co-created with businesses, it was designed to provide an assessment framework to enable employers to look at their current practices and identify where they could make changes which would have a beneficial impact on inclusive growth in the city. Driven by the Council’s Social Policy Working Group (SPWG), the charter has been operationalised as the Belfast Business Promise (BBP) since</p>

	<p>April 2023 and delivered by a cross-council team, led by the Strategy, Programmes and Partnership and Economic Development teams, with support from Corporate HR, CPS and Climate teams.</p> <p>A report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March outlined a series of operational and structural changes to the service and these were endorsed as a way forward for the coming year. In order to support delivery, a budget of £50,000 is allocated to Belfast Business Promise and this year will focus on further development/refinement of the business promise, with potential development of a CRM which will enable greater potential to scale and manage the programme.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Financial and Resource Implications</b>
4.1	The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2026/27 budget for the Enterprise & Business growth section of the Place and Economy departmental budget that was approved as part of the 2026/27 estimates process.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b>
5.1	Each of the proposed projects referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. Considerations given to equality and good relations impacts at the initial stages of project development and monitored throughout delivery. Officers will work closely with the Equality and Good Relations Team on this activity.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	None

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