

**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

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 13th January, 2021 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 - 4)
- (b) DfC Revitalisation Fund Update (Pages 5 - 12)

3. **Request to Present**

- (a) Request for Presentation - BID One (Pages 13 - 16)

4. **Growing Business & the Economy**

- (a) Sunday Opening Hours for Retailers (Pages 17 - 20)

- (b) Covid-19 Health and Safety Adjustments to Cruise Belfast Welcome Hub
(Pages 21 - 24)

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

- (a) Alternative to York Street Interchange (Cllr O'Hara to raise)

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

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Subject:	Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID): request for presentation
Date:	13 January 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Senior Manager, Economy

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	The purpose of the report is to present a request to members to receive a presentation at the next meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee from Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID).
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the upcoming ballot for BID One • Agree to receive a presentation from the BID Team at the February meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were established for the first time in Northern Ireland in 2015. There are three BIDs in Belfast:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast One covers the retail core from City Hall to Royal Avenue, bounded by Victoria Street and Millfield • Destination CQ covers the Cathedral Quarter, encompassing the area from High Street to Great George’s Street, bounded by Donegall Quay and Millfield • Linen Quarter BID covers the area from City Hall to Dublin Road, bounded by Joy Street and Durham Street.
3.2	<p>Businesses located within the BID area agree a five year business plan and pay a mandatory annual contribution to the delivery of the business plan, based on the NAV of their property. BID services must demonstrate that they are additional to core services that are delivered by other statutory partners (such as the Council, Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure etc.). Belfast One was the first BID to be established in Belfast in April 2016 and, in line with the legislation governing BIDs, it must now go to a re-ballot if it is to be extended for another five years.</p>
3.3	<p>The Belfast One BID is managed by a small core team and is supported by a Board which has representation across all business sectors in the Belfast One area. The council has an advisor role on the Board through staff from the Place and Economy Department. Officers from other departments – particularly City and Neighbourhoods – also work very closely with the BID on issues such as street cleansing, addressing anti-social behaviour and city promotion.</p>
3.4	<p>Belfast One has now produced a draft business plan for the coming five year period. It is using this business plan as the basis of a consultation and engagement process with levy payers, with a view to securing its re-election for a further five year period. The key priorities for action in the business plan are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote: the aim of this work is to drive footfall into the city centre. Potential activities will include promotional events (many of which will be in partnership with the council); promoting the evening economy and carrying out research to support the work of the BID and other partners • Enhance: the aim of this work is to deliver projects which will improve the experience of visitors and enable businesses to thrive in a positive trading environment. Activities likely to be supported will include support for City Centre Beat scheme; additional cleansing activities through the “Clean Team” and exploring additional lighting and dressing schemes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support: the aim of this work is to drive down business costs and to provide practical support to all businesses within the BID area. Activities likely to be supported include waste management and recycling support; business workshops on topics such as fire safety, merchandising and social media and exploring new ways of integrating new technologies in the city centre.
3.5	The ballot will open on 21 January 2021 for a period of 6 weeks, closing on 4 March 2021. The decision of the ballot will be known on 5 March. All levy payers will be entitled to vote in the ballot. Belfast City Council has a number of properties in the BID One area and will therefore be entitled to a vote for each of the properties.
3.6	In order to raise awareness of the work of the BID and its plans for the new five year period from April 2021, it is proposed that a presentation on the draft business plan is made at the February 2021 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
3.7	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The current levy payable by the council to Belfast One is in the region of £12,000 on an annual basis. This is set aside within existing budget estimates.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>No specific equality implications. BIDs have been established in a number of locations across Northern Ireland.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None

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Subject:	Sunday opening hours for essential retailers
Date:	13 January 2021
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director, Place and Economy
Contact Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic 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 the report is to update members on the uptake of extended Sunday trading in the run-up to Christmas and to advise the committee of requests to extend Sunday opening hours for large retailers in order to support the management of shopper numbers as part of ongoing social distancing measures.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the uptake of extended Sunday opening hours in the run-up to Christmas • Consider the request from large retailers to support extended Sunday opening hours (in line with Northern Ireland Executive guidance) on a temporary basis, to be reviewed by 5 April 2021, as part of the efforts to manage shopper volume and support social distancing.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that, during the initial period of lockdown from late March 2020, Belfast City Council agreed not to take enforcement action against those essential retailers that opened earlier than the current permitted opening time of 1pm on a Sunday (for large stores as smaller stores are already permitted to open). This measure was put in place to support healthcare staff and vulnerable individuals in particular, and there was no end date to retain flexibility throughout the uncertain period.
3.2	From end June 2020, the retail sector was permitted to re-open in line with the various measures set out in the Northern Ireland Executive's Pathway to Recovery. However, since then, the Executive has also announced a number of shorter and more focused closures for certain sectors including close contact services and hospitality.
3.3	The current Northern Ireland Executive guidance – which became operational on 26 December 2020 – confirms that only those retailers deemed as “essential” retail are permitted to remain open at this time. This decision is to be reviewed after four weeks but the Executive has suggested that it expects that these restrictions will remain in place for six weeks (i.e. until 6 February 2021 at least).
3.4	Taking account of the specific challenges faced by the retail sector, and as a means of managing numbers wishing to access retail premises in the run-up to Christmas, the council advised businesses that it would not carry out enforcement action for all types of large retail shops (essential and non-essential) should they open or deliver from 10am onwards on a Sunday (up to 6pm). This was a temporary arrangement, running from 22 November 2020 to 10 January 2021.
3.5	In the context of the current NI Executive guidance, business organisations and individual retailers have been engaging with the council to feed back on the impact of the temporary non-enforcement approach in the run-up to Christmas and to request that the council considers extending this approach to support retail stores in managing shopper volume at peak times to ensure social distancing.
3.6	Feedback from retailers on the extended opening hours in the run-up to Christmas was universally supportive of the provisions made by the council. Broadly, those retailers

	<p>reported an increase in sales from previous levels, and all considered that trade was spread better across the day. This meant that they were able to manage social distancing measures more effectively and provide a positive experience for those visiting the stores. The supermarkets, in particular, noted that it had allowed them to better manage their numbers over the longer hours, instead of the shorter five hour window during which they noted that there was a much more “intense” volume of shoppers. The supermarkets also noted that the extended hours enabled them to expand their delivery service and that these slots were very popular with customers. Some smaller retailers and those operating on an appointment-only basis felt that the extended hours gave them an opportunity to drive new customers with the additional flexibility.</p>
3.7	<p>Given the positive experience in the run-up to Christmas, and taking account of the ongoing need to support social distancing measures until the vaccine roll-out makes significant progress, a number of the large retailers and business support organisations have asked that the council continues with the current approach to enforcement after the proposed end date on 10 January 2021. Officers have been engaging with colleagues in other council areas and we know that an extension of this approach to being considered across other council areas – and has already been agreed for the Lisburn and Castlereagh City, Derry City and Strabane District Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council areas.</p>
3.8	<p>Given the degree of uncertainty in the short-term, with even the most optimistic of scenarios indicating that a significant vaccine roll-out will take until Spring at the earliest, it is proposed that the current approach to enforcement remains in place until 5 April 2021, subject to review and in keeping with Northern Ireland Executive decisions relating to retail opening.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> No specific financial or resource implications for council.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> No specific equality implications.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

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Subject:	Covid-19 health and safety adjustments to Cruise Belfast Welcome Hub
Date:	13 January 2021
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	The purpose of this report is to update Members on plans to work in partnership with Tourism NI and Visit Belfast to facilitate necessary health and safety adjustments to the Cruise Belfast Welcome Hub and neighbouring berths at Belfast Harbour in advance of the cruise season which is due to commence in March 2021.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the contents of the report and agree that Belfast City Council works in partnership with Tourism NI and Visit Belfast to facilitate necessary Covid-19 health

	and safety upgrades using appropriate contractual mechanisms as advised by Legal Services.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>In 2019, a partnership between Tourism NI, Visit Belfast and Belfast Harbour saw the opening of a dedicated cruise terminal in Belfast. After a record breaking year, Belfast welcomed 146 ship and over 280,000 visitors into the harbour and a global panel (Cruise Critic) named Belfast the best port of call in the UK and Ireland. The purpose built terminal facility can accommodate all vessels currently operating in the UK and Ireland region and the berth has been dredged to accommodate the next generation of ships, designed to carry over 6,000 passengers and crew. The cruise terminal facilities currently include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cruise visitor information centre • Shore excursion coach parking • Dedicated shuttle bus space • Taxi rank • Free Wifi • Destination showcase video wall • Gift shop • Washroom facilities including disabled access WC • Security desks • Seating
3.2	<p>Belfast's visitor economy has been severely challenged by Covid-19 and it is anticipated that many of the challenges that the pandemic has brought to the tourism and hospitality industry may be with us for some time in the future. In order to ensure that Belfast is ready to allow the first cruise ship of the season to dock in the city on 7 March 2021, Tourism NI have agreed to allocate up to £110,000 of capital investment for Belfast City Council to administer to Visit Belfast and Belfast Harbour to allow for specific Covid-19 health and safety adjustments to be made to the terminal and surrounding passenger docking areas. The adjustments will be made in the terminal itself and at the 3 berths in Belfast Harbour where a ship may dock (D1, Stormont Dock and Pollock Dock). Examples of adjustments include but are not limited to protective screens, internal and external directional signage, temperature check stations and hand sanitizing stands. These adjustments will give assurance to visitors that Belfast is a safe place to visit as well as being necessary to reduce the potential spread of the virus.</p>

3.3	<p>Tourism NIs investment of £110,000 inclusive of VAT will be awarded through their annual allocation from the Department for Economy. In order to ensure good corporate governance and continue to support a three-way partnership between Tourism NI, Visit Belfast, and Belfast City Council, it is proposed that an agreement is set up by Belfast City Council facilitate the transfer of funds from Tourism NI to Visit Belfast.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial implications for Council other than an allocation of officer time to facilitate contract management and administration. The timing for administration of the Agreement and processing invoices is challenging but achievable and necessary in the context of facilitating a return to business and recovery for the tourism sector.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The proposed works will need to adhere to required equality implications including access requirements.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None

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