

**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 in the via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 3rd March, 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 (Report to Follow)
- (b) Festival 2022 Commission (Pages 1 - 18)
- (c) DfC COVID19 Revitalisation Fund (Pages 19 - 30)

3. Presentations

- (a) Visit Belfast (Report to Follow)
- (b) York Street Interchange Alternatives - Mr. M. Hackett

4. **Requests to Present**

- (a) Requests to Present to Committee (Pages 31 - 34)

5. **Regenerating Places & Improving Infrastructure**

- (a) Connectivity Issues - Letters to Ministers (Pages 35 - 54)

6. **Growing Business & the Economy**

- (a) Economic Inactivity Research (Pages 55 - 58)
- (b) Update on Tourism (Pages 59 - 68)

7. **Strategic & Operational Issues**

- (a) Belfast Bikes - allocation of stock to social enterprises and charities (Pages 69 - 72)
- (b) Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (Pages 73 - 76)

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

- (a) Developing Clean Tech in the City (Ald. Dorrian 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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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:	Requests to present to CGR Committee
Date:	3 rd March 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager

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	To advise Members of a request to present to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree to receive a presentation from Department for Infrastructure (DfI) senior officials on the Belfast Rapid Transport (Glider) Phase 2 scheme. Agree to receive a presentation from the Ulster University providing an update on the ongoing development works, the migration strategy for the new City Centre Campus, and campus impact study.
3.0	Main report

	<u>Belfast Rapid Transport (Glider) Phase 2 Scheme</u>
3.1	The BRT (Glider) Phase 1 scheme launched in September 2018, has provided the city with the G1 East-West public rapid transit route that connects Colin Town Centre, through the city centre to Dundonald, and the G2 Titanic Link route. The scheme, through the introduction bus priority, a new fleet of glider vehicles, additional feeder and residual services, contactless payment and enhanced Park & Ride facilities has seen an uptake in passenger journeys on the East-West Corridor of over 45%.
3.2	DfI are currently progressing plans for Phase 2 of the BRT scheme that would see an added north-south route in the city. The Outline Business Case for the scheme is being further developed in order to bid for funding under Belfast City and Regional Deal, with technical feasibility and proposed network route being developed with the view to progressing to public consultation in Spring 2021. DfI have engaged with Council officers and there will be an opportunity for the Council to provide a formal response to any public consultation, the details and timescale of which are currently been finalised.
3.3	Given the strategic, city wide importance of the next phase of this public transport infrastructure scheme, it is recommended that Members receive a presentation from DfI senior officials on the BRT Phase 2 Scheme and the emerging proposals. It is anticipated that a presentation would be provided at the CGR committee meeting in April, subject to confirmation by DfI.
	<u>Ulster University City Centre Campus</u>
3.4	Members are asked to agree to receive a presentation providing an update on the ongoing development works and the migration strategy for the new City Centre Campus.
3.5	This presentation will include an update on the University's progress in opening the city centre campus in 2021 and the regenerative impact of the new campus on the city centre and local communities. The presentation will include an update on the Migration Strategy and the ongoing Transport and Travel work and associated issues to be resolved to ensure a successful migration and embedding of this strategically significant development for the city centre.
3.6	The presentation will also include an update on the Campus Impact Study, a collaborative project being carried out between the Council, UU and UUEPC to support an evidence based and ongoing conversation on the regeneration impacts of the UU campus with the surrounding communities, aligned to the Belfast Agenda.
3.7	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>

	None associated with this report.
3.8	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u> None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.

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Subject:	Connectivity Issues: Letters to Ministers
Date:	3 rd March 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager Michelle Bagnall, Programme Manager

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	To update Members on the responses received to letters that were sent to Ministers at the request of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the responses received in relation to letters issued from the Council at the request of CGR Committee, in relation to connectivity related matters:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. York Street Interchange ii. Covid 19 Revitalisation Programme: Connectivity Projects iii. Public Realm Schemes at Shankill Gateway and Fredrick Street iv. Increasing Sustainable Transport in Belfast
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>York Street Interchange (YSI)</u></p> <p>At its meeting on 12th August 2020 the Committee agreed that the Council would write to the Minister for Infrastructure to express its support for the external review of the York Street Interchange project, and to offer an opportunity to engage with the review process. The Council has received a response from the Minister (see Appendix 1) indicating that the review is now complete and that the Minister is currently considering the findings. The Minister went on to promote a collaborative approach between the Department and the Council in terms of the future development of the York St Interchange Scheme and other infrastructure solutions in line with the City Centre Connectivity Study.</p> <p>Also to note, in relation to YSI scheme, at the CGR Committee meeting 13th January 2021 it was agreed that Committee would receive a presentation from Mr. M. Hackett on the issue of an Alternative York Street Interchange and the presentation is being provided to this Committee meeting (3 March).</p> <p><u>Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme: Connectivity Related Projects</u></p>
3.2	<p>At its meeting on 11th November 2020 the Committee agreed that the Council would write to both the Minister for Communities and the Minister for Infrastructure to formally acknowledge, on behalf of the Council, the commitment of funding to the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, and welcome the support to enable the delivery of a range of measures. In addition, the letter highlighted that it was critical that a collaborative and flexible multi-agency approach is taken across all of the public sector, including the need for fast and effective response across each collective organisations in order to deliver projects on the ground. The Council has received a response from the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for Communities – see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 outlining the £19.3m of urgent funding to Councils to prepare our town and city centres to reopen safely. The Ministers also reiterated</p>

3.3	<p>the departmental commitment to providing assistance, support and partnership working in delivering the programme of works.</p> <p>Members will also note that, further to the CGR Committee meeting 10th February 2021, and subject to Council ratification in March, it was agreed to write to the Minister for Communities to request additional support through the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme for the business and community cluster grants. An update will be brought back to Committee on this issue in due course.</p>
3.4	<p><i>Public Realm Schemes at Shankill Gateway and Fredrick Street</i></p> <p>At its meeting on 11th November 2020, the Committee agreed that the Council would write to both the Minister for Communities and the Minister for Infrastructure to reiterate its concerns regarding the Shankill Gateway Public Realm Scheme, as set out in a previous letter (12 October 2020). In addition, the letter expressed the Council's concern that the opportunity to make impactful change at this strategic junction will be missed if not realised now, and included a wide ranging number of connectivity related issues (copy letter enc at Appendix 4)</p>
3.5	<p>The Council has received a response from both the Minister for Communities and the Minister for Infrastructure – see Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 respectively. These responses refer to the ongoing work of the joint Junctions Stakeholder Group to review the designs with the Minister for Infrastructure stating that ‘officials would work at pace to bring forward proposals for alternative junction layouts that would better reflect the priority that we all agree needs to be given to public transport, pedestrians and cyclists’ with a further update to be provided to Council soon.</p>
	<p><u>Increasing Sustainable Transport in Belfast</u></p> <p>Belfast City Council, at its meeting on 1st December, passed the following proposal which had been proposed by Councillor Hanvey:</p> <p>“At the request of Councillor Hanvey, the Council agreed to amend the minute of the meeting of 24th November, under the above mentioned heading, to provide that the Council write to the Department for Infrastructure to ask for clarity on its position on increasing sustainable transport in Belfast.”</p>

	<p>The associated letter from Council to the Minister is included in Appendix 6 of this report with the Ministers response included in Appendix 7. In the response (Appendix 8) the Minister confirms the Departments commitment to creating more opportunities for active travel and making our roads safer for those who walk, wheel and cycle. The Minister goes on to reference the importance of reimagining our city and town centres with a focus on making them greener, more walkable and more connected with commitments from the Department including the establishment of a Walking and Cycling Champion, a £20m capital funding for Blue & Green Infrastructure, progression of two key sustainable transport projects in the BRT Phase 2 and the Ormeau Road Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge, and the pending publication of the final Belfast Bike Network.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report</p>
3.7	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Minister for Infrastructure response to Committee re York Street Interchange</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Minister for Infrastructure response to Committee re Covid 19 Revitalisation Programme</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Minister for Communities response to Committee re Covid 19 Revitalisation Programme</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Copy of the letter from BCC to Minister for Communities and Minister for Infrastructure re Public Realm Schemes at Shankill Gateway and Fredrick Street</p> <p>Appendix 5 – Minister for Communities response to Committee re Public Realm Schemes at Shankill Gateway and Fredrick Street</p> <p>Appendix 6 – Minister for Infrastructure response to Committee re Public Realm Schemes at Shankill Gateway and Fredrick Street</p> <p>Appendix 7 – Ltr – Dfl _ Minister Mallon – Sustainable Transport</p> <p>Appendix 8 – Response – Dfl – Minister Mallon – Sustainable Transport</p>



Department for

Infrastructure

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**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
Nichola Mallon MLA**

Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services Officer
Belfast City Council
Legal and Civic Services Department
City Hall
BELFAST
BT1 5GS

Room 708
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: EMCGNMI121020
Our reference: CORR-2746-2020

22 January 2021

Dear Ms McGoldrick,

YORK STREET INTERCHANGE - PROJECT ASSESSMENT REVIEW

Thank you for your letter of 12 October 2020 on behalf of Belfast City Council's, City Growth and Regeneration Committee, regarding the external review of the York Street Interchange scheme, which I announced on 27 July 2020. Firstly, I apologise for the late response.

This review was carried out by a panel of accredited reviewers, independent from the project in early November 2020. The review is now complete and I am currently considering its findings.

While I welcome the Committee's offer to participate, unfortunately the format of the review did not allow for engagement with groups of stakeholders. I understand my officials contacted you at that time to explain this and highlight that a representative from the Council has been invited to participate.

However, I have asked my officials to continue to work collaboratively with Belfast City Council, through the future development of the York Street Interchange scheme and also to deliver infrastructure solutions in line with the Belfast City Centre Connectivity Study.

NICHOLA MALLON MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

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**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
Nichola Mallon MLA**

Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services Officer
Belfast City Council

Room 708
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Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

McGoldrickE@BelfastCity.gov.uk

Your reference: EMDFI071220
Our reference: COR/3186/2020

29 December 2020

Dear Ms McGoldrick,

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL – REVITALISATION FUNDING

Thank you for your letter of 7 December 2020 on behalf of Belfast City Council acknowledging the funding provided by my Department through the COVID-19 Revitalisation Programme.

I agree fully with the points that your letter makes regarding the importance of engagement with stakeholders including the Business Improvement Districts, Translink, Belfast Chamber and community representatives. I also fully recognise the importance of a fast and effective multi-agency approach and response across the public sector. My officials are working closely with council officers on many of the schemes to which you refer, including the recent pedestrianisation on Union Street.

Given its role, connectedness to and knowledge of local communities, Council is best placed to lead on such schemes, and I can assure you my Department stands ready to provide the Council with the assistance, support and partnership working that is required to ensure delivery for our citizens in Belfast and across the north, particularly in areas of deprivation.

I am also copying this to my colleague the Communities Minister.

**NICHOLA MALLON MLA
Minister for Infrastructure**

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**Regional Development Office
Level 4 North
9 Lanyon Place
Belfast
BT1 3LP**

Telephone: (028) 9082 9307
e-mail: private.office@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our ref: CORR 3115/2020
Date: February 2021

Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services Officer
Belfast City Council
City Hall
BELFAST
BT1 5 GS

Via email:

Dear Ms McGoldrick

Thank you for your letter of 7th December 2020 to Minister Ní Chuilín, expressing Council's recognition of the funding that the Department had provided through the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme. As Director for Regional Development and SRO for this programme, your correspondence had been passed to me to reply, and I would first like to offer my apologies for the undue delay in doing so. This was down to an administrative oversight.

I am grateful for Belfast City Council's ongoing support for this Programme. The pandemic has provided all of us not only with unique challenges, but also with opportunities to explore new approaches to delivering our regeneration remit. The Programme, which was designed to be as flexible as possible to allow it to address the specific needs of each area, has allowed the Department to collaborate with DfI and DAERA to deliver £19.3m of urgent funding to councils to prepare our town and city centres to reopen safely.

I welcome Council's promotion of a collaborative approach to deliver our regeneration agenda and hope that the work of the recently-established High Streets Task Force will identify further opportunities to put this into practice.

Yours sincerely

Gerard Murray
Director, Regional Development Office

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Legal and Civic Services Department

Democratic Services Section



Your reference

Being dealt with by Ms Eilish McGoldrick

Our reference EMDFC171220SG

Ext. 6307

Date 17th December, 2020

Minister Hargey
Minister for Communities
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Dear Minister Hargey & Minister Mallon,

Re: City Growth and Regeneration Committee: Public Realm Scheme at Shankill Gateway and Frederick Street

At its meeting in November, Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreed that the Council would write to you to reiterate its concerns regarding the Shankill Gateway Public Realm Scheme as set out in our previous letter to you dated 12 October 2020. Furthermore, Council is concerned that the opportunity to make impactful change at this strategic junction will be missed if it is not realised now.

It was noted at Committee that during the design development there was a positive co-client and co-design work between our collective organisations to build and arrive at a consensus for the design of this junction. This also followed a period of extensive community and statutory engagement which resulted in support of the original designs as submitted for planning approval. The proposal included alterations to the junction including the rationalisation of the road infrastructure and the uncontrolled pedestrian crossing while simultaneously increasing pavement space and introducing additional green landscaping. The proposal as agreed through the consultation process would have minimised the number of pedestrian crossings required to traverse the junction while removing uncontrolled pedestrian crossings while increasing the provision of cycling infrastructure. In doing so, it encouraged safe and active travel, and reduced severance between local communities and the city centre. This approach was supported by this council.

Council was disappointed to learn that this design was superseded immediately prior to the granting of planning approval, and without wider consultation, with a design that maintained the layout of the current junction. At its meeting on 11 November 2020 the City Growth and Regeneration Committee reiterated the concerns around this major junction progressing without provision for pedestrian and cycling priority as previously envisaged within the scheme designs that were subject to public consultation. It was considered that the preservation of the current junction configuration represented a missed opportunity to address the issues presented by the hard infrastructure layout of the inner ring and did not take into account the collective Council, DfI and DfC visioning principles of the 'Bolder Vision for Belfast'. The Bolder

Vision, jointly commissioned and endorsed by both Departments and Council states that we should prioritise integrated walking, cycling and public transport and end the dominance of the car, that Belfast should be providing lively, safe and green streets, and that we should collectively remove severance and barriers to movement between the city centre and the surrounding communities to improve access for all.

Elected Members reiterated their concerns regarding the adequacy of the existing junction to safely meet the active and sustainable travel needs of the neighbouring communities and raised issues in terms of the design of road infrastructure for pre-pandemic peak traffic volumes. Members highlighted that if the right choices were not made now at these key locations that this presented a missed opportunity to address the imbalance and negative consequences of our road dominated landscape and the severance issues created by the Inner Ring Road.

Council Members believe that improvements can be made to this scheme that will greatly contribute to reducing the impact of the hard infrastructure of the Inner Ring by providing improved key connections to local communities and prioritising active and sustainable travel. In addition, this will provide a much greater contribution to the place-making potential of the local area, while providing adequate provision for the transportation network. We also believe that the deferral of the planned upgrade of the Peter's Hill junction until an unspecified future date risks undermining public confidence in the consultation process especially when the emerging designs have been discarded in favour of maintaining the status quo, effectively the 'do nothing' option.

In your respective letters of response to the committee the Departments referenced a joint BCC/DfI/DfC Junctions Working Group to address the issues raised at the Shankill Gateway Scheme, the Clifton Gateway Scheme and the proposed catalyst project of the Frederick St/Patrick St Junction. While this approach was welcomed by the Committee it is now understood that the Shankill Gateway Scheme no longer forms a part of the agenda for this group, and that the emerging design for the Frederick St/ Patrick St Junction remains unclear some 16 months after the initial agreement that the works should be accelerated to provide some level of provision to support the critical modal shift requirements of the University of Ulster opening in September 2021.

I look forward to receiving your comments on these issues raised by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

Yours sincerely



Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services Officer

Cc: Minister N. Mallon

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**Level 4
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Telephone: (028) 9082 9229
e-mail: mary.mccartan@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our ref: CORR-2728-2020
Date: 31st December 2020

Your ref: EMCGDFC121020

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

Dear Ms McGoldrick

PUBLIC REALM SCHEME AT SHANKILL GATEWAY AND FREDERICK STREET

The Minister for Communities has asked me to thank you for your correspondence of 17 December 2020, regarding proposals within the Shankill Gateway Phase I Public Realm/Environmental Improvement Scheme for the Peter's Hill junction and also proposed improvements to the Great Patrick Street/Frederick Street junction. The Minister has asked me to reply to your letter on her behalf.

The Department notes the concerns of Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee regarding the Peter's Hill junction.

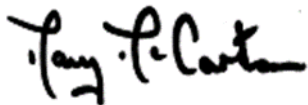
The current position regarding the Shankill Gateway scheme is that the project is on hold pending confirmation of budget availability for the capital works. We have given the concerns raised in your letter further consideration. As the Department's Design Team is currently stood down, the review of the existing Peter's Hill junction will come under the newly-established DfC/DfI/BCC Junctions Working Group, so that revised

designs can be developed in collaborative way and in light of our shared “Bolder Vision” for Belfast. Members of Belfast City Council’s Regeneration and Development Team form part of this working group.

Regarding the emerging design for the Frederick Street/York Street/Great Patrick Street Junction, work is ongoing to ensure that the optimum design is developed. At the last meeting of the Junctions Working Group on 17 December 2020, DfI advised that the design has now been reviewed internally by the various DfI teams and that they should be in a position to share the revised designs with the Working Group in January 2021.

I trust this response addresses the concerns of the Council’s City Growth and Regeneration Committee raised in your recent correspondence. However, should you need to discuss further, or require further clarification, please feel free to contact me on 028 9082 9229 or by e mail: Mary.mccartan@communities-ni.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary McCartan', written in a cursive style.

Mary McCartan
Deputy Director
Belfast Regeneration Directorate



Department for

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**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
Nichola Mallon MLA**

Ms Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services Officer
Belfast City Council

Room 708
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10-18 Adelaide Street
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BT2 8GB
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: EMDFI171220SG
Our reference: CORR-3269-2020
Date 5 February 2021

Dear Ms. McGoldrick

PUBLIC REALM SCHEMES AT SHANKILL GATEWAY AND FREDERICK STREET.

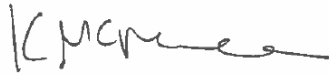
Minister Mallon has asked me to thank you for your letter of 17 December 2020, on behalf of Belfast City Council's (BCC) City Growth and Regeneration Committee, regarding the Public Realm schemes at Shankill Gateway and Frederick Street. She has also asked me to stress her commitment, and that of her officials, to continued partnership working with both the Council and the Department for Communities (DfC) to refine proposals for these junctions that fully reflect our shared ambitions to make Belfast a greener city, prioritising public transport, walking and cycling wherever we possibly can.

In relation to the Shankill Gateway scheme, you are aware that proposals have been developed to include a new layout for the Millfield/Carrick Hill/Peters Hill/North Street junction. These proposals would, in aligning with strategic objectives, improve pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities. However it may be helpful to explain that, in a situation where there was not time for council officers and departmental officials to develop a better solution, the planning application submitted by DfC included the existing junction layout so that planning approval for the entire project could proceed. This was, however, on the understanding that officials would, in conjunction with DfC and BCC officials, work at pace to bring forward proposals for alternative junction layouts that would better reflect the priority we all agree needs to be given to public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.

To take forward this task, a Working Group, comprising officials from DfC and DfI and officers from BCC, has been set up with a specific focus on the development of key junctions in this part of the city including those at Carrick Hill/Clifton Street/North Queen Street/Frederick Street and at Carlisle Circus. The group will also be considering solutions for the Peter's Hill/ Millfield and Great Patrick Street/ Frederick Street/ York Street junctions. The aim will be to come forward with proposals that fully reflect our shared commitment to creating a more sustainable city, in line with the ambitions we set out in our shared *Bolder Vision* document.

The Minister is keen that this work brings forward proposals quickly for consideration by ministers and councilors and will arrange for a further update to be provided to the Council soon. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please do contact Divisional Roads Manager, Kevin Monaghan at kevin.monaghan@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K MCFERRAN', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

KATHRYN MCFERRAN
PRIVATE SECRETARY

Legal and Civic Services Department

Democratic Services Section



Our reference: CD 07.12.2020

Date: 29th December, 2020

Email: private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Ms Nichola Mallon MLA
Minister for Infrastructure
Corporate Policy Unit
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8GB

Dear Minister

Department for Infrastructure Roads - Autumn Report

Belfast City Council, at its meeting on 1st December, passed the following proposal which had been proposed by Councillor Hanvey:

“At the request of Councillor Hanvey, the Council agreed to amend the minute of the meeting of 24th November, under the above mentioned heading, to provide that the Council write to the Department for Infrastructure to ask for clarity on its position on increasing sustainable transport in Belfast.”

I would invite you to consider the request and advise me of your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CD', written over a faint, larger signature.

Carolyn Donnelly
Democratic Services Officer

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Department for

Infrastructure

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**From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
Nichola Mallon MLA**

Carolyn Donnelly
Democratic Services Officer

DonnellyCarolyn@BelfastCity.gov.uk

Room 708
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: CD 07.12.2020
Our reference: CORR-0027-2021
18 January 2021

Dear Ms Donnelly,

INCREASING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT IN BELFAST

Minister Mallon has asked me to thank you for your letter of 29th December 2020 about increasing sustainable transport in Belfast. Since her appointment in January 2020, the Minister has made a commitment to deliver sustainable infrastructure that will transform our communities and lives. The Minister wants to create more opportunities for active travel and make our roads safer for those who want to walk, wheel and cycle. In 2020/21, the Minister allocated £20 million capital funding for blue / green infrastructure which will support communities through transformation, promoting active travel and shaping our places to live in the new normal in support of the COVID 19 recovery.

The Minister has also asked me to stress the importance she attaches to reimagining our city and town centres with a focus on making them greener, more walkable and more connected. Connecting Belfast communities to the city centre via sustainable forms of transport is key to a shared vision for the city. The creation of a Walking and Cycling Champion within the Department was intended to provide an impetus to advocate for walking and cycling, facilitate the sharing of ideas, oversee progress and ensure that the promotion of walking and cycling is at the heart of all the work of the Department. Part of this involves partnership working with Councils to deliver on the Minister's ambition for active and sustainable travel.

In this regard, the Minister plans to publish a final Belfast Bicycle Network later this year. This document is intended to guide the development and operation of the bicycle infrastructure in the city for the next ten years.

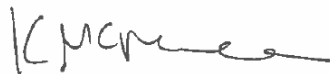
As the Council will know, the Department is leading work on two key sustainable transport projects for the city as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) – Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) 2 and Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge.

Following the success of BRT1 (Glider), with patronage figures showing some 45,000 additional passenger journeys per week on the BRT corridors (when compared with the previous year), BRT2 would, if prioritised by the City Deal, involve a further development of the Belfast Rapid Transit system to north and south Belfast with an extension of the CITI route to serve Queens University and the City Hospital to improve urban connectivity. It potentially would be a further game changer in terms of promoting sustainable travel within the city.

The Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge aims to improve accessibility to the city centre for residents and communities east of the River Lagan. The bridge also aims to encourage both people from the city centre and local communities to use Ormeau Park for recreational use.

As you will know, BRCD partners are currently considering which projects will be included in the City Deal. Outline Business Cases (OBCs) for these two projects were submitted in August 2020 to help inform the prioritisation of schemes. It is expected that a decision on which projects go through to the final City Deal will be made in early 2021. Should BRT2 and Lagan Bridge be prioritised, their delivery would have the potential to have a huge positive impact on sustainable travel outcomes in Belfast.

I hope you find this information helpful.



KATHRYN MCFERRAN
Private Secretary to the Minister



Subject:	Economic Inactivity research
Date:	3 March 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Sinead O'Regan, Employability and Skills Manager

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 paper is to provide the Committee with an update on the key findings of a report into barriers experienced by economically inactive residents within the Urban Village areas across Belfast.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the key findings and barriers of this research; and Note and agree the way forward, based on this research.
3.0	Main report

3.1	<p>Members will be aware that economic inactivity is one of the most significant challenges for Belfast – and has been so for some time. Economic inactivity rates in the city are regularly ahead of the Northern Ireland average and, in some parts of the city, can be almost double the regional figure. A key element of the council’s work on employability is to focus on supporting inclusive growth by targeting our interventions on those furthest from the labour market – including those who are long-term unemployed and economically inactive. In order to understand the barriers faced by those individuals in finding work, the council undertook a research project in collaboration with The Executive Office’s Urban Villages programme. The data gathering element of the research was largely undertaken in advance of Covid-19. However, it is important to acknowledge that the pandemic is likely to exacerbate the barriers to economic activity as identified in the results of this research.</p>
3.2	<p>The research process was initiated through a series of meetings with representatives of the Urban Village Local Reference Groups and included desk research; 36 one-to-one interviews, 252 questionnaires and 12 focus groups to qualitatively explore any perceived barriers to economic inactivity in depth. Those engaged in the research are currently engaged within community provision within their local communities (through Urban Villages).</p>
3.3	<p>Of those individuals who were involved in this research, 1/3 have been out of work for between 2-5 years and 27% were out of work for over 5 years. Over half of respondents are living with a health condition or disability. Almost 3/4 of those aged between 19-49 years reported having no qualifications.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Overview of key findings</u></p> <p>While respondents were not specifically engaged on employability or skills-based projects when they were interviewed, over 75% considered securing employment to be important. Just under half stated that the salary level required for an individual to leave the welfare system in favour of paid employment was between £16,000 and £24,000. The two key driving factors for finding a job were for financial gain and also to have a sense of purpose.</p>
3.5	<p>The preferred employment sectors for female respondents were retail, office and administration. For males, the preferred employment sectors were manufacturing and construction. Only 2% view finance; and 6% IT as preferred employment sectors – while these are recognised as two key growth sectors for the city. 24% of respondents have considered the option of self-employment or starting their own business.</p>

3.6	<p>The main barriers identified by respondents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications: two thirds feel they require skills training and almost two thirds have been unable to resource this and feel this is exacerbated by a lack of employment experience and not being able to identify referees to provide to prospective employers • Intergenerational Economic Inactivity: three quarters indicated that the potential impact on their benefits, or those of their household, is a challenge to securing and remaining in a job and 87% reported that they do not have family support and encouragement to help them get a job • Capacity and Confidence: over two thirds described themselves as not being confident in presenting themselves at job interviews and 60% worried their communication skills would be a barrier in a job environment • Caring Responsibilities: two thirds of respondents have dependent children or care for other family members and 81% of those with primary care responsibilities cannot afford the childcare to work. Half of these respondents indicated they would need to work part time or secure flexible working arrangements • Health & Disability: almost a fifth of respondents stated that they live with a physical health condition and almost all of these stated they consider their physical health to be a barrier to employment. 26% of respondents stated they live with a mental health condition and all considered their mental health to be a barrier to employment • Age: almost two thirds of those aged 50+ years believe that age is a barrier to getting and remaining in a job • Legacy Issues: the research illustrated that 65% of respondents felt confident about working in a community not considered to their own although this was predominantly by those from ethnic minority/migrant communities • Language & Recognition of International Qualifications: just under 80% of black and minority ethnic (BAME) respondents feel that their ability to speak English is a challenge to getting and remaining in a job and 84% of BAME respondents have been unable to access certain types of training because they couldn't afford to pay.
3.7	<p>The research also identifies a key roles for local authorities in tackling long-term economic inactivity and notes that place-based solutions are necessary to reach those who are out of work for a long period and/or economically inactive. This confirms the rationale behind the ongoing work on the Labour Market Partnership for Belfast in partnership with the Department for Communities, as reported at the November meeting of this Committee.</p>
3.8	<p>Taking account of the findings, officers plan to use the insights in a number of ways:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share with the Department for Communities in order to explore the potential for additional support to address barriers – particularly the provision of support for childcare both during training and in the early stages of employment, in order to ensure that an individual can confidently take on a role • Ensuring that these findings shape all of our employability interventions for these target groups as part of our development approach • Continue to work with employers through our Employment Academy model, including negotiating with the employer to explore how the qualification/experience levels normally expected at recruitment stage can be adapted to provide opportunities for people within these target groups, with the Employment Academy packaging together the skills/qualifications required as well as employability support for the individual • Engaging with local communities around opportunities within the digital sector – including youth engagement support, school engagement activity and the co-design of Employment Academies and other bespoke solutions within this sector • Continuation of the Enterprise Pathway programme as a way of engaging with those who are economically inactive/long-term unemployed and helping them move into self-employment by providing intensive wrap-around support • Disseminating the research finding across Council, for example in the development of the Inclusive Growth City Charter through to our approach to Social Value and Developer Contributions as well as the economic, social and community recovery plans within Council • Continue to influence the scope and remit of the emerging Shared Prosperity Fund and other large-scale interventions to ensure that they are informed by the specific needs of these target groups and that eligible activity reflects their needs.
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>No specific financial or resource implications</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The unit undertakes equality screening on the overall work programme to ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of each project. The Urban Villages programme covers targeted areas across Northern Ireland.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	N/A



Subject:	Update on Tourism
Date:	3 March 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 provide Members with an update on the development of a new tourism plan and set out key actions for quarter 1 of the 2021/22 financial year.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the contents of the report and progress made to date on the development of the new tourism plan with agreement to receive a full draft in June 2021. - Agree to progress the key actions as set out in appendix 1 and supported by 2021/22 departmental budget for tourism development.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that at a meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2020, it was agreed that a new ten-year plan for tourism was to be developed.</p> <p>The purpose of this plan is to:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver on the tourism priorities set out 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 on 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 City Region Deal.
3.2	<p>A further update was provided to Committee in December 2020 setting out findings of the initial research and development phase and the emerging four draft strategic themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grow Belfast - Experience Belfast - Position Belfast - Sustainable Belfast
3.3	<p>An initial timeframe had aimed to present a full draft plan to Committee in March 2021. However due to ongoing challenges facing the tourism and hospitality sectors it is proposed that this is now extended to June in order to facilitate sectoral engagement and to better understand the recovery trajectory. This report therefore provides an update on further progress made during the development phase of the plan and sets out key foundation actions to be taken forward in quarter one of the 2021/22 financial year.</p>
3.4	<p>Experience Belfast – developing neighbourhoods</p> <p>The cultural strategy recognises the importance of cultural tourism and the role of Council in supporting the development of local destinations and quality products across the city. In particular the strategy commits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing cultural tourism through building capacity and opportunity for citizen and culture led approaches to tourism development and infrastructure (e.g. local tourism programme).
3.5	<p>This will be further expanded in the ten year tourism plan through one of the four draft themes, Experience Belfast. This will 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. This also increases connectivity between all parts of the city raising the visibility and appeal of the breadth of the tourism offer with a focus on encouraging international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interacting with people and learning the history and stories of the places.</p>

3.6	<p>Further work will be undertaken to embed neighbourhood tourism into the overall experience plan with proposals for a competitive funding scheme to be developed in line with the investment approach to the cultural sector. Details will be included in future Committee reports for consideration from 2022/23 onwards. However to ensure continuity and to build on local tourism development provided to date it is proposed to provide interim support for key programmes such as the City Connections local tourism programme and other ongoing partnership agreements. In 2020/21 these local conduits have continued to deliver support programmes throughout COVID-19 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insights and research into impact of the pandemic on tourism businesses at a localised level. - Public events and activities – adapting to restrictions including hybrid models of digital content and on the ground activity during summer months when permitted. - Developing linkages between heritage programmes and community tourism. - Connecting local regeneration to tourism development.
3.7	<p>It is proposed that these ongoing partnerships can be utilised to ensure that recovery plans are pivoted to consider local needs and opportunities with the focus of activity for 2021-22 to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase engagement and promote the benefits of participating in local networks including identifying new and emerging partners delivering local tourism experiences. – Investing in local programmes that engage directly with visitors including support to attract target markets during phase one of recovery such as domestic staycations as well as UK and Ireland. – Capacity building and development work on clustering approaches with involvement of industry experts and practitioners to develop geographic and thematic models. – Supporting and commissioning robust evidence base to increase understanding of the market including consumer testing of local products.
3.8	<p>Programme Development supported by the Global Destination Sustainability Index</p> <p>Members will be aware that Belfast has completed its year one benchmarking as a member of the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDSI). The Index is based on 69 Indicators broken down into four categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental Performance - Social Performance - Supplier Performance - Destination Management Performance

3.9	As previously reported to Committee in December 2020, a series of recommendations for action have been identified for Belfast to take forward to increase our ranking position in the Index in advance of the benchmarking review which is due for submission in August 2021. A number of these specifically relate to the Destination Management Organisation and will be taken forward as part of Visit Belfast's business plan for 2021-22. In addition to this, under Council's contract with the GDSI, they have been engaging with the ICC (as the City's Congress venue) to identify a suitable 3 rd party accreditation scheme, likely to be the globally recognized Earthcheck scheme.
3.10	<p><u>Environmental research</u></p> <p>Belfast's Resilience Strategy with its alignment to UN Sustainability targets was commended by the GDSI as exemplary. It was noted that although great progress has been made in terms of recycling over recent years, overall Northern Ireland has a relatively high landfill rate and export of waste remains high. Officers wish to understand the overall contribution of the tourism industry to this process in greater detail in order to make informed decisions on future plans. It is proposed that a piece of research is carried out to establish baselines and future areas of action specifically in relation to landfill and the export of waste.</p> <p><u>Social and cultural initiatives</u></p>
3.11	In 2020 Belfast City Council partnered with QUB to host a student placement from QUB's MSc Leadership for Sustainable Development programme to analyse sustainable practices currently used by festival and event organisers in Belfast, highlight best practice and identify areas for improvement. Officers facilitated engagement with events and festivals through BCC's Festivals Forum. The output of this project was a Sustainable Events Toolkit aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is hoped that once events and festivals re-open that this toolkit can be mobilised to enable both Council and our partners in the cultural sector to assess their accountability in the context of sustainability and begin to adapt.
3.12	This year, our delivery partner Visit Belfast are hosting a further student placement to develop a Sustainable Events Framework. Due to complete in April 2021, this project will map the current sustainable initiatives which are underway in Belfast and identify best practice in terms of sustainable destinations globally. The outcome of this project will be the creation of a Sustainable Events Framework which will be used to assist Visit Belfast, Council and clients to connect to, produce and promote events and cultural activities which have sustainable environmental, community, social and economic impacts.

3.13	Working from this framework, we will identify and curate 'Green Stories' for businesses in the Belfast City Council area for promotion in a range of media to inspire, motivate and further incentivise engagement.
3.14	<p><u>Supporting Suppliers</u></p> <p>The GDSI benchmarking exercise identified a number of gaps in relation to the city's supply chain. Officers have been working in partnership with the GDSI, Visit Belfast and the Resilience Team to progress a third party accreditation strategy for the hospitality industry and events and festivals sector. This will involve a strategic partnership with Green Tourism and a scheme to incentivise 3rd party accreditation across the Visit Belfast partnership and Council client portfolio.</p>
3.15	<p>In addition to the accreditation strategy, officers have identified a lack of capacity building initiatives and programmes which assist and encourage the industry to commit to sustainability in the long-term. A number of initiatives will be developed to address this gap:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Officers will establish a pilot scheme for the hospitality industry encouraging the reduction of food waste (aligning with the UN sustainability target of reducing food waste by 2030). Previous successful pilot schemes in other cities have involved initiatives such as training kitchen staff in food reduction techniques which also bring financial benefits to the business. - Officers will work in partnership with key stakeholders to enhance reduce, reuse and recycling initiatives both internally (across our own tourism assets) and externally across the tourism and hospitality industries and related sectors. - Early discussions have taken place with the Resilience team and other Council Departments to look at the potential for co-designed schemes with a specific focus on sustainable food. - Officers are discussing the potential for a Belfast showcase at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) which will take place in November 2021 in Glasgow.
3.16	<p>Creating new digital content to support the positioning of Belfast</p> <p>As part of the development of the new tourism plan and in support of the concept development for the Belfast Destination Hub, research has been commissioned to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better understand consumer attitudes and motivations to visiting Belfast - Establish a baseline for perceptions of the city as a cultural tourism destination - Receive feedback on the proposed cultural tourism narrative and themes included in the cultural strategy. - Test the Belfast Stories concept and the wider product in the Belfast Destination Hub

3.17	<p>The final report identified an opportunity to strengthen and broaden the emotional connection of the market to Belfast beyond those that are seeking a niche experience. The key recommendation coming out of this research is the role that Council can play in transforming perceptions of Belfast by enabling the creation of much richer and diverse digital content that represents the breadth of the city's tourism experience and authentic Belfast offer.</p>
3.18	<p><u>Summary of feedback</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unless people had some prior connection, the majority of participants did not know enough about Belfast to include it in their sub-list of choices for a city break destination. In particular there were limited emotional connotations required to make it a destination of choice. - Some of participants were aware of Belfast marketing –most notably those from ROI – however this is not necessarily their preferred format for influencing where to go. Formal marketing is considered insufficient of itself to prompt action. Searching digital content does not provide the necessary supplementary information to set Belfast apart in a competitive marketplace or to challenge established perceptions of the city. Setting this in context against digital content of other cities such as Edinburgh, Galway, or further afield but of similar population size to Belfast, Arhus (Denmark), or Varna (Bulgaria) presents a difficult first hurdle for potential tourists to overcome. - In the absence of strong positive digital content, potential tourists must rely on formal communications, opinions of others and prior knowledge. This leaves Belfast open to generalisation. - Internationally, people see Belfast as a potential destination, but not quite yet and this is in part based on a lack of curated digital content. -
3.19	<p>COVID-19 has amplified the importance of digital spaces. At the appropriate time consumers will return to making decisions of future destinations of preference. It is important that Belfast develops a digital strategy that can spark and sustain global dialogue about the city to create the connections that ultimately will move from a digital space to experiencing the place through city breaks. In turn the production of digital content supports of the positioning of the city internationally in all sectors including investment, events and education.</p>

3.20	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the 2021/22 budget for the Culture and Tourism section of the Economic Development division of the Place and Economy Departmental budget.</p>										
3.21	<p>All programmes will be subject to ongoing review with cost savings identified where projects cannot proceed due to Covid-19. The breakdown is detailed below with further detail provided at appendix 1.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>GDSI Membership</td><td>£7,500</td></tr> <tr> <td>Capacity building including Green Tourism accreditation</td><td>£75,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Research and development</td><td>£10,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Local tourism support</td><td>£200,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Digital content</td><td>£60,000</td></tr> </table>	GDSI Membership	£7,500	Capacity building including Green Tourism accreditation	£75,000	Research and development	£10,000	Local tourism support	£200,000	Digital content	£60,000
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3.22	<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 ten year tourism plan will include a further equality screening.</p>										
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached										
	Appendix 1: Tourism Actions for 2021/22										

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APPENDIX 1: 2021-22 Tourism Actions

The proposed programme supports initial quarter one actions against the priorities set out in the ten year cultural strategy as well as foundation actions for the emerging ten year tourism plan.

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/ Targets	Timeline	Budget
Sustainable tourism				
Global Destination Sustainability Index	Belfast completed index benchmarking in 2020. This is due to be repeated in 2021 with the results published as part of the index Global Destination Sustainability Index.	Forward Planning for Climate Change: Update to Index including Environmental Impact Audit and Action Plan. Ongoing support to Council and partners including Visit Belfast and ICC.	April 2021 – March 2022	£7,500
Research and development	Commissioning of relevant research to better understand index scores, challenges and impacts including developing key actions for improvement.	Impact of tourism research report.	April 2021 – August 2021	£10,000
Green Tourism Accreditation	The programme will provide access to the GreenCheck tool, completing individual assessments for tourism businesses including accommodation, hospitality, events and attractions. Cultural organisations will also access the programme.	Up to 300 businesses supported.	April 2021 – March 2022	£60,000
Capacity building	Working with the supply chain to incentivise change programmes, raise awareness and pilot projects e.g. food waste.	Pilot programme completed. Green Stories curated.	April 2021 – March 2022	£15,000

Experience Belfast – local and neighbourhood tourism				
Lagan Canal Trust	Ongoing annual support for Lagan Canal Trust in partnership with other local authorities to support annual programme of work.	Annual funding agreement with specific targets to be developed.	April 2021 – March 2022	£17,000
City Connections	Ongoing partnership model between Fáilte Feirste and Eastside Partnership to deliver a programme of work that supports development of local tourism products and citywide connections.	Complete market research. Support for local businesses through joint initiatives. Support for delivery partners with targets to be developed as part of funding agreement.	April 2021 – March 2022	£100,000
Capacity building	Roll out of local tourism development across other geographic areas in the city and to include communities of interest.	Developing phased approach and identification of new partners. Capacity building and support programme delivered.	April 2021 – March 2022	£83,000
Positioning Belfast				
Digital content development	Working with local partners to showcase Belfast's authentic cultural tourism offer through the commissioning of new online content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital showcase - Video and photography - Webinars Sharing of content with key partners to embed cultural vibrancy messaging into tourism, investment and education positioning.	April 2021 – September 2021	£60,000



Subject:	Belfast Bikes – allocation of stock to social enterprises and charities
Date:	3 March 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Cathy Keenan, Enterprise and Business Growth 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	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the allocation of the old stock of Belfast Bikes to social enterprises and charities, as previously agreed by the committee.
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 Enterprise and Business Growth team to allocate the stock of bikes Note the recipients and proposed use of the old bikes Note the opportunity to utilise this model to create further opportunities to create positive social impacts through the distribution of materials and products.

3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that, at the November 2020 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, it was agreed that officers should take forward a programme of work to distribute some of the Belfast Bikes that were due to be replaced.
3.2	Due to the arrival of new stock, there were a number of bikes due to be replaced and it was agreed that these were to be offered these out to the Social Economy, Co-operative and Charity sectors in Belfast. 100 bikes were made available for distribution. Organisations were able to use the bikes for a range of uses including but not limited to; stripping the bikes for parts, repairing them to sell or gift out and upcycling them. The council's main stipulation was that the handover of these bikes created a positive social impact in the communities across the city.
3.3	The Enterprise and Business Growth team developed an Expression of Interest form and associated guidelines for the allocation of the bikes. The guidelines stated that the bikes were to be allocated on a first come, first served basis, with a final closing date of 29 January 2021. Applicants were sought from organisations for a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 bikes each.
3.4	<p>The following guidelines had to be adhered to by all successful applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All successful applicants must sign an agreement accepting liability and responsibility for the bikes they obtain - Organisations must operate within Belfast's social economy, co-operative or charity sector - All bikes must be collected within one week of the council notifying the organisation that they have been allocated a number of bikes - Successful applicants will be given contact details for collection from a Belfast address when notified if they have been allocated bikes. They must agree a time and date to collect the bikes in order to abide by all COVID regulations - An organisation must apply for a minimum of five bikes - Bikes must be used for the purpose set out in each organisation's EoI - Successful applicants must be willing to participate in promotional activity if required.
3.5	The opportunity was launched via the council's communications team on Friday 15 January. This included promotion through the council's website, press releases, social media promotion, email distribution directly to social enterprises and cooperatives across the city

	and stakeholders including SENI, Cooperative Alternatives and Trademark for further promotion.																
3.6	Due to the level of demand, the scheme closed on 18 January at which point we had received 54 expressions of interest for the bikes. As per the guidelines, these were reviewed on a first come, first served basis until all 100 bikes were allocated.																
3.7	<p>The bikes have now been allocated to 15 organisations, each receiving between 5 and 10 bikes. Details of successful applicants are include below:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>East Belfast Mission</td><td>Saints Youth Centre</td></tr> <tr> <td>The Turnaround Project</td><td>18th Belfast Scout Group</td></tr> <tr> <td>Forward South Partnership</td><td>Lyric Theatre</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tools for Solidarity</td><td>Belfast South Community Resources</td></tr> <tr> <td>Failte Feirste Thiar</td><td>Mount Merrion Parish Church</td></tr> <tr> <td>Sudanese Community Association Northern Ireland</td><td>Salvation Army</td></tr> <tr> <td>Kith and Kin Financial Wellbeing for Employers</td><td>Concerned Residents of Upper Ardoyne</td></tr> <tr> <td>Ligoniel Improvement Association</td><td></td></tr> </table>	East Belfast Mission	Saints Youth Centre	The Turnaround Project	18 th Belfast Scout Group	Forward South Partnership	Lyric Theatre	Tools for Solidarity	Belfast South Community Resources	Failte Feirste Thiar	Mount Merrion Parish Church	Sudanese Community Association Northern Ireland	Salvation Army	Kith and Kin Financial Wellbeing for Employers	Concerned Residents of Upper Ardoyne	Ligoniel Improvement Association	
East Belfast Mission	Saints Youth Centre																
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3.8	Organisations will be using these bikes for a variety of purposes with many refurbishing them to promote healthier lifestyles within their communities and to support them to access employment by cycling to work. Others want to gift these to the vulnerable, homeless and newly-arrived asylum seekers to help them get to appointments whilst others want to refurbish the bikes to sell or lease through the use of a pop-up shop.																
3.9	The successful organisations were all notified on 22 January 2021 and issued with their legal documentation detailing the handover of liability and requirement for collection. If further bikes become available, they will be allocated to the remaining organisations who expressed an interest on a first come, first served basis as per the guidelines.																
3.10	Overall, this model worked extremely well, and officers are now considering how a similar model could be used to distribute reusable items in the future to deliver local impact. The sectors have not only shown great interest in obtaining these items but are also able to showcase how they will create a positive social impact in our local communities.																

3.11	<u>Financial and resource implications</u> <p>There are no financial implications associated with this initiative. It demonstrates a positive re-use of existing resources.</p>
3.12	<u>Equality and good relations implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> <p>The main purpose of this initiative was to enable community-based organisations to create positive social impact in their area. Only organisations based in the council area were able to access the bikes.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	None.



Subject:	Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor
Date:	3 March 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Cathy Keenan, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager

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 provide the Committee with an update on progress to date, on work to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and to provide an overview of plans for the official launch of the Corridor Partnership.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the contents of this report and progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. - Approve the budget allocation to be managed by Fingal County Council to support the delivery of the work programme aligned to the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.
3.0	Main report
3.1	At its meeting on the 7 November 2020 members were provided with an update on progress to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor. At the meeting

	members noted the progress to date, endorsed the emerging plans and member representation for participation on the political advisory group as part of the governance structure of the partnership.
3.2	Members will be aware that since the establishment of the partnership, partner councils have been working to shape its future direction and to find ways to work collaboratively to realise the potential benefits of the further development of the Corridor. In 2019 DCU and UU were commissioned to carry out research on behalf of the councils to inform how the councils could collaborate for mutual benefit between the cities of Dublin and Belfast and the regions between. The report detailed the current economic performance of the Corridor and the prospects for the region based on current trends. The report also began the work of identifying potential areas for cooperation which could create a stronger trajectory for growth.
3.3	However, since this initial research was undertaken the global economy has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in monumental declines in levels of economic activity across the board. The pandemic has also had an impact on the speed of the partnership's plans to support economic regeneration across the corridor area, however the pandemic has highlighted the interdependencies across the area and reinforces the need for a coordinated commitment to enhancing the future economic potential of the corridor.
3.4	<p>Officers continue to work in partnership to progress the recommendations of the research and have been engaging with councils along the economic corridor on a monthly basis. These specific areas for collaboration included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for branding and promoting the area to attract private and public investment; • Identification of areas of complementary policy and objectives to support collaborative opportunities and the development of joint interventions; • Skills development to ensure that the skills pipeline is appropriate to meet future demand; • Use of sectoral strengths to influence of FDI pipeline; • Further development of sectoral concentrations which already exist in tradeable services, Agri-Food and high-tech Manufacturing and Construction; • Cooperation in the development and delivery of enterprise supports to increase the number of new businesses along the corridor area;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of joint policies on infrastructure to enhance transport, innovation, education; • Enhancing Research and Innovation through the development of cross border complimentary research, access to funding, access to students etc e.g. joint internships; • Collaboration to collectively address the shared challenges which are not confined by spatial or administrative boundaries such as Environmental resilience and management.
3.5	<p>Thus far the partnership has agreed/progressed the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance structure including roles and responsibilities for the partnership at an advisory, strategic, operational and political level. • Engagement with the North South ministerial Council, and the shared Island Unit to draw their attention to the important and ongoing work of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor Network and its efforts at promoting cross-border economic development. Highlighting the importance of our collaborative endeavours in maximising the potential of the network to kick-start the economic recovery in each of our respective areas. The initiative was positively welcomed by the NSMC and the Shared Island Unit are keen to engage in further dialogue with the partnership to identify opportunities to bid for funding for cross border research, research infrastructure etc. • Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have taken the lead in developing the branding and suite of marketing material for the partnership. This is now complete, and work is underway to develop a website showcasing the partnership, key projects and linking to the work in each of the council areas. • Development of the Corridor Research Seminar Series which aims to grow the knowledge base among partners and enhance the potential of the corridor. The series will provide a platform for regional, national and international sharing of ideas and initiatives designed to maximise the assets of corridors. • Review of existing policies in areas of R&D, Skills, Tourism, Infrastructure, Trade and Investment to identify areas of alignment and areas for immediate collaboration and development of joint interventions.
3.6	<p>At the meeting of the Chief Executives in December 2020 it was agreed that there would be an official launch of the partnership on the 24 March 2021 which would highlight the current profile of the corridor, potential in recovery and opportunities for cooperation. The aim of the launch is to position the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor in the minds of decision-makers</p>

	in government and other state agencies and in the business community to present a cohesive, regional approach to economic development along the corridor among the 8 local government bodies.
3.7	The format of the event will include a range of segments highlighting reasons to collaborate which will outline the key findings from the research undertaken to date to profile the corridor area and provide an outline of the strategic vision of the partnership. The event will also include a range of panel discussions with businesses, agencies and politicians from across the corridor area which will focus on opportunities for collaboration. This section will set out the possibilities across the area for innovation and collaboration, the role that agencies will play in supporting the messaging and the role of politics in strengthening the Economic Corridor and making the strategic vision into a reality through strong decision making. The details of the launch event are currently being finalised, at that point members will be issued with an invitation to attend.
3.8	To support the development and delivery of the launch event and the programme of work completed to date it has been agreed that each council would be required to make a contribution to Fingal County Council as the current chair of the partnership of £27,000 in to cover activity in 2020 and 2021. This budget would be retained by Fingal County Council and utilised to cover the cost of any partnership activity approved by the Strategic Oversight Group of Chief Executives.
3.9	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> The activities outlined within this report will be resourced from the 2020/21 Economic Development budget agreed by this Committee on 4 March 2020.
3.10	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> The unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of this project.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None