

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, 14th April, 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. **Matters Referred Back from Council**

- (a) Update on Tourism (Pages 1 - 18)

3. **Restricted Items**

- (a) Culture Update - 2021/22 Priorities (Pages 19 - 58)

4. **Request to Present**

- (a) Future Provision of Business Start-up Support in Northern Ireland (Pages 59 - 62)

5. **Regenerating Places & Improving Infrastructure**

- (a) York Street Interchange (Pages 63 - 112)
- (b) Future City Centre (Report to Follow)
- (c) Union Connectivity Update (Pages 113 - 118)

6. **Growing Business & the Economy**

- (a) Sunday Opening Hours for Large Retailers (Pages 119 - 122)

7. **Strategic & Operational Issues**

- (a) Notice of Motions - Quarterly Update (Pages 123 - 132)



Subject:	Request for Matter to be Taken Back for Further Consideration – Update on Tourism
Date:	14th April, 2021
Reporting Officer:	J. Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	E. McGoldrick , Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input 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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To further consider the report and appendices presented on the Update on Tourism that was considered by the Committee at its meeting held on 3rd March.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the report and recommendations.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Committee will recall that, at the Council meeting on 1st April, it was agreed that the minute of the meeting of 3rd March, under the heading “Tourism Update”, be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.</p>

3.2 Accordingly, the report from last month and associated appendices, along with an extract of the minutes from the March Committee (below) has been re-circulated for further consideration.

Minutes of 3rd March City Growth and Regeneration Committee

“Update on Tourism

The Committee considered the following report, together with associated appendices:

“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 The Committee is asked to:

- 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 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. The purpose of this plan is to:

- 3.4
- 3.5
- Deliver on the tourism priorities set out the *Belfast Agenda*, recognising the importance of tourism to *Growing the Economy and City Development*.
 - Align to the ten-year cultural strategy *A City Imagining*, 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 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:

- Grow Belfast
- Experience Belfast
- Position Belfast
- Sustainable Belfast

3.3 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.

3.4 Experience Belfast – developing neighbourhoods

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:

- 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 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.

3.6 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:

- 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 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:

- 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.

Programme Development supported by the Global Destination Sustainability Index

3.8 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:

- 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 3rd party accreditation scheme, likely to be the globally recognized Earthcheck scheme.

Environmental research

3.10 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.

Social and cultural initiatives

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 Supporting Suppliers

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.

3.15 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:

- 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.

Creating new digital content to support the positioning of Belfast

3.16 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:

- 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 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.

3.18 **Summary of feedback**

- 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 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.

Financial & Resource Implications

3.20 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.

3.21 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.

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

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**

3.22 The cultural strategy, *A City Imagining* 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.”

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development provided further information on funding agreements and confirmed that further detail in relation to inclusivity and accessibility would be provided in the 10 year tourism plan being submitted to the Committee in June.

The Committee:

- Noted 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; and
- Agreed to progress the key actions as set out in appendix 1 and supported by the 2021/22 departmental budget for tourism development.”

Financial and Resource Implications

As per original report.

	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Copy of report and appendices from March Committee.



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	The Committee is asked to: <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	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. The purpose of this plan is to:

	<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. <p>Programme Development supported by the Global Destination Sustainability Index</p>
3.8	<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	<p>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 3rd party accreditation scheme, likely to be the globally recognized Earthcheck scheme.</p>
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>
3.11	<p><u>Social and cultural initiatives</u></p> <p>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.</p>
3.12	<p>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.</p>

3.13	<p>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.</p>
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 data-bbox="272 656 1043 707">GDSI Membership</td> <td data-bbox="1043 656 1481 707">£7,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 707 1043 759">Capacity building including Green Tourism accreditation</td> <td data-bbox="1043 707 1481 759">£75,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 759 1043 810">Research and development</td> <td data-bbox="1043 759 1481 810">£10,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 810 1043 862">Local tourism support</td> <td data-bbox="1043 810 1481 862">£200,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="272 862 1043 913">Digital content</td> <td data-bbox="1043 862 1481 913">£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										

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.	- 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

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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:	Request to Present - Future Provision of Business Start-up Support in Northern Ireland
Date:	14 April 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	Members will be aware that the Council is committed to refreshing the range of business start up support that is currently in place in order to help us achieve the substantial shift that will be required in order to meet the targets set out in the Enterprise Framework. The actions of the framework focus on increasing the number of business start-ups in the city and making existing businesses more productive and competitive.
1.2	Working with the 10 other councils, Invest NI and DfE, it was agreed that Belfast City Council take the lead in undertaking research to inform the future measure and model required to deliver business start-up support across the region.

	As this work is now complete, it is proposed that the findings are presented to members at the May meeting of the Committee by the Enterprise Research Centre, the consultancy team which has been working with officers on the development of the research.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agree to receive at its monthly meeting in May, a presentation from the Enterprise Research Centre on their findings from the research on the Future Provision of Business Start-up Support in Northern Ireland.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that, as part of the transfer of functions and Local Government Reform, responsibility for business start-up and support for under-represented groups in terms of enterprise support transferred to Councils. Since the transfer of functions in 2015 we have been working with other councils across the region as well as local delivery partners to put in place a range of support which is aimed at engaging new entrepreneurs and supporting them to develop the skills and capabilities to start their own business.
3.2	As a council we acknowledge that the current provision has some significant shortcomings and limitations particularly in relation to how success is measured through a jobs outcome approach which is estimated based on the delivery of a client led business plan. This measure firstly restricts the model of delivery used to support new businesses across the region, and it also does not take account of the wider provision of support that is in place to encourage entrepreneurial activity.
3.3	We are committed to refreshing the range of support in order to help us achieve the substantial shift that will be required in order to meet the targets set out in the Enterprise Framework. With the Enterprise Framework now in place, officers have been working in partnership with stakeholders across the city to put in place an action plan which takes account of the longer-term ambitions to increase the number of new business starts and to make existing businesses more productive and competitive. The Enterprise Framework recognises that, to achieve these ambitions, the council and partners must nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture across the city.
3.4	One such action is undertaking research to inform the future delivery of start-up support across the region. we are working in partnership with the 10 other councils across the region, Invest NI and the Department for the Economy (DfE) to inform and shape what our future

	offer needs to look like. The research proposes a new target framework and focuses on supporting the pipeline of new businesses, from engaging individuals in early stage entrepreneurship through to scaling businesses and sustaining business growth.
3.5	<p>The objectives of the research as agreed by the 11 councils, Invest NI and DfE were as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To draw on best practice from comparable regions to provide the 'case for change' for business start-up delivery in Northern Ireland. - To provide recommendations on appropriate measures of success, targets, and delivery mechanisms required to help local start-up businesses to flourish.
3.6	The research seeks to identify and articulate how Northern Ireland and Belfast should best measure and articulate business start progress providing indicative targets for business start delivery based on the region's ambitions, resources and learning from comparable successful regions. The findings will enable us to make recommendations to DfE on the most appropriate measure for reporting on business start-up performance which is based on a model of delivery that sets out to achieve our ambitions as a council.
3.7	The Enterprise Research Centre was commissioned to undertake the research in the Summer of 2020. The research involved a review of available metrics on start-ups in Northern Ireland, together with appropriate comparisons across other regions of the UK and internationally; a review of the literature on international best practices; extensive stakeholder engagement in Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK.
3.8	The outputs for policy makers and stakeholders from the research include an assessment of the current delivery model, a set of indicative ambitious 'stretch' targets; recommendations for a potential re-boot in light of revised targets; and an outline of budget and other resources needed for a revised business start-up support programme in Northern Ireland.
3.9	It is proposed that the presentation by the Enterprise Research Centre will provide an overview of the key findings from the research and recommendations which will include priority areas of investment for the Council in order to deliver on and achieve the ambitions set out in the Belfast Agenda, inclusive growth strategy and the recovery plan for the city, Belfast: Our Recovery.

3.10	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The development of the research to inform the Future Provision of Business Start-up Support in Northern Ireland has been resourced from the 2020/21 financial budget for the Economic Development budget. The financial implications of any new areas of investment will be factored into the 2021/22 budget and into the medium-term financial planning process.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>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.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	N/A.



Subject:	York Street Interchange (YSI)
Date:	14 April 2021
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place & Economy
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development

Restricted Reports	
<p>Is this report restricted?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"> After Committee Decision <input type="checkbox"/> After Council Decision <input type="checkbox"/> Some time in the future <input type="checkbox"/> Never <input type="checkbox"/> </p>	

Call-in	
<p>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	<p>Following a request by Members at the City Growth & Regeneration Committee in March, this report provides an overview on decisions taken by Committee and Council since the inception of discussions on the York Street Interchange (YSI) that have informed the Council's position on the proposed scheme.</p>

2.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the background to, and context of, Council's position on the York Street Interchange scheme; and, • Note the chronology of events in relation to the YSI including the formal considerations by the Council.
3.0	Main report
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The existing junction links together the three of the busiest roads in NI and provides access to the Port of Belfast from the Strategic Road Network and is the main access to Belfast from the north. The capacity of the existing York Street junction is limited by competing traffic flow priorities and physical constraints (properties and railway). This lack of junction capacity to accommodate continuous through movements contributes to congestion on surrounding parts of the network; delays for freight, public transport and private vehicles.</p> <p>The current signalised junction arrangement was not designed to deal with over 100,000 traffic movements per day. The current configuration is a source of traffic congestion for both the strategic and city networks that requires careful traffic management, particularly in peak periods, to ensure that the different components do not become blocked and cause significant delays across the network. As recognised in the Regional Transportation Strategy where such "<i>localised restrictions cause undue congestion and thereby delay for freight, public transport and cars</i>" they are considered to be bottlenecks that undermine the effectiveness of the Strategic Road Network.</p> <p>The location of the strategic junction on the edge of the city centre provides some unique challenges in terms of local accessibility particularly for pedestrians as they have to cross six lanes of traffic at two locations on their route into the city. There are challenges in relation to the access to the Yorkgate Station and an absence of cycling facilities to support movement through the junction.</p>

3.4	<p><u>Context</u></p> <p>The Council has consistently supported YSI, subject to detailed design considerations and confirmation of mitigation measures to be put in place by DfI to avoid adverse impacts. The evolution of the scheme and associated issues have been discussed at a range of committee meetings contributing to the formal Council responses which highlighted issues in respect of: connectivity, walking, cycling, air quality, noise, contaminated land and regeneration. A timeline of the key events in relation to the YSI is appended at Appendix 6.</p>
3.5	<p>A 2005 initial feasibility study led to the Preliminary Options Report (2009) and subsequent public consultation (2011) on four layout options. Two of the four options supported fully connected through movements of strategic traffic (Options B&C) with Option B incorporating a significant additional 18m high bridge structure whilst Option C proposed an underpass arrangement. The Council recommended Option B or C and DfI subsequently selected Option C, a fully grade-separated underpass option.</p>
3.6	<p>On consideration of consultation responses, and the high profile nature of scheme, the Department for Regional Development (DRD) Minister at that time decided to hold a Public Inquiry. The Public Inquiry Inspector supported the issues raised by the Council in relation to design; linkages and connections; air quality; contaminated land and noise.</p>
3.7	<p>A Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) was established in January 2015 to consider and advise on the aesthetic / design aspects of the scheme, with Council representatives included in the membership. The SAG reconvened in September 2017 following the Public Inquiry Inspector's report recommendations and with wider community representation.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Key Dates</u></p> <p>December 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department for Regional Development (DRD) YSI feasibility study completed. • Options ranged from traffic management options, which could have been implemented in the short term to provide immediate improvements, to full grade-separation options that removed the conflicts between traffic movements implemented in the longer term.

3.9	<p>October 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCC response to DRD YSI consultation requested assurance from DRD that any new road infrastructure is designed to improve connections to the north of the city and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. • Council also requested consideration be given to the potential reallocation of surplus road space within the surrounding network e.g. Dunbar Link.
3.10	<p>January 2013</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YSI update paper submitted to BCC Development Committee. • Committee noted the preferred option and supported continued engagement with DRD on the next stage to seek to influence the design of the preferred option to reflect the aspirations of the Council.
3.11	<p>March 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee approved the draft response to the Environmental Statement consultation. • Response highlighted the need to carefully consider connections to the north of City, increase opportunities for active travel linked to new UU campus and also highlighted issues relating to air quality, noise and contaminated land. • Committee approved the draft response.
3.12	<p>November 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YSI Public Inquiry over three days, including site visits. • Council raised the following issues: design, linkages and connections, air quality, contaminated land and noise. • In relation to design and connectivity issues the Council emphasised the need for careful design to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and to enhance connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. • The Council suggested that some modest investment by DRD in the design of the interchange proposal with the aim of improving development and regeneration potential and non-motorised movement could generate significant future social, economic and environmental benefits for the York Street area and for the wider city.

3.13	<p>8th November 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Growth & Regeneration Committee received an update paper on the outcome of the Public Inquiry and Council's ongoing involvement. • Noted that at the Inquiry Council officers made representations on the need for careful design to reduce visual impact and enhance connectivity and raised issues around air quality, noise and vibration and contaminated land. • The Inspector's report recommended that DfI Roads liaise with Council throughout the remainder of the design phase and construction phase. • As a result, the Strategic Advisory group was reconvened in Sept 2017. • After discussion, the Committee noted the YSI update and the ongoing participation of Council officers in the process
3.14	<p>January 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Decade, New Approach deal includes YSI as a key infrastructure project that will benefit from increased funding for capital infrastructure from the UK Government's 'infrastructure revolution'. • At the SP&R meeting held on 21 February 2020 members adopted the recommendation that the YSI scheme be included as a specific point for further discussion with the Minister for Infrastructure and this has subsequently happened
3.15	<p>Summer 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In July 2020 the Minister for Infrastructure announced the external review of the YSI scheme. • At its meeting on 12th August 2020 the City Growth & Regeneration Committee agreed that the Council would write to the Minister for Infrastructure to express its support for the external review of the YSI project, and to offer an opportunity to engage with the review process.
3.16	<p>January 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council received a response from the Minister indicating that the review was carried out by a panel of accredited reviewers, independent from the project in early November 2020. • The letter also advised that the review is now complete and Minister Mallon is currently considering its findings.

3.17

March 2021

Infrastructure Minister announces the outcome of the review of the YSI scheme and stated that *“I want the scheme to maximise focus on wellbeing, sustainable travel, creating thriving liveable places and communities as well as responding to the climate emergency and connecting people and opportunities”*. The Minister also approved the six recommendations by the independent review panel and additional actions, as follows:

1. The YSI project brief should be reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with the concept of “place making” and new best practice in terms of urban transport design, and with the Minister’s agenda.
2. The wider area impact and benefits of the Project should be evaluated using appropriate quantitative and qualitative assessment mechanisms.
3. The current Project costs should be updated to act as a benchmark to inform any decision on future alternative development.
4. There needs to be a system of ongoing communications with all interested parties. This should include updating the 2017 Communications Strategy and employing a robust Communications Structure now as well as during any construction phase. Communications should be ongoing and not just point in time.
5. There needs to be much closer co-ordination both within the DfI and between DfI and other relevant departments and interested parties at both policy and delivery levels with regard to YSI development and delivery.
6. There needs to be a co-ordinated decision made in the context of emerging policies, which then needs to be applied to ensure that the YSI project aligns to this context

- The SAG is to be reconvened and the communications strategy updated to ensure local communities and other stakeholders are kept informed of future developments
- Consultants have been retained by DfI to carry out further work particularly around place making and optimisation of scheme delivery for communities, connectivity and green recovery, the wider living places agenda, and future development of Belfast.
- A further update report from the consultants is anticipated in the autumn of 2021.

3.18

Further details on this review process will be brought to Committee when available.

	<p><u>Related Issues</u></p>
3.19	<p><i>Environmental Health</i></p> <p>Whilst Council statutory powers to enforce construction hours of work, noise limits, etc. do not apply to works carried out by Government Departments it was agreed through the Public Inquiry that Council should expect the same degree of liaison or co-operation from DfI as from private developers. DfI requested further input from Council into hours of proposed work during construction phase to inform the new tender processes.</p>
3.20	<p><i>Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)</i></p> <p>YSI is within one of Belfast's four Air Quality Monitoring Area's (Westlink Corridor). The area was originally declared in 2004 for predicted exceedances of both nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulate matter (PM10). In 2015 the area was revoked for PM10 but continues in relation to NO2.</p>
3.21	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.22	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	<p>Appendix 1 Development Committee consultation response to YSI proposal (October 2012)</p> <p>Appendix 2 Development Committee - YSI Proposals (January 2013)</p> <p>Appendix 3 Shadow SP&R Committee YSI - Environmental Statement consultation (March 2015)</p> <p>Appendix 4 Council representations to YSI Public Enquiry (September 2017)</p> <p>Appendix 5 DfI response to BCC re. request to participate in YSI external review</p> <p>Appendix 6 York Street Interchange scheme timeline of key events</p>

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Response to York Street Interchange proposals
Date:	16 th October 2012
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Shirley McCay, Head of Economic Initiatives, ext 3459

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Department for Regional Development (DRD) Roads Service presented options for the proposed York Street interchange to Development Committee on the 27 June 2011 as part of a public consultation process. Following a request for further information from Roads Service, a report to consider the potential implications arising from the four options was presented to Committee on the 21 st August 2012. It was agreed that a cross-party working group would be established to examine whether a consensus could be reached in respect of the Council's preferred option for York Street Interchange. A meeting of the cross party working group took place on the 8 th October 2012.

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>Details on the four options were previously presented to Committee and are summarised below:</p> <p>Option A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Movement between the M2 and Westlink will be via underpasses below ground level and Westlink to M3 movement also via an underpass• The M3 to Westlink movement will remain signalled controlled• All slip roads at Clifton Street remain open• This option is the lowest cost of approximately £72m <p>Option B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Movement between M2 and Westlink (southbound) via a new bridge over existing Lagan Road and Dargan Rail bridges, which will be approximately 18 metres above existing ground level.• Movement between Westlink and M2 (northbound) and Westlink to M3 (eastbound) will be via an underpass below existing ground level and under

	<p>new York Street bridge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement between the M3 to Westlink (westbound) will be via new bridge over York Street. • All Slip roads at Clifton street remain open • This option has the highest estimated cost at approximately £100m. <p>Option C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement between M2 and Westlink will be via underpasses below existing ground level underneath a new York Street bridge and existing Lagan Road and Dargan Rail Bridges • Westlink to M3 movement will be via an underpass below existing ground level and new York Street bridge. • All slip roads at Clifton Street remain open • The cost is approximately £98m <p>Option D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement between M2 and Westlink will be via new bridges over existing Lagan Road and Dargan Rail bridges, approximately 18 metres above existing ground level • Westlink to M3 movement via traffic signal controlled junctions at York Street • Nelson Street and M3 to Westlink movement via new bridge over York Street • M2/M3 bound on-slip from Clifton Street closed, all other slip roads at Clifton Street remain open • The cost approximately £95m
2.2	<p>The following issues were considered in more detail at the cross party working group meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A & D will have signalled controlled junctions at York St for traffic moving from the Westlink to M3 which will result in an interruption to the traffic flows for this route. • Options B and D propose separate flyovers which will be 18 metres above ground level. These options may have greater potential impact on the surrounding communities in terms of their visibility and the raised road profile adjacent to the Henry St and Portland Place communities however, the proposed separate flyovers in Options B and D will potentially have less land take than the underpasses. • Option A and C propose the movements between the strategic roads via underpasses which would have a very much reduced visual impact but have potential to cause increased severance from the city centre for the communities in the north of the city. • The M2/M3 bound on-slip from the Clifton Street junction will be closed under proposals for Option D.
2.3	<p>Preferred options</p> <p>In the consideration of all the options the cross party working group suggested that Option B or C offered the most effective solution in terms of enhanced connectivity for the strategic road network. In relation to the identification of a preferred option, the working group agreed that DRD should consider measures to ensure land in the vicinity of the new road infrastructure is considered for public realm improvements, potential development opportunities or for the enhancement of pedestrian or cycling</p>

	connections. The issue of 'left over' or surplus land resulting from the proposed development should be assessed at this stage and considered for regeneration opportunities to maximise the potential benefit for the city.
2.4	The Forum for Alternative Belfast proposed a modified version of Option C as the preferred option. Their proposals include the introduction of covered sections for the new underpass elements and the introduction of new building blocks alongside the proposed road infrastructure. The objectives for this approach are to introduce additional development to shield existing areas from potentially negative impacts and improve pedestrian connectivity. Whilst the Council would support the principles of identifying new development opportunities and improved connectivity as outlined in previous reports there has not been the opportunity to assess the potential costs or viability of the proposals. Details of the FAB proposal is outlined in Appendix 3.
2.5	Based upon air quality modelling data, the Health and Environmental Services Department indicated that Option B could provide for the greatest potential for improvements in ambient nitrogen dioxide levels for residents living directly adjacent to the A12 Westlink in locations such as Great and Little George's Streets. These conclusions are based upon the limited air quality modelling data provided to the Council by Roads Service and its consultants. The full response relating to air quality is outlined in Appendix 2.
2.6	In the consideration of all the options it is suggested that the Council would recommend Option B or C in terms of the enhanced connectivity for the strategic road network. However, the Council would seek assurance from DRD that any new road infrastructure is designed to improve connections to the north of the city and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. This would include consideration of the potential to actively use spaces below the flyover in Option B or cover some of the proposed cut sections in Option C. The final designs should also consider the potential for reallocation of surplus road space within the surrounding network and opportunities for the redesign of the Dunbar Link. A draft response containing proposed Council's comments relating to Option B & C is outlined in Appendix 1

3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	No considerations.

4	Recommendations
4.1	Recommendation that the Committee agree to submit comments relating to Option B & C as the basis for a response to the Department for Regional Development.

5	Decision Tracking
	Submission of an agreed response following consideration and agreement of the Committee.

6	Key to Abbreviations
	DRD – Department for Regional Development

7	Documents attached
	Appendix 1: Proposed response Appendix 2: York Street Interchange Air Quality Assessment Comments. Appendix 3: FAB comments relating to the York Street interchange

Appendix 1

Councils Draft comments on York Street Interchange proposals

The Council considers that Option B or C offered the most effective solution in terms of enhanced connectivity for the strategic road network. In relation to the identification of a preferred option, the Council would recommend that DRD should consider measures to ensure land in the vicinity of the new road infrastructure is considered for public realm improvements, potential development opportunities or for the enhancement of pedestrian or cycling connections. The issue of 'left over' or surplus land resulting from the proposed development should be assessed at this stage and considered for regeneration opportunities to maximise the potential benefit for the city.

The Council would recommend that DRD work with other agencies to ensure a joint approach to the assessment of the regeneration impact of land associated with the transport proposal. Opportunities to create employment uses and attractive and safe open space that contribute to the regeneration of this part of the city should be maximised. This proposal is particularly important given the location within the inner city directly adjacent to a number of existing city neighbourhoods.

The proposal in Option A & D to retain signalled controlled junctions at York St for traffic moving from the Westlink to M3 which will result in an interruption to the traffic flows for this route. With the high level of investment proposed, the Council considers that continuation of such interruptions in traffic flows between the strategic roads should be removed. The proposal to close slip road access in Option D is also not supported.

The Council would recommend that the final road infrastructure in addition to improvements to the strategic network also enhance connections to the north of the city and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. This should include consideration of the potential to actively use spaces below and adjacent to the proposed flyover infrastructure as well as the potential to partially cover the proposed cut sections.

There are a number of proposed developments in the vicinity of the road infrastructure proposals that could be affected. The Council would recommend that in taking forward the preferred option, the proposal takes account of the proposed development in the area, such as the proposed UU campus development on York Street are included. The major upgrade to the strategic road network will have implications for local traffic movements in the north of the city and the accessibility of the new campus. Any increase in the efficiency of the proposed junction arrangements at the York Street interchange should be used to deliver positive impacts for the northern city centre area and surrounding communities. The potential for surplus road space within the surrounding network should be explored in relation to the opportunities for the redesign of the Dunbar Link. The reduction in road space could contribute to enhanced connectivity within the city centre and the integration of the areas to the north of the Frederick Street Dunbar Link axis.

Appendix 2

York Street Interchange Air Quality Assessment Comments.

Members will be aware that the Department for Regional Development Roads Service has brought forward proposals to address the traffic bottleneck that exists at the junction of the A12 Westlink, M2 and M3 motorways where they bisect York Street.

As part the public consultation process that commenced in June 2011, Roads Service has sought views on four preliminary engineering options that involve the construction of a series of overpasses and underpasses near to Great George's Street, York Street, Corporation Street and Nelson Street. This area of the city has been used historically for industrial activities but it has the potential to be regenerated for residential housing, commercial and other uses, assuming sympathetic local environmental conditions. Indeed, the council is aware that a range of residential planning applications has already been approved for this locality and that a number of other residential and commercial planning applications are pending. Moreover, this area functions as the main access route to the city for commuters travelling from the north via the M2 Motorway and from the east of the province. For this reason, it is considered important that its redevelopment reflects the council's wider vision for city regeneration, as well as supporting forthcoming local landmark development projects such as the Royal Exchange, the University of Ulster Belfast Campus and the proposed City Quays development at Clarendon Dock. Finally, it should be noted that numerous residential premises are situated already near to the A12 Westlink in areas such as Great and Little George's Streets. Accordingly, Elected Members directed that, in reviewing the four preliminary road options for this location, officers should consider the overall sustainability of each option to take account of local social, economic and environmental impacts.

Members are advised that, as part of its statutory environmental protection obligations for the city, the council has completed a series of reviews and assessments of local air quality under the auspices of Part III of the Environmental (Northern Ireland) Order 2002. The most recent review and assessment confirmed that levels of nitrogen dioxide, associated principally with road transportation, continue to exceed both national and European health-based standards for air quality along the M1 Motorway and A12 Westlink corridor. This situation has recently necessitated a joint Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and DoENI application to the European Commission for a 5-year derogation to the compliance date for achieving nitrogen dioxide limit values for the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area. If accepted, the revised compliance date for achieving European Commission nitrogen dioxide limit values for the Belfast area will be 1 January 2015. Accordingly, the council is keen to ensure that the proposed interchange proposals do not lead to a worsening of air quality near to York Street, thereby leading potentially to infraction proceedings by the Commission and restricting the type of the redevelopment that can occur at this location.

As highlighted previously, Roads Service published four preliminary options as part of the public consultation exercise but did not complete an environmental impact assessment for each option. For this reason, the council has been unable to provide a comprehensive consultation response to Roads Service to date that addresses our environmental concerns. Accordingly, council officers requested that Roads Service undertake an air quality impact assessment for each of its engineering options in accordance with the provisions of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and government local air quality management technical guidance including LAQM.TG(09). Council officers met with representatives of Roads Service on 2 April 2012 to review the outcome of this air quality impact assessment.

The air quality impact assessment suggests that in 2020, when the road reprofiling is assumed to be complete, nitrogen dioxide levels will comply with both national and European annual mean air quality standards at all receptors. However, the assessment appears to have taken account only of existing residential receptors and, therefore, it has failed to consider the impact of, and upon developments that have already been granted planning

permission, or those with pending applications for this location. By way of example, it is understood that the assessment has not considered the impact of the new University of Ulster Belfast campus at York Street, which will provide facilities for around 15,000 students or the impact of the proposed road reprofiling on approved residential premises to be located between Corporation Street and Nelson Street. In assessing the impact of the four road options, the report has characterised the impact on air quality as a large, medium or small improvement, a small, medium or large worsening, or an imperceptible change.

Unfortunately, the format of the air quality impact assessment report did not appear to comply fully with government technical guidance and, in addition, the impact of the proposed road revisions on a number of air quality standards for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter were not made available to council officers. Accordingly, the council's air quality officer subsequently contacted Roads Service and its consultants to highlight the abovementioned omissions and to request clarification. The council received a response by email from Roads Service on 11 May 2012, although the response related principally to technical aspects of the air quality assessment process and did not provide additional information regarding projected air pollution levels. The Roads Service did indicate, however, that more detailed air quality modelling results would be included in the published 'Options Appraisal: Local Air Quality Report' which, it is assumed, will form part of the 'Stage 2 Preferred Options Report'.

Accordingly, from the air quality modelling data and referring to the four road reprofiling scenarios, Options A and C are both expected to result in a small improvement in annual mean nitrogen dioxide levels along Great and Little George's Streets during 2020, a small worsening along Garmoyle Street and an imperceptible impact at all other locations. Option B will result in broadly similar reductions in annual mean nitrogen dioxide levels to Options A and C but will deliver a marginally better improvement along Little George's Street. Finally, Option D will result in a medium improvement in annual mean nitrogen dioxide levels along Little George's Street in 2020 but will cause a worsening along North Queen Street, Brougham Street and at Nelson Street.

In conclusion, and based upon air quality modelling data provided to the council to date, it appears that Option B will provide for the greatest improvements in ambient nitrogen dioxide levels for residents living directly adjacent to the A12 Westlink in locations such as Great and Little George's Streets. However, rerouting of road traffic will also result in a small worsening in nitrogen dioxide levels along Garmoyle Street for Option B. These conclusions are based upon air quality modelling data provided to the council by Roads Service and its consultants. Therefore, it is understood that the data is not reflective of the impact of forthcoming local developments such as the University of Ulster Belfast Campus or Royal Exchange. In addition, the air quality assessment does not appear to have characterised the impact of the proposed road reprofiling on the potential for regeneration of the 'Little Italy' area, which is centred on Little Patrick Street, and its environs.

Appendix 3
FAB proposals on a modified version of Option C

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Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	York Street Interchange Proposals
Date:	29 January 2013
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Keith Sutherland, Urban Development Manager ext 3478 Anne Doherty, Planning Transport Officer, ext 3477

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Department for Regional Development (DRD) Roads Service presented options for the proposed York Street interchange to Development Committee on the 27 June 2011 as part of a public consultation process.
1.2	The existing York Street Interchange is a key junction on the strategic road network which links three of the busiest roads in Northern Ireland, the Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways. It is the main gateway to Belfast from the North, provides access to the port of Belfast as well as facilitates local traffic movement. It is considered that the existing traffic signal control at the York Street junction causes delays and congestion particularly at peak times, therefore DRD Roads Service have identified a number of options to remove the bottleneck.
1.3	Four options (A, B, C and D) aimed to improve traffic flow on the strategic road network were proposed. The options will provide direct links between the Westlink and the M2 and M3 motorways by creating new flyovers and/or underpasses below the existing Lagan Road and Dargan Rail bridges. Details of the proposed four options are outlined in Appendix 1.

2	Key Issues
2.1	The Councils response to the consultation on the four options recommended Option B or C in terms of the enhanced connectivity for the strategic road network. The Council requested assurance from DRD that any new road infrastructure is designed to improve connections to the north of the city and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. This would include consideration of the potential to actively use spaces below the flyover in Option B or cover some of the proposed cut sections in Option C.

	<p>The Council also requested for consideration to be given to the potential for reallocation of surplus road space within the surrounding network and opportunities for the redesign of the Dunbar Link.</p>
2.2	<p>On the 6 December 2012, the Minister for the Department for Regional Development announced that Option C was the preferred option for strategic road improvements at York Street, Belfast.</p>
2.3	<p>Option C proposes movements between M2 and Westlink via underpasses below existing ground level underneath a new York Street bridge and existing Lagan Road and Dargan Rail Bridges and Westlink to M3 movement via an underpass below existing ground level and new York Street bridge. The cost is approximately £98m</p>
2.4	<p>Roads Service state that the decision is based on the government's overarching five objectives for transport, which are: environment, safety, economy, accessibility and integration. The decision also took account of the following scheme specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To remove a bottleneck on the strategic road network - To deliver an affordable solution to reduce congestion on the strategic road network - To improve reliability of strategic journey times for the travelling public - To improve reliability of strategic journey times for the travelling public - To improve access to the regional gateway from the eastern seaboard key transport corridor - To maintain access to existing properties, community facilities and commercial interests - To maintain access for pedestrians and cyclists - To improve separation between strategic and local traffic
2.5	<p>Following this announcement Roads Service intend to commence the Stage 3 Assessment to further refine the design of the Preferred Option in liaison with the public, the local community and the key stakeholders. Detailed environmental, engineering, economic and traffic appraisals on the preferred option will be completed as part of this assessment process.</p>
2.6	<p>At the conclusion of the Stage 3 assessment, Roads Service will prepare and publish the following documents to enable the scheme to proceed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The draft Direction Order - The drafting Vesting Order - The Environmental Statement - It is proposed that the council
2.7	<p>It is proposed that the Council will continue to work with Roads Service during the Stage 3 process to ensure issues raised during the Stage 2 consultation are addressed including:</p>
2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further air quality assessment to reflect the impact of forthcoming local developments such as the University of Ulster Belfast Campus or Royal Exchange and the impact on proposed residential development in the vicinity;
2.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the design of the new road infrastructure to consider opportunities to improve connections to the north of the city and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists;

2.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a joint approach by DRD to work with other agencies on the assessment of the regeneration impact of land associated with the transport proposal. Opportunities to create employment uses and attractive and safe open space that contribute to the regeneration of this part of the city should be considered; and
2.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the potential for redesign of surplus road space within the surrounding network is considered such as opportunities for the redesign of the Dunbar Link.

3	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
3.1	No specific equality implications.

4	Recommendations
4.1	<p>It is recommended that Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - note the announcement of Option C as the preferred option for strategic road improvements at York Street, Belfast; and - support continued engagement with the Department for Regional Development on the Stage 3 Assessment to seek to influence the design of the Preferred Option to reflect the aspirations of the Council for both the transportation and broader regeneration outcomes.

5	Decision Tracking
There is no decision tracking attached to this report	

6	Key to Abbreviations
DRD – Department for Regional Development	

7	Documents attached
Appendix 1: York Street Interchange Proposed Options Summaries	

Appendix 1

Details on the four options for the York Street Interchange were previously presented to Committee and are summarised below:

Option A

- Movement between the M2 and Westlink will be via underpasses below ground level and Westlink to M3 movement also via an underpass
- The M3 to Westlink movement will remain signalled controlled
- All slip roads at Clifton Street remain open
- This option is the lowest cost of approximately £72m

Option B

- Movement between M2 and Westlink (southbound) via a new bridge over existing Lagan Road and Dargan Rail bridges, which will be approximately 18 metres above existing ground level.
- Movement between Westlink and M2 (northbound) and Westlink to M3 (eastbound) will be via an underpass below existing ground level and under new York Street bridge.
- Movement between the M3 to Westlink (westbound) will be via new bridge over York Street.
- All Slip roads at Clifton street remain open
- This option has the highest estimated cost at approximately £100m.

Option C

- Movement between M2 and Westlink will be via underpasses below existing ground level underneath a new York Street bridge and existing Lagan Road and Dargan Rail Bridges
- Westlink to M3 movement will be via an underpass below existing ground level and new York Street bridge.
- All slip roads at Clifton Street remain open
- The cost is approximately £98m

Option D

- Movement between M2 and Westlink will be via new bridges over existing Lagan Road and Dargan Rail bridges, approximately 18 metres above existing ground level
- Westlink to M3 movement via traffic signal controlled junctions at York Street
- Nelson Street and M3 to Westlink movement via new bridge over York Street
- M2/M3 bound on-slip from Clifton Street closed, all other slip roads at Clifton Street remain open
- The cost approximately £95m



Report to:	Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	York Street Interchange- Environmental Statement consultation
Date:	20 th March 2015
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen (Director of Development)
Contact Officer:	Keith Sutherland (Urban Development Unit Manager), Anne Doherty (Planning & Transport Officer)

1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Department for Regional Development announced the preferred option for the York Street Interchange (YSI) in December 2012. The preferred option proposes the full grade separation of movement between the Westlink, M2 and M3. Grade separation is provided via underpasses below the Lagan Bridge and Dargan Bridge. York Street would be partially raised to accommodate the underlying links. All north facing slip roads at Clifton Street remain open in the proposed layout.
1.2	DRD Transport NI has now completed Stage 3 assessment of the scheme and this work has included the completion of an Environmental Impact Assessment, in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. The DRD Minister announced the formal consultation on the Environmental Statement for the proposed York Street Interchange on 27th January 2015.
1.3	DRD Transport NI anticipates that following this stage of public consultation there will be a Public Inquiry (possibly late 2015), with construction beginning 2017/18 and the proposed scheme completed by April 2021.
1.4	A Strategic Advisory Group has been set up by DRD Transport NI to provide strategic guidance to facilitate the integration of York Street Interchange with other government and private initiatives and also to review the scheme aesthetics. The Council are represented on this group along with representatives from DSD, Planning NI, Arts Council, FAB and Transport NI.
2.0	Key Issues
2.1	<p>A draft response is attached in Appendix 1 for consideration and a summary of the main issues is outlined below.</p> <p>It is suggested that the Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Statement for the York Street Interchange as part of the Stage 3 Assessment public consultation process.</p> <p>The York Street Interchange is highlighted in the Council's draft City Centre Regeneration</p>

Strategy and Investment Plan as a significant project for the city. It is suggested that careful design is required for connecting north / south routes for pedestrian and cyclists and creative solutions are needed to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and make use of otherwise dead space required. The Plan suggests “Underpass Projects” to improve the visual impact and pedestrian connectivity through the M3 and York Street Interchange through public art, landscaping interventions and community sports facilities.

The Council will continue to work with DRD and other partners through the Strategic Advisory Forum to consider actions to minimise the impact of the scheme on the adjoining residential areas and to consider the aesthetics and finishes of the road proposal. The Council are also keen to assess the regeneration opportunities of surplus land parcels resulting from the proposed development at an early stage to maximise the potential benefit for the city. It should be noted that the YSI proposal will impact on one of the DRD off street car parks which will be transferred to Council ownership in April 2015.

It is suggested that the Council request DRD to reconsider the use of on road cycle lanes and shared bus lanes as part of the proposed cycle provision for the scheme. In our response to the draft NI Bicycle Strategy, the Council strongly supported high quality segregated cycle lanes in urban areas particularly on routes where traffic volumes and speed may be high. It is considered that the York Street proposal presents an opportunity to develop segregated cycle lanes along with other innovative measures for cycling infrastructure such as bus stop by passes. The Council would recommend input from DRD Cycle unit into the design of this infrastructure following on from consultation on the Bicycle Strategy.

There are a number of proposed developments in the vicinity of the YSI proposals such as City Quays and the new University of Ulster campus development on York Street. The need to increase the opportunity for active travel access to the new University campus, the city centre and the harbour area is vital.

In relation to the technical aspects of the proposed scheme, it is suggested that the Council highlight the following issues relating to air quality, noise and contaminated land:

- Air Quality

Council Officers have been working closely with DRD on the development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for the city and York Street Interchange has been identified as one of the measures to include in the new plan to improve air quality in that area. The scheme is considered as a means of reducing localised emissions on connecting roads (i.e. as a result of relieving a significant congestion hotspot) and, to a lesser extent, incremental reductions in background emissions, which of course will have a wider impact on exposure. It is suggested that there will be additional concerns regarding the air quality impacts of the proposed scheme on receptors, however, the Council would wish to continue in consultation with DRD regarding the operational and construction plans for the proposed scheme.

- Noise

It is suggested that there could be some concerns as to the impact the construction and particularly piling works could have on the local community. The Council would request early communication from DRD and future contractors regarding work schedules, especially night time work to ensure early communication and engagement with local communities.

- Contaminated Land

The Council welcomes the approach taken and the recommendations made with respect to the management of any unforeseen contamination during construction. However, full

	technical details of the work to be completed have not been provided. This would need to be submitted in order for the Council to fully appraise the possible land contamination issues. Furthermore, there are some concerns that the risks posed to users / residents of adjacent sites has not been fully considered.
3.0	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no resource implications attached to this report.
4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are no specific Equality and Good Relations Considerations attached to this report.
5.0	Call-in
	This decision is subject to Call in.
6.0	Recommendations
6.1	Elected members are requested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to consider the proposed Draft response to the consultation appended and to agree a final response or any amendments to be forwarded to DRD.
7.0	Decision Tracking
	Timeline: March 2015 Reporting Officer: Keith Sutherland
8.0	Key to Abbreviations
	YSI- York Street Interchange DRD- Department for Regional Development FAB- Forum for Alternative Belfast
9.0	Documents Attached
9.1	Appendix 1- Draft Belfast City Council response to York Street Interchange- Environmental Statement.

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Appendix 1

Response to York Street Interchange - Environmental Statement Public Consultation

Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Statement for the York Street Interchange as part of the Stage 3 Assessment public consultation process. A Strategic Advisory Group has been set up by DRD Transport NI to provide strategic guidance to facilitate the integration of York Street Interchange with other government and private initiatives and also to review the scheme aesthetics. The Council are represented on this group along with representatives from DSD, Planning NI, Arts Council, FAB and Transport NI.

Council Officers will continue work with DRD and other partners through the Strategic Advisory Forum to consider actions to minimise the impact of the scheme on the adjoining residential areas and to consider the aesthetics and finishes of the road proposal. The Council are also keen to assess the regeneration opportunities of surplus land parcels resulting from the proposed development at an early stage to maximise the potential benefit for the city. It should be noted that the YSI proposal will impact on a number of DRD off street car parks which will be transferred to Council ownership in April 2015

Our response below outlines the Council position in relation to the strategic context of the York Street Interchange proposal and this is followed by specific comments on technical aspects.

Belfast City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan (Draft)

The York Street Interchange is highlighted in the Council's draft City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan as a significant project for the city. The northern edge of the city centre is identified as the least permeable, defined by the major highway infrastructure of the Westlink and M3. The Plan highlights the issue that with the construction of the York Street Interchange there is the danger that the barrier between the city centre and the communities to the north will become even more pronounced. The City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan suggest that innovative and interesting ways must be found to penetrate this barrier and foster connections through the concrete of the interchange.

Under the policy of "Creating a green, walkable, cyclable centre" the objective is to "reduce the area of asphalt and increase green space in the city centre through the provision of new open spaces, a comprehensive streetscaping programme and development of the Lagan corridor as a recreational spine." The draft plan considers the need to rebalance the scales between asphalt and softness on city centre streets as a priority. With the introduction of the York Street Interchange there will be excess road capacity on some of the worst offending portions, notably the Dunbar Link, which the plan proposes could be reallocated to support cyclists and pedestrians.

The Plan also outlines a policy to "Connect to the city around" and aims to "reduce barriers around the city centre and the communities that surround it by connecting to activity in adjacent neighbourhoods, ... reducing road widths, improving pedestrian crossings,

streetscaping key corridors and improving the built form relationship at the edge of the centre.”

It is recommended that careful design is required for connecting north / south routes for pedestrian and cyclists and creative solutions are needed to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and make use of otherwise dead space required. The Plan suggests “Underpass Projects” to improve the visual impact and pedestrian connectivity through the M3 and York Street interchange through public art, landscaping interventions and community sports facilities.

Finally the Plan states that with some modest investment in the design of the interchange with the aim of improving development and regeneration potential and non-motorised movement could have significant future benefits. The Council will work with DRD and other partners through the Strategic Advisory Group to consider how the barrier effect of the interchange can be minimised.

Belfast City Masterplan

Belfast City Masterplan sets out the Cathedral area placemaking solution to deliver the integration of the University of Ulster at Cathedral Quarter. The Plan states that with the opportunity to plan for a new university campus care needs to be taken to shape the substantial investment of public money to ensure that it delivers the optimal social, economic and physical impacts on the city centre. Belfast City Masterplan recognises the need for alignment between the University expansion in this part of the City and the proposed major upgrade of the motorway interchange at York Street.

Specific Comments:

Cycling provision

The Council would request that DRD reconsider the use of on road cycle lanes and shared bus lanes as part of the proposed cycle provision for the scheme. In our response to the draft NI Bicycle Strategy, the Council strongly supported high quality segregated cycle lanes in urban areas particularly on routes where traffic volumes and speed may be high. It is considered that the York Street proposal presents an opportunity to develop segregated cycle lanes along with other innovative measures for cycling infrastructure such as bus stop by passes. The Council would recommend input from DRD Cycle unit into the design of this infrastructure following on from consultation on the Bicycle Strategy.

There are a number of proposed developments in the vicinity of the YSI proposals such as City Quays and the new University of Ulster campus development on York Street. The need to increase the opportunity for active travel access to the new University campus, the city centre and the harbour area is vital.

Open Space

The York Street Interchange project presents the opportunity to create significant areas of new green space in a sector of the city currently dominated by transport infrastructure. In line with Council policy, set out in our City Centre Regeneration Plan, we need to increase our network of green spaces to balance increased amounts of hardscape associated with a

project of this scale. Opportunities also exist to create new green boulevards that connect the Northern Quarter through Dunbar Link and back to the city's core.

The northern edge of the city is the least permeable, therefore new open space associated with the development must be accessible to local communities, welcoming, easy to maintain and innovative in terms of landscape treatments. The project presents an opportunity to reconnect this sector of the city through green walking and cycling routes and to reduce severance of adjacent neighbourhoods.

The proximity of the UU Campus development is also significant. The Interchange project also provides opportunities to enhance pedestrian activity associated with the new campus and further develop pedestrian connections to the city centre.

New green spaces should also be designed to reduce the visual impact of new elevated road structures. The Council would support the introduction of significant mature tree and screen planting where possible. Our City Centre Regeneration Plan also advocates the use of planters that disguise harsh concrete surfaces with vines/climbers and the use of vibrant public art or lighting schemes.

The development also offers the opportunity to re-design spaces between road infrastructure which are currently dead space. Where appropriate underpass areas could be transformed into productive community spaces used for sport e.g. multi use games areas or climbing walls. A recent council success has been the development of 'The Bridge's urban sports park beneath the M3 bridge at Corporation Street. A more simple 'greening' approach may present opportunities for informal recreation e.g. small urban parks with stronger connectivity to surrounding communities.

Air Quality

BCC have been working closely with DRD on the development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for the city and York Street Interchange has been identified as one of the measures to include in the new plan to improve air quality in that area. The scheme is considered as a means of reducing localised emissions on connecting roads (i.e. as a result of relieving a significant congestion hotspot) and, to a lesser extent, incremental reductions in background emissions, which of course will have a wider impact on exposure. In relation to Air Quality operational and construction phase impacts are outlined here with a full response included in Appendix 1a.

Operational Impacts:

The URS report has demonstrated that the proposed scheme would result in localised changes in emissions as a result of modification to the existing road layout and associated traffic redistributive effects, the changes in concentrations would generally be of an imperceptible or small magnitude, in terms of both increases and decreases in exposure. In the assumed year of Opening (2021) and the Design year (2035), predicted annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter would be below national air quality objective values at all assessed sensitive receptors for both the Do-Minimum and Do-Something scenarios. Overall, there would be no significant effect on either local or regional air quality as a result of the Proposed Scheme.

Construction Phase Impacts:

Adverse effects on amenity and local air quality due to fugitive emissions of dust, particulate matter and construction related traffic movements are not considered to be significant and would only be of local concern during the construction phase.

Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit has no concerns regarding the air quality impacts of the proposed scheme on receptors and would support the scheme in relation to health benefits it has the potential to deliver. However, the Unit would wish to continue in consultation with DRD regarding the operational and construction plans for the proposed scheme.

Noise

Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit would request further information as outlined below with a full technical response included in Appendix 1a.

Operational Phase

- The Environmental Protection Unit requests that once the scheme is operational, the applicant demonstrates, by way of a Verification Report, that further assessment has been conducted to confirm/inform initial predictions as to whether or not any properties identified within the study area meet eligibility criteria under the Noise Insulation Regulations (NI) 1995.
- With respect to compliance with the Environmental Noise Directive, the aforementioned Verification Report should demonstrate liaison with the relevant competent authority (Department of the Environment) and identify any required noise actions arising out of duties under the Environmental Noise Directive.

Construction Phase

This Unit advises the following **additional information** should be presented once available:

- Submission of a regularly updated CEMP – (Construction Environmental management Plan). This Unit recommends that DRD instruct the appointed Contractor to liaise closely with Belfast City Council in communicating details of the various phases of work demonstrating how good site practices will be adopted in order to mitigate construction noise and vibration impacts. This should include details of noise reduction methods to be employed during piling activities;
- Documentation demonstrating the feasibility of the chosen method of piling;
- Further information relating to the removal of existing noise barriers as part of the construction phase and details of proposed temporary alternatives;
- A proactive strategy aimed at reassuring residents in advance of any piling operations is also recommended. Evidence of feasibility study for the chosen method of piling should be appropriately documented;

- Significant night time works have been identified as likely to be required. Details of proposed night time works required as part of the construction phase should be communicated to Belfast City Council well in advance of any such proposed works with proposed mitigation measures clearly identified;
- Early communication and engagement with communities likely to be impacted by noise and vibration impacts during the construction phase will be an essential element of managing complaints. This Unit seeks confirmation, by the applicant or contractor that a community liaison officer has been appointed to deal with complaints and focus on community engagement/ consultation in relation to the construction phase.

Contaminated Land

Below is a summary of comments/recommendations from the Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) with regard to contaminated land. The full response is included in Appendix 1a.

With respect to potential human health issues relating to potential land contamination issues associated with the scheme, the EPU has undertaken to review Chapters 16 and 17 of the Environmental Statement. Within these chapters, URS present a contaminated land risk assessment (CLRA) which has been completed generally in line with relevant current industry guidance (*CLR11 Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination*).

The CLRA concludes that the risks posed to human health associated with the scheme are 'very low' and that the remediation of any previously unidentified contamination encountered during construction could actually have a 'Slight/Moderate Beneficial' environmental impact.

The EPU welcomes the approach taken and the recommendations made with respect to the management of any unforeseen contamination during construction.

However, full technical details of the work completed have not been provided. This would need to be submitted in order for the EPU to fully appraise the possible land contamination issues. Furthermore, the EPU has some concerns that the risks posed to users / residents of adjacent sites has not been fully considered.

Appendix 1a

Air Quality Impact Assessment Response Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit Technical Comments

Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement and its Appendices describe the air quality impacts of the preferred option associated with the redevelopment of York Street junction. The assessment considers the effects on Local and Regional air quality in accordance with the methodology for a 'Detailed' and 'Simple' assessment respectively, as stated within the DMRB Advice Note HA 207/07.

Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 establishes a statutory duty upon Northern Ireland district councils to periodically review, assess and manage air quality for a range of common ambient pollutants. A series of health-based standards for these pollutants, that are designed to protect the public and the environment, are detailed within the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Accordingly, this Unit on reviewing the report focused primarily upon the assessment of ambient pollutants prescribed within the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

The consultant has used Cambridge Environmental Research Consultant's Atmospheric Dispersion Modelling Software (ADMS- Roads V3.2.4) to quantify local pollution levels at 18 relevant receptor locations. Additional predictions have also been obtained as set out in the DMRB approach to 'simple' assessment methods to consider regional emissions. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM₁₀ & PM_{2.5}) background data for the modelling studies has been derived from data published by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Report Findings

Operational Impacts:

The URS report has demonstrated that the proposed scheme would result in localised changes in emissions as a result of modification to the existing road layout and associated traffic redistributive effects, the changes in concentrations would generally be of an imperceptible or small magnitude, in terms of both increases and decreases in exposure. In the assumed year of Opening (2021) and the Design year (2035), predicted annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter would be below national air quality objective values at all assessed sensitive receptors for both the Do-Minimum and Do-Something scenarios. Overall, there would be no significant effect on either local or regional air quality as a result of the Proposed Scheme.

Construction Phase Impacts:

Adverse effects on amenity and local air quality due to fugitive emissions of dust, particulate matter and construction related traffic movements are not considered to be significant and would only be of local concern during the construction phase.

Comments

The M1/Westlink Corridor including the York Street junction is declared as an Air Quality Management Area for predicted exceedences of the nitrogen dioxide annual mean air quality objective and also the nitrogen dioxide 1 hour mean objective.

As a key member of Belfast Air Quality Steering Group, BCC have been working closely with DRD on the development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for the city and York Street Interchange has been identified as one of the measures to include in the new plan to improve air quality in that area. The scheme is considered as a means of reducing localised emissions on connecting roads (i.e. as a result of relieving a significant congestion hotspot) and, to a lesser extent, incremental reductions in background emissions, which of course will have a wider impact on exposure. This Unit will continue to review and assess air quality within this location as part of our statutory duties under Part III of the Northern Ireland the Environment (NI) Order 2002.

Accordingly, based upon the findings of the URS report, this Unit is satisfied that no exceedence of the air quality objectives will occur at relevant receptors. As a result, this Unit has no concerns regarding the air quality impacts of the proposed scheme on receptors and would support the scheme in relation to health benefits it has the potential to deliver.

Noise and Vibration Impacts

Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit Technical Comments

This Unit notes the URS detailed study area for the quantitative assessment of noise impacts has been defined as comprising a 400m buffer around the Proposed Scheme design.

URS presents results of ambient noise monitoring undertaken at six monitoring locations they identify as representative of sensitive receptors potentially impacted by the proposed scheme.

The noise and vibration assessment examines both the potential operational impacts from the proposed scheme once operational (for both the assumed year of opening of 2021 and fifteen years later in 2035) and the potential impacts from noise and vibration during the construction phase (expected to last 3 years).

Operational Impacts

Report findings:

Calculations carried out and presented in the URS noise and vibration assessment report demonstrate that in the absence of the proposed scheme, road traffic noise levels in the 400m study area generally increase slightly from the baseline year to the future assessment year, due to the general increase in traffic flows over time.

With the scheme in place the URS report advises that the vast majority of properties will undergo a negligible increase in daytime traffic noise in the long-term from 2012 Do-Minimum to 2035 Do-something scenarios. In addition, the URS report advises that a small number of residential properties adjacent to the proposed scheme were predicted to experience an increase in noise levels that may meet the criteria for provision of insulation (as defined in the Noise Insulation Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995).

However, the report advises that the provision of mitigation in the form of noise barriers located along a section of proposed fence line adjacent to the northbound and southbound carriageways of the Westlink would ensure that predicted increases in noise levels experienced at these properties would be reduced to such an extent that they are no longer predicted to meet the Noise Insulation Regulations (NI) 1995 criteria. In addition, the URS report advises it is proposed to use low noise road surfacing on interchange links between the Westlink, M2 and M3 and the slip roads from these to the local road network

Comments:

It is noted that the conclusions of the operational noise impact assessment advise that no properties have been predicted to meet the eligibility criteria of the Noise Insulation Regulations.

This Unit requests that the applicant demonstrates by way of a Verification Report once the scheme is operational that further assessment has been carried out to confirm/inform initial predictions whether or not properties within the identified study area meet eligibility criteria under the Noise Insulation Regulations.

The URS report advises it will be important to take into account the Environmental Noise Directive (END) but offers no further discussion.

- The applicant should be aware that any future Noise Action plans drawn up to meet the requirements of END will need to be reviewed and amended in light of the Proposed Scheme.
- The Unit directs the applicant to seek comments from DoE (Environmental Policy Unit) as the competent authority in respect of meeting the requirements of END.

The afore-mentioned Verification Report should demonstrate liaison with the relevant competent authority (Department of the Environment) and identify any required noise actions arising out of compliance with the Environmental Noise Directive.

Construction Phase Impacts

Report Findings:

The URS report presents information relating to the potential noise and vibration impacts during construction. Relevant British standards and guidance are referred to in the report to determine impacts over and above recommended limit values (based on a 12-hour daytime limit). The report indicates there will be noise impacts in excess of the good practice guideline limits if work proceeds without mitigation measures. A number of industry good practice measures are presented in the report which should be implemented where possible during construction.

Comments:

While it is noted that the potential noise and vibration impacts during construction will be short-term, there is concern that there is potential for a high level of complaints due to noisier elements of the construction phase and *likely perceived* disturbance and structural damage from piling activities. It is noted that the URS report advises that the vibration impacts as a result of piling activities are predicted to be within the guideline limits for daytime but no night time piling work is to take place as guideline limits are not predicted to be met for night time.

Even when within guideline limits, vibration from piling is often perceived by sensitive receptors as alarming and often generates a significant number of complaints. It is noted in the URS report that driven precast concrete piling is proposed in proximity to residential receptors.

This Unit advises the following **additional information** should be presented once available:

- Submission of a regularly updated CEMP – (Construction Environmental Management Plan). This Unit recommends that DRD instruct the appointed Contractor to liaise closely with Belfast City Council in communicating details of the various phases of work demonstrating how good site practices will be adopted in order to mitigate construction noise and vibration impacts. This should include details of noise reduction methods to be employed during piling activities;

- Documentation demonstrating the feasibility of the chosen method of piling;
- Further information relating to the removal of existing noise barriers as part of the construction phase and details of proposed temporary alternatives;
- A proactive strategy aimed at reassuring residents in advance of any piling operations is also recommended. Evidence of feasibility study for the chosen method of piling should be appropriately documented;
- Significant night time works have been identified as likely to be required. Details of proposed night time works required as part of the construction phase should be communicated to Belfast City Council well in advance of any such proposed works with proposed mitigation measures clearly identified;
- Early communication and engagement with communities likely to be impacted by noise and vibration impacts during the construction phase will be an essential element of managing complaints. This Unit seeks confirmation, by the applicant or contractor that a community liaison officer has been appointed to deal with complaints and focus on community engagement/ consultation in relation to the construction phase.

Land Contamination

Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Unit Technical Comments

Information Reviewed

This Unit has reviewed the Environmental Statement prepared by URS for the proposed York Street Interchange scheme titled '*York Street Interchange. Proposed Scheme Report: Part 1. Environmental Statement, January 2015*'.

URS have addressed matters relating to land contamination within Chapter 17 of the report '*Geology & Soils*' and also made reference to contamination in the context of surface water and groundwater quality in Chapter 16 '*Road Drainage & The Water Environment*'.

In order to aid in understanding the likely impact of the development with respect to land contamination and possible remediation works, URS has completed a Contaminated Land Risk Assessment (CLRA). This has been completed in accordance with the methodology presented in relevant industry guidance, CLR11 *Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination* (EA, 2004).

Findings Presented

The CLRA firstly included the completion of a Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA). The PRA identified a number of potentially contaminating land uses in the vicinity of the site and included the construction of a Conceptual Site Model (CSM) of possible pollutant linkages. The PRA identified a number of historical manufacturing works and fuel storage facilities in the vicinity.

Following the PRA, data on the chemical composition of the underlying soils and groundwater, and on the generation of ground gases, were collected during a site investigation undertaken in the vicinity of the proposed scheme. It is understood that these data were subsequently assessed using relevant current guideline values in order to assess possible contamination risks.

In relation to human health, the risk assessment concludes that '*the risk to human health with respect to current users of the site, construction workers as well as ground gas generation to potential receptors is considered to be very low*' (Section 17.5.7.4.5). Furthermore the report goes on to conclude that '*based upon the assessment of information available to date, it is not anticipated that specific remediation would be required at the site*' (p594).

The report acknowledges that there are inherent uncertainties in CLRAs and that '*while ground investigations have been undertaken, the potential for localised areas of unidentified contamination cannot be discounted*'. On this basis, the report presents recommendations for addressing any unidentified contamination encountered during construction through additional sampling, assessment and appropriate materials handling as necessary.

The report also goes on to acknowledge that a 'Slight/Moderate Beneficial' environmental impact could result from any remediation or mitigation measures which would be undertaken.

Comments

The EPU welcomes that the proposals have been supported by a CLRA which has generally been undertaken in line with current relevant industry guidance. The proposals for addressing contamination encountered during construction are also welcomed.

It is noted, however, that the data upon which the abovementioned conclusions have been drawn have not been included in the report and no details of the specific guideline values used to complete the assessments of the data are presented. The EPU cannot therefore fully appraise the appropriateness of the work completed and the conclusions presented. The EPU would require to see all relevant technical data before it can be satisfied that the conclusions drawn are valid.

Furthermore, the EPU has some concerns that all pathways associated with the potential exposure of site users and users of adjacent sites have not been fully considered. Some elevated levels of Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH) were detected within groundwater beneath the site, however, no specific quantitative assessment of the potential risks posed by vapour inhalation from these contaminants appears to have been presented.

Appendix 2

Council representations to YSI Public Inquiry

The Council made the following submission for consideration at the public inquiry in relation to the issues outlined below:

- Design, linkages and connections;
- Air quality;
- Contaminated land; and
- Noise.

Design issues, linkages and connections

The Council emphasised the need for careful design to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and to enhance connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. The Council considers that some modest investment by the Department for Regional Development in the design of the interchange proposal with the aim of improving development and regeneration potential and non-motorised movement could generate significant future social, economic and environmental benefits for the York Street area and for the wider city.

Pedestrian provision

The Council considers that it is critical that sympathetic and careful design ensures connected north / south routes for pedestrian and cyclists alongside more creative solutions to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and make more effective use of potentially under-utilised space.

The Council would support inclusion in the scheme of a budget to ensure the upgrade from more basic paving material and finishes to a high quality public realm that would link to the Streets Ahead initiative. There was agreement at the Strategic Advisory Group that this will be considered for the three priority routes.

It is the Council's view that aesthetics must consider wider connectivity and not look at the scheme in isolation. The Council considers that the York Street interchange scheme should secure the enhancement of the wider environment to support improved connectivity for adjacent communities and these improvements should be included in the overall project budgets.

The Council would emphasise the need to minimise any impacts from the scheme on the adjoining residential areas and enhance connectivity through high quality public realm and finishes. For example, the York Street interchange will present an opportunity to enhance the environment around the off-ramps and steps access in the North Queen Street area. The poor pedestrian access and physical environment have been raised by the local community as issues which should be addressed in the proposals for the widening of the North Queen Street Bridge.

The Council would emphasise the need for high quality landscaping through a comprehensive streetscaping programme as part of the overall project. The Council would support the integration of the scheme with adjacent initiatives such as Streets Ahead Phase 3.

In addition, the introduction of the York Street Interchange will result in excess road capacity on some of the city centre routes that already have over provision for large parts of the day, notably the A2 in the vicinity of Dunbar Link, which the Council suggests could be freed up to support more sustainable transport, cyclists and pedestrians.

Underpasses

The Council would support a programme of greening and landscaping as part of the York Street proposal which could make a big difference. The Council would also support a programme of vibrant public art and lighting which could brighten up the dreary environment, making it seem much safer. The Strategy also proposes that the underpass areas could actually be turned into productive community spaces.

The North Queen Street bridge and underpass will be widened as part of the proposal and the Council would support a high quality finish and the use of lighting to enliven the pedestrian environs and the area beneath the structure.

York Street Bridge

The Council would support the enhancement of design and finishes along York Street and the new bridge as this will be an important gateway to the city centre and university area.

Cycling Provision

The Council would strongly support high quality segregated cycle lanes in urban areas particularly on routes where traffic volumes and speeds may be high. It is considered that the York Street proposal presents an opportunity to develop segregated cycle lanes along with other innovative measures for cycling infrastructure such as bus stop bypasses.

There are a number of proposed developments in the vicinity of the YSI proposals such as City Quays and the new Ulster University campus development on York Street. The need to increase the opportunity for active travel access to the new University campus, the city centre and the harbour area is vital.

Gamble Street Rail Halt

The Council would strongly support the integration of the strengthening works as part of the construction of the proposed YSI. The Gamble Street halt could provide an important sustainable transport access to this area of the city.

Air Quality

The M1 / Westlink Corridor including the York Street junction has been declared as an Air Quality Management Area for predicted exceedences of the NO₂ annual mean air quality objective and also the NO₂ 1-hour mean objective.

The council has been working closely with the Department for Regional Development (DRD) on the development of a new Air Quality Action Plan for the city. The TransportNI (a business unit within the DRD) York Street Interchange scheme has been identified as one of the principal measures to include in the new Belfast plan to improve air quality in that area.

The York Street Interchange will provide full grade separation for traffic travelling on the strategic road network between the A12 Westlink and the M1 and M2 Motorways. The proposed improvements to this key junction will provide continuous links between three of the busiest roads in Northern Ireland; the M2, M3 and A12 Westlink. The scheme is considered as a means of reducing localised transport related emissions on connecting roads (i.e. as a result of relieving a significant congestion hotspot) and, to a lesser extent, incremental reductions in background NO₂ emissions, which will have a wider beneficial impact on exposure across the city.

The URS Environmental Statement in support of the scheme has demonstrated that no exceedences of air quality objectives will occur at relevant receptors. Based on the URS results, coupled with indicative tests undertaken by the council and its competent authority partners as part of the development of the Belfast Air Quality Action Plan, the council considers that the proposed scheme has the potential to reduce transport related NO₂ emissions in vicinity of the York Street Interchange and to deliver associated human health benefits.

Contaminated Land.

The Council welcomed that the road upgrade proposals had been supported by a Contaminated Land Risk Assessment (CLRA), which had generally been undertaken in line with current relevant industry guidance. The proposals for addressing land contamination encountered during the construction process were also welcomed.

The Council notes, however, that the data upon which the above-mentioned conclusions had been drawn were not included in the Environmental Statement report and no details of the specific guideline values used to complete the human health and other risk assessments of the data were presented. At that time, the Council concluded that it could not therefore fully appraise the appropriateness of the work completed and the conclusions presented. The Council requested to review all relevant technical data before it could be satisfied that the conclusions with regard to the protection of human health drawn were valid.

In addition, the Council expressed concerns that all pathways associated with the potential exposure of site users and users of adjacent sites had not been fully considered within the Environmental Statement. The Council highlighted that some elevated levels of Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH) were detected within shallow groundwater beneath the site, however, no specific quantitative assessment of the potential risks to human health posed by vapour inhalation from these contaminants appeared to have been presented.

The abovementioned comments were acknowledged by TransportNI on 2 October 2015 in their communication COM12. The Council was also referred to the following additional URS Ground Investigation report 47037827/GIR and dated 20 June 2015.

As part of the Council's consideration of the Ground Investigation report 47037827/GIR, the following additional documents were obtained from the DRD TransportNI York Street Interchange website and reviewed.

DRD-YSI-3-10 York Street Interchange Factual Ground Investigation Report, comprising:
DRD-YSI-3-10 A *Causeway Geotech Ltd Factual Report on Ground Investigation December 2013*
DRD-YSI-3-10BCPD *SI1305 York Street Interchange Additional Fieldwork Belfast Report September 2013*
DRD-YSI-3-11 York Street Interchange Stage 2 Public Consultation Report November 2011
DRD-YSI-4-04-C York Street Interchange Proposed Scheme Report: Part 1 Environmental Statement January 2015.

Following an announcement by the Minister that a Public Inquiry would be held to examine the York Street Interchange, the Council contacted URS on 14 October 2015 in order to seek further clarification on the following technical points.

1. Made Ground - information to address the risk of mobilising asbestos to the atmosphere and to offsite receptors and site workers:

- Information regarding former land uses within the site that may indicate a possibility of contamination;
- Additional information regarding targeted shallow made ground characterisation and assessment for asbestos containing material (ACM) and;
- Information regarding a control of asbestos risk assessment.
- It is unclear whether waste acceptance criteria (WAC) testing been completed and a waste (soil) management plan been developed. It is considered that this may be an issue if plots of land are to be developed in the future. For example, any reprofiled areas for use as public space would need to be proven as suitable for that end use by chemical analysis and comparison to the relevant soil guidance values.

2. Groundwater - To address the risk of mobilising volatile organic chemicals in groundwaters to offsite receptors and site workers the following information would be required:

- Modelled groundwater flows or identification of perched shallow groundwaters;
- Modelled groundwater flows or level modifications as a result of the construction of the underpasses and;
- Completion of a piling risk assessment or assessments, which characterise any shallow contamination which may be transported to the Sherwood Sandstone Formation

3. Ground Water Quality - To address the risk of direct contact with contaminants to site workers and off site receptors.

- The availability of additional water or soil chemistry data which has not been presented in the abovementioned reports.

At the time of compiling the Council's Statement of Case, detailed responses to all of these enquiries have not been received from TransportNI / URS. In order to assist the Inquiry to come a decision regarding the human health risks from land contamination however, the Council has provided the following land contamination interim summation.

The Council accepts that significant works have already been undertaken in order to characterise and understand the human health impacts from land contamination sources associated with the proposed York Street Interchange upgrade. It is noted that the scientific reports have substantially characterised the nature of the made ground and have provided the initial findings of intrusive sampling in report DRD-YSI-3-10A.

The conclusions reached tentatively indicate that there is no risk to local residents or site workers from made ground, based upon the data available to date. The Environmental Protection Unit acknowledges these conclusions and accepts TransportNI / URS's assertion that given the nature of the made ground and the numerous former industrial land uses located on land to be used for the Interchange upgrade, that further ground investigation works will be required as the Interchange upgrade process continues. This work may uncover new sources of contamination which would require assessment. Furthermore, the Council notes that the majority of trial pits and borehole samples were taken at depth and would therefore welcome an assessment of human health risk based upon targeted shallow sampling to determine the risk posed by asbestos, heavy metals and organic contaminants in shallow made ground (less than 1m).

Accordingly, Belfast City Council would encourage TransportNI to continue to liaise with the Council regarding future analytical results of any made ground and hydrogeological groundwater monitoring. The Council notes TransportNI / URS's intention to generate a hydrogeological model in order to determine the likely impact of deep engineering structures on the surrounding water table. Changes to this water table may have implications for contaminant mobilisation, ground gas generation and contaminant transport to offsite receptors. However, the Council is broadly satisfied with the TransportNI's management strategy towards ground contamination and towards the mitigation of risk posed by contaminated land. The Council anticipates that additional analytical data and modelling will help to refine the conceptual site model for the development but is recommended that adjacent residents and site workers' safety should continue to be a primary consideration.

Noise

Operational Phase Noise Impacts

Whilst Belfast City Council is not the competent authority in relation to operational noise from major roads developments and END requirements, as the Council have been consulted on the application we have included comments in relation to the potential noise impacts.

The URS Environmental Statement (ES) advises that DRD's round 2 Noise Action Plan identifies one CNMA within the proposed scheme, the area of Little Georges Street.

The ES demonstrates, with the proposed scheme in operation, that noise levels to properties in Little Georges Street are predicted to decrease by approximately 3 to 7 dB, subject to mitigation by emplacement of additional noise barriers (detailed in sub-section 13.7.1). The ES, therefore, concludes that the scheme addresses the noise issues for this CNMA as required by the Noise Action Plan.

The URS ES also advises that the Proposed Scheme is not predicted to result in any properties qualifying for noise insulation subject to the identified mitigation measures being successfully implemented (noise barriers).

Overall, the URS ES concludes that the operational impact of the proposed scheme in terms of traffic noise is assessed as resulting in a negligible increase at the vast majority of residential premises with a minor increase expected at other premises along North Queen Street when comparing the future year of 2035 with and without the scheme in operation.

The Council welcomes the statement by TransportNI (DRD) that, subject to the scheme proceeding, it will prepare an operational phase Verification Report to confirm / inform Noise Insulation Regulations (NI) 1995 eligibility and identify any actions arising out of duties under the Environmental Noise Directive.

Construction Phase Impacts

Belfast City Council has powers under the above mentioned legislation allowing the service of an enforcement notice specifying hours of work, noise limits etc and plant and machinery but it is noted that these powers shall not apply to any such works carried out by a government department. However, the Council would expect the same degree of liaison and co-operation from the Department as it would form a private developer in demonstrating the adoption of best practices in line with relevant British Standards to minimise construction noise and vibration impacts.

Belfast City Council notes the response from TransportNI (DRD) dated 2nd October 2015 in relation to comments made by BCC regarding further information that has been requested regarding construction noise and vibration impacts.

Most comments have been addressed, however, the Council would stress the need for the detailed construction programme including proposals for the chosen piling methods and hours of proposed works to be communicated and agreed with the Council well in advance of works commencing.

While the Council acknowledges the need to carry out certain works at night, it remains concerned that full details of such works will need to be agreed well in advance of such works commencing to determine what methods the Contractor proposes to employ to mitigate noise disturbance during the sensitive night time period.

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Department for

Infrastructure

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

Eilish McGoldrick
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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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YSI - Timeline of Key Events

December 2005 - DRD YSI feasibility study completed. Options ranged from traffic management options, which could have been implemented in the short term to provide immediate improvements, to full grade-separation options that removed the conflicts between traffic movements implemented in the longer term.

March 2009 - DRD Stage 1 Preliminary Options Report published

June 2011 – DRD present options for proposed YSI to BCC Development Committee as part of public consultation process. Members raised issues around connectivity to surrounding communities and north Belfast. Committee agreed that officers submit interim response to DRD based on Members comments.

Summer 2011 - BCC response to DRD YSI consultation requested assurance from DRD that any new road infrastructure is designed to improve connections to the north of the city and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Council also requested consideration be given to potential reallocation of surplus road space within surrounding network e.g. Dunbar Link.

December 2012 - DRD announce YSI preferred option, i.e. full grade separation of movement between the Westlink, M2 and M3 and grade separation via underpasses below the Lagan and Dargan Bridges.

January 2013 - YSI update paper to BCC Development Committee. Committee noted the preferred option and supported continued engagement with DRD on next stage to seek to influence the design of the preferred option to reflect the aspirations of the Council.

January 2015 - DRD Minister announced formal consultation on YSI Environmental Statement.

March 2015 - Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee approved draft response to Environmental Statement consultation. Response highlighted the need to carefully consider connections to north of City, increase opportunities for active travel linked to new UU campus and also highlighted issues relating to air quality, noise and contaminated land. Committee approved the draft response.

May 2015 - Gateway 2 review of YSI scheme approved.

September 2015 - BCCRIS launched; YSI highlighted as a significant project for the city. BCCRIS suggests that careful design is required pedestrian and cyclists and creative solutions are needed to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and make use of otherwise vacant space.

November 2015 - YSI Public Inquiry over three days, including site visits. Council raised the following issues: design, linkages and connections, air quality, contaminated land and noise. In relation to design and connectivity issues the Council emphasised the need for careful design to reduce the visual impact of the interchange and to enhance connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. The Council suggested that some modest investment by DRD in the design of the interchange proposal with the aim of improving development and regeneration potential and non-motorised movement could generate significant future social, economic and environmental benefits for the York Street area and for the wider city.

June 2016 - Council response to Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) masterplan

November 2016 - Public Inquiry Inspector's Report released and DfI publish 'Notice to Proceed' with scheme.

December 2016 - DfC's Greater Clarendon & Sailortown Masterplan published. Includes proposals for the potential development sites owned by public sector that will become available on completion of the YSI. Also suggests recreation, entertainment and public art beneath the flyover and enhanced lighting.

January 2017 - DfI publish YSI Designation Order.

April 2017 - Legal challenge to tender process by an unsuccessful contractor.

June 2017 - £2bn NI funding over two years, inc. YSI (Confidence & Supply) agreed between DUP/Tories

September 2017 - SAG reconvened following Public Inquiry and Inspectors Report recommendations. Main aim of the SAG is to provide a Forum to consider the integration of the scheme with other government agencies and private initiatives to maximise future redevelopment opportunities. It is also a Forum to develop the detail of the aesthetics of the scheme, having regard to the scheme's objectives, the inspectors report, the Departmental statement and feedback from local community engagement.

8th November 2017 - City Growth & Regeneration Committee receive update paper to Members on outcome of Public Inquiry and Council's ongoing involvement. Noted that at the Inquiry Council officers made representations on the need for careful design to reduce visual impact and enhance connectivity and raised issues around air quality, noise and vibration and contaminated land. The Inspector's report recommended that DfI Roads liaise with Council throughout the remainder of the design phase and construction phase. As a result, the Strategic Advisory group was reconvened in Sept 2017. After discussion, the Committee noted the York Street Interchange update and the ongoing participation of Council officers in the process

March 2018 - Hearing to consider the legal challenge took place in the High Court of Justice.

June 2018 - Confidence & Supply Agreement update. Statement from UK government states "*we will ensure that our commitments on major infrastructure spending, including the York Street Interchange ... agreed alongside of the Confidence and Supply Agreement with DUP ... are able to be taken forward*".

August 2018 - Court rules mistakes made during procurement and set aside construction contract award.

November 2018 - DfI to appeal Court ruling.

August 2019 - City Growth & Regeneration Committee Members Briefing from Council officers on the Greater Clarendon (Sailortown) Masterplan and the work of the YSI Strategic Advisory Group.

September 2019 - DfI appeal dismissed by Court.

January 2020 - The New Decade, New Approach deal includes YSI as an infrastructure project that will benefit from increased funding for capital infrastructure from the UK Government's 'infrastructure revolution'.

January 2020 – North Belfast MLA Nichola Mallon (SDLP) nominated as Minister for Infrastructure.

Summer 2020 - New tender process expected to begin during summer 2020. A contractor could be appointed by summer 2021 and following detailed design work, construction could commence autumn 2022. Construction is expected to take 3-4 years.

Summer 2020 – In July 2020 the Minister for Infrastructure announced the external review of the YSI scheme. At its meeting on 12th August 2020 the City Growth & Regeneration Committee agreed that the Council would write to the Minister for Infrastructure to express its support for the external review of the YSI project, and to offer an opportunity to engage with the review process.

January 2021 - Council received a response from the Minister indicating that the review was carried out by a panel of accredited reviewers, independent from the project in early November 2020. The letter also advised that the review is now complete and Minister Mallon is currently considering its findings.

March 2021 - The CGR Committee received a presentation from Mr. M. Hackett on the issue of an Alternative YSI.

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Subject:	Union Connectivity Review - Update
Date:	14 April 2021
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director, Place and Economy
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 Union Connectivity Review aims to understand whether and how connectivity across the UK can support economic growth and quality of life, particularly in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
1.2	Following Council ratification, the Council's response to the Call for Evidence, as reported to the CG&R Committee on 13 th January 2021, was submitted to the review team in February 2021. This report updates the Committee on the publication of the Interim Report for the Union Connectivity Review.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the receipt of the letter confirming the publication of the Interim Report, the next steps and that the Union Connectivity Review is due to complete in summer 2021.
3.0	Main report
3.1	As reported to CG&R Committee on 13 th January 2021, an independent review for the UK Government (Department for Transport) led by Sir Peter Hendy was being undertaken to assess how the quality and availability of transport infrastructure connections across the UK can support economic growth and quality of life, with a specific focus on NI connections.
3.2	The Committee agreed to the response to the call for evidence, noting that the deadline for receipt of submissions was 14 January 2021. This was subsequently ratified by Council on 1 February 2021.
3.3	Subsequent to this, an Interim Report (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/union-connectivity-review-interim-report) was published on 10 March 2021 and provides high level information on the preliminary transport and economic assessment across England, Scotland, Wales and NI along with a summary of the stakeholder views. It makes reference to the interdependencies that need to be factored in, including the New Decade New Approach commitments for NI. The report also outlines the proposed assessment methodology to be used by the review team to determine transport and economic baselines and how it will support the identification of future recommendations and highlights that the potential development of a pan-UK strategic transport network will be a key focus of the Review going forward.
3.4	The next stage of the review will take a future-focused view of transport in the next 20-30 years and how transportation can contribute to the UK's target of becoming net zero carbon by 2050, with a particular reference to the extent, essential domestic air travel can be made carbon neutral. The Interim Report also highlights that a discrete piece of work will be carried out to assess the feasibility of a fixed link between NI and the British mainland, including an outline cost and timescale for the link and associated works needed.
3.5	While the focus is on connectivity links between England, Scotland, Wales and NI, it acknowledges the role of integrated transport at a local level in contributing to overall

	<p>connectivity. The integration of land use and transport planning at key nodes is also noted as contributing to environmental benefits and improved quality of life by supporting healthier transport options such as walking and cycling.</p> <p>Some of the key issues that will be subject to further review are highlighted in the Interim report on page 4. The following are of specific note for Belfast and the region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher capacity and faster connection on the A75 from the ferry port at Cairnryan to the M6 corridor for freight and passengers to and from NI - Faster and higher capacity connections from Belfast to North West, and to the Republic of Ireland (ROI), for passengers and freight, and to link with ROI plans for rail development - Improved port capacity, road and rail capacity and journey times East/West across the Midlands and the North, for passengers, and to enhance freight capacity and connections from Ireland, and onwards to the East Coast ports for exports, post Brexit. - Better air links to England to and from NI and Northern Scotland, including but not exclusively to and from London Heathrow, for worldwide connections for passengers and freight; including the appropriate rate of Air Passenger Duty for journeys not realistic by rail - Connections to freeports when those are announced by the government and the devolved administrations.
3.6	<p>These issues, along with other connectivity issues that may be identified in the next stages of the work will be reviewed in the final report.</p>
3.7	<p>The next steps for the review, which is due to complete in summer 2021, are outlined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop proposals for a UK Strategic Transport Network covering road, rail, air and maritime - Further analysis and review of the evidence collected to date and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders to better understand their views - Transport connectivity appraisal, to include the links between transport connectivity and economic performance - Commission social research to understand the perceived ease of travelling across the UK and associated barriers to travel. It will also assess the perceived impact of

	<p>connectivity within England, Scotland, Wales and NI, and across the union on opportunities, access to services and quality of life,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further research and engagement with subject matter experts to better understand how better connectivity can support an improved quality of life, increased social cohesion and a reduction in inequality across the UK.
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – Letter to Respondees from Sir Peter Hendy



Dear Respondees,

Union Connectivity Review Interim Report Published

I wanted to write to thank you personally for taking the time to provide written evidence to the Union Connectivity Review's Call for Evidence. The insights have shaped our direction and improved our understanding of the opportunities and challenges. It is greatly appreciated, and the team continues to analyse the responses received. Whilst it's with regret that due to the lockdown restrictions we can't meet to discuss the Union Connectivity Review in person I wanted to update you on the progress being made.

The Union Connectivity Review is intended as an opportunity to assess current transport connectivity within and between the nations of the UK and make recommendations that will maximise economic potential and improve quality of life. The Prime Minister asked me to begin my work from October 2020 and this week we published the [Interim Report](#). It provides an overview of my work to date and outlines the direction I intend to take, with a final report due to the Prime Minister in summer 2021.

Specifically, the Interim Report considers the existing transport connectivity in the UK and breaks this down by mode for passengers and for freight; it considers transport needs and what a network of the future might look like; finally, it overviews the stakeholder engagement which has taken place to date.

A key emerging recommendation is the possible development of a new UK Strategic Transport Network, loosely modelled on the aims of the EU Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). The Interim Report elaborates on my thinking of how a UK Strategic Transport Network or equivalent could support better assessment of transport routes and investment decisions,

better management of the flow of people and goods between nations and improved partnership working between the UK government and devolved administrations. When I spoke to various organisations in the autumn there was initial support for this, subject to understanding more about the details and additional funding being made available. The Review believes that there is a strong strategic case for a UK Strategic Transport Network and will undertake additional work to define this further.

You may have seen that the Prime Minister wrote a piece in the Telegraph on 10th March outlining his initial views on union connectivity and shared a short video online. I am grateful for his support. As you would expect conversations with industry, government, devolved administrations and other stakeholders will continue leading up to the final report in the summer as I'm keen to hear views on my Interim Report and how to make progress. The team will be in touch about future engagement shortly and I look forward to having further conversations, hopefully some of which will be in-person subject to the progress made with the government's roadmap.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Hendy', written over a light blue grid background.

Sir Peter Hendy CBE



Subject:	Sunday opening hours for large retailers
Date:	14 April 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 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 provide an update to members on feedback from engagement with Trades Unions, retail representatives and relevant stakeholders following the Committee's decision at the 3 March meeting to support extended Sunday opening hours. The Committee decision is subject to relevant Northern Ireland Executive guidance and will operate on a temporary basis, to be reviewed on 5th July, 2021, as part of the efforts to manage shopper volume and support social distancing.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the feedback of following consultation with Trades Unions, retail representatives and relevant stakeholders on the council's decision to extend Sunday opening hours

	(in line with Northern Ireland Executive guidance) on a temporary basis, to the 5 th July 2021.
3.0	Main report
3.1	At its meeting on 3 March 2021, the City Growth and Regeneration Committee agreed a request from large retailers to support extended Sunday opening hours (in line with Northern Ireland Executive guidance) on a temporary basis, to the 5 July 2021, as part of the efforts to manage shopper volume and support social distancing. The committee asked that officers consult with Trade Unions, retail organisations and relevant stakeholders on the matter and report back on findings at the April meeting of the Committee.
3.2	Following the March meeting, officers have sought to engage with a range of stakeholders including representatives from USDAW, Retail NI, Northern Ireland Retail Consortium, Belfast Chamber, BCCM, Destination CQ BID, Linen Quarter BID, Belfast One BID, Victoria Square, CastleCourt Shopping Centre, the Kennedy Centre, Sainsbury, Tesco and Lidl.
3.3	Each of the BID representatives welcomed the temporary extension of additional opening hours on a Sunday. They noted that, with the increased footfall patterns over the last re-opening, extended hours had a positive impact on smoothing out potential peaks and troughs at specific pinch points across the city. The BIDs viewed the extended opening hours as just one of a number of interventions that will be needed to address the 80% drop in footfall that the city centre has experienced over the last year. They were supportive of additional investment including targeted promotional campaigns, focusing on shop safe messaging and encouraging visitors to avoid the traditional peak trading hours in order to ensure that they have a pleasant experience of the city centre and its unique offer.
3.4	The large retailers and shopping centres including CastleCourt, Victoria Square and the Kennedy Centre were also supportive of the decision, noting that the extension supports demand management and avoids any queuing at 1pm. They also offered customer feedback, suggesting that shoppers feel safe and comfortable to visit the retail outlets at a quieter time and that the extended trading hours on a Sunday make this possible. The Northern Ireland Retail Consortium's view was that the extension is needed while the lockdown and the effects of the pandemic continue in order to enable social distancing and to keep shoppers and staff safe. Their view was that, in the busiest stores, this makes a huge difference while making a noticeable difference in all retail premises that avail of the extended operating hours.

3.5	<p>The response from USDAW confirmed that, while they have been understanding and pragmatic around the decisions that local authorities have taken with regard to the enforcement of Sunday trading restrictions in their areas, their opposition to extended Sunday trading hours has not changed. They feel that it does not offer businesses any real benefits and that it has a detrimental impact on retail workers, their families and their local communities. USDAW considers that social distancing in stores can be best supported by putting in measures such as queuing systems, and deploying marshals to direct and support customers and that longer opening hours on Sundays are not the solution to keeping shops safe.</p>
3.6	<p>Members will be aware that, on 2 March 2021, the Northern Ireland Executive produced “Moving Forward: the Executive’s Pathway out of Restrictions”. This document outlines the first step in the Executive’s Roadmap to Recovery and sets out how it will approach the relaxation of restrictions. It includes nine pathways. These pathways cover areas such as Home and Community; Culture, Heritage and Entertainment; Travel and Tourism; Retail and Services and Hospitality. Each pathway has a series of five phases and movement from one phase to another will be informed by the Executive taking a risk-based approach, weighing up data across a range of factors including economy, health and community. The first formal review by the Executive took place on 16 March and there will be subsequent reviews every four weeks thereafter (the next review is scheduled for 15 April). The Executive has also confirmed that, while it will formally review and make decisions on restrictions every four weeks, the monitoring cycle provides them with the ability to move more rapidly on emerging priorities should the need arise before the next review point.</p>
3.7	<p>As part of the announcement on 2 March 2021, the Executive confirmed that, from 8 March 2021, it would permit a limited contactless click and collect service at baby equipment shops, clothing shops, footwear shops and electrical goods shops. Garden Centres have been able to offer click and collect from 1 April and the extension of click and collect more widely to other retail sectors will come into force on 12 April. These developments mark phase 2 on the Retail and Services pathway. Phase 3 will permit all non-essential retail to re-open and close contact services to resume, with mitigations. Phase 4 on this pathway will permit all close contact services to open without appointments and will end remaining mitigations. It will also support increased in-store capacity in all retail at this stage in the re-opening process. Finally, phase 5 will permit all retail and close contact services to open with reduced mitigations. This means that it is likely that the restrictions on capacity within retail and</p>

	<p>services will remain in place for some time in order to maintain some level of social distancing in indoor premises.</p>
3.8	<p>As part of this engagement work, officers have also engaged with colleagues across other council areas. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council has extended the current approach to enforcement until the end of June 2021 while both Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council have agreed open-ended extensions.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.9	<p>No specific financial or resource implications for council.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.10	<p>No specific equality implications.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None



Subject:	Notices of Motion – Quarterly Update
Date:	14 th April 2021
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place & Economy
Contact Officer:	Michelle Bagnall; Programme Manager Claire Patterson, Business Research & Development Manager Geoff Dickson, Strategic Planning & Policy Officer

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 Committee on the agreement at SP&R Committee that all Standing Committees will receive a quarterly update on the Notices of Motion they are responsible for and to provide the first quarterly update for City Growth & Regeneration Committee.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes the process for reporting Notices of Motion through Standing Committees agreed by SP&R Committee and outlined in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3; - Notes the updates to all Notices of Motion that this Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and

	<p>- Agrees to the closure of a number of Notices of Motion, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.7 below.</p>
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>At SP&R Committee on 25th October 2019, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:</p> <p>“That this Council notes that other Councils produce a monthly status report in relation to Notices of Motion; and agrees Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly Notice of Motion Update which will be brought to each full Council Meeting, detailing the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Date received 2. Notice of motion title 3. Submitted by which Councillor 4. Council meeting date 5. Committee motion is referred to 6. Outcome of committee where Notice of Motion will be debated 7. Month it will be reported back to committee 8. Other action to be taken.”
3.2	<p>As a first step, officers undertook a review of existing Notices of Motion to ensure that any that had been completed could be reported to Committee as closed before commencing the live database. This review was undertaken in 2020 and recommendations were brought to SP&R Committee to close 69 Notices of Motion.</p>
3.3	<p>The remaining Notices of motion were added to a new database with all subsequent Notices added to the database to enable quarterly reporting to the relevant Standing Committee. Appendix 1 is the first of the quarterly updates for CG&R Committee showing 21 active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which this Committee is responsible.</p>
3.4	<p>Notice of Motion Updates</p> <p>CG&R Committee is asked to note that, given the current pressures in responding to the pandemic, it has been difficult to afford the usual time towards progressing Notices of Motion. Nevertheless, there has been progress in a number of notices of motion.</p>

3.5	<p>Likewise, given the nature of remote working at present, it has proven more difficult than usual to coordinate the updates across all departments. Members will note that estimated completion dates and Next Steps require further updates – these will be progressed and reported back at the next quarterly update.</p>
3.6	<p>Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance</p> <p>At SP&R Committee on 20th November, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Category 1 - Notices of Motion which contained an action that has been completed. All Notices of Motion within this category contained a specific task that has since been complete. It is worth noting that, when Committee agree to action a Notice of Motion, there are sometimes additional actions agreed alongside the Notice of Motion. As these are not technically part of the Notice of Motion, they are taken forward through normal committee decision making processes. The Notice of Motion can therefore be closed, but additional actions related to it will continue to be progressed and reported to the committee. These additional actions are not contained in this report, but will be noted in the live database moving forward. - Category 2 - Notices of Motion have become Council policy or absorbed in to a strategic programme of work. These Notices of Motion did not contain a specific task that could be complete. Instead, they were more strategic in nature and required changes in Council policy and/ or strategy for long term outcomes. Those listed within this category have all been agreed by Committee and are now either Council policy or are currently being implemented through a Council strategy that is managed by a Standing Committee through the corporate planning process.
3.7	<p>CG&R Committee are asked to agree that the following 12 Notices of Motion are now closed:</p> <p>Category 1 Recommended Closures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens’ Basic Income Scheme (Ref number 4). Initial research on pilot CBI programmes completed summer 2020. Recommend that further work on the NOM is taken forward and considered in conjunction, with the subsequent and related NoM on Universal Basic Income, considered by SP&R Committee (Sept 2020). - Funding of PLACE NI (Ref number 19). PLACE NI made the decision to close and dissolve the organisation shortly after the Committee considered this issue. - York Street Interchange Project (Ref number 39). A letter was issued to DfI and a response from DfI reported to CGR April 2020.

- **Dogs on Public Transport - Response from Translink (Ref number 40).** Raised with Translink again at the Special CGR Committee on 24th November. Translink note they review their policies regularly, which included their current Dogs on Public Transport Policy.
- **Sustainable Transport (Ref number 43).** A report was taken back to CG&R Committee.
- **High Speed Rail Connection (Ref number 44).** The case for a High Speed Rail connection is progressing with central government Departments working on a feasibility of a Belfast to Dublin High Speed Rail Letter. It is important that BCC is linked in to this process and so a Letter to the DfI Minister was issued to seek confirmation that DfI would engage with BCC as part of the Feasibility process.
- **Update on Motion - EuroPride (Ref number 91).** Belfast Pride presented to Committee in September 2020, and support agreed; however, the bid was unsuccessful with Malta securing Europride 2023 Report on culture and arts work programme and funding opportunities in light of COVID impacts was also submitted and noted by Committee at the September 2020 committee meeting.
- **Installation of additional Parklets on arterial routes and in neighbourhood areas (Ref number 119).** Report submitted to CG&R Committee in Nov 2020 under item 2(c) DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme; Community and Business Cluster Interventions.
- **Alternatives to York Street Interchange (Ref number 150).** Mr Hackett attended the March 2021 CG&R Committee meeting and delivered presentation.
- **Fra McCann's (MLA) Proposals for Free Car Parking at Hospitals (Ref number 151).** Following the Council meeting in September, correspondence was sent to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for Health to outline the Council's position on the issue.

3.8

Category 2 Recommended Closures:

- **Supporting the Writers of Belfast (Ref number 20).** Officers verbally updated the Councillor and this will now be considered in the context of the Cultural Strategy and an update will be included in a Culture update report to Committee in April.
- **Supporting Artists of Belfast (Ref number 59).** This will be considered in the context of Cultural Strategy and covered in the April Culture update to Committee. Funding has been received from DfC to co-commission an infrastructure audit.

3.9	Additional information in relation to these Notices of motion and Issues Raised in Advance are available in Appendix 1.
3.10	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no additional financial implications attached to this report. Finance and resource implications are considered by Committee when taking decisions on the specific Notices of Motion and Issues Raised by Members.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1: Notices of Motion Live Database – CG&R Committee

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Notice of Motion – Live Database

Belfast

Ref	Type	Date of Council Meeting	Motion (including hyperlinks)	Proposed by	Referral route	CG&R	Lead officer	Department	Status	Status Update	Next Steps	Estimated completion date
4	Notice of Motion	02/10/2017	Citizens' Basic Income Scheme	Cllr McVeigh	Straight to Committee	CG&R	John Greer	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Initial research on pilot CBI programmes completed summer 2020. Recommend that further work on the NOM is taken forward and considered in conjunction, with a subsequent NOM on Universal Basic Income, considered by SP&R Committee in September 2020.		
14	Notice of Motion	04/02/2019	Enterprise Zones	Cllr Attwood	Straight to Committee	CG&R	John Greer	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Officers followed up with the Cllr and research briefing on Enterprise Zones completed. To be progressed in line with current developments and as resources become available.		
19	Issue raised in advance	05/06/2019	Funding of PLACE NI	Cllr Ferguson	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	PLACE NI made the decision to close and dissolve the organisation shortly after the Committee considered this issue.		
20	Issue raised in advance	05/06/2019	Supporting the Writers of Belfast	Cllr Nicholl	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Verbally updated the Councillor. This will be considered in the context of the Cultural Strategy and an update will be included in a Culture update report to Committee in April.		April
39	Issue Raised in Advance	15/01/2020	York Street Interchange Project	Cllr O'Hara	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	A letter was issued to DfI and a response from DfI reported to CGR April 2020.		Completed
40	Issue Raised in Advance	15/01/2020	Dogs on Public Transport - Response from Translink	Cllr McReynolds	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Closed	Raised with Translink again at the Special CGR Committee on 24th November. Translink note they review their policies regularly, which included their current Dogs on Public Transport Policy.		Completed

43	Notice of Motion	03/02/2020	Sustainable Transport	Cllr Groogan	Straight to Committee	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Closed	A report was taken back to CGR Committee		
44	Notice of Motion	03/02/2020	High Speed Rail Connection	Councillor Shauneen Baker	Straight to Committee	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	The case for a High Speed Rail connection from Belfast to Dublin [and Dublin to Cork] has progressed - a feasibility study is currently being progressed. A letter has been issued to the Minister for Infrastructure seeking confirmation that there will be engagement with BCC as part of this process.		
58	issue Raised in Advance	12/02/2020	Air Passenger Duty	Cllr Graham	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	This will be considered in the context of the new 10 year Tourism Strategy in terms of identifying barriers to growth and Council's advocacy position.		June
59	issue Raised in Advance	12/02/2020	Supporting Artists in Belfast	Cllr Nicholl	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	This will be covered in April Culture update - funding received from DfC to co-commission an infrastructure audit		April
72	issue Raised in Advance	04/03/2020	Review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme	Cllr O'Hara	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	To be included in the strategic review of Belfast Bikes and report to be brought to a future meeting.		June
91	issue Raised in Advance	12/08/2020	Update on Motion - EuroPride	Cllr O'Hara	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation close	Belfast Pride invited to Committee in September 2020, and support agreed; however, the bid was unsuccessful with Malta securing Europride 2023. Report on culture and arts work programme and funding opportunities in light of COVID impacts was also submitted and noted by Committee at the September 2020 committee meeting.		
92	issue Raised in Advance	12/08/2020	Economic Impact of Retail Unit Closures and Job Losses	Cllr Heading	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Report to be submitted to a future meeting as part of the city recovery/future city centre programme.		
117	issue Raised in Advance	07/10/2020	City Wide Strategic Site Assessment Update	Cllr Murphy	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	A report to be brought back to committee		

119	notice of Motion	02/11/2020	Installation of additional Parklets on arterial routes and in neighbourhood areas	Cllr McMulan	Straight to Committee	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Report submitted to CG&R Committee in Nov 2020 under item 2.c) DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme; Community and Business Cluster Interventions		
120	Notice of Motion	02/11/2020	Belfast Bikes - Pilot Scheme to use Rolloe	Cllr Baker	Straight to Committee	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	To be included in Belfast Bikes Strategic Review and report to be submitted to a future meeting		
150	issue Raised in Advance	13/01/2021	Alternative to York Street Interchange	Cllr O'Hara	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Mr Hackett attended the March 2021 CGR Committee meeting and delivered presentation		
151	issue Raised in Advance	13/01/2021	Fra McCann's (MLA) Proposals for Free Car Parking at Hospitals	Cllr O'Hara	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Closed	Officers confirmed that following the Council meeting in September, correspondence had already been sent to the Ministers for Infrastructure and Health outlining the Council's position.		
152	issue Raised in Advance	13/01/2021	Environmental Infrastructure in Council Car Parks	Cllr Heading	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	To be progressed as resources become available.		
153	issue Raised in Advance	13/01/2021	Disabled Parking Accreditation Scheme	Cllr McMullan	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	To be progressed as resources become available.		
164	Issue raised in Advance	03/03/2021	Developing Clean Tech in the City	Alderman Dorrian	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	To be progressed as resources become available.		

