

**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,

A meeting of the Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee will meet via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 11th August, 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. **Presentation**

- (a) Translink Belfast Transport Hub - Weavers Cross (Pages 1 - 6)

3. **Restricted Items**

- (a) Financial Reporting - Quarter 4 2020/21 (Pages 7 - 28)
- (b) City Centre Property -Targeted Acquisition (Pages 29 - 34)
- (c) Belfast Destination Hub - Site Acquisition (Pages 35 - 40)

- (d) Request for loan of Portrait of Michael Longley - 'Light from Two Windies' by Jeffrey Morgan (Pages 41 - 44)

4. **Regenerating Places & Improving Infrastructure**

- (a) Connectivity and Active Travel Update (Pages 45 - 60)
- (b) DfC Housing Supply Strategy: Call for Evidence (Pages 61 - 120)
- (c) City Centre Open and Open Spaces (Pages 121 - 160)

5. **Growing Business & the Economy**

- (a) Employability NI - Belfast Labour Market Partnership Action Plan (Pages 161 - 168)

6. **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

- (a) A City Imagining Investment Programme: Cultural multi-annual grants (Pages 169 - 176)

7. **Finance, Procurement & Performance**

- (a) The Zoo - Quarter 1 Performance Update Report (Pages 177 - 182)
- (b) DfC Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme Update (Pages 183 - 192)

8. **Strategic & Operational Issues**

- (a) DfI Accessible Parking Bay Proposals (Pages 193 - 196)
- (b) Notice of Motion Quarterly Report (Pages 197 - 204)

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

- (a) 20s Plenty for Us Campaign (Cllr McMullan to raise)



Subject:	Translink: Belfast Transport Hub – Weavers Cross update presentation
Date:	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Adrian Ferguson, Development Manager

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

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

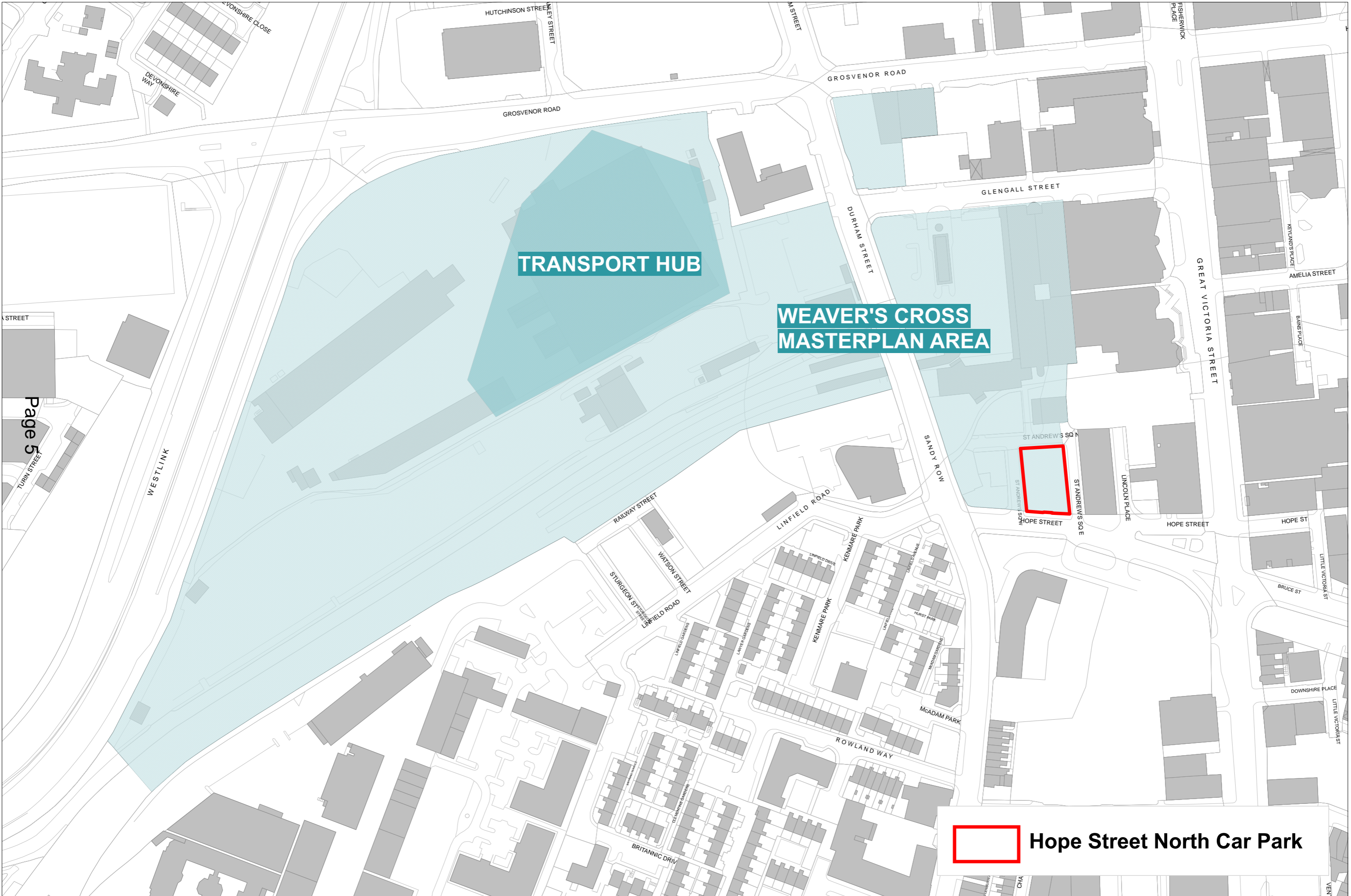
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to bring to Members attention the key issues which will be covered in a presentation from Translink.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translink will be presenting to Members with regard to the Belfast Transport Hub and the wider Weavers Cross regeneration scheme</li> <li>• In line with the Committee's approval in November 2019 the Council's Hope Street carpark facility is included in Translink's Weavers Cross master planning considerations and the site has been conditionally included in their marketing collateral seeking a master-developer partner with the financial means and relevant experience, skills and resources to realise the vision for Weavers Cross.</li> <li>• That a further report will be brought to the Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee in the near future on the detail of any subsequent land /development proposal and associated financial offer and, subject to Members endorsement, for inclusion of the Hope Street carpark facility in any formal development agreement with Translink's nominated developer partner.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	Members will recall at the June 2021 City Growth & Regeneration Committee meeting that they agreed for Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) to present to the August 2021 meeting of the Committee on the Belfast Transport Hub and the wider Weavers Cross regeneration scheme. Whilst contractually the Weavers Cross scheme is a NITHC project it is promoted by Translink.
3.2	<p>In addition to an update on delivery of the Belfast Transport Hub Translink have advised that their presentation will specifically cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on benefits aligned to the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda (buy social clauses linked to BCC Inclusive Growth Strategy, job creation and training opportunities, residential development)</li> <li>- Focus on objectives aligned to the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda and a Bolder Vision (transport led regeneration scheme, focus on movement, active travel and connectivity including into local neighbourhoods)</li> <li>- Overview on progress of development partner procurement</li> <li>- Strategic synergies and linkages (Belfast Streets Ahead 5 and the extension of public realm into local neighbourhoods, BRCD BRT Phase 2)</li> <li>- The extent and level of engagement carried out to date including with local communities</li> </ul>
3.3	At its meeting on 6 November 2019, the City Growth and Regeneration Committee had noted the Council's Hope Street car park as having significant potential to contribute to the comprehensive Weavers Cross Regeneration scheme and approval was given by Members

	for inclusion within Translink's Master planning considerations (Appendix 1 – Weavers Cross location map, Council's car park edged red).
3.4	The site has been conditionally included in their marketing collateral seeking a master developer partner with financial means ad robust experience, skills and resources to realise the vision for Weavers Cross. As noted in the November 2019 CG&R report, further reports are to be brought back to CG&R Committee on the development proposals but with any subsequent disposal or other arrangements to be approved by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.
3.5	A further report will be brought to a future SP&R Committee on the detail of any subsequent land/development proposal and associated financial offer, and subject to Members approval, for inclusion of the site in any formal development agreement with Translink's nominated development partner.
	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
3.6	There are no finance or resource implications associated with this report.
	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
3.7	There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications associated with this report.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	<b>Appendix 1 – Weavers Cross location map, Council's car park edged red</b>

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Appendix 1 - Weavers Cross, Transport Hub & Hope Street North Car Park



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Subject:	Connectivity & Active Travel Update
Date:	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Richard Griffin, Development Manager Callie Persic, Connectivity Programme Lead

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes ☒ No ☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To update Members on work regarding connectivity and active travel, including the City Centre Connectivity Study, and a number of emerging public realm / infrastructure projects, the design and delivery of which will be informed by the principles established by 'A Bolder Vision'.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to note:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The update on the Connectivity Study: A Bolder Vision, including the pending elected representatives' workshop on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August and planned Public Consultation;</li> <li>• The updates on individual public realm projects including the 5Cs, and Belfast Streets Ahead phases 3 and 5;</li> <li>• The proposed amendments to the scope of the '5Cs' public realm scheme, including the removal of College Avenue, which will now be delivered through Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5;</li> <li>• The update regarding DfC plans for carriageway resurfacing at Queens Square;</li> <li>• The update on the Junctions Working Group;</li> <li>• The update on the Belfast THRIVES initiative, a pilot partnership to inform how Belfast's public spaces can more effectively and inclusively contribute to the liveability of the city and the wellbeing of its inhabitants;</li> <li>• The update regarding the BCC bid to the UK Community Renewal Fund.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	Connectivity is at the core of the Belfast Agenda. The Belfast Agenda seeks to develop a city that is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable.
3.2	Sustainable connectivity and active travel requires a collaborative and holistic approach across a number of city stakeholders and partners to deliver strategic connections and improved access between, and into local communities and areas. At the April meeting of the CG&R Committee members requested a comprehensive report should be brought back to the Committee on Green and Blue Infrastructure / Active Travel related initiatives across the city along with Council proposals in relation to potential funding mechanisms. This is reflected in the prioritisation of the CG&R Committee Plan as agreed on the 9th June 2021 where one of the key pillars includes 'Working with stakeholders to bring forward improved, sustainable connectivity and active travel across the city'.
3.3	The Community Planning Partnership Boards, as reported in May and June 2021, were established to translate the Belfast Agenda into action and to mobilise city partners to support the delivery and have clear synergies with the work of the CG&R Committee. The recently re-configured City Development Board has agreed the establishment of Active Travel and Connectivity as one of the four key pillars of work for the Board. The City Development Board, and as agreed by this Committee, recognises there is a need to focus on joint objectives and a targeted delivery approach across partners to accelerate opportunities to enhance accessibility, connectivity and active travel across the city. This is

	not only important to connect people to employment opportunities and investment hubs, but is important from a climate resilience perspective and will also create healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environments that promote health and emotional wellbeing
3.4	The Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy identifies creating a green, walkable, cyclable centre and connecting to the city around as two of the eight key principles, recognising that active travel and connectivity are closely aligned to regeneration and development. In our ambition to attract 66,000 new residents to the city it is critical that connectivity considerations and alternative travel options can align with these growth ambitions. For example, the development of housing close to existing services may mean shorter, more localised journeys, allowing higher levels of cycling and walking or public transport, therefore reducing dependence upon the car and mitigating negative impacts such as traffic congestion and air pollution.
3.5	Officers across the Council departments are working at pace to bring forward projects and initiatives that will help to achieve these goals, as well as assisting our statutory and city partners to enhance and further develop our collective ambitions.
3.6	While this report focuses on certain areas related to connectivity City Regeneration & Development Officers are working in conjunction with DfI, DfC, Physical Programmes, C&NS and Resilience to provide a strategic overview of our collective projects to focus the city's strategic priorities, opportunities, issues and funding options and an update will subsequently be provided to this Committee in the near future.
	<b>A Bolder Vision for Belfast</b>
3.7	<p>As reported previously, A Bolder Vision for Belfast was agreed by Council and endorsed by the DfC and DfI Ministers and is underpinned by four Visioning Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a <b>healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment</b> that promotes well-being for all, inclusive growth and innovation;</li> <li>• Fundamentally changing the centre of Belfast to <b>prioritise</b> integrated <b>walking, cycling</b> and <b>public transport</b> and end the dominance of the car;</li> <li>• Providing <b>lively, safe, and green streets</b> linking inclusive shared spaces to promote resilience and enhance our built heritage;</li> <li>• Removing <b>severance and barriers</b> to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities to improve access for all.</li> </ul>

3.8	The Bolder Vision represents the building blocks that to be considered within public realm, connectivity and open space investments within the city centre and key connectors to surrounding communities, influencing the development of public and private regeneration developments to ensure that the city centre is developed with people at the heart of design, that the city is attractive to investment, thrives economically, is fit to meet our climate agenda and is vibrant and welcoming to all.
3.9	To this end a number of public realm and junction improvement projects are currently progressing through design development within and at the edges of the city centre, and officers are working with DfC and DfI to ensure the agreed principles of ' <i>A Bolder Vision</i> ' are directly influencing these schemes so they release maximum benefit for the city centre and surrounding communities. These principles have also informed the current place-shaping revitalisation work referred to in a separate report. Given the close alignment between the Bolder Vision and Connectivity and Active Travel update a detailed paper on the approach to the City Centre Open Spaces is included in a separate paper to this Committee meeting.
	<p><u>Detail</u></p> <p><b>A Bolder Vision: City Centre Connectivity Study</b></p>
3.10	As reported to this Committee on 9 June 2021, a multi-disciplinary team led by Jacobs has been appointed to progress with Phases 2 and 3 of the joint BCC/DfI/DfC Bolder Vision Connectivity Study for Belfast. Members were advised that this work would include co-design workshops, the development of scenarios and interventions and the completion of a draft Strategy for public consultation in the autumn of 2021. The Bolder Vision approach involves a fundamental rethink of how streets and places are used to make them attractive, inclusive, accessible, healthy, and vibrant places.
3.11	Phase 2 of the City Centre Connectivity Study will provide scenarios and projects to inform the future of the city centre by shaping large infrastructure projects and developing supporting or enabling schemes and initiatives. As part of a co-design approach, five workshops took place in June with a range of community, voluntary, statutory and private sector stakeholders.
3.12	A cross-sector Visioning Workshop was held on 25 June, which included Vienna's former Vice Mayor who successfully implemented a transformation agenda comprising numerous innovative projects, as a keynote speaker. The workshop also considered what had

	changed since the completion of ' <i>A Bolder Vision</i> ', and stimulated discussion on further "What Ifs", for the city centre.
3.13	Subsequently, four thematic workshops took place the following week covering Community, Heritage & Culture; Infrastructure, Energy and Environment; Economic Recovery, Development & Tourism, and Connectivity (Transport and Digital). This early engagement with a range of stakeholders provided a chance to explore opportunities and challenges and consider interventions to support positive transformation of the city centre.
3.14	As a continuation of the co-design process, a workshop with elected representatives including Councillors, MLAs and MPs is anticipated to take place on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> August and will provide an opportunity to feed into the emerging scenarios, in advance of a 12 week public consultation that is due to commence on 27 September 2021 with a report to this Committee prior to launching the Consultation.
3.15	The public consultation document will include scenarios based on emerging infrastructure projects and development proposals and potential supporting or enabling projects to demonstrate concepts or test approaches that will enable the transformational changes required to create a connected and animated city core. Some of these could be delivered by partners such as the city stakeholders, for example the BIDs (subject to funding) whereas others may require a collaborative approach, particularly any significant proposals of a transformational nature and will be set out as short, medium and longer term projects and initiatives.
3.16	Following the public consultation, Phase 3 of the Connectivity Study will consist of the development of a Draft Strategy and Delivery Plan, Strategic Outline Business Case, and Monitoring Strategy. Critically, funding and commitment by central government agencies will be key to delivery going forward and through the City Development Board and other city fora we must ensure that these remain within the Programme for Government, Departmental and Council spending priorities. This includes the recent Reset for Growth Paper as published by the Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth recommendation inclusion of the Bolder Vision Strategy supported by a three year joint funding programme.
	<b>Public Realm Projects</b>
3.17	A number of public realm projects are currently in development and officers have been working closely with DfI, DfC and other stakeholders to embed the principles of ' <i>A Bolder</i>

	<p><i>Vision</i>’ during design development, so that these schemes can begin to effect positive change in a number of parts of the city.</p> <p><b>The 5Cs</b></p>
3.18	<p>The CG&amp;R and SP&amp;R Committees approved the development of the 5Cs ‘catalyst’ Public Realm Project utilising existing developer contributions to support delivery of public realm improvements in Chichester Street, Callender Street, College Street, College Court and College Avenue. Delivered by DfC, the 5C’s project was originally estimated to have a value in the region of £1.9m-£2m, with £765k provided through secured Developer Contributions and the remainder to be funded by DfC.</p>
3.19	<p>An integrated design team (IDT) has been leading the design development process, with a Council Stakeholder and Engagement Group providing cross-Departmental input to the project, while workshops have been facilitated for elected members. The IDT has also engaged with key stakeholders (including DfI, city centre business representatives and residents) in relation to emerging design concepts, before running a public consultation on initial concept designs from 30 September to 22 December 2020.</p>
3.20	<p>In response to feedback received during the public consultation period the IDT made a number of amendments to the design- including incorporating cycle infrastructure on Chichester Street, and rationalising parking / loading bays across the scheme to maximise pedestrian space.</p>
3.21	<p>Further stakeholder workshops were then undertaken which captured strong views regarding the potential to stop-up both Upper Arthur St and Montgomery St to create additional pedestrian and business spill-out space, while also enabling provision of a segregated cycle lane along Chichester St. The project area has been extended to include these areas which can bring significant value to the project, in line with ‘<i>A Bolder Vision</i>’.</p>
3.22	<p>The recently revised project cost based on revised concept designs is now c£3.5m, £1.5m over the original budget. This significant rise in costs prompted a Value Engineering exercise which identified a number of amendments, while seeking to retain an emphasis on design quality. The most significant amendment is the proposed removal of College Avenue from the scope, with DfC confirming this section would then be delivered as part of Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5.</p>

3.23	<p>Other amendments to the scheme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of Seymour Street from the project area- not originally included in the scope and minimal impact given very limited pedestrian usage.</li> <li>• Increasing soft landscaping on Upper Arthur Street and Montgomery Street (from Chichester Street to Arthur Lane).</li> <li>• Removal of Street lighting from the project scope- DfI and DfC are working to agree separate delivery of upgraded street lighting (in line with Belfast Streets Ahead palette) throughout the 5Cs project area using alternative funding.</li> </ul>
3.24	<p>Officers have reviewed the proposed amendments to the scheme relative to the terms of the developer agreements that have been committed to the project and are content these are unaffected by the changes. As noted above, the removal of College Avenue is the most significant change to the scope, but BSA5 represents an opportunity to deliver this section out with the 5Cs scheme. Further detail on BSA5 is included below.</p>
3.25	<p>An initial assessment indicates these amendments would yield cost savings that bring the total budget down to £2.1m, with Council's financial contribution unchanged. The IDT are preparing a revised concept design on this basis, which will be shared with Members when available, and detailed drawings will also be shared in advance of a planning application being submitted.</p>
3.26	<p>Further stakeholder engagement is also planned in order to provide clarity regarding scope and design of the scheme.</p>
3.27	<p><b>Belfast Streets Ahead 3</b></p> <p>The Belfast Streets Ahead Board is overseen by the BSA Programme Board, a cross-department board consisting of DfI, DfC, DoF and Council Officers to ensure adequate governance and alignment across our collective objectives. BSA 3 focuses on the areas of Royal Avenue, York Street, Frederick Street and the area around St Anne's Cathedral. The current and anticipated development of the northern end of the city centre including the Ulster University development and other private sector development has made this a priority area for investment by the Department, to help to reverse economic, social and physical decline in this part of the city.</p>
3.28	<p>BSA 3 had been on hold since August 2017 due to funding for the construction works not being available. The Project has now recommenced.</p>

3.29	As the scheme designs were developed in 2014-2015 the Design Team are now carrying out a review of the project plans to take account of changes to policies, developments in the area, changes emerging as a result of the Belfast City Centre Connectivity Study (Bolder Vision), COVID 19 pandemic, etc.												
3.30	DfC has advised that the following are indicative key milestones for the BSA 3 project: <table><tr><th>Activity</th><th>Start Date</th><th>End Date</th></tr><tr><td>Design Revision (including stakeholder engagement, planning, consultation etc.)</td><td>August 2021</td><td>December 2021</td></tr><tr><td>Contractor Procurement &amp; Pre-construction</td><td>January 2022</td><td>December 2022</td></tr><tr><td>Site works</td><td>January 2023</td><td>July 2025</td></tr></table>	Activity	Start Date	End Date	Design Revision (including stakeholder engagement, planning, consultation etc.)	August 2021	December 2021	Contractor Procurement & Pre-construction	January 2022	December 2022	Site works	January 2023	July 2025
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3.31	<b>Belfast Streets Ahead 5</b> BSA 5 comprises Great Victoria Street, Shaftesbury Square, Dublin Road, Bedford Street, Blackstaff Square, and surrounding streets as well as the Thomas Thompson Memorial Fountain. The project has been accelerated to complement the planned Belfast Transport Hub and surrounding Weaver's Cross development.												
3.32	McAdam Design were appointed to lead the Integrated Design Team for BSA 5 in February 2021, with OPEN Landscape Architects acting as Lead Designer. OPEN Landscape Architects are also part of the Jacobs team leading the second stage of the Bolder Vision Connectivity Study, and both teams have met with Council officers to ensure alignment of objectives and ambition, and will continue to work closely with both DfI and the Council to ensure that the designs take account of the visioning principles from the shared Bolder Vision that is currently underway. The scheme designs will also take account of emerging proposals for the next phase of DfI's Belfast Rapid Transit programme which is likely to include part of the BSA 5 area.												
3.33	Initial work will involve producing a range of design options, which will be refined to identify a preferred option, for which the Department will seek planning approval. As affordability will be a key consideration, costs will be provided for the range of options developed and this will help inform the decision about which option is selected as the preferred one.												
3.34	The design team will be engaging with stakeholders to ensure that the scheme designs create a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment that supports the local communities, inclusive economic growth and innovation.												

3.35	<p>DfC have provided the following indicative key milestones for the BSA 5 project:</p> <table><tr><td>Activity</td><td>Start Date</td><td>End Date</td></tr><tr><td>Design Development (including public consultation)</td><td>August 2021</td><td>October 2022</td></tr><tr><td>Planning</td><td>November 2022</td><td>May 2023</td></tr><tr><td>Contractor Procurement</td><td>June 2023</td><td>December 2023</td></tr><tr><td>Site works</td><td>March 2024</td><td>September 2026</td></tr></table>	Activity	Start Date	End Date	Design Development (including public consultation)	August 2021	October 2022	Planning	November 2022	May 2023	Contractor Procurement	June 2023	December 2023	Site works	March 2024	September 2026
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3.36	<p>There are a number of timebound ‘historic’ developer contributions within the BSA 5 area, including in the vicinity of Blackstaff Square, and officers are continuing to explore delivery options with DfC to satisfy the terms of the agreements and deliver on regeneration potential in the area. The commitment of contributions will be reported through Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee, with detail on proposals also to be brought to CGR</p>															
3.37	<p><b>Queens Square</b></p> <p>At the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019 meeting of City Growth &amp; Regeneration Committee, Members agreed <i>‘that officers raise with the Department for Communities the Committee’s concerns around its proposal to replace the granite carriageway in Queen’s Square with a standard road construction, in the context of the transfer of assets, pedestrianisation and the wider connectivity study’</i>.</p>															
3.38	<p>Officers have discussed the matter with DfC, and while minor revisions have been made, the most recent drawings submitted to Planning continue to propose the replacement of the existing granite carriageway with a standard road construction. Members may wish to note that Historic Environment Division had expressed concerns regarding the original proposal in terms of detrimental impact on listed buildings and the Conservation Area, but following engagement with the applicant, and subject to conditions, have latterly noted the proposal to be acceptable. The application has yet to be determined, with a number of consultation responses currently outstanding.</p>															
3.39	<p><b>Junctions Working Group</b></p> <p>In October 2020 a Junctions Working Group was established with a view to developing proposals for a number of key junctions that fully reflect the shared commitment set out in <i>‘A Bolder Vision’</i>. This Group is chaired by DfC and comprises representatives from DfI,</p>															

3.40	Belfast City Council, Ulster University, Clifton House (North Belfast Heritage Cluster) and more recently IMTAC, PSNI and Translink.
3.41	<p>The work of the group has focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Clifton Gateway</u>- the group has reviewed the previously developed designs with comments focused on reducing severance, reallocating space for pedestrians and cyclists, and introducing soft landscaping. Proposed amendments currently under review include the reduction of traffic lanes along Carrick Hill, the introduction of cycle lanes along North Queen St, Frederick St and Donegall St, and the removal of the left turn from Donegall St to Carrick Hill, although these decisions will be heavily influenced by the outcome of the BRT2 design development which opened to consultation on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021.</li> <li>• <u>Shankill Gateway</u>- full planning approval was granted for the scheme in July 2020 although Members of the CG&amp;R Committee subsequently expressed concern regarding the approved scheme in a letter to the DfC and DfI Minister. In response to this the Junctions Working Group is currently reviewing the designs and officers expect to bring the emerging designs into Committee in the near future.</li> <li>• <u>Great Patrick Street / Frederick Street / York Street Junction</u>- informed by the views of the Group, DfI have developed a number of options for this key junction within the University Quarter. With the pending relocation of the University of Ulster and the influx of students there is a criticality to ensuring improvements are made in this area. A number of options have been shortlisted that propose amendments including removal of left turn slips, introduction of dedicated cycle lanes, reduction in the number of traffic lanes and the introduction of single-phase pedestrian crossings. An example of one of the options is provided in Appendix 1 with DfI undertaking to carry out modelling so as to identify a preferred option which can then be costed and a delivery route agreed, informed by the junction's location within the BSA 3 project area. Members will be aware that the programming and delivery of this scheme is critical to support the integration of the student population, facilitate safe pedestrian and cycle movement, and to capitalise on a generational opportunity to promote and enable modal shift. This has been conveyed to the Minister in letters from this Committee and in direct conversations with the DfI Permanent Secretary. Updates will be provided to this Committee as designs and delivery mechanisms are developed.</li> </ul>
3.42	Members will also be aware that Council agreed S76 contributions from developers of a number of student accommodation blocks adjacent to the junction, some of which could be

	<p>directed towards the junction improvement scheme. At the October 2019 meeting of this committee, approval was granted to allocate '£100k of funding towards design and development of public realm and environmental improvement works', in a number of areas of the city including Greater Clarendon. Officers are working to develop a public realm scheme within Little York St / Little Patrick St which will further utilise these contributions to deliver local placemaking benefit. City Regeneration &amp; Development officers are working with Physical Programmes to develop designs for this scheme and will report back to this Committee at a future date.</p> <p><b>Belfast THRIVES (Transformative Health &amp; Regeneration Initiatives for Vibrancy, Equality and Sustainability)</b></p>
3.43	<p>Belfast THRI(VES) is a pilot partnership between Ulster University [Urban Research Lab] and Belfast City Council, to inform how Belfast's public spaces can more effectively and inclusively contribute to the liveability of the city and the wellbeing of its inhabitants. The project is funded through Belfast City Council via the Department for Communities Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme, and the Department for Infrastructure. This practical research project will support BCC and DfI to develop new urban-health focused collaborative working practices across civic and private sectors, and with the public. The project will draw lessons from current processes to transform Belfast's public spaces in line with '<i>A Bolder Vision</i>', and in response to immediate health and socio-economic threats, and will evaluate public-private sector attitudes to the changing City Centre, including proposed building and infrastructure projects.</p>
3.44	<p>The project recognises that COVID recovery projects are emerging at pace with little to no time or resources put in place to evaluate their effectiveness against agreed criteria and datasets, or through user engagement to collect feedback and identify improvements for future schemes. In developing this partnership, the project will establish a base reference model that will reflect on how we have addressed the immediate needs of the pandemic, while also laying the groundwork from which to prepare for future environmental stressors. It is anticipated that this short-term project will lead to longer term benefits and potentially larger scale projects to monitor and evaluate interventions alongside socio-economic factors, capturing new primary data by implementing and testing new proposals.</p>
3.45	<p>As part of the project, a free online webinar took place on the 16th of June that featured four international speakers, and an online Symposium on 17th June with Belfast-focused panel discussions and next generation planning researchers. The events were very well</p>

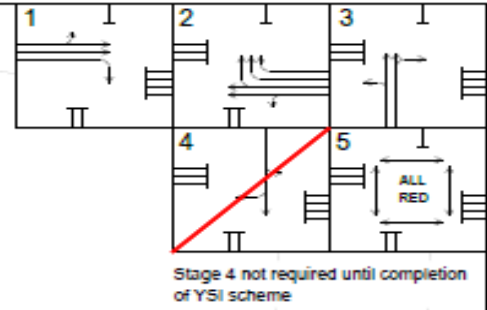
	received and provided a platform for a range of Belfast views to come forward and included input from AGENI, Belfast Healthy Cities, Belfast Charitable Society, Clifton House, Bryson CARE, Migrant Help, Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee, NI Women's European Platform, Belfast Chamber, Linen Quarter BIDs, Ulster University Youth Forum, Belfast City Centre Management, among others, see <a href="#">Belfast THRI(VES)   ND Events</a>
3.46	As part of the project, UU will conduct four semi-structured focus group sessions with city centre business reps and BIDs, NI-UK professional bodies and expert organisations, Government and Council officers, NI based community and voluntary organisations. They will also be launching a survey to capture public views on how Belfast's public spaces can more effectively and inclusively contribute to the liveability of the city and the wellbeing of its inhabitants. There are a number of emerging opportunities for international dissemination of the findings and the final report will be available late 2021.
	<b>UK Community Renewal Funding</b>
3.47	In terms of the wider connectivity context, a bid for revenue funding under the UK Community Renewal Fund has been made to carry out a city-wide feasibility study that would examine gaps in the provision active travel infrastructure including greenway and urban active connectivity routes and enabling infrastructure; explore opportunities to maximise social, economic and environmental outcomes from the range of connectivity and active travel ideas; assess proposals and options that would then form an overarching delivery plan that is feasible, deliverable and supported by partners. The plan would also inform key criteria for phasing delivery options for the emerging proposals to inform our capital requirements.
3.48	This work could provide an opportunity for Belfast to be a unique exemplar in terms of accessibility and connectivity, with the ability to access all areas of the city in an active and sustainable way. This links with aspirations which have already been put forward by Members including access to the hills, active travel and biodiversity gain, and links with other initiatives underway including Belfast Urban Greenway (BUG), BOSS (Belfast Open Spaces Strategy). An update on this bid was also reported to SPR 18 June as part of Physical Programmes Report.
3.49	The output of the study would also help prepare for and inform future capital funding bids and influence partnership delivery. At the time of writing this report, the outcome of the bid is expected to be communicated from late July onwards. In addition, as agreed in the

	recently approved CGR Committee Plan for 2021/22 and as a priority pillar of the City Development Board, a report will be brought to Committee on the overall Connectivity and Active Travel related projects/initiatives that Council is involved in. Furthermore, we will consider and identify key areas of collaboration with external partners to support effective delivery and maximise outcomes, particularly via the Community Planning Partnership City Development Board.
3.50	<b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b> None associated with this report.
3.51	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> None associated with the report- EQIA Screening has been undertaken by DfC for the 5Cs project which Council are part funding. Project specific assessments will be undertaken by the relevant lead delivery body at the appropriate stage of the development process.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	Appendix 1- Great Patrick Street Junction Redesign Option

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**WORKING DRAFT / UNDER REVIEW**



Reduction from 4 lanes to 2 (under review)

Continuous Ped Crossings

Footway widened / No layby parking

Reduction from 6 lanes to 3

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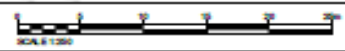
Dedicated 2way cycle lane

Footway widened / No layby parking

Removal of Left Turn Slips

Continuous Ped Crossings

2way Cycle Lane in footway / Bus Layby retained



Project Name	YORK STREET INTERCHANGE
Client	Transport for London
Project Number	YSI-ACM-HQW-2013-DR-HY-000012
Revision	1.0
Date	12/01/2013
Drawn By	...
Checked By	...

**NOTES**  
This drawing is to be used in conjunction with all other drawings in the project.  
It is the responsibility of the user to ensure that the drawing is used in the correct context.  
This drawing is to be used only for the purpose of design and is not to be used for construction.  
This drawing is to be used only for the purpose of design and is not to be used for construction.

<b>SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION</b>
This drawing is to be used only for the purpose of design and is not to be used for construction.
<b>INFORMATION</b>



**YORK STREET INTERCHANGE**

**YORK STREET INTERCHANGE PROPOSED CYCLEWAYS YORK STREET JUNCTION CONCEPT OPTION 7**

Project Name	YORK STREET INTERCHANGE
Client	Transport for London
Project Number	YSI-ACM-HQW-2013-DR-HY-000012
Revision	1.0
Date	12/01/2013
Drawn By	...
Checked By	...

**Key**

- Blue line: Kerb Layout
- Green line: Cycleways

**AECOM**

Transport for London  
YORK STREET INTERCHANGE  
YORK STREET JUNCTION  
CONCEPT OPTION 7

TfL YSI-ACM-HQW-2013-DR-HY-000012 P01.3

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Subject:	DfC Housing Supply Strategy – Call for Evidence
Date:	11 August 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the DfC Housing Supply Strategy Call for Evidence.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note that a draft response to the DfC Housing Supply Strategy Call for Evidence was submitted to DfC on the 16<sup>th</sup> July;</li> <li>Confirm the draft consultation response of the 16<sup>th</sup> July (as enclosed at Appendix 1) as the Council's final response.</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	At the CG&R meeting of the 9 <sup>th</sup> June Members were updated on the emerging DfC work to develop a Housing Supply Strategy as a key part of the housing programme to help meet the Programme for Government commitments to reduce housing stress and increase housing supply.
3.2	<p>The report presented at this Committee meeting highlighted that on the 19th May 2021 the Minister launched a public Call for Evidence to inform this new Housing Supply Strategy. The Committee subsequently recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree that officers develop initial responses to the questions posed in the recent Housing Supply Strategy: Call for Evidence document that has been launched by DfC</li> <li>• Agree that the draft response will subsequently be brought via Party Group Leaders given the closing date of 16 July for responses, with the final response brought back retrospectively to CGR Committee in August.</li> </ul>
3.3	Due to other Council commitments the meeting of the Party Leaders Forum did not meet prior to the closing date of 16 <sup>th</sup> July for responses. As a result, officers circulated an electronic copy of the draft responses to the Call for Evidence to the Members of the Party Group Leaders Forum and the Members of the CG&R Committee on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> July for review and comment, with a requested return date for all comments of the 8 <sup>th</sup> July.
3.4	In keeping with the timetable set out by DfC, the draft response was submitted on the 16 <sup>th</sup> July, as included within Appendix 1 of this report. A cover letter was also forwarded alongside the response to highlight to DfC that the submitted response was to be considered as draft pending a recommendation from the CG&R Committee on 11 <sup>th</sup> August that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to confirm the draft consultation response as the Council's final response pending Council ratification in September.
3.5	<u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u> None
3.6	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – Draft BCC Response to DfC Housing Supply Strategy Call for Evidence

Belfast City Council  
Response to The Department for Communities  
“Call For Evidence” on a  
Draft Housing Supply Strategy for N.Ireland  
July 2021

DRAFT

## CONTENTS:

- **Call for Evidence Questions and Responses**
- **Introduction**
- **Bibliography**

### ***DFC Questions:***

1. Please confirm whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation.
2. Do you agree that a 'Whole System' approach given the challenges is the right one?
3. Do you agree with the 15-year timeframe proposed for the Housing Supply Strategy?
4. Do you agree with the proposed vision for the Strategy?
5. Do you agree with the following proposed objectives for the Strategy:
  - (a) Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet current and future demand.
  - (b) Reduce housing stress and homelessness and improve housing solutions for the most vulnerable.
  - (c) Improve housing quality
  - (d) Ensure the provision of housing options that contribute to the building and maintaining of thriving, inclusive communities, and places.
  - (e) Support the transition to carbon neutrality by reducing whole-life carbon emissions from both new homes and existing homes.
6. The terms good quality, sustainable and affordable mean different things to different people how would you define these terms?
7. What do you believe are the three main barriers to delivering the objectives for the strategy?
8. To what extent do you agree that there is a need to establish a more robust understanding of NI Housing Stock, e.g. by tenure, location, condition, etc.?
9. Are you aware of any specific data sources or methodological approaches to estimating existing housing stock, e.g. by tenure, location, condition, etc.?

## **Sustainable Communities and Homes**

10. How can housing supply help create and maintain sustainable communities?
11. How do we engage communities more effectively in place making?
12. To what extent do you agree that housing led regeneration policy contributes to reversing the physical, social, and economic decline of:
  - (a) areas of deprivation
  - (b) town and city centres
  - (c) rural areas
  - (d) suburban areas
13. How can we change the approach to housing led regeneration and ensure that it is more integrated in delivering wider policy outcomes?
14. To what extent do you agree that it should be a priority to deliver more shared housing developments throughout NI?
15. How can more shared housing developments be delivered here?
16. To what extent do you agree that housing should be an integral part of the care and support system?
17. What challenges do you see in delivering a wider range of housing types, e.g. housing that is better suited to the needs of older people or those with disabilities and how can these be overcome?
18. How important is mixed tenure to addressing housing supply issues in NI?
19. What challenges do you see in progressing mixed tenure developments, and how could these be overcome?

## **Equality and Human Rights**

20. The Equality Commission has framed local housing demand and supply in relation to three constructs – accessibility; adequacy; and sustainability. Are you content with this framework or are there other issues that may warrant inclusion?
21. In addition to the inequalities or data gaps already identified in the Equality Commission's Statement and the Wallace Report, are there any other issues that should be considered?
22. In relation to the issue of using multivariate analyses (Multivariate analysis is analysis that considers the impact of more than one Section 75 characteristic), are you aware of any work already undertaken that would be useful? Housing Supply in Rural Areas

23. To what extent do you agree that the Housing Supply Strategy should address the need for affordable homes in rural areas?

24. To what extent do you agree that community led housing should be supported and enabled in rural and urban areas across NI?

25. How can additional innovative multi-agency projects (or approaches such as 'Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation') be created to deliver more affordable housing supply in rural areas?

## **Housing and Poverty**

26. Is there a need for this Housing Supply Strategy to play a role in reducing poverty?

27. Currently housing stress is identified as 'those experiencing intimidation, insecurity of tenure, housing conditions, health and social wellbeing issues. Do you have any comments on this definition of housing stress or are there other causes of housing stress that need to be considered?

28. To what extent do you agree that more needs to be done from an interdepartmental perspective to improve the lives and life chances of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness?

29. How do we help homeless people transition from temporary accommodation to long term homes?

30. To what extent do you agree that housing plays a significant role in reducing economic inactivity/enabling individuals to take up employment?

## **Land and Property**

31. Are there changes to land & property legislation, policies, processes, or procedures that could transform housing supply for the better?

32. Should the options for making public sector land (local and central government) available to support a wider variety of housing options be explored?

33. Are there land & property practices adopted in other UK or European jurisdictions that you believe would transform supply if adopted here?

## **Planning**

34. Are there changes to planning legislation, policies, processes, or procedures that could transform housing supply for the better?

35. Are there planning practices adopted in other UK or European jurisdictions that you believe would transform supply if adopted here?

36. Is land banking hindering housing supply here?

## **Finance**

37. To what extent do you agree that the NICS could better utilise existing funding (e.g. Block Grant, Financial Transactions Capital, Housing Association Grant, Reinvestment and Reform Initiative) to leverage greater levels of private finance for housing development?

38. Are there other ways the private and voluntary community and social enterprise sectors can leverage other forms of funding to increase housing supply?

39. Are there any other areas of market failure that need public and/or private intervention?

## **Infrastructure**

40. Are there changes to infrastructure legislation, policies, processes, or procedures, such as the establishment of an Infrastructure Commission, that could transform housing supply for the better?

41. To what extent do you agree that coordination of housing provision and infrastructure services need to be better aligned?

42. To what extent do you agree that a Housing Supply Strategy should consider both the provision of new homes and protecting existing supply?

43. How do we ensure that our housing supply integrates and brings together all the essential infrastructure (hard/soft & critical) required to create thriving homes and communities?

## **Climate Change/Net Zero**

44. Are there changes to climate, sustainability and environmental legislation, policies, processes, or procedures that could transform housing supply for the better?

45. Transitioning to low carbon homes will require significant behavioural changes by householders. Is support required to aid the necessary behavioural changes?

46. Taking into account social impact, what incentives or disincentives could be introduced to positively impact the current and future delivery of low carbon homes?

## **Innovation**

47. Should existing buildings, including our heritage assets, play an enhanced role

in transforming housing supply.

48. Are you aware of any innovations relating to housing including design, construction, procurement, contracting and commissioning that could help transform supply?

## **Skills**

49. To what extent do you agree that the Housing Supply Strategy could act as a stimulus to improve and modernise construction skills and increase the importance of the sector?

50. Does the Construction Sector in NI need support to skill up in digital technologies, Modern Methods of Construction, low carbon construction and the whole life performance of house building etc.?

51. Does the age profile and make-up of the construction sector (older workers/ self-employed) require a specific intervention to support our housing supply in the future?

52. Does NI need some large Green Building Projects such as those being developed elsewhere to help create momentum for a changed skills agenda here?

53. Are there any other areas that could impact on the development of the Housing Supply Strategy that you feel have not been covered in this call for evidence?

## Section 1 – Introduction

1. Please confirm whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation

Belfast City Council welcomes this opportunity to provide a formal response to the Department for Communities “Call for Evidence” on the development of a Housing Supply Strategy for Northern Ireland.

This response forms the comments of Belfast City Council, however while every effort has been made to ensure cross Council support for the responses provided within the timelines as outlined within the Call for Evidence, this response remains subject to retrospective Committee approval and Council ratification.

Belfast City Council will ensure timely confirmation of the status of the response pending completion of the Council approval process.

2. Do you agree that a ‘Whole System’ approach given the challenges is the right one?



Housing Supply faces a huge range of related and interdependent challenges that requires a new approach to unlocking the necessary solutions. To ensure effective delivery of any strategy there is a need to ensure cross-cutting collaboration and policy coordination across all relevant public sector bodies, as well as exploring opportunities to work with third party and private sectors.

Council welcomes a “Whole System” approach that involves addressing the drivers for need and demand as well as supply levers which includes planning and infrastructure, finance and skills, demographics, and climate action. A whole system approach will require all partners working together to achieve long term sustainable change and this partnership approach is particularly important in the context of Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole given the fragmented governance, financial complexities, planning, interface issues, land availability and housing stress.

This approach is also reflective of the process adopted in the development and delivery of the Belfast Agenda. The approach provides a potential opportunity to link to the Community Planning Partnership processes and structures to support the delivery of the city’s growth ambitions.

### **3. Do you agree with the 15-year timeframe proposed for the Housing Supply Strategy?**

The 15-Year timeframe for the Housing Supply Strategy is welcomed and aligns with the timeframe for the delivery of the growth ambitions envisaged for Belfast as a city through the delivery of the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda – the community plan for the city.

In addition, the proposed timeframe is comparable to other regional strategies including the Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy and emerging Local Development Plans (LDP).

Whilst Council note that the Call for Evidence on the Housing Supply Strategy states that it will be underpinned by a high-level delivery framework supported by multi-year action plans - in order to gain traction and create the needed catalytic effect in housing supply, Council would be keen to see that this includes significant committed investment and funding streams. The recently published Reset for Growth Report from the Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission has found that Belfast presents a unique opportunity to position a significant housing building programme at the heart of its economic recovery plans. The Commission sees this

investment in housing stock as having the potential to address a number of economic and social problems. These findings should be used in support of ensuring significant investment and funding is aligned to delivery plans.

Council would welcome further detail on the delivery framework and multi – year action plans as part of the co-design of the strategy, to support the development of a robust process of action planning, funding, performance management, monitoring and review.

#### 4. Do you agree with the proposed vision for the Strategy?

The proposed Vision for the Housing Supply Strategy is that *“Every household has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate for its needs”*. Council agree with this given the Vision for Belfast – by 2035 under the Belfast Agenda is that *“Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone. Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by all its citizens, free from the legacy of conflict. A compassionate city offering opportunities for everyone. A confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region. A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world. A city people dream to visit.”* The vision for the city under the Belfast Agenda is underpinned by the focus on inclusive growth where no one is left behind, with the vision and outcomes being long-term and intended to improve the lives of everyone in Belfast. Council can see clear alignment and synergies between the proposed vision for the Strategy and the Belfast Agenda, as well as a number of corporate strategies and strategic priorities for the Council, for example the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, the Resilience Strategy, the Local Development Plan draft Strategy plan, Inclusive Growth Strategy and Good Relations Strategy.

5. Do you agree with the following proposed objectives for the Strategy:

- (a) Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet current and future demand.
- (b) Reduce housing stress and homelessness and improve housing solutions for the most vulnerable.
- (c) Improve housing quality
- (d) Ensure the provision of housing options that contribute to the building and maintaining of thriving, inclusive communities, and places.
- (e) Support the transition to carbon neutrality by reducing whole-life carbon emissions from both new homes and existing homes.

Housing is integral to creating sustainable communities. Consultation and engagement gathered to inform the development and priorities of the Community Plan for the city, found that affordable and safe housing is fundamental to the quality of life of Belfast citizens. Council has committed to collaborative working through Community Planning to maximise the benefits of housing investment in the city, increasing the tenure mix, growing the population of the city centre, and helping to create sustainable communities.

The Belfast Agenda - the community plan for the city, created and being delivered via the Community Planning Partnership – will seek to deliver increased social and affordable housing in the city and will measure outcomes through housing supply and housing stress indicators. By 2021 the Belfast Agenda is committed to delivering 1,800 social housing units and agreeing a city target for affordable housing.

**Furthermore:**

- The Living Here priority of the Belfast Agenda places a significant emphasis on housing whilst the City Development Board has recognised housing led regeneration as a key priority area. The Resilience and Sustainability Board has identified 30 programmes which will improve Belfast's resilience including housing focused areas. Key to making progress on inclusive growth is addressing and mitigating poverty and issues such as affordable housing.

- In the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS – the policy framework for the city centre developed by the Council and adopted by Department for Communities), a key priority area is to increase the residential population within the city centre: the proposed objectives will be a key enabler to this alongside collaboration between Council and the public and private sectors.
- Council's partnership with QUB and the establishment of the Belfast Climate Commission, has identified the housing sector as a priority for the transition to net zero in the city.
- There is a strong degree of alignment between the overall Strategic Aims and Objectives (pg24-29) of the Housing Supply Strategy and the city's LDP, as well as the policy aims set out specifically in relation to housing (pg59).

Given the ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda, in particular the ambition that the city is home to an additional 66,000 people, there is a real need to increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet current and future demand, as well as reducing housing stress, improving housing quality, ensuring options contribute to building and maintaining inclusive communities and support the transition to carbon neutrality.

Council supports the proposed objectives for the Strategy. They will go some way to enabling the delivery of new and regenerated inclusive, healthy, sustainable, resilient, and liveable neighbourhoods with housing options that responds to the needs of all sections of our city.

6. The terms good quality, sustainable and affordable mean different things to different people how would you define these terms?

Council agrees that good quality, affordable and sustainable housing is central to reducing housing stress, homelessness and improving housing solutions for the most vulnerable. It increases supply and offers choice across all tenures, and helps to create thriving, inclusive communities.

Council further believes that housing through construction, renovation and repurposing also plays a key role in emissions reduction as we seek to ensure a fair and just transition to carbon neutrality by reducing whole-life carbon emissions from both new homes and existing homes. We need to do this while addressing inequalities and by ensuring that households in fuel poverty are not left behind in the move to net zero.

Council would see a significant advantage in ensuring that the definitions for such terms used within a housing policy context align with those being utilised within a planning policy context. By way of example, the SPPS has recently been updated to reflect the updated definition of ‘affordable housing’ adopted by DfC on 1 April 2021. This successfully ensures the required alignment between the use of the term in both a housing and a planning policy context.

In relation to the term ‘good quality’ this is a far more subjective context and much more difficult to define. The SPPS achieves this through the establishment of a core planning principle relating to ‘good design and positive place making’, which is then defined at length in sections 4.23-4.36. Within a Belfast context, the LDP draft Plan Strategy has similarly established an overarching objective “to promote sustainable urbanism and high-quality design”, linking this to the protection and enhancement of the built environment and local distinctiveness.

The term ‘sustainable development’ is defined at length within Sections 3.1-3.9 of the SPPS with reference to both the United Nations definition of “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” and the Executive’s Sustainable Development Strategy. The UN definition is also reflected in the glossary to the draft Plan Strategy in Belfast.

7. What do you believe are the three main barriers to delivering the objectives for the strategy?

Council believes that key challenges to the delivery of the draft Housing Supply Strategy objectives may revolve around the:

- Funding, Delivery Vehicles & Land - Availability of targeted funding streams and financial incentives as necessary, with flexibility in terms of appropriate delivery vehicles to bring forward housing development at scale, whilst addressing any viability issues and de-risking development as required. Availability of developable land in the right locations aligned to housing need and at appropriate value levels to underpin viable development.
- Policy - The ability to develop and deliver targeted and joined up policies to address the effective supply of the full range of housing options. This may present particular challenges given the fragmented nature of central and local government with responsibility for policies impacting on housing including planning, housing policy, housing delivery, financing, regeneration, land assembly, highways etc all sitting across a number of local and central government departments.
- Infrastructure – The criticality of having supported and properly financed infrastructure across the water, energy and transport sectors in order to support development and the growth ambitions as set out in the Belfast Agenda. In particular the underfunding of wastewater treatment works, and capacity issues is a critical issue.

8. To what extent do you agree that there is a need to establish a more robust understanding of NI Housing Stock, e.g. by tenure, location, condition, etc.?

Council believes that a robust approach is required for the strategic assessment of existing housing stock, by tenure, location, and condition.

Whilst Council understand there is already a significant amount of data available in relation to existing housing stock – although Council wouldn't be fully sighted on all data available – there is always room for improvement and we would support a

robust approach to putting this in place. There is also a need for alignment in relation to future housing requirements across a range of tenures that are both calculated and articulated, which we understand is being considered in depth by the NIHE.

A particular problem that we have encountered in Belfast is a disconnect between Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) published by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and evidence of housing need and policy requirements. The HGIs, are developed by extrapolating forward past trends in housing growth, which take no account of policy aspirations – including those contained within the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) which the HGIs should be seeking to deliver against – and are disconnected from the areas with a high level of affordable housing need.

This results in a current context in Belfast where the HGIs suggest a housing growth of 5,600 units between 2016 and 2030 (or 400 units per annum) , whilst the NIHE estimate the future social housing need alone for Belfast to total 5,118 units between 2020-2025 (or 1,023 per annum). Clearly a significant disconnect, without even taking into account the range of broader housing tenures. This disconnected HGIs are then used by other public sector partners to provide a basis on which to plan for future growth, presenting a significant barrier to the delivery of housing over the longer-term.

9. Are you aware of any specific data sources or methodological approaches to estimating existing housing stock, e.g. by tenure, location, condition, etc.?

A significant amount of additional research was undertaken in Belfast as part of the preparation of the Local Development Plan, including a specific study analysing the existing housing markets and future housing need. Primarily this sought to link housing need to projected economic growth and sought to determine the size and type of housing needed over the next 15-20 years in comparison to existing housing stock. This research, including the methodologies applied in each case, are available for consideration within the Council's Local Development Plan document library via [Local development plan \(belfastcity.gov.uk\)](http://belfastcity.gov.uk) .

## Sustainable Communities:

### 10. How can housing supply help create and maintain sustainable communities?

The housing policies within the Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) Strategy 7.1.2, seek to “nurture the development of balanced local communities by achieving an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures”<sup>1</sup> Mixed tenure developments that reflect a mix of privately owned, privately let, affordable and social accommodation can help to avoid the creation or the perception of ghettos by increasing the diversity of people living in an area.

This approach to mixed tenure development has been strongly supported throughout the LDP consultation process, receiving general support from most respondents as part of the Preferred Options Paper (POP) consultation and was stressed as a key factor in building sustainable communities.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland, 4.1.4,<sup>2</sup> highlights the role of the planning system supporting Government to addressing sustainable communities, through its influence on the type, location, siting and design of development. As well as mixed use developments and mixed tenure housing schemes, the planning system should also encourage strong neighbourhood centres; temporary uses in interface locations; active street frontages; buildings that provide public services, including education, healthcare and recreational facilities; public paths and cycleways; and passive spaces such as civic squares and public parks.

Whilst a great deal of focus has been given to mixed use, mixed tenure development in an effort to build sustainable communities, Council also recognises the need for specialist housing types for people with specific housing needs, particularly those with physical and mental impairments and old age.

Research undertaken as part of the Belfast Agenda, states that people over 60 already make up one fifth of our population and this forecast is predicted to increase dramatically to over one third by 2050. As a member of the World Health Organisation’s Global Network of Age-friendly Cities, we must continue to play a

positive and supporting role in the delivery of homes to meet the full range of housing needs of those requiring additional support, that maximises access to facilities and services ensuring they can live independently within our communities.

With regards to shared space, the Executive through it's "Together Building a United Community" Strategy vowed commitment to addressing barriers that prevent shared space ensuring all individuals can live where they choose.

Council is working with our Shared City Partners in a bid to achieve safe, sustainable neighbourhoods that diminish issues of division, segregation, crime, and fear of crime and pave the way for a more diverse, enriched environment.

Council is of the view that the delivery of homes offers significant opportunities to help achieve balanced communities through well-linked, accessible, inclusive, mixed-tenure neighbourhoods. Combined with creating opportunities for communities to access local employment shopping, leisure and social facilities ensuring that they can live full independent lives in an inclusive, cohesive, and sustainable community.

Council believes that an effective Housing Supply Strategy can go some way to creating and maintaining Sustainable Communities. Council further believes research undertaken as part of the Local Development Plan, Preferred Options Paper, emphasises the broad recognition that an appropriate mix of housing units could help foster balanced communities, provide housing choice, benefit health and wellbeing, reduce social exclusion and help tackle area based deprivation.

**Q11: How do we engage with communities more effectively in place making.**

The Council places great value in the importance of shaping places *with* rather than *for* those who will use it. It is committed to early engagement with local communities and stakeholders and has sought to encourage inclusive discussions on the Belfast Agenda, LDP and key planning policies that will guide future development to deliver the tangible social, economic and environmental benefits for the city.

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) **2011** (Planning Act), introduced a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), to be developed by Councils, setting out how they intend to involve the community in carrying out their respective functions.

Belfast City Council published its SCI <sup>3</sup>in March 2018, which set out the method and timeframe for engagement on the draft Plan Strategy and POP which states when stakeholders and the community could contribute to preparation of the LDP, its Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and decisions around planning applications. It promotes a more meaningful and effective approach to enable interested parties and the local community to engage early in the plan process and throughout its preparation.

Council recognises that place-making is a people-focused approach to the planning and design of new and future developments and places a great emphasis on collaborative engagement between applicants and stakeholders in advance of a full planning submission. Pre-Application Discussions (PAD) provide an opportunity for early consideration and engagement on design considerations and will generally produce better outcomes, particularly for housing schemes, as it provides the opportunity to work through issues such as design and access, transport, parking including green travel measures, heritage and conservation issues, and environmental issues.

Council recognises the importance of providing a planning system is clear, transparent and accessible to different user groups so that people have the opportunity to participate and are not disadvantaged by the planning process. Finding and maintaining effective means of communication is unquestionably central to the collaborative process of place making. Through providing the opportunity for active participation from early onset instils ownership and pride in the outcome, which will greatly encourage its ongoing success and contribute to vibrancy, adaptability, and diversity thus creating sustainable and safe places.

Council has also led on various non statutory Masterplans and regeneration plans focused on the regeneration and 'place making' of specific areas, with community engagement being integral to this process. The Council believes a collaborative

approach involving community, landowners and other stakeholders is essential to realise the full place making potential of an area.

The preparation of the LDP and the process by which individual planning proposals are now determined are key to furthering sustainable development, implementing the SPPS, and realising the vision and aspirations of local communities.

Council believes comprehensive and inclusive community engagement is fundamental to shaping our city at all levels. This has been at the forefront in the development of all Council plans, strategies, and planning processes to date. Council have demonstrated this through the development of various channels to improve how we listen and engage with our residents and other stakeholders. The Council's Citizen Space consultation platform provides a corporate approach to all consultations. However, we wanted to give people the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas at an earlier stage and encourage more open and ongoing dialogue. So we have now set up a new engagement platform, called Your Say Belfast (using a system called Engagement HQ). Through this platform, residents and other interested parties can submit ideas and comments, to get involved in online forums and much more. We feel we can continue to develop and improve our means of engagement through strategic partnerships we have forged across the city and utilising the structures that are there to support these for example the Community Planning Partnership and associated boards. Council would advocate that effective community engagement sits at the heart of all future plans for house building / supply with placemaking an integral part of this.

12. To what extent do you agree that housing led regeneration policy contributes to reversing the physical, social, and economic decline of:

- (a) areas of deprivation
- (b) town and city centres
- (c) rural areas
- (d) suburban areas

Council acknowledges the evidence that housing led regeneration delivers significant outcomes for local communities to include:

- Sustainable, Affordable & Good Quality Housing:
- Increase Health outcomes:
- Increase Environmental sustainability:
- Tenant Control and Community Governance:
- The right mix of social and physical infrastructures

Housing has a significant role to play in urban regeneration as it is an important part of the social/cultural dimension of regeneration, and can be directly related to the wellbeing and welfare of communities.

Urban/Rural regeneration is seen as a potential solution through its roles in promoting the different environmental, economic, social and health benefits.

Council believe that housing led regeneration policy contributes to reversing the physical, social, and economic decline of town and city centres. A key principle and policy area within the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) is to increase the residential population in the city centre. BCCRIS advocates that city centre living will *“Add liveliness and bustle to the city centre at all hours and create a market for retail, restaurants and entertainment by supporting residential development of various types and tenures at key locations”*. BCCRIS outlines that a significant residential population is highly important for the successful functioning of a city centre, providing a home for the knowledge workers on whom the office sector is dependent. The development of city centre living is integral to re-imagining and diversifying underutilised city centre land assets, this is a key priority area within the Council’s Future City Centre Programme and its Recovery Framework under Housing Led Regeneration. The recently published Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission, Reset for Growth Report, has found that the foundations of the city centre have been shaken by the impact of Covid-19. For the city and wider region to prosper the city centre needs to create a re-imagined, liveable and resurgent city core. Reset for Growth goes further in evidencing the

importance of housing led regeneration within the city centre as it identifies that in most successful urban areas, residential development is a core element of the mix.

13. How can we change the approach to housing led regeneration and ensure that it is more integrated in delivering wider policy outcomes?

Council acknowledges the evidence of key benefits of housing led regeneration in the development of new communities and improvement of others as significant. There is an increasing level of knowledge and understanding across key public sector decision makers about the wide contribution housing regeneration can make across a range of government priorities.

Council also recognises that housing led regeneration goes beyond the provision of social housing developments to include mixed use, mixed tenure developments providing a range of housing options to meet local need and growing demand.

Regeneration of this nature is about more than bricks and mortar. It is about investing in people, their communities, and the places in which they live, with jobs and improved health and life chances of our residents at its heart. The Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission in the Reset for Growth Report have advised that Belfast has a unique opportunity to place house building at the heart of its economic recovery plans. The Commission sees this investment in housing stock as having the potential to address several social and economic problems.

Council would commend the significant benefits that can be achieved through housing led regeneration across the City:

- Through effective cross-sectoral joint working, as housing is recognised as a priority within the Programme for Government and aligns with the growth ambitions of the Belfast Agenda. We recognise the benefits to be realised cut across economic, social, and environmental factors;
- Through a range of capacity building measures for Councils and other statutory partners to better understand, develop, deliver, and monitor housing led regeneration plans and schemes and outcomes;

- Through the development of innovative funding models to support both private and social housing regeneration developments and supporting infrastructure requirements;
- Through the development of best practice policy and powers. To place statutory duties on key statutory departments to contribute to strategic housing led regeneration schemes – we believe that the Community Planning Partnership function and role is an important part of this process;
- Through working with communities to identify and measure social value and the wider benefits of housing led regeneration.

14. To what extent do you agree that it should be a priority to deliver more shared housing developments throughout NI?

As mentioned in earlier responses, the Belfast Agenda sets out a vision, values and outcomes for the city to achieve by 2035. As part of this vision, council believes that shared housing should be a priority for the Housing Supply Strategy as a fundamental enabler to redress the structural barriers to the inclusive growth of the city and its neighbourhoods – we know from the people that we have surveyed as part of the development of the Council's Good Relations Strategy in 2019, that shared housing could be an opportunity to promote good community and race relations.

The Local Development Plan (LDP) draft Strategy plan has adopted the Belfast Agenda's aim to ensure that Belfast will be a culturally rich and diverse city that is open, safe and welcoming to all - promoting good relations is key to improving the quality of life for everyone in the city. The strategic policy adopts a core planning principle to create and enhance shared space, to promote social cohesion and good relations in the plan area. Belfast has high levels of neighbourhood segregation, which has constrained development and connectivity to all parts of the city.

The Belfast Agenda is promoting inclusive growth to address social and economic inequalities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Increasing diverse neighbourhoods and access to opportunities through the spatial planning process is therefore an integral part of the LDP. This means considering how all communities may be affected by a development and ensuring that proposals help to improve community cohesion, fostering social integration, reducing isolation, and improving access to opportunities in the city.

Provision of good quality, shared social and community infrastructure is critical for social cohesion and contributes to the creation of lifetime neighbourhoods

#### 15. How can more shared housing developments be delivered here?

Council acknowledges the delivery of shared housing is now an action in the Draft Programme for Government 2016 – 2021; Together: Building A United Community strategy and the Shared Housing headline action; and the Department for Communities is committed to delivering approx. 200 shared social housing units per year as part of the Social Housing Development Programme.

Council recognises that the concept of choice is an important one, and it acknowledges that a person's choice(s) may depend on familial links and/or community connections. Therefore, shared housing is not about forcing people to live in a certain way or in a certain area, but rather to improve the choices that are available by tackling the barriers that prevent individuals from opting to live in shared neighborhoods.

When considering sharing housing development it might be useful to consider developing a set of shared spaces principles: for example, the share spaces principles developed as part of Council's Good Relations Strategy 'Shared and Connected Spaces' could underpin the continued development of Shared Space in Belfast. When Council uses the term 'Shared Space' we are describing space that is welcoming, accessible, good quality and safe:

- Welcoming

- Shared Space should be welcoming, where people feel safe to visit and to take part in activity within that space, increasing an overall sense of shared experience and community
- Activities within the public spaces will respect diversity and promote inclusion
- Accessible
  - There will be equality of opportunity afforded to all those using public spaces and accessing goods, facilities, and services
  - In a Shared City, public expressions of identity will be respected and respectful
  - Shared Spaces should reflect the values of diversity and inclusion
- Good quality
  - Shared Space should be good quality, with attractive, high quality services and well-designed buildings and spaces
- Safe
  - Shared Space should be safe for all

We would recommend consideration of shared spaces principles – for more details on the Council's Good Relations Strategy and information on shared spaces, please contact the Council directly.

16. To what extent do you agree that housing should be an integral part of the care and support system?

Council believes that a “Whole system” approach to the provision of Housing is welcomed as an integrated approach between Housing and Public Health. Evidence linking human health and well-being to poor living and housing conditions has a long history as a driver of public health policy and action.

The interlinked dimensions of household, dwelling, community, and neighbourhood environment, have the capacity to affect individual health status through physical, mental or social mechanisms. As poor health is associated with poorer living

circumstances, there is a policy expectation that area regeneration and housing improvement strategies will contribute to health improvement and reduced social inequalities in health.

The development of an integrated approach to housing is likely to realise a range of key economic, social and health and wellbeing benefits for community and regions, to include:

- A reduction and prevention in homelessness
- Greater outcome for the most vulnerable to include children
- Enhancing living conditions through addressing energy and fuel poverty challenges
- Creating living and healthy communities which provides access to community-based assets, including parks, open spaces, and facilities.
- A significant increase in Inclusive economic growth for local communities and the city
- The development of an agile and better resourced approach to the tailoring of individual housing type to housing needs

17: What challenges do you see in delivering a wider range of housing types, e.g. housing more suited to the needs of older people or those with disabilities and how can these be overcome?

Council recognises that an aging population brings with it several challenges in terms of effectively meeting housing needs in the longer term. There is a significant cost associated with making modifications to existing stock to make them suitable for residents throughout their lifetime. To help address this in the future, the Belfast LDP seeks to improve the adaptability and accessibility of new housing through the requirements for all new housing to meet a number of criteria intended to improve adaptability and accessibility of units, as well as a proportion of all new homes across all tenures to be wheelchair adaptable (see Policy HOU7).

Although it is recognised that there is a minor additional cost associated with these requirements that will need to be borne by developers, it is considered that this is

largely outweighed by the wider significant social benefits, including the current and anticipated cost of inaccessible housing, such as:

- The expense of adaptations to existing properties
- The cost of residential care and additional levels of social care
- Negative impacts of independent living, employment, and social life all of which have human, social and economic significance
- Falls and other accidents and the health and care costs triggered
- Mental health impacts and effect on general health; and
- Avoidable hospital admissions and increased stays in hospital.

In addition, it is important to recognise the importance of supported housing as providing important bridge between independent living and someone needing to go into a residential care setting.

It is notable that the Lifetime Homes standards have been widely used in other UK jurisdictions to address many of these challenges, but in Northern Ireland such standards only currently apply to new social housing. In other jurisdictions, the Lifetime Homes standards are now being amalgamated into building regulations and the Council would argue that similar changes to the Northern Ireland Building Regulations would probably represent the best mechanism to achieve flexible and adaptable housing consistently across the Region in the future.

#### 18: How important is mixed tenure to addressing housing supply issues in NI?

Council believes that mixed tenure housing is important for Belfast and Northern Ireland. Housing policies within the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy seek to “nurture the development of balanced local communities by achieving an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures”, “secure mixed tenure housing developments” and “build strong, inclusive and cohesive communities for people of all backgrounds”. Mixed tenure development is seen as vital in achieving these aspirations and in avoiding many of the problems now associated with large areas of single identity social housing in the City.

The Local Development Plan draft Strategy plan therefore includes two specific policies that seek to achieve an appropriate mix of housing, including Policy HOU5: Affordable housing and Policy HOU6 Housing mix. In both cases, Policy HOU5 requires that “affordable housing should be provided as an integral part of mixed-use development, integrated with general needs housing and not readily distinguishable in terms of external design, materials and finishes.” This ‘tenure blind’ approach is considered vital in the delivery of mixed tenure housing, as it helps to ensure that many of the perceived barriers to growth can be mitigated (see also response to Question 19 below).

This approach to mixed tenure development has been strongly supported throughout the consultation process, receiving general support from over two thirds of respondents as part of our Preferred Options Paper (POP) consultation and was often emphasised as an important factor in building sustainable communities.

19: What challenges do you see in progressing mixed tenure developments, and how could these be overcome?

Council believes that there are a few challenges to progressing mixed tenure development, but it is considered that many of these are perceived barriers, rather than the reality in practice. The primary concerns raised as part of the consultation process on the draft Plan Strategy in Belfast relate to the potential for a loss of value on private dwellings as a result of being in close proximity to social housing, differences in design standards/specifications between private and social housing and potential inefficiencies in management when properties are ‘pepper-potted’ rather than clustered throughout.

However, there is no evidence available in a Northern Ireland context to suggest that mixed tenure development has a negative impact on house prices generally, and evidence in other jurisdictions suggests that where development is truly tenure blind there is no evidence to support concerns about price differentials between mixed-tenure developments and mono-tenure schemes. The Council also believes that there is sufficient flexibility in design standards to enable tenure blind development to be achieved whilst meeting the differing requirements – tenure blind doesn’t mean that every housing unit needs to be the same, but rather that from the external

appearance there is nothing in terms of style, material or finishes that distinguish between tenures.

In relation to the perceived barriers associated with the management of pepper-potted housing tenures, the Council recognise that some flexibility may be required in the application of policies to ensure that any potential problems can be mitigated where possible. However, we would also note that it is not unusual for landlords, whether social or private, to manage multiple properties throughout a town or city, down to an individual dwelling in a development, so it is likely that such barriers can also be successfully overcome whilst achieving a desired mix of housing types and tenures.

## Section 2 – Equality and Human Rights

20. The Equality Commission has framed local housing demand and supply in relation to three constructs – accessibility; adequacy; and sustainability. Are you content with this framework or are there other issues that may warrant inclusion?

Council is satisfied with this framing of local housing demand based on the constructs of accessibility, adequacy and sustainability. Whilst fully acknowledging the historic and systemic inequalities in relation to housing, particularly in Belfast where segregation in public housing estates increases to 94%, we welcome an approach which fully acknowledges the increasing diversity of the city.

21. In addition to the inequalities or data gaps already identified in the Equality Commission's Statement and the Wallace Report, are there any other issues that should be considered?

Council believes data gaps and how they relate to inequalities have been highlighted through an increased use of the Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) methodology, for example in community planning. Increasingly the ability to extract knowledge and insights from structured and unstructured data is becoming central to how we apply actionable insights across a broad range of policy areas. The centrality of the work to

address data gaps, as identified by ECNI and the Wallace Report is fundamental to addressing vertical and horizontal inequalities.

22. In relation to the issue of using multivariate analyses (Multivariate analysis is analysis that considers the impact of more than one Section 75 characteristic), are you aware of any work already undertaken that would be useful?

Council believes that within the field of equality there is an increased focus on multivariate analysis, related to intersectionality. In addition to the important work in this field by both local Universities, further research and application which may be useful in this regard are:

- The 'Understanding Inequalities' project is a partnership project exploring spatial inequalities, with published researched papers demonstrating a broad understanding of multivariate analysis, for example age and gender > Welcome to Understanding Inequalities | Understanding Inequalities ([understanding-inequalities.ac.uk](http://understanding-inequalities.ac.uk))
- The Office of National Statistics publication Past experiences of housing difficulties in the UK: 2018 provides an important insight, including multivariate analysis, of experiences of housing difficulties and how they shape current situations. Centre for Equalities and Inclusion - Office for National Statistics ([ons.gov.uk](http://ons.gov.uk)).

23. To what extent do you agree that the Housing Supply Strategy should address the need for affordable homes in rural areas?

The rural hinterland for the Belfast City Council area is relatively small compared to other Districts. That said, within the Local Development Plan draft Strategy there is provision for small levels of rural housing provision. Housing Supply Strategy should consider the need for affordable housing in rural areas based on evidence which sees affordable housing in rural areas going some way to mitigating against the issues of

- Poverty

- Poor Health & wellbeing
- Economic inactivity
- Homelessness and displacement of homelessness to regional cities

24. To what extent do you agree that community led housing should be supported and enabled in rural and urban areas across NI?

Council acknowledges that community led housing can be an innovative approach with the potential to provide homes that are affordable to rent or buy, whilst sustaining local economies and public services.

Council believes community led housing could provide an opportunity as part of the development of housing options in particular situations and developed through the concepts of Cohousing, Cooperative Housing, Community Land Trusts and Self-Help development models. We would however highlight that the opportunities to benefit from such housing development models is greatly enhanced in communities where good levels of community development and capacity exist.

25. How can additional innovative multi-agency projects (or approaches such as 'Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation') be created to deliver more affordable housing supply in rural areas?

The rural hinterland for the Belfast City Council area is relatively small compared to other Districts. Council would however welcome the opportunity to input where we can, to the development process around the creation of innovative multi-agency projects to deliver more affordable housing supply in rural areas.

## Housing and Poverty

26. Is there a need for this Housing Supply Strategy to play a role in reducing poverty?

Council believes that a Housing Supply Strategy for Northern Ireland will play a significant role in reducing poverty and notes that housing has been included as a cross-cutting issue in the Expert Advisory Panel's recommendations to DfC for an Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The concurrent development of a new Housing Supply Strategy, Fuel Poverty Strategy and Energy Strategy, presents an opportunity for greater policy alignment and the creation of a whole system approach to supporting vulnerable in poverty, addressing fuel poverty and substandard living conditions and improving health outcomes.

Improving social and economic wellbeing for citizens as energy consumers, including those deemed vulnerable, should be at the core of any emerging supply housing strategy, like other key emerging strategies such as the DfE new Energy Strategy. We recognise that it presents a significant potential to address the impacts of fuel poverty and health inequalities in the city and beyond in line with Outcome 4 in the Programme for Government. You will be aware that Belfast City Council declared a climate emergency in October 2019, and the Belfast Climate Commission and Belfast Resilience and Sustainability Board are progressing actions from within the published Climate Action Plan and Resilience Strategy with the ambition to transition to a zero emissions economy and the eradication of fuel poverty.

Council would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention the Belfast Warm and Well Programme which has been developed and implemented under the auspices of community planning. The initiative has adopted an evidence-based approach to identifying vulnerable people and those at risk from experiencing adverse health conditions because of living in cold homes and suffering from fuel poverty. This has provided a model for inter-agency and cross-sectoral working, which has seen the mobilisation of local assets and communities to identify and support those who are at risk of cold weather and ensure they receive the services and support they require.

The development of a Housing Supply Strategy provides a pivotal opportunity to address these barriers, especially if closely linked to a renewed Fuel Poverty Strategy.

Although the past year has seen a decrease in energy costs, this has been accompanied by a fall in incomes and those living in cold homes are often less motivated to take appropriate efficiency measures or aware of the potential financial support and incentives available to make such measures affordable. Accordingly, there is a risk that those in greatest need may not access the support available resulting in a widening of the inequality gap.

Consequently, we wish to engage across each of these processes, at a senior and strategic level, to explore the potential of taking a whole system and integrated approach to supporting vulnerable people and consider opportunities to harness a more effective approach to addressing avoidable winter deaths in Belfast and beyond. The importance of such a whole systemic and integrated approach to supporting vulnerable people has never been demonstrated more than in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, with much learning to build on.

27. Currently housing stress is identified as ‘those experiencing intimidation, insecurity of tenure, housing conditions, health and social wellbeing issues’. Do you have any comments on this definition of housing stress or are there other causes of housing stress that need to be considered?

Council is content with the current definition of housing stress as recorded. However, in support of this we would like to draw on the evidence established, that to a large extent cold homes and poor housing conditions are linked to excess winter mortality. Council would like to refer to the response to question 26, and the detail in paragraph four to support evidence of this, as well as a model for inter-agency work across the issue.

28. To what extent do you agree that more needs to be done from an interdepartmental perspective to improve the lives and life chances of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness?

Council believes that there is a continued need for collaborative and coordinated action on homelessness in the city. Homelessness and associated vulnerabilities in Belfast are areas of concern for the Council. For example, following a Notice of

Motion (February 2019), the Council agreed ‘through the office of the Mayor, to convene a statutory and non-statutory multi-agency task group that will seek to take further partnership actions in addressing all facets of homelessness.’ This task group sought to bring together the relevant statutory and voluntary service providers for those living with addiction and mental health issues and those who have no place to call home.

Furthermore in 2019 Council provided a formal response to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Public Consultation Plan on a “Chronic Homeless Action Plan for Northern Ireland”, to include:

- that mechanisms needed to be developed across agencies for early identification of those who are at risk of homelessness or chronic homelessness:
- a robust approach to the monitoring of homeless data, trends, multi-agency case management system and accountability needs to be in place.
- services engage with those at risk of homelessness as quickly as possible

Council welcomes the Housing Executives proposal to tackle the difficult issue of homeless prevention and reduction through the development of multidisciplinary teams. There is a specific need to support those homeless people with mental health issues and chronic drug and alcohol addictions to achieve better life outcomes. Council would welcome the provision of services which target these specific issues, through collaboration with medical health experts such as Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Public Health Agency, thus supporting the long-term prevention of homelessness.

Council would comment that in considering the approach to homelessness, it will be important that we focus on the individual needs. Wider social challenges (e.g. such as lack of life skills, alcohol, substance and other mis-use) may impact on the individual to remain in fixed accommodation, This may necessitate bringing together multiple partners and services to integrated wrap-around support which will enable an individual(s) to transition. Council would highlight the emerging Doncaster

Complex Lives initiative currently being co-designed with the NIHE and other Belfast Community Planning partners and services providers which has a housing led approach to supporting vulnerable people and targeted cohorts.

29. How do we help homeless people transition from temporary accommodation to long term homes?

Recent evidence presented by NIHE to council in relation to 'Dealing with Homelessness during the Pandemic' (March 2021) reported that the number of homeless presentations had fallen while demand for temporary accommodation had increased. In addition, it highlighted that young people had been disproportionately impacted and that the availability and throughput of temporary accommodation had reduced, necessitating an increase in the use of hotel and B&B accommodation.

In response to the NIHE Public Consultation on a Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2017–2022, 'Ending Homelessness Together', Council supported the key priorities within the Strategy to:

- To prioritise homelessness prevention
- To secure sustainable accommodation and appropriate support solutions for homeless households
- To further understand and address the complexities of chronic homelessness across Northern Ireland
- To ensure the right mechanisms are in place to oversee and deliver the strategy
- To measure and monitor existing and emerging need to inform the ongoing development of appropriate services

Council would refer to the final paragraph in the response to question 28, as it is relevant to the focus of this question.

30. To what extent do you agree that housing plays a significant role in reducing economic inactivity/enabling individuals to take up employment?

Housing can play a key role in economic development. It can enhance economic performance and place competitiveness, but it can also lead to segregation and spatial concentrations of poverty. Too often, however, housing investment has taken place in isolation from the wider economic context. The development of the Housing Supply Strategy presents an opportunity to improve the use of housing as an enabler of economic growth, but housing policy will need to be more responsive to local economic development conditions.

In the current downturn, ensuring new homes are delivered of the right type, in the right place, and linked to wider economic outcomes will be more important. Implementing a more integrated response to housing and economic development will be the key challenge facing the city. The type and quality of the housing offer can have a significant impact on the health and wealth of places. Their ability to attract and retain people and provide support for those who need it relies on good housing and attractive and inclusive neighbourhoods. Effective housing led regeneration approaches increasingly recognise this.

The importance of housing to the wellbeing and prosperity of places can play out in three ways:

- 1) The growing importance of skills to places' economic performance means that getting the right housing offer, including affordable housing, is essential to attracting and retaining a skills base that will encourage inward investment.
- 2) If we better align our strategies for housing and economic development, we increase the likelihood that efforts to address deprivation will be supported by measures to address the underlying economic causes of area deprivation. Co-ordinating regeneration and economic development interventions maximises the potential for achieving a virtuous circle that can deliver greater economic inclusion.
- 3) Finally, housing investment in of itself can be a powerful driver of local economic activity and can have a significant positive impact on local economies, particularly in deprived areas.

In line with recent evidence targeted investment in social and affordable housing has the twin benefits of meeting housing need for those unable to secure good-quality and low-cost housing in the market and, at the same time, permitting housing construction to generate economic benefits through creating local job opportunities, supply chains, spending and economic activity.

The additional house building proposals will provide significant opportunities for construction employment. One of the new areas of development that we see is the opportunity to invest in retrofitting skills development at scale. This will create opportunities across a range of skills levels and support inclusive growth by engaging those with lower skills.

Linked to housing supply, Council would also highlight the significant opportunities presented from 'green employment' in creating and sustaining jobs and supporting skills development. We would seek the support of the NI Executive and key NICS departments including Department for Communities, Dept. for Economy and Dept. of Finance to bring forward a green stimulus fund of scale which has housing supply at its core as a key enabler.

## Land and Property

31. Are there changes to land & property legislation, policies, processes or procedures that could transform housing supply for the better?

Council would comment that there are certain changes that could benefit housing supply. In terms of land availability there is opportunity for a more joined up approach across the public sector to identify and collate land ownership details and identify lands with potential for housing development purposes considering suitability and deliverability. In tandem with this and as part of a more joined up public sector approach consideration should also be given to optimal ways of working and delivery vehicles for working with the private sector and funders to bring forward appropriate housing development opportunities in a more agile way.

Belfast City Council has been undertaking Strategic Site Assessments in respect of its own lands, as well as adjoining public sector lands and private sector as

appropriate to bring forward opportunities for housing led and mixed-use regeneration. Council have been working closely with the Department for Communities and NIHE in this regard. Various city centre proposals are currently being progressed and a city-wide approach is also in progress, with a proposition as to how this could be further progressed as part of the Community Planning process. The Belfast CPP City Development Board has identified housing led regeneration as one of its key priorities, with a Delivery Group being set up to specifically consider this issue of the collation of public sector land details aimed at bringing forward housing opportunities across the wider public estate and identification of private sector lands as appropriate – with further detail in Question 31 below.

A recent example of a joint BCC/DfC approach is the ongoing Development Brief process for combined BCC/DfC lands in the Inner North West area of the city centre inviting proposals from Housing Associations for a mixed tenure /mixed use development.

As part of a joined up public sector approach further consideration could also be given to optimising the D1 surplus land notification process in respect of lands available for housing.

As set out below (and in other questions) alternative models for delivery and financing should be considered including innovative financing models, Housing Investment Funds and Strategic Land Partnerships.

Council would advocate therefore for a much more joined up approach across the public sector to collectively bring forward housing opportunities with all partners contributing in terms of ensuring the required processes, delivery vehicles, funding and supporting infrastructure are aligned to deliver agreed outcomes.

**32. Should the options for making public sector land (local and central government) available to support a wider variety of housing options be explored?**

Council believes that further options for making public sector land available to support a wider variety of housing options should be explored. Belfast City Council already actively engages with government departments, NIHE, Housing

Associations, private sector, funders, and institutional investors in relation to the use of lands for housing development and to support a wide variety of housing.

Over the past number of years, the Council have disposed of various surplus lands across the city to Housing Associations, with other proposed disposals ongoing. By way of example the Council are currently working in partnership with a Housing Association in respect of housing development on Council lands at the Gasworks Northern Fringe site. As outlined in the preceding question Council have also been undertaking a comprehensive Strategic Site Assessments exercise across their own lands and are working with other public sector bodies, including DfC, and the private sector as appropriate in respect of their lands to bring forward housing led regeneration opportunities. The Development Brief process for BCC/DfC lands at the Inner North West area of the city centre is one example of the outworking's of this Strategic Sites Assessments work.

As part of the Belfast Community Planning process the CPP City Development Board has identified housing regeneration as a priority and specifically in relation to the use of public sector lands a Delivery Group under the City Development Board is being proposed. The objective of this emerging Delivery Group is to support integrated planning and greater collaboration across partners in relation to the assessment and identification of city wide public sector lands to facilitate housing led regeneration, as well as identifying potential strategic private sector land opportunities, either on their own or in conjunction with adjoining public sector owned lands. It is also intended that this group would explore mechanisms to establish partnerships for development of homes and ways of investing in housing throughout the city, as well as identifying barriers to delivery and potential solutions. It would also consider how best to maximise the wider regeneration benefits, connectivity and place making potential of identified housing development opportunities. It is intended that this could build upon the ongoing work undertaken by NIHE, DfC, BCC and other stakeholders in identifying and assessing public sector lands to facilitate housing-led regeneration within the city, as well as identifying strategic private sector land opportunities, either on their own or in conjunction with adjoining public sector owned lands. As outlined above in question 32 Council would therefore support a holistic and joined up approach to exploring options for making public sector lands available for housing.

As set out in the Belfast Innovation & Inclusive Growth Commission 'Reset for Growth' report it is being advocated that Strategic Land Partnerships are set up to bring together public and statutory bodies to make more effective use of public lands, providing a stable, sustainable supply of land for housing or other development types in line with strategic ambitions. The purpose of such Strategic Land Partnerships across the public sector will be to identify physical assets suitable for assembly into investable propositions of scale. It is proposed that relevant public sector organisations including DfC, Belfast City Council, NIHE and DoF as well as other major public sector landowners and private sector as appropriate could form part of such Strategic Land Partnerships.

At the initial consideration of this Call for Evidence, the Council's City Regeneration & Development Committee requested that the response included a proposal that consideration be given to the possibility of a ring -fenced fund for those areas with the highest need/deprivation.

It is also critical that the supporting infrastructure for housing development is in place and properly financed across the water, energy, and transport sectors in order to support development and the growth ambitions as set out in the Belfast Agenda.

33. Are there land & property practices adopted in other UK or European jurisdictions that you believe would transform supply if adopted here?

The provision of housing supply to meet demand may need to be supported through new investment models and delivery vehicles which involves innovative financing and partnership delivery models that may include institutional and private investment, joint ventures /partnerships and other models of delivery.

The Council notes the Homes England model, acting as the government's housing accelerator with the resources and expertise to drive housing development and responsibility for increasing the number of new homes including affordable homes and homes for market, sale or rent. In addition, they have responsibility for increasing the supply of public land and bringing empty homes back into use and utilising their land and investment to attract private sector investment.

It is also noted that other UK / European jurisdictions adopt similar approaches to those advocated in the Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission Report in terms of Strategic Land Partnerships and Housing Investment Funds.

The Council would also note that other jurisdictions utilise additional means to support housing supply, including:

- The provision of 'Green Finance' opportunities and community municipal bonds, for the retrofit of buildings and social and affordable housing for low-income households.
- Grants to support Living over the Shops to help reinvigorate high streets, support City Centre Living and provide low carbon sources of housing.
- Certain planning relaxations, with adequate controls built in, and/or tax incentives for the conversion of redundant office space and retail to residential.
- The use of vesting powers to support provision of land supply in places of need and to assemble sites.

## Planning

34: Are there changes to planning legislation, policies, processes or procedures that could transform housing supply for the better? And

35: Are there planning practices adopted in other UK or European jurisdictions that you believe would transform supply if adopted here?

The Call for Evidence paper suggests that the planning system frequently attracts criticism in terms of 'process', but suggests that addressing these improving these processes is unlikely to transform the quantity, quality, sustainability, viability and/or suitability of housing supply in NI.

Council would contend that if unnecessary bureaucracy were removed and processes streamlined, planners could better add value to improve the quality of schemes through Pre-Application Discussions, bringing forward masterplans and generally having more time to help drive improvements in the quality of design and place making. There are also several process challenges in developing Local

Development Plans that serve to hinder the speed of developing and adopting new policies tailored to a local context, which serves to prolong periods of uncertainty for the development industry.

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is currently carrying out a review of the implementation of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and issued a “call for evidence” on 15 February 2021. This is a wide ranging review of the planning system as a whole and the Council would recommend that DfC to also review the Council’s submission to that call for evidence for an overview of the wide-ranging challenges and potential solutions that would also help improve the quantity, quality, sustainability, viability and/or suitability of housing supply in Northern Ireland.

The key issues identified by Council are:

- a) too many “checks and balances” at a regional level which serve to cause difficulties, uncertainty and delays in policy development and decision making.
- b) There is considerable “red tape” and unnecessary administrative processes for Planning Authorities to follow. The information requirements for applications at the beginning of the process is far too low and encourages “bad” applications to enter the system.

Council has sought to address this through publication of its "Application Checklist" in November 2018 – the first time anywhere in Northern Ireland guidance has been published on the type of information that should be submitted with a planning application at the start of the process. This has been very successful in front-loading the application process, resulting in higher quality applications and improved processing times. Our review of the Application Checklist was a key component of the Council’s response to the DfI’s Call for Evidence and DfI has already committed to changing planning legislation to improve planning application information requirements at the start of the process. The Council considers there is a need for fundamental reform if the NI planning system is to effectively support Belfast and the wider region.

More specifically, the following bullet points address the Council's views on key issues identified in the Housing Supply Strategy's Call for Evidence, many of which are reflected in the previous response to DfI noted above:

- **Locations and use of sustainable travel modes:** As noted in our response to Questions 8 and 9 above, there is a significant disconnect between housing growth projections, based on unsustainable past trends, and policy aspirations contained within both regional and local planning policy. The Belfast LDP embodies a 'whole system' approach to future growth, recognising the contribution that different aspects of a development process play towards delivering more sustainable patterns of growth.

In accordance with the SPPS and RDS, the Belfast LDP seeks to locate new homes closer to where residents work, which will maximise the use of existing infrastructure and services, including public transport and active travel opportunities through a network of good quality green and blue infrastructure. Alongside this, it seeks to make the most efficient use of land, promoting the redevelopment of brownfield land and the use of higher densities of development. It also advocates the re-purposing of buildings, particularly within the City Centre where there is already a significant level of vacancy because of the decline of the high street.

In contrast, whilst the rhetoric of much of the regional policy contained within the SPPS and RDS advocates a similar approach to sustainable development, the same documents and associated regional planning processes allow the unsustainable growth of housing on greenfield land in small towns and villages, as well as a significant number of single dwellings in the countryside. As the Call for Evidence notes, this results in a "locked-in car dependency", especially when much of the economic growth continues to occur in Belfast and the wider metropolitan area. This approach also serves to undermine the delivery of the more sustainable housing growth on brownfield land in Belfast, because of an oversupply of remote greenfield land elsewhere.

- **Appropriate resourcing:** Overall, the Council's Planning Service is well resourced in comparison with other major city planning departments. However, this is far from cost neutral and the fee structure for planning applications should be amended so that local planning authorities are much closer to being cost neutral. A

significant reason for the additional costs is that the NI planning system has some systemic issues that result in it being much more bureaucratic, slow and cumbersome. A significant contributing factor is the inherent system and structure of central and local government in Northern Ireland. Whilst planning powers were largely transferred to local government in April 2015, this did not include key responsibilities such as transport, regeneration, or listed buildings. In relation to housing, the housing authority operates as an independent body (NIHE) linked back to a responsible central government Department (DfC), which is separate from the planning structures. This structure combined with silo working and a lack of accountability is ineffective as currently operated.

In the Council's experience, many of these external 'statutory consultees' are significantly under resourced and unable to effectively support the development management process. Response times are generally poor, and the Council has no influence over resources, priorities or culture in these separate organisations, despite delays in response causing overall delays to decision making. The Department of Infrastructure's Planning Forum is attempting to resolve some of these issues through implementation of the "John Irvine" report, which makes recommendations on improving the role of statutory consultees in the planning application process.

- **Pre-application Process:** Pre-Application Discussions (PADs) are of fundamental importance to front-loading the planning application process, especially for Major and complex Local applications. The PAD process is generally valued by customers in Belfast, particularly for housing schemes, as it provides the opportunity to work through issues such as design and layout, transport and access requirements, parking including green travel measures, heritage and conservation issues, and environmental issues, such as contaminated land, with customers and developers up front.

However, as noted above, statutory consultees are already overburdened and over-stretched and unable to effectively support statutory consultation on planning applications. They therefore frequently struggle to properly engage in the PAD process due to lack of resources. Legislative change is necessary to enable statutory consultees to charge their own PAD fees with the income ring-fenced to improve

capacity. Belfast City Council's experience is that that developers would be willing to pay statutory consultees for PAD advice if it would improve the quality of their applications and significantly improve processing times. In our experience, developers would be prepared to pay for a much faster and more responsive service and they already do so for PAD advice from the Belfast planning service. At present, we are currently the only council in NI to charge for PAD advice.

- **Developer Contributions:** The Council have been a strong advocate of the use of developer contributions as part of the planning system, although it should be noted that this has not to date related directly to the supply of housing. It should also be noted that Developer Contributions in a NI context are a planning tool used to mitigate or manage the impacts of new development, such as ensuring that new development is supported by the right infrastructure or that the environmental impacts of proposals are appropriately managed. The Council's existing approach to developer contributions is set out within the Council's Developer Contributions Framework, helping provide more certainty and transparency to in the process.

Whilst in the future the right policy environment could mean scope to use developer contributions to deliver affordable housing – i.e. a private developer funding the affordable housing – this is different to what currently proposed as part of the emerging Belfast LDP. Under Affordable Housing Policy HOU5, there is an assumption that the affordable housing (whether social or intermediate/shared ownership) can be fully funded by housing associations, and so will not result in loss of income from a private developer. Consequently, viability should be improved as the affordable units are essentially fully funded, reducing the risk for developers and providing the opportunity for cross-subsidy. The key driver behind this approach is that the shortage of affordable housing is driven primarily by access to land, rather than cost of delivery (see also comments on Land Banking under Question 36 below).

- **Conditional planning approval:** The onus should be for developers to resolve such issues as soon as possible in the development process. For example, if they were to front-load and provide the information upfront at the time the application is made, then there would not be a delay post-decision trying to discharge conditions.

However, there is a role for Planning Authorities to take a flexible and reasonable approach to pre-commencement conditions and only require them when necessary - sometimes the information could be provided prior to occupation depending on the nature of the issue (this would unlikely apply to contaminated land issues which is normally prior to commencement). BCC is producing a series of model planning conditions, in part to help this flexibility issue. Consideration should be given, with appropriate funding, to the commencement of Part 3 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, which would ensure that, where possible, those who pollute the land will pay for its remediation so that it is suitable for use.

### **36: Is land banking hindering housing supply here?**

Council believes the “Call for Evidence” presents a balanced view of the role of land banking in hampering the supply of new housing. Although it states that there is data existing to suggest that this is not happening, there is no indication as to what this data is. The Council would argue that land banking does make a significant contribution to the constrained supply of land for housing, especially within Belfast.

In recognition of this view, the consultation paper makes reference to the research undertaken by Belfast City Council in the preparation of its draft Plan Strategy, which suggest that “there may in fact be an untapped land bank in NI, or at least within Greater Belfast”. Page 48 of the LDP draft Plan Strategy Consultation Report notes that the housing monitor data at the time identified land for over 22,000 units, much of which already has planning approval. By the 2019/20 Housing Monitor this figure had fallen to 21,692 but given that valid consents can in many cases be implemented without any further planning approvals, this still clearly indicates that housing delivery is not being hindered by the planning system itself.

It is recognised that there are economic and financial factors and market challenges related to risk and yield which may influence land banking and the lack of progress in housing development. Any approach to increasing housing supply needs to be cognisant of this but also any interventions that may need to be made to unlock such challenges.

37. To what extent do you agree that the NICS could better utilise existing funding (e.g. Block Grant, Financial Transactions Capital, Housing Association Grant, Reinvestment and Reform Initiative) to leverage greater levels of private finance for housing development?

The Council would support the better utilisation of existing funding to leverage greater levels of private finance for appropriate housing development. As set out in the recent Belfast Inclusive and Innovation and Growth Commission Report 'Reset for Growth' the Commission notes with interest the recent announcement by the Minister for Communities to reform the NIHE, establishing a new funding model that would enable borrowing for investment in existing stock and new build. It highlights this is a timely step with a target date of 2025, albeit some way off given the scale of need for new social and affordable housing across the city.

The Commission also noted that it positive that the Department for Communities was developing a Housing Supply Strategy aimed at bringing forward institutional, regulatory and policy change. It highlighted however that this ambition will be matched with appropriate levels of funding and policy change to deliver significant impact. It was felt that the scale of the task will require further intervention particularly in stimulating private sector development, including affordable housing provision.

As per the Commission it is proposed that the regional government and the Treasury should consider developing a Housing Investment Fund. This model has been successful in stimulating new housing at scale across many UK cities. Housing Investment Funds would be dedicated funds that provide financing through a range of innovative vehicles aimed specifically at bringing forward housing development at pace.

38. Are there other ways the private and voluntary community and social enterprise sectors can leverage other forms of funding to increase housing supply?

The Council would commend that all forms of funding and delivery models should be considered as part of a comprehensive assessment of vehicles for the funding and delivery of housing at scale across the city, with appropriate input from the public,

private and voluntary community and social enterprise sectors. The Community Planning structures may be a useful conduit to further consider this.

As set out in the recent Belfast Inclusive and Innovation and Growth Commission Report 'Reset for Growth', the Commission is advocating for the creation of new financial instruments including Housing Investment Funds to provide financing through a range of innovative vehicles aimed specifically at bringing forward housing development at pace.

39. Are there any other areas of market failure that need public and/or private intervention?

As highlighted in the preceding question the Council would commend that a review is undertaken in respect of all potential delivery and funding vehicles to deliver on housing and would propose that this should also identify any barriers to delivery and specific areas of market failure. There is a need also to consider how delivery vehicles and partnership models including those across the public sector and private sector funding institutions could be progressed in a more agile way that provides for appropriate housing development at scale whilst ensuring proper integrated placemaking.

The Council would highlight the very limited scale of residential development that has taken place in the city centre over the last few years with only c350 units completed since 2015, which would suggest that there may be market failure. Estimates suggest that the City Centre population is just over 9,000 people. Scaling up and bringing forward city new mixed tenure city centre residential developments are important in not only addressing housing need but also providing vibrancy to the city centre and supporting its economy and jobs. Over the past two decades development in the city centre has been in the commercial real estate sector with few residential starts since the financial crisis in 2008 and this balance needs to be addressed. The city centre has significant potential to contribute to meeting housing need by having comparatively large areas of undeveloped land close to strong supporting infrastructure. It is imperative therefore that proper consideration is given to unlocking the barriers that may exist in bringing forward

more city centre living which may include de – risking or government intervention as appropriate.

However, in order to support the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda and as set out in the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission report there is a need for a radical re-think of investment models involving both the public and private sectors. The housing issue does of course go beyond the city centre and with significant levels of housing stress and a commitment via the Belfast Agenda to the growth of the city's population by 2035 it is clear that housing development needs to be progressed at scale. At present there are a number of gaps principally in terms of the structural models required to support public-private collaboration and access to finance to bring forward developments. Innovation finance solutions, investment funds and public sector interventions will be required to unlock this.

## **Infrastructure**

40. Are there changes to infrastructure legislation, policies, processes or procedures, such as the establishment of an Infrastructure Commission, that could transform housing supply for the better?

The Belfast Agenda highlights the importance of appropriate sustainable development to make the city competitive and to connect people to opportunities. Fundamental to creating the conditions for and enabling this inclusive growth, is infrastructure. This is also reflected in regional policy; the Regional Development Strategy 2035 recognises the importance of infrastructure to support sustainable growth. Fundamental to creating the conditions for and enabling this inclusive growth, including housing growth, is infrastructure.

The Belfast Agenda recognises that there are gaps in Belfast's key infrastructure which must be addressed if the city is to grow. The Agenda identifies that infrastructure planning for Belfast needs to be taken forward in a strategic and integrated way and a core goal of the Agenda is to create a partnership and plan for sustainable urban infrastructure.

The majority of Northern Ireland infrastructure has suffered from long-term under-investment resulting in the need for significant investment in key infrastructure

provision including wastewater, rail, and sustainable and active travel. There is a need for a longer-term regional prioritised infrastructure strategy and updated integrated localised strategic plans such as Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and Living With Water Programme. These strategic plans /programmes should provide a holistic and prioritised approach to the delivery of NI infrastructure and critically they need to be considered in the context of a realistic funding model to achieve the level of infrastructure required to enable the region to continue to grow and to compete effectively.

There needs to be an approach that ensures or helps support a process where infrastructure investment decisions can be made, and to ensure delivery on a long-term basis that sits beyond the standard political decision-making timescales. Infrastructure decisions should be made in line with a prioritised and agreed delivery strategy that considers social and economic change, demands and the longer-term return from the investment in terms of growth and sustainability. While political oversight is required, expert independent advice and guidance can help ensure that the infrastructure prioritisation is undertaken based on delivering the sustainable infrastructure requirements of the region as a whole, encouraging sustainable development and promoting the region to grow and to compete effectively.

An independent, expert-led Infrastructure Commission that is transparent and accountable, focusing on strategic prioritisation and delivery could bring value. If the focus is clearly on developing a strategy which will incorporate an infrastructure plan with associated delivery in the form of projects and priorities to improve both the quality and impact of infrastructure development.

An Infrastructure Commission can provide an oversight and challenge role and provide strategic advice and knowledge on infrastructure essential to future housing supply to ensure effective, sustainable and efficient delivery of housing.

41. To what extent do you agree that coordination of housing provision and infrastructure services need to be better aligned?

There is some alignment between housing provision and infrastructure services. The Urban Capacity Study ensures that the most suitable sites are proposed for allocation for housing and that all sites allocated for housing development will have been robustly tested for suitability, availability, and deliverability. This includes consideration of infrastructure constraints and the phasing of development to align with future infrastructure investment.

Community planning also enables local councils, statutory agencies, community, and voluntary sectors to work together to identify local community needs and integrate housing supply with essential infrastructure.

However, there is an opportunity to better align / coordinate housing provision and infrastructure services. As highlighted in Q40 it is critical that there is significant investment in key infrastructure provision that can match the growth ambitions as articulated in the Belfast Agenda and wider aspirations for housing across the city.

42. To what extent do you agree that a Housing Supply Strategy should consider both the provision of new homes and protecting existing supply?

Belfast City Council is committed to inclusive growth so that the success of the city reaches every citizen. Our aim is to connect all residents with economic growth and create vibrant communities where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed. Therefore, we strongly agree that a Housing Supply Strategy should consider both the provision of new homes and protecting existing supply. As set out in the recent Belfast Inclusive and Innovation and Growth Commission Report 'Reset for Growth', the Commission endorses the need for investment at scale in an energy retrofitting programme across public and private housing stock. This would require new financing and investment models to bring forward.

43. How do we ensure that our housing supply integrates and brings together all the essential infrastructure (hard/soft & critical) required to create thriving homes and communities?

The Belfast Agenda recognises that infrastructure planning for the Belfast city region needs to be taken forward in a strategic and integrated way, not on a project by project basis. This includes hard, soft, and critical infrastructure. In addition it is important to adopt a place based approach to create thriving, inclusive and sustainable neighbourhoods - Community planning enables local councils, statutory agencies, community and voluntary sectors to work together to identify local community needs and integrate housing supply with essential infrastructure.

Housing supply impacts on the need for infrastructure (hard/soft and critical) and this will have some implications for the Local Development Plan, including in terms of land use allocations and providing a policy framework against which to assess future development proposals.

## Climate change / net zero

44. Are there changes to climate, sustainability and environmental legislation, policies, processes or procedures that could transform housing supply for the better?

Belfast City Council believes that the introduction of climate legislation in Northern Ireland will support our city ambitions and will support the transition of housing supply in the city. In addition, Council has recently hosted workshops on the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy Options Consultation with the aim of supporting its development.

The issue of climate change, both mitigation and adaptation, is addressed throughout the LDP draft Plan Strategy. This includes matters such as:

- Better integration between transport and land use planning;
- Increased urban densities;
- Reuse of brownfield land and repurposing existing buildings;
- Energy efficiency and green design;
- Avoiding flood risk areas;
- Sustainable drainage systems;
- Green & Blue Infrastructure;

- Active/sustainable travel; and
- Protection of trees and more new planting.

There are many draft LDP policies that seek to mitigate and adapt to the climate emergency across a wide range of policy areas, including those listed above. These include housing, design, environmental protection, and natural heritage policy areas.

As regards climate change' specifically, draft Strategic Policy SP6 - Environmental resilience states: "The council will support development where it helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and is adaptable in a changing climate to build environmental resilience."

The Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission, Reset for Growth Report has identified that housing should be a key focus to contribute to the net zero commitments. Even though the UK is a leader in smart technology adoption, it is lagging Europe on energy efficiency. In Northern Ireland, less than 50% of housing has an Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) band at C or above. The Commission has identified that a retrofit programme at scale across Belfast would provide a significant boost to the local economy. The Commission has been encouraged by the findings of an independent study, commissioned by the Department for the Economy, which recommends "dramatic change in policy extent and funding levels... for Northern Ireland to put building energy performance in line with the UK's net zero carbon emissions commitment". The study concluded that policies would need to drive an annual peak of retrofits for over 50,000 buildings (across Northern Ireland) within the next decade.

45. Transitioning to low carbon homes will require significant behavioural changes by householders. Is support required to aid the necessary behavioural changes?

Council believes support is required, both financial and in the form of advice and guidance. Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap points to housing as a key priority that must be addressed in Belfast. Behaviour change has been identified as a key area of work by both Belfast Climate Commission and Belfast Resilience and Sustainability Board.

46. Taking into account social impact, what incentives or disincentives could be introduced to positively impact the current and future delivery of low carbon homes?

Council believes potential incentives or disincentives could include regulation, grant aid, finance, information, advice, and guidance.

## **Innovation**

47. Should existing buildings, including our heritage assets, play an enhanced role in transforming housing supply?

The Council supports the use of heritage assets and existing buildings to assist with the provision of housing supply. The adaptive reuse and retrofitting of older buildings for new uses provides an opportunity to ensure the longer-term sustainability of existing buildings and heritage assets. Given potential viability issues, this may however need to be underpinned by the use of central government interventions or incentives.

Given the number of heritage and vacant assets within the city centre and the Council's strong desire to see increased city centre living to help address housing stress as well as providing a diversified city centre offer, bringing vibrancy and supporting people and businesses, this could potentially form part of an overall solution to the delivery of housing within the city centre, whilst preserving the heritage and built environment .

48. Are you aware of any innovations relating to housing including design, construction, procurement, contracting and commissioning that could help transform supply?

Belfast City Council is supportive of the innovation concepts identified by the Future Cities Catapult, which include:

- Connected homes
- Low carbon homes
- Shared living
- Assisted living
- Modern construction methods
- Immersive applications
- Location intelligence
- Innovative financing

49. To what extent do you agree that the Housing Supply Strategy could act as a stimulus to improve and modernise construction skills and increase the importance of the sector?

Council believes that a Housing Supply Strategy may act as stimulus to improve and modernise the construction sector to deliver what industry needs now and into the future, skills. This will be a considerable challenge as it is the key to unlocking improved productivity and enabling construction to thrive and to maintain and deliver the UK's build pipeline.

For example, the net zero agenda challenges us to change the game in how we build new buildings, but also offers a significant opportunity to the smaller firms that power the Repair, Maintenance and Improvement (RMI) sector as we gear up to retrofit millions of homes to meet higher environmental standards.

Similarly, the digital skill needs will create totally new ways of doing things, as well as the potential for collectively massive efficiency gains through small improvements. One example of this is equipping hundreds of thousands of small and micro firms in our industry with the knowledge and skills required to adopt digitalised processes and management tools. For SMEs, cloud, and mobile-based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software streamlines the control of workers, materials, logistics, tools and equipment – in turn driving efficiency, quality and productivity.

Council believes further that to improve the productivity of the construction industry and seize the opportunity for its wider contribution to N.I, it needs to improve the productivity of its main asset – its people. This means attracting talent by offering careers of choice and being a positive and fulfilling place to work and effectively upskilling, re-skilling and cross-skilling the workforce to work effectively and safely.

Construction industry support will need to focus on the key identified areas of skills development to include addressing the key areas of:

- Inclusive Access to the Construction industry as a career for all through direct employment, apprentices, further and Higher education:
- Making the industry attractive as a career:
- Skill competence of individuals:
- Providing skills for a Modern Industry:

There are opportunities to invest in significant re-skilling of local construction companies, particularly focusing on new technologies and retrofitting/integration of environmental solutions. This can potentially provide those businesses with competitive advantage, enabling them to grow their business – including in external markets.

## Section 9 – Skills

50. Does the Construction Sector in NI need support to skill up in digital technologies, Modern Methods of Construction, low carbon construction and the whole life performance of house building etc.?

Council believes that Construction Sector in NI needs support to skill up in digital technologies, Modern Methods of Construction, low carbon construction, retrofitting and the whole life performance of house building. That this is a key element of transitioning the economy to enable local people and employers to take advantage of the opportunities created through the journey to net zero.

51. Does the age profile and make-up of the construction sector (older workers/ self-employed) require a specific intervention to support our housing supply in the future?

Council believes new roles are emerging to deliver retrofit, and there is an additional need to plug growing skills gaps in construction. Filling these gaps and delivering new skills for retrofitting will require a rapid shift in NI's provision of existing vocational qualifications.

The complex processes involved in energy retrofitting require 'energy literacy' across all construction roles, and the related occupations listed above. Now is the time to develop new Retrofit training to meet the demand anticipated within the social housing and public buildings across Belfast City. This must include general knowledge of low energy construction and skills in understanding the 'whole house' needs, alongside tailoring to specific skills for the trade or role. In addition, COVID-19 has left many sectors e.g., travel and hospitality, with increased levels of unemployment.

It would be fruitful to explore how the transferable skills of these workers can be utilized in retrofitting. For example, experts in consumer protection from these sectors could potentially combine their existing knowledge with new training on buildings and energy to work within retrofitting.

There are specific challenges around apprenticeships – and the ability of businesses to give time to bring young people on. Attracting additional talent into the system is a must – although consideration should be given to the profile of roles and the nature of employment – this may help to attract more people into this sector.

52. Does NI need some large Green Building Projects such as those being developed elsewhere to help create momentum for a changed skills agenda here?

Council believes NI need some large Green Building Projects such as those being developed elsewhere to help create momentum for a changed skills agenda here this would align with and support Belfast's ambitions to address to transition to net zero within a generation as set out in the Belfast Resilience Strategy. This should connect to the Belfast City Region Deal programme.

We would also highlight the significant opportunities presented from 'green employment' in creating and sustaining jobs and supporting skills development. We would seek the support of the NI Executive and key NICS departments including Department for Communities, Dept. for Economy and Dept. of Finance to bring forward a green stimulus fund of scale.

We believe that both need to work hand in glove: simply commissioning green building projects without having the supply chain in terms of skills and talent within the indigenous construction sector will not be a sustainable approach.

53. Are there any other areas that could impact on the development of the Housing Supply Strategy that you feel have not been covered in this call for evidence?

Council is satisfied that for the most part the Call for Evidence and questions therein provide a comprehensive analysis of the key issues that could impact on the development of a Housing Supply Strategy.

Council further believes that COVID19 has and may well continue to have a destabilising effect upon the economy for some time. Its therefore imperative that the Department for Communities is aware of the positive impact Housing led Regeneration at scale can make to driving inclusive growth in cities particularly after significant economic shocks.

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[https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/32e10909-2075-454f-8d5c-d9c0834b00fc/POP006\\_Evi-02.pdf](https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/32e10909-2075-454f-8d5c-d9c0834b00fc/POP006_Evi-02.pdf)
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[https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/e1293776-30b6-4269-a3f9-283743d9e00a/DPS026\\_Evi-03.pdf](https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/e1293776-30b6-4269-a3f9-283743d9e00a/DPS026_Evi-03.pdf)
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- 2016-based Housing Growth Indicators, is available from:  
<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/HGI2016.pdf>

[ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/Housing%20Growth%20Indicators%20-%202016%20based\\_1.pdf](http://ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/Housing%20Growth%20Indicators%20-%202016%20based_1.pdf)

- Social Housing Development Programme Commissioning Prospectus, NIHE, is available from:  
<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Corporate/Commissioning-Prospectus-2021-23>
- Technical Supplement 2: Housing for further analysis and information in relation to accessible and adaptable housing (p46-49). Available from:  
[https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/ddfb61e2-c5ef-47d4-ad31-07aae15dae9f/DPS008\\_TS02.pdf](https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/ddfb61e2-c5ef-47d4-ad31-07aae15dae9f/DPS008_TS02.pdf)
- Further details about building regulations in England that address accessibility and adaptability can be seen in Category 2 of Technical Booklet M. Available from:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/540330/BR\\_PDF\\_AD\\_M1\\_2015\\_with\\_2016\\_amendment\\_s\\_V3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/540330/BR_PDF_AD_M1_2015_with_2016_amendment_s_V3.pdf)
- Developer Contributions Framework is available from:  
<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Development-plan-and-policy/Supplementary-planning-guidance/Developer-contributions-and-planning-agreements>
- The 209/20 Housing Land Availability Monitor is available from:  
[https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Documents/Belfast-Housing-Land-Availability-Summary-Repo-\(4\)](https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Documents/Belfast-Housing-Land-Availability-Summary-Repo-(4))
- [Centre for Equalities and Inclusion - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)
- [Welcome to Understanding Inequalities | Understanding Inequalities \(understanding-inequalities.ac.uk\)](https://understanding-inequalities.ac.uk)
- Call for Evidence Review of the Implementation of the Planning Act (NI) 2011  
<https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/s90345/Appendix%20%20Draft%20BCC%20response%20to%20Call%20for%20Evidence.pdf>
- Applying for Planning Permission Check List  
<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Applying-for-planning-permission/Application-checklist>
- Together Building a United Community <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/topics/good-relations-and-social-change/together-building-united-community-tbuc>
- Current Planning Legislation [www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/current-planning-legislation](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/current-planning-legislation)
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Subject:	City Centre Open Spaces
Date:	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Richard Griffin, Development Manager Callie Persic, Connectivity Programme Lead

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To update Members regarding ongoing work to develop and enable the creation and curation of a network of high quality open/green spaces across the city centre that are both accessible and attractive to a range of users.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the ongoing work to identify open space and additional greening opportunities across the city centre and connections to local communities;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the update regarding Cathedral Gardens design development</li> <li>• Agree to receive a presentation on the emerging Cathedral Gardens Masterplan in the near future;</li> <li>• Agree to the proposal to consider opportunities to create a new temporary pop-up park in a suitable location during the permanent construction works for Cathedral Gardens;</li> <li>• Note the work underway through the INW Open Space Framework to maximise the combined benefits of emerging open space and regeneration projects in the wider Cathedral and UU area and its alignment also with the ongoing Bolder Vision Connectivity work; BRT Phase 2; Belfast Streets Ahead etc;</li> <li>• Note the update on other emerging projects, including City Quays Gardens and key connections between the City Quays and City Centre areas.</li> <li>• Note the ongoing work on a 'Playful City'.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The City Centre Connectivity Study: 'A Bolder Vision', in line with the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy (BCCRIS), proposes the development of a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre with a greener, walkable and connected core that is more people and family-focussed. BCCRIS identifies that the city centre lacks major publicly accessible open spaces, and that the majority of open spaces are disconnect and have a hard landscape and character, with the centre lacking in greener streets that can provide relief in the most densely developed part of the city. BCCRIS also identifies the opportunity to provide a sizable new open space and greening opportunities by linking St. Anne's Cathedral to Cathedral Gardens and Writers Square. It goes onto say that 'the entire Inner Ring should be tamed, humanised and greened to reduce severance from adjacent communities.</p>
3.2	<p>It is well understood that there is a need to enhance existing, and develop new, high quality open spaces across the city centre, for the benefit of all users, including existing communities, and to support the growth of the resident population and diversification of uses in the city centre. This was reflected in the Future City Workshop held with Members of the CG&amp;R Committee in May 2021 where Members agreed that the right infrastructure needed to be developed in order to achieve the aims of diversification of use and supporting city centre living within the Future City Centre Programme. It was noted that this includes the provision of community infrastructure and high quality, inclusive and sustainable open spaces for families and city users to enjoy and utilise the outdoor environment.</p>

3.3	<p>At the Future of the City Centre Workshop in May 2021 Members had asked that officers look at the provision of open and green space across the city centre and opportunities to improve on this in order to attract families, build communities and support businesses. At the CG&amp;R meeting in June 2021 Members had also raised some concerns in relation to the timeline of expected developments that were key to the Bolder Vision connectivity work and the importance, in the interim, of bringing forward existing plans and interventions, such as the greening of the city centre in a timely manner. Through ongoing work under the Future City Centre Programme officers will be bringing key pieces of work to provide a holistic approach to address the matters raised by Members, both from this Workshop and other Committee Meetings, to this Committee in the near future. This includes the City Centre Living Vision, the Bolder Vision and the City Centre Open Spaces work.</p>
3.4	<p>While this paper relates specifically to ‘City Centre Open Spaces’, additional papers to this Committee meeting address ‘Connectivity &amp; Active Travel’, and an update on the interventions under the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme. It is important to note that the work referred to in these papers, including specific projects, form part of an integrated approach to addressing key city centre issues under the Future City Centre Programme in terms of maximising combined outcomes through targeted interventions. In this context, the aim is to develop a network of temporary and permanent spaces across the city centre that complement one another in terms of form and function, and that are connected by streets and other linkages that are designed for people and economic benefit.</p>
3.5	<p>An update regarding the second phase of the Bolder Vision is included in a separate paper to this Committee, and sets out next steps in terms of developing proposals that will seek to reimagine the city centre and connections to local communities, where streets and open spaces are designed to meet the changing needs of a diverse range of users, as well as supporting existing businesses alongside the diversification of city centre uses to promote resilience and wellbeing within a more sustainable, climate-resilient city.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Providing Enhanced Open Spaces</u></p> <p>Officers have commenced work to scope a review of open space and ‘greening’ opportunities within the city centre, with a view to producing a recce of open spaces and identifying potential opportunities for improvements to existing spaces or greening opportunities. The focus of the work is to enhance usability and sustainability, as well as opportunities to create new spaces of varying size and function, with an emphasis on</p>

	<p>greening and softening otherwise hard and underutilised streetscapes. To bring forward proposals will require collaboration across Council departments, and with other agencies and landowners in terms of statutory approvals, consents and deliverability, funding opportunities and consideration of new models of maintenance and stewardship. To note also that such opportunities may also involve the private sector/developers etc, particularly in relation to lands or properties that are vacant or underutilised and where meanwhile uses may be explored. This proposal is aimed at ultimately providing a connected network of spaces that when knitted together enhance the overall experience of connectivity and usability of the city centre. As this work progresses, further detail will be provided at a future meeting of the CG&amp;R Committee.</p>
3.7	<p>It is also considered that opportunities to temporarily utilise vacant sites (public / private) to provide open space 'meanwhile uses' should be fully explored, including sites pending development, taking account of the opportunity to release social value while protecting asset value and development potential. This would centre on the Council / wider public sector assets as well as private sector land ownerships linking in with and enhancing policies associated with the Clean, Green, Inclusive &amp; Safe research, Resilience Strategy, the Cultural Strategy, the Belfast Open Space Strategy, the One Million Trees Initiative and the Cultural Strategy. Careful consideration will be required across Council departments in terms of delivery, funding and maintenance however this will not be viewed as a Council only initiative but will influence other public and private land holders to commit to and deliver the aims and objectives of the work.</p>
3.8	<p>To support the ambitions set out in the 10 year cultural strategy, A City Imagining and in the new tourism plan, a strategic and operational assessment of meanwhile sites in the city is to be carried out. Further detail will be presented to committee as part of the culture and events programme development and will be subject to approval. This will include consideration of internal use of the Bank of Ireland building subject to a condition survey and options for the potential use of external space based on a cost analysis and the wider development timeline.</p>
3.9	<p>There are also a number of specific open space / public space projects in development by Council and others, which represent opportunities to deliver on the ambitions set out above and conveyed by the BCCRIS and 'A Bolder Vision', with updates provided below.</p>

	<b>Cathedral Gardens</b>
3.10	Members will be aware of the temporary use of the Council's Cathedral Gardens site as a playpark, which was completed in August 2020 as a meanwhile use. In terms of its permanent redevelopment, as part the Council's Physical Programme a Master Plan for the space has been commissioned with the intention to create a unique urban space reflective of the changing nature of the city centre. As part of this Master Plan, and to inform the emerging design concepts, a number of engagement sessions have recently taken place with key city stakeholders and it is expected this process will be completed in early Autumn. The project is at Stage 2 ('Uncommitted') in terms of the Council's Physical Programme, and in line with the Council's governance process further updates on will this be provided to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee via the "Physical Programme Update". Upon completion of the draft Masterplan, which is envisaged late August, it is recommended that the plans are presented to the CG&R Committee in the near future.
3.11	The consultants developing the Master Plan are also assisting Council with the development of a temporary Active Travel Hub within Cathedral Gardens, to promote modal shift among user groups including the growing student population. This Active Travel Hub will be delivered through the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme with further details provided in the associated update report to this Committee meeting.
3.12	A consideration during delivery of the project will be how to offset the temporary loss of open space at Cathedral Gardens during the permanent construction works, with potential utilisation of vacant city centre lands for temporary open space currently under exploration by Officers. The existing play space has seen substantial usage, particularly during the pandemic when outdoor and family friendly space was at a premium and has been recognised internationally as a leading example of how to create child friendly spaces in city centres while addressing issues associated with underused or derelict spaces. Pending agreement and subject to funding it is proposed to recreate this space within a suitable site to ensure a continuity of provision while construction works are undertaken. As further details are developed a report will be brought into this Committee for approval prior to proceeding.
	<b>Belfast City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy: Inner North West Special Action Area; Open Space Framework</b>
3.13	As above, BCCRIS highlighted the opportunity to link the spaces of St Anne's, Cathedral Gardens, Writers Square and Streets Ahead 3. While Council are developing designs for

	<p>Cathedral Gardens, a number of other schemes are emerging in the immediate vicinity of the Cathedral Gardens site. St Anne's Cathedral (funded by DfC / HLF) have appointed Urban Scale Interventions to carry out an initial scoping exercise which will explore options for the future of the Cathedral, looking at both internal and external space within the theme of 'Reframing Reconciliation' (included Appendix 1). This work includes concept design development (to RIBA Stage 1) for land surrounding the Cathedral including creation of green space through a process involving gradual transition from meanwhile installations and partial landscaping to a fully green and integrated space connecting beyond to Cathedral Gardens and Writer's Sq.</p>
3.14	<p>In addition to this, DfC have commenced a review of the Belfast Streets Ahead 3 scheme designs under the Principles of the Bolder Vision for Belfast and the BRT Phase 2 route options opened for consultation on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The Tribeca Scheme was granted planning approval in 2020 and includes proposals for North Street and Writer's Square. It should be noted that while developer discussions are ongoing, Writers Square currently remains within the ownership of DfC. The University of Ulster Greater Belfast Campus, due to open this year, through the Campus Community Regeneration Forum have prioritised the provision of sustainable and active travel connections, and enhanced provision of open spaces both in the city centre, and in the connections to local communities.</p>
3.15	<p>Given the strategic significance of the location and the range of schemes at different stages of design and delivery, officers are engaging consultants to ensure a fully considered and collaborative approach to placemaking across the emerging schemes that will maximise the delivery of the combined open space and public realm. As identified in BCCRIS, this will aim to provide an integrated approach in terms of both form and function, while fully capitalising on the potential of the core area of Cathedral Gardens, Writers Sq., St Anne's Cathedral and surrounding infrastructure to maximise contribution of the combined investment to the immediate surrounds, adjacent areas and the wider city centre. This approach is supported by key stakeholders including St. Anne's, University of Ulster, DfC &amp; DfI.</p>
3.16	<p>This work will be informed by existing policy and strategy including BCCRIS, relevant masterplans and the visioning principles of '<i>A Bolder Vision</i>', and will enable the identification of synergies or disconnects, critical areas of collaboration, as well as opportunities to align approaches from a placemaking (and connectivity) perspective, through existing projects or via further commissions. Officers will consider the timing of</p>

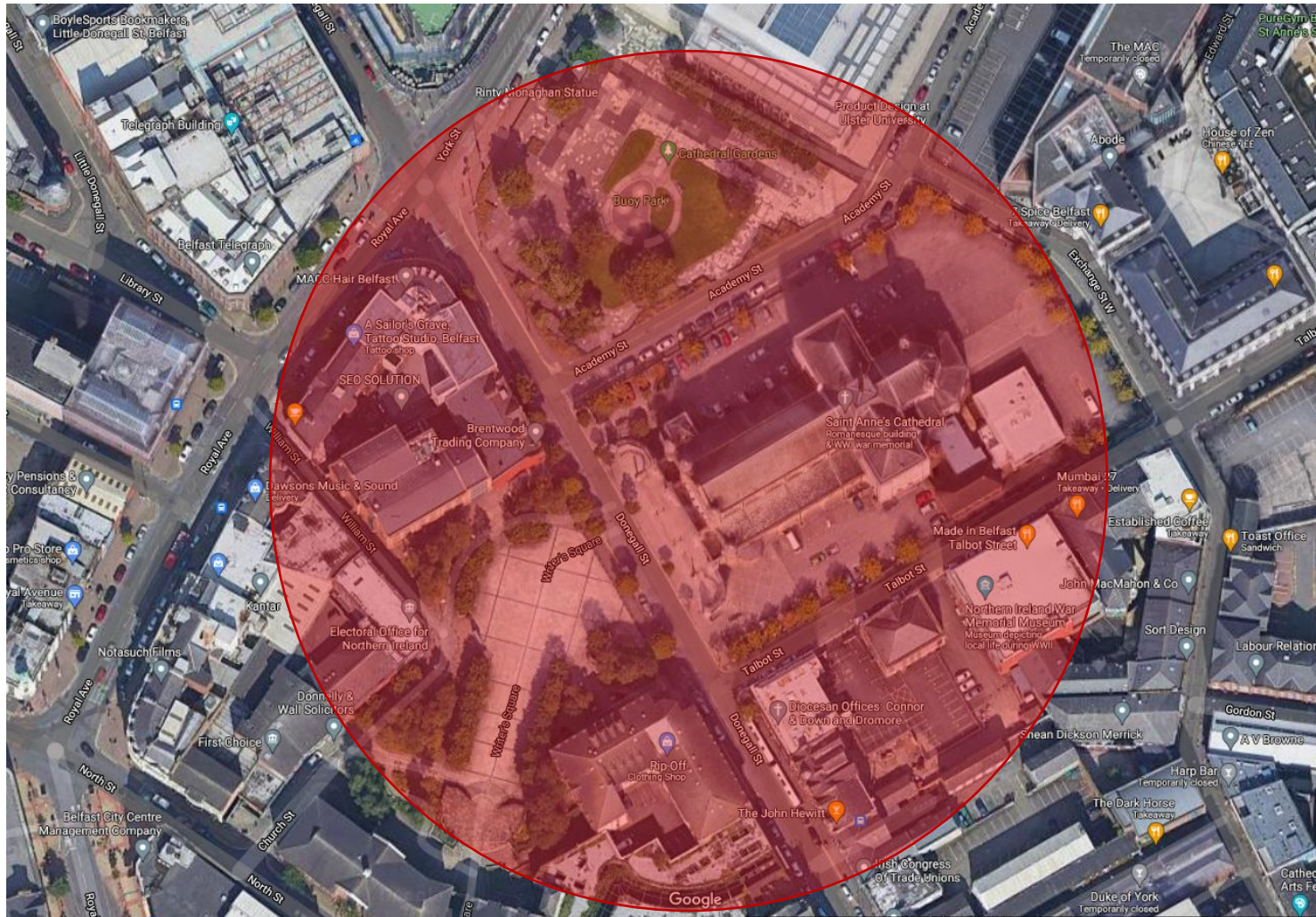
	<p>design development and phasing of delivery across schemes, to ensure alignment of design ethos/approach, and to maximise efficiencies through delivery, future proofing etc, in order to work towards a collective vision to help inform current and future funding opportunities.</p> <p><b>City Quays Gardens</b></p>
3.17	<p>Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) are continuing to develop design proposals for 'City Quays Gardens', which they have indicated will place significant emphasis on creating quality open and green space, incorporating active travel infrastructure and event space, enhancing connections with adjacent communities The overall scheme is expected to exceed £20m and comprises 4 phases (Appendix 2), with BHC intending to submit a planning application for Phase 1 (Clarendon Gardens) in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Subsequent phases extend beyond the BHC estate and potentially include lands in Council ownership. Officers will continue to engage with BHC to ensure Council land and operational interests are protected, while also seeking to collaborate with and capitalise upon the BHC scheme as a catalyst to deliver further regeneration benefit in line with BCCRIS and the Greater Clarendon &amp; Sailortown masterplan (Appendix 3).</p>
3.18	<p>There are specific opportunities in this regard to deliver wider benefit through and alongside the Housing Led Regeneration programme of work, and to utilise committed and potential developer contributions in the area, to help reconnect and humanise streets and spaces in this part of the city.</p>
3.19	<p>BHC are developing the City Quays Gardens scheme in the context of a wider 'Placemaking Strategy', which is attached at Appendix 4.</p>
3.20	<p>The work of the INW Open Space Framework and the projects identified within the 'Connectivity and Active Travel' paper to this Committee Meeting, including the North/South Spine, the Little York/Little Patrick St scheme, and the Fredrick St Junction will provide enhanced connectivity between the emerging Open Spaces of Cathedral Gardens and City Quays Gardens. These projects will focus on linking open spaces through prioritised sustainable and active travel and enable a seamless link of quality places through and around the city centre (Appendix 5).</p>

	<b>‘Playful City’</b>
3.21	Over the past three years, officers have worked to elevate and embed play in the city centre, placing emphasis on the need to create family-friendly places through engagement and participation with user groups during design development. For example, due to the multi-functional nature of the space, the temporary scheme completed at Cathedral Gardens in September 2020 involved children and other user groups early in the design process to develop an understanding of how people of all ages might use the space before design detail was considered.
3.22	In terms of taking an ‘active learning’ approach, the Urban Childhoods Report that shaped the Resilience Ambitions document as previously reported to SP&R was informed by the Castle Place pop up park and resulted in a shared approach to progressing a child-friendly city centre. Recently, an internal officer’s workshop was held to explore issues, challenges and opportunities to progress a child-friendly city, in line with the aspirations of the Cultural Strategy and Resilience Strategy to establish Belfast as ‘A Playful City’ by 2023. Council teams involved to date include representatives from City & Neighbourhood Services, Physical Programmes, Local Development Plan, Tourism, Arts and Culture and City Innovation.
3.23	Drawing upon Belfast’s membership of the Resilient Cities Network (RCN), officers worked with Placemaking X and the Real Play Coalition (ARUP, Lego, IKEA, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, National Geographic, and UNICEF) and identified a number of areas for focus, including, the engagement of children and young people in the design and development of schemes and places, tangible projects and space for children and families in the city centre and the potential to leverage in policies and strategies to support a coherent approach. This programme supports the wider Future City Centre programme and the diversification, re-imagination and liveability of the city centre. Play and leisure are key drivers for successful place-making and increase footfall and dwell time. It is also recognised that play is not just for children and supports the physical and emotional well-being of people, regardless of age.
3.24	Through this work with the RCN, Belfast has been invited to join the ‘ <i>Strengthen Resilience through Play</i> ’ initiative and be one of a selected cohort of eight cities who will become an Ambassador City for Play. The initiative aims to promote the value of play in cities and support impactful play-focused ideas that contribute to children’s well-being and development and strengthening the resilience of cities. This programme is being led

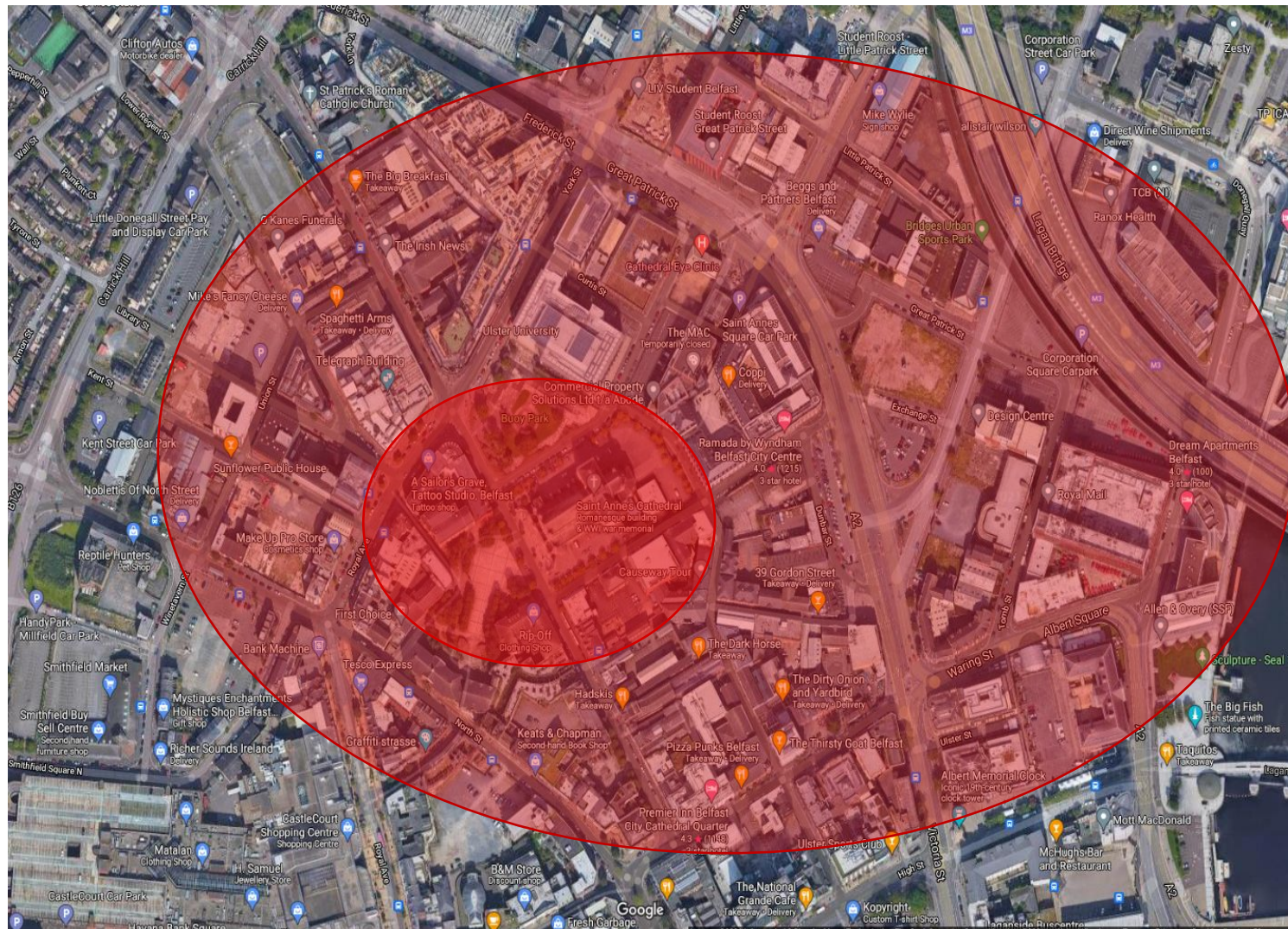
	through the Resilience Unit and will run from June 2021 to January 2022 with CRD and other officers from across the Council feeding into it at key intervals, including a knowledge sharing webinar. The aim of the programme is to have cities develop and sign up to a pledge in January 2022 and it is likely that our involvement will give us access to additional resources which will become available through the Real Play Coalition in 2022.
<b>3.25</b>	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Concept design work (up to £40k) for temporary play areas will be covered from within the CRD approved budget.</p> <p>INW Open Space Framework (up to £20k) will be covered from within the CRD approved budget.</p>
<b>3.26</b>	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with the report- EQIA Screening will be undertaken by Council or lead partner organisations as required as projects are further developed.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1- INW Open Space Framework Study Area</p> <p>Appendix 2- City Quays Gardens Phasing Diagram</p> <p>Appendix 3- Greater Clarendon &amp; Sailortown Masterplan Extract</p> <p>Appendix 4- Belfast Harbour Commissioners Placemaking Strategy</p> <p>Appendix 5- Committed &amp; Emerging Projects- Inner North Special Action Area</p>

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## CORE AREA



## AREA OF WIDER INTEREST



# City Quays Gardens Proposed Phasing

## PHASE 1

- Clarendon Gardens
- Enabling works to vehicle movement + servicing

## PHASE 2

Clarendon Dockyard including:

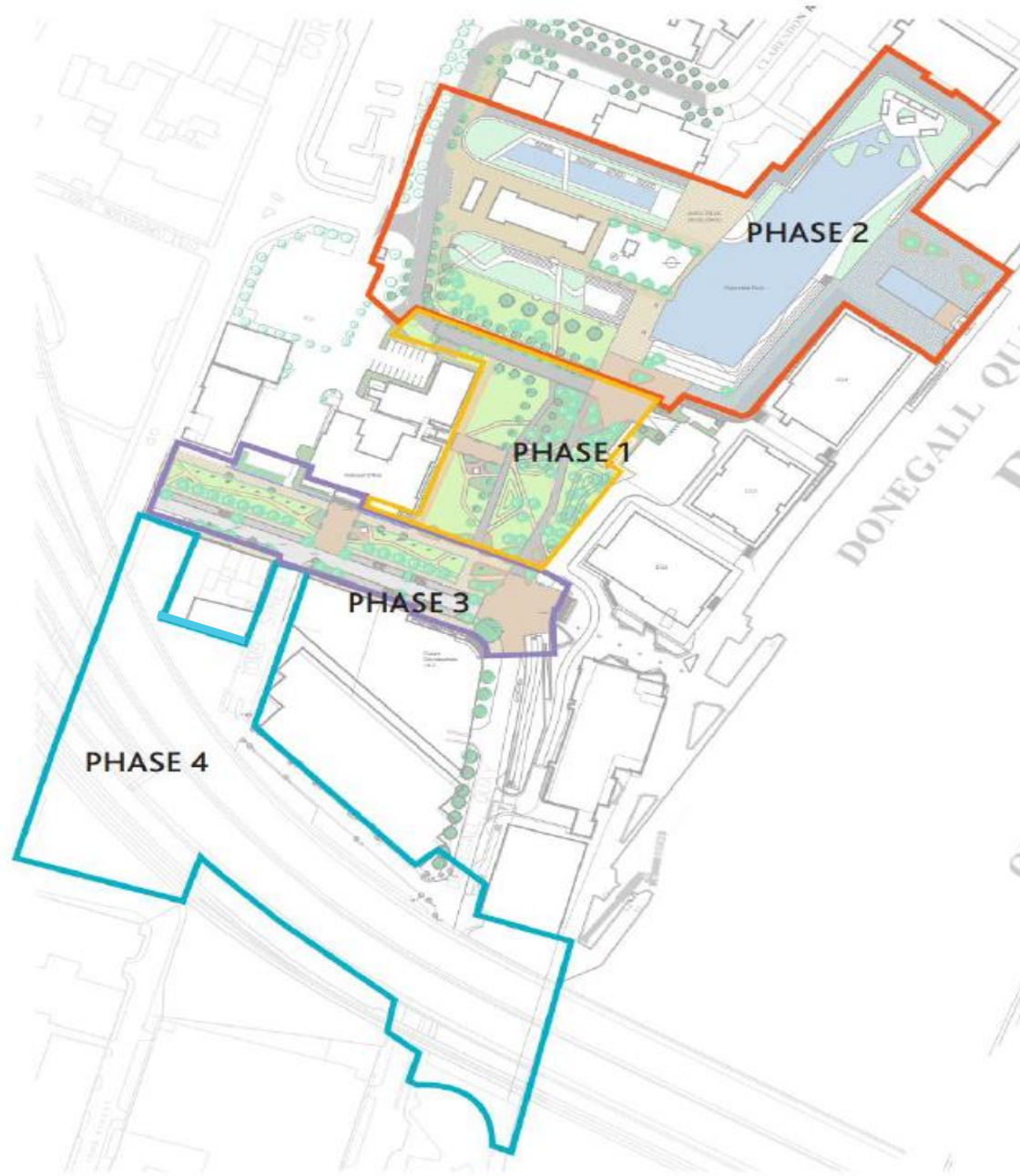
- Clarendon Dock including maritime Training Academy
- Graving Docks 1- Urban Lagoon
- Graving Docks 2- Dry Dock Park
- Clarendon Buildings- Maritime Foodhall + Pool Facilities

## PHASE 3

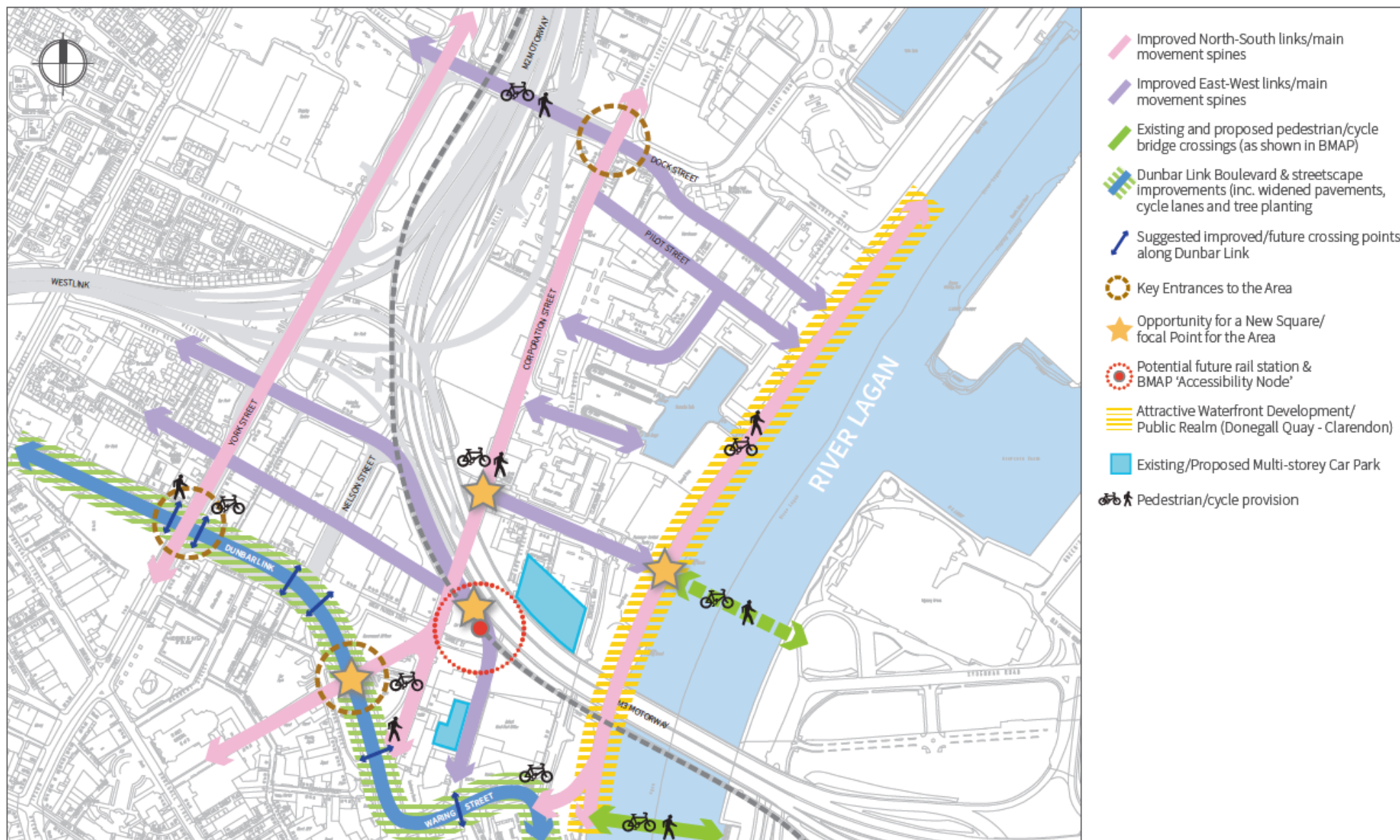
- Corporation Square
- Ritchie's Park

## PHASE 4

- Cross Harbour Park
- Stream Mill Lane Pop-up Container village



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# Connecting Belfast Harbour

## Placemaking Strategy

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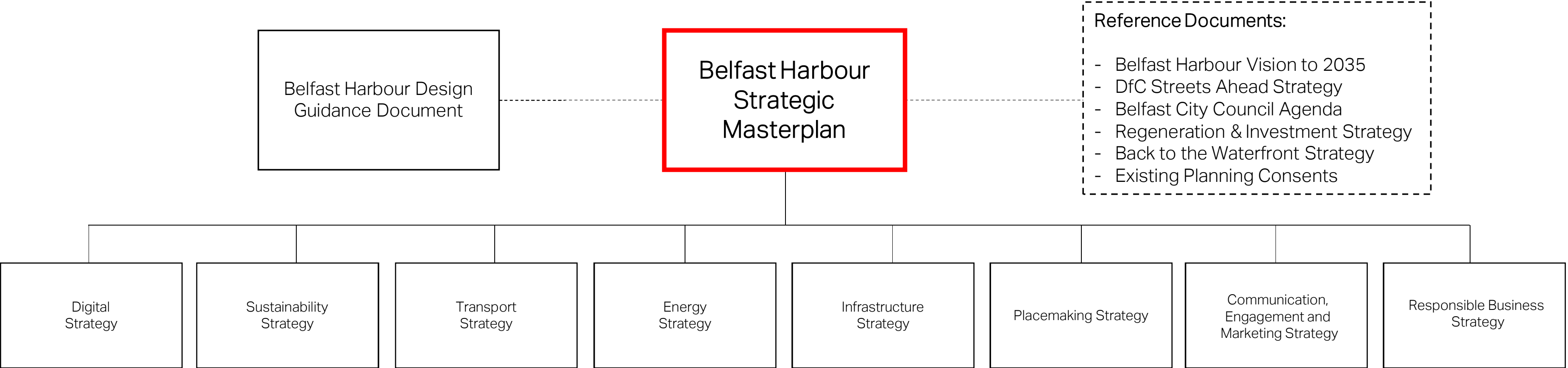
**AECOM**

**Belfast  
Harbour**

# Overview

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# BHC Document Hierarchy



# Background

BHC has a long and proud history of supporting local businesses to succeed and trade with the world. Today is no different: it is home to 760 businesses, 1,500 residents and welcomes 27,000 people to work or study each day. Five-million people visit its tourism and leisure destinations, 1.75-million arrive and depart through international ferries and cruise liners and 2.4-million arrive and depart through George Best Belfast City Airport.

Building on this, a Placemaking Strategy will:

- Support BCC's **Agenda** and BHC's **Vision to 2035**
- Facilitate effective **planning, design, management and animation** of shared spaces across the Harbour
- Inform **Community and Stakeholder engagement**
- Support BHC's **Strategic Masterplan** and related strategies for **Transport, Sustainability, Digital Infrastructure and Energy**.

Next steps:

- Engage with the **Strategy Champions** ensure all strands are **aligned and integrated** within the Strategic Masterplan

## The Belfast Agenda: Belfast's Community Plan



## A Port for Everyone: Vision to 2035



# Placemaking and its importance

Placemaking is “more than just promoting better urban design; it facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution”<sup>1</sup>

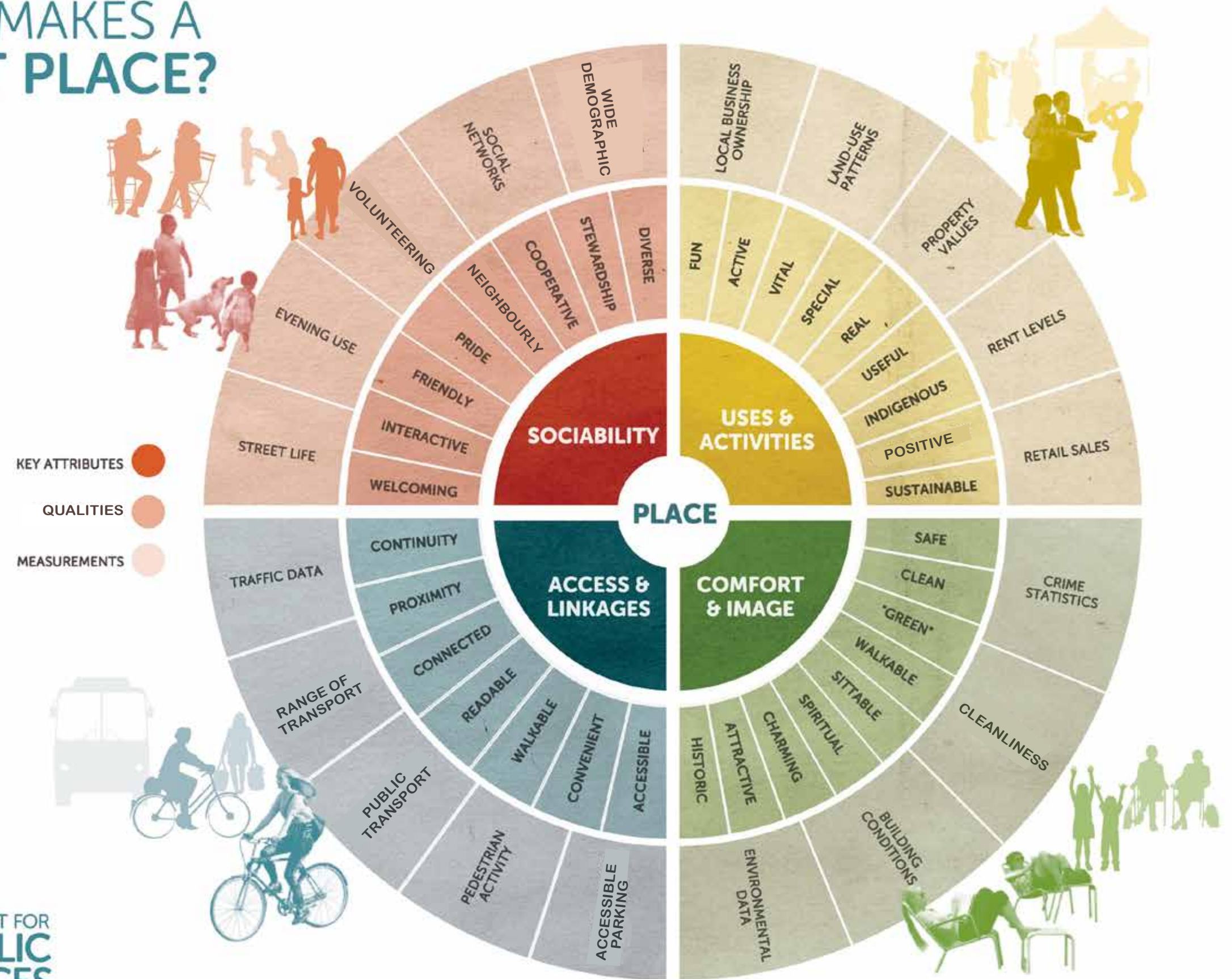
The Placemaking Strategy will:

- Facilitate a **connection between people and places** to promote the sharing of public spaces
- Ensure **community-based participation** at its centre
- Achieve **high quality design** emphasising **physical, cultural and social identities** that define a place
- Develop quality public spaces that **contribute to health and wellbeing**.

The placemaking process will:

- Require collaboration between a range of **private, public, voluntary and community stakeholders**
- Involve community-based stakeholders in association with the Strategic Masterplan, to ensure **joined up engagement on the overall masterplan strategy**.

## WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE?

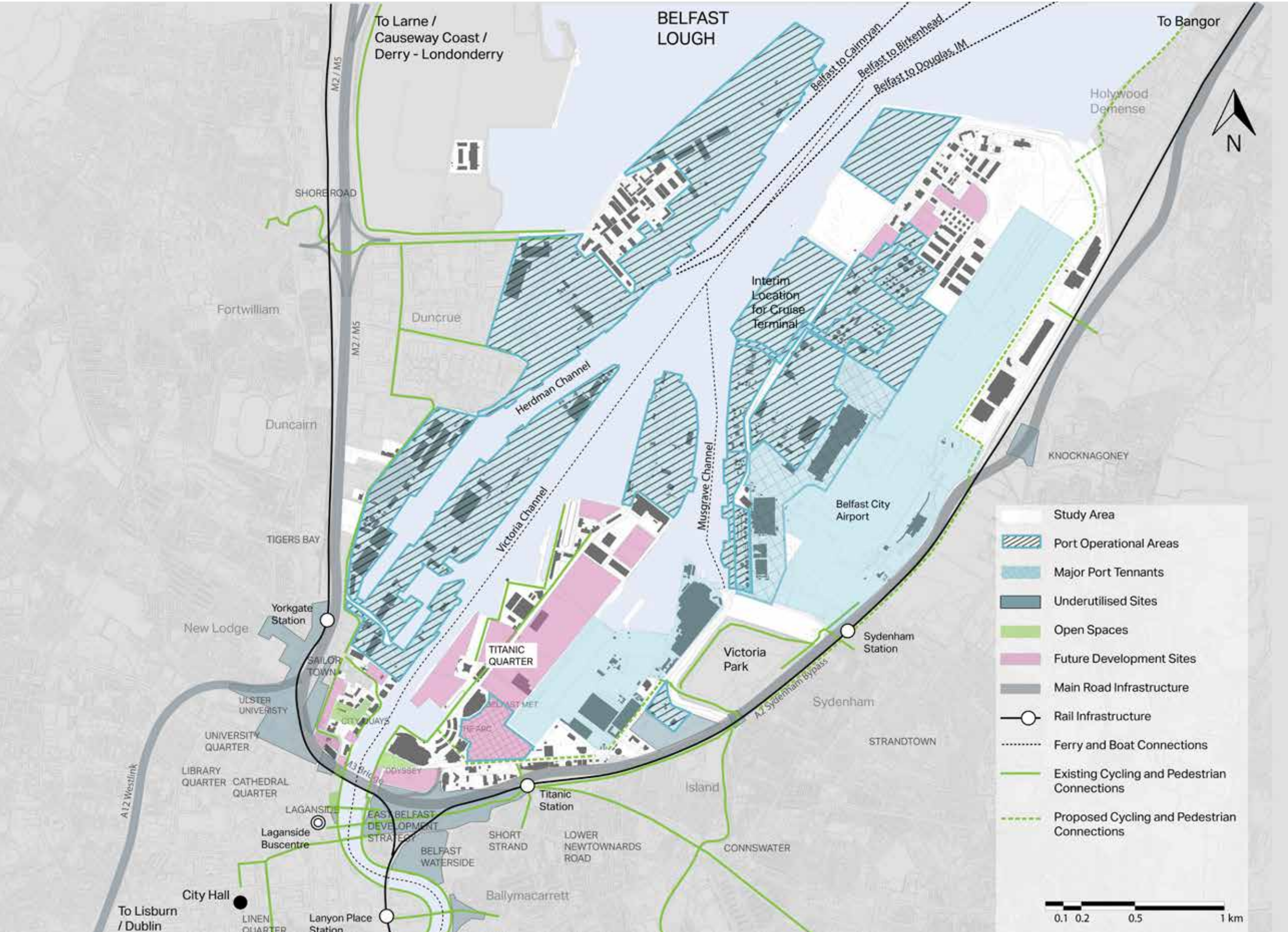


# Study extent and influences

The study extent covers the Belfast Harbour Estate, including the emerging mixed-use inner Harbour Development Zones outlined in the Strategic Masterplan: City Quays, Odyssey Quays, Titanic Quarter and Catalyst.

It also considers:

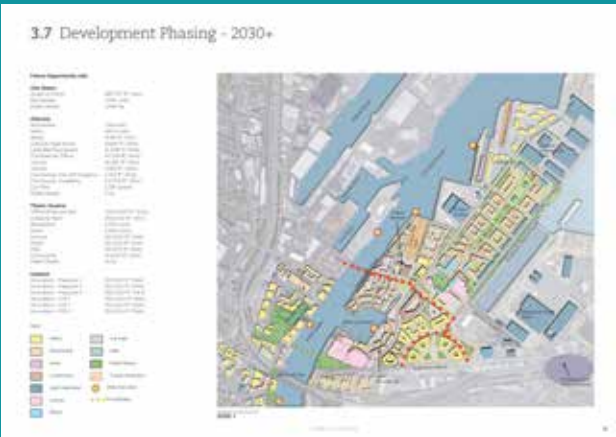
- The industrial, logistics and operational port areas, as well as major port tenants City Airport and Harland and Wolff Shipyard, focusing on **key enhancements that would benefit users while maintaining the primary working function of these areas**
- **Interfaces and relationships with key City Districts and neighbouring communities**, including Sailortown, Ulster University City Campus, Cathedral Quarter, Laganside, Eastbank, Sydenham Road, Victoria Park, Strandtown and Holywood
- **Alignment with key plans and strategies within the Harbour**, including the Titanic Quarter Maritime Mile and City Quays Gardens.



# Strategic context

## STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN AND RELATED STRATEGIES:

- Placemaking Strategy
- Transport Strategy
- Sustainability Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- Infrastructure Strategy
- Energy Strategy
- Harbour Brand Strategy



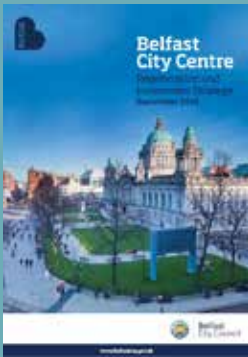
### OVERARCHING VISION

- Belfast Agenda
- A Port for Everyone (Vision to 2035)



### OVERARCHING STRATEGIES

- City Centre Regeneration/Investment Strategy
- Bolder Vision: Reimagining the Centre
- The Smart Belfast Framework
- Green and Blue/Open Space Strategies



### PLACE-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

- Maritime Mile / Titanic Quarter
- City Quays Gardens
- Greater Clarendon and Sailortown
- East Bank Development Strategy



# Key issues identified



## OVERCOMING PHYSICAL BARRIERS

Improving connectivity, safety and activation under elevated infrastructure  
Bridging and connecting over infrastructure  
Wayfinding and thresholds



## CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF PLACE

Meanwhile and temporary uses and spaces  
Space programming  
Activation



## IMPLEMENTING AN ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDA

Enhancing biodiversity and conserving natural environment  
Education  
Design for climate



## CREATING AN ICONIC WATERFRONT

Recreation, interaction and activities (on water and waterside)  
Improved access to waterfront and broader connectivity to city centre  
Celebrating history

# Vision Statement

A draft Vision has been developed to guide the development of the Placemaking Strategy - laid out under five Themes and underpinned by a series of Principles to guide development of Placemaking Strategies.

The Placemaking Vision and Principles aim to:

- Support BHC's Vision to 2035 – **"to be the region's gateway for trade, growth, tradeable services and an Iconic Waterfront for the City"**
- Support BHC's **Strategic Masterplan Vision** and the successful and holistic delivery of its Development Zones
- Be **delivered in close partnership with key stakeholders** including Maritime Belfast Trust, BCC
- Provide a commitment to the development of high-quality public spaces that **optimise shared value** and contribute to people's **health and wellbeing**.

**"To provide a welcoming, memorable and accessible harbour destination that provides opportunities for prosperity, innovation and leisure, supports the health of its users and the environment, and encourages community and stakeholder participation."**

# Vision Themes

“To provide a welcoming, memorable and accessible harbour destination that provides opportunities for prosperity, innovation and leisure, supports the health of its users and the environment, and encourages community and stakeholder participation.”

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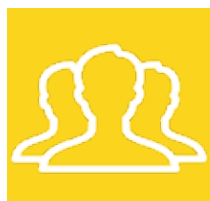
## INNER LEISURE HARBOUR AND ICONIC WATERFRONT FOR THE CITY

Celebrating 400 years of innovation - past, present and future. Belfast Harbour will be **an exciting range of living, working and leisure districts, clustered together along its iconic waterfront** - active, engaging and accessible to all.



## CONNECTED GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY

The **primary gateway to Belfast - well connected** to its region, its neighbours and within its districts. **Priority will be given to Active Travel - walking, cycling and public transport:** driving will be the least attractive choice.



## WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE AND HEALTHY

There will **no longer be delineation** between city and Harbour. The **waterside will be reclaimed and embedded** into the life of the city. **All people will feel safe and welcome.**



## SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE

Place **nature within everyone's reach. Protect and re-build** the natural environment and the waterside's unique bio-diversity. The environment and the need to sustain it will be **celebrated. Education and outreach** will provide protection into the future.



## ENGAGING AND DIVERSE

Many reasons for Belfast residents and visitors to stay and return. **Activity and interest beyond day-time hours** and the summer. Early initiatives in underutilised areas will **build momentum for an exciting future.**

# Principles

## INNER LEISURE HARBOUR AND ICONIC WATERFRONT FOR THE CITY

Celebrating 400 years of innovation - past, present and future. Belfast Harbour will be an exciting range of living, working and leisure districts, clustered together along its iconic waterfront - active, engaging and accessible to all.



### Establish a cohesive and iconic identity that complements the City

- Establish an **overarching set of elements** that unify, (branding, wayfinding, public art, street furniture and public realm materials);
- Establish **physical, cultural and social identities** to define places;
- Complement and **reference the identities** of MBT's Maritime Mile concept, heritage assets and tourist attractions;
- Create distinct districts and neighbourhoods;
- Continue **strengths** for built form and public realm (character/typology), building on existing successes;
- Work with **local climatic conditions** (shelter, shade, orientation).

### Maximise activities that are water-fronting, water-proximate and on-water

- Ensure the waterfront is **highly connected to, and easily accessible** from, the City;
- Provide a **range of spaces** along the waterfront (large/small) to accommodate a variety of formal and informal activities;
- Focus **arts, cultural and recreational destinations/** features at the waterfront;
- Introduce **on-water leisure activities** and allow people to get closer to the water;
- Enhance access to, along and across the water **outside of the inner-Harbour** areas;
- Establish **nodes of activity** around water transport stops and bridge crossings.

### Celebrate history and the working port

- Integrate and find **purpose for physical historic features** within built form and public realm;
- Weave **historic stories** into the design of the public realm;
- Provide long-term stewardship of heritage assets;
- Identify where historic artefacts or stories can be integrated into the current offer;
- Use iconic **industrial features as landmarks**, waymarkers and branding;
- Identify opportunities to see and understand more of the working port areas (**working port is part of atmosphere**).

### Embrace innovation and technology

- Provide **unique, innovative and flexible** buildings and spaces;
- Embed **SMART technology** to assist, enlighten, and entertain;
- Celebrate innovation and technology by making it **visible and interactive** (e.g. buildings or spaces that put activities on display, or creating features of innovative infrastructure);
- Facilitate demand-led activities and services (e.g. shuttle services, cruise ship arrivals);
- Evaluate the **technology and sustainability merits of new developments**.

# Principles

## CONNECTED GLOBALLY AND LOCALLY

The primary gateway to Belfast - well connected to its region, its neighbours and within its districts.  
Priority will be given to walking and cycling: driving will be the least attractive choice.



### Reinforce Belfast Harbour's role as the primary gateway to Belfast/Northern Ireland

- Work with key stakeholders to integrate with and enhance the **quality of major gateways and destinations**, including City Airport and the Cruise Terminal;
- Provide convenient, efficient and intuitive transport links to and from the Harbour;
- Create **inviting, memorable and intuitive** public realm spaces.

### Improve connectivity with the City, surrounding communities and broader region

- Provide strong, attractive and intuitive physical connections to **meld Harbour and City** (land and water based connections);
- Improve connections to **neighbouring communities** via active modes of travel;
- Improve connections to **regional active travel routes** (e.g. greenways);
- **Repurpose under-utilised areas** as public spaces to expand/benefit connectivity.

### Provide high-quality experiences that support active modes of travel

- Increase **intra-Harbour connections** via land and water services;
- Provide **safe, direct and attractive** walking and cycling routes for leisure users and commuters (white and blue collar)
- Integrate walking and cycling routes with public realm and public transport nodes;
- Modify existing infrastructure and **reallocate road space** to prioritise active modes of travel;
- Provide clear wayfinding measures to make it **easy to get to and to move around**.

### Create nodes of activity around transport hubs and key points of access

- Co-locate **hubs of activity** around transport nodes and major gateways/points of arrival;
- Locate places/uses of broader interest where they are easily accessible.

# Principles



## WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE AND HEALTHY

There will no longer be delineation between city and Harbour. The waterside will be reclaimed and embedded into the life of the city. All people will feel safe and welcome.



### Create an open and welcoming environment

- Create spaces that are **open, democratic and flexible**;
- Remove redundant/historic security infrastructure and **reinstate/repurpose** areas around it;
- Ensure **gateways/points** of arrival are **welcoming and inviting**;
- **Avoid hard boundaries**/fenced areas wherever practical (utilise softer measures to delineate).

### Accessible and intuitive

- Develop a clear suite of wayfinding measures (**information, design, branding, way markers**);
- Adopt best practice measures to ensure buildings and places are **accessible to/comfortable for people of all ages and abilities**.

### Create a safe daytime and nighttime environment

- Prioritise **sustainable modes of transport** over cars (crossings, remove blind spots, traffic calming);
- **Reduce space** for car movement and **manage vehicle/HGV speed** and traffic to create a pleasant and safe environments for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Ensure routes and spaces are **activated with passive surveillance** and activity over extended hours;
- Design spaces to **reduce anti-social behaviour** (remove 'blind spots' and remove reliance on security cameras);
- Provide high-quality lighting that provides **safety and comfort at night**.

### Support health and well-being

- Establish attractive routes for walking and cycling to **support active lifestyles**;
- Provide opportunities to **engage with nature** and the natural environment to support **mental health and well-being**;
- Provide green and blue spaces for **relaxation and contemplation**;
- Blur lines between indoor and outdoor spaces and **encourage use of outdoor spaces** for working;
- Design spaces and places to **improve air quality**.

# Principles

## SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE

Place nature within everyone's reach. Protect and re-build the natural environment and the waterside's unique bio-diversity. The environment and the need to sustain it will be celebrated. Education and outreach will provide protection into the future.



### Protect, enhance and celebrate wildlife and biodiversity

- Enhance wildlife and **ecology corridors/connections** between existing and new green spaces (remove barriers to migration);
- Design to achieve a **net-gain in biodiversity** in new developments and existing areas across the Harbour;
- Integrate features/activities to **educate** about the local environment;
- Consider the design of all spaces (public/private) to **support biodiversity** (e.g. lighting).

### Create sustainable buildings and places

- Improve **air quality** by maximising flora and implementing sustainable measures (planting, limiting cars, renewable energy, allowing air movement and circulation);
- Improve **water quality** by managing water in a sustainable and integrated way (SUDs, recycling/reuse, education);
- Design and orientate buildings and public realm to reduce emissions and create a **comfortable micro climate** (protection from wind exposure);
- Encourage use of materials and construction methods that support a **circular economy** (embodied carbon, recycling/reuse);
- Provide more green spaces to drawdown atmospheric carbon dioxide and **reduce heat-island effects**.

### Enhance quality of life and encourage sustainable behaviour

- Create an extensive, connected and appropriately-scaled network of high-quality open spaces to bring **nature within everyone's reach**;
- Prioritise **sustainable and active modes** of transport (walking, cycling, electric/hydrogen powered public transport);
- Introduce community-led programmes that **foster and develop healthy lifestyles** (e.g. urban farming);
- Weave **sustainable/environmental story-telling** into the public realm (education, information boards, interactive/art installations).

# Principles



## ENGAGING AND DIVERSE

Many reasons for Belfast residents and visitors to stay and return. Activity and interest beyond day-time hours and the summer. Early initiatives in underutilised areas will build momentum for an exciting future.



### Provide reasons for people to visit and stay

- Provide a range of anchors/destinations to **draw a diverse group of people** to the Harbour;
- Curate a **year-round programme** of events in the public realm to **encourage shared use**, in partnership with MBT and other stakeholders;
- Provide places and activities for a **broad range of users** (children, young people, enterprise, learning/knowledge, art/design, recreation/health, cultural/visitor attractions);
- Consider relationships between different activities to **foster innovation, creativity and partnerships** (interaction, co-location);
- Integrate **interactive elements** within places that are educational, interactive and fun;
- Co-locate social uses along and within open spaces to encourage their use and contribute to their character.

### Expand activities beyond 9 to 5

- Curate **night-time and weekend activities** to activate and attract people beyond office hours;
- Provide high-quality, sustainable and ecologically compatible **lighting that adds interest and spectacle**;
- Curate activities/programmes that suit **different seasons**;
- Encourage restaurant/bars to locate around public realm to **animate space and provide passive surveillance**.

### Build momentum and interest over time

- Identify **quick wins and interim solutions to transform** underutilised or poorly accessed places for the benefit of users;
- Implement meanwhile uses on **vacant sites** awaiting development;
- Consider meanwhile uses, on land and on water, that will provide a **platform for innovation and a broader range of uses** early on (not just leisure activities);
- Provide **low-cost spaces to encourage enterprise, innovation** and start-up activity (pop-ups, food growing, arts/culture, trade/business);
- Provide opportunities for public engagement.

### Connect people and places to optimise shared value

- Consult with a range of stakeholders to **integrate diverse opinions**, to avoid designing in isolation;
- Undertake **regular engagement** to help **shape, adapt and refresh** places and activities as the Harbour develops and evolves;
- Encourage **community participation and ownership** through volunteering, stewardship and cooperatives.

# Alignment with BHC's Strategic Vision to 2035

		Placemaking Vision Themes and Principles																		
		Inner leisure Harbour and iconic waterfront for the city				Connected globally and locally				Welcoming, inclusive and healthy				Sustainable and environmentally responsible			Engaging and diverse			
		Establish a cohesive and iconic identity that complements the City	Maximise activities that are water-fronting, water-proximate and on-water	Celebrate history and the working port	Embrace innovation and technology	Reinforce Belfast Harbour's role as the primary gateway to Belfast and Northern Ireland	Improve connectivity with the City, surrounding communities and the broader region	Provide high-quality experiences that support active modes of travel	Create nodes of activity around transport hubs and key points of access	Create an open and welcoming environment for all	Accessible and intuitive	Create a safe daytime and nighttime environment for all	Support health and well-being	Protect, enhance and celebrate wildlife and biodiversity	Create sustainable buildings and places	Enhance quality of life and encourage sustainable behaviour	Provide reasons for people to visit and stay	Expand activities beyond 9 to 5	Build momentum and interest over time	Connect people and places to optimise shared value
Supports Vision 2035	World's Best Regional Port																			
	A Green Port																			
	A Key Economic Hub																			
	A Smart Port																			
	An Iconic Waterfront for the City																			
Supports Belfast Agenda	Growing the Economy																			
	Living Here																			
	Working and Learning																			
	City Development																			

# BHC Placemaking Strategy



## Character

Creating distinctive new City Areas

## Connectivity

Connecting home, work and leisure with attractive active travel routes

## Focal Points and Attractors

Building attractors to enhance the existing offer of land and water-based tourism and leisure across the City Areas

## Programming

Developing dynamic experiences for residents and visitors.

# Character:

## Creating distinctive new city areas

- 1

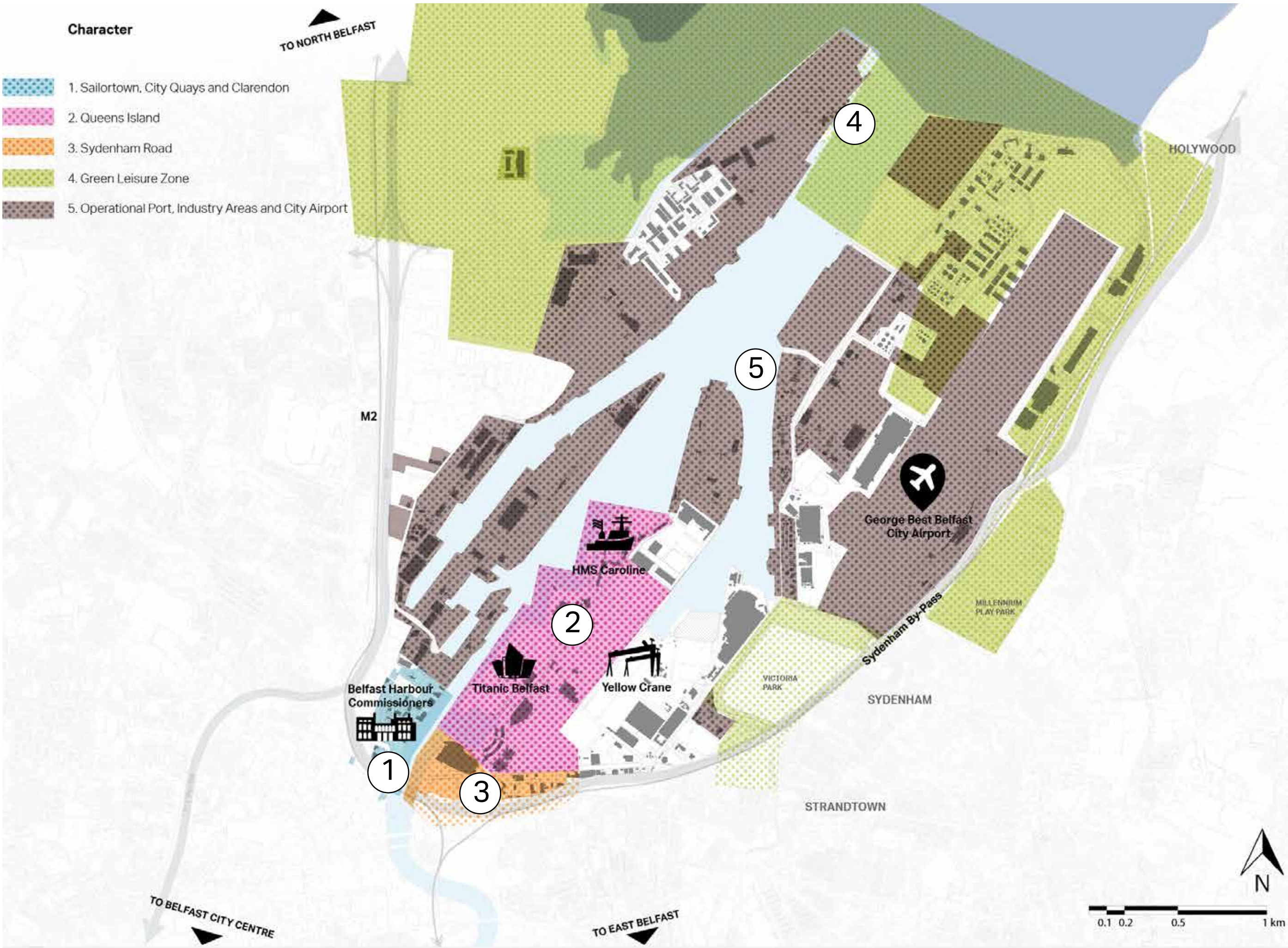
**Sailortown, City Quays and Clarendon:**  
An attractive new destination that accommodates a broad range of users, offering green space, events space and activities. It will have a strong relationship with the River Lagan and will celebrate its industrial and cultural heritage.
- 2

**Queens Island:**  
Belfast's premier visitor destination, incorporating major visitor attractions, cultural and recreational activities, green spaces and art and heritage trails. Mixed landuse with, office, commercial, studio and operational activites and emerging residential.
- 3

**Sydenham Road:**  
A vibrant commercial led location integrating key access routes to Queens Island.
- 4

**Green Leisure Zone:**  
A well-connected network of active travel routes and green spaces that will provide improved access to nature and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.
- 5

**Operational Port, Industry Areas and City Airport:**  
Retaining its primary working character and functionality, enhancements will be made to improve public transport and active travel links to enhance connectivity to destinations within and through the area.



# Connectivity:

Connecting home, work and leisure with attractive active travel routes

## Gateways:

Targeted enhancements to key gateways will be made to ensure a positive first impression welcoming visitors and residents. Safe connections and intuitive wayfinding will allow navigation into and around the Harbour and onward to other destinations.

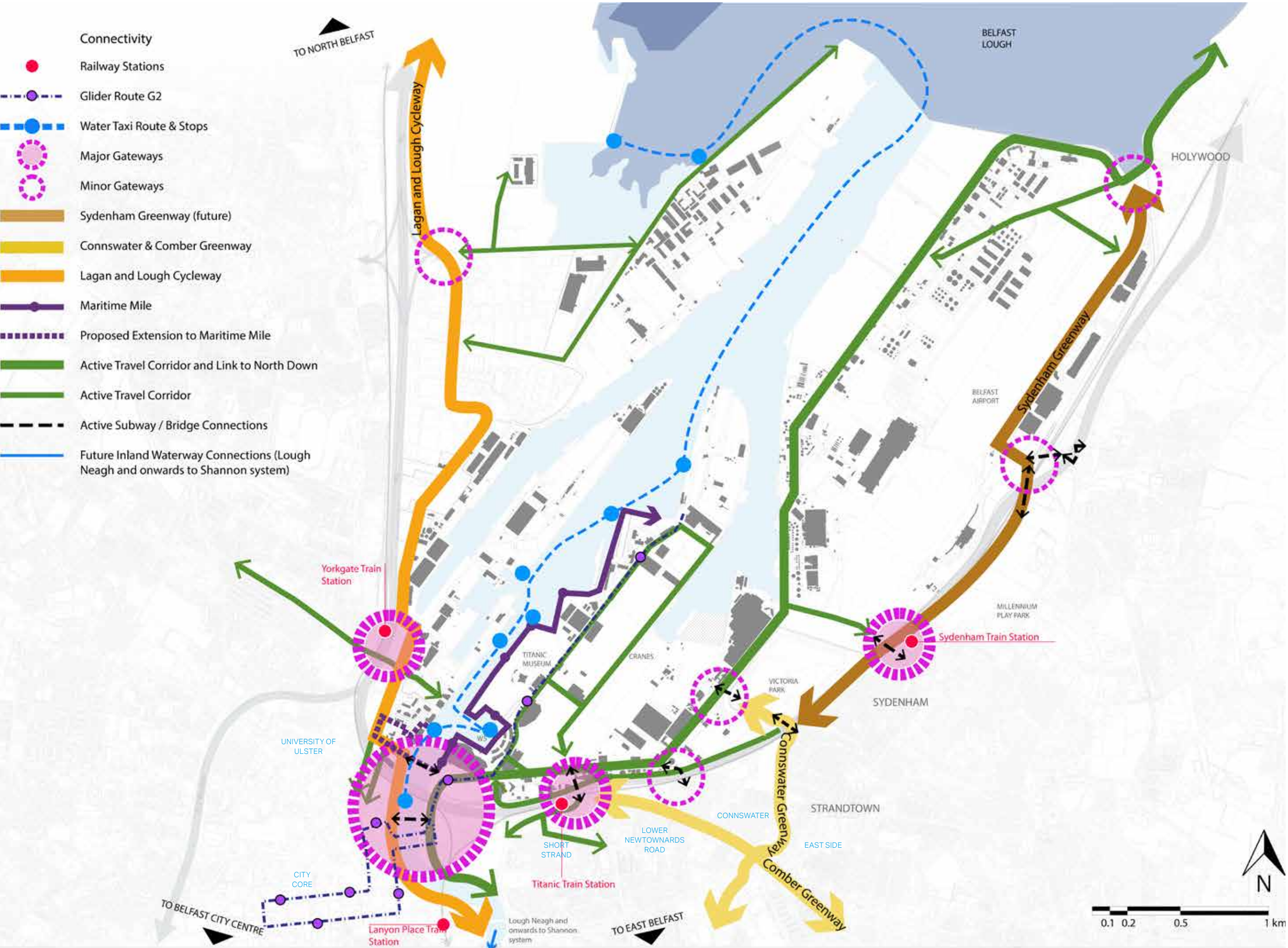
## Active Subway/Bridges:

New and enhanced linkages will be created to connect Belfast Harbour with the City and surrounding communities.

## Active Travel:

A comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes, combined with green infrastructure, will be established to encourage sustainable travel, extend nature into the City, improve micro-climate for users and establish desire lines that link active open spaces with key destinations.

Note: all greenways, cycleways, active travel corridors and subway/bridge connections shown opposite are indicative only and subject to review and alignment with the Transport Strategy.



# Focal Points and Attractors:

Building attractors to extend the existing offer of land and water-based tourism and leisure across the City Areas

## Trails and creative wayfinding

A series of themed walking and cycling trails will be created, using art, wayfinding and waymarkers to link attractors and points of interest.

## Regional attractors and landmarks

These are iconic elements that are visually prominent and are regional and international draws for Belfast.

## Culture/history-based attractors

Predominantly based around Titanic Quarter, these will bring the waterfront and adjacent areas to life with maritime exhibits celebrating Belfast's rich culture.

## Water-based attractors

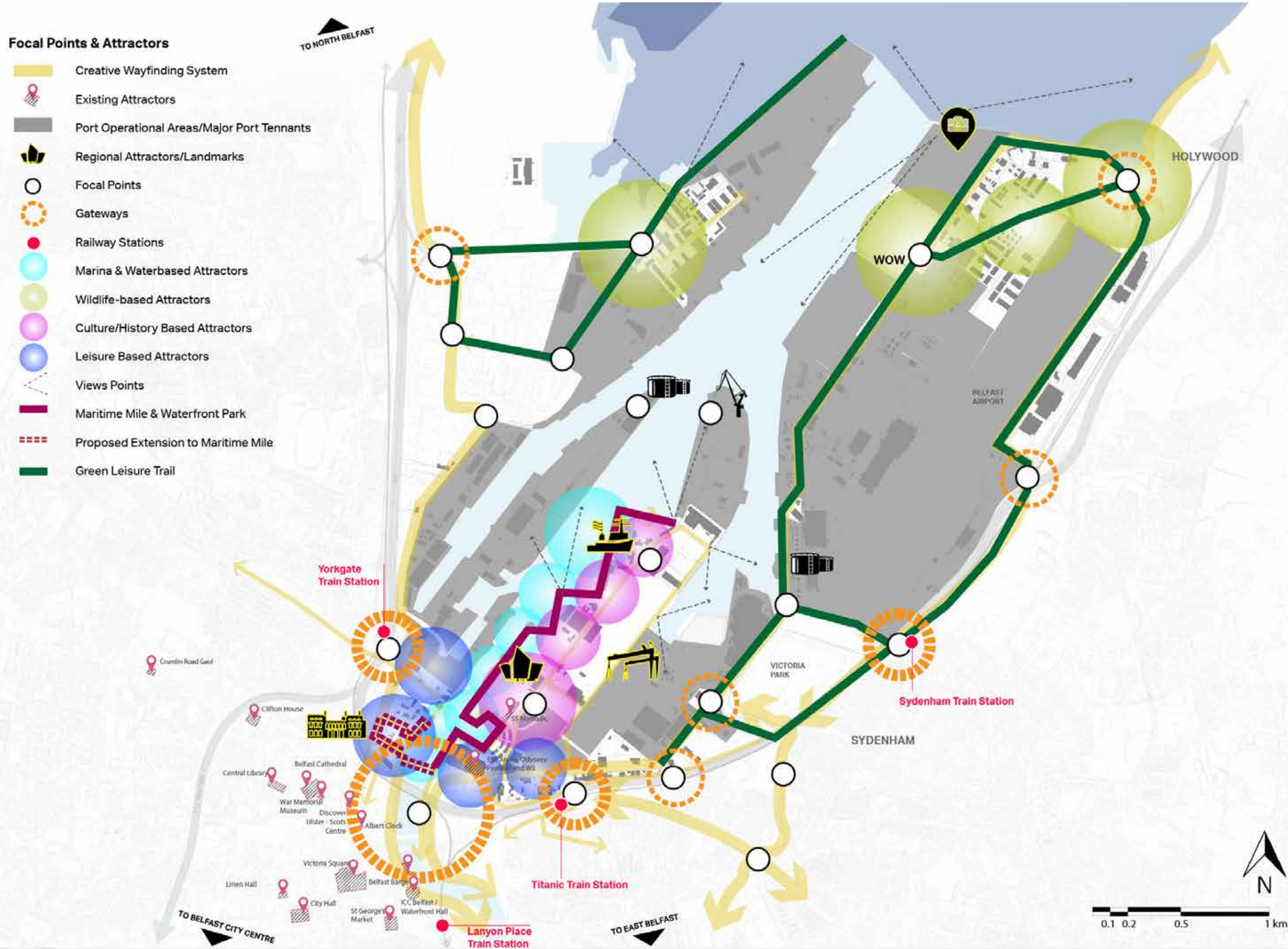
The Abercorn Basin has potential to expand, providing enhanced shore-based facilities as well as leisure activities.

## Wildlife-based attractors

The wildlife theme will be supported by existing ecological assets and extended, sensitively drawing the shore and wetland habitats deep into the existing built infrastructure.

## Leisure-based attractors

Active travel routes will lead to new honey-pot destinations, with cycle hire and Belfast Bike docks located strategically to promote local and visitor use.





**AECOM**

**Belfast  
Harbour**

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Greater Clarendon Regeneration



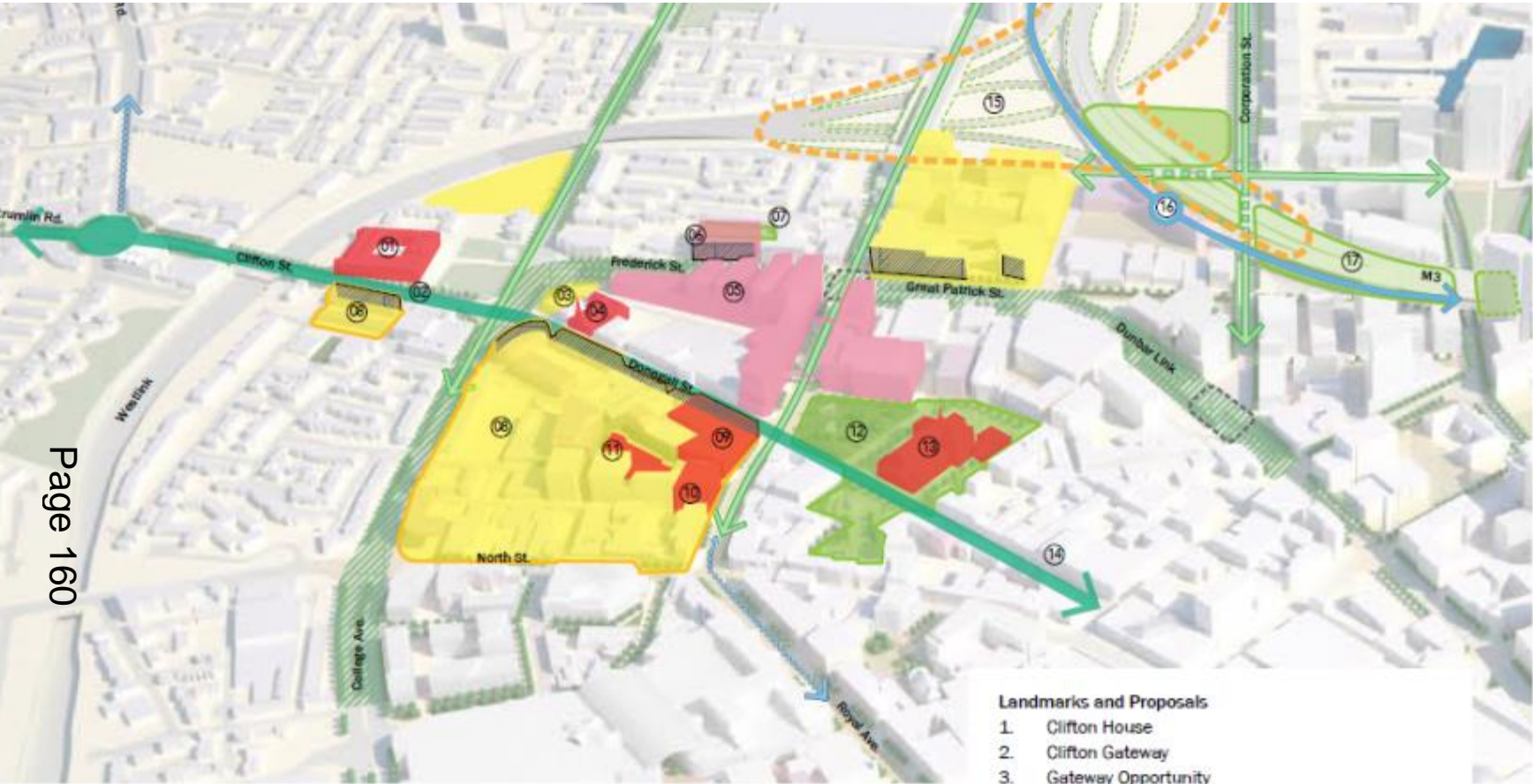
- 1. City Quays Gardens
- 2. Cathedral Gardens
- 3. St. Anne's Cathedral Grounds
- 4. Writer's Square

- 5. Streets Ahead Phase 3
- 6. North / South Spine
- 7. Little Patrick / Little York St

- 8. Great Patrick St Junction
- 9. Clifton Gateway

- 10. Potential Depot Relocation
- 11. Corporation Street (SSA)
- 12. Exchange Street (SSA)
- 13. Dunbar Street (SSA)
- 14. Tribeca

- 15. Site 10
- 16. The Sixth
- 17. Union Street Hub
- 18. INW Northern Cluster (SSA)



- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Ulster University - Belfast Campus                    |  Inner Ring Road - Traffic Calming & Streetscaping |
|  Historic Buildings & Landmarks                       |  Open Space / Recreation Opportunities            |
|  Plan Proposals                                       |  Enhanced Community Connection                    |
|  Development Opportunities                            |  Interchange Greening Zones                       |
|  Active Street Frontage                               |  Super Crossing                                   |
|  York Street Interchange                              |  |
|  Potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - North South Line |  |
|  Rail Connection & Gamble Street Rail Halt            |  |

- Landmarks and Proposals**
1. Clifton House
  2. Clifton Gateway
  3. Gateway Opportunity
  4. St. Patrick's Church
  5. Ulster University
  6. Proposed Multi-Storey Car Park
  7. Potential Open Space
  8. Northside Development Area
  9. Belfast Telegraph Building
  10. Belfast Central Library
  11. Library Square
  12. Cathedral Gardens - Existing / Regeneration Strategy Proposed
  13. St. Anne's Cathedral
  14. Creative Hub Proposal Area
  15. York Street Interchange
  16. Gamble Street Rail Halt - Proposed
  17. Underpass Open Space/Recreation



Subject:	Employability NI – Belfast Labour Market Partnership Action Plan
Date:	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Sinéad O'Regan, Employability & Skills Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>			
Is this report restricted?	Yes	No	X
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?			
After Committee Decision			
After Council Decision			
Some time in the future			
Never			

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Strategic Assessment & Action Plan developed by the Belfast Labour Market Partnership (LMP).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4<sup>th</sup> May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the outline Action Plan which will be used as a basis for engagement with the Department for Communities (DfC) in the coming weeks, in order to support delivery</li> </ul>

	of activity from September 2021. If approved, the action plan will run from September 2021-March 2023.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	Members have recently received a number of reports on Employability NI and the emerging work of the Belfast Labour Market Partnership. At the June meeting of this committee, it was noted that the LMP action plan was under development and would be submitted to DfC in the coming months. Since that time, officers have undertaken further consultation with the interim partnership and are currently working with DfC with a view to formally submitting the action plan for review and approval in early August.
3.2	<p><u>Strategic Assessment &amp; Action Planning Process</u></p> <p>Between February and June this year, the interim Belfast LMP undertook a Strategic Assessment of employability, skills, provision and local labour market conditions in Belfast. This exercise was undertaken to inform the priority areas of investment within the action plan.</p>
3.3	<p>The LMP action plan is based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A statistical assessment of labour market data and insights relating to both supply (those seeking work) and demand (nature/scale/type of job opportunities), with very local level data generated by Queen's University, Belfast</li> <li>• Consideration of key policy documents including the Draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework, the Belfast Agenda, Belfast City Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy and the draft skills strategy, in order to ensure alignment</li> <li>• Input from the interim Belfast Labour Market Partnership members to shape and tailor emerging interventions.</li> </ul>
3.4	<p>The action plan is for an initial period of 18 months from September 2021 until March 2023 with a subsequent 3-year action plan to be submitted for the period from April 2023 onwards. The current draft structure of the plan is focused on four priority areas of intervention. As previously noted, these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quickly back to work:</b> Ensuring a co-ordinated response to the substantial number of people in the city who have been or are risk of being made unemployed, especially as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on helping people to move quickly back into employment and/or training (with a view to future employment);</li> </ul>

3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increasing Opportunities:</b> Empowering those furthest from the labour market to succeed through quality support, especially those who will be considered long-term unemployed as a consequence of COVID-19, as well as the economically inactive;</li> <li>• <b>No-one Left Behind:</b> Targeting of those disadvantaged groups through the delivery of an integrated, comprehensive, inclusive, holistic and local employability approach; and</li> <li>• <b>Catching Up:</b> Supporting access to careers pathways, re-skilling and upskilling for those unemployed as well as those on low incomes.</li> </ul> <p>The Labour Market Partnership also identified a number of cross-cutting issues which are considered to be essential in order to improve the performance of the proposed active labour market programmes. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for a strong and effective Belfast Labour Market Partnership, including operational arrangements to deliver Action Plan initiatives, in particular between Belfast City Council and Belfast's Jobs and Benefits Offices</li> <li>• Priorities and actions to be intelligence-led: our work to date has identified significant limitations with the existing labour market data, particularly when focusing on local geographies.</li> <li>• Need to support employers to build back better following the interruptions caused by COVID-19 lockdown. Providing flexible responses to employer requirements to recruit and train staff and supporting the aims of inclusive growth</li> <li>• Need to create an integrated framework of provision in Belfast. There needs to be improved information about existing provision and help for individuals and employers to navigate the range of services on offer and make informed choices. In the longer term, there is a need to ensure that new interventions are more coherent and better aligned than in currently the case</li> <li>• Need to ensure co-ordination with other Departments, particularly Department for Health (DoH) and Department for the Economy (DfE).</li> </ul>
3.6	<p>The LMP action plan seeks to target provision on those priority groups identified in section 3.4, recognising that not all interventions need be new 'provision' or 'programmes'; sometimes it is equally important to profile and/or promote existing interventions. The headline programme of work within the action plan at present is as follows:</p>

3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gateway to Choice:</b> A key issue that emerged in our engagement with the LMP partners was the need for independent advice and guidance outside of mainstream JBO support for those who are out of work and non-job ready such as long-term unemployed and the economically inactive. In our engagement with LMP members, they considered that these groups required enhanced support to navigate the existing provision and identify the right support, at the right time, to help move them towards positive job, skills and qualification outcomes. It is proposed that the <b>Gateway to Choice</b> will support 1,000 people, engaging on a voluntary basis, over the 18 month period. Subject to DfC endorsement, it is proposed that the delivery model will be co-designed in the coming months, working with key stakeholders such as the JBO Network, Careers Service, VCSE sector etc. with a view to procuring the service following intensive pre-market engagement in early 2022.</li> </ul>
3.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Employment Pathways:</b> members will be aware that the Employment Academies model has been successful in helping an average of 350 people a year into employment over the last 4-5 years. The academies focus on those furthest from the labour market. Their success is due, to a significant extent, to the partnerships with local organisations that undertake the early engagement and outreach activity to identify those individuals that may be interested in taking part and ready to do so. The volatility of the labour market at present means that there are certain groups – such as people on furlough or at risk of redundancy – that could benefit from an abridged version of the Employment Academy model in order to help them find a more sustainable job role. Likewise, there are sectors where the levels of demand are significant and where there are opportunities to target those further back in the labour market as well as those impacted by COVID-19. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Logistics &amp; transport</li> <li>○ Health &amp; social care</li> <li>○ Anchor institutions/CPP partners</li> <li>○ Technical &amp; professional services, including digital sectors</li> <li>○ Tourism and hospitality.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The proposal in the action plan is – in addition to those supported by Council's resources to deliver Employment Academies - to support a minimum of 300 individuals through these interventions, helping at least 225 of those to find a new or better job. One of the new areas of work for this calendar year is a significant investment in curriculum development to create skills interventions at all levels in the green sector – particularly focusing on retrofitting and opportunities arising from the growth of electric</p>

	<p>vehicles and the associated infrastructure. We have established a strong partnership with BMC and NIHE in particular to support the development and delivery of these interventions and propose to be delivering employment pathways and academies at scale within 18 months.</p>
3.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enterprise Pathway:</b> following an economic downturn, many of those who lose their job or risk doing so take the opportunity to become self-employed. Last year, we piloted a targeted enterprise pathway intervention for LTU individuals seeking to set up their own business. Given the uptake and the appetite for additional support, the action plan includes a proposal to support 40 people on out-of-work benefits, who are ready for self-employment but require intensive wrap-around support to do this.</li> </ul>
3.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) Pilot:</b> ILMs are paid employment interventions in specifically created posts. They are focused on specific individuals that are far from the labour market and generally operate on the basis of dedicated support alongside the time-bound role. The objective is to help the individual towards a permanent role – either within that position or within another post, following the period of labour market engagement. ILMs have previously been used in Belfast as part of wider labour market support interventions. It is proposed that scoping work is undertaken to develop a pilot ILM for up to 30 people, focusing on those aged over 25 with significant barriers to employment.</li> </ul>
3.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Digital Badges project:</b> The number of people in Belfast with no or low skills is significantly above the NI and UK average. This is based on formally recognised skills. Officers have recently been working with the RSA to explore how a Digital Badges scheme could be used to help recognise the non-accredited skills of these individuals, as well as working with employers to help them think about how some current practices are excluding those that may not have the formal qualifications but that have aptitudes and strengths that could make a valuable contribution to the workforce. The RSA has supported a number of pilots in other cities so we are reviewing the initial learning in order to shape the Belfast-based intervention, focusing on how the employability and skills providers within the city might create a collaborative approach and have access to digital badging that recognises the “hidden” skills of their participants.</li> </ul>

3.12	<p>While the initial delivery will focus on the Gateway, the Employment Pathways, the ILM and the Digital Badges work, there will also be a significant programme of development work to explore the potential for large-scale interventions in 2022/23. Initial areas of focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coordination of the employer-facing support services:</b> this has loosely been referenced as an “employer navigation service”. It acknowledges that Belfast is predominantly a micro and small business economy and that those businesses need support and guidance to navigate the wide range of employability and skills support interventions in place, focusing on the right solution for their business and helping them access the relevant support</li> </ul>
3.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Bridges to progression:</b> over the coming years, the training environment for level 1 and level 2 skills is changing. We know that, at present, up to 1000 young people in Belfast are entering these training interventions and that, in many cases, the outcomes (into employment, education or training) are very poor. This proposal will look at how the positive outcomes for these young people can be enhanced, through additional support and more structured exposure to the work of work – particularly in new growth sectors</li> </ul>
3.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Targeted interventions for key groups/locations:</b> the strategic assessment identified a number of key groups that were under-represented in the labour market or that faced significant barriers to finding work. These groups include (among others) those with a disability, justice system leavers, older people, lone parents, those living with health issues (including mental health), ethnic minorities. Likewise, the research identified that there are specific parts of the city where levels of LTU and economic inactivity are more than twice the city average. Government programmes over many years have tried different approaches to support these groups. We propose to explore some new models that are either target group-based and/or location-based in order to support incremental improvements in employment outcomes among the target populations. The development work on these interventions will take place until April 2022, with delivery coming forward after that time.</li> </ul>
3.15	<p>In order to support delivery of these priority interventions and to raise awareness of the opportunities for both job seekers and for businesses, it is proposed that a campaign loosely around the theme of “Belfast: Back to Work” will be developed as well as supports for those on furlough who have no other access to employability advice and guidance within the city. This will be timed to coincide with the planned end of the furlough period, when the real impact on the employment numbers is likely to become clearer.</p>

3.16	<p><b><u>Financial and resource implications</u></b></p> <p>No specific additional financial contribution required from council at this point. The resourcing plan for delivery of the agreed interventions will be agreed with DfC and funding will be allocated to Council through a funding agreement.</p> <p><b><u>Equality implications/rural needs assessment</u></b></p>
3.17	One of the key advantages of this approach is that it will enable us to target resources on specific groups, including those with particular access issues and barriers that currently prevent them from accessing training and employment opportunities.
3.18	DfC proposes to establish Local Inclusive Labour Market Partnerships in all council areas in the course of the coming financial year.
4.0	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	None.

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<b>Subject:</b>	<i>A City Imagining</i> Investment Programme: Cultural multi-annual grants
<b>Date:</b>	11 August 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Update Members on the investment programme that supports the cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining 2020-2030</i>.</li> <li>– Seek approval for the opening of the cultural multi-annual two-year scheme in September 2021 for funding from 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the contents of this report and agree to open cultural multi-annual grants in September 2021 for Arts and Heritage organisations and Events and Festivals for funding from 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2024 subject to final recommendations being agreed by Committee in February 2022.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that at a meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 28 August 2019 a new ten-year cultural strategy for Belfast, <i>A City Imagining</i>, was agreed. As part of this strategy a new investment approach was approved including phased implementation of new funding programmes. Similar to the Belfast Agenda, the recommended investment model for culture proposed a new partnership approach to supporting the cultural sector, with the aim of sustaining and developing accessible cultural activity and infrastructure across Belfast. This investment is central to creating positive cultural, social and economic impacts for the city, delivering on our overall targets for the period, positioning Belfast as a regional driver, and creating the conditions for long-term transformation.</p>
3.2	<p>As included in the strategy, the aims of the cultural investment model are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support the cultural life of the city by enabling citizens to be active, dynamic and creative agents of change</li> <li>invest in the cultural and creative sectors skills development and capacity for production and innovation</li> <li>position Belfast as an international testing ground for new approaches to cultural engagement, development and placemaking</li> <li>establish Belfast as a cultural destination.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p>The first phased implementation of the cultural investment model commenced with the opening of a competitive funding programme for cultural multi-annual grants for the period April 2020 to March 2024. It was agreed that these multi-annual grants would cover two main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts and heritage organisations, which have a year-round programme of cultural activity (<i>Anchor</i> four-year grants and <i>Enable</i> two-year grants)</li> <li>Festivals and events organisations, which have a festival or event with an audience of 65,000 or more (<i>Imagine</i> four-year grants), or an audience of 10,000 or more (<i>Activate</i> two-year grants) by end of grant period.</li> </ul>

3.4	These two strands of funding, Arts and Heritage and Festivals and Events, each with two tiers of investment available (two-year and four-year) replaced previous core multi-annual funding for arts and heritage and previous one-off funding agreements to events and festivals awarded on an annual basis via the Committee process.
3.5	The Arts and Heritage strand of funding is similar to and replaced the established core multi annual funding first implemented in 2013. It was designed to sustain our existing cultural offer covering both programmes and infrastructure. The Festivals and Events strand of funding was a new element and was designed to develop large events and festivals that will help Belfast become a year-round events destination. Furthermore it created a transparent and open process in line with the arts and heritage funding process.
	<b>Cultural multi-annual funding April 2020 Process</b>
3.6	<u>Applications received</u> In 2019 the process was completed to award funding for the period commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020. A summary of this process is included below.
3.7	Cultural multi-annual grants opened for applications on 7 October 2019 and closed on 22 November 2019. The grants were advertised via websites, existing networks and on social media. Nine information sessions were held across the city, with 204 attendees in total. In addition, 137 one to one advice sessions took place. In total, officers engaged directly with 406 potential applicants in advance of the deadline.
3.8	84 applications were received in total, and 54 grants were recommended to be awarded across the two strands as follows:
3.9	<i>Festivals &amp; Events cultural multi-annual funding</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four-year <i>Imagine</i> grants: 11 applications were assessed, of which four were recommended and received a grant. Seven applications were unsuccessful, of which six were considered for a two-year grant.</li> <li>- Two-year <i>Activate</i> grants: 26 applications were assessed, of which 12 were recommended and received a grant. Eleven applications were unsuccessful, two were ineligible, and one was withdrawn.</li> </ul>

3.10	<p><i>Arts &amp; Heritage cultural multi-annual funding</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four-year <i>Anchor</i> awards: 13 applications were assessed, of which nine were recommended and received a grant. Four applications were unsuccessful, of which three were assessed for a two-year grant.</li> <li>- Two-year <i>Enable</i> awards: 43 applications were assessed, of which 29 were recommended and received a grant. Thirteen applications were unsuccessful, and one was deemed ineligible.</li> </ul>
3.11	<p><u>Criteria for Decision making</u></p> <p>Assessments were made and scoring applied under three key areas of criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality of programme: this includes their vision, content, audience experience and marketing and audience development.</li> <li>- Impact of activity: this includes how the programme contributes to the four strategic themes (A City Belonging, A City Challenging, A City Creating and A City Exploring) and how they will monitor and evaluate that impact. A minimum score of 30 was required in this section to be eligible for a grant.</li> <li>- Readiness for investment: this includes planning, financial management, staff, governance and environmental impact.</li> </ul>
3.12	<p>Assessments were made only on the basis of information supplied by the applicant within their submission. This included the application form and supporting documentation such as business plans and strategies.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Principles of the Assessment Process</u></p> <p>Applications are received and eligibility checked by the Central Grants Unit before being passed to officers for scoring. A five-day rule is implemented consistently by the Central Grants Unit at the eligibility check stage for missing key eligibility information such as annual accounts, bank statements and governing documents. Thereafter, officers do not return to applicants to request any additional details in relation to their applications.</p>
3.14	<p>Officers undertake a thorough assessment of all eligible applications. Applications and assessments are discussed and agreed at an internal moderation panel. Applications to Festivals and Events grants were assessed and moderated jointly between the Tourism Culture Arts &amp; Heritage team and the City Events team. This was in order to combine the skills and knowledge of both teams. Given the substantial investment for the <i>Imagine</i> festivals and events grant strand, an independent external advisor was</p>

	appointed via competitive quotation to complement the team in assessing and moderating these applications.
3.15	An independent assessment panel co-ordinated by Central Grants Unit and chaired by a Senior Managers is then convened. The role of this assessment panel is 'to ensure that the scoring of applications has been undertaken in an appropriate fashion and to provide verification or validation of sampled applications and the overall process'.
3.16	<p><u>Rationale for funding allocations</u></p> <p>The threshold for awarding grants was determined by the quality of applications and the budget available within each strand. This was a competitive process and the standard of applications was overall very high, with thresholds ranging from over 73% to over 79%.</p>
3.17	Due to limits of budget available, volume of applications, and high scoring threshold, some parameters were set in place to help guide grant allocations. The following general rules were applied to help rationalise allocation of grants:
3.18	<p>Festivals and Events organisations (<i>Activate</i> two-year grants):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those organisations recommended to receive an <i>Imagine</i> and an <i>Activate</i> grant, or two <i>Activate</i> grants for different festivals or events, received a maximum of £20,000 for their second festival or event.</li> </ul>
3.19	<p>Arts and Heritage organisations (<i>Enable</i> two-year grants)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The following three steps were applied: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grant offer was 10% of turnover based on average of last two year's supplied audited accounts, or £30,000, or specific amount requested, whichever is the lowest (as published in the guidance notes).</li> <li>2. Maximum of standstill funding, if applicant was an existing core multi-annual funding recipient, where the minimum score of 30 had been achieved under the 'Impact' criteria within the scoring matrix.</li> <li>3. Where an uplift of funding was recommended following step one and the minimum impact score of 30 had been exceeded, then 90% of the amount calculated at step one was awarded. The exception is where this amounts to less than standstill funding for existing clients, at which point the amount recommended will revert to standstill, or maximum grant of £30,000, whichever is lower.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

3.20	In calculating the level of award for organisations that met the scoring threshold and were not in receipt of a core multi-annual grant, the moderation panel took into consideration the level of turnover and discretionary factors such as nature of work and potential for alternative sources of income.
3.21	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The total requested for Festivals and Events funding was £2,431,150.00, and for Arts &amp; Heritage it was £2,014,963.50. This was a total request of £4,446,113.50 which was substantially more than the budget available.</p>
3.22	<p>51 organisations representing 54 grants received funding amounting to a total level investment of £ 2,363,264. Of these 54 grants 41 were for a 2-year period made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 29 Arts and Heritage organisations</li> <li>- 12 Events and Festivals</li> </ul> <p>These 2-year contracts are due to come to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. In order to ensure new funding is in place it is recommended that a new 2-year scheme opens in September 2021 for grants for period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This scheme would operate under the cultural strategy criteria as set out at 3.11.</p>
3.23	<p><b>Review of current scheme</b></p> <p>Whilst the 2-year scheme falls into an overall 4-year programme with a commitment for a full review at the end of this period (March 2024) there is an opportunity to make a number of amendments at this stage. Therefore, officers have conducted a review of the current scheme including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 group engagement sessions</li> <li>- 67 one to one meetings</li> <li>- Analysis of end of year monitoring data</li> <li>- Consideration of the application and assessment process for the 2020 scheme</li> </ul>
3.24	<p>Key feedback includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overall satisfaction at the funding process and systems</li> <li>- Concern relating to certain eligibility thresholds, for example turnover and beneficiaries given the impact of COVID-19</li> <li>- Greater parity between Arts and Heritage upper grant limit (£30,000) and Festival and Events (£50,000) upper grant limit</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concerns that 4-year and 2-year tiers create a hierarchy within the cultural sector in the city</li> </ul>
3.25	<p>In response to this feedback and based on an analysis of available information a number of amendments are proposed. These have also been informed by a review of the quality of applications received as part of the 2020 funding scheme including information relating to unsuccessful or ineligible application in order to better understand barriers to accessing multi-annual grants.</p>
3.26	<p>The proposed changes are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lowering the turnover threshold from £100,000 to £60,000 to reflect how baselines have changed due to COVID-19. Consideration was given to requesting baselines relating to pre-COVID-19 period however this was felt to disadvantage new organisations or those that had continued to develop.</li> </ul>
3.27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The requirement to have a full-time equivalent staff member for the delivery of an event or festival is adapted so that this resource can be within a partner organisation where there is a clear legal relationship and where a commitment to delivering the Festival or Event can be demonstrated and measured.</li> <li>- Inclusion of digital audiences as part of beneficiaries - both baselines and targets.</li> <li>- Strengthening of criteria relating to sustainability (in particular environmental practices) and accessibility.</li> <li>- Integration of criteria relating to proposals for Year of Culture to streamline process for applicants. This will be subject to a separate assessment and approvals process however is an efficient method for organisations to present information to Council.</li> </ul>
3.28	<p><b>Proposed process</b></p> <p>It is therefore recommended that the amendments above are made to the scheme and that it opens in September 2021 and closes in November 2021. An extensive assessment process will be undertaken as outlined at 3.13. Final recommendations for funding will be presented to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in February 2022. Engagement with the sector will be sustained throughout the application process including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Group Advice Clinics facilitated by the Central Grants Unit and Culture and Tourism team offering information and guidance.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In addition, officers will offer one to one meetings to any organisation considering applying to the scheme. Organisations who have applied to previous schemes will be offered detailed feedback on their applications.</li> </ul>
3.29	<p><b><u>Other Forms of Investment</u></b></p> <p>It is important to note that Cultural multi-annual grants (CMAG) are only one form of funding provided by the Council to support cultural development in the city. As part of A <i>City Imagining</i> other schemes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Festivals Fund – while this did not operate in 20/21 due to COVID-19, a letter of offer has now been received from Department for Communities and this scheme will launch in October 2021.</li> <li>- Pathfinder Awards – for organisations not in receipt of core funding from any public sector body.</li> <li>- Creative Bursaries – to support individuals who have clear career development paths aligned to the priorities of the cultural strategy.</li> <li>- Project Funding – during COVID-19 this has been replaced by transition funding for organisations who had lost core funding. This scheme will be re-introduced in due course.</li> </ul>
3.30	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are currently no financial implications to this report. Final recommendations will be subject to Committee approval and confirmation of departmental budgets for 2022-23.</p>
3.31	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Assessment was carried out for the Cultural Strategy. An equality screening was completed on the Investment Model including multi-annual grants which has been screened out with mitigating actions. Mitigating actions include: monitoring key population indicators and programme performance measures, in particular participation and attendance by disabled people; consider additional support and for sector-wide audience development of under-engaged audiences, in particular disabled people and older people; people and groups where there is evidence of additional barriers, such as LGBTQ+ and carers, and people with multiple identities; promotion and implementation of the council's Inclusive Events Guide for outdoor events and cultural festivals.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None



Subject:	The Zoo – Q1 (Apr-June) Performance Update Report
Date:	11 August 2021
Reporting Officer:	Jacqui Wilson, Business Manager
Contact Officer:	Alyn Cairns, Zoo Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update in regard to the Zoo performance during Q1 (Apr-June) of the 2021-22 financial year.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the Zoo performance update report for the period April – June 2021.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>

3.1	<p>To ensure that City Growth and Regeneration Committee is regularly updated in regard to performance at the Zoo, Members are updated on a quarterly basis across the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor Services</li> <li>• Education Services</li> <li>• Animal Collection</li> <li>• Marketing &amp; Events, and</li> <li>• Financial performance.</li> </ul>
3.2	<p><b><u>Visitor Services</u></b></p> <p>The zoo remained closed to the public at the start of Q1 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and reopened on 30 April as an outdoor attraction only. A takeaway catering service, operated by franchise partner, USEL, was provided in the zoo's small Treetop Café located the top of the zoo. Indoor animal houses (excluding the Rainforest House) reopened to the public on 24 May.</p>
3.3	<p>The zoo has implemented a range of health and safety measures in line with Covid-19 requirements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily capacity on visitor numbers (2475)</li> <li>• Essential online booking</li> <li>• Recommended one-way system signposted around the zoo</li> <li>• Safety signage and floor markings highlighting requirement for social distancing and hand hygiene</li> <li>• Protective screens in place at staff contact points</li> <li>• Advise wearing of face coverings in indoor public areas e.g. animal houses</li> </ul>
3.4	<p>Several zoo initiatives remained unavailable during Q1 due to health and safety requirements. These included keeper talks, animal feeding experiences, keeper experiences, education services, Friends of the Zoo volunteering and indoor hospitality.</p>
3.5	<p>Upon reopening at the end of April, the zoo saw significant visitor demand with the majority of weekends throughout May and June being fully booked. During Q1 the zoo welcomed 84k visitors over the two-month period it was open. This is an increase of 54% compared to average number of visitors (May-June) since 2014. This is further impressive due to the daily capacity in place.</p>

3.6	The requirement of advance booking has helped with increased visitor demand, as people are planning in advance and are committed to visiting the zoo on their selected date. The zoo intends to keep this, in at least some form, even when Covid-19 restrictions are reduced or removed in future.
3.7	<p><b><u>Education Services</u></b></p> <p>The zoo has a small education team with two staff members. Due to limited staff resources and the impact of Covid-19 restrictions, a normal education service was not available during Q1. School groups were accommodated on a reduced basis with self-guided visits only available.</p>
3.8	<p><b><u>Animal Collection / Welfare</u></b></p> <p>The zoo celebrated the birth of five Fijian banded baby iguanas which hatched in early January, marking the first new addition to the zoo of 2021. The iguanas' arrival is particularly special as they are a critically endangered species and a welcome addition to the European Breeding Programme. The Fijian banded iguana is found on several of the Fiji Islands. This stunning species faces a very uncertain future due to habitat destruction, illegal trade, and competition from introduced evasive species. This is a great achievement in such a short space of time as this species is difficult to breed. Providing the right breeding conditions has been crucial for the animal care team.</p>
3.9	In September 1984 Belfast Zoo proudly unveiled its most exciting exhibit area of the time: namely an aquatic habitat featuring underwater viewing that houses sealions and penguins. This exhibit affords visitors a fascinating view of sealions swimming and penguins "flying" underwater. It was the first pool in Britain to have underwater viewing. In 1985 the Californian Marine Mammal Rehabilitation Centre offered Belfast Zoo three California sealions, two of which had lost their sight. These animals lived and bred successfully at the zoo for many years and today our current sealion group and habitat is still one of the most popular areas in the zoo.
3.10	In 2021, a health and safety refurbishment of Belfast Zoo's sea lion pool within the aquatic habitat was completed with fresh water being changed to saline water. Research has shown that this kind of system enhances the welfare of the animals as it provides a more natural environment. The underwater viewing area of the sealions had been closed before the refurbishment. An upgraded water treatment system was installed and has vastly improved general water quality and energy efficiency. It provides a much more enhanced

3.11

visual experience through the underwater viewing which was reopened at the delight of our visitors with lots of positive comments being generated on our social media.

3.12

Zoo visitors were fortunate to view the live birth of a giraffe calf, Ballysheen, at the end of May.

Births

Animal	Number
Mammals	1
Birds	0
Reptiles	3

3.13

Deaths

	Natural Causes	Medical	Accidental
Mammals	3	1	0
Birds	1	0	0
Reptiles	0	0	0

3.14

Transfers In (from other facilities)

Animal	Number
Mammals	0
Birds	0
Reptiles	0

3.15

Transfers Out (to other facilities)

Animal	Number
Mammals	0
Birds	0
Reptiles	0

\*This does not include amphibians, colony species and invertebrates.

\*\*This does not include neonatal deaths - animal deaths up to 30 days old.

3.16

Marketing & Events

Marketing focus during Q1 was heavily focused on generating awareness that the zoo was ‘Now Open’ following a sustained period of closure due to the pandemic. The relevant health and safety measures in place supported this key message which were communicated through the zoo’s website, social media channels and e-newsletters.

3.17

The zoo was accredited as ‘Good to Go’ through the UK-wide industry scheme for tourism and hospitality businesses.

3.18	The zoo promoted its new Changing Places facility for visitors with disabilities and reopened its sea lion viewing window which was closed to the public for several years.
3.19	The zoo launched its Amazon Wish List which allows supporters to purchase and donate enrichment items which are posted directly to the zoo. This was a huge success and generated items valued at over £1k within a matter of weeks.
3.20	The zoo welcomed several babies during Q1 including the birth of a giraffe calf, Ballysheen, in front of hundreds of visitors, a critically endangered bongo and six Madagascar tree boas. Baby news is communicated through the zoo's digital channels and is always well received by zoo supporters. An increase in visitor numbers followed the news of the giraffe calf.
3.21	The zoo's marketing capacity has been reduced by 50% this year following postponement of industrial placements across the Council, leaving just one staff member in post. The zoo's annual Photography Competition did not take place as normal and no events took place during Q1 due to the focus on operational recovery.
3.22	The zoo currently has over 60k followers on Facebook, over 18k on Instagram, over 7k on Twitter and over 1k on YouTube.
3.23	The zoo is rated 4/5 on TripAdvisor and is rated #3 on things to do in Newtownabbey.
	<b><u>Financial performance</u></b>
3.24	At the end of Q1 income was £997k which was £245k above budgeted income.
3.25	Income has been generated primarily through admission, followed by retail, key commercial products and franchise concessions. Several commercial products including animal experiences/ Keeper for a Day/ birthday parties have been unavailable due to Covid-19 restrictions and have not generated income.
3.26	Retail income was £205k which was £66k above budget. Retail as a % of income has increased from around 20% to 26% which is understandable considering other commercial products haven't been on sale.
3.27	Income from membership has been positive, generating £23k income.

3.28	No catering commissions have been received yet for this financial year, as the commission threshold has not been met. However, the zoo's photography commission has seen increased demand and generated over £5k income for the zoo in Q1.
3.29	Zoo net expenditure at the end of Q1 is £241k. This is lower than the budget by £309k as the Zoo continues to work hard to reduce costs where possible. Net expenditure for the same period last year was £563k.
3.30	Cost saving measures include staff furlough reduction in marketing spend and continued efficiencies in animal feeds, all of which contributed to this positive position.
3.31	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>The net expenditure at Q1 is £309k under budget. The zoo has reduced expenditure where possible while closed to the public and recovery, and customer demand has increased income in comparison to recent years.</p> <p>Currently the zoo is forecasting to be under budget by approximately £120k by year end.</p>
3.32	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	None.



Subject:	DfC Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme Update
Date:	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development John Greer, Director, Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development Lisa Toland, Senior Manager, Economy

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To update Members on the progress of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and to seek approvals to proceed with the recommendations regarding reallocation of budget lines within the overall programme.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the updates on the DfC Revitalisation Programme projects contained within this paper and the continued importance of the use of streets and spaces to assist</li> </ul>

	<p>businesses and communities as part of a wider programme of work focused on Reimagining the Public Realm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To note the challenges and risk around delays in delivery, the request to DfC for an extension and the agreement, via a Letter of Variance process, to extend funding spend period to March 2022.</li> <li>• To note the outcome of the Castle Place Hub procurement, with project costs now exceeding the current budget allocated;</li> <li>• To note the DfI commitment to 100% funding Adelaide Street project and the proposed condition to reallocate Adelaide Street budget of £100,000 to Castle Place Hub scheme.</li> <li>• To note the £45,000 underspend of the Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area following a procurement exercise and agree to reallocate this underspend to Castle Place Hub project.</li> <li>• To agree that any further underspends realised are utilised to meet any additional cost increases on previously agreed and committed projects.</li> <li>• To note the progress made with the E-cargo bike pilot and the appointment of a suitable operator to carry out the pilot project.</li> <li>• To note the progress of the Covid-19 Business Grant, the potential underspend and to approve the reallocation of underspend to the overall Revitalisation Programme budget.</li> <li>• To note the current position regarding the Business Cluster and Community grant scheme and the ratified decision at full Council 1 July to allocate Council monies towards the remaining applications (subject to the applications due diligence process).</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The CG&amp;R Committee have received regular updates and provided approvals relating to the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme - a £4.039m programme funded via DfC to bring forward and deliver a range of economic, cultural and physical interventions to support businesses to trade efficiently during the Covid-19 restrictions and to maximise and create more outdoor space for businesses. To date a total of £2.250m has been spent or directly allocated to delivery partners up to the end of June 2021. The following sections provide an outline of certain works still in progress and programme challenges, with Appendix 1 Table providing a summary overview of the overall programme.</p>
3.2	<p>To date, some eight interventions/projects have been completed including marketing, branding, public safety messaging and communication activity; animation activity; revenue funding support for additional street cleansing and neighbourhood safety; and the</p>

	<p>replacement of the Belfast Bikes fleet with 450 new smart bikes. The first of the physical interventions completed and recently launched by the Lord Mayor and Department for Infrastructure Minister was the Linen Quarter parklet (see Appendix 2 photos). This new 10m parklet, located on the corner of Linenhall Street and Clarence Street, provides improved and enhanced outdoor green, social space and bike racks. This parklet is the first of a number of new place-making and outdoor spaces across the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) areas that we are working in partnership with the BIDs, DfI and other city stakeholders to deliver.</p>
3.3	<p>While much progress has been made and work continues to progress at pace across a number of strands, there are however challenges and risks to achieving the current programme deadline of September 2021. A key factor in the delay in progressing with a number of projects is the dependency of Council on external factors such as the reliance on DfI Statutory approvals and /or DfI enabling works delivery timeframes. As much of the physical public realm, parklet, and streetscape type interventions are on adopted pavements and roads this requires DfI consent or have elements of enabling works that require DfI delivery of the civils works elements. Ongoing delays have also resulted in the realisation of increases in contractor/supplier costs, increased lead-in times for delivery items, and limitations in contractor availability. Officers have taken a partnership approach to delivering many of the physical measures, and therefore are reliant on partner capacity and resources to support this partnership working at a time when many partners are stretched.</p>
3.4	<p>Given the expected delays in delivery in a number of interventions, officers requested an extension to the DfC Contract for Funding programme completion timeframe from September 2021 to March 2022. DfC have issued notice of their agreement to extend the completion timeframe in line with this request and will issue the associated Letter of Variance in the coming weeks.</p>
3.5	<p>As above, we are increasingly aware of external supplier environment in terms of increase in contractor/supplier costs. We continue to proactively manage the cost estimate process as effectively as possible through project scope review and value engineer processes and also via consideration of other sources of funding (e.g. DfI, DfC), identified underspend opportunities within the Revitalisation Programme and agreed CRD Divisional budget. As outlined below there is an excess budget cost on one project (Castle Place Hub) but with underspend within another project (Church Lane) The proposed recommendations below</p>

	<p>will also be notified to DfC and included with the information to be submitted as part of the DfC Letter of Variance process.</p> <p><u>Project Specific updates</u></p> <p><b>Castle Place Hub</b></p>
3.6	<p>This project involves the creation of new public realm and streetscape enhancements, including a new cycle lane and a new kiosk that offers a unique city centre kiosk located in a prime retail pitch. Planning Permission has been granted although following further engagement with local businesses, an amendment to the Planning Consent will be sought in August 2021. DfC (with Council also on the assessment panel) have completed an external exercise to seek an operator for the new kiosk with 16 applications received, with the preferred operator notified. Other statutory approvals, including Experimental Road Orders, signalling design and relocation of bus and blue badge parking are currently underway by DfI. A critical factor however in the overall delivery is DfI delivery of the civils enabling works and finalising the necessary statutory approvals. Discussions remain ongoing with DfI regarding programming these works into their works programme.</p>
3.7	<p>In terms of contractor appointment procurement has completed however the returned cost has exceeded the current project budget by approx. £150k. As outlined below there are proposals for reallocation of underspend from other interventions as well as the potential to lever in additional monies from other funders.</p>
3.8	<p><b>Adelaide Street – parklet and public realm scheme</b></p> <p>This parklet / public realm scheme proposal has been developed in partnership with DfI and will see pavement extensions and public realm improvements along the length of Adelaide Street. Given the wider benefits of the scheme DfI have agreed to commit to 100% fund this scheme outside of the Revitalisation Programme, thereby releasing the previously allocated funding of £100,000, on the condition that the budget would be reallocated to Castle Place Hub given the Castle Place Hub budget issues (as above) and as this project contains a significant amount of DfI-related improvements to the pavements/public highway. The funding commitment from DfI for Adelaide Street scheme is currently going through Department of Finance approval process.</p>
3.9	<p>Subject to a satisfactory Contract for Funding offer from DfI for £100,000 for the Adelaide Street Scheme, it is being recommended that the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation £100,000</p>

	<p>budget is subsequently moved from Adelaide Street scheme to Castle Place Hub budget line.</p> <p><b>Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area</b></p>
3.10	<p>Following consultation with local businesses to refine the project scope, the emerging proposal will see a new lighting installation and open space enhancements via planters. The procurement process for a relevant contractor has now been completed. The reduction in the initial project proposal scope and confirmed project costs will result in a £45,000 underspend and it is being recommended that this underspend is reallocated to the Castle Place Hub project.</p>
3.11	<p>It is also worth noting that the illegal car parking and enforcement of the pedestrianised zone along Church Lane was raised as a specific issue by a number of stakeholders. Officers have been liaising with DfI to develop measures to address this issue.</p>
	<p><b>E-cargo delivery pilot</b></p>
3.12	<p>This e-cargo delivery pilot aims to improve air quality, reduce kerb parking and congestion by providing a sustainable delivery options for first mile/last mile/onforwarding and only mile deliveries. As updated in the CG&amp;R Committee Revitalisation report in May, an Expressions of Interest exercise was undertaken which subsequently informed a competitive tender process. This tender process closed on 9 July 2021. Following the assessment process, and contract discussions, a local business, StreetDock Systems Limited has been awarded the contract for the pilot which will commence operations in the Autumn.</p>
3.13	<p>This project will involve use of e-cargo delivery bikes to make urban logistics more convenient, efficient and environmentally sustainable. Seed-funding is often offered in city centres to bring forward innovative pilot schemes for breaching the issues created by the last and first mile deliveries. Previous bids for funding for sustainable solutions have been unsuccessful in the city centre, with successful bidders showing that once market viability is established the trend continues to grow. It will operate as a first, last and only mile delivery project through a hub-based approach that is scalable as demand grows. The successful operator is responsible for developing a long term and sustainable business plan, client base and operation of the e-cargo fleet. Key performance indicators have been established and will be reported on at agreed intervals to monitor the success of the project and longer-term commercial viability.</p>

3.14	<p><b>Cathedral Gardens Active Travel Hub</b></p> <p>This pilot project involves the creation of new active travel physical hub on Council's Cathedral Gardens site as a meanwhile use. It will provide two key elements that will be run and operated by the successful operator following a competitive procurement competition:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Active Travel Support and Advice:</b> Information, guidance and programming provision to encourage and support walking and cycling</li> <li>2. <b>Bicycle and Bicycle Parking Provision:</b> Supporting bike accessibility and provision through a range of cost-effective products and services</li> </ol>
3.15	<p>A Planning Application was submitted on the 9<sup>th</sup> July in conjunction with Physical Programmes and the design team for the proposed permanent Cathedral Gardens works. Discussions remain ongoing with a number of partners including the Public Health Agency, DoJ and the University of Ulster to finalise agreements on the required revenue funding for the temporary period. Any approvals in relation to asset implications (e.g. lease/licence) will be brought to the Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee.</p>
3.16	<p><b>Covid-19 Business Grants [up to £2.5k grant]</b></p> <p>The Covid-19 Business Grant, with an initial budget of £800k, is now closed and fully committed through mini grants up to £2.5k per application. Following additional funding provided by DfC in January 2021 an additional £154k was allocated to this scheme. In total 494 awards were made totalling £858,165.</p>
3.17	<p>The closing date for businesses to claim their awards through the scheme was the 25th June. To date £790,821 of funding has been drawn down by 445 businesses who were granted awards through the process. 49 businesses have withdrawn from the scheme and officers are currently processing the remaining 13 claims. There is currently an underspend within this budget line, and it is therefore recommended to reallocate any underspend from the fund to the overall Revitalisation Programme budget to meet some of the cost escalation currently being realised in other projects. The total amount of underspend and area of reallocation will be confirmed to this Committee when outstanding claims are processed.</p> <p><b>Business Cluster &amp; Community Grants [£10k - £25k capital grants]</b></p>

3.18	<p>Members will be aware of this capital grants scheme for environmental improvement proposals on arterial routes, in urban villages and local communities – proposals were sought on interventions that would support business operation and recovery; enhance physical spaces; increase civic participation and sense of ownership; and encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in local area. The scheme was originally allocated £363k from the Revitalisation Programme, with a further £300k and £95k allocated to the scheme following additional funding provided by DfC in January 2021 and from underspend in the Business Grant Scheme respectively and as agreed by this Committee. Members will also be aware that the Council received a total request for £1.34m from over 66 submitted applications. Grants were awarded on a first come basis, subject to appropriate due diligence checks, and 32 applications were approved with total committed funding of £690k.</p>
3.19	<p>As of end of June £531,160 has been provided to businesses. This represents the provision of the Integrated Design Team and the first 80% upfront payment to 27 of the successful applicants, with the remaining 20% to be paid on completion of the works and satisfactory completion of the monitoring and evaluation returns. Officers continue to work through the remaining successful applicants to secure relevant statutory approvals, however delays in securing relevant statutory approvals are anticipated and will result in an impact on delivery timelines, and subsequent funding spend beyond the initial proposed September deadline of the Funding Contract as paragraph 3.6 above.</p>
3.20	<p>Members will be aware of the oversubscription of applications to the funding allocated to this Business Cluster and Community Grants Scheme. Following Council ratification on the 1<sup>st</sup> July, the Council have committed to allocating £450,000 additional Council funding to meet the outstanding demand with an extended scheme delivery timeframe of March 2022. Officers have commenced engagement with business and organisations who previously applied, with the due diligence assessment process underway. Further updates on this next phase of application assessment will be brought back to Committee at a future date.</p>
3.21	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Subject to a satisfactory Contract for Funding from DfI for £100,000 to fund the Adelaide Street parklet and public realm scheme, it is recommended that £100,000 initially allocated from the Adelaide St project is to be reallocated to Castle Place Hub. It is recommended the £45,000 underspend identified as part of the Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area, to be allocated to Castle Place Hub scheme, and that any further underspends realised will be utilised to meet any additional cost increases on previously agreed and committed projects.</p>

	Any overall Programme underspend will be brought into this Committee for agreement on allocation.
<b>3.22</b>	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> Impact assessment complete on overall programme and kept under review
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Document attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – DfC Covid19 Revitalisation Programme - status overview

## Appendix 1 - DfC Covid19 Revitalisation Programme - status overview

Programme Headline Category	Project	RAG	Status
Revenue funding	Additional Street Cleansing & Neighbourhood Safety		Complete
	Belfast Gift Card		Complete
Enhanced Christmas Offering including animation, lighting and marketing	Marketing & branding		Complete
	Animation		Complete
	Feature Lighting Linen Quarter		In progress - procurement underway
	Feature Lighting BID One		In progress - procurement underway. However, delivery is expected to exceed the Sept [previous DfC LoO] completion date
	Feature Lighting Cathedral Quarter Bid		In progress - procurement underway; delivery dependent on BID meeting funding conditions; delivery is expected to exceed the Sept [previous DfC LoO] completion date
Signage & Dressing	Public Safety signage and messaging		Complete
	Public messaging and communication		Complete
	Adelaide Street - parklet and public realm		In progress: Note - DfI commitment received to 100% fund this project outside of the Revitalise Programme. A Business Case has been submitted to DoF for approval, on the condition the funding for Adelaide Street is reallocated to Castle Place Hub (see Castle Place Hub update below). Expected delivery by March 2022
Physical Interventions & Streetscape Improvements	Covid-19 Business Grants (up to £2.5k)		445 businesses have claimed their funding allocations funding. The closing date for all claims was the 25 <sup>th</sup> June. There are a currently 13 claims in progress. 49 businesses have withdrawn from the process therefore recommendation to reallocate remaining funding as per committee report, total amount to be confirmed when outstanding claims are processed.
	Business Cluster & Community Grants (capital grants £10 - £25k)		In progress: 32 applications approved; Officer liaising with organisations to support delivery/progress statutory approvals. [Note -BCC recently approved the allocation of additional funding to meet the full funding requirements of the applications received. Officer engagement with remaining organisations underway]

	Entries Phase 2		In progress - development stage
	Union Street Pedestrianisation		In progress – Statutory Road Orders in place and contractor procurement underway.
	Cathedral Quarter - Exchange Place/Warehouse Entry		In progress - contractor procurement underway.
	Castle Place Hub		In progress: Statutory requirements and timelines outstanding from DfI. Project dependent on DfI delivery timeline. Procurement completed – note, price exceeds current budget. Proposed reallocation of funding within the Programme as outlined in the Committee Paper
	Linen Quarter Hub		In progress - progressing to on site/construction stage.
<b>Access &amp; Connectivity</b>	Linen Quarter Parklets		Completed (launched 2 July)
	Linen Quarter Boardwalk		On site
	DfC and DfI Budget allocation for Bolder Vision Phase 2		In progress - Phase 2 commenced
	City Wide Parklets		Included within Community & Business Cluster Grant funding. Update as above
<b>Sustainable active travel initiatives</b>	Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area		In progress - Procurement complete. NOTE - £45k underspend identified following consultation with local businesses - removal of items of work. Recommendation to reallocate funding as included within the Committee Report
	Replacement/upgrade of Belfast Bikes		Completed
	Expanding Belfast Bike network		In progress - Order placed for 4 new docking stations (as agreed CGR May)
	Electric Bike Trial <i>[E-cargo delivery pilot]</i>		In progress - procurement underway. Delivery expected to exceed the Sept delivery date
	Covered Citywide cycle stands		In progress - currently out to procurement. Delivery expected to exceed the Sept delivery date; report to be brought back
	Expanding Sustainable Transport Hub network <i>[Cathedral Gardens ATH; QUB Cycle Hub]</i>		In progress - development stage; delivery dependent on statutory approvals and securing of revenue funding from external sources.
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>	UU Study allocation		In progress - nearing completion
	Monitoring & evaluation of the Revitalisation Programme		In progress - procurement scoping; reliant on programme completion



<b>Subject:</b>	DfI Accessible Parking Bay Proposals
<b>Date:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place & Economy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Dermot O’Kane, Principal Planning Officer

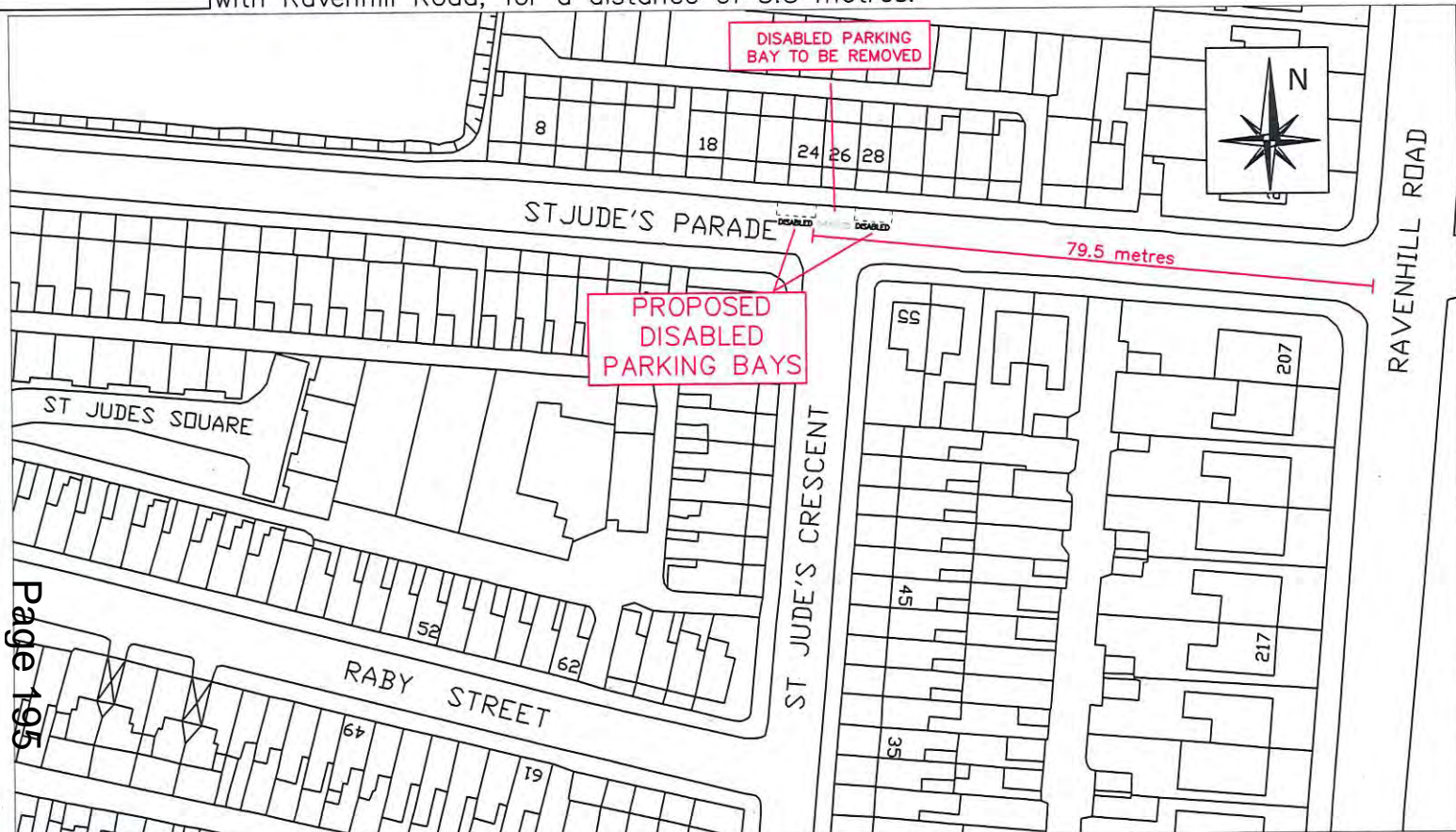
<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To inform the Committee of two Department for Infrastructure (DfI) consultations relating to accessible/disabled park bay proposals within the city.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the two proposed schemes.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<u>Consultations</u> Consultations on proposals for two accessible/disabled parking bay schemes have been received from DfI.

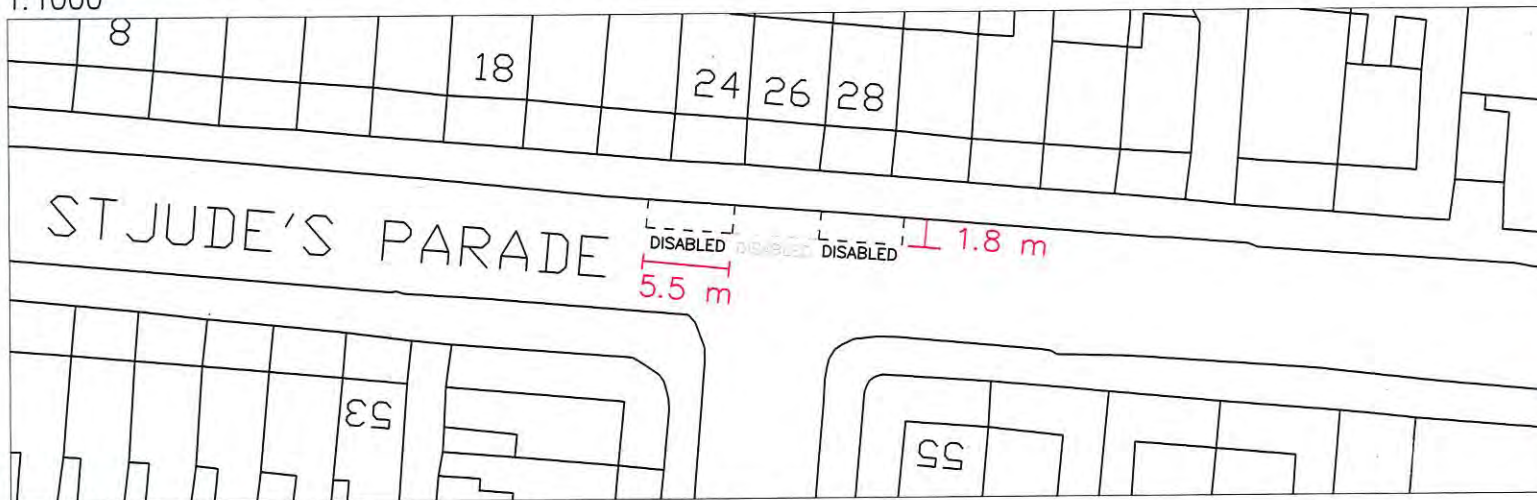
<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p>	<p><b>St Jude's Parade</b></p> <p>DfI propose to remove an accessible/disabled parking bay outside No. 26 St Jude's Parade and provide an accessible/disabled parking bay outside Nos. 24 and 28 St Jude's Parade. This proposal is in response to the bay outside No. 26 no longer being required and two subsequent applications from local residents for accessible parking bays outside Nos. 24 and 28.</p> <p><b>80 Willowbank Gardens</b></p> <p>DfI propose to remove an accessible/disabled parking bay outside No. 80 Willowbank Gardens as it is no longer required.</p> <p>These proposals will contribute to the provision of accessible parking and/or on-street parking in the respective localities and in the case of St Jude's Parade should provide improved accessibility for motorists with limited mobility. It is recommended that these proposed schemes are supported by the Council.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices – Documents attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Maps showing the location and detail of the two proposals.</p>

St Jude's Parade, Belfast, (north side) – from a point 79.5 metres west of its junction with Ravenhill Road, for a distance of 5.5 metres.



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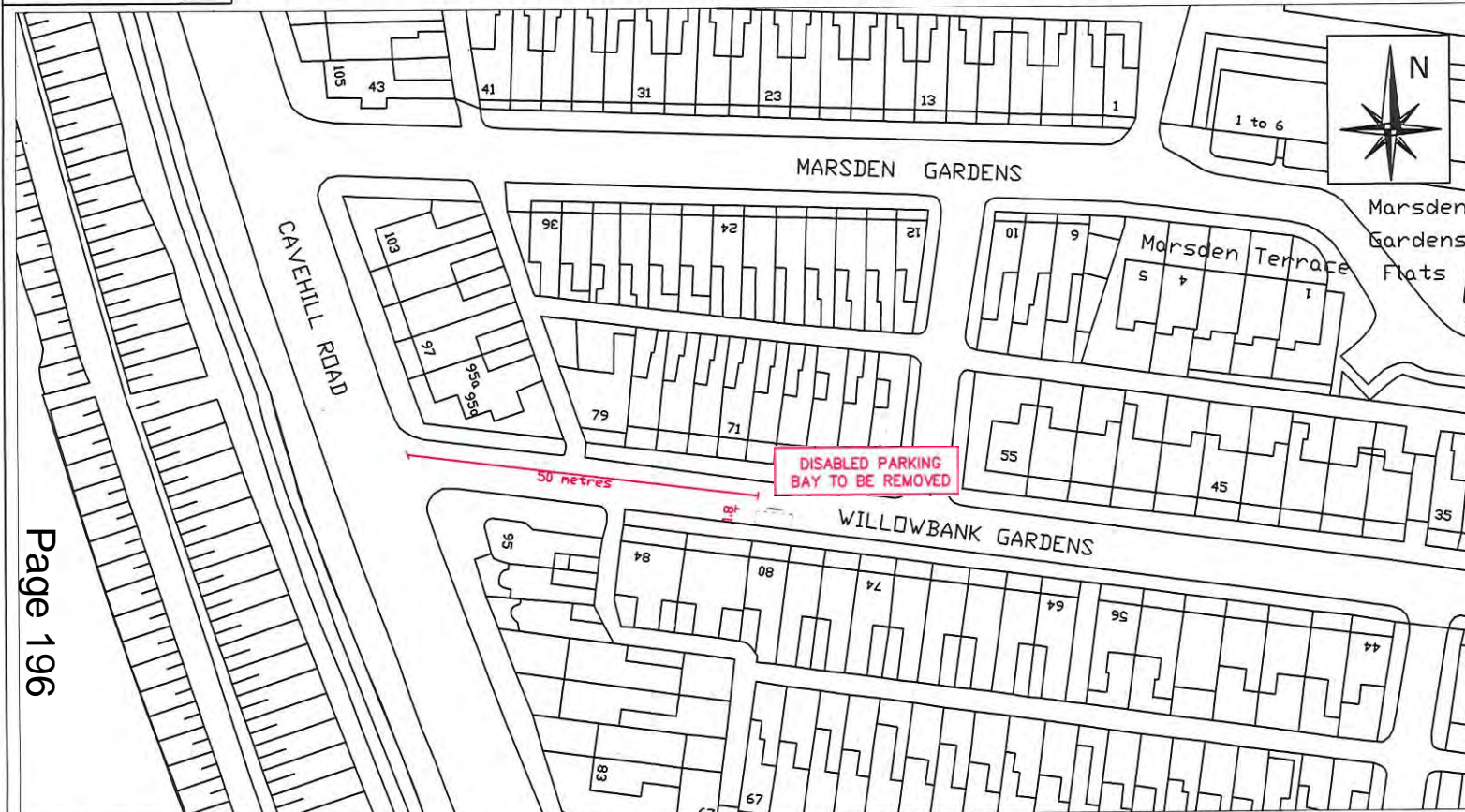
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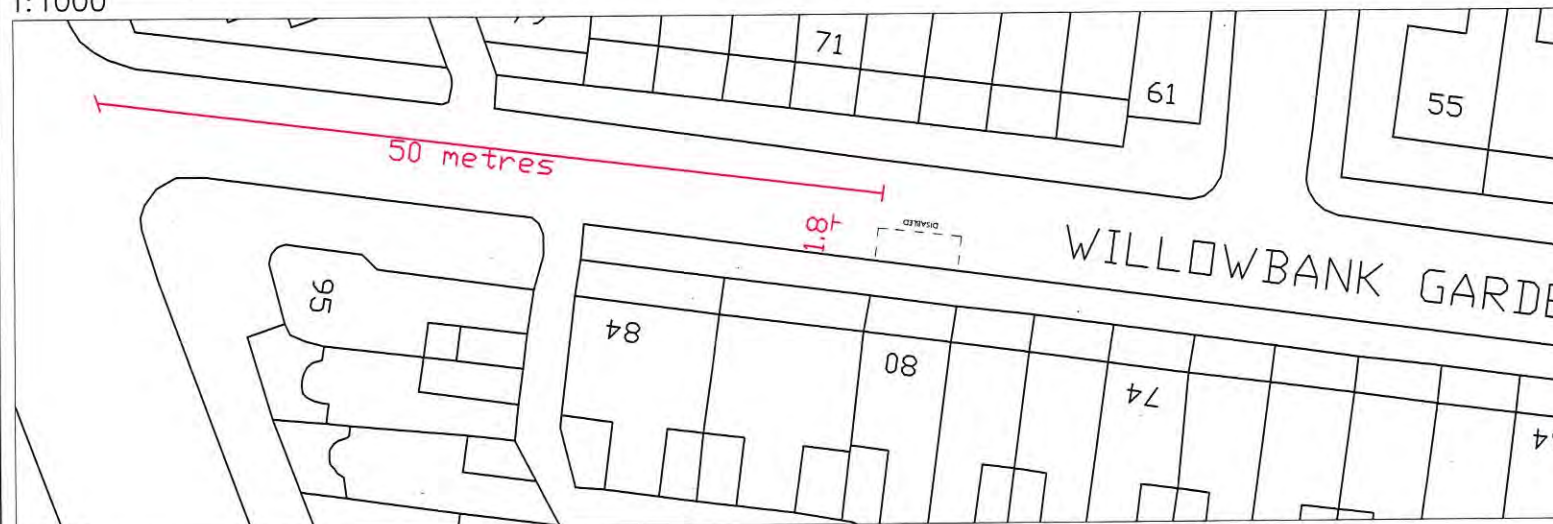
NO.	REVISION	DATE
<p>Based upon the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland 1:1000 Scale Map with the Permission of the Director and Chief Executive          © Crown Copyright          Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings</p>		
<p>Project</p> <p>AN ACCESSIBLE/ DISABLED PARKING BAY</p>		
<p>Title</p> <p>24 ST JUDE'S PARADE BELFAST</p>		
FILE NO.	DESIGNED	AO'H date JUN'21
DRAWN	CHECKED	date
TRACED	APPROVED	date
Org. No.		Revision
TM2/BEL/JUN/21/11/A		
<p>Scales</p> <p>AS SHOWN</p>		
<p><b>Eastern Division</b></p> <p>Annex 7          Castle Buildings          Stormont Estate          Belfast          BT4 3SQ</p> <p>Telephone: 0300 200 7893          Textphone: 028 90540022</p>		
<p>Department for  <b>Infrastructure</b>          An Roinn  <b>Bonneagair</b>  <a href="http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk">www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk</a></p>		

S.R. 2012 No. 347 item 861. - Willowbank Gardens, Belfast, (south side) -from a point 50 metres east of its junction with the Cavehill Road, for a distance of 5.5 metres in a easterly direction.



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1:1000



1:500

NO.	REVISION	DATE
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<p>Project</p> <p>80 WILLOWBANK GARDENS BELFAST</p>		
<p>Title</p> <p>PROPOSED DISABLED PARKING BAY</p>		
FILE NO.	DESIGNED	AO'H date JUN'21
DRAWN	CHECKED	date
TRACED	APPROVED	date
Drg. No.		Revision
TM2/BEL/JUN/21/12/A		
<p>Scales</p> <p>AS SHOWN</p>		
<p><b>Eastern Division</b></p> <p>Annex 7          Castle Buildings          Stormont Estate          Belfast          BT4 3SQ</p> <p>Telephone: 0300 200 7893          Textphone: 028 90540022</p>		
<p>Department for  <b>Infrastructure</b>          An Roinn  <b>Bonneagair</b>          www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk</p>		<p>INVESTOR IN PEOPLE</p>



Subject:	Notices of Motion – Quarterly Update
Date:	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place & Economy
Contact Officer:	Deirdre Kelly; Programme Manager Claire Patterson, Business Research & Development Manager Geoff Dickson, Strategic Planning & Policy Officer

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	In line with the agreement at SP&R Committee that all Standing Committees will receive a quarterly update on the Notices of Motion they are responsible for, this report provides a quarterly update for the City Growth & Regeneration Committee.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4 <sup>th</sup> May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note the updates to all Notices of Motion that this Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree to the closure of a number of Notices of Motion, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.6 below.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>At SP&amp;R Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> 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"> <li>1. Date received</li> <li>2. Notice of motion title</li> <li>3. Submitted by which Councillor</li> <li>4. Council meeting date</li> <li>5. Committee motion is referred to</li> <li>6. Outcome of committee where Notice of Motion will be debated</li> <li>7. Month it will be reported back to committee</li> <li>8. Other action to be taken.”</li> </ol>
3.2	<p>Following Committee’s consideration of the first quarterly update of Notices of Motion, it was agreed to close 11 Notices of Motion in April 2021. All subsequent Notices have been added to the database in Appendix 1 which shows 12 active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which this Committee is responsible.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Notice of Motion Updates</b></p> <p>As previously noted by Committee, 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>
3.4	<p>Members will note that estimated completion dates and next steps require further updates for the database, this will be further developed on the database for the next quarterly update.</p>
3.5	<p><b>Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance</b></p> <p>At SP&amp;R Committee on 20th November, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:</p>

3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Category 1</b> - 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 completed. 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.</li> <li>- <b>Category 2</b> - 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.</li> </ul> <p>CG&amp;R Committee are asked to agree that the following 5 Notices of Motion are now closed:</p> <p><b>Category 1 Recommended Closures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Sustainable Transport (Ref number 43).</b> A further report was considered by the Committee in May 2021 and a range of potential impacts and issues were discussed such as increased vehicles in shared bus/cycle lanes, segregated cycle provision, hackney and public hire vehicles, convenience for the public as well as the impact of vehicles on air pollution and the need for better transport options. The Committee noted that the proposed Notice of Motion as set out would not be taken forward.</li> <li>- <b>Closure of Donegal Street for Belfast Pride (Ref 190)</b> - Request / events plan has not been received from the organised to enable examination of the proposal for the road closure for Belfast Pride this year. Future proposals can be considered on submission of an events plan/formal request.</li> </ul> <p><b>Category 2 Recommended Closures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Air Passenger Duty (Ref number 58).</b> This will be considered in the context of the new draft 10 year Tourism Plan, which is included on the Committee agenda for consideration in September 2021.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Economic impact of retail closures and job losses (Ref number 92).</b> The Future of the City Committee Workshop on 25 May 2021 provided an update on the current economic impact of Covid-19 on the city, including job losses and the vacancy rates in the city centre. This information is directly informing the Future City Centre Programme. Whilst this programme, was initially developed around the key findings and recommendations outlined in the Pragma Consulting retail analysis, given the significant challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic the Future City Centre Programme has been recast to help address the issues impacting on the city centre and is aligned with the wider Belfast: Our Recovery framework priorities. It will continue to be monitored to reflect the changes in the city which will involve analysing the recent trends influencing the city centre and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, with a future report being back to Committee along with regular updates on the Future City Centre programme of work as it progresses.</li> <li>- <b>Belfast Bikes – pilot Rolloe scheme (Ref number 102).</b> As noted in the committee report of June 2021, Officers have been working with the company on the viability of pilot scheme and regular updates will be brought back to this Committee. This will be integrated into the Belfast Bikes programme of work.</li> </ul> <p>Additional information in relation to these Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance are available in Appendix 1.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Financial &amp; 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>
3.8	<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. Implications are considered when taking forward the specific Notices of Motion and Issues Raised by Members.</p>
4.0	<b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>
	<b>Appendix 1:</b> Notices of Motion Live Database – CG&R Committee 06.08.21

# Notice of Motion – Live Database

**Belfast**

Ref	Type	Date of Council Meeting	Motion (including hyperlinks)	Proposed by	Referral route	Committee	Lead officer	Department	Status	Status Update	Next Steps	Estimated completion date
14	Notice of Motion	04/02/2019	<a href="#">Enterprise Zones</a>	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 the current developments, such as the Economic Strategy, BRCD and Innovation programmes of work; and as resources become available.		
43	Notice of Motion	03/02/2020	<a href="#">Sustainable Transport</a>	Cllr Groogan	Straight to Committee	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	A report was discussed by CGR Committee in May 2021 and it was noted that the proposed Notice of Motion as set out would not be taken forward.		August
58	issue Raised in Advance	12/02/2020	<a href="#">Air Passenger Duty</a>	Cllr Graham	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	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. Report due to be considered at CGR in September 2021.		September
72	issue Raised in Advance	04/03/2020	<a href="#">Review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme</a>	Cllr O'Hara	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Update provided as part of Strategic review of Belfast Bikes (9/6/21). Decision under item 4b) Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review subsequently called in.	To be progressed following call-in decision.	

92	issue Raised in Advance	12/08/2020	<a href="#">Economic Impact of Retail Unit Closures and Job Losses</a>	Cllr Heading	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Information on economic impact and vacancies was reported to the Members workshop in May. The Future City Centre Programme has been recast and is aligned with the wider Belfast: Our Recovery framework priorities. This will continue to be monitored to reflect the changes in the city which will involve analysing the recent trends influencing the city centre and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, with a future report to Committee and regular updates on the Future City Centre programme of work as it progresses.	Future report to Committee.	September
117	issue Raised in Advance	07/10/2020	<a href="#">City Wide Strategic Site Assessment Update</a>	Cllr Murphy	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	An update on the city wide SSA was provided to CGR Committee in June 21. This is also being considered as part of the Community Planning Partnership process under the City Development Board with further updates to be brought back to Committee.		
120	Notice of Motion	02/11/2020	<a href="#">Belfast Bikes - Pilot Scheme to use Rolloe</a>	Cllr Baker	Straight to Committee	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Update included in Belfast Bikes Strategic Review Report on 9/6/21. Noted that Officers were working with company on the viability of pilot scheme and regular updates will be brought back to committee and this will be integrated into the Belfast Bikes programme of work.	Belfast Bikes Programme of work to be progressed following call-in decision.	
152	issue Raised in Advance	13/01/2021	<a href="#">Environmental Infrastructure in Council Car Parks</a>	Cllr Heading	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	J Tully	City & Organisational Strategy	Ongoing	To be progressed as resources become available.		
153	issue Raised in Advance	13/01/2021	<a href="#">Disabled Parking Accreditation Scheme</a>	Cllr McMullan	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Officers are currently working with CNS in relation to the refresh of the Car Parking Strategy, it is anticipated that this NOM will be progressed in line with this. A draft specification is currently under development and further progress will be made as resources become available.		

164	Issue raised in Advance	03/03/2021	<b>Developing Clean Tech in the City</b>	Alderman Dorrian	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	To be progressed through the development of the Belfast Economic Strategy which will examine the health of the current sector and with partners including Invest NI make recommendations for sector development actions.		
180	Notice of Motion	04/05/2021	<a href="#">Extension of the Belfast Bikes Scheme</a>	Cllr Baker	Straight to Committee	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Letter to the Infrastructure Minister referencing the need for consultation with communities before implementing infrastructure drafted in July 2021. Strategic Review of Bikes report brought to CGR Committee in June. Decision under item 4b) Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review subsequently called in (9/6/21).	Programme of work to be progressed following call-in decision.	
190	Issue raised in Advance	09/06/2021	<b>Closure of Donegal Street for Belfast Pride</b>	Cllr O'Hara	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Request/events plan not received to enable consideration of road closure.		

