

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



**Belfast
City Council**

3rd September, 2021

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will be a hybrid meeting (both remote and in person) in the Council Chamber on Wednesday, 8th September, 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
- (d) Correspondence - Sunday Opening Hours (Pages 1 - 8)

2. Matters Referred Back from Council

- (a) Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review

3. Presentations

- (a) Belfast Rapid Transit 2 - Consultation on Route Options (Pages 9 - 14)
- (b) Renewed Ambition Programme Task Force

- (c) Linked Report: Public / Private Partnership for Developing Regeneration, Infrastructure and a Modern Built Environment for the City of Belfast

4. **Restricted Items**

- (a) Financial Reporting - Quarter 1 2021/22 (Pages 15 - 24)

5. **Regenerating Places & Improving Infrastructure**

- (a) A Bolder Vision Update
- (b) DfI Autumn Report (Pages 25 - 34)
- (c) DfC Revitalisation Programme Update
- (d) Request for Site Visit - PPR Project (Pages 35 - 40)
- (a) Draft Ten Year Tourism Plan (Pages 41 - 98)
- (b) ESF Update and Proposed Match Funding Approach (Pages 99 - 102)
- (c) Destination CQ BID Ballot (Pages 103 - 106)

7. **Growing Business & the Economy**

- (a) City of Music - Support for Autumn Programme 2021 (Pages 107 - 114)
- (b) Support for NI Hospice Public Art Project (Pages 115 - 118)
- (c) International Engagement Activities (Pages 119 - 122)



Subject:	Correspondence – Sunday Opening Hours
Date:	8th September, 2021
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy
Contact Officer:	Eilish McGoldrick , Democratic Services Officer

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To note the correspondence received regarding Sunday Opening Hours.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the correspondence as set out in the report.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	At its meeting on 9th June, Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercises her delegated authority to

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p>approve the request from city business organisations to extend the current approach to Sunday opening for large retailers until 5th September, 2021</p> <p>The Committee will recall that, at the Council meeting on 1st July, it was agreed that the minute of the meeting of 9th June, under the heading “Sunday Opening Hours” was amended to provide “That the current extended Sunday trading hours are not brought back to the Committee for further extension beyond 5th September, 2021. And that the Council acknowledges the full range of challenges facing retail in the city, write to The Executive Office requesting an urgent meeting of the High Streets Task Force.</p> <p>Accordingly, Democratic Services wrote to the Junior Ministers who convene the Task Force (Appendix 1) and a response was received from the Department for Communities on their behalf (Appendix 2).</p> <p>The Department note that it was content to add the issue to the agenda for the Task Force’s next plenary meeting once a date for it has been confirmed.</p> <p>Subsequently, in relation to this issue, correspondence has also been received from the Belfast Chamber (Appendix 3) to request that the Council reconsiders its previous decision not to extend its permission for early Sunday trading hours by larger retailers.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – CGR Letter to Junior Minister 140721 Appendix 2 – DfC Response 160721 Appendix 3 – Letter to A. Reid from Belfast Chamber 230821</p>

Legal and Civic Services Department

Democratic Services Section



Your reference

Being dealt with by Ms Eilish McGoldrick

Our reference EMTF140721

Email: democraticservices@belfastcity.gov.uk

Date 14th July, 2021

Email: ps.ministers@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

Junior Ministers
GD36 Stormont Castle
Stormont Estate
Belfast, BT4 3TT

Dear Junior Ministers,

Re: Sunday Opening Hours – Large Retailers

At the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 9th June, the Members of the Committee recommended that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercises her delegated authority to approve the request from city business organisations to extend the current temporary approach to Sunday opening for large retailers until 5th September, 2021. Namely, that that council would not carry out enforcement action against large retail shops (in excess of 280sqm) should they choose to open or deliver on a Sunday from 10am onwards (until 6pm).

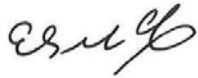
During discussion of the matter, Members raised concerns in relation to the request for extended opening hours and the impact it would have on retail workers, together with the need for further consultation, if the extension was to be considered to continue past September.

At its meeting in July, Belfast City Council passed the following proposal which had been proposed by Councillor Ferguson and seconded by Councillor Lyons:

“That the current extended Sunday trading hours are not brought back to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for further extension beyond 5th September, 2021. And that the Council acknowledges the full range of challenges facing retail in the city, write to The Executive Office requesting that this issue be considered at an urgent meeting of the High Streets Task Force.”

Accordingly, I would be grateful if you would consider this request. I look forward to receiving a response on this matter.

Yours sincerely



Eilish McGoldrick
Democratic Services Officer

Cc: First Minister and Deputy First Minister.



From: Anthony Carleton

**Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG**

Telephone: (028) 90 xx xxxx
e-mail: anthony.carleton@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our ref: TOF-0613-2021
Date: 16 July 2021

McGoldrickE@BelfastCity.gov.uk

Dear Ms McGoldrick

Sunday Opening Hours – Large Retailers

Thank you for your letter of 14 July 2021 on behalf of the Belfast City Council to the Junior Ministers at The Executive Office, regarding the extension of Sunday opening hours for large scale retailers and the impact on retail workers. This has been passed to the Department for Communities (DfC) as we have responsibility for Sunday Trading legislation and co-ordinating the work of the High Street Task Force.

The Department appreciates the Council informing us that it has recently decided to extend its interim approach to Sunday opening hours for large scale retailers until 5 September 2021. We do, of course, recognise the very real challenges that many retailers have been facing as a result of the Covid pandemic and the need to likewise take account of the potential effect on retail workers of extending shop opening hours to assist businesses. We are also aware that a number of Councils have, at different stages over the past year and in response to the pandemic, temporarily relaxed the enforcement of some aspects of Sunday trading law under The Shops (Sunday Trading &c.) (NI) Order 1997.

With regard to the Council's proposal that the issue be considered at an urgent meeting of the High Street Task Force, as you know all Council members are already represented on this Task Force through NILGA. Local government Chief Executives are also represented through SOLACE and, specifically, by Belfast City Council's Chief Executive, Suzanne Wylie.

Having said that, the Department is happy to add this issue to the agenda for the Task Force's next plenary meeting once a date for it has been confirmed.

I trust you find this helpful.

Yours sincerely
pp Ciarán Mee

on behalf of **Anthony Carleton**
Director of Local Government and Housing Regulation

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23 August 2021

Alistair Reid
Strategic Director
Place and Economy
Belfast City Council
No.9 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8DJ

Dear Alistair

Re: Sunday Trading

I hope this letter finds you well.

Belfast City Council's decision to not enforce early Sunday trading by larger retailers in the city has proven hugely helpful to that hard hit sector and is greatly valued by Belfast Chamber and its members as a positive response by the Council to the unprecedented and difficult situation we have faced in recent times.

Belfast Chamber is aware that the Council's view was that non-enforcement should not be extended beyond the 5th September. Whilst our members appreciate the generosity displayed by the Council thus far and understand the desire that non-enforcement should not become a permanent fixture, Belfast Chamber does though believe that there is a strong argument and indeed a need for a further extension. All of the original reasons for the decision not to enforce early Sunday opening (i.e., various restrictions, queuing, demand management etc) remain in place. We are also concerned that if we end this before other neighbouring districts do, then the risk exists that we will drive trade to other places with Belfast losing out.

Belfast Chamber therefore requests that the Council reconsiders its previous decision not to extend its permission for early Sunday trading hours by larger retailers.

I look forward to your response and we would be very happy to discuss this issue further with you if required.

Yours Sincerely



Simon Hamilton

Chief Executive



Subject:	DfI – Roads Presentation to CGR Committee on Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase 2
Date:	8 th September 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to introduce the Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2 presentation to this Committee meeting and to update Members on how the Council intends to respond to the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase 2 Public Consultation on route options (Appendix 1).
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the information provided within this report in advance of the DfI presentation on the emerging preferred routes for Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2; Note the timelines of the ongoing BRT2 Public Consultation; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the Councils proposed mechanism for providing the Councils response to the Public Consultation
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Belfast Rapid Transport (BRT) Phase 1 commenced service in 2018, providing priority corridors to both the G1 service (East-West), and the G2 service (Titanic Quarter). BRT Phase 1 has been a key driver and enabler of modal shift away from private car use on congested arterial routes in Belfast. Translink estimate BRT Phase 1 has attracted approximately 45,000 additional passenger journeys per week in its first year of operation.</p>
3.2	<p>The BRT system implemented a number of measures to prioritise the system including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus priority infrastructure - including bus lanes, priority at junctions and new halts; Glider vehicles - operating along the trunk routes, including hybrid drive chains operating in the newer models; Feeder vehicles and Residual Services – Metro and Ulsterbus services connecting into and along the BRT route benefiting from the bus priority infrastructure; Park & Ride – provision of dedicated parking facilities typically at the end of the route Connect – provision of local interchange hubs to enable connection between feeder and trunk services.
3.3	<p>Belfast has ambitious targets for sustainable economic growth and to enhance wellbeing for all, as set out in the Belfast Agenda. The vision in the Belfast Agenda sets out that “Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone”. The Agenda outlines the City’s ambition to promote the development of sustainable transport, including promoting walking and cycling. The support for, and concept of, promoting a place that can be shared by all in the City reflects one of the key policies in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) , which seeks to create a connected city centre.</p>
3.4	<p>Public transport accessibility via the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT), both to the City Centre and ‘cross city’, will play a key role in catalysing the ambitious targets of the Belfast Agenda and underpinning the inclusive economic growth that will drive the Belfast Local Development Plan.</p>

3.5	<p><u>Report</u></p> <p>BRT Phase 1 (East-West Corridor) cost an estimated £90m upon completion, with Phase 2 currently under consideration within the Belfast Region City Deal process. BRT Phase 2 will introduce high priority corridors to North and South Belfast with the preferred route options currently out for public consultation.</p>
3.6	<p>Phase 2 of the BRT project is one of several infrastructure, tourism and regeneration projects being considered as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD). The project aims to extend the rapid transit network with a North-South service as well as connecting the existing G2 Glider service to Queen's University and Belfast City Hospital.</p>
3.7	<p>Under the BRCD approval process a draft Outline Business Case was submitted in August 2018 with an Interim Outline Business Case submitted in June 2020.</p>
3.8	<p>The Interim Outline Business Case (OBC) outlined indicative route options, including options for connecting to the G1 service in the City Centre, north route options including Antrim Road, Shore Road and Crumlin Road, and south route options including Ravenhill Road and Ormeau Road. DfI have now undertaken a shortlisting process of the route options including a Route Audit Report, an Options Assessment Report and Strategic Traffic Modelling in order to bring forward the preferred route options for Public Consultation ahead of the submission of the final Outline Business Case for consideration within the BRCD process in Winter 2021.</p>
3.9	<p>The Public Consultation was launched on the 26th July and closes on the 4th October and can accessed for full details at www.brt2.org. The emerging preferred routes for consultation include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glider G2 extension linking the City Hospital and Queens University Belfast via Howard St – Great Victoria St – Bruce St – Dublin Road – University Road and back to the City Centre via Lisburn Road and Great Victoria Street. • The South Route option runs from the existing G1/G2 network at City Hall along Great Victoria Street – Bruce Street – Bankmore Link – Ormeau Road – Saintfield Road to Cairnshill Park & Ride • The North Route contains a number of preferred options, including;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Antrim Road option running from City Hall to a 2-way bus lane on Donegall Place and Royal Avenue – Donegall Street – Clifton Street – Carlisle Circus – Antrim Road to a proposed Park & Ride/Interchange facility on O'Neill Road; ○ Shore Road to O'Neill Road running along a 2-way bus lane on Donegall Place and Royal Avenue – York Street – York Road – Shore Road – Longwood Road to a proposed Park & Ride Interchange facility at O'Neill Road; ○ Shore Road to Longwood Road running along a 2-way bus lane on Donegall Place and Royal Avenue – York Street – York Road – Shore Road to a proposed Park & Facility at Longwood Road
3.10	<p>The Dfl presentation to the CG&R Committee will outline the process regarding the shortlisting of the route options and provide further detail on the emerging preferred routes for the North, South and G2 extension. The Dfl will be welcoming comments from Members on the emerging preferred routes and offering additional opportunities to engage with the Dfl during the Public Consultation process.</p>
3.11	<p>As the BRT Phase 2 is a project of strategic importance to Northern Ireland and to the regeneration of Belfast City Centre, the Council intends to provide a formal consultation response to Dfl on the proposals as part of the project's public consultation phase. In that context, the Council is finalising the appointment of a suitably qualified consultant to provide technical support, analysis and feedback on each of the emerging route options. The Consultant will assist BCC to reach a position on the options presented and prepare a formal consultation response to Dfl that reflects established Council and wider city ambitions.</p>
3.12	<p>The Council consultation response will be based on Member comments at this Committee meeting, the external consultant advice and the ongoing work of the Bolder Vision for Belfast as well as alignment with other Council strategy and policy documents including the Resilience Strategy, the emerging Local Development Plan and the Innovation and Growth Commission: Reset for Growth report. Phase 2 of the Bolder Vision for Belfast commenced in Summer 2021 and has held a number of engagement sessions with City stakeholders and Elected Members across the City. The Phase 2 work proposes to inform the City's key capital infrastructure projects to ensure the right foundation for connectivity based on the future uses of the City Centre in line with the Future City Centre Programme as well as bringing forward</p>

3.13	<p>short to medium-term interventions to provide a greener, more inclusive and better connected city centre and connections to local communities.</p> <p>Given the timeframes of the BRT2 Public Consultation it is proposed the BCC consultation response will be brought to the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum prior to submission prior to 4th October. The consultation response will be submitted, subject to CG&R Committee approval on 13th October and Council ratification on 1st November.</p>
3.14	Financial & Resource Implications
	The procurement of the external consultant advice will be provided from within existing approved budgets within the City Regeneration & Development division.
3.15	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
	Considerations of Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Assessments will be undertaken within the Council's consultation response, although it will be DfI that will be undertaking the detailed assessments of them under the development of the BRT2 programme.
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	Appendix 1 Hyperlink to BRT Phase 2 Public Consultation on Route Options

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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Subject:	DfI Autumn Report Presentation to Special CGR Committee 23.10.2021
Date:	8 th September 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to request that Members agree to receive the Department for Infrastructure Autumn report update to the special meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 23 rd October 2021.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Agree to receive the DfI Autumn Report Update to the Special Meeting of the CG&R Committee on the 23rd October 2021; 2) Note the issues previously discussed at the presentation of the Spring Report 3) Note the update on the Car Parking Strategy Action Plan and proposed timelines for the review of the Car Parking Strategy

3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	The Department for Infrastructure have requested permission to present their Autumn Infrastructure Report to the Special Meeting of the CG&R Committee on the 23 rd October 2021. This request is in keeping with the DfI bi-annual reports to the Council works completed and proposed works of the Department.
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.2	At the meeting June meeting of the CG&R Committee Members received the Spring Update from DfI and raised the following discussions with the Department;
	<u>York Street Interchange Independent Assurance Review</u>
3.3	Members previously requested that the Minister forward a copy of the Independent Assurance Review Report and to advise on the opportunities for the Council to contribute to the implementation of the review recommendations. Correspondence with the Minister was shared with the Committee in March 2021 and officers can now confirm that DfI have commenced a number of engagements with Council Officers and the Strategic Advisory Group in September and October 2021.
	<u>Safe Cycle Network</u>
3.4	The Department launched the Belfast Cycling Network and its programme 'Making Belfast an Active City' in June 2021. At the June presentation DfI confirmed that the outline delivery plan, including funding, would be published by Autumn 2021. Members highlighted the need for an expansion of the 20mph zones of Safer Routes to Schools scheme, the Cycle Network Deficit across the city but in particular in North and South Belfast, the need for segregated cycling infrastructure and the need for long term funding to deliver the required level of safe cycle infrastructure.
3.5	The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to reiterate the need for working in support of investment into the required protected cycle lane network in our city and communities, and to support the further roll out of the Belfast Bikes scheme extending its reach and accessibility throughout the city. The Committee also noted that the implementation of further cycling infrastructure, both temporary and permanent, should be done in consultation with locally affected communities and businesses prior to implementation and the response will be reported back into this Committee when available.

3.6	<p>Other issues raised with the DfI include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of the SUDs policy and the integration into schemes; • 20mph zones in the city centre; • Pedestrianisation of the City Centre – an Update on the Bolder Vision for Belfast will be provided in a separate report to this Committee <p><u>Car Park Strategy</u></p>								
3.7	<p>The Members of the CG&R Committee agreed that Council would undertake a review and refresh of the Council's Car Park Strategy and at the August meeting Members requested an update on the timelines of this review. The Car Park Strategy was launched in 2018 and included over 40 actions to address the car parking and congestion issues surrounding the city centre. An update on the action plan is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.</p>								
3.8	<p>Members are asked to note the progress made on a number of the actions contained within the Car Parking Strategy Action Plan, and to note the importance of the partnership with DfI in delivering the Action Plan.</p>								
3.9	<p>Officers are currently drafting the specification and Terms of Reference of the Car Parking Strategy and propose that this work is commenced following the completion of the Bolder Vision for Belfast Public Consultation. This is due to the close relationship of both of these pieces of work, and the importance of the Bolder Vision for Belfast in setting the strategic context for the future provision of infrastructure within the city centre, the findings of which will be used to inform the next stages of the Car Parking Strategy. The timelines for the Bolder Vision are for public consultation to be carried out from 27th September to 20th December 2021, with finalisation of the document to take place between January and April 2022. As such the proposed timeline for the Car Parking Strategy review is;</p> <table> <tr> <td>Specification and Terms of Reference completion</td><td>Dec 2021</td></tr> <tr> <td>Procurement and appointment of External Consultant</td><td>Jan-Mar 2022</td></tr> <tr> <td>Review & refresh of the Car Parking Strategy</td><td>Mar 2022 – June 2022</td></tr> <tr> <td>Finalisation of the Review</td><td>June 2022</td></tr> </table>	Specification and Terms of Reference completion	Dec 2021	Procurement and appointment of External Consultant	Jan-Mar 2022	Review & refresh of the Car Parking Strategy	Mar 2022 – June 2022	Finalisation of the Review	June 2022
Specification and Terms of Reference completion	Dec 2021								
Procurement and appointment of External Consultant	Jan-Mar 2022								
Review & refresh of the Car Parking Strategy	Mar 2022 – June 2022								
Finalisation of the Review	June 2022								

	<p><u>Meeting Logistics</u></p> <p>Members are asked to note that the Special Committee Meetings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for September and October 2021 will be online only due to lack of availability of rooms within City Hall.</p>
3.10	Financial & Resource Implications
	The procurement of external consultant advice associated with the review of the Car Parking Strategy will be met from within existing approved budgets up to £40k.
3.11	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
	Equality, Goods Relations and Rural Needs implications will be considered within the review of the Car Parking Strategy.
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	Appendix 1 – Car Parking Strategy Action Plan Update

Appendix 1 - Belfast Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan – UPDATES

1. Operational - (Lead Department C&NS)		
	Action	Status
1.1	Consider extension of free parking for Blue Badge holders to off-street sites. Review of existing Parking Order ongoing	Consultation on Parking Order currently on hold due to Covid-19 and finalisation of legislative process with Dfl. Informal consultation has taken place with a number of Disability Groups and this has influenced the Draft order which is to continue with charging but to allow additional free time to make allowance for any mobility issues.
1.2	Re-examine tariffs and permitted parking durations at all sites. Review of existing Parking Order ongoing	Review of existing Parking Order ongoing. Consultation on Parking Order currently on hold due to Covid-19 and finalisation of legislative process with Dfl. Draft order makes changes to tariffs and parking duration at specific sites
1.3	Remove season ticket provision at certain sites (i.e. Cromac Street). Review of existing Parking Order ongoing	Review of existing Parking Order ongoing. Consultation on Parking Order currently on hold due to Covid-19 and finalisation of legislative process with Dfl. Draft order removes season ticket provision at specific sites
1.4	Introduce a modest charge after two hours at all non-city centre council sites apart from Shaw's Bridge. Parking to remain free for up to two hours. Review of existing Parking Order ongoing	Review of existing Parking Order ongoing. Consultation on Parking Order currently on hold due to Covid-19 and finalisation of legislative process with Dfl. Draft order would introduce a modest charge for all parking hours between 0800 and 1800 (Mon – Sat) and be supplemented with time restrictions at specific sites
1.5	Consider impact of above on adjacent areas and develop plan prior to implementation. Review of existing Parking Order ongoing	Review of existing Parking Order ongoing. Consultation on Parking Order currently on hold due to Covid-19 and finalisation of legislative process with Dfl.

		Some informal consultation has taken place with DfI Roads/Translink/Ballyhackamore Business Group/Arches Medical Centre and the consultation will include all stakeholders including local residents and businesses
1.6	Consider additional Belfast Bikes docking stations associated with parking facilities.	Expansion of Belfast Bike network ongoing along with further provision of cycling infrastructure across the city including Active Travel Hubs and covered cycle stands. This programme of work is ongoing and to be reported through CG&R committee
2. Parking Forum (lead Department CRD)		
2.1	Establish a Parking Forum.	Complete and initial meetings held pre-pandemic. Further work to continue picking up on the actions as below.
2.2	Investigate integrating parking payment, management technologies and information systems in a city wide system	Action on-going through the Parking Forum. May be explored through the development of 'A Bolder Strategy for Belfast' (City Centre Connectivity Study)
2.3	Dedicated Parking Website for city.	Council operated car parks listed on the council website and privately operated car parks listed on the Visit Belfast website
2.4	Development of city parking app.	Parking Forum decided against progressing this as it could cause poor driver behaviour e.g. use of phone while driving and that better provision could be provided through live integrated signage systems.
2.5	Investigate an Integrated Signage System.	Action to be to be progressed following support from operators. This action may be appraised further through the development of 'A Bolder Strategy for Belfast' (City Centre Connectivity Study) and agreement with DfI

2.6	Private sector parking providers should be encouraged to consider investing in parking technology.	On-going – MSCP providers are investing in their infrastructure provision
2.7	The council should encourage car park operators to invest in their facilities to the extent that they will achieve the Park Mark standard and increases spaces available for accessible and family parking.	On-going. Operators indicate that many operators currently have this standard and continue to invest within their facilities.
2.8	A Shuttle Bus to connect all of the MSCPs and the main shopping and employment areas should be considered in consultation with Translink	This option may be appraised further through the City Centre Connectivity Study as a wider approach to public transportation provision. A trial of orbital shuttle buses was completed in the aftermath of the Primark fire with limited uptake in demand.
3. Strategic Sites Assessment (Lead Department CRD)		
3.1	Keep current parking stock under review with demand levels regularly monitored	MSCP provision and off-street car parking provision continually updated. A review of the CPS is to be taken forward, assessing the total car-parking stock and making recommendations for addressing the current over-provision of city centre parking.
3.2	Identify opportunities to consolidate surface car parking as an integral part of new development or through new multi-storey /underground car park provision where appropriate.	Council owned Off-Street Car Parking provision progressing through the housing-led regeneration programme (formerly Strategic Sites Assessment) Work continues across other public and private sector surface level car park owners to bring forward temp and permanent provision to address
3.3	Retain all council sites but with a view to incorporation within MSCP provision.	Work progressing to assess existing & proposed stock. Findings continue to be reported to the CG&R Committee.
4. Infrastructure Provision (lead Department DfI)		

4.1	Free on-street parking for Blue Badge holders to remain	Current position to be maintained
4.2	Tariffs for on-street parking to be examined at a strategic level.	DfI action to be examined – DfI currently reviewing on-street parking provision and have closed a quantum of the provision in the past year
4.3	Variable pricing to be examined	DfI action to be examined
4.4	Review of ticketing and payment systems.	DfI action to be examined
4.5	DfI to consider a pilot of on-street bay monitoring	DfI action to be examined
4.6	Extend controlled on-street parking area within the core. DfI to undertake parking studies within the city centre fringe in consultation with the council.	DfI action to be examined
4.7	Improved enforcement to reduce inappropriate parking such as pavement parking	On-going throughout the city
4.8	Parking Standards to be re-examined by development type.	The LDP Draft Plan Strategy contains a policy outlining reduced parking standards within designated areas of parking restraint for residential and non-residential development. Designations will be considered as part of the revised BMTP and at the next stage of the LDP (Local Policies Plan).
4.9	Support DfI to deliver Residents Parking Schemes in specific areas of city.	Action on-going through DfI and Member Engagement. Residents Parking Scheme operational in the Rugby Road area and a further scheme at Iveagh Drive is being progressed while consultation has commenced in the Lancaster St area. Council continues to press to bring a more uniformed and expedited process forward
4.10	Wayfinding signage scheme for individual areas of city centre, including cycling routes	DfI action to be examined

4.11	Confirm location of off-street coach park and provide facility	Existing provision allowed for within the Boucher and Crumlin Road areas although the enforcement of city centre drop-off remains an issue. Potential to provide dedicated coach provision through a strategic review of the on-street parking provision.
4.12	Improve enforcement against car parks operating outside their planning conditions.	Action on-going with a number of actions followed up recently. Continue monitoring ongoing
4.13	Minimising traffic in the BMTP core.	Awaiting clarification from DfI on the process and timeframes for the preparation of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and how the governance /consultation and assessment process will be structured
4.14	Gamble Street Halt.	Awaiting clarification from DfI on the process and timeframes for the preparation of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and how the governance /consultation and assessment process will be structured
4.15	Review Park and Ride costs versus city centre parking charges.	Ongoing as part of DfI's annual works programme.
4.16	New Park and Ride sites.	An expanded Park and Ride at Blacks Road opened in November 2018 and DfI are currently developing proposals to expand Park and Ride capacity at Ballymartin, Cairnshill, Moira, Mossley, Newtownards and Sprucefield and create new facilities at Comber, Knocknagoney and Trooperslane.
4.17 – 4.18	Improve parking at train stations (including for cycles).	Improved parking facilities at approved Yorkgate Rail station redevelopment and at future Transport Hub incl. dedicated cycle parking provision

4.18	Examine feasibility of a Cycle Parking Hub.	City wide infrastructure to support the cycling network is being progressed through the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme. This includes new temporary Active Travel Hubs at Queens and Cathedral Gardens and several secured cycle parking stations.
4.19	Review the level of cycle parking provided for new developments.	The LDP Draft Plan Strategy contains a policy to ensure major new development takes account of cyclists in terms of safe, convenience and secure cycle parking. Cycle parking will also be considered as part of the review of the BMTP.
4.20	Examine taxi parking provision citywide	Ongoing as part of DfI's annual works programme



Subject:	Correspondence referred from Planning Committee – Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR Project)
Date:	8th September, 2021
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy
Contact Officer:	Eilish McGoldrick, Democratic Services 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

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The Committee is requested to consider the correspondence received by the Planning Committee from the PPR project in relation to the Take Back the City (TBTC) coalition.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and advise of any further action, if required.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	Correspondence has been received from the Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR Project), providing the Planning Committee with information relating to the Take Back the

	City (TBTC) coalition, which seeks the “development of a prototype community on the site of the former Mackie’s factory in West Belfast.” (see Appendix 1).
3.2	PPR invited the Members of the Planning Committee to attend a walkabout at the Mackie’s site in order to assess the site’s potential for addressing housing need.
3.3	<p>Given the Planning Committee’s potential role in determining any planning applications which may come forward in respect of this site, officers are of the view that it would be inappropriate for Members of the Planning Committee to accept the invitation. At its meeting on 19th August, the Planning Committee subsequently agreed to refer the invitation to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for consideration, as follows:</p> <p><i>“In accordance with the Council decision of 4th May 2021, the Chief Executive exercised her delegated authority to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• refer the invitation for a walkabout of the former Mackie’s site to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, given that it would be inappropriate for Members of the Planning Committee to accept the invitation from PPR, who were objectors to a current planning application lodged within that site; and</i> <i>• accept the invitation for Members of the Planning Committee to attend future workshops coordinated by Mr. Hugh Ellis, Policy Director at the Town and Country Planning Association, to explore the key issues in developing social housing in Belfast, on themes such as sustainability, planning, financing and contested spaces, given that they were general and not site specific, and that officers would liaise with the PPR Project and update Members of the Committee with the workshop dates and topics.”</i>
3.4	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None identified.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None identified.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	Appendix 1 – Letter from PPR Project to the Planning Committee 300621.

Councillor Arder Carson
Chair, Planning Committee
Democratic Services Section
Room 123B
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

By e-mail: chloe@pprproject.org

30th June 2021

Dear Councillor Carson and members of the Planning Committee,

I am writing to advise you about the work of the Take Back the City (TBTC) coalition, an innovative collaboration between PPR, Queen's University Belfast School of Architecture, Maynooth University and the Town and Country Planning Association. The coalition has been working together with housing activists to progress the development of social, public and co-operative housing across the city of Belfast, particularly in areas of high housing need.

A key focus for our work is the development of a prototype community on the site of the former Mackie's factory in West Belfast. Almost half of this 61 acre site is owned by the Department of Communities, with a significant amount of vacant land available to build good-quality, sustainable public housing in line with the following model:

1. Co creation in design: communities working with professionals to design their own future.

2. Local employment and skills to ensure that the development process helps build local skills and keeps investment in the local community. The final design will create local workspace and opportunities for home working.

3. A healthy place to ensure our community prioritises walking and cycling, access to parks and gardens and opportunities for growing and exchanging local food.

4. A climate-ready place to ensure that our community will be zero carbon and, if possible, energy positive. It will use sustainable urban drainage and green spaces to manage flood risk, create urban cooling, and enhance biodiversity.

5. An inclusive place to ensure our new community is open to everyone, meeting the needs of diverse people across their whole lifetime by ensuring a mixed community, with emphasis on shared community meeting spaces.

6. A self-managed community framed by a model of long-term community stewardship, so that the homes and assets will be used for benefit of residents over the long term.

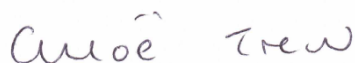
Last week (June 24th), the coalition held a highly successful and well-attended public event to discuss approaches to building a sustainable Belfast in the context of sectarian interfaces and the challenges of climate change. The event was chaired by Rory Hearne, Assistant Professor at Maynooth University and author of 'Housing Shock.' Other speakers included Grainia Long, Chief Executive of the NIHE and Minister Nichola Mallon, who confirmed that plans in progress for a greenway across the site would not preclude the building of public/social housing on Mackie's.

In addition, we were fortunate to hear from Mr Alistair Reid, Director of Place and Economy at Belfast City Council, who informed us of the Council's plans with respect to planning, economic growth and the upcoming consultation on the Belfast Agenda. Mr Reid confirmed to the coalition that any decision relating to the future use of the Mackie's site lay in the hands of elected politicians. With that in mind, we are pleased to invite members of the Planning Committee to attend a walkabout at the Mackie's site in order to assess the site's potential for addressing housing need for yourselves. Please do let us know when would suit members best. Our staff will be available at your convenience.

I am also pleased to advise that one of our coalition partners, Hugh Ellis, Policy Director at the Town and Country Planning Association is in the process of designing and delivering a number of workshops to explore some of the key issues in developing social housing in Belfast, on themes such as sustainability, planning, financing and contested spaces. Mr Ellis is an expert in planning policy and is particularly interested in the role of planning in addressing poverty and climate crisis. We would like to extend an invitation to all members to attend these workshops. Mr Ellis is keen that these are as useful and practical as possible, and therefore if members have any suggestions as to fruitful topics of discussion, he will be happy to accommodate this.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Chloë Trew".

Chloë Trew

Director, PPR, on behalf of the Take Back the City Coalition.

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Subject:	Make Yourself at Home – Tourism Plan
Date:	8 September 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager – Culture and Tourism

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2020, it was agreed that a ten-year tourism plan for Belfast would be developed. The purpose of this report is to provide a draft of the proposed plan, <i>Make Yourself at Home</i> and seek approval to commence public consultation in October 2021.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the contents of this report and agree to commence a 12-week consultation period from October 2021. - Agree to hold a workshop with Members to discuss in detail the priorities set out in the plan.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Members will be aware that at a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2020 it was agreed that a new ten-year tourism plan was to be developed. The purpose of this plan is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver on the tourism priorities set out in the <i>Belfast Agenda</i> recognising the importance of tourism to <i>Growing the economy</i> and <i>City Development</i>. - Align to the ten-year cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i>, in order to ensure that tourism development supports cultural development and is based upon an authentic and sustainable Belfast offer. - Support economic and social recovery in the context of COVID-19 including stabilisation, recovery and growth with the opportunity to build back better. - Provide strategic context to the Belfast Region City Deal that sets out wider city priorities to ensure Belfast's appeal internationally and ability to attract out of state visitors.
3.2	<p>Tourism Growth Pre Covid-19</p> <p>In August 2019 Belfast City Council agreed a new ten-year cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining 2020-2030</i>, to drive transformation in the city. For the first time, the scope of this strategy brought together under one compelling vision a number of areas including tourism, culture, heritage, arts, events and festivals. <i>A City Imagining</i> (cultural strategy) and <i>Make Yourself at Home</i> (tourism plan) should be seen as part of an overall strategic approach with strong alignment and interdependencies.</p>
3.3	<p><i>A City Imagining</i> acknowledges that whilst Belfast has enjoyed relative growth in tourism over recent years that in turn has supported regional development, it is necessary to continue to support sustainable tourism development and job creation. Belfast's first community plan, the <i>Belfast Agenda</i>, also articulates the importance of delivering a culturally vibrant city both for residents and visitors as well as acting as an attractive driver for inward investment. In order to continue to build on the value of out-of-state tourism and welcome more overnight stays in our visitor accommodation it is essential that we collaborate with our tourism sector to evolve, broaden, deepen and expand the tourism offer currently available in Belfast.</p>
3.4	<p>Despite significant growth and the success of flagship projects such as Titanic Belfast there is still a gap in scale and maturity of the local industry when compared with other regions. Notably, Northern Ireland lags behind UK regions and Republic of Ireland with respect to</p>

	<p>tourism as a driver for job growth. However, the positive trajectory in place before Covid-19 had identified tourism growth as both feasible and a necessary part of inclusive economic growth. The challenge of any tourism development plan will be to create a sustainable model that continues to support the growth that is essential for city success and the creation of jobs.</p>
3.5	<p>Belfast's tourism and hospitality sectors directly supports 19,300 jobs, one third of the sector in Northern Ireland. Key tourism sectors such as Accommodation & Food Services, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Transportation have been impacted by COVID-19 however if Belfast's recovery from the pandemic is managed then the growth potential remains high. The hospitality sector is an employment-intensive one, supporting a disproportionate number of jobs compared with the average sectoral GVA: jobs ratio. Between 2013 and 2019 employment in Accommodation and Food Services in Belfast increased by 18.2 percent, compared with 8.5 percent growth in the city's total employment.</p>
3.6	<p>It was in this context that Tourism NI set the ambitious target of doubling the value of the tourism industry to £2 billion by 2030. A key element of this opportunity further reinforced by ambitions of the Belfast Region City Deal was getting a bigger share of the international visitors coming to the island of Ireland to travel to Belfast and the Belfast region.</p>
3.7	<p>Impact of Covid-19</p> <p>While the full impact of Covid-19 is as yet unknown what is clear is that recovery will require new and innovative approaches in an increasingly competitive market. As the regional driver, Belfast will be hugely significant to this growth ambition, both in terms of visitor spend and the creation of new jobs. It is therefore imperative that our city break destination is developed in a strategic way which maximises the economic benefits that can be derived from tourism for local industries, businesses and communities, as well as increasing visitor numbers and spend and improving overall satisfaction levels.</p>
3.8	<p>In advance of the development of the tourism plan, Ernest and Young were commissioned to assess the potential impact of COVID-19 on the city. The report recognises Belfast's role in regional tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belfast is an important attractor for international, high value tourists to the region. - Belfast's share of out of state tourism spend has been significantly higher than the NI-wide share (83% v 72%).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spending by tourists in Belfast has outpaced the NI average, growing by 20% year on year compared to 4.5% regionally. - Belfast has grown at a faster rate than the rest of NI mainly because of its attractiveness in two high value markets – city breaks and business tourism.
3.9	<p>The report also sets out a number of scenarios depending on the length of the pandemic and recovery trajectory. Below is set out a series of recommendations specific to Belfast and need for stabilisation, recovery and longer-term growth. These recommendations have formed the basis for the strategic priorities and actions set out in the draft tourism plan.</p>
3.10	<p>Develop tourism supply in Belfast to foster a sustainable economic model creating jobs and improving local quality of life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring forward renovations or upgrading of tourism facilities to support the economy and improve the quality of the tourism offer in Belfast. 2. Pursue planned City Deal investments following a dynamic model based on regularly updated visitor numbers and visitor behaviours. 3. Focus on the development of resilient tourism attractions (e.g. mix of outdoor and indoor spaces, online content, attractive to locals) and mitigate the impacts for the most impacted sectors (e.g. business tourism). 4. Launch a wide consultation with key stakeholders and locals regarding the role tourism should play in a city like Belfast (e.g. urban regeneration, housing, sustainability, jobs, social inclusion, international attractiveness). 5. Identify ways for Belfast or specific attractions within the City to be distinguished internationally (e.g. awards, UNESCO, travel guides).
3.11	<p>Developing a ten-year plan</p> <p>The draft ten-year tourism plan has taken into consideration these initial recommendations alongside the existing commitments outlined in the Cultural Strategy that identified the four areas where Council could make the most difference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing the coherency of the Belfast experience - Supporting quality authentic product - Developing skills

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening the city's position through marketing and communications
3.12	<p>The approach</p> <p>The past two decades have given rise to a number of trends within tourism development. This has included the popularity of approaches such as cultural tourism, green tourism or local tourism. What each of these approaches and associated models have in common is an increasing awareness that sustainable forms of tourism must respect the local context and support the economic, social, environmental and cultural values of a place.</p>
3.13	<p>In the context of Belfast, even before COVID-19, this is a complex proposition. The city requires further growth with a clear international agenda and need to continue to attract and grow out of state visitors. The new 10 year tourism plan seeks to set out how this growth can be achieved in a responsible and inclusive way recognising that the city's greatest asset is its people.</p>
3.14	<p>The plan sets out a shared vision for tourism in the city and will be supported by 4 strategic themes and three of catalyst projects. The draft strategic themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grow Belfast - Experience Belfast - Position Belfast - Sustainable Belfast
3.15	<p>Each theme is supported by an evidence-based body of work and research.</p>
3.16	<p><i>Strategic theme 1: Grow Belfast</i> (supported by EY Recovery report)</p> <p>This theme focuses on the role of tourism in city recovery including the need for stabilisation of the tourism sector and the requirement for further growth in Belfast. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic context and evidence-based proposition that Belfast acts as a catalyst for the region. - Measurement of the attractiveness of the city as a destination and how this plays a key role in maximising the economic impact of each visitor by increasing average length of stay and daily spending levels. - Priority areas for investment e.g. catalyst projects. - Introducing social, cultural and environmental measures to better understand and advocate for the true value of responsible tourism growth.

3.17	<p><i>Strategic Theme 2: Position Belfast</i> (supported by a Positioning Review completed by Blue Sail Consulting).</p> <p>A critical dimension to any tourism development plan is understanding the market and how the brand operates in this space. In order to develop an effective strategy there also needs to be consideration of the brand architecture for the city and the region. The result should be clarity of roles and responsibilities for agencies working in this field including Council's own role and city partners such as Visit Belfast and Tourism NI. The ten year plan sets out a dynamic model for city positioning that strengthens Belfast's role as the gateway to the region in a way that responds to key markets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Tourism and sub-sectors within this group. - Leisure tourism target markets including - geographic considerations and the visitor journey.
3.18	<p>This theme takes forward a new approach that pushes beyond traditional marketing methods towards enabling the people creating the Belfast experience to tell their story. Therefore, the approach is narrative driven and the new plan sets out areas of support on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we tell Belfast stories? How do we enable people to tell their Belfast story? - How do we create an emotional connection with visitors? - How do we make local stories resonate internationally?
3.19	<p>The theme brings forward actions that support an effective way of working and will be particularly dependent on successful establishment of governance and leadership support mechanisms that will be strengthened to support the overall delivery of the plan.</p>
3.20	<p><i>Strategic theme 3: Experience Belfast</i> (supported by Visitor Experience Framework developed with CHL Consulting)</p> <p>The plan provides a summary of key actions to strengthen the coherency of Belfast's overall visitor experience. The plan contains strategic priorities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - include experiences that can be brought to life through the development of an optimal mix of 'anchor' and ancillary products that get people into an area and keep them there - focuses on encouraging international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interacting with people, engaging the senses and learning the history and stories of the places. - prioritises delivering immersive moments that inspire tourists not only to share their experience with others but also make them want to return to the city.

3.21	<p>This theme is critical to the overall success of the overall plan due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the role of Belfast City Council in developing the Belfast experience through the development of Council assets - Support for local initiatives and development plans through geographic or thematic based community development <p>Therefore, a full Belfast Experience Framework has been developed to support implementation. This detailed Framework will be presented to Committee in January 2021 alongside a revised plan followed public consultation. It is proposed that engagement with Members of this Framework takes place through a dedicated workshop.</p>
3.22	<p>In developing this Framework, a number of pieces of foundational work have been completed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A mapping exercise which maps our existing tourism assets against the city's 'Belfast brand' and Tourism NI 'Embrace the Giant Spirit' brand. - Assessment of the quality, market fit and sustainability of existing products. - Development of a proposed combination of thematic and geographical clustering. - Undertaken a gap analysis of potential experience-based products. The gap analysis reviewed what was missing from the tourism offer taking into consideration issues such as seasonality, immersive experiences, events and festival animation, and opportunities to meet local people for instance. - Consideration of investment and evaluation criteria for longer term priorities and programmes of support incorporating social, environmental and economic factors.
3.23	<p><i>Strategic theme 4: Sustain Belfast</i> (supported by benchmarking of Belfast as part of Global Destination Sustainability Index)</p> <p>This theme is shaped by recommendations emerging from the benchmarking completed as part of Global Destination Sustainability Index. Members will be aware that Belfast signed up to this benchmarking following Committee approval in August 2020. The Global Destination Sustainability Index is the world's leading benchmarking and performance Index for cities, their events and their visitor economy. Its purpose is to engage, enable and inspire cities to become more sustainable places to visit, meet and thrive in. In addition to benchmarking a city's environmental strategy and social sustainability performance, the GDS-Index assess criteria that are industry specific: industry supplier support (restaurants, hotels, conference centres) and convention bureau strategy and initiatives. Alongside benchmarking it helps destination management organisations, convention bureaus, key</p>

	industry associations suppliers and clients to develop effective strategies and practices in support of sustainability goals.
3.24	<p>Since 2019, over 60 cities have started the process of benchmarking and assessment. The goal is to have 300 cities collaborating by 2023. The Index is based on 69 Indicators broken down into four categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City Environmental Performance - City Social Performance - Supplier Performance - Destination Management Performance
3.25	<p>Belfast has now completed benchmarking and a series of recommendations are included in the 10-year plan. A number of these relate to Visit Belfast's role as the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and Visit Belfast have already made significant progress in implementing these as part of their current funding agreement with a commitment to build on this on a multi-annual basis. However, Council also has a direct role and recommendations within the plan include the establishment of a taskforce and a sustainability lab for tourism in Belfast. Further action is also set out in relation to the following areas:</p> <p><u>Council assets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing plans for Council's assets and supporting the ICC (as the city's Congress Venue) to achieve accreditation. - Embed tourism in city emergency planning. <p><u>Supporting the supply chain</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a tiered certification strategy for suppliers set targets for certification. - Funding support to help / incentivise suppliers achieve 3rd part accreditation Sustainability training for suppliers. - Training and capacity building to help suppliers create and implement their own sustainability policies.
3.26	<p>Catalyst Projects</p> <p>All four of these strategic themes are underpinned by the need to support inclusive economic growth and to differentiate the Belfast offer in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. A fifth strand to the plan considers key strategic opportunities that could</p>

	bolster investment in the sector in order to support recovery and future growth. These are catalyst or accelerator projects and are outlined below.
3.27	<p><u>Catalyst Project 1: Our Place – support for local tourism</u></p> <p>Adopting a place-based approach to the development of our neighbourhoods through local tourism investment that supports product development, jobs creation and destination management including the design and delivery of a Belfast Experience Development Fund to support product development. There are also opportunities to support capital development through alignment with existing programmes such as the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.</p>
3.28	<p><u>Catalyst 2: Make Yourself at Home</u></p> <p>This is a renewed commitment to long-term initiatives contained in the cultural strategy including signature Belfast events, International Year of Culture and UNESCO City of Music. The global summit of One Young World has been secured for 2023. A plan will be developed to bid for other major events that support the ambitions set out in the plan. Members will be aware that Belfast had planned to host a year of culture in 2023 in line with the original European Capital of Culture bid. However, the ongoing impact of COVID-19 at a city level in terms of the capacity of our local sector to deliver something of this scale in 18 months and the trajectory for the full return of international markets increasing makes this challenging. Therefore, it is now proposed that a multi-annual approach is taken forward focussing initially on the period 2022-24. Building on the cultural strategy, we have positioned events as one of the catalyst programmes for tourism to help contribute to the city's long term growth (visitor numbers, dwell time, spend and brand positioning) and in particular act as a key motivator for GB and Ireland visitors as part of the next phase of recovery. Over this initial period this would include at least 2 flagship events each with a critical mass of homegrown activity in 2024. Consumer sentiment research is already indicating that Events will be a key differentiator for cities in terms of re-establishing market position post-COVID. It is proposed an update report on events is presented to Committee in November 2021 following the result of the UNESCO City of Music bid.</p>
3.29	<p><u>Catalyst Project 3: Our Stories</u></p> <p>Delivering the Belfast Destination Hub as part of the tourism pillar of the Belfast Regional City Deal must be part of an overall integrated approach to tourism development and inclusive economic growth for the city. The Hub will connect to local tourism product development and infrastructure through a hub and spoke model. Importantly the Hub will</p>

	<p>be an exemplar for responsible and sustainable tourism demonstrating the principles set out in the ten-year plan. Through the focus on Belfast Stories, the Hub will also be transformative for the positioning of the city. The development programme for the Hub as part of BRCD is fully aligned to this 10-year tourism plan with cross-cutting priorities and synergies.</p>
3.30	<p>Next steps</p> <p>Subject to approval, the draft plan <i>Make Yourself at Home</i> included at Appendix 1 will be subject to a 12-week public consultation with a revised plan presented to CGR Committee in January 2022. It is proposed that a workshop for Members will take place during the public consultation phase.</p>
3.31	<p>Significant engagement has already taken place with public sector stakeholders such as Visit Belfast, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland as well as with the tourism industry. To build on this, a detailed consultation plan will be delivered optimising a number of consultation methods including online platforms, workshops (by sector and by theme) and surveys.</p>
3.32	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are currently no immediate financial implications to this report. The final plan will be supported by implementation programmes and a detailed finance and resource plan will be presented to Committee as part of the next phase of work.</p>
3.33	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i> has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). A specific screening is being carried out on this plan that will be included as part of the consultation exercise and presented to Committee in January 2022. The Belfast Destination Hub will be subject to a separate Equality Impact Assessment. It is also anticipated that should any investment programmes emerge from this plan these will be subject to further equality screening.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1: Make Yourself at Home – Planning for the future of tourism</p>



**MAKE
YOURSELF
AT HOME**



Belfast

Planning for the future of tourism

Page 51

**We are a city that confounds expectations. A city that's like no other.
For a capital city we're small... compact. Our heart is big.
Our spirit strong. Our energy palpable.
Our character stout. Our humour dark.
And the craic is mighty.**

We're a great city that welcomes you with open arms - and we're ready to tell our stories to the world. For visitors there's the unforgettable experience of being in a city in transition - an edgy city that's on the move. Colourful, complicated, messy... and magnificent.

Because Belfast is a city that's rich in so many ways.

Richly storied: an early coastal settlement named Béal Feirste, enfolded by hills, rivers and loughs, this is a place with a long and complex history, a tapestry of narratives, and now a new story in the making.

Richly ornate: this industrial powerhouse of the 19th and early 20th centuries has lavish façades and gorgeous interiors - not just the grand civic buildings but its pubs and cafés and hotels.

And rich in culture, talent and creativity: with our history of making things, our extraordinary street art, our live music scene, our sporting legends and our unique dialect that helps give the city its different sound. Belfast's long been home to creators who dare to dream - industrial designers and innovators, technicians and craftspeople, as well as artists, writers and poets, music and film-makers.

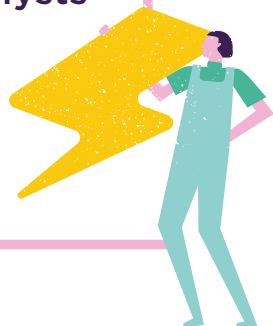
There are other giants in Belfast too - the world famous story of the Titanic and the towering new edifice that marks its creation, the sleeping giant's silhouette on the ever-present Belfast hills that encircle the city, the huge yellow dockside cranes Samson and Goliath which dominate the skyline, the Peace Walls that open your eyes to the recent troubled past.

In one trip you can experience a cultural city, a vibrant evening city, a maritime river city, a university city, a foodie city and a historic city. Belfast's story is all around you - it's written (quite literally) in the paving stones and on the walls. And after a day or two here - walking the streets, hearing the stories, listening to the voices - you start to make the connections. You start to unlock the past. You start to understand the banter. You start to feel like you belong. Which is a nonsense, of course... but tourism's still relatively new here, and the people go out of their way to make you feel at home. There's a generosity to strangers that can take the visitor by surprise... but it shouldn't: it's part of the local DNA.

So... BELFAST IS READY. ARE YOU?

6

Catalysts
p29



5

Sustain
p23



4

Experience
p19



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Making it
happen
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MAKE
YOURSELF
AT HOME

Belfast

1

Open doors
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Grow
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3

Position
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Chapter 1

OPEN DOORS

THE INVITATION

If future-proofed cities are a global aspiration, then now is the time for Belfast to stop chasing the horizon and realise that despite our complex challenges, we've had the solution all along. Our greatest asset is that of any city - our people. To have the confidence and belief that the rest of the world might be interested in a city situated at the northernly point of an island on the edge of Europe, is to reach into the heart of this pandemic and affirm that connection and social interaction are fundamental human needs. When our lives contracted to the footprint of our bricks and mortar homes, we promised that when life returned to normal, we would do things differently. As we open our doors again, as citizens and as a society, let us extend the invitation to make yourself at home to our neighbours, both local and global.

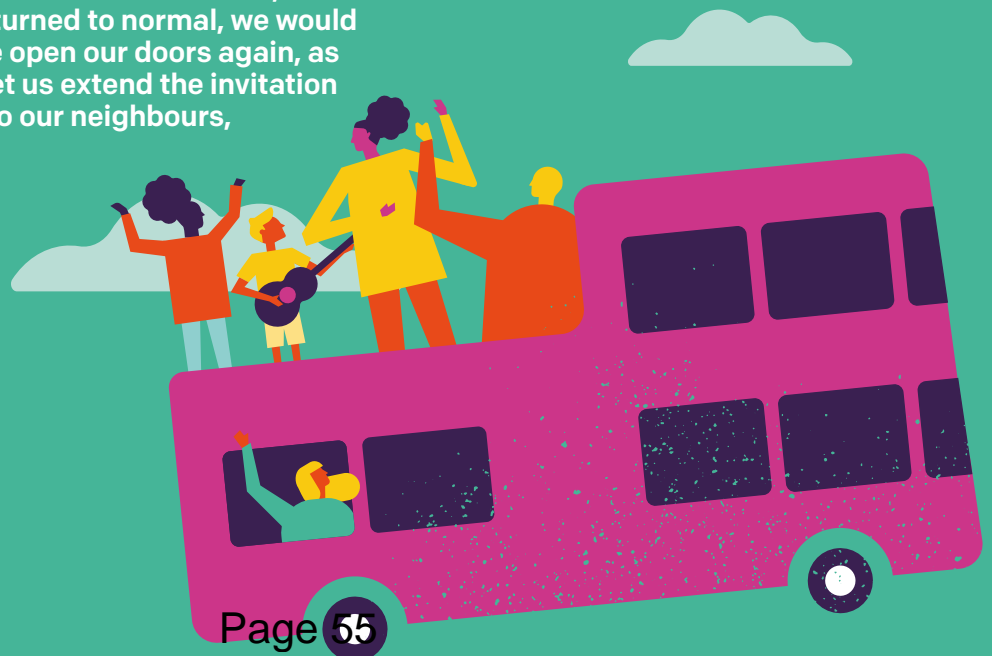


Image opposite:
Pottinger's Entry
by Irony

THE CHALLENGE

Tourism hasn't always had the best reputation with a tension between the economic and regeneration benefits of the visitor economy and the potential for negative impact on the local population and on the planet. Yet for a city such as Belfast, juxtapose this with the ebb and flow of people arriving and departing and we quickly realise that visitor mobility creates a permeability to our city that can enrich our own lives. This plan seeks to build on the success of tourism to date acknowledging both the investment of the public sector and the significant contribution of business, local enterprise and communities in taking risks and establishing, in a relatively short period of time, a city offer of culture, heritage and hospitality to be celebrated. The next phase of development should now commit to an inclusive approach that recognises the importance of tourism and global connectivity to our economic and social wellbeing, but to do so under the principles of being people-centred, responsible and sustainable.



People-centred

This plan is centred around the local and the visitor and how to create the environment for interaction, engagement and exchange. This will include ongoing research that better understands the needs of the visitor and provides evidence of the inclusive benefits of tourism to local people, businesses and neighbourhoods.



Responsible

The role of local government in tourism development has evolved in recent years and is likely to continue to do so. This plan therefore sets out those key actions within Council's sphere of agency to affect positive change whilst also recognising our role in influencing and shaping policy and legislative reform in support of a visitor economy that will effectively serve the city and the region.



Sustainable

A people-centred and responsible approach to tourism development should align to sustainable development goals across economic, social and environmental spheres. This plan commits to striving to introduce models of best practice and to better understand the effects of our collective actions both positive and negative.

THE ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE

The early development of today's tourism industry in Belfast was largely organic, driven by the 'culturally curious' visitor who was keen to see, do and experience something a little different. To date this development has been largely positive with heritage-led investment projects such as Crumlin Road Gaol and the iconic architectural infrastructure of Titanic Belfast receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from visitors and collectively drawing in excess of 1 million visitors in 2018-19.

Despite huge efforts, there is still a gap in scale and maturity of the local industry. Notably, NI lags behind the rest of the UK and Ireland with respect to tourism as a driver for Gross Value Added (GVA) with just 2.3% of NI's GVA attributable to tourism compared to the Republic of Ireland reported at approximately 3.9% and in Scotland at 4.1%. It was in this pre-COVID-19 context that Tourism NI set the ambitious target of doubling the value of the tourism industry to £2 billion by 2030.

A key element of opportunity is getting a bigger share of the international visitors coming to the island of Ireland to travel to Belfast and the Belfast region. As the gateway to the region, Belfast will be hugely significant to this growth ambition, both in terms of visitor spend and the creation of new jobs. It is therefore imperative that our destination is developed in a strategic way that maximises the economic and social benefits which can be derived from tourism for local industries, businesses and communities, as well as increasing visitor numbers and their spend and improving overall satisfaction levels. In the light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic it is imperative to plan for the future and to ensure that tourism continues to build as a key export for Northern Ireland. This plan therefore sets the target of doubling tourism revenue by 2030.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Belfast's ambition to attract more visitors who stay longer will depend on our ability to deliver memorable experiences. This relationship starts at the first point of contact with the prospective visitor which is now increasingly taking place within a digital space. For the traveller their connection to a place is established before their decision to visit. Whether through traditional media, online platforms or word of mouth we make certain associations with particular cities. In Belfast, we must continue to challenge perceptions of our city and establish new relationships with our global communities. In recent decades we have confounded expectations and for those who have made the decision to visit us, we have left them with a new appreciation of the place we call home. The opportunity now is to raise this bar and to move from confounding to celebrating.

By maximising our unique cultural assets and applying a creative approach to our marketing campaigns, we can create more engaging experiences for visitors that will leverage better overall tourism outcomes for Belfast and the NI region. Research indicates that international visitors seek authentic, immersive experiences that allow them to connect with the people and place. It is therefore no surprise that Council made the decision to invest in a ten-year cultural strategy and this tourism plan should be considered a further iteration of the ambitions set out in the cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*. If we recognise the value of culture to the lives of our citizens then by extension this should be shared with all those who chose to live, work and visit here. Belfast is a city of stories and storytellers. The diversity and richness of many of these stories is yet to be told or experienced.



THE PLAN

Four strategic themes will provide a framework for delivery that initially includes three exemplar catalyst projects. These will be supported by a new investment and governance model with measures of success aligned to the *Belfast Agenda* and *A City Imagining*, ten year cultural strategy. Our ability to work in partnership with government, tourism agencies including Tourism Ireland, Tourism NI and Visit Belfast alongside communities and the tourism sector will be critical to the successful delivery of this plan.

GROW

The role of tourism is critical to **city recovery**. For Belfast this will mean the stabilisation of the tourism industry and the requirement for further growth.

POSITION

This theme seeks to **strengthen Belfast's positioning** in national and international tourism markets - business and leisure - and as a gateway to the region.

EXPERIENCE

Increasing connectivity between existing and planned for tourism assets will improve the overall Belfast Experience, inspiring the visitor to stay longer, return and to recommend the city to others.

SUSTAIN

The **sustainable development** of cities is not just a local imperative it is also a key motivation for the visitor. This theme sets out how we do more, do it better - and together.



Chapter 2

GROW THE INVITATION

Alongside our contribution to the regional economy comes a responsibility to foster collaboration and transcend boundaries. Given the relatively small size of the destination, this is particularly relevant. The recovery potential of Belfast as a tourism destination and economic driver is strong in part thanks to the yet untapped potential in closer-to-home markets including Great Britain and Ireland. We need to keep growing our tourism product and investing in our people in order to answer fast evolving expectations of visitors. We have never had a better opportunity to create an exemplar model for inclusive tourism and in so doing foster the authenticity and vibrancy visitors are seeking. The benefits will be tangible - we need to measure them so that we can maximise them. The value of tourism to Belfast can be shaped by the people of Belfast.



THE CORNERSTONE

Belfast has played an essential role in the success of tourism in Northern Ireland to date and must now be a catalyst for recovery.

- We foster the international attractiveness of the region as a tourism destination
- We are an important part of the Northern Ireland and island of Ireland tourism journey
- We provide half of Northern Ireland's hotel capacity
- We attract higher value tourists and a larger proportion of four and five star hotels, driving tourism spend
- Tourism in Belfast has grown at a faster pace than the rest of Northern Ireland, mainly because of our competitiveness in two high value markets: city breaks and business tourism

The result is that up until 2019, Belfast tourism and hospitality sectors directly supported 19,300 jobs, accounting for one third of the sector in Northern Ireland.

However, we also know that these were the very strengths that left the tourism and hospitality sectors particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19. Belfast is more reliant on overseas tourism and we will continue to experience the sustained effects of the pandemic on city breaks, cruise holidays and business tourism.

What is critical, is that we address these immediate challenges to ensure that skills, talent and business viability are maintained to support recovery. We cannot lose sight of longer-term ambitions and

should continue to invest in the future through initiatives such as the Belfast Region City Deal to safeguard our forward resilience and potential for growth. The effects of the pandemic are far-reaching and ongoing, however we must ensure that when global tourism returns, Belfast is in a strong position to compete and to continue to increase the attractiveness of the destination.

**1 NIGHT
OUT OF 3**



Belfast accounts for 32% of Northern Ireland's tourism nights

**1 JOB
OUT OF 3**



Belfast supports 31% of Northern Ireland's tourism jobs

**£2 OUT
OF £5**



Belfast generates 40% of Northern Ireland's tourism spend

MORE THAN TOURISM

Belfast should continue to be a catalyst for the development of tourism in Northern Ireland and we need to better understand and monitor our performance as a city. Given the relatively small size of Northern Ireland, the impact of local authority collaboration can have a high impact. What benefits one local area, is likely to benefit another, as a visitor rarely observes strict geographic boundaries. Proposing a diverse and high-quality tourism offering is key to increasing the number of visitors and the average length of stay. In order to understand and grow the full value of tourism, it must be better monitored and measured. We need to move beyond bed nights as a measure of success to understand that the value of tourism can be felt and measured on many levels, providing insights that can inform future investment. We must also consider how Belfast tourism can:

- **Stimulate regional growth:** tracking credit card data rather than just occupancy rates, will help to understand how visitors move between city and region and the contribution of Belfast to Northern Ireland. We also need to better understand the value derived from business tourists who, beyond their conference, often extend their stay both inside and outside the city. In doing so, they become high value leisure tourists.
- **Contribute to wider brand positioning:** Business tourism also supports international attractiveness and foreign investments. World-class professional events contribute to perceived attractiveness as an innovative place to do business. This also contributes to a city's real competitiveness, fostering the development of a knowledge economy, sharing best practice, making business connections and ultimately creating a successful ecosystem.
- **Support inclusive economic growth:** Inclusive tourism, as defined by the UN, creates an environment for all parts of the city to benefit from tourism. This requires analysis to better understand access issues such as geographic or demographic challenges. The result should be a more tailored response to support job creation and skills development.
- **Regenerate cities:** Tourism infrastructure improves connectivity, which in turn creates a more permeable city, with the movement of people that can support further regeneration. For example, these benefits are often evident when considering the relationship between tourism investment and waterfront regeneration. There is a need to better understand this model and extend its application to city centre and neighbourhoods especially as part of the re-imagining of our high streets.

GROW ACTIONS

Actions will be aligned to key success factors to help develop the destination, ensuring short-term recovery and longer-term resilience and growth. This will be measured through the development of new key performance indicators and a city tourism dashboard.

Collaborate

- We must work together to improve the coherency and connectivity of the visitor experience. This should include all parts of the ecosystem such as government departments, Tourism NI, Visit Belfast, Belfast City Council, the private sector, the voluntary sector and other local authorities. Tourists do not recognise administrative boundaries and the NI destination is small. Belfast has a critical role to play in the success of Northern Ireland. This needs to be better understood and measured.

Measure

- We will improve the capture of data, the analysis of performance and the evidence-based approach to decision-making. This new tourism plan must build and establish an evidence base that can then be regularly reassessed and communicated to stakeholders.

Invest

- We will invest in tourism products that can adapt to fast-evolving demand, stimulate tourism jobs and maximise the benefits for locals. Investment will be aligned to the distinctive characteristics of Belfast as an authentic and vibrant place as set out in a new Visitor Experience.

Recover

- We recognise that growth ambitions must be grounded in the stark reality of the impact of COVID-19, not only on the tourism and hospitality sectors, but also on the creative and cultural communities who create the authentic Belfast stories that attract visitors and help position Belfast as a destination. Therefore, we must continue to provide short-term support for the tourism and hospitality sector to protect jobs and maintain the recovery potential of the sector post COVID-19. We also need to look at how innovation addressing immediate needs can contribute to sustainable changes - things like adapting the tourism offering to new visitor expectations (such as open spaces) and new markets that could continue to grow in the medium term (for example, local, GB, Ireland and parts of Europe).

Aspire

- We aspire to be an inclusive, authentic and vibrant tourism destination, with the ambition for Belfast to be recognised as a leading standard globally. The legacy of peace-building and the commitment to inclusive economic growth should be applied to tourism as a contributor to wellbeing.
- Major investment opportunities such as the Belfast Region City Deal, which includes the Belfast Destination Hub, will not only support the visitor economy, they will regenerate the city and improve connectivity. Investment in live events and creative industries, as well as the development of new experiences and infrastructure, can be positive accelerators to move from recovery to transformation.

Chapter 3

POSITION

BOLD AMBITIONS

The Belfast Agenda sets out the belief that Belfast can be a city that people dream to visit. A place that is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable. It also sets out long-term goals to grow the value of out-of-state tourism exponentially and to develop another world-class visitor attraction in the city. We recognise that tourism plays a vital role in the city's economy, its employment opportunities, especially for the young, and its support for small businesses and entrepreneurs. Further brave thinking came out of a setback, when our bid to be recognised as European Capital of Culture was cancelled due to Brexit. Determined to build on the momentum behind the bid, we produced a 10-year cultural strategy, *A City Imagining* that commits to bidding for UNESCO City of Music and to an international year of culture. Initiatives such as these, combined with plans for the new world-class attraction, the Belfast Destination Hub, provide opportunities to put Belfast's people at the centre of our story and to begin talking about the city in a new way to the rest of the world. These signal a new approach to the positioning of our city and our home.



A WAY TO GO

Of course no one knew COVID-19 was on the horizon when these ambitious strategies and plans were developed. The city's growth markets of business tourism, city breaks and cruises have been hit hard by the pandemic. However, early thinking is that Belfast is in a good position to recover post-COVID-19 thanks to our connectivity (especially to potential growth markets in GB and ROI), our strong assets, our authentic experiences and our development plans.

Belfast is Northern Ireland's most-visited destination. More than half (52%) of all visitors to NI visit Belfast. Some 90% of NI business events take place in Belfast. It also encourages visitors to explore NI. In Tourism NI's Visitor Attitudes Survey 2018, 48% of visitors said they were influenced to visit Northern Ireland by the city of Belfast, 38% by Titanic Belfast and 16% by *Game of Thrones* locations.

Belfast has experienced exceptional tourism growth in the past decade. Out-of-state overnight stays to Belfast grew by more than 70% in the five years to 2019. The drivers for this growth were city breaks and business tourism - both high-value markets. Cruise tourism has also contributed: numbers of cruise ships docking in Belfast almost tripled between 2013 and 2019, overtaking Dublin. Belfast is seen as more than a city break for many. Some 42% of out-of-state visitors to Belfast also visited the Causeway Coast and Glens.

However, despite this growth, we continue to face perception challenges. A recent qualitative study across 12 countries found the city "is not yet recognised as having desirable emotional connections". It is thought of as a working city, rather than for one for tourism and a tourist destination, or at most "a work-in-progress" - appealing to early adopters.

Agencies such as Tourism NI and Visit Belfast use common themes in their destination marketing and these are picked up and repeated by the travel media. Yet to date, there is no simple shared positioning for Belfast that would strengthen our image and differentiate us from other UK or European cities. Tourism Ireland uses its emotive proposition '*Fill your heart with Ireland*' while Tourism Northern Ireland has developed its new '*Embrace A Giant Spirit*' brand. The focus of both is on the emotional, human connection.

When it comes to icons associated with Belfast, Titanic and *Game of Thrones* are used frequently - both visually and in words, for example 'Titanic City' and 'Home of Thrones'. While downplayed by the official tourism agencies in consumer marketing, the Troubles are almost always mentioned by external media - differentiating Belfast from other city destinations, but also invariably as a hook to tell the story of how the city has progressed into a peaceful and safe place: a city reborn that's worth taking a look at.

A STATEMENT

We've done a lot of thinking about Belfast's brand and image, especially in recent years. We have invested in both the city brand and a visioning narrative for tourism which have been developed with stakeholders, consulted on with local people and market tested.

Tourism NI has developed a bold new experience brand, 'Embrace A Giant Spirit', to take to market in partnership with Tourism Ireland over the next few years. The marketing and product development investment behind this will help to reposition Northern Ireland as a visitor destination. As its principal destination, it's essential that Belfast should be central to its implementation. Unsurprisingly, there is coherence between these pieces of work. Working with Visit Belfast and Tourism NI, there is an opportunity to ensure that the positioning of Belfast draws on and aligns with this work and investment. As well as the existing consumer-facing brands and narratives, the city needs a positioning statement that can be shared, with and used by, stakeholders to guide destination marketing and development.

The positioning statement is a set of concepts. Bringing these concepts to life - through creative marketing, visitor servicing and product development - will give us a clear competitive position in the market place. The positioning statement is not consumer facing, it is not a strapline, it will not have a logo, it is not marketing copy. It sits 'behind' the visioning narrative and city brand. It is to be used by us as a 'filter' to guide investment in tourism development and to select and shape marketing messages and content - to decide which experiences are developed and taken to market.

It is evidence-based. It draws on market intelligence - on what visitors currently feel and what we predict Belfast's target markets will look for in the future.

Our positioning statement is: **"Belfast - gateway to Northern Ireland - a city that confounds expectations and rewards curiosity".**

GATEWAY

Positions Belfast as the base from which to explore Northern Ireland and establishes its status as principal destination and attractor. It provides a strong reason to visit, and to stay longer.

CONFOUNDS EXPECTATIONS

Reflects the research and addresses lack of awareness of the breadth and richness of the city's offer. It challenges out-of-date perceptions of Belfast.

REWARDS CURIOSITY

Promises an intriguing city with layers of stories, a city that repays the effort of making the journey, delivers for the engaged visitor and is ripe for exploration.

POSITION ACTIONS

Plans for the Destination Hub and the themes of *A City Imagining*, already put stories front and centre in Belfast's tourism development and promotion. The task now is to ensure that the tactical implementation of these strategies match the city's positioning statement.

This is about doing things differently, rather than in addition. As a visitor, stories pull you in, hold your attention and create emotional connections. Belfast as a gateway is a win-win- not replacing what we have to offer but adding to it, raising our profile and providing a reason to stay longer. Digital platforms, technologies and spaces are tools that can showcase Belfast. It is interesting stories told by dynamic storytellers, that will lead to the successful positioning of Belfast.

Gateway

By fusing the city and region, Belfast can be seen as more than a city break and can become the gateway to the Northern Ireland experience and a must-see part of the island experience. This requires new levels of collaboration between partners to:

- Develop maps and apps to give an idea of distance and means of travel to places inside and beyond the city limits.
- Produce creative driven, thematic content to showcase regional experiences that have Belfast at their heart.
- Strengthen Gateway messaging on online platforms that promote the city and region.

Curated Stories

If Belfast is a city of stories, then we should provide a storytelling 'stage' in destination digital platforms for the city's players to act on. This moves city marketing from broadcasting orchestrated outputs to being a curator of stories, shifting from 'one voice' to 'many voices' through:

- User-generated content that can be shared via social channels and integrated into websites with incentivised use of hashtags (for example, share your #BelfastStory)
- Curated blogs supported by monthly guest editors, from the recognised name to the local. Contributors should include travel writers, bloggers, conference ambassadors, students, diaspora, experts (such as chefs and artists) photographers and museum curators.
- Third party content should be integrated into websites and shared via social channels

Storytelling Ecosystem

Only a fraction of what leisure and business tourism visitors see is through 'official channels'. It's Belfast stories of real people, delivering authentic experiences that the visitor is interested in. Success will depend on the ability to engage all parts of our tourism ecosystem. To create city ownership we will:

- Establish a stories framework and online platform for the city and link with plans for the Belfast Destination Hub.
- Provide practical tools to enable creativity and storytelling within the tourism sector that can tap into the visitor's desire for immersive moments that have a strong sense of place.

Chapter 4

EXPERIENCE

WORK HARD

Tourism is an experiential activity. People travel to experience another place, to find out about it and to enjoy what it has to offer. The experiences available in any destination are varied and may mix the exotic with the mundane, the exceptional with the ordinary, the memorable with the forgettable. They may be communal or personal, emotional or practical, significant or slight, good or bad. For the visitor, it is the cumulative impact of the range of experiences encountered in a destination that leaves its mark and dictates whether the visitor will recommend it to others and whether they will return again. For Belfast to be a successful destination, we know that we need to work hard at enhancing and enriching the experiences that we offer to our visitors to create compelling reasons to visit - and visit again.

DEVELOPING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Our engagement with partners identified four priorities for council-led tourism development and support in the next decade:

1. Enhancing and enriching the visitor experience
2. Supporting tourism development across the city's neighbourhoods
3. Strengthening tourism and marketing communications in line with city positioning
4. Supporting skills development to enhance tourism growth and development

As a first step, we commissioned the development of a Visitor Experience Framework for the city which allows the city's tourism partners to agree on a number of unique selling points (USPs) that are authentic to Belfast and to coalesce buy-in for investment in a series of products and/or experiences that will give substance to those USPs. We want to give visitors a compelling experiential offer within a competitive tourism market that lives up to the expectations of new marketing campaigns which will be developed with our partners as part of the delivery of this plan. For our tourism partners, this will mean that investment becomes more focused, with greater potential for return and more opportunities for packaging and developing new experiences.

The Visitor Experience Framework, which has been co-designed with key tourism stakeholders, provides a more focused and co-ordinated approach to product and experience development in the city. This is required if we are to maximise the export opportunity that the tourism sector presents locally. The Framework provides an exciting opportunity to develop, showcase and promote Belfast's destination promise, acting as a catalyst to support the social, economic and physical regeneration across the city and its surrounding neighbourhoods. It acts as the implementation tool for this wider strategic plan and should be considered as part of a collective body of work.

The Framework will:

- Include experiences that can be brought to life through the development of an optimal mix of 'anchor' and ancillary products that get people into an area and keep them there.
- Focus on encouraging international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interacting with people, engaging the senses and learning the history and stories of the places.
- Centre around immersive moments that inspire tourists not only to share their experience with others but also make them want to return to the city.



BELFAST VISITOR EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK



EXPERIENCE ACTIONS

Expanding our experience mix

- Titanic Belfast continues to act as the main attractor for the city, drawing visitors to Belfast. To enable Belfast to recover and grow, we need to get visitors to stay longer. This makes sense from both an economic and environmental perspective. Therefore we must make sure there is enough visible product in order to extend the dwell time of the visitor in the city and allow Belfast to compete with other city break destinations. This can be achieved through developing anchor and ancillary experiences to create a more coherent, accessible and compelling proposition for the visitor.

Connecting our neighbourhood tourism offer

- An impressive neighbourhood-based tourism offer has been developing in recent years. But for the visitor, this continues to come across as fragmented. Through clustering and capacity-building, there's an opportunity to uplift these individual experiences to be more market-focused. The relationship of smaller experiences to each other, and to the main city attractors, should be strengthened.

Better utilising our existing assets

- Belfast is rich in natural assets with the rivers and hills and characterised the physical landscape, although these remain largely under-utilised. Ongoing and planned development is taking place as part of the Maritime Mile, but there's an opportunity to build further on this. Greenways and Blueways have the potential to become an important part of the city experience and to change perceptions of Belfast. Accessibility of the Belfast Hills continues to be a challenge, but there's the potential to develop supporting products as part of a longer-term infrastructure plan.

Overcoming navigation challenges

- Despite the compact nature of Belfast, it's not an easy city to navigate without a car. The introduction of the Glider has improved this, but more work should be done to develop walking and cycling routes and to increase awareness and confidence through improved signage and wayfinding.

Animating our arrival experience

- First impressions count. Arrival and departure gateways are an important part of the overall visitor experience, not only in terms of providing information but establishing a connection with a place. Working with airports, harbour, rail and roads authorities, we can better animate these spaces through improved public realm and visitor servicing.

Developing capacity and skills

- The Belfast welcome is recognised as one of distinctive characteristics of our city destination. However, there's a need to build on this to create a consistency and reliability in the delivery of experiences. A long-term skills development plan to increase creative and technical capacity is required. This will ensure the quality of the visitor experience is also recognised as standout.

Addressing specific gaps and opportunities

- Further plans need to be developed to support the implementation of the Visitor Experience Framework. This should include priority areas such as a Food Tourism Actions to support the recovery and long term success of Belfast's hospitality sector as a contributor to Belfast's success to date. We must make clear commitments to accessible and inclusive tourism and this will be set out in a detailed and co-designed plan.

Chapter 5

SUSTAIN WELLBEING

Cities across the globe have been challenged by tourism. Some have been overcome with a volume of consumption that has left local residents hostile and infrastructure overrun. For others, the economic stimulus of the visitor economy remains elusive. Belfast was undoubtedly on an upward path, outpacing the rest of Northern Ireland. The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted this exponential growth. However in doing so, it has provided a breathing space to ensure that tourism development and growth can align to the city's priorities of resilience and sustainability and deliver on the people-centred vision of the cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*. In line with new global thinking, this plan seeks to move beyond the 'do no harm' model, to a regenerative form of tourism that contributes to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our city.



GLOBAL DESTINATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

This theme will be driven by recommendations emerging from the benchmarking completed as part of Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index). In 2020, Belfast City Council agreed to sign up to the GDS-Index, the leading benchmarking and performance index for cities, their events and their visitor economy. Its purpose is to engage, enable and inspire cities to become more sustainable places to visit, meet and thrive in. In addition to benchmarking a city's environmental strategy and social sustainability performance, the GDS-Index assess criteria that are industry specific. This includes industry supplier support (restaurants, hotels, conference centres) and convention bureau strategy and initiatives. Alongside benchmarking, it helps destination management organisations, convention bureaus, key industry associations, suppliers and clients to develop effective strategies and practices in support of sustainability goals.

In 2019, over 60 cities had started the process of benchmarking and assessment. The goal is to have 300 cities collaborating by 2023. The Index is based on 69 indicators broken down into four categories:



PROGRESS

The roadmap for Belfast identifies two areas where Belfast City Council can make significant difference. The first is by taking on a clear leadership role, including advocating for the importance of sustainability. With this comes the commitment to lead through action, including in the management of our own assets and in making sure that city data is captured and performance is measured.

The Resilience Strategy gives us an excellent framework to do this. The challenge will be to uplift the importance of tourism in the implementation of this strategy and in future emergency planning. To help lead this work we will create a tourism taskforce.

Council's second critical role is to support capacity building by creating the conditions and incentives supporting city suppliers to adopt sustainable models of best practice. This will be a phased approach, recognising the challenges whilst articulating the benefits of regenerative tourism. In support of this we will create a sustainability lab for tourism to foster collaboration, develop new approaches and design legacy initiatives.



SUSTAIN ACTIONS

To support the ambitions of delivering a regenerative tourism model for the city, a number of actions will be delivered. These actions will directly improve Belfast's ranking on the GDS-Index.

Leadership

- Establish a regenerative tourism taskforce aligned to Belfast's Resilience Strategy.
- Work with Tourism NI and Visit Belfast to develop a regenerative tourism dashboard for the city with long-term commitment to research and data collection.
- Position sustainability as part of city positioning, celebrating best practice and developing clear messaging.

Destination management

- Support Visit Belfast to complete certification and include sustainability Key Performance Indicators aligned to UN's Sustainable Development Goals as condition of funding from 2022.
- Work with local organisations to gain accreditation and develop sustainability plans.



Suppliers

- Develop a certification strategy with appropriate tiers including the following targets:
 - 50% of hotels by 2023.
 - 40% of wider hospitality and accommodation sector by 2023.
 - 60% of funded cultural organisations by 2023 rising to 100% by 2025.
 - 50% of funded event organisers by 2023 rising to 100% by 2025.
- Integrate sustainability credentials in recovery funding to unlock financing for industry development.
- Provide direct support to ICC Belfast to complete certification by 2023 including retention targets.

Food and drink services

- Organise training on sustainability for restaurants and caterers.
- Create a sustainability lab to accelerate circular thinking, policy and initiatives among hotels and restaurants.
- Promote and incentivise sustainability certifications for restaurants and caterers.

Partners and visitors

- Support partners with ideas and resources to support local social, environmental or economic causes and projects.
- Develop a corporate social responsibility policy for the city, to encourage visitors and partners to contribute to social and environmental wellbeing.





Chapter 6

CATALYSTS

LEGACY

We have identified three catalyst projects which we believe have the potential to be living exemplars of the vision, principles and themes set out in this plan. Each project has been designed to deliver, not simply due to scale, but rather a lasting and sustainable impact that can only be derived from strengthening, supporting and enabling our city to tell its story to the world. The legacy of this plan will be its contribution to create a new environment for creativity and enterprise to thrive. In particular, these projects are a statement of intent by Belfast City Council to continue to invest in delivering the ambition of the Belfast Agenda - for Belfast to be a culturally vibrant and welcoming city.



1. OUR PLACE

Developing local tourism

Regenerative tourism is driven by the relationship between people and place. The strategic themes of this plan uplift the importance of community in the context of tourism - and in particular, the relationship between the visitor and the host.

For a number of years, Belfast has had aspirations to take forward a community tourism framework. However, the risk with this approach is to create a hierarchy of importance - a two-tiered system defined by geography or theme. This has now been superseded by a new appreciation of the symbiotic relationship between city centre and

neighbourhoods, city and region, local and global. This plan places community at its heart. Respect for the local context, to ensure tourism-derived benefits are shared and inclusive, is evident in all four of the strategic themes - *Grow, Position, Experience and Sustain*.

As exemplars of the themes, all catalyst projects are designed to be people-centred. However, there is a need for a specific programme to support the development of local or neighbourhood-based tourism experiences. Neighbourhoods are uniquely positioned to offer the visitor the immersive experiences they are seeking:

**Celebrating
local culture,
heritage and
enterprise**

**Accessing
open and
green spaces**

**Co-creating
authentic
Belfast
experiences**

**Enjoying
day to night
food and
hospitality**

The Belfast Region City Deal identifies tourism as a key pillar. As part of this major programme, the Belfast Destination Hub will be the city's flagship investment in product development in the city. We want to make sure this investment maximises the potential for citywide, inclusive growth in Belfast.

To do this, we believe that it's critical to work in partnership to develop plans that build capacity for city neighbourhoods to meaningfully connect into the emerging broader tourism offer and to enable these local communities to become part of the Belfast visitor experience.



PRIORITY PROGRAMMES

This is both an exciting and challenging opportunity for stakeholders across a diverse range of sectors (tourism, public and private, culture, art, heritage, sport, community and voluntary) to engage in the process of co-designing authentic and sustainable cultural tourism products that will bring vitality to their own neighbourhoods, local residents and visitors alike. To this end, we propose that support should focus on the two main areas of infrastructure and product development. These programmes should support the development of community tourism both in terms of geographic communities but also communities of interest and thematic clustering. This is in addition to the actions set out under the four strategic themes contained within this plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Support for visitor servicing and information access points across the city** - including support for visitor servicing based in local areas.
- **Quality and innovative signage, interpretation and wayfinding** - including developing new digital approaches.
- **Developing Council owned visitor attractions, parks and open spaces** - including experience development plans for Belfast Castle, Belfast Zoo, Malone House, Templemore Baths, the Tropical Ravine and Palm House, and cemeteries including the City Cemetery.
- **Inclusion of tourism as a priority in the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund**

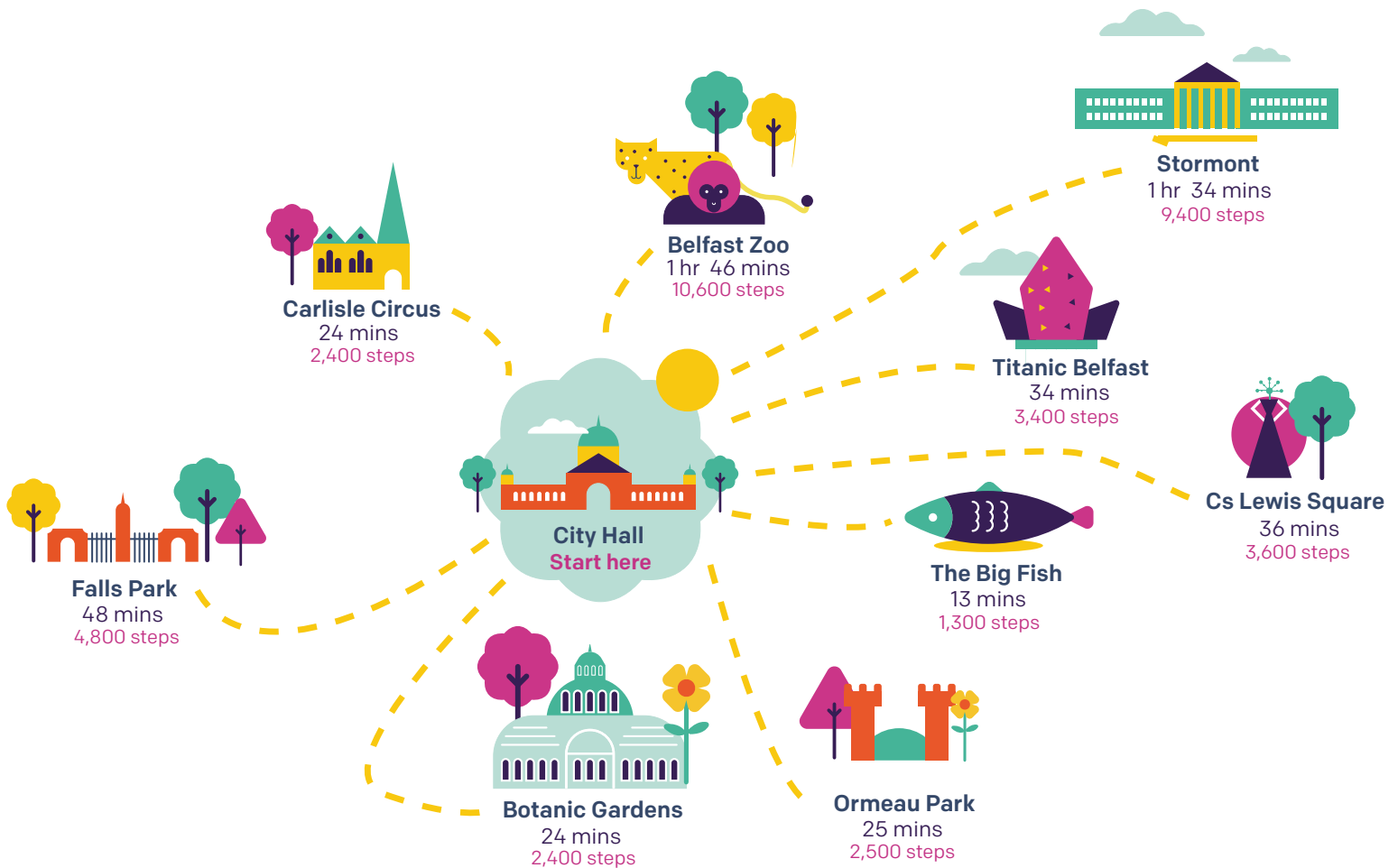
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

There is an opportunity to enable local communities to tell their stories and in so doing, create tourism experiences that respond to market research and consumer demand. Current trends are for experiential products and packages offering ease of access and a high-quality visitor experiences. Walks, trails and tours can package multiple products into an attractive and connected 'experience' within neighbourhoods. In order to facilitate product development in city neighbourhoods, we will launch an Experience Development Fund. This will support the development of tourism 'clusters' including:

- **Support from tourism experts to enhance existing products or research, or to develop and pilot new products that maximise opportunities to link with the wider city offer and ensure customer and market-led focus.**
- **Investment to bring these products to market.**
- **Long term capacity building to ensure all parts of the city have the opportunity to benefit from tourism investment.**

This programme will be implemented as part of the Belfast Visitor Experience Framework.

GET LOST... IN BELFAST





2. MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME

Establishing Belfast as a cultural destination

Belfast's cultural strategy, *A City Imagining*, recognises the importance of events and programming to the wider cultural and tourism profile of Belfast. Events can tell stories, connect people and present new perspectives on our place. As cities emerge from COVID-19, consumer sentiment research is already indicating that events will take on a new significance as motivators for travel and an opportunity for destinations to differentiate their offer. Events can create immersive spaces for the visitor to become part of an ever-evolving story.

The cultural, social and economic impacts of events cut across all areas of the Belfast Agenda. In 2017 the decision to bid for the European Capital of Culture indicated that there is a desire to enhance the quality and ambition of the cultural offer in Belfast through closer partnerships within the city, across the region and internationally. Importantly, the process revealed the creative potential of our city that could be realised if we had an environment where ambition was encouraged and rewarded. Since then, there have been high levels of support for a designated year of culture for Belfast. There has been recognition that in order to maintain civic momentum, secure buy-in from city partners and build the capacity of our cultural sector, a well-considered, well-planned cultural programme of scale and ambition is critical. These plans had originally focused on 2023, however with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing, we believe that we should take the time to recover, to dig where we stand and to rebuild the city from the assets that surround us. We are therefore setting out a six-year multi-annual approach with a renewed commitment centred around the need to invest in our creative communities.

The benefits of events and cultural programmes to cities are considerable. Many cities have used events to engage with local people, build civic pride and transform their reputation internationally. Events are one of the best ways to measure the economic, social and environmental impact of tourism as they bring together a cross section of city stakeholders. Importantly they also have the ability to create legacy.



THE PROGRAMME

In 2021 we will launch a programme designed to build momentum towards a year-long celebration of culture and Belfast stories in 2024. There will be important cultural milestones in 2022 and 2023 as Belfast plays host to a number of significant and ambitious projects. Belfast will be home to international events such as One Young World, the leading global event for young leaders, as well as the global Music Cities conference, and the city will be transformed into a forest of creativity in partnership with the Eden Project Cornwall.

The target will be to restore the international visitor economy to 2019 levels by 2024 and to help competitively position Belfast to move into a new phase of growth. This next phase of development will take us to 2027 and the opening of the Belfast Destination Hub, marking the establishment of Belfast as a cultural tourism destination. This sustained programme of activity, further reinforced by our own annual calendar of signature events, will help attract visitors back to our city, providing a much-needed boost for citizens as well as the cultural and hospitality sectors, and the wider tourism industry.

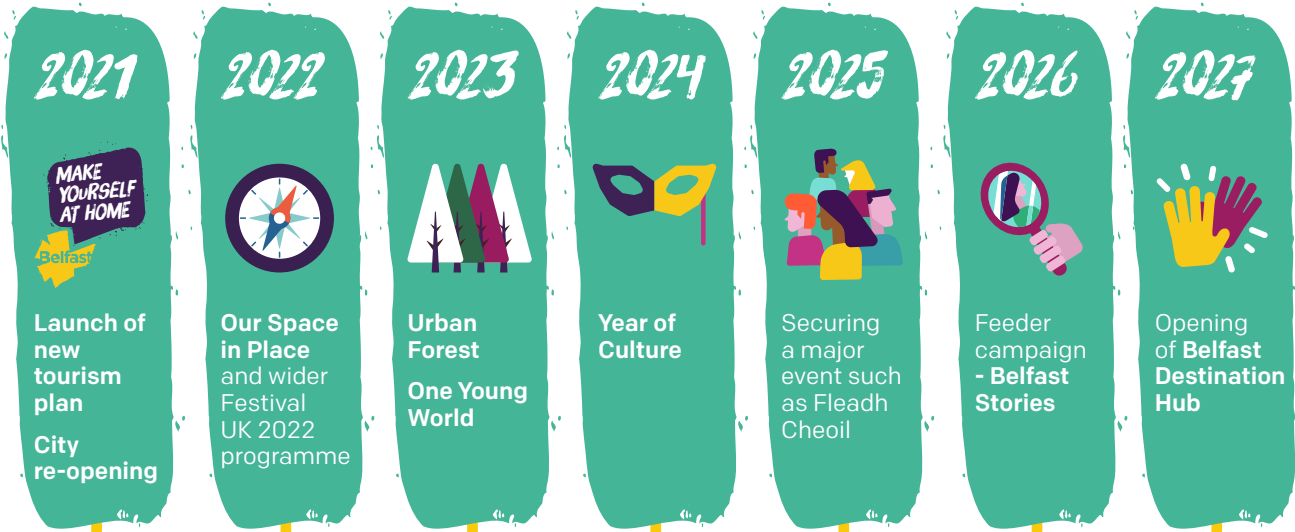
Importantly, this approach to long-term planning for events will be an exemplar for the four strategic themes of this plan: *Grow, Position, Experience and Sustain*. These events will:

- Directly contribute to the growth of the tourism industry in Belfast through an increase in out of state visitors, dwell time and spend.
- Challenge perceptions of Belfast and raise awareness of the diversity and richness of the city's culture, arts and heritage.
- Create authentic and contemporary Belfast Experiences of quality.
- Establish a model for carbon neutral activity.

Events of this ambition have the potential to be truly transformative. They will tell contemporary Belfast stories with an unprecedented international reach by fusing digital and real-life experiences. They will leave a lasting legacy of skills and capacity that will support future generations of tourism ambassadors, creative talent and storytellers. *Make Yourself at Home* takes the ambitions set out in our cultural strategy, *A City Imagining* and makes them real - Belfast will be an Urban Forest, a UNESCO designated music city, the meeting place for our global young leaders - and so much more.



MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME



UNESCO CITY OF MUSIC INITIATIVES

MAIN CREATIVE FOCUS
Over three-year period that sets out Belfast's ambition as a city that challenge perceptions

STRATEGIC PHASE 1
Raising profile and building capacity

STRATEGIC PHASE 2
Welcoming visitors to Belfast

STRATEGIC PHASE 3
Belfast is established as a cultural tourism destination

3. OUR STORIES

Introducing a new visitor destination

Imagine if there was a unique place in the heart of Belfast. A place where real stories of love and loss, conflict and peace, history and hope are told by the people who have lived them. A place where you not only get a true sense of the city of Belfast - past, present and future, but also gain new insights into the basic human needs of belonging and homeland. A place where age old stories of identity are told in a new way - a way that looks forward. A place that embodies the best of Belfast.

The **Belfast Destination Hub** is a transformational project designed to capture the unique spirit of Belfast. This major regeneration and tourism anchor will help revitalise our city centre, allowing people to connect with the city and one another through stories, screens and social spaces.

The beating heart of the Hub is Belfast Stories, a visitor experience that tells the remarkable first-person accounts of the city by the people who call it home. Stories spill out into every aspect of the Hub including the new state of the art Belfast Film Centre, offering specialist cinema content from NI and around the world.

Within the Hub, an integrated cultural, educational and commercial screen industry centre will provide working, networking and training facilities to ensure Northern Ireland's screen industry continues to grow and foster new creative talent.

This new destination will be connected by dynamic architecture and vibrant public realm, allowing for lively event programming and conversation. The Hub will offer the best of our local food and drink as the stories of Belfast unravel through all areas of the Hub. The Hub's rooftop urban park and restaurant will present 360° views over our vibrant metropolitan city.







THE AMBITION

We believe Belfast can be a leading cultural visitor destination. Belfast enjoys a strength in its current gateway role for NI and Ireland. The Belfast Destination Hub will be a tourist attraction; a cultural beacon for the city; an anchor for the wider Belfast experience and a place of orientation for visitors to the region.

Successful regions have strong and vibrant cities at their core. Belfast is no exception as the city drives much of the economic growth and shares its wealth across the region. Through the Belfast Regional City Deal, we have the opportunity to fulfil our plans to create a significant and complementary star attraction in the city centre, providing more reasons for people to visit and things to do, while supporting new and better jobs.

In a very competitive global tourism marketplace, we know that the only true differentiator is Belfast: its story, its character and its people. Following thousands of conversations with the Belfast citizens over the last five years, we know that Belfast is ready to share its stories with the world in innovative ways and to celebrate the place we call home.

The Belfast Destination Hub will bring an economic and financial return for Belfast, but the benefits

stretch way beyond the direct dividends of a new tourist attraction. Clustering is a well-tested and long-established concept in cities across the world, with growing relevance to tourism and city centres. It provides both operational benefits and wider enhancements to the brand and appeal of the components parts through increasing footfall, providing economies of scale, promoting cross-pollination of ideas and revenues resulting in a greater impact than the sum of the parts.

As global competition increases, the Hub will support Belfast in its role as the gateway to the region. It will support recovery and drive a new approach to inclusive growth and the region seeks to re-establish ambitions for a £2 billion tourism economy by 2030.

Our plans for the Hub are ambitious, inclusive and support the plans for the Belfast we want to create.

THE IMPACT

PRODUCING £15 MILLION RETURN

Estimated annual tourism GVA benefit (not including indirect or induced benefits).

WELCOMING 700,000 VISITORS

Annual visitors to Belfast Stories, Screen and Skills.

CREATING 1,400 JOBS

Direct 132 FTE with 243 in the wider economy and 1,064 in construction.

Chapter 7

MAKING it HAPPEN

There is an impetus to make change happen that is shaped both by the urgency created by a global pandemic and the organic evolution of a city increasingly confident of our place in the world. The challenges and opportunities that this presents can be reconciled through innovation. Throughout the strategic themes and proposed catalyst projects, we have sought to move forward with new approaches to tourism development that build on the successes of the past. However, innovative approaches and new thinking are required for how we do things (differently) as much as they are for what we do. The principles of being people-centred, responsible and sustainable are therefore applied to putting this plan into operation - through setting out proposed models of collaboration for governance, investment, skills development and measuring success.



GOVERNANCE

Effective governance is critical to the successful implementation of this plan. This will help provide clear ownership of actions and will support the optimal collaboration and coordination between a complex group of stakeholders including the tourism sector, government, business and community and voluntary sectors. The incentive for city stakeholders is to collectively ensure that tourism is positioned as a major city driver, generating economic activity and employment, and serving as a powerful instrument for city and regional development that will support inclusive growth and social wellbeing.

Rationale

- The actions set out in this plan will be championed by Belfast City Council, but their implementation will require the close collaboration of different partners. We know that we will need partnership working across the city and region. This tourism plan sits under the Belfast Agenda and as such, we must continue to commit to developing multi-stakeholder city models of delivery.

Structure

- A City Leadership Group will be established to ensure that the importance of tourism is recognised and championed as part of city recovery.
- An Implementation Group will be set up to drive forward progress on the actions set out in this plan.
- The Implementation Group will bring together senior representatives of the tourism industry, the public sector, the wider business sector and community and voluntary sectors. These representatives should have the agency, influence and commitment to deliver this plan and make change happen.
- The Implementation Group will be established for a fixed period of no more than three years. A review

will be carried out at the end of this period with recommendations for the future.

- A Tourism Futures programme will also be established to support new ambassadors and leaders that will have a voice in shaping tourism development in the city.

Process

- The Implementation Group will report on progress, achievements and deliverables at six monthly intervals. Belfast City Council will co-ordinate reporting, working with partner organisations involved in the delivery of individual actions. A particular focus will be on emerging barriers or constraints that challenge progress against actions and developing solutions to overcome these.
- An annual Tourism Stakeholder Forum will be convened to share insights and understanding on performance to date and on measures that need to be introduced to accelerate progress or to address issues. An Impacts Report will be published annually alongside results of an attitudinal survey of residents on the benefits of tourism.

INVESTMENT

The ambitions set out in this plan will require a new way of working and investment in people, product and place.

The Belfast Region City Deal is a transformational investment programme that includes a cross-cutting Employability and Skills pillar that supports other pillars like Tourism and Regeneration. There's a need to support recovery and growth through tailored interventions delivered alongside tourism and skills development partners. The catalyst projects in chapter 6 require dedicated investment strategies (which are underway). We also need year-round investment aligned to the plan themes.

Grow. Investing in a new research and data-driven tourism approach including:

- Establishing an evidence-based proposition that Belfast acts as the regional catalyst.
- Measuring of the attractiveness of the city as a destination and how this plays a key role in maximising the economic impact of each visitor by increasing average length of stay and daily spend.
- Evaluating accelerator or catalyst project impacts.
- Broadening economic measures to include areas such as brand value.
- Introducing social, cultural and environmental measures to better understand and advocate for the true value of responsible tourism growth.

Position. Investing in a new approach to marketing and communications including:

- Enabling the people creating the Belfast experience to tell their story.
- Uplifting Belfast's USPs in campaigns and initiatives with specific support for Belfast's authentic food and drink offer and UNESCO City of Music bid.
- Extending Belfast's reputation as a welcoming city to ensure inclusivity of all potential visitors. This includes working with the industry to create an Accessible Tourism plan.

Experience. Belfast's ability to develop the visitor experience will be critical to attracting more visitors and increasing length of stay. This will require prioritising tourism within infrastructure programmes and launching a new Experience Development Fund including:

- Developing experiences that can be brought to life through a mix of 'anchor' and ancillary products that get people into an area and keep them there.
- Focusing on encouraging international visitors to immerse themselves actively in the locale, interacting with people, engaging the senses and learning the history and stories of the places.
- Delivering immersive moments that inspire tourists not only to share their experience with others but also make them want to return to the city.

Sustain. Belfast's Global Destination Sustainability Index benchmarking provides a roadmap for change. There is now a need to invest in the implementation of recommendations including:

- Developing results-driven plans for council assets including working with ICC Belfast to secure accreditation.
- Developing a tiered certification strategy for suppliers including funding support to help / incentivise suppliers achieve 3rd part accreditation.
- Sustainability training for suppliers with tailored programmes for food and drink industry and events sector.
- Include sustainability criteria and KPIs in funding contracts including Visit Belfast.

Advocacy. The future of tourism in Belfast and the region requires innovative approaches to investment and collaboration. While areas like passenger duty and visitor levies are not within the remit of the Council, we'll adopt policy positions based on up-to-date research and evidence.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Like all cities, our greatest asset is our people. Tourism is very much a ‘people business’ and the visitor experience is highly dependent on the interactions with those who work across a range of customer touch points.

With almost 20,000 employees in 2019, tourism and hospitality is a significant employer in Belfast. The sector was devastated as a result of COVID-19 and is slowly emerging from a series of restrictions that required operators to put new ways of working in place to ensure compliance and address customer safety concerns. It's likely that the sector will continue to need support for some time to build back, given the likelihood that some restrictions may remain in place.

Outside of the challenges created by the pandemic, the tourism and hospitality sector was already facing staffing and skills challenges as a result of the UK's exit from the EU and the associated changes to migration policy which made it more difficult to attract talent to the sector.

As we move towards a rebuilding of tourism and hospitality in Belfast over the coming years, there are a number of priority skills interventions that will be required to ensure that there is both the volume and level of supply to meet the projected demand and deliver on our ambitions for growth.

Our priority areas of intervention will include:

Enhancing the attractiveness of the sector to new talent:

- This will entail working with businesses to look at how tourism and hospitality can be seen as a sector of choice, where employees can enjoy fulfilling careers. In addition to selling some of the existing

advantages, it may also require work to look at issues such as terms and conditions, working patterns and progression pathways, with the aim of attracting a wider profile of entrants into the sector.

Building management skills:

- The sector will require strong leadership to bounce back from the recent challenges. This will involve additional investment in management and leadership skills for existing staff. There will also be a growing demand for additional leadership investment in order to explore new business models, build strong teams and deliver customer excellence to underpin our world-class experiences.

Business resilience:

- COVID-19 exposed weaknesses across many sectors in fields such as digital technology. As visitor expectations change and the user experience evolves, it is essential that businesses and their employees are skilled in the use of these technologies- and that they explore how they can give their business a competitive advantage.

Entry and progression pathways:

- We have had some success through our Employment Academy model, helping businesses to meet their workforce needs. We will continue to work with local companies to ensure that they can have access to a strong pipeline of talent, creating both entry and progression pathways to fulfilling careers in sustainable and dynamic businesses.

MEASURING SUCCESS

An interactive city dashboard will be created with Key Performance Indicators developed to include:

- Number of jobs supported and economic impact
- Number, origin and type of visitor
- Occupancy rate of hotels and number of rooms per type
- Mapping of rooms in alternative types of accommodation (for example, Airbnb) including volume and average price
- Number, size and economic impact of business tourism events
- Quality of the experience (for example, proportion of attractions with Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence or equivalent)
- Overall GDSI index rating

WHAT WE WILL DO

Grow

- Analyse available data to help understand the economic impact of visitors and their movements in and beyond the city. Currently, data based on occupancy bed nights does not accurately reflect the economic contribution of the day trippers who stay in Belfast but visit the rest of NI during the day.
- Explore and implement effective ways to analyse the real value of business tourism.
- Benchmark tourism monitoring reports of other cities to understand best practice.

Experience

- The key source of qualitative data has traditionally been the Visitor Attitude Survey carried out by Tourism NI. There is an opportunity to complement this and maximise the development of qualitative data on social media and through other online tools.
- Qualitative data will include the visitor experience, consumer satisfaction, product gaps, Belfast's USPs and stand-out experiences.

Position

- Survey the top five words that come to mind of visitors to track the changing perception of Belfast and NI and analyse how visitor behaviours are evolving. This will inform investment decisions and enable the respective tourism offerings of Belfast and the rest of NI to complement each other.
- Media monitor over longitudinal period to analyse what other people are saying about the city, including key words from the positioning statement.

Sustain

- Ongoing participation in the Global Destination Sustainability Index to monitor Belfast's progress against regenerative tourism targets and sustainability credentials. Performance will be measured in the following areas: Environmental (city), Social (city), Destination Management and Suppliers.
- Conduct an attitudinal survey of residents to help assess the perceived and real value of tourism.
- Produce an analysis per social group and per neighbourhood to assess access to tourism benefits and inform initiatives that support jobs, skills, training or increased event access.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT...

Make Yourself at Home is an invitation that welcomes the visitor to Belfast. It also invites the people of our city to get involved, to tell our stories and to shape how tourism is delivered over the remainder of this decade. We hope that this draft plan will build on the work undertaken during the development of our cultural strategy and signal a new approach to developing and engaging with tourism in Belfast. We will be opening a 12-week public consultation on this draft plan in September 2021. This will be your opportunity to tell us if you think we have addressed the city's strategic priorities for tourism in the right way. This draft plan will provide a framework to support more immediate city recovery alongside longer-term growth ambitions that will benefit local and visitors alike. Your feedback will help us shape these plans - look out for our creative consultations across the city. Should you require the document in a different format please email culture@belfastcity.gov.uk with your request.







Subject:	ESF update and proposed match funding approach
Date:	8 September 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Sinéad O'Regan, Employability and Skills Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the European Social Fund (ESF) call for applications which closed in July 2021, and to seek approval for the proposed Council approach to match funding projects, subject to funding availability, in the coming financial year.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the Department for the Economy's decision to open the last year of ESF funding (2022/23) to an open call Approve the recommended approach for Council match funding, within the indicative funding envelope of £240,000 (subject to approval of 2022/23 estimates), consistent with the amounts and approach operated in the previous years

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that, subject to agreement of this approach, a report will be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee to advise on proposed funding allocations. 												
3.0	Main report												
3.1	The European Social Fund (ESF) provides funding for activity to help key target groups (long-term unemployed, economically inactive, those not in education, employment or training, disabled people) to develop their employability and skills and ultimately to find employment/self-employment. ESF providers are currently in year four of what was expected to be a five-year delivery timeframe.												
3.2	<p>Through ESF, DfE had provided funding for up to 65 projects regionally with approximately 50% of these operating from and/or within the Belfast area. Members will be aware that the Council has previously given commitment to match fund five European Social Fund (ESF) projects over the Call 2 funding period. The five projects are:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Organisation</th><th>BCC ESF Match-funding per annum</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Springboard</td><td>£27,245</td></tr> <tr> <td>Workforce</td><td>£54,699</td></tr> <tr> <td>USEL</td><td>£50,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Specialisterne</td><td>£9,080</td></tr> <tr> <td>LEMIS+/Belfast Works (ACT, USDT, EBM, GEMS NI and Impact Training)</td><td>£98,966</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Organisation	BCC ESF Match-funding per annum	Springboard	£27,245	Workforce	£54,699	USEL	£50,000	Specialisterne	£9,080	LEMIS+/Belfast Works (ACT, USDT, EBM, GEMS NI and Impact Training)	£98,966
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3.3	In May 2021, DfE advised that the proposed extension of existing funding agreements for a further year (2022/23) would not be possible, based on advice from the European Commission. Instead, they issued an open call for applications in June 2021, with a closing date of July 2021. Applications are currently being assessed and it is likely that decisions on successful projects will be made by mid-September 2021. Similar to previous years, successful projects will receive up to 65% of the requested budget, and project promoters are expected to find the matching 35% budget. This usually comes from other government departments, councils, public bodies or private organisations. Projects can also provide an element of “self match funding” where they make a contribution to the programme costs.												
3.4	ESF is administered by the Department for the Economy (DfE). This means that the council has no influence on the selection process and/or funding allocations to specific projects.												

	<p>Nonetheless, the level of resources available represents a significant investment in provision and there are opportunities to consider how the Council can work alongside selected projects as part of the solution to addressing economic inactivity in the city, complementing some of the Council-led work in this field. ESF projects and other community-based engagement and training are key elements of the pipeline of support for Council's delivery of, for example, Employment Academies as well as for the new Belfast Labour Market Partnership.</p>
3.5	<p>As part of the application process, the Council received match-funding requests from ten organisations. Officers have met with all projects at this stage in order to explain the council position and the proposed approach, subject to Council endorsement. It is not yet known how many of these projects will be successful in attracting their 65% funding from DfE. Taking account of the need to ensure provision for these priority target groups – particularly in a challenging labour market – it is proposed that the council approach to supporting ESF in 2022/23 is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the match funding at £240,000 (subject to resource availability as part of the estimates process) • Establish a transparent process for assessing which projects should receive match funding from the Council, and the amount of match funding that they should receive.
3.6	<p>In terms of the transparent process, it is proposed that a number of criteria are established and formally communicated to those seeking match funding. It is also recommended that only those projects that are successful in securing approval through the DfE call will be included as part of this process. Recommended assessment criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to address the specific areas of challenge identified in the strategic assessment recently undertaken as part of the work of the Belfast Labour Market Partnership • Ability of the project to support delivery on a city-wide basis, while recognising the need to address the spatial disparities in employment deprivation and skills levels across the city • Experience of delivering against targets such as engagement rates and outcomes such as employment/self-employment, involving ESF and/or other interventions • Assessment of how the project can complement and support delivery of planned Council interventions.
3.7	<p>Subject to Council endorsement, officers will undertake an assessment of projects seeking match funding in line with the approach set out above, following the DfE decision on successful</p>

	<p>applications. A report will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee outlining the proposed projects to be supported, including the financial allocation recommended for each.</p> <p><u>Financial and resource implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>Subject to 2022/23 financial estimates, it is proposed that an allocation of £240,000 is set aside within the departmental budget to match fund successful ESF projects.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.9	<p>The Department for the Economy is responsible for the EQIA for the overall programme. The nature of the programme means that it is focused on those furthest from the labour market. Projects all across Northern Ireland can apply for funding.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None



Subject:	Destination CQ BID ballot
Date:	8 September 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of the report is advise of the upcoming ballot for the Destination CQ BID (Business Improvement District) and to recommend that the council uses its available votes to support a “yes” vote to enable the BID to extend its mandate for a further five years.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree to use the council ballots to support a Yes vote for a new five year mandate for Destination CQ BID.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were established for the first time in Northern Ireland in 2015. There are three BIDs in Belfast:

3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination CQ covers the Cathedral Quarter, encompassing the area from High Street to Great George's Street, bounded by Donegall Quay and Millfield • Belfast One covers the retail core from City Hall to Royal Avenue, bounded by Victoria Street and Millfield • Linen Quarter BID covers the area from City Hall to Dublin Road, bounded by Joy Street and Durham Street.
3.3	<p>Businesses located within the BID area agree a five-year business plan and pay a mandatory annual contribution (levy) to the delivery of the business plan, based on the NAV of their property. BID services must demonstrate that they are additional to core services that are delivered by other statutory partners (such as the Council, Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure etc.). Belfast One was the first BID to be established in Belfast in April 2016 and was subject to a successful re-ballot at the end of March this year. Destination CQ's initial five-year mandate is now coming to an end and the re-ballot to determine whether or not the organisation will remain in existence for the next five years is currently open, with a closing date of 22 September 2021.</p>
3.4	<p>All property owners are eligible for one vote per levy-paying property in the BID area. Belfast City Council has sixteen properties in the Destination CQ area (largely car parks) and will therefore be entitled to a vote for each of the properties.</p>
	<p>Members will be aware that all three BIDs have been playing an active role in the animation and management of the city centre since their establishment a number of years ago. Destination CQ's business plan for the next five year period includes a recap of its activities over the previous five years. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 1200 individuals from Cathedral Quarter businesses attended training events and took part in learning and development activities • Helped businesses to reduce their rate overheads by 30% through collective purchasing arrangements • Supported council in delivery of public realm improvements funded through DfC's Revitalisation Fund to a value of £170,000 • Worked with the other BIDs to successfully achieve Purple Flag – recognition of work to support a safe and vibrant night-time economy, as well as delivering events such as Belfast Restaurant Week and participating in collaborative promotion activities such as the Belfast Gift Card • Supported delivery of a dedicated police team for the Cathedral Quarter – Street Beat

3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided additional and dedicated cleansing services through their appointed contractor, working alongside council teams to improve the cleanliness of the area. <p>The BID expects to spend up to £2million over the next five years. Its business plan identifies how this spend will break down across three priority work areas. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business Support: includes activities such as collective purchasing to reduce costs, training and networking activities and support for local businesses/cultural organisations 2. Safer, Cleaner, Greener: includes putting in place additional street cleansing activities, progressing pedestrianisation efforts in collaboration with statutory partners, addressing anti-social behaviour issues and working on social issues such as homelessness 3. Promoting and Animating: include activities to encourage visitors to stay in the area outside of work hours as well championing culture and arts activities.
3.6	<p>All levy payers will now have received their ballots, which must be returned in advance of 22 September 2021. In order to secure a new mandate, the BID requires that at least 25% of those eligible to vote do so. Of those that vote, at least 50% need to cast a “yes” vote if the BID is to continue its work for a further five years. It is proposed that officers return the council ballots to confirm support for the BID with a “yes” vote. The BIDs are important engagement and delivery partners for the council and it will be increasingly important for us to have strong interfaces with city centre businesses as we focus on re-shaping the city centre in the post-COVID era and driving forward on key interventions such as city centre living and progressing the work on the Bolder Vision in conjunction with the other government departments. In addition, the complementary services that the BID delivers such as the Street Beat and the additional street cleansing regime are important in creating a welcome and safe city centre for all.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The current levy payable by the council to Destination CQ is in the region of £7,500 on an annual basis. This has been accounted for in existing estimates.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>No specific equality implications. BIDs have been established in a number of locations across Northern Ireland.</p>

4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None



Subject:	City of Music – support for Autumn Programme 2021
Date:	8 th September 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

☐

After Council Decision

☐

Sometime in the future

☐

Never

☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - update Members on developments on the UNESCO City of Music designation process, strategic music development and music-based events due to happen as part of the city's recovery programme in October and November 2021. - Request that Members consider supporting events due to take place in Belfast.
2.0	Recommendations

2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gradam Ceoil including broadcast event, local engagement programme and legacy bursary support. – NI Music Prize – incorporating UNESCO City of Music announcement
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>In March 2018, as a result of the coalescence of many conversations which were happening in the city at the same time, Council backed a proposal for the city and its partners to make an application for the endorsement of UNESCO City of Music status which became a key ambition of the city's cultural strategy <i>A City Imagining 2020-30</i>, setting out a commitment to applying for UNESCO Creative Cities Network membership via recognition as a UNESCO City of Music in 2021. Since 2018, Council have spent three years working on music development for the city including extensive engagement with the sector and city stakeholders to co-design the UNESCO application as well as a complementary music strategy and implementation plan to support the ambitions set out for UNESCO designation. In June 2021 Belfast was officially shortlisted in the global competition for UNESCO City of Music status in 2021, the results of which will be announced mid-November 2021. This will coincide with a number of key music events for the city which we seek to support as part of our ongoing commitment to music in the city.</p>
3.2	<p>Support for these high-profile music events will contribute not only to the city's cultural recovery but to a number of the aims set out in the Belfast Agenda and <i>A City Imagining</i> cultural strategy by contributing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An inclusive city where everyone actively participates in cultural life - A diverse city with vibrant public and cultural spaces - A city where creativity pushes boundaries - A city confident of our place in the world
3.3	<p><u>Gradam Ceoil</u></p> <p><i>Broadcast Event</i></p> <p>Gradam Ceoil is an annual awards ceremony which celebrates the best of traditional Irish music and song. It comprises a gala event as well as citywide community outreach and engagement events which help to maximise reach and impact.</p>
3.4	<p>The live coverage on TG4 provides a meaningful opportunity to showcase Belfast as a city of music, arts and culture with the event often picked up by other broadcast platforms such as PBS America and online channels. As host city, Belfast continues to work closely with the event organisers to develop deep cultural and visitor engagement opportunities. This year concludes Gradam's four-year residency in the city and plans are underway for a bursary programme for local musicians to build on its legacy by strengthening and continuing Gradam Ceoil's connection with Belfast. In 2019</p>

	<p>the event reached 110,000 television viewers with a total of over 500,000 views including online channels.</p>
3.5	<p>The 2021 edition will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gradam's fourth and final year of residency in Belfast. – Previous years the Award Ceremony and Concert was held in The Waterfront Hall but this has had to be scaled back due to ongoing Covid restrictions. – The Award Ceremony and Concert will be recorded at The Whitla Hall the week commencing 25 October and broadcast on TG4 on Sunday 31 October and promotion through online channels. – Six music categories will be awarded. – Launch event will take place in Belfast on Wednesday 8 September.
3.6	<p><i>Local Programme</i></p> <p>In previous years the Gradam local engagement programme in Belfast centred on small scale music events and tutoring sessions at community venues. These were held in the two days leading up to the main event. With this year being Gradam's final year in Belfast, there is a focus on its legacy and how it will continue to positively impact on Belfast as a music city. The proposal for these events will include a series of special performances in venues across the city:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Focus on all female performers who are also Gradam award recipients – Focus on promoting regional artists – Youth Concert tour – pop up concerts with past Gradam pupils performing in venues in Belfast such as Duncairn, Ulster Scots Centre and QUB. Potential guest performances.
3.7	<p><i>Gradam Ceoil – Bursary Programme</i></p> <p>Creating a legacy from Gradam Ceoil Belfast is a priority. Since 2017, in preparation for the arrival of Gradam Ceoil in Belfast in 2018, Red Shoe (Gradam Producer) has been building networks and partnerships with a diverse mix of cultural organisations in neighbourhoods across Belfast and has established a hub at The Duncairn.</p>
3.8	<p>Building on the success and impact of the programme of fringe events that animate the city around the main Gradam Ceoil event, Red Shoe, in partnership with The Duncairn and TG4, now propose to establish a music and audio-visual bursary scheme for an initial five-year period to achieve the following objectives and to contribute to Belfast's proposition to UNESCO for designation as a Music City:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Create a practical, living legacy from Gradam Ceoil Belfast – Develop and support the traditional music sector across the city region, and promote Belfast as a destination rich in traditional and other music

3.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enrich Belfast's offering as a creative place and as a city that fosters ideas, ambition, in ways that help our artists to build capacity and develop their work – Recognise potential and support creative ideas, particularly among young people engaged in traditional music – Create opportunities for young people to work and learn alongside leading figures in traditional music and in the audio-visual production sector – Provide new kinds of creative opportunities to foster creativity in response to the needs that young people identify for themselves, for their work, and for their communities <p>The proposition is to create three Gradam Ceoil Belfast bursaries annually, each valued at £3,000, for the five-year period 2021-25.</p>
3.10	<p>The call for applications will seek proposals that are grounded in traditional music, ideally with a Belfast angle, and that can be realised as audio-visual projects such as short film, video, or other digital content. The recipients will be able to work with their ideal team of artistic and technical experts, under the guidance and mentorship of Red Shoe, thereby learning and refining additional and new transferrable skills in many aspects of audio-visual production.</p>
3.11	<p>The rationale for this approach is that with the increased availability and ease of access to technology today, the strategic issue is about quality, skills, training, and being able to make the best use of all the tools of audio-visual production to support creative projects based in and around traditional music.</p>
3.12	<p>The involvement of the delivery partners is as follows:</p> <p>Red Shoe Productions: concept and project development; design and delivery in Belfast of the creative and technical supports for recipients; post-production support to bring projects to broadcast quality; joint management (with The Duncairn) of the project.</p> <p>The Duncairn: concept and project development; identification and communication with target groups across the city; location and venue support; administrative support and joint management (with Red Shoe) of the project</p> <p>TG4: concept and project development; broadcast platform and online dissemination of selected projects as integral element of Gradam Ceoil; recognition and promotion of the significance of the relationship with Belfast, and Belfast's uniquely diverse musical traditions (this project is unique to Belfast).</p>
3.13	<p>The application process for these bursaries will be designed and managed jointly by Red Shoe and The Duncairn, using an open call for expressions of interest and a scored assessment process in line with prevailing good practice. Council will be invited to sit on the assessment panel for these</p>

	<p>bursaries. The assessment of applications will be carried out by a panel comprising Red Shoe, The Duncairn, TG4, a BCC nominee and an external assessor.</p>
3.14	<p><u>NI Music Prize & UNESCO City of Music Announcement</u></p> <p>The Northern Ireland Music Prize honours and celebrates the very best of new, established and emerging Northern Irish music and is a key music event for the city of Belfast, more so than ever with the ambitions for City of Music Designation announcement coinciding with this year's ceremony . It is an annual awards night organised by the Oh Yeah Music Centre and takes place in the Ulster Hall during Sound of Belfast Festival every year. Sound of Belfast is a festival that showcases the Belfast music scene and sector with gigs, panels, talks, workshops, discussions, exhibitions, showcases and special events at various venues across Belfast.</p>
3.15	<p>The prize is a high-profile celebration of music from Northern Ireland. Four awards are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Best Album (with cash prize of £3,000), – Best Live Act (normally £1000, an alternative in 2021 due to impact on live music in 2020) – Best Newcomer (Oh Yeah Contender Award (in association with BBC cash prize of £1000) – Best Single (with cash prize of £1000 and shortlist going to public vote).
3.16	<p>The NI Music Prize was established to support the growth and build the profile of NI Music and reflect similar work and recognition of regional music in other parts of the UK and Ireland. It is a significant event and key milestone for Belfast as the regional driver for the music industry in Northern Ireland.</p>
3.17	<p><i>Plans for 2021</i></p> <p>Due to the pandemic NI Music Prize 2021 will be with an invited audience of music industry, media, nominated and shortlisted acts, stakeholders and supporters as well as a limited number of tickets going to fans or key workers. A cabaret style event on the ground floor, reducing numbers and keeping with the possibility of a more restricted event, but also elevating it to a more formal awards event for the first time. The event will take on a blended approach in terms of reaching audiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A live audience in the hall – A live stream to a wider and global audience via high quality production via YouTube. – Media interviews, podcast recordings, live streams and prerecords backstage. – There will be 5 award presentations – Guest Presenters and speakers – Video messages – Performances from 3 special guest acts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Performances from 3 or 4 shortlisted acts – UNESCO announcement – and/or opportunity for BCC to use the platform to communicate successful UNESCO City of Music Designation, and if unsuccessful the plans to continue to support music in the city through the cultural strategy and recovery programmes. <p><i>Significance of NI Music Prize in 2021</i></p> <p>This is an important event for music in Belfast given the impact of the Covid pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The NI Music Prize can play a key part in the recovery of Belfast as a music city – It will be an opportunity for the music community of Belfast to come together for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic – It will be an important platform to recognise the resilience of the industry and how it will be part of the city's overall recovery – It will be an investment in our world class and strong emerging diverse talent, which is becoming more varied and exciting as the city emerges from almost two years under restrictions – It will acknowledge the challenges and recognise the role of our creative sector throughout lockdown – Belfast will be notified of the outcome of the UNESCO City of Music bid at this time therefore this would be a potential platform for an announcement – It will showcase our local talent through extensive online reach with a live streamed event – It will demonstrate that Council is committed to supporting and investing in music long term
3.18	
3.19	<p>Regardless of the outcome of the bid for UNESCO designation, there is still cause for this to be a significant event with a strong message going forward – that music will be at the centre of the recovery and future of Belfast as a culturally vibrant city and that Council is committed to music in the city through delivery of <i>A City Imagining</i> and the development of a new music strategy for the city.</p>
3.20	<p>To complement and strengthen the initiatives and ambitions laid out in the UNESCO City of Music application officers have been working with Sound Diplomacy and the City of Music Steering Group to develop a robust Music Strategy and Recovery Plan for Belfast which includes priority actions for the music sector post-pandemic and a three-year implementation plan which will be taken back to Committee for approval in November 2021.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The financial support requested from Belfast City Council is as follows:</p>
3.21	<p>Gradam Ceoil Broadcast event and local engagement programme - £50,000</p>

3.22	<p>Gradam Ceoil legacy bursaries for local musicians - £15,000</p> <p>NI Music Prize - £15,000</p> <p>These costs are to be met from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Officers will work with event organisers to ensure that a wide range of groups and artists across the city are engaged with. There are no Rural Needs implications.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None

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Subject:	Support for NI Hospice Public Art Project
Date:	8 th September 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - update Members on Elmer's Big Belfast Trail – a public art event in 2022 coordinated by Northern Ireland Hospice. - request that Members consider supporting this event in Belfast.
2.0	Recommendations

2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note the contents of the report and agree to Belfast City Council to act as an official sponsor of the initiative at a cost of £35,000.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Northern Ireland Hospice is a local charity which has been caring for critically ill babies, children and adults in the region for over 40 years. They are collaborating with Wild in Art and Andersen Press to bring David McKee's popular children's character Elmer the Patchwork Elephant to life during 2022, through a physical and online trail to celebrate the 21st anniversary of their children's in-patient unit - Horizon House. Elmer's Big Art Parades have taken place previously in Suffolk, Maidstone and London since 2019.</p>
3.2	<p>A herd of around 60 elephant sculptures will be colourfully decorated by local artists working with young people and community groups and will be positioned around key landmarks across Belfast and NI from June 2022 before being auctioned off for charity in October 2022. This is a similar event to the CowParade in Belfast in 2012 when Council provided £35,000 of funding and hosted 15 cows as a presenting partner.</p>
3.3	<p>Through delivering this largescale public art event in Belfast, Northern Ireland Hospice note that the event is likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generate an estimated £20million economic impact including £1million media value through national and regional media coverage (note that similar projects such as Manchester's 'Bee in the City' (2018) and Birmingham's 'The Big Hoot' (2015) generated over £30million economic impact) - One million visitors across ten weeks and one million interactions via the trail app - engage more than 10,000 local schoolchildren in over 30 schools - offer employment to artists and showcase local and regional artists - promote health and wellbeing (majority of visitors to 'Bee in the City' said the trail helped them to spend more time with their family)
3.4	<p>Belfast's cultural strategy <i>A City Imagining</i> has set out a commitment to developing a diverse city with vibrant public and cultural spaces. As identified in the strategy one of the city's challenges is to create the conditions whereby Belfast's open spaces and cultural venues offer opportunities for diverse encounters with different cultures, ethnicities, lifestyles, ideologies and attitudes. This public art event will enable artists to work with local people and businesses to tell their story.</p>

3.5	<p>The project will contribute to the aims set out in the Belfast Agenda, <i>A City Imagining</i> and the City Recovery Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the trail will be an attraction which will help animate the city, attract footfall and spend by locals and visitors, and encourage people to discover new spaces - complementing the Playful City initiative, the Trail will create art in the public realm, help improve the quality, accessibility and openness of public spaces - involve the cultural sector in the promotion and positioning of the city, by offering employment to local artists - create opportunities for artists and citizens for virtual collaboration, networking and new user experiences, and foster creativity in young people - facilitate connections between enterprise and culture
3.6	<p>Officers will provide additional support to Northern Ireland Hospice to connect with local groups and with artists and help promote the event. Some of the sculptures may be situated at Council owned or managed locations such as City Hall, parks, etc. Locations have not yet been discussed and Council has not been asked to contribute financially to the installations.</p>
3.7	<p>Sponsorship package options offer a range of different benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elmer sponsor – includes use of Council logo on one elephant (£7,000) - Premium Elmer sponsor – includes bespoke design of one sculpture and optional staff engagement (£10,000), - Official Sponsor (£35,000) – as above as well as recognition as one of a maximum of 10 official sponsors to be accredited in public and media campaigns. - Presenting Partner (£70,000) – as above however limited to 2 presenting partners, with increased profile and bespoke design of 3 sculptures.
3.8	<p>Official sponsorship is recommended to align with strategic priorities and relevant city messaging during summer 2022.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Official sponsorship at a cost of £35,000 will be allocated from existing departmental budgets. In kind support to Northern Ireland Hospice on the project can be accommodated within existing staff resources.</p>

3.10	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u> Officers will work with Northern Ireland Hospice to ensure that they engage with a wide range of groups and artists across the city. There are no Rural Needs implications.
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None



Subject:	International Engagement Activities
Date:	8 September 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Laura Leonard, International & European Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

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☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek funding approval for a number of international engagement activities, in line with the Committee workplan priorities.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the attendance of Committee Chair/Deputy Chair or nominee and one officer at the Eurocities AGM, taking place 3-5 November in Leipzig, at a maximum cost of £2500, subject to prevailing COVID restrictions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a City Hall reception on the occasion of the visit to Belfast by the US and Russian Women's Olympic Ice Hockey Teams, as part of their visit to Belfast from 7-12 November 2021, at a maximum cost of £3,000, depending on numbers attending. Agree to provide financial support to the Confucius Institute up to a maximum for £5,000 for the current financial year, in order to support the Council's work with China.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Attendance at Eurocities AGM</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been a member of the Eurocities network for 20 years and proactively engages in a broad spectrum of thematic working areas including Culture, Environment, Knowledge Society, Mobility, Economic Development and Social Affairs. As a result of Council's participation in this network of over 140 major cities and municipalities, Council has secured transnational European funding, showcased city best practice, exchanged policy and strategic concepts to help develop local activity and contributed to raising the importance of the role of cities in delivering European objectives.</p>
3.2	<p>The Eurocities Annual Conference provides the opportunity for elected representatives and senior city officials to input into the organisation's workplan, discuss pertinent city issues and network, collaborate and debate with European officials and representatives from other cities across the network. The 2021 event takes place in Leipzig from 3-4 November 2021. The theme of the conference is "The Power of Cities – Transforming Society". It will focus on how the "Green New Deal" is being implemented at local level and will explore additional mechanisms to push forward the role of cities as key conduits to move forward at pace in a volatile economic climate.</p>
3.3	<p>Invitations to the conference have been issued and it is hoped that as many cities as possible will be represented in person for the November event. Members are requested to approve the attendance of the Chair or Deputy Chair or nominee plus one Officer at the Annual Meeting at a maximum budget of £2,500. Attendance in person will be subject to Council advice regarding the implementation of COVID restrictions at that time.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Women's Ice Hockey: 8-12 November 2021</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that over a five-year period from 2015, the Council supported the work of the Odyssey Trust in developing and delivering the Friendship Four Festival. This tournament was a central plank of the Belfast-Boston Sister City relationship and was used as a platform to promote Belfast as a study, investment, and tourist destination. The event</p>

	<p>itself attracted more than 100 visitors from USA and generated significant associated tourism revenue for Belfast. In 2019, it was expanded to incorporate a Women's Tournament. Both events also acted as an avenue to provide positive international TV exposure for Belfast in the United States and Canada, reaching over 150 million households.</p>
3.5	<p>Based on the success of the Friendship Four model, the Odyssey Trust is currently developing plans to host the Women's Ice Hockey Teams that will represent both the USA and Russia at the 2022 Olympic Games. By way of context, the US Team is joint favourite for the Games and Russia is presently ranked 4th in the world.</p>
3.6	<p>Whilst the proposition is being refined, it is expected that the programme will reflect the Friendship Four model and include not only sporting fixtures, but also community and educational outreach activity. As part of their engagement activities, it is proposed that a civic reception for both teams will take place in City Hall (COVID restrictions permitting). Subject to approval, the event will take place on 10 November. The costs associated with hosting the event will not exceed £3,000.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Confucius Institute Memorandum of Understanding with Belfast City Council</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Confucius Institute in Northern Ireland was established in partnership with Ulster University in Belfast, in 2011. Its role is comparable to that of the British Council, in that it serves to promote Chinese culture, education and language across the world. One of the most visible examples of the work of the Confucius Institute is in the network of 48 Chinese teachers based in 111 schools across NI, working in 8 hub schools, two of which are in Belfast (Grosvenor and Aquinas).</p>
3.8	<p>The Institute has also been working closely with those NI councils that are engaged in activity within China, and has greatly assisted Belfast City Council in its work with Sister City Shenyang since the signing of our agreement in 2016. This includes advice and guidance on business etiquette, translation of key documentation and development of visit programmes and support in hosting relevant groups coming to Belfast. As this work evolves, Confucius Directors have now engaged with the council to explore the potential to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding between our organisations in order to formalise the support services and agree an outline activity plan. They consider that this approach will help them manage resources more effectively. Based on the outline programme of activity, it is proposed that a budget allocation of £5,000 is set aside for this work. The outputs will</p>

3.9	be managed and reviewed by officers in order to ensure value for money and to inform future support.
3.10	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>These initiatives fall within the International Relations Framework which has been equality screened.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The specific financial allocations set out above include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to £2,500 to support attendance of the Committee Chair/Deputy Chair or delegated nominee plus one Officer at the Eurocities AGM in Leipzig on 3-5 November 2021 • Up to £3,000 to support a civic reception to mark the visit of the US and Russia Women's Ice Hockey Teams to Belfast in November 2021 • £5,000 budgetary support for a new Memorandum of Understanding and programme of support to the Confucius Institute, to support the council's economic development work in China.
3.12	These budgets have been set aside within the EU and International Relations budget 2021/22.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	N/A