

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 10th November, 2021

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Aldermen Dorrian and Kingston; and
Councillors Beattie, Brooks, Donnelly, Ferguson, Gormley,
Harvey, Heading, Howard, Hussey, Long, Lyons, Maskey,
McLaughlin, McMullan, O'Hara and Spratt

In attendance: Mr. A. Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;
Ms. E. Henry, Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee of 13th and 27th October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st November.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Beattie, Lyons and O'Hara declared an interest in relation to item 4(c) – City Centre Open Spaces, in that they were members of the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. However, as the report was an update, it did not conflict with their role on the Board, they were not required to leave the meeting whilst the report was being considered.

Alderman Kingston and Councillor Donnelly declared an interest in relation to item 4(b) – A Bolder Vision Update, in that they were both employed by organisations in receipt of funding from Department for Communities, however they were not required to leave the meeting whilst the report was being considered.

Councillors Brooks, Hussey, Maskey, Murphy and McMullan declared an interest in relation to item 4(e) – DfC Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme Update, in that they were Members of the Planning Committee, which had been considering an application in relation to the Castle Place Kiosk and left the meeting while the item was being considered.

Schedule of Meetings

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee during 2022 (All meetings to commence at 5.15 p.m.):

- Wednesday, 12th January
- Wednesday, 9th February
- Wednesday, 9th March
- Wednesday, 6th April
- Wednesday, 11th May
- Wednesday, 8th June
- No meeting in July
- Wednesday, 9th August
- Wednesday, 14th September
- Wednesday, 12th October
- Wednesday, 8th November
- Wednesday, 7th December

The Committee noted that the following Special Committee dates had also been scheduled, in order to receive presentations from outside bodies and that these would be arranged if required:

- Wednesday, 26th January
- Wednesday, 23rd March
- Wednesday, 27th April
- Wednesday, 22nd June
- Wednesday, 28th September
- Wednesday, 26th October

Correspondence received from Minister Mallon

The Committee was asked to consider a response to a motion proposed by Councillor O'Hara, regarding York Street Interchange – Request to Share Independent Assurance Report, which had been passed by the Council, at its meeting on 4th October.

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy highlighted that, in her response, the Minister had stated that, the Independent Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange Scheme had been carried out to provide assurances on how the proposed scheme reflected her key Ministerial priorities, and both the Executive and Belfast City Council objectives, in particular:

- The Minister's priorities around focus on wellbeing, sustainable travel, creating thriving liveable places and communities, responding to the climate emergency and connecting people and opportunities;

- The Executive's priorities set out in New Decade: New Approach and the Outcomes Delivery Plan; and
- The scheme's strategic fit alongside the emerging policy context, for example, the Belfast Agenda, the Belfast City Council Development Plan Strategy and the emerging Transport Plans.

He pointed out that the Minister had also made clear, the need to engage with local key stakeholders as part of this review and explained that she was not able to publish the report in accordance with Department of Finance guidance contained within DAO 02/20 (Section 8).

He stated that the Minister's correspondence indicated that the further work which was being carried out to address the recommendations from the Independent Assurance Review, included a placemaking and active travel review, and was due to be completed in the coming weeks. The Minister would consider the report before deciding on the next steps for the scheme.

Following discussion, it was:

Moved by Councillor O'Hara,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the Members of the Committee agrees to withdraw Belfast City Council's corporate support for the York Street Interchange scheme and will only reinstate corporate support for the scheme, if the review, and any new scheme arising from it, meets the Council's climate, air quality, place making and housing ambitions as a city and complements the aims of "A Bolder Vision."

On a vote, thirteen Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the report associated with the following two items was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following two items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Update on Strategic Acquisition

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy provided the Committee with an update on the acquisition of 2 Royal Avenue and the progress of a meanwhile use for the premises.

The Committee noted the update.

Vacant Premises Programme and Supporting Vibrant Business Destinations Programme

The Senior Development Manager provided an update to the Committee on the proposed Vacant Premises Grant Programme and sought approval to progress with a pilot city centre grant scheme.

Following discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the update in relation to the proposed Vacancy Grant Programme and Supporting Vibrant Business Destinations Programme;
- Agreed to a continuation of the pilot Vacancy Grant Programme for the city centre and that, in tandem, further engagement would be undertaken with businesses on arterial routes, through the 'Supporting Vibrant Business Destinations Programme' in order to assess the most appropriate support packages for those areas, as part of a complimentary approach; and
- Noted the opportunity to utilise the MAG High Street Craft Kit in the codesign and development of area specific interventions.

Motions Referred from Standards and Business Committee

Motion - Tourism Street Signage

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy reported that, The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 26th October, had referred the following motion, proposed by Councillor Long, and seconded by McMullan to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for consideration:

"This Council calls for the erection of street signage in the city centre to mark the location of important historical events related to the 'Belfast Enlightenment' period of our shared history in the late 18th Century. The aim is to encourage increased footfall in the city centre and improve the tourist offering. This Council will work with other relevant agencies to develop this strategy."

The Committee agreed that a report on how the Motion would be facilitated, resourced and managed would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Regenerating Places & Improving Infrastructure

A Bolder Vision Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To outline for Members the key aspects of A Bolder Vision (ABV), including the proposed four Key Moves, the engagement programme, feedback from the consultation to date and the indicative timelines.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note:

- **The Bolder Vision consultation material and the proposed Key Moves and potential short and longer term interventions.**
- **The consultation activity; feedback to date and associated issues in relation to further engagement, timeframes and delivery.**
- **A key objective of the Bolder Vision is to enable key design decisions to be made on the city’s emerging strategic capital and infrastructure projects as well as informing major private and public sector regeneration schemes and sustainable and active travel networks. It aims to strengthen and support the diversification of the city centre and enable improved connectivity with surrounding communities.**
- **As the Bolder Vision process progresses and interventions are refined and developed, consideration will need to be given as to how the Council and other partners can prioritise funding opportunities and align corporate priorities and programmes against the Bolder Vision Strategy and subsequent action plan.**
- **The Bolder Vision provides the foundation for the emerging wider city connectivity programme that seeks to address the need to improve connectivity and active travel right across the city. To note also that Connectivity and Active Travel have been identified in the Community Planning Partnership: City Development Board as a key priority.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 A Bolder Vision Consultation document

As Members will be aware A Bolder Vision – Connectivity Study has been developed jointly between Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure. At the 8th September 2021 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, Members received an update on the Bolder Vision pre-engagement activity, overview of the emerging issues and details on the public consultation. In the interim period before the finalisation of the current Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan the Bolder Vision aims to provide a holistic look at the city centre’s infrastructure and connections to neighbouring communities from a people and place based priority.

3.2 A key objective is to enable key design decisions to be made from a city user perspective on the city’s emerging strategic capital programmes such as BRT Phase 2, Belfast Streets Ahead 3 & 5, the Inner Ring Junctions, as well as informing major regeneration schemes such as Weavers Cross and the Transport Hub, private and public sector developments including housing led regeneration projects and the sustainable and active travel network. The Bolder Vision also aims to bring forward area based infrastructure planning. This will strengthen and support the diversification of the city centre reflecting the changing nature of retail, the development of sustainable and inclusive city centre communities and increased city centre living; tourism and cultural development and improved connectivity with surrounding communities.

3.3 As previously advised to Committee, the public consultation document was influenced by five thematic co-design workshops including a large, cross-sector session that involved Vienna’s former Vice Mayor, who led the transformation agenda in the city. A range of follow up meetings were also held with key stakeholders including IMTAC, Transport Hub, Translink, Belfast Harbour, Chamber, INI, Arts Council NI, Developers’ Forum, NI Water and the BIDs and council departments.

3.4 This input from stakeholders, coupled with analysis of the opportunities emerging from large infrastructure projects, ongoing strategic alignment across local and central government, and best practice was the basis of the proposed four Key Moves and supporting interventions outlined in the

public consultation document (Appendix 1). After securing DfC and DfI Ministerial approval, the consultation was launched by the Lord Mayor, DfC and DfI Ministers on 30 September and will run until 23 December 2021.

3.5 A Bolder Vision Proposed Key Moves for transformation

A Bolder Vision has identified a number of proposed 'Key Moves' to deliver radial change. These are underpinned with proposed short and long-term interventions that would support transformation in critical parts of the city to create a green, people focused, connected city centre for current and future users. The consultation will however seek the view of consultees as to other potential short, medium and long term interventions. Further details on these interventions and the proposed Key Moves are provided in Appendix 1 of this report. The proposed Key Moves are:

3.6

1. Create a Civic Spine with a focus on people

Establish a clearly defined and recognisable strategic north-south Civic Spine, connecting the Ulster University and York Street Interchange through the heart of the city to Queen's University via Botanic Avenue. The Civic Spine would be reconfigured to prioritise space for people and support effective access by public transport while enabling the introduction of green spaces for a diverse, inclusive, future-proofed and vibrant city centre.

3.7

2. Reimagine the Inner Ring Road and end Car Dominance

Transform the Inner Ring Road to reduce physical severance for surrounding communities and become a sustainable mobility corridor. To do this, the Inner Ring should be reconfigured to accommodate high priority public transport services (such as BRT2) as well as fully segregated and green infrastructure for walking, wheeling, and cycling.

3.8

3. Promote City Centre Living

Encourage city centre living by providing greater quality, choice, and affordability of accommodation, to create a shared and inclusive environment. Establish a city-wide network of people friendly routes, community focus streets, incorporating city parks and connections to opportunities for play, interaction, rest, and leisure.

3.9

4. Embrace the River Lagan and Waterfront

Capitalise on one of the city's most defining, but underused assets, the River Lagan, by strengthening connections from the city centre to the east and its surrounding communities – enhancing connectivity across and around the River Lagan.

3.10 Stakeholder engagement and feedback

Council is hosting the online survey on the Engagement HQ platform with Dfl and DfC linking to this on their respective consultation sites. A key feature is the Virtual Room that provides boards with information on the background, Key Moves, other supporting capital projects and strategies, timeframe and contact details. Copies of the consultation material, case studies, Frequently Asked Questions are also available to download. It will continue to be pushed through the various BCC Corporate Communications channels and DfC and Dfl platforms.

3.11 Whilst engagement will mainly take place online, there is also an extensive programme of in-person and virtual meetings organised throughout the consultation to gain holistic feed back on the proposed interventions, and to take on board additional recommendations to ensure that the final document is representative of the needs of the city centre business, transportation, community, visitor and user perspective.

3.12 Specifically, there is targeted engagement with partnership bodies that have a wide membership and reach and can disseminate information and host engagement sessions including Belfast Chamber, BIDs, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Area Partnerships, Community Planning Partnership and Boards, disability groups, cultural groups, City Reopening Group, QUB, UU and the Community Campus Regeneration Forum, professional bodies, representatives from tourism and active travel sectors and various BCC internal staff networks including the Women's Network, PROUD and ABLE networks. Officers have also reached out to Council fora such as the Shared City Partnership, Migrant Forum, Greater Belfast Seniors' Forum, Equality Consultative Forum, among others. There will also be focused engagement with different elements of Dfl (e.g. Section offices, Active Travel), Translink and DfC (including public realm, MAG, housing and HED).

- 3.13 Feedback from these sessions will be added to the online public consultation survey which asks the public to comment to what extent they agree or disagree with the proposed Key Moves, the short and long term interventions and provide any additional comments or suggestions on these. Within the survey we also asked people to drop a pin into a map to identify their favourite place in Belfast and tell us why.
- 3.14 To date, feedback is largely positive and supportive. This is, in part, a result of ongoing engagement with key civic stakeholders since the completion of Phase 1 and the use of the Visioning Principles to guide recovery interventions that kept a focus on the wider strategic context of the changing city centre landscape and opportunities for transformation. Officers are closely monitoring the feedback and weekly reports are sent to Jacobs (specialist consultants assisting Council, DfC and DfI) so that they can consider the material on a rolling basis. Jacobs will develop a Post-Consultation report that will provide an overview of the feedback and submissions, and detail the engagement and communications undertaken.
- 3.15 As of 26 October, there has been 344 responses to the online consultation and 2,200 views of the site and 98.5% of responses have been from individuals. The feedback on the proposed Key Moves indicates strong support for the proposals:
- 3.16 **Key Move 1: Create Civic Spine with focus on people**
66.6% Strongly agreed
25% Agree somewhat
3.2% Neither agree nor disagree
2.9% Disagree somewhat
2.3% Strongly disagree
- 3.17 **Key Move 2: Reimagine the inner ring road and end car dominance**
70.6% Strongly agreed
18.6% Agree somewhat
4.4% Neither agree nor disagree
2.6% Disagree somewhat
3.8% Strongly disagree
- 3.18 **Key Move 3: Promote City Centre Living**
75.9% Strongly agreed
17.7% Agree somewhat
4.7% Neither agree nor disagree

0.9% Disagree somewhat
0.9% Strongly disagree

3.19 Key Move 4: Embrace the River Lagan and Waterfront

85.8% Strongly agree
11.6% Agree somewhat
1.8% Neither agree nor disagree
0.3% Disagree somewhat
0.6% Strongly disagree

3.20 In addition, a number specific suggestions have come through the survey which will also be taken into consideration when carrying out the Multi-Criteria Analysis to assess the social, economic and environmental impact of the interventions prior to making the final recommendations:

- Reduce speed limits in the Belfast metro area to 15pmh
- Charging zones for polluting vehicles
- No idle zones
- Meanwhile use and social enterprise economic zones
- Superblocks
- Stitch over the grey river. Westlink is the largest economic barrier in the city; add resilience with multiple routes

3.21 Targeted engagement will continue throughout November and December and it is envisaged that this will raise and highlight specific geographic areas and proposed interventions e.g. Linen Quarter Sustainable District, the INW Regeneration Framework etc. Feedback from presentations carried out to date to groups also indicate support for the Vision and flagged up specific issues e.g. opportunities for enhanced connectivity with neighbouring communities including Sailortown, TQ area, Carrickhill etc; Durham Street and the need for connectivity to the city within Weaver's Cross development; dereliction around Shaftesbury Square; opportunities for public spaces such as Backstaff Square and opportunities to better link and connect our public spaces.

3.22 Timeframe and delivery

The programme timeline is intensive, and will require ongoing updates and approvals to keep Members, Ministers, Chief Officers and Permanent Secretaries updated. The indicative timeframe and dates are set out below:

- Consultation Close: 23rd December 2021
- Analysis of emerging interventions: Dec 2021 – Jan 2022
- Review, collate & analyse consultation response: Jan 2022
- Draft Document for sign-off: March 2022
- Finalise and publish document: April 2022
- Identify funding streams & delivery of Interventions: April 2022 – Dec 2026

3.23 Jacobs is aware that ABV interventions need to be both deliverable and aspirational to deliver the effective change that is required to meet our Resilience and Climate targets, which will be at the heart of the Bolder Vision work. Taking into account the major investment opportunities outlined in section 3.1 of this report a focus of ABV is to help shape these major schemes in line with the Bolder Vision principles/key moves but also to identify additional catalyst schemes and interventions that can be delivered at pace, and that can be delivered through joint public/private sector delivery.

3.24 The Innovation & Growth Commission's report 'Reset for Growth' highlighted that a Bolder Vision was fundamental to creating a connected and animated city core. A key proposition within the report was the delivery of key commitments in the Bolder Vision by 2026. It referenced the need to invest in significant transformational interventions arising from ABV, as well as the importance of wider city to community connectivity. In order to accelerate delivery it highlighted the need to establish a long-term city revitalisation programme to support active travel, pedestrianisation and green spaces and that the delivery of the Bolder Vision should be supported by a three year joint funding programme (BCC/DfI/DfC) to accelerate delivery.

3.25 As projects and interventions are refined and developed as the ABV process progresses, consideration will also need to be given as to how the Council and other partners can identify or prioritise funding opportunities and align corporate priorities and programmes against the Bolder Vision Strategy and subsequent action plan.

3.26 Wider City Connectivity Programme

ABV provides the foundation for the emerging wider city connectivity programme that seeks to address the need to improve connectivity and active travel from and to the city core right across the city and provide access for communities to key destinations and facilities, including the Belfast Hills. This connectivity programme links into ongoing work across Council and a number of other bodies

including DfI, DfC, the private sector, Translink etc. It includes for e.g. DfI's Strategic Cycle Network; active travel and place-making initiatives that address barriers and improve connections and capital projects such as greenways. It also aligns with the emerging proposals for the 'Belfast Urban Greenway' (BUG) Initiative, as previously reported to this Committee in October 2020 and August 2021. The BUG will seek to enhance connectivity to and from the city centre and create an urban greenway concept through the city centre.

3.27 Members will also be aware through previous reports (most recently reported in October 2021) that the thematic area of access, connectivity and active travel have been identified in the Community Planning Partnership and the City Development Board as a key priority. The City Development Board has representation across key stakeholders relevant to access, connectivity and active travel including DfI, DfC, Sustrans, Translink, SIB, VCSE, private sector etc. A workshop focused on reinvigorating the Board and shaping and influencing the refresh of the Belfast Agenda is planned for 19 November. The key focus will be on agreeing a collective position on the city's priorities and identification of gaps and opportunities for collaboration that will inform the future action plan. This will also provide an opportunity to bring a cohesive approach this cross cutting area of connectivity and active travel.

3.28 Governance

The Oversight Group established in Phase 1 consisted of the BCC Chief Executive and the Permanent Secretaries from DfI and DfC. This has continued and provides oversight and decision making for strategic direction at key milestones. Within this structure, the Permanent Secretaries and Chief Executive would escalate decisions to the Ministers and Members for final approval.

As part of the ongoing engagement between BCC/DfC/DfI a meeting with the Ministers and the Lord Mayor, CX and senior Council officers is planned to take place in City Hall with a view to discussing strategic infrastructure, regeneration and connectivity schemes that impact on ABV.

Regular reports will continue to be brought via the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and political engagement will also be held via the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum. Engagement with the Forum is scheduled for November and mid-February.

3.29 Financial and Resource Implications

None associated with this report.

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

None associated with this report, however, an EQIA Screening will be carried out on the Strategy.”

The Committee noted:

- The Bolder Vision consultation material and the proposed Key Moves and potential short and longer-term interventions;
- The consultation activity; feedback to date and associated issues in relation to further engagement, timeframes and delivery;
- That a key objective of the Bolder Vision was to enable key design decisions to be made on the city’s emerging strategic capital and infrastructure projects as well as informing major private and public sector regeneration schemes and sustainable and active travel networks, and that, it aimed to strengthen and support the diversification of the city centre and enable improved connectivity with surrounding communities;
- That, as the Bolder Vision process progresses ,and interventions were refined and developed, consideration would need to be given to how the Council and other partners, could prioritise funding opportunities and align corporate priorities and programmes against the Bolder Vision Strategy and subsequent action plan; and
- That, the Bolder Vision provided the foundation for the emerging wider city connectivity programme, that was seeking to address the need to improve connectivity and active travel right across the city, and that, connectivity and active travel had been identified in the Community Planning Partnership: City Development Board as a key priority.

The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure, to request that the Department’s work on junctions would be expedited as soon as possible, and that double yellow lines would be installed in the Ulster University area, including Clifton St and Fredrick St to address the ongoing parking issues in the area.

City Centre Open Spaces

The Senior Development Manager reported that, officers were undertaking a review of open space within the city centre with a view to identifying potential interventions to improve existing spaces, as well as creating new spaces with an emphasis on greening and softening otherwise, hard urban environments.

He explained that an audit was underway, which would enable the identification of priority sites or projects, ranging from short term to permanent placemaking projects.

He provided the Members with a brief update on the undernoted projects, which were in development across the city:

- City Quays Gardens;
- North South Spine Road and Little Your Street/Little Patrick Street Area;
- Cathedral Gardens; and
- RSUA Design Competition for Early Career Architects 2021.

A number of Members raised concerns regarding the consideration of a temporary meanwhile use of the Council-owned lands at Corporation Street, for a RSUA/JP Corry Open Belfast Design Competition, as it had previously been put forward as a potential site for a housing led mixed-use regeneration scheme.

Following further discussion, the Committee agreed:

- To note the update on emerging open space and placemaking projects across the city centre, including the Belfast Harbour Commissioners City Quays Gardens, the City Quays North-South Spine, the Little York – Little Patrick Street scheme and the INW / Cathedral Gardens Open Space Framework; and
- That, a report would be brought back to the December meeting of the Committee, which would consider alternative Council-owned lands, for a temporary meanwhile use for the RSUA/JP Corry Open Belfast Design Competition.

High Street Task Force Call for Evidence

The Senior Development Manager informed the Committee that, The Executive Office had formed a Hight Street Task Force, which comprised of members from key areas, including retail, hospitality, culture and arts sector and, the community and voluntary sector.

He reported that the Hight Street Task Force had launched a Call for Evidence, the first stage of an ongoing public engagement process, which would run from 24th October, until 6th December. He highlighted the themes identified in the Call for Evidence, relating to the issues high streets were facing.

He pointed out that, responses to the Call for Evidence, would inform a draft report relating to high street issues, and it had been proposed that a final report would be presented to the Executive by June, 2022.

He put forward to the Committee that, officers would develop draft responses to the questions posed in the Call for Evidence document, and that a draft response would be brought to the Party Leaders' Forum, at its meeting on 25th November. He stated that the final response would be brought back, retrospectively, given the timeframe, to the December meeting of the Committee.

The Committee agreed to:

- Note that the Executive Office has launched the High Street Task Force Call for Evidence, in order to gather evidence, data and views on a wide range of issues relating to the High Street, with a closing date of 6th December 2021 for responses; and
- That officers prepare a draft response which would be brought via Party Leaders Forum on 25th November, with the final response brought back retrospectively to the Committee, at its meeting in December.

DfC Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme Update

(The Chairperson, and Councillors Brooks, Hussey, Maskey, and McMullan, who had declared an interest in this item, left the meeting for the duration. Alderman Dorrian, deputised for the Chairperson, in his absence.)

The Senior Development Manager outlined the detail of the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To update Members on the progress of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the updates on the DfC Revitalisation Programme projects contained within this paper and the continued importance of the use of streets and spaces to assist businesses and communities as part of a wider programme of work focused on Reimagining the Public Realm.**

- To note the progress and completion of a number of projects within the programme with further detail to be provided in a presentation to this Committee Meeting.
- To note, in respect of the Castle Place Hub project, the current position and in particular the request from DfC to the Council to take ownership of the new kiosk at Castle Place.
- To agree the proposed approach (as below) in terms of the Council taking ownership of the new Castle Place kiosk subject to approval of the business case by DfC and approval by SP&R Committee on the transfer of the kiosk to Council and relevant licences and business case implications.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

The CG&R Committee have received regular updates and provided approvals relating to the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme - a £4.039m programme funded via DfC, DfI and DEARA to bring forward and deliver a range of economic, cultural and physical interventions to support businesses to trade efficiently during the Covid-19 restrictions and to maximise and create more outdoor space for businesses.

3.2 Progress

In terms of progress on delivery of the Programme, at the end of September a total of £2.6m has been spent or directly allocated to delivery partners with a forecast to complete the programme by March 2022. As previously reported, officers are continuing to work with contractors and delivery partners to minimise the impacts of the global supply and contractor availability issues. The majority of the procurement is now complete, and contract works programmes are being finalised with suppliers and contractors for the remaining work packages, minimising the impacts of these issues and further reports will be brought to this Committee as appropriate.

- 3.3 The following sections provide an outline of a few of the projects recently completed to date and projects in progress, with Appendix 1 Table providing a summary overview of the projects being delivered as part of the overall programme. Appendix 2 sets out the detail of the wide range of projects being delivered as part of the Business Cluster Community Grants. Members are also asked to note that a presentation will be provided to this Committee meeting providing further detail on the projects delivered through the Revitalisation Programme.

Sustainable and Active Travel (DfI Funded as part of the DfC Revitalisation Fund)

The following are some of the projects currently being delivered:

- 3.4 **Queens University Active Travel Hub** involves the completion of a new active travel hub, jointly funded by the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and QUB to encourage more people to choose cycling as a means of transport in and around the city, officially opened and launched on 17th September 21. The hub will be operated by social enterprise Big Loop Bikes and is one strand of the Universities goal to reach net-zero carbon emissions as set within their Strategy 2030
- 3.5 **Cathedral Gardens Active Travel Hub** is currently awaiting planning approval with delivery expected in February 2022. The tender for the construction works is now complete and pending appointment and the Expression of Interest for the preferred operator has now closed and officers are currently assessing the returns.
- 3.6 **The e-cargo bike scheme** – a pilot scheme that aims to improve air quality, reduce kerb parking and congestion by providing a sustainable delivery option for first mile/last mile/onforwarding and only mile deliveries has been appointed to local company, Streetdock. Streetdock are currently mobilising to commence operations in December 2021.
- 3.7 **Bolder Vision**

On the 30th September we launched a 12 week public consultation on 'A Bolder Vision for Belfast' Reimagining our City Centre – an ambitious connectivity blueprint for the city centre on how to create a vibrant place, support our economy and our health and well-being. A detailed report on the Bolder Vision is included on the Agenda for this Committee Meeting, and the projects been brought forward by the Revitalisation Programme form a key element in the development of the Bolder Vision and how the city can better use its spaces and places.

3.8 Business Cluster & Community Grants [£10k - £25k capital grants]

To bring forward this capital grants scheme for citywide environmental improvement schemes, proposals were sought on interventions that would support business operation and recovery; enhance physical spaces; increase civic participation and sense of ownership; and encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in local areas. A total £1,067,204 has been approved for some 51 applications with 7 successful city centre applications and 44 successful applications outside city centre. This grant programme is supporting 35 Community Groups and Social Enterprises and 16 business clusters across the city, with a full list including project description included within Appendix 2 of this report. This funding allocation comprises £700k of funding from the Revitalisation Programme and £450k from BCC as previously reported to this Committee.

- 3.9 As of end of September £750k has been provided to the successful applicants and officers continue to work with the remaining successful applicants in conjunction with the Integrated Design Team to secure relevant statutory approvals and support delivery of the projects.

Ongoing Projects:

3.10 Castle Place Kiosk

This project involves the creation of new public realm and streetscape enhancements within a key junction of the city centre, including the extension of the existing pavement width, reallocation of road space to create a new cycle lane and the creation of a new kiosk that offers a unique city centre kiosk and key attractor located in a prime retail pitch. This project forms a significant project in terms of informing the future treatment of this central city centre location, incorporating enhanced public space encouraging footfall and dwell time, with segregated active travel infrastructure and unique architecture that incorporates the cultural and historical significance of the conservation area.

- 3.11 This joint DfI/DfC/BCC project was agreed to have DfI installing the roadworks, BCC delivering the Kiosk build and above ground elements, and DfC to undertake the long-term ownership and operation of the kiosk structure.

- 3.12 DfI have commenced the road realignment works and are due to complete works in early November. DfC were in the process of applying for a Streetworks licence for the structure and had undergone an advertisement process to appoint a preferred operator for the kiosk. Following receipt of 16 applications DfC commenced discussions with a preferred operator and have removed their existing kiosk from this location to make way for the new kiosk. BCC has awarded the contract for the fabrication and installation of the kiosk.
- 3.13 With regards to the new Kiosk, DfC have recently informed the Council that, on further consideration of the proposal, they do not in fact have the statutory vires to enable them to undertake the ownership of the kiosk and, following detailed discussions, have requested that the Council considers undertaking the long-term ownership of the new kiosk. To enable this a number of considerations need to be made:
- Current Committee (CG&R and SP&R) approval is for BCC to install the kiosk with ownership transferring to DfC on completion.
 - Undertaking the ownership of the kiosk will have a resource and revenue tail implication for Council. DfC have requested that Council submit a business case to DfC that outlines the implications and any revenue tail implications associated with this new asset for consideration. However, it should be noted that the operator marketing process undertaken by DfC and subsequent operator proposal was predicated on an annual lease to the operator with a rent payable and the operator being responsible for rates and Public Indemnity and contents insurance.
 - BCC will need to undertake their own marketing exercise to secure an operator and thereafter enter into an appropriate lease agreement, which will involve future landlord lease management responsibilities.
 - BCC would be required to undertake a Streetworks licence from DfI
- 3.14 A business case is currently being prepared to submit to DfC outlining the financial implications to the Council and seeking appropriate financial recompense arrangements from DfC to offset this. Prior to formally responding to DfC on this matter Committee is asked to consider agreeing to this approach, which will be subject to approval of the business case by DfC [regarding financial implications] and approval by SPR Committee on the transfer of the kiosk to Council and relevant licences and any business case implications, as well as future approval to any lease agreements.

3.15 Financial and Resource Implications

The capital costs associated with the identified projects are met by the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme with additional funding from BCC as identified in 3.8 of this report.

As above, a business case is being submitted to DfC in respect of the Castle Place Kiosk to address any financial implications for Council and requesting appropriate financial recompense from DfC to offset this. The intention is to market the kiosk and secure an operator on a lease/tenancy arrangement with an annual rent and responsibility for other outgoings as appropriate.

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

Impact assessment complete on overall programme and kept under review.”

The Committee agreed:

- To note the updates on the DfC Revitalisation Programme projects and the continued importance of the use of streets and spaces to assist businesses and communities, as part of a wider programme of work focused on Reimagining the Public Realm;
- To note the progress and completion of a number of projects within the programme;
- To note, in respect of the Castle Place Hub project, the current position and in particular the request from DfC to the Council to take ownership of the new kiosk at Castle Place; and
- The proposed approach, in terms of the Council taking ownership of the new Castle Place kiosk, subject to approval of the business case by DfC and approval by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, and relevant licences and business case implications.

(The Chairperson and Councillors Brooks, Hussey, Maskey, and McMullan, who had declared an interest in this item, returned to the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

Strategic and Operational

Notices of Motion - Quarterly Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 This report provides a quarterly update on the Notices of Motion that City Growth & Regeneration are responsible for, in line with the agreement at SP&R Committee that all Standing Committees will receive a quarterly update.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Notes the updates to all Notices of Motion that this Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and
- Agrees to the closure of a number of Notices of Motion, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.5 below.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

At SP&R Committee on 25th October 2019, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

‘That this Council notes that other Councils produce a monthly status report in relation to Notices of Motion; and agrees Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly Notice of Motion Update which will be brought to each full Council Meeting, detailing the following:

- 1. Date received**
- 2. Notice of motion title**
- 3. Submitted by which Councillor**
- 4. Council meeting date**
- 5. Committee motion is referred to**
- 6. Outcome of committee where Notice of Motion will be debated**
- 7. Month it will be reported back to committee**
- 8. Other action to be taken.’**

3.2 Following Committee's consideration of the report on the quarterly update of Notices of Motion in August 2021, it was agreed to close 4 Notices of Motion. All subsequent Notices have been added to the database in Appendix 1 which shows 11 active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which this Committee is responsible.

3.3 Notice of Motion Updates

As previously noted by Committee, given the current pressures in responding to the pandemic, it has been difficult to afford the usual time towards progressing Notices of Motion. Nevertheless, there has been progress in a number of notices of motion. Members will also note that work on the database continues to be developed.

3.4 Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance

At SP&R Committee on 20th November, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:

- Category 1 - Notices of Motion which contained an action that has been completed. All Notices of Motion within this category contained a specific task that has since been completed. It is worth noting that, when Committee agree to action a Notice of Motion, there are sometimes additional actions agreed alongside the Notice of Motion. As these are not technically part of the Notice of Motion, they are taken forward through normal committee decision making processes. The Notice of Motion can therefore be closed, but additional actions related to it will continue to be progressed and reported to the committee. These additional actions are not contained in this report but will be noted in the live database moving forward.
- Category 2 - Notices of Motion have become Council policy or absorbed into a strategic programme of work. These Notices of Motion did not contain a specific task that could be complete. Instead, they were more strategic in nature and required changes in Council policy and/ or strategy for long term outcomes. Those listed within this category have all been agreed by Committee and are now either Council policy or are currently being implemented through a Council strategy that is managed by a Standing Committee through the corporate planning process.

3.5 CG&R Committee are asked to note and agree that the following 2 Notices of Motion are now closed:

Category 1 Recommended Closures:

- Closure of Donegal Street for Belfast Pride (Ref 190) - Request / events plan has not been received from the organisation to enable examination of the proposal for the road closure for Belfast Pride this year. As per the August Committee report, future proposals can be considered on submission of an events plan/formal request.
- York Street Interchange Project (Ref 207) – a letter was issued to the Minister for Infrastructure on 14th October 2021 inviting the Minister to consider the motion.

3.6 Additional information in relation to these Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance are available in Appendix 1.

3.7 **Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no additional financial implications attached to this report. Finance and resource implications are considered by Committee when taking decisions on the specific Notices of Motion and Issues Raised by Members.

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

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report. Implications are considered when taking forward the specific Notices of Motion and Issues Raised by Members.”

The Committee noted the update and agreed to the closure of a number of Notices of Motion.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan –
Six Month Progress Report**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 **Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

1.1 This paper provides a six month progress update on the key actions contained in the City Growth and Regeneration (CG&R) Committee Plan, as agreed by this Committee in June 2021.

1.2 The 2021-2022 Committee Plan was developed in the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda. The Committee will recall that the Committee Plan contains the commitments within the 2021-22 annual delivery plan for the Corporate Plan which fall under the remit of the Committee, plus additional deliverables that have been agreed by CG&R Committee and relevant to the Standing Orders of the Committee. It sets out the main priorities and programmes of work that the Committee is overseeing to maximise the Council's contribution to delivering a sustainable and inclusive recovery and the Belfast Agenda.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- note the content of the report and that officers are continuing to progress the actions within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan 2021-2022, as agreed by the Committee in June 2021.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Whilst the City Growth & Regeneration Committee have a role to play across a number of the themes, the clear focus for this Committee is City Recovery, immediate emergency response and reopening etc whilst also continuing with work to deliver on longer term plans for the city, with key priorities that will help the people and businesses of Belfast continue to respond to, and recover from, the economic impact of the pandemic while also shaping the future development and sustainability of the city.

3.2 In addition to the ongoing work to support the Community Planning Partnership, through the refreshed Jobs, Skills and Education Board and the City Development Board, this year the Committee has held a number of engagement and workshop sessions to enable strategic discussions to shape the Council's role and position on key issues such as the future of the city and role of the city centre and the DfC Employability NI programme, which has led to the establishment of the interim Labour Market Partnership. In addition to this there is regular and ongoing engagement with the City Stakeholder Group and a multi agency approach to city recovery measures etc.

3.3 The Committee receive regular updates on progress with the delivery of specific programmes and initiatives such as; the DfC COVID19 Revitalisation Fund, Future City Centre programme, A Bolder Vision and A City Imagining Cultural

Strategy. At the October 2021 meeting, the Committee also received detailed reports on the progress in relation to the Jobs and Skills work programme and the Business Support Services programme.

- 3.4** This report therefore provides a composite overview. Appendix 1 outlines progress with the main commitments in the Committee Plan for the six month period (April-September 2021). It should be noted that many of the commitments will continue to be delivered over the course of the year and the Committee will be kept informed of progress. However, some examples of the progress delivered against the corporate themes of Our city - safe, vibrant, connected spaces and places, inclusive economic recovery and community recovery in the first six months of the 2021-22 are provided below.
- 3.5** To support city recovery, the Business Cluster and Community Capital Grants scheme is virtually complete, with 33 applicants obtaining grants across the city. The DfC funding of £759k has now been spent in full. A further £450k from BCC was also made available to assist 18 other groups. The Local Business Interventions fund closed for claims on 25th June, assisting 445 businesses.
- 3.6** Work to support inclusive growth and recovery through employment initiatives over the last six months, a total of 427 people enrolled on Employment Academy programmes, across a range of sectors. 176 have completed their programme and 141 have secured employment so far. Additionally, via our Youth Support Programme, has supported 186 young people who have, or are at risk of, dropping out of education, employment or training. To date, 109 young people have progressed into positive outcomes. Officers continue to work with partners to develop employment pathways to emerging growth sectors within the technology and green sectors.
- 3.7** The Committee has also noted that business start-up support has helped 306 individuals to develop 200 business plans, creating an estimated 120 jobs. Support has been provided to 40 Social Enterprise and Cooperative organisations, 4 of which were Cooperatives. With a focus now on cooperatives, six outreach events for 120 attendees are being progressed. Committee agreed in October to accessing funding to support the delivery of area-based support for local business associations to increase vibrancy and drive footfall in anticipation of a go-live date in early November 2021.

- 3.8 Following Committee approval in September 2021, work is underway on two significant 12 week public consultation exercises to inform (i) the next phase of A Bolder Vision city centre connectivity study, which has been developed jointly between Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure. The Consultation will seek the views of consultees on a number of identified proposed 'Key Moves' to deliver radial change, as well as other potential short, medium and long term interventions and (ii) the 10 year Tourism Plan, Make Yourself at Home.
- 3.9 Delivering on the Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) and associated masterplans remains a priority. This includes the Inner North West, with the publication of the Masterplan and action plan; progressing with a programme of work around Housing Led Regeneration which includes the city centre strategic site assessments to facilitate city centre living through the strategic use of public sector city centre land assets. The strategic sites include the Inner North West – Northern Cluster, with a development brief agreed with DfC and issued, aimed at achieving the delivery of a residential led mixed-tenure, mixed-use scheme with a focus on place-making development. The Inner North West – Southern Cluster is progressing with a concept regeneration plan seeking to maximise the regeneration potential of this significant area of the city centre, strategically located in close proximity to the core retail area, the new university, the site of the new Destination Hub and existing residential communities. Dunbar Cluster, master planning exercise in underway to maximise the place-making potential arising from the comprehensive redevelopment of a number of co-located sites. Exchange St / Corporation St; Gloucester Street and Ormeau Avenue, planning assessments all complete and progressing with concept making plans at Ormeau Avenue. In addition to the ambitious programme of work within the city centre, a city wide approach has been taken to the strategic site assessments. Officers are working collaboratively with a number of other public sector bodies in the mapping and identification of public sector lands for housing. This includes the establishment of a Housing Led Regeneration Sub Delivery Group within the Community Planning structures of the City Development Board, chaired by NIHE Chief Executive to over see a detailed programme of work which will bring together the various strands of work undertaken by a number of public bodies in relation to the mapping and identification of public lands for housing led regeneration. Work is progressing on the development of a City Centre Living Vision aimed at bringing forward housing

development at scale; completing Phase 1 of the Entries Programme with Phase 2 underway and ongoing work with key partners and stakeholders on major regeneration and infrastructure schemes in the city such as Transport Hub/Weavers Cross, Ulster University campus and BRT Phase 2.

3.10 As noted by Committee in August, the Council's strategic acquisition of a city centre site marked a significant step in the Council's regeneration role in shaping the future of the city centre and the diversification of uses. Further updates on this and strategic proposals for the city centre will be brought to Committee for consideration.

3.11 Support for the Belfast Region City Deal continues, in particular the Belfast Destination Hub, with a decision due in the next month. This will signal further opportunities for the regeneration and future of the city centre as well as being a key strategic asset for the delivery of the 10 year A City Imagining Cultural Strategy and draft 10 Year Tourism Plan.

3.12 Partnerships are key to delivering on the City's strategic ambitions. The joint public / private sector Renewed Ambition Programme is continuing at pace focusing on maximising the impact of the joint partnership for developing regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for the City of Belfast. Work is ongoing to complete the Social, Economic and Environmental Impact of Real Estate and Regeneration Investment Research.

3.13 **Financial and Resource Implications**

Progress is in line with the agreed Committee Plan, annual work plans and associated Departmental budgets.

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

Strategies, programmes and actions within the Committee Plan are developed and delivered in consultation with the Council's Equality & Diversity Officers and subject to appropriate equality, good relations and rural needs assessment."

In response to a query from Councillor O'Hara regarding an update on a previous Notice of Motion in relation to Air Passenger Duty, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy stated that he would provide an update to a future meeting of the Committee.

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City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 10th November, 2021

The Committee noted the content of the report and that officers were continuing to progress the actions within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan 2021-2022, as agreed by the Committee at its meeting in June, 2021.

Chairperson