

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

7th January, 2022

## **MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will be a remote meeting via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 12th January, 2022 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 Received (Pages 1 - 12)

#### **2. Restricted Items**

- (a) Revenue Estimates and District Rate 2022/23 (Pages 13 - 20)

#### **3. Request to Present**

- (a) The National Lottery Heritage Fund (Pages 21 - 22)

#### **4. Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

- (a) A Bolder Vision Update (Pages 23 - 40)

5. **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

- (a) International Events Update (Pages 41 - 46)
- (b) Update on Christmas Activities (Pages 47 - 54)
- (c) Consultation on the draft Smart Belfast Urban Innovation Framework (Pages 55 - 94)
- (d) Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and National Development Plan (Pages 95 - 98)
- (e) Update on Renewed Ambition Programme 2022 (Pages 99 - 104)

6. **Strategic and Operational Issues**

- (a) Community Planning Update: City Development Board (Pages 105 - 112)



**Belfast**  
City Council

CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Correspondence Received; Road Safety Review and York Street Interchange |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 12th January, 2022  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Planning and Place                 |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Carolyn Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer                           |

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

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>  |
|            | To note the correspondence received following the Council's Notice of Motion in relation to Road Safety Review and its decision to withdraw corporate support for the York Street Interchange scheme.   |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
|            | The Committee is asked to note the correspondence as set out in the report.   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |
| <b>3.1</b> | <p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p><b>Road Safety Review</b></p> <p>At its meeting on 4th October, 2021, the Council agreed to the following motion:</p> <p>“Communities around the City Centre, in all quarters of Belfast, face issues attached to commuter parking, high density traffic volumes, services proximity and the legacy of division in the city. The resulting infrastructural impacts include poor access to dedicated public transit links, physical barriers to active travel, damaged road surfaces, outdated safety measures, inadequate parking controls and poor air quality. Such areas generally house dense residential communities, with poor access to private vehicles</p> |

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <p><b>3.2</b></p> | <p>and high exposure to toxic emissions, including schools who are at the front line of daily road safety concerns.</p> <p>The inner-city surrounding communities of Belfast are also dissected by the Westlink further straining the already at breaking point road capacity.</p> <p>This Council has a duty of care to citizens and in the vein of the Belfast Agenda a commitment to ensure people can live in safety and with improved health outcomes. As such, this motion asks that a letter be sent to the Minister for Infrastructure to commission a road safety review of inner-city surrounding communities in all quarters of the City. This should include a review of active travel measures, dedicated public transit links, road surfaces, safety measures, parking restrictions and accident volume. A further letter should be sent to the Minister for Finance and the Executive Office, recognising the significant financial restraints placed on the Department for Infrastructure under existing budgetary allocations and supporting the establishment of an Infrastructure Commission alongside further budgetary allocation to fund the change for change in communities like our inner-city.”</p> <p>Accordingly, Democratic Services wrote to the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Infrastructure, and a response has been received on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure from her Private Secretary (appendix 1) and from the Minister for Finance (appendix 2).</p> <p><b>York Street Interchange</b></p> <p>The Committee, at its meeting on 10th November 2021, agreed to withdraw its corporate support for the York Street Interchange scheme and would only reinstate corporate support, if the review, and any new scheme arising from it, met the Council’s climate, air quality, place making and housing ambitions as a city, and complemented the aims of A Bolder Vision.</p> <p>The decision was subsequently ratified by Council at its meeting on 1st December and accordingly, Democratic Services wrote to the Minister for Infrastructure to inform her of the Council’s position on the matter and a response has been received on the Minister’s behalf (Appendix 3), from her Private Secretary.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; 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> |
|-------------------|---|



|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            |   |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>  |
|            | <p>Appendix 1 – Response on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure.</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Response from Minister for Finance.</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Response on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure.</p> |

This page is intentionally left blank



Department for

**Infrastructure**

An Roinn

**Bonneagair**

[www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

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

Mrs L McLornan  
Belfast City Council  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

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

[McLornanL@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:McLornanL@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Your reference:  
Our reference: DFI/CORR/1738/2021  
19<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Mrs McLornan

## **ROAD SAFETY REVIEW**

Thank you for your letter of 14 October 2021 to Minister for Infrastructure, Nichola Mallon, following the Council meeting on 4 October 2021 when a motion was proposed and seconded by Councillors De Faoite and Heading requesting a road safety review in inner-city communities in the City. The Minister has read your letter and has asked me to respond on her behalf.

### **Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan**

The Department is currently developing a new suite of Transport Plans across Northern Ireland. This will include a new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), which will address future plans to 2035 for roads, public transport and active travel within the five councils whose spatial area falls within the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA). The BMTP will be integrated with the Councils' Local Development Plan (LDP) processes and many of the issues mentioned in your letter will be addressed through this work.

A Belfast Metropolitan Transport Study (BMTS) has been published on the Department's website. The BMTS sets out an objective evidence-based assessment of current and future transport issues in the context of the Councils' growth ambitions.

The timescales for completing the Draft BMTP and its release for public consultation are still under review due to its integration with the formal LDP processes. However, preparatory work is ongoing and the Minister is determined that the Transport Plan for Belfast will take account of the shared objectives for our towns and cities within the Greater Belfast area and given the climate emergency, will deliver reduced levels of commuting by private car and greater use of sustainable modes of transport including public transport, walking and cycling.

The Minister shares your aspiration for Belfast to be somewhere where people want to live, work and visit; and to be able to do so safely. Various forms of demand management will be considered as part of the BMTP, which will seek to address road congestion and

air pollution while promoting sustainable and active travel as preferred ways in which to move people and goods throughout the Greater Belfast area.

## **Public Transport**

You will be aware that the public transport system in Belfast offers a high level of accessibility on all key corridors through a dense network of bus stops, fully accessible vehicles and high frequency Metro and Glider services. The introduction of a zero-emission bus fleet which is currently in progress, will greatly help to address the issue of air pollution in the city.

## **Active Travel**

The need for better active travel provision in the city at large and in the centre of the city in particular has been recognised in 'Making Belfast an Active City: Belfast Cycling Network 2021' which the Minister published on 4th June this year. This document articulates a vision for the city centre in line with the aspirations of 'A Bolder Vision for Belfast' where walking, wheeling and cycling would be achieved principally by the following means:

- Reduce car parking progressively (particularly on-street car parking and footway parking) over several years;
- Re-organise traffic flows to eliminate through traffic in the city centre (except for sustainable travel and emergency services);
- Reduce speed limits in high pedestrian footfall areas or streets;
- Prioritise pedestrian crossings to minimise waiting time for pedestrians and maximise crossing time; and
- Re-allocate road space for uses other than traffic.

## **Road Maintenance**

To ensure that roads are maintained in a safe and serviceable condition, officials inspect all adopted roads on a monthly, three monthly or six monthly cyclical basis, depending on the volumes of traffic using the road. Any defects identified in the course of these inspections, which meet current intervention levels, are processed for repair on a prioritised basis in accordance with the Department's current road maintenance standards.

Defects such as potholes can be reported directly to the Department through the online reporting system <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/problems-roads-and-streets>

This ensures that, even in the current restricted working conditions, locations can be identified and issues properly assessed and dealt with in accordance with our policies and within established timescales.

It should be noted that the Department has been operating in a challenging budgetary position for some time and this has had an impact on all road maintenance activities. Only the highest priority defects are currently being repaired and unfortunately some defects will not be repaired until they meet the required intervention levels.

In addition, the Department also carries out an annual programme of reconstruction and resurfacing works which is implemented on a scheme priority basis, subject to the availability of the necessary financial resource.

## **Road Safety**

Minister Mallon is aware of the challenge road safety presents to all of us in our everyday lives and is committed to the ongoing development of a safe and sustainable transport network system that keeps us free from road traffic harm and meets the needs of all our citizens.

To this end, on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021, the Minister launched a consultation on the new Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland which seeks views on the proposed approach to road safety until 2030 and the issues and priorities that need to be addressed. As part of the consultation development process officials engaged with a wide range of key stakeholders, including the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), and the Committee for Infrastructure, to help build a consensus around the key priorities for the new Strategy. The Department will again be facilitating a number of stakeholder engagement sessions in December to provide an opportunity for all road users to input into the Strategy. The Department will be keen to hear your views which will help to inform the future direction of Road Safety. Details of the consultation, how to register your interest in the stakeholder events, and on how to respond are available at <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-proposed-content-new-road-safety-strategy-northern-ireland-2030>

I hope that all of the work which the Department is progressing as outlined above demonstrates that it is putting in place interventions for delivering the improvements suggested by the Council in your letter of 14th October.

I trust that you will find this reply helpful.



**KATHRYN MCFERRAN**  
**Private Secretary to the Minister**

This page is intentionally left blank

**From the Minister of Finance**

*Louise McLornan*

*Democratic Services Officer*

Private Office  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Clare House  
303 Airport Road West  
BELFAST  
BT3 9ED

**Tel:** 028 90816216

**Email:** [private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@finance-ni.gov.uk)

**Your reference:** LM 04.10.2021

**Our reference:** CORR-1336-2021

**Date:** 25 October 2021

Dear Louise

**CORR-1336-2021: Louise McLornan Belfast City Council - Road Safety Review**

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 October 2021 regarding the Road Safety review in inner city Belfast.

I appreciate the issues faced by communities in inner city areas as a result of road traffic volumes and the wide ranging impact this has on parking, congestion, safety around schools and air quality and I support the review into how to improve road safety in these areas.

My officials have been involved in pre-consultation engagement with DfI on the new Road Safety Strategy and I would encourage the Council to participate in this exercise.

As regards the comments that investment has been constrained by the Department for Infrastructure's budget allocations, I would like to point out that the Executive's 2021-22 Final Budget included £722.5 million capital for the Department for Infrastructure, which is an increase of 29% over the previous year and is a record level of investment in infrastructure. It is a matter for the Infrastructure Minister to decide how to allocate her budget depending on her priorities.

I would encourage the Council to engage further with Minister Mallon on this very important area.

Is mise le meas



**CONOR MURPHY MLA  
MINISTER OF FINANCE**





Department for

**Infrastructure**

An Roinn

**Bonneagair**

[www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

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

Carolyn Donnelly  
Democratic Services Section  
Belfast City Council  
Legal and Civic Services  
[donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:donnellycarolyn@belfastcity.gov.uk)

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

Your reference:

Our reference: CORR-2072-2021  
07 January 2022

Dear Ms Donnelly,

## **YORK STREET INTERCHANGE – REQUEST TO SHARE INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE REPORT**

Thank you for your letter of 20 December 2021 to Minister Mallon, on behalf of Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee, informing her of Council's decision to withdraw corporate support for the York Street Interchange scheme. The Minister has noted the Council's position.

Your letter states that corporate support for the York Street Interchange scheme would only be reinstated, "if the review, and any new scheme arising from it, met the Council's climate, air quality, place making and housing ambitions as a city, and complemented the aims of A Bolder Vision."

I can reassure you that the Minister's aim is to ensure the York Street Interchange scheme aligns with the emerging policy context and rises to the challenges facing us all - an approach that is supported by the motion passed by Belfast City Council.

In my response to your colleague, Ms Louise McLornan on 29 October 2021, I explained that the Independent Assurance Review of York Street Interchange was carried out to provide the Minister with assurance on how the proposed scheme reflected her key ministerial priorities and both Executive and Belfast City Council objectives. In particular:

- The Minister's priorities of 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.

In March 2021, the Minister accepted in full the six recommendations of the Independent Assurance Review and asked for some further work to be carried out, particularly around place making and to maximise ambition in terms of what can be delivered for communities, connectivity and the wider living places agenda. The work involved a place making and active travel review, which took into account the further development of the Bolder Vision for Belfast. The review is in its final stages and the Minister will consider next steps following receipt of the final report. The Minister will further consider next steps following receipt of the final report.

You have also requested in your letter that the Department's work on junctions be expedited, and that double yellow lines be installed outside Clifton House.


I am pleased to inform you the Department proposes to introduce approximately 72m of 'full-time' waiting restrictions (double yellow lines) and approximately 12m of 'part-time' waiting restrictions (single yellow lines) along North Queen Street at Clifton House. The legislation is currently being processed, which I understand can take 9 to 12 months to complete. It is therefore hoped that these restrictions can be installed before autumn, subject to no objections being received.

The Minister is keen to see the Junctions Working Group maintain momentum in relation to other key junctions. The Great Patrick Street / York Street junction has been considered as part of the place making and active travel review that I referenced earlier.

The Minister has asked officials to reconsider the design options for the Shankill Gateway junction at Peter's Hill to ensure they fit more clearly with our wider vision. As soon as this work is concluded they will present their proposed design to the Junctions Working Group.

The Frederick Street / North Queen Street junction is being considered as part of the Department for Communities' (DfC) public realm scheme. I understand that DfC is proposing an extension to this project and developing junction proposals. These design proposals will, as soon as they are ready, also be presented to the Junctions Working Group.

I hope these comments are helpful.



**KATHRYN MCFERRAN**  
**Private Secretary to the Minister**

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



**Belfast**  
City Council

CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION  
COMMITTEE

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Request to Present to Committee – The National Lottery Heritage Fund |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 12th January, 2022   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration and Development          |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Carolyn Donnelly, 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

☐

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>  |
|            | To inform the Members that a request has been received from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to present to a future meeting of the Committee. |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
|            | The Committee is asked to consider the request from The National Lottery Heritage Fund (HLF).   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            | <p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>In the request from HLF, the Policy and Public Affairs Manager stated that, as the Committee was responsible for supporting the development of culture, heritage and the arts, HLF would like the opportunity to talk about its role in supporting heritage in Belfast, as it was central to place and neighbourhood regeneration plans for repurposing the city and town centres, transport, planning, job creation and social cohesion.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p> |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>  |
|            | None.   |



|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | A Bolder Vision Update   |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 12 January 2022  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development                |
| <b>Contact Officers:</b>  | Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager<br>Callie Persic, Development Manager |

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

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

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>  |
| 1.1        | To update Members on the engagement programme and feedback from the consultation to date for the Bolder Vision for Belfast and additional engagement activities for elderly and disabled groups                     |
| 1.2        | To make Members aware of an upcoming DfC/DfI Ministerial workshop in City Hall to address issues associated with key ABV delivery projects such as Belfast Streets Ahead 3 and 5, key junctions and Glider Phase 2. |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1        | Members are asked to note:  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation activity, feedback to date and associated issues in relation to approval, timeframes and delivery</li> <li>• Upcoming DfC/DfI Ministerial workshop due to take place on 12 January 2022.</li> <li>• The proposed community led seminar, Joining the City, planned for January 2022.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>   |
| <b>3.1</b> | <b>A Bolder Vision consultation document</b>   |
| <b>3.2</b> | At the 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2021 meeting the City Growth and Regeneration Members received an update on the Bolder Vision engagement activity, governance and timeframe for delivery.   |
| <b>3.3</b> | A Bolder Vision aims to provide an holistic look at the city's infrastructure from a people and place based priority, to enable key design decisions to be made from a city user perspective on our emerging strategic capital programmes such as BRT Phase 2, Belfast Streets Ahead 3 & 5, the Inner Ring Junctions, Weavers Cross and the Transport Hub, private sector developments, key Housing-Led Regeneration areas such as the Inner North West and the sustainable and active travel network. Not only will this provide a framework for delivery, but it will help inform the forthcoming Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. A Bolder Vision also aims to bring forward area-based infrastructure planning to strengthen and support the diversification of the city centre for tourism, the changing nature of retail, the increased student population and to provide the right infrastructure to enable the development of sustainable and inclusive city centre communities. |
| <b>3.4</b> | <p><b>A Bolder Vision Key Moves for transformation</b></p> <p>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 proposed Key Moves are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a Civic Spine</li> <li>2. Reimagine the Inner Ring Road</li> <li>3. Promote City Centre Living</li> <li>4. Embrace the River Lagan and Waterfront</li> </ol>   |
| <b>3.5</b> | <p><b><u>Stakeholder engagement and feedback</u></b></p> <p>Council has been hosting the online survey on the Your Say Engagement HQ platform with DfI and DfC linking to this on their respective consultation sites. Supporting the content on Your Say is a Virtual Room that is accessed via an additional, external link and provides further information on</p>  |



|     |   |
|-----|---|
|     | the background, Key Moves, other supporting capital projects and strategies and timeframe. As of 21 December, there has been 575 responses to the online consultation and 5,500 views of the site.  |
| 3.6 | <p>The online responses received to date have been very positive, with approx. 97% of the online responses coming from individuals, with 75% of those respondents been from residents in Belfast, 17% from commuters and 4% from visitors. Respondents were also asked to confirm their primary method of access into the city centre with 35% of respondents travelling by car, 25% by bus, 18% by cycle and 12% by walking. Of the online responses received to date there has been significant support for the four moves and in particular for the civic spine and creating the right environment to support city centre living. In the two weeks prior to the 21<sup>st</sup> December a number of detailed written responses were received from organisations and key city stakeholders Belfast Chamber, Sustrans, Belfast Metropolitan Residents' Group, Queen's University, Belfast Civic Trust, Libraries NI, Sustrans and a collective response from the Belfast Harbour, Titanic Quarter Limited and Maritime Belfast Trust's, Officers in conjunction with the consultants continue to interrogate these responses, which are supportive to date, and include some comments that include:</p> |
| 3.7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A call for action and delivery of high-quality interventions to support the emerging future city users;</li> <li>• The need for an updated Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan;</li> <li>• Better connections to communities and proposals around how the Inner Ring can function for traffic and better connections</li> <li>• Addressing car dominance but realising that car access is still required and needs to be better managed in terms of prioritisation of the transport hierarchy of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;</li> <li>• Better connections to, and use of the river</li> <li>• Use other levers, e.g. 20pmh zone, Low Emissions Zones, enforcement</li> <li>• A suitable governance structure to streamline processes and support delivery</li> <li>• Be even bolder</li> </ul>  |
| 3.8 | <p>There has been an extensive programme of in-person and virtual meetings organised throughout the consultation to get different perspectives on the proposed interventions, and to general new ideas and recommendations. Cross sector stakeholder input will help to ensure that the final Strategy and Delivery Plan is representative of the current and future needs of the city centre businesses, transportation, communities, visitors and users and provides the framework that integrates the design and delivery of infrastructure.</p>   |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 3.9  | Specifically, there has been targeted engagement with partnership bodies that have a wide membership and reach and can disseminate information and host engagement sessions including, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Area Partnerships, Belfast Chamber, BIDs, Climate Commission, City Development Board, IMTAC, cultural groups including the UNESCO Music Steering Group, BCC Core funded cultural organisations, City Reopening Group, QUB, UU, professional bodies, tourism, active travel, and various BCC internal staff networks including the Women's, PROUD and ABLE networks. Officers engaged with Council fora such as the Youth Forum, Migrant Forum, Greater Belfast Seniors' Forum and the Equality Consultative Forum. There was also focused engagement with different elements of DfI (e.g. Section offices, Active Travel) and Translink.  |
| 3.10 | Two public webinars took place on the 25th November and the 1st December, and on the 14th December a specific session, supported by BSL sign language interpreters, was held to further reach out to elderly and disabled people. Feedback from these sessions will be added to the online public consultation survey. Officers are closely monitoring the weekly feedback and Jacobs will develop a Post-Consultation report in mid-January that will provide an overview of the feedback and submissions, detail the engagement and communications undertaken.   |
| 3.11 | As reported at the December meeting of the CG&R Committee a technical issue with the Virtual Room came to light at the end of November, which meant that some people who are blind or partially sighted could not access the Virtual Room platform. Working in conjunction with IMTAC and RNIB this was immediately addressed, and alternative arrangements were quickly put in place to ensure accessibility to the consultation material.  |
| 3.12 | In order to address this issue, the Consultation period has been extended to the to the 14th January specifically for disabled and older people. During this extended period the YourSay platform and Virtual Room will reopen to the general public. Further engagement with these groups will continue with two 'Deep Dive' sessions on the 11th January 2022 that will explore issues, barriers and opportunities arising from ABV. The dates and agenda were agreed with the Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) who is the main source of advice to Government and others in Northern Ireland on issues that affect the mobility of disabled and older people. The agenda and registration details were circulated to their members before Christmas. This was also placed on the YourSay and sent out on Council communication platforms. The deep dive sessions will cover topics that were raised at the IMTAC webinar in December such as, transport, blue badge parking, street clutter, cycle infrastructure design and the design of road junctions. Sign language interpreters (including backups) have been booked for each session. |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 3.13 | <p><b><u>Ministerial Workshop</u></b></p> <p>A major risk to the delivery of the Bolder Vision Framework is the potential lapse in timeframe for approval due to the 2022 election period, and the impact that this may have in informing the designs of the strategic capital investments of BRT2, Belfast Streets Ahead 3 &amp; 5, and the Inner Ring Junctions. Officers across the three organisations are still working to an accelerated programme and are striving to have a final document made available for Ministerial sign off by 16 March 2022. This document will provide the framework to inform all capital projects and emerging policy and strategy and will be followed in May with a detailed delivery plan.</p>   |
| 3.14 | <p>As part of the ongoing engagement between BCC/DfC/DfI and to mitigate against potential delays, a workshop with the Ministers, CX and senior Council officers is planned to take place virtually on the 12th January 2022. It will be facilitated by Andrew Haley, the Chair of the DfC Ministerial Advisory Group for Architecture and Built Environment in Northern Ireland. The purpose is to discuss issues and potential conflicts in relation to Belfast Streets Ahead, the Inner Ring Junctions and Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 in the context of ABV. Despite the lack of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan in place (due to start in 2022), large infrastructure projects are still moving forward and there is a need to work within ABV as the coherent framework for delivery.</p>  |
| 3.15 | <p><b><u>Joining the City</u></b></p> <p>In conjunction with this, officers are working with community groups in North Belfast, including Ashton and Healthy North Belfast, and representatives from city stakeholders including DfI and Ulster University to participate in a community led 'Joining the City' Seminar. This seminar will be specifically aligned to community based discussions of major regeneration and infrastructure schemes, including the new Ulster University and the York Street Interchange, and how these projects and the outworkings of the Bolder Vision can be maximised or proactively designed and implemented to restitch communities to the city centre and in particular to maximise the positive impacts of these projects on the people who live closest to them. This seminar is currently pencilled in for January with further details to follow in the New Year.</p> |
| 3.16 | <p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>   |
| 3.17 | <p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>None associated with this report, however, an EQIA Screening will be carried out on the Strategy.</p>  |
| 4.0  | <p><b>Appendices – Documents attached</b></p> <p>Appendix 1: ABV Consultation Brochure</p>   |

This page is intentionally left blank

# A BOLDER VISION FOR BELFAST

## Public Consultation

30<sup>th</sup> September - 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021



Page 29



**Belfast**  
City Council



Department for  
**Infrastructure**  
[www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

An Roinn  
**Bonneagair**



Department for  
**Communities**  
[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department for  
**Communities**

**open**  
optimised environments

**Jacobs**

# JOINED UP VISION FOR BELFAST

Belfast City Centre is changing. A Bolder Vision is our approach for a progressive, re-imagined Belfast City Centre that is greener, walkable and connected. Improving connectivity is always important and this taken on a new relevance and urgency to collectively work to build a cleaner, stronger and more resilient city. At its heart, A Bolder Vision is creating a people-focused Belfast.

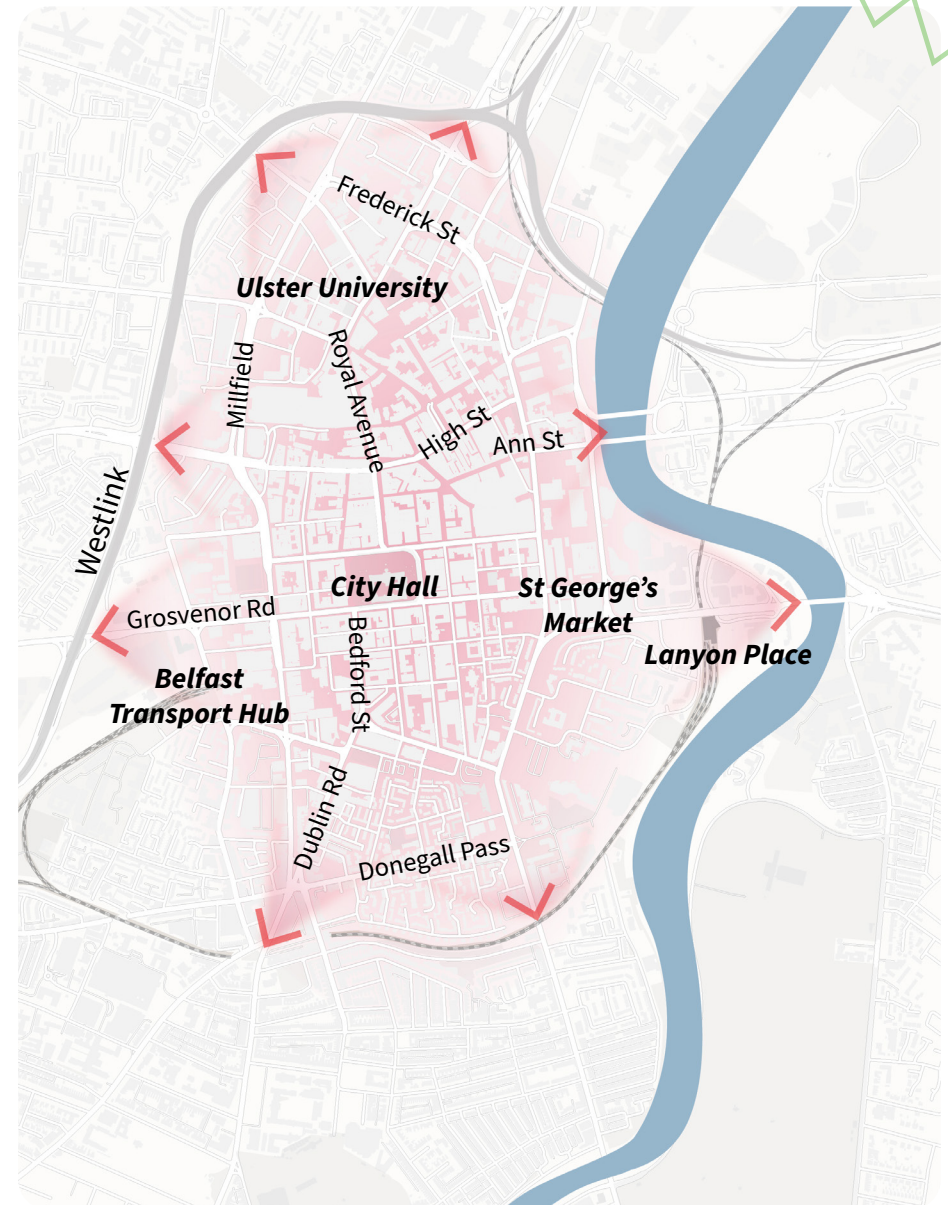
Ulster University is opening its new campus, there is growing demand for city centre living and increased leisure provision across the city centre. It is vital that we plan our infrastructure to shape the city for its future users. We must overcome historical issues including severance and barriers to movement that are still very prevalent today.

A number of strategically important projects will be delivered in the next few years, including vital public sector projects such as the Belfast Region City Deal with Innovation and SMART districts, Belfast Transport Hub, Belfast Streets Ahead 3 and 5, Belfast Rapid Transit 2, Cultural Strategy, Belfast Destination Hub and York Street Interchange.

It is important that Belfast captures these opportunities to ensure projects are fully integrated and support the needs of the city's changing user base. This will help create an accessible, inclusive city ready to address the challenges of climate change and other shocks or stresses.

In August 2019, Belfast City Council (BCC), the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department for Communities (DfC) completed '**A Bolder Vision (ABV) for Belfast**' for a shared vision of the city centre. This next step is to develop a strategy to inform and strengthen proposed projects and actions and set out new bold interventions across the city centre. Bolder Vision for Belfast will provide the mechanism for a more united approach across planning, transport and regeneration.

A Bolder Vision is our blueprint for moving forward and will guide our future infrastructure investment decisions that are ambitious yet deliverable. This is a shared vision for BCC, DfC and DfI but it will require everyone to work together, make changes and collectively rise to the challenge. Together we can build a Belfast that addresses the climate emergency and builds sustainable places that supports the health and well-being of all our people now and in the future.





## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A Bolder Vision for Belfast reflects the overwhelming recognition that change needs to happen to ensure economic and environmental resilience is embedded within the liveability and mobility landscape of Belfast as a capital city of today and of the future. This Bolder Vision is the continuation of a journey for the city, initiated with the Belfast Agenda and strengthened by recent policies and strategies focusing on the centre of Belfast in 2035.

Bolder Vision is underpinned by eight Themes for Change that have led to the four Visioning Principles which will see Belfast city centre by 2035 as:

Page 31

**Creating a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment that promotes wellbeing for all, inclusive growth and innovation.**

# 2

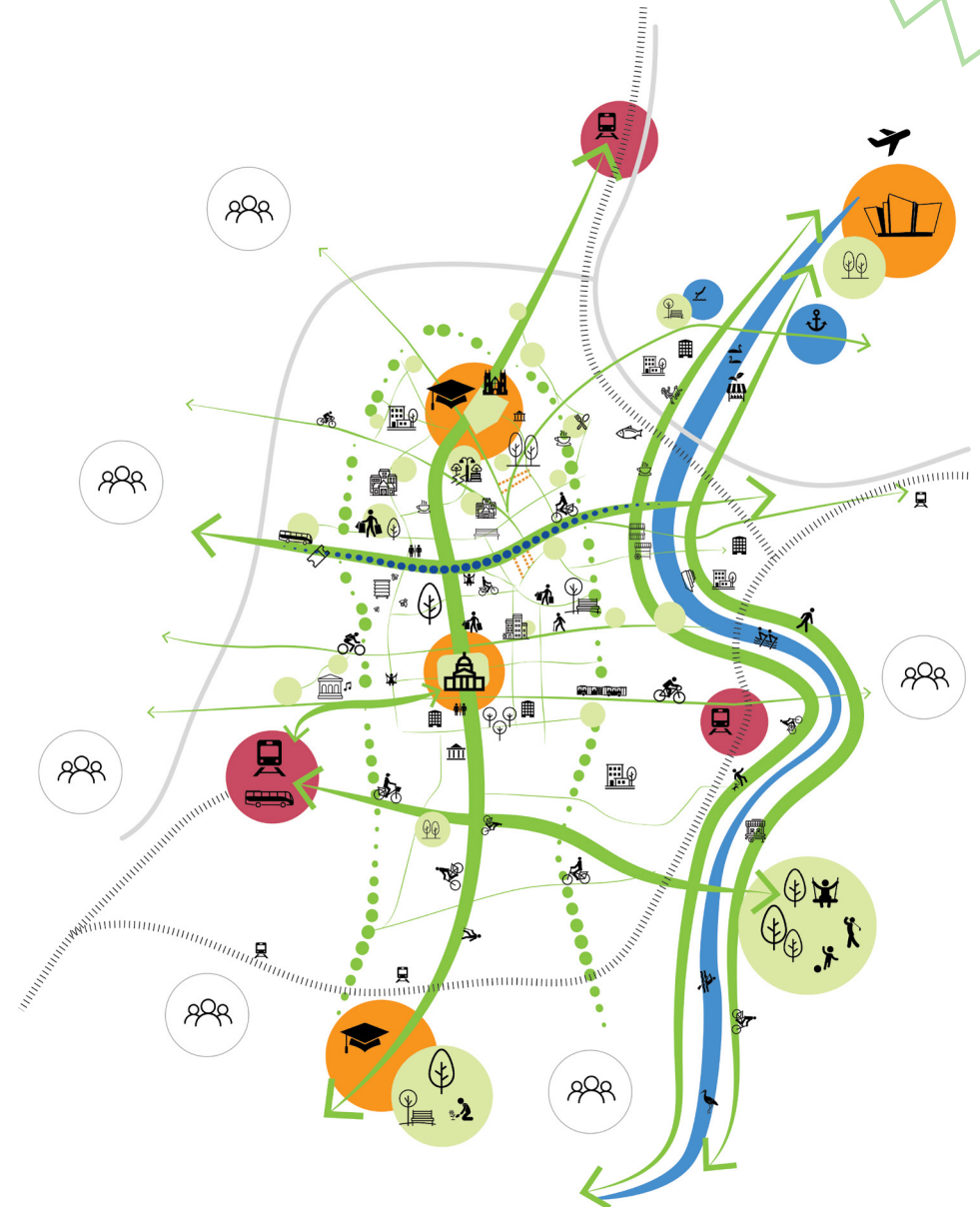
**Fundamentally changing the centre of Belfast to prioritise integrated walking, cycling and public transport and end the dominance of the car.**

3

**Providing lively, safe and green streets linking inclusive shared spaces to promote resilience and enhance our built heritage.**

4

**Removing severance and barriers to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities to improve access for all.**



# OPPORTUNITY AREAS TO DELIVER TRANSFORMATION

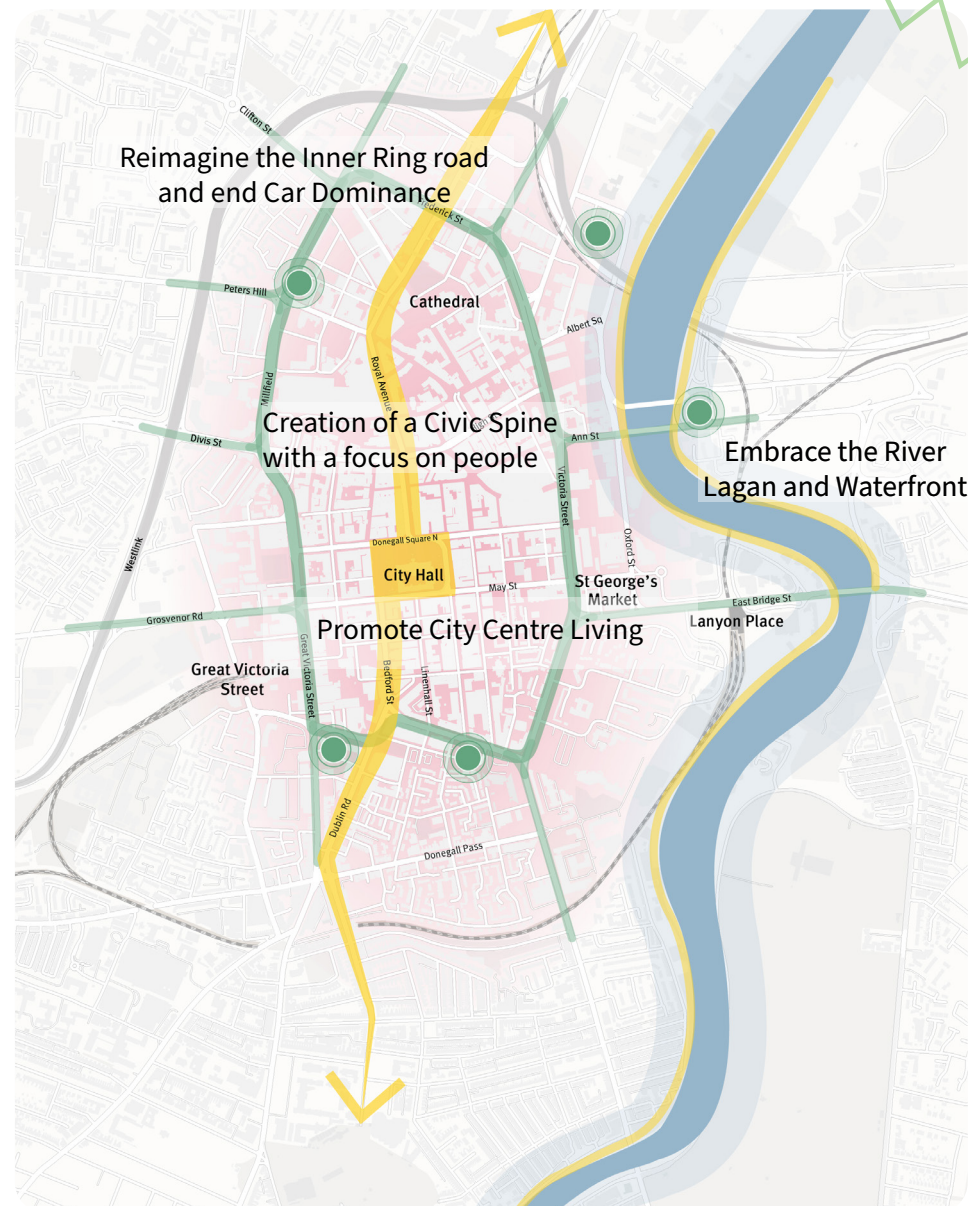
Bolder Vision has identified a number of 'key moves' to deliver transformational change. These key moves can help deliver the new interventions proposed whilst ensuring the right decisions are made for major capital investment schemes and other important projects. Each Key Move groups a number of interventions in critical parts of the city to create a green, people focused, connected city centre for current and future users.

The associated opportunity areas of each key move relate and interface with the major ongoing capital projects in the city. It is critical to understand what the potential of these areas is to inform the delivery of these schemes to safeguard a city centre for all in the future.

The Key Moves are:

- Creation of a Civic Spine with a Focus on People
- Reimagine the Inner Ring Road and End Car Dominance
- Promote City Centre Living
- Embrace the River Lagan and Waterfront

More detail on the Key Moves can be found on the following pages of this brochure.





# WHAT IS THE CONSULTATION ABOUT?



## **Creation of 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 Queens 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.



## **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.



## **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.



## **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.



## Creation of A Civic Spine With A Focus On People

### Short term interventions /Catalyst Opportunities:



Redesign the Great Patrick Street junction with a people first approach, supporting improved safety, walking, wheeling and cycling.



Through schemes such as Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3 and 5, identify priority streets wherein standard on-street parking is removed and re-allocated for spaces for people, including linear pocket parks, public realm, retail and pop-up events.



Review location and provision of on-street parking for blue badge provision, coach parking and better streets and places for people



Develop Franklin Street to Amelia Street as a people focussed connection to a newly invigorated Blackstaff Square, with a focus on walking, wheeling and cycling, supporting the Belfast Cycling Network 2021 and reinforcing a strong desire line to Belfast Transport Hub.

### Long term interventions:



Further develop the Civic Spine with a high-quality 'people first' space while still delivering efficient public transportation connections and city servicing requirements.



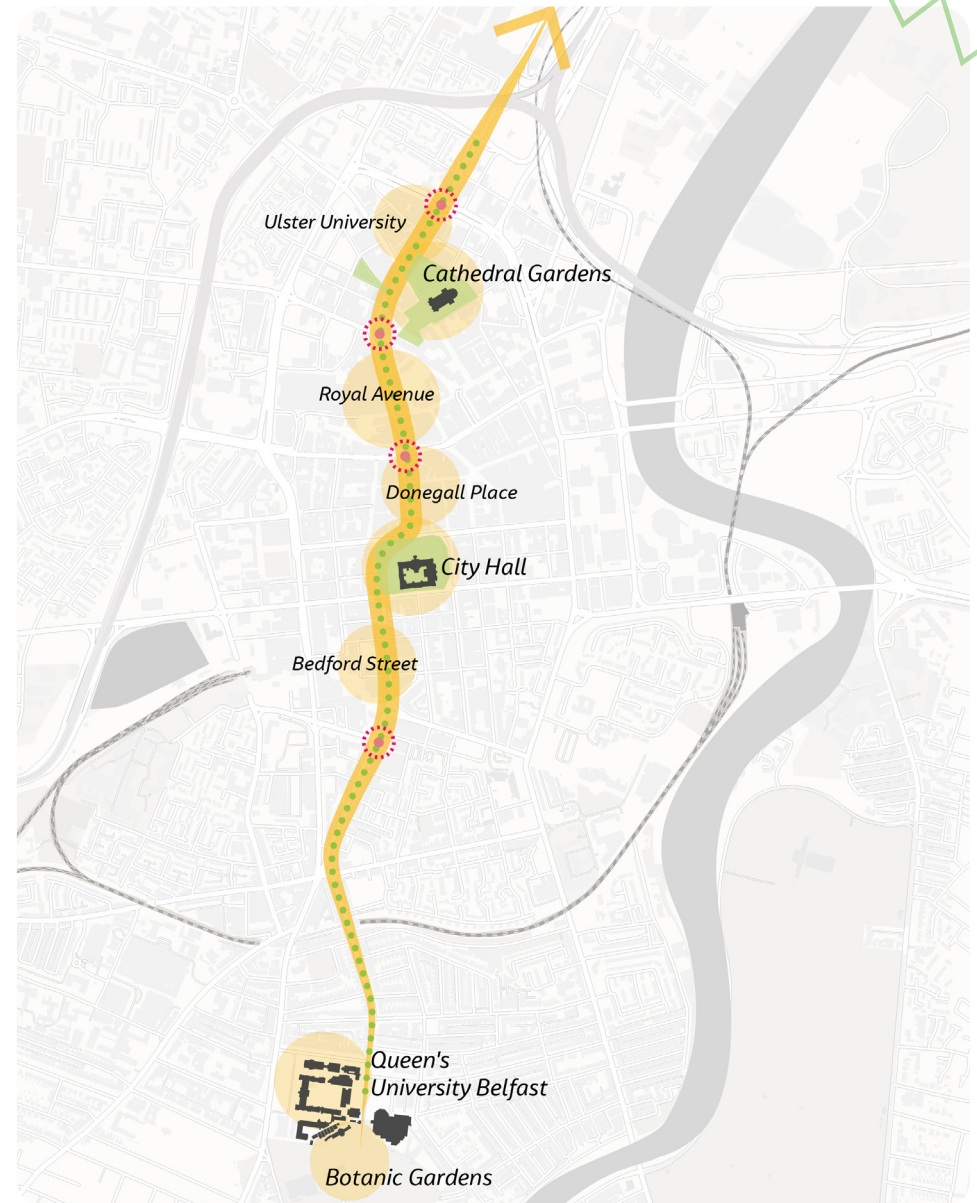
Integrating blue/green infrastructure, the Civic Spine should provide safe, accessible and legible movement in the heart of the city that will be delivered through the Belfast Streets Ahead 3 & 5 & BRT projects.



Transform the Linen Quarter to become a sustainable people focussed district, restricting levels of standard on-street parking and reallocating space for blue badge holders, public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling.

### Strengthening existing projects:

- Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2
- Belfast Transport Hub
- York Street Interchange
- Five C's Project
- Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3 & 5
- Belfast Destination Hub





## Reimagine the Inner Ring road and End Car Dominance

### Short term interventions /Catalyst Opportunities:



Utilising the existing configuration, reallocate road space on the Inner Ring to facilitate the delivery of an orbital cycle urban greenway, accessible from all sides of the city with effective signage, artwork and wayfinding.



Redesign the Shankill Gateway and Clifton Gateway junctions with a people first approach, supporting improved safety, walking, wheeling and cycling.



Create green corridors along the Inner Ring, develop active travel hubs and city parks via temporary uses.

### Long term interventions:



Reprioritise the Inner Ring to remove severance to communities with a focus on public transport, priority cycling routes and green infrastructure.



Create a one-way gyratory system for traffic along Great Victoria Street and Durham Street, freeing up space on street frontages for walking, wheeling and cycling on both of these streets.



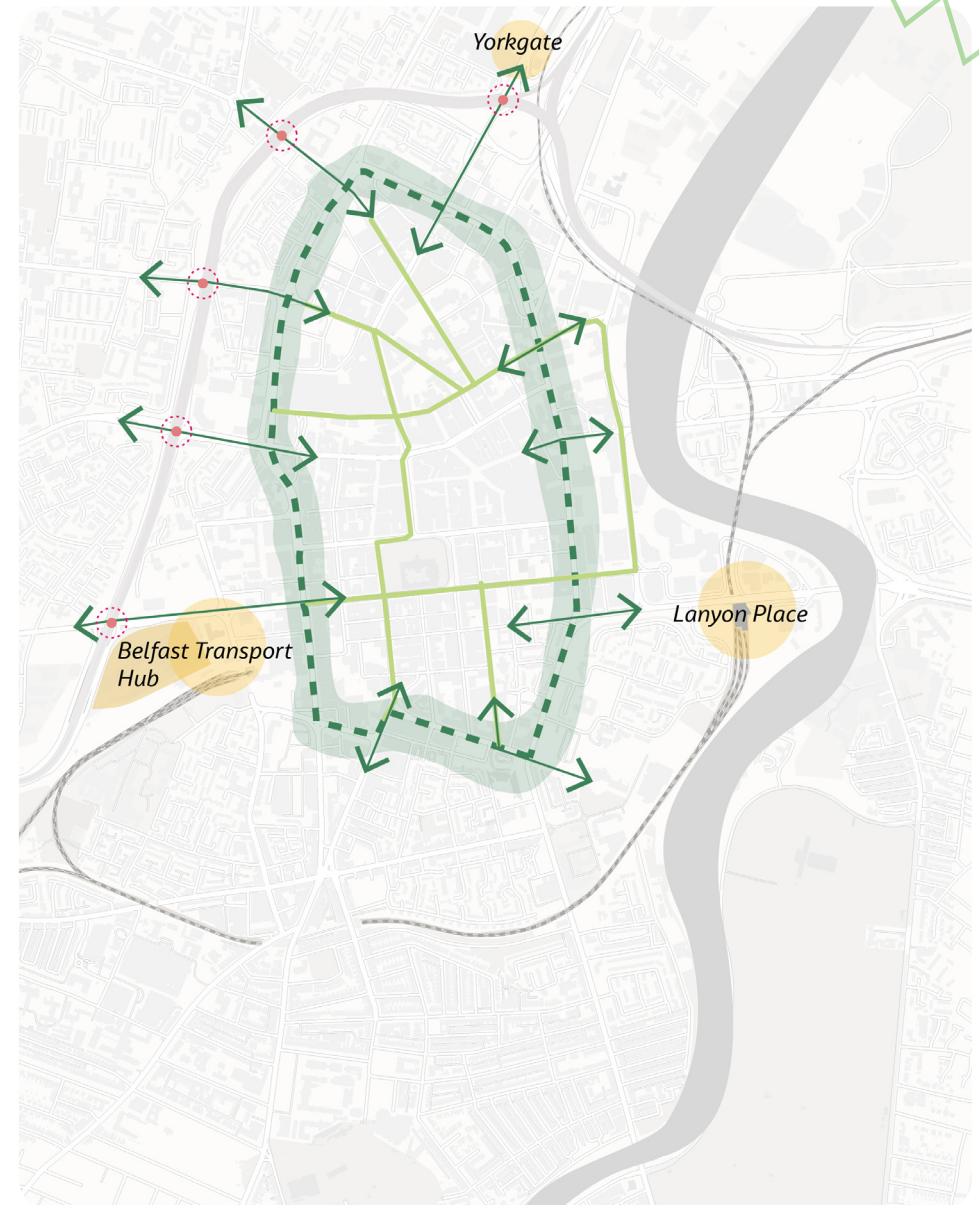
Integrate Belfast Rapid Transit directly with Belfast Transport Hub utilising Durham Street.



Enhance pedestrian and cycle movement over Westlink and under A12/M3 to improve city centre connectivity by introducing green landscaping together with wide and sufficiently lit footpaths.

### Strengthening existing projects:

- Belfast Rapid Transit 2
- Belfast Transport Hub
- Belfast Cycling Strategy 2021
- Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5
- York Street Interchange
- One Million Trees commitment







## Promote City Centre Living

### Short term interventions /Catalyst Opportunities:



Ensure all capital projects, including private sector developments, are designed to support city centre living and building sustainable communities.



Remove traffic access from Verner Street, and utilise St George's market to activate the space for greening, parklets and retail.



Introduce a linear park in the derelict car park south of Bruce St during construction phase of Belfast Transport Hub. Explore opportunities additional city parks as temporary uses.



Increase cycle parking and Belfast Bike docking stations along the river, around the inner ring road of the city centre to support the development of the Belfast Cycling Network 2021 and linking with the Connswater Greenway to the East.



Supporting the urban forest/one million tree commitment which Belfast has signed up to with the introduction of temporary trees in movable containers. These could be used to test out the introduction of more permanent boulevard planting.

### Long term interventions:



Create a series of destination parks and community focussed streets for the Inner North West areas



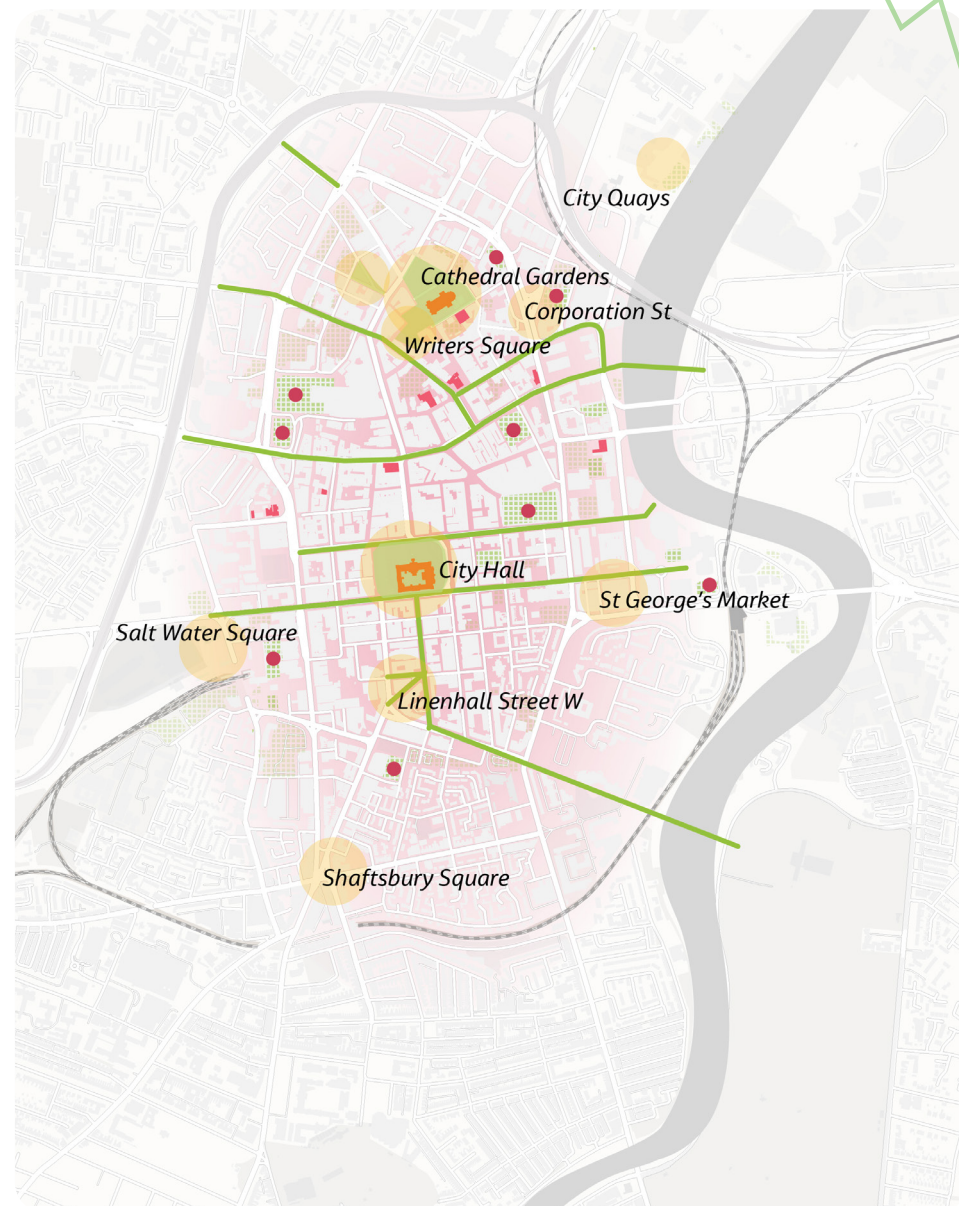
Create a series of vibrant public spaces, including Cathedral Gardens area, Saltwater Square and City Quays Garden linked to both existing and proposed people focussed routes



Establish a network of green streets to prioritise walking, wheeling and cycling, together with incorporating, street trees, pocket parks and different typologies of landscaping.

### Strengthening existing projects:

- Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3
- Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5
- Five Cs project
- Belfast Transport Hub
- One Million Trees commitment
- Belfast Cycling Strategy 2021





## Embrace the River Lagan and Waterfront

### Short term interventions /Catalyst Opportunities:



Improve existing waterfront active travel networks by connecting to the emerging Urban Greenway on the Inner Ring, introducing appropriate signage and branding.



Activate the River Lagan by introducing pop-up 'green island' parks and swimming pontoons along its length, coupled with a network of public spaces between the harbour area to Ormeau Park.



Introduce new pedestrian and cycle bridge linking Titanic Quarter to City Quays

### Long term interventions:



Enhance existing and create new riverside destinations to optimise the use of River Lagan. Strengthen connectivity to both the river and surrounding communities by promoting travel along the water and enhancing both existing and new crossings at strategic locations.



Introduce a new cycle and pedestrian bridge from Sailortown at the North of the City, connecting to the Titanic Quarter.



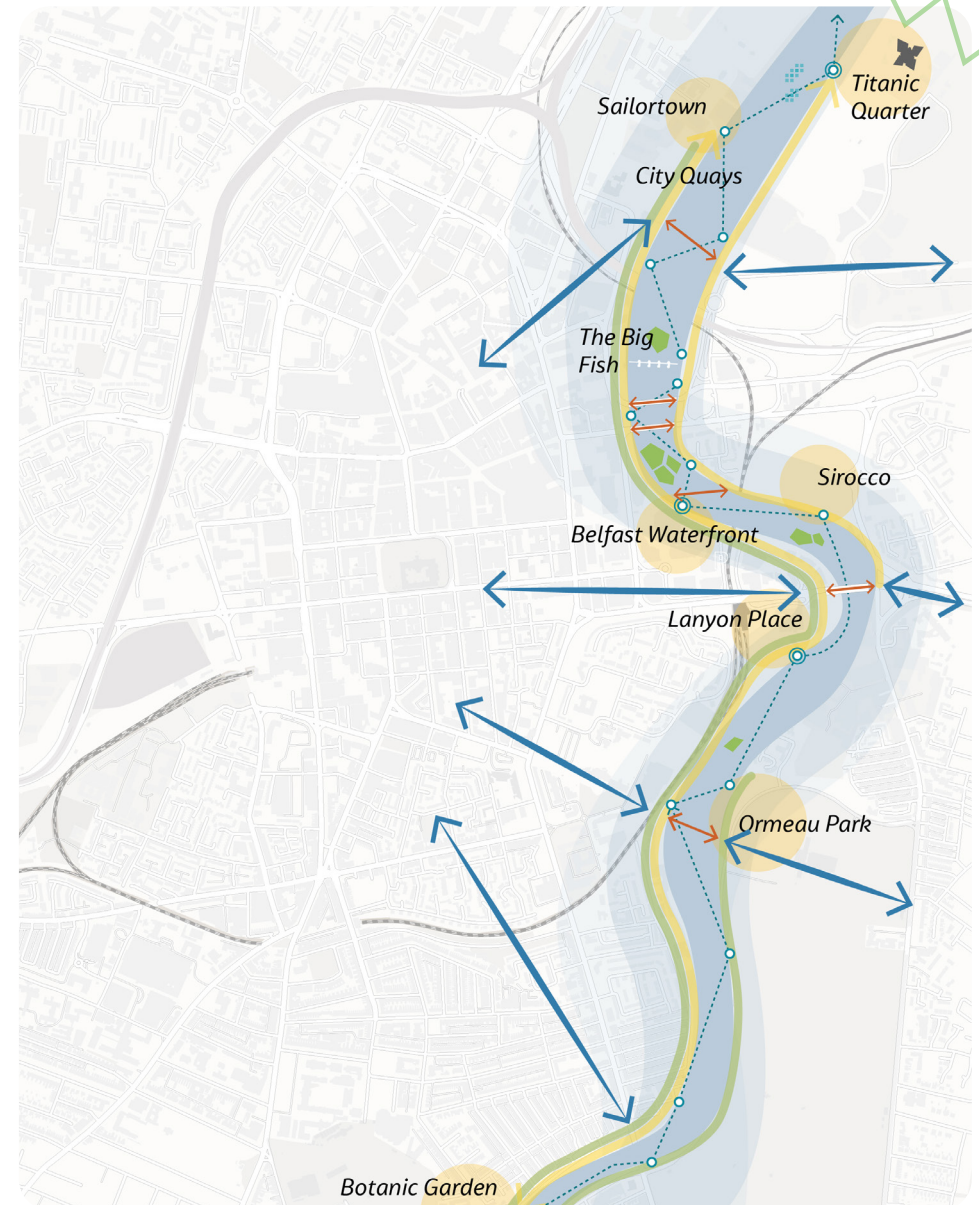
Support commuting, tourism and leisure by growing and developing the Belfast Maritime Mile.



Connecting to the river from the civic spine – extension of the existing linear green park along Chichester street to create green islands in the hard space outside Waterfront Hall. These could 'spill out' onto the river itself becoming floating green islands.

### Strengthening existing projects:

- One Million Trees Commitment
- Belfast Cycling Network 2021
- Belfast's Maritime Mile
- Planned developments including Titanic Quarter, City Quays, Queens Quay and Waterside



# PROJECT TIMELINE

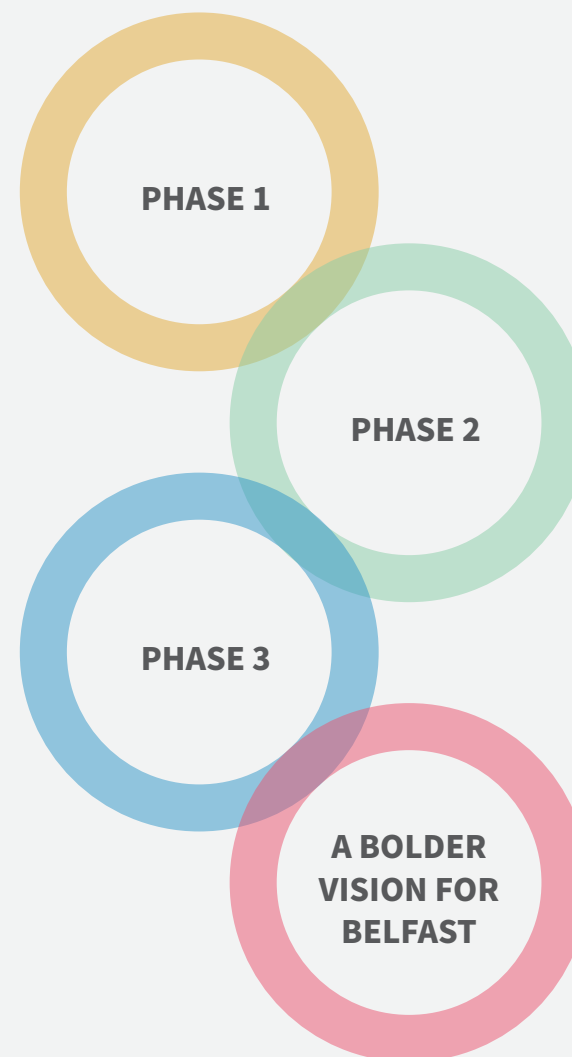
**Phase 1** A Bolder Vision for Belfast, sets out how green, walkable, cyclable network of streets and places will improve health for all, revitalise the city's economy and restore a sense of collective pride in the centre of the city by the communities. This stage resulted in the Visioning Principles and Themes for Change.

**Phase 2** will provide a tangible vision that creates a green, people focused, connected city centre for current and future users in line with the Visioning Principles set out in Phase 1. This phase follows a collaborative process between the three public agencies (DfI, DfC and BCC) and multiple stakeholder engagement via focus groups, interviews and numerous workshops. This helps collating a number of potential interventions that will shape the future city centre and will influence the way the capital schemes are delivered.

This stage is happening now and the current public consultation will form part of this phase.

**Phase 3** Following the consultation period, we will collate and analyse the stakeholder feedback. A consultation report will be produced which will outline all engagement undertaken with stakeholders and the local community before and during the public consultation. We will review the outcomes of engagement and consultation and where appropriate, accommodate requested changes or alterations to the preferred Strategy.

**A Bolder Vision for Belfast** - The outcome of Phases 1-3 will be the production of the Bolder Vision Strategy which will include the range of interventions for the city. The interventions are organised in short term and long term interventions that ensure a step change for the city centre of Belfast.





# HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

This public consultation is 12 weeks long between the 30th September to the 23rd December and we are inviting you to fill in the feedback form.

In response to Covid-19 restrictions around holding public events, this online public consultation experience has been developed. This online public consultation experience allows stakeholders and members of the public to view information and to express their opinions in a safe and accessible environment.

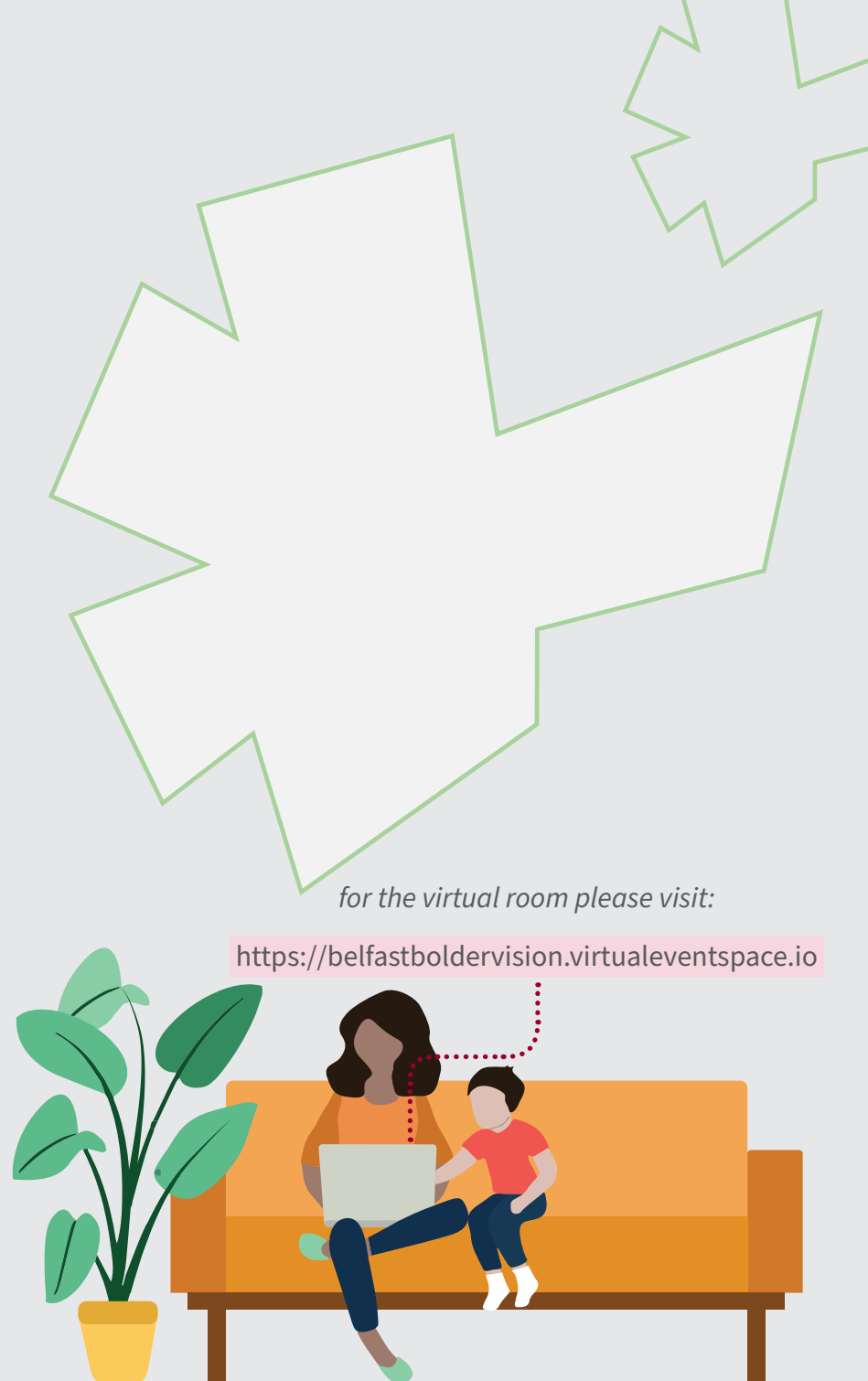
Page 39



Email: [belfasti@BelfastCity.gov.uk](mailto:belfasti@BelfastCity.gov.uk)



Website: <https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/bolder-vision>



*for the virtual room please visit:*

<https://belfastbolder-vision.virtualeventspace.io>

This page is intentionally left blank





|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Subject:           | Update on International Events                     |
| Date:              | 12 January 2022                                    |
| Reporting Officer: | John Greer, Director of Economic Development       |
| Contact Officer:   | Eimear Henry, Senior Manager – Culture and Tourism |

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

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

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>   |
| 1.1        | <p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update Members on the proposed programme for international events as part of the city's cultural strategy and <i>draft</i> Tourism Plan.</li> <li>- Outline the financial implications of these events and seek approval to proceed as required.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| 2.1        | <p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note the contents of this report and the proposed programme of international events as part of an overall strategic approach to tourism and cultural development.</li> <li>- Consider the request of £175,000 for the World Rally Championships subject to confirmation of approval of business case and funding from Tourism NI.</li> </ul> |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree £350,000 as Belfast City Council contribution towards hosting One Young World in 2023 subject to final business case sign off by Tourism NI.</li> <li>- Agree to submit an Expression of Interest for Belfast to host the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann within the next three years and receive update report in due course.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |
| 3.1        | <p><b>Background</b></p> <p>At a meeting of City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2019 the new ten-year cultural strategy for Belfast, <i>A City Imagining 2020-30</i> was agreed. As part of this process a four-year implementation plan was developed with an associated financial forecast. Within these plans consideration was given to the importance of uplifting a programme of homegrown events with a targeted and strategic approach to international events that provided legacy for the city as well as a direct economic return.</p>  |
| 3.2        | <p>The need for a return on investment has been further reinforced through the draft tourism plan currently out for public consultation alongside ongoing work to position Belfast as the gateway to region. These plans articulated the need for specific consideration to be given to those international events that aligned to strategic priorities such as UNESCO City of Music or skill development, capacity building and civic participation.</p>   |
| 3.3        | <p>It is therefore positioned within these strategies that international events should directly contribute to creating the conditions for long-term transformation in the city. It was agreed that the overall partnership model promoted within these plans should be applied to both the direct delivery of City events by Council as well as funded programmes of activity including any financial contribution towards international events.</p>  |
| 3.4        | <p>Therefore, financial support by Council to events should also be assessed against the overall aims of the cultural investment model which set out to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support the cultural life of the city by enabling citizens to be active, dynamic and creative agents of change</li> <li>- invest in the cultural and creative sectors skills development and capacity for production and innovation</li> <li>- position Belfast as an international testing ground for new approaches to cultural engagement, development and placemaking</li> <li>- establish Belfast as a cultural destination</li> </ul> <p>Progress has already been made in relation to securing events that have clear synergies with these priorities.</p> |

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 3.5 | <p><b>One Young World 2023</b></p> <p>Members will be aware that Belfast successfully bid to host One Young World in 2023. The event was hosted by London in 2019, Munich in 2021 and is due to take place in Tokyo in 2022. One Young World is a global forum for young leaders. Its mission is to convene the brightest young talent from every country and sector, working to accelerate social impact by identifying, promoting and connecting the world's most impactful young leaders. The One Young World Summit presents us with the opportunity to host an internationally diverse, youth driven event that is second only to the Olympic Games in terms of the number of countries represented, and has an established track record in the calibre of world famous participants. At past Summits, Delegates have been joined by Counsellors including Justin Trudeau, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Kofi Annan.</p> |
| 3.6 | <p>The published impact report from the event in 2019 included a summary of outputs as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2,000+ Delegates Participated</li> <li>- 190+ Countries Represented</li> <li>- 9,600+ Hotel Nights Provided</li> <li>- 190+ Partners sent Delegates</li> <li>- 70+ New Partners sent Delegates</li> <li>- 210+ Counsellors and Guest Speakers</li> <li>- 3,000+ Attendees at One Young World Caucuses globally</li> <li>- 440+ Scholarship recipients</li> <li>- 20.9M Impacted by Ambassador-led initiatives since 2010</li> </ul>  |
| 3.7 | <p>The cost for the event is approximately £2.7m. A funding package of £1m has been offered by government subject to full business case approval. Following the initial bid for Belfast to host the event a contribution of £350,000 was allocated from within the cultural investment programme subject to Committee approval. The remaining funding is through income generation from the private sector including delegate fees and corporate sponsorship.</p>   |
| 3.8 | <p><b>Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann</b></p> <p>Members will be aware that Belfast successfully secured the designation of UNESCO City of Music in November 2021. As part of the bidding process Council set out a 5 year plan in partnership with the music sector. These initiatives focus on sector development and civic participation. However, there is also an opportunity to complement these initiatives through international music events such as Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann that will:</p>  |

|      |   |
|------|---|
|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offer direct economic return through bed nights and visitor spend</li> <li>- Profile the city's cultural offering and increase awareness of the city's tourism offer to attract new and repeat visitors in subsequent years</li> <li>- Increase exposure of Belfast brand through media coverage</li> <li>- Provide opportunity for capacity and skills development within the music sector</li> </ul>   |
| 3.9  | <p>Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann takes place annually in August and is the most important event in the traditional music calendar and up until the COVID 19 pandemic had been continuously held since 1951. The Fleadh encompasses a range of entertainment activities including concerts, ceili/set dancing, traditional sessions plus competitions in music, song, language and national and international events. The full Fleadh programme was last held in Mullingar in 2019 and Dundalk in 2018. In recent years the 10-year programme has attracted up to 450,000 visitors with 6,000 accounted for through competitors alone.</p> |
| 3.10 | <p>Whilst it is estimated that the initial outlay to secure the event is approximately £2.5 million there are also significant opportunities for the host city to recoup this investment through partnership initiatives including media buy-in. It would also be intended to bid for support from government and other sources.</p>  |
| 3.11 | <p>Members are asked to grant approval to officers to prepare and submit a formal expression of interest. This will be important to set out the city's statement of intent. As part of this process a due diligence report will be prepared and an update will be provided to Committee before progressing to any further stage.</p>  |
| 3.12 | <p>In line with the Cultural Strategy, <i>Draft</i> Tourism Plan, UNESCO designation and recovery plans this expression of interest would indicate 2024 and 2025 as optimum years to host the event. Work will continue to ensure that any plans are progressed in a complementary approach to other activity in that period including working in partnership with other cities as required.</p>  |
| 3.13 | <p><b>World Rally Championships 2021</b></p> <p>The events outlined above had been identified by Council as important opportunities for the city as part of a wider strategic approach. However, in addition to these events there continues to emerge other requests from private sponsors that identify tourism benefit for the city and the region. Tourism NI are currently assessing the business case for NI to host the World Rally Championships in August 2022. An initial report was taken to Committee in</p>  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | <p>January 2019 with further updates to be provided in due course. The ask from local government incorporating council areas where activity is taking place is a total of £500,000, of which a request of funding from Belfast City Council is £175,000. This is commensurate with the likely return for Belfast as a key location for the rally and the accompanying activation programme as well as the base for the majority of overnight stays. The event is projected to attract up to 30,000 bed nights; £10 million economic return &amp; global media value of £45 million. Tourism NI are currently conducting an appraisal of these targets. Whilst no funding has been specifically earmarked for the World Rally Championship, the investment programme for the cultural strategy and tourism plan does allow for funding to be allocated to international activity where the benefits have been clearly established. Whilst the targets are considered ambitious, more realistic outputs could still offer a good return on investment subject to Tourism NI support.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.14 The financial implications to this report relate to approval of £350,000 for One Young World which has already been allocated from departmental budgets.</p> <p>3.15 In terms of the £175,000 required for the World Rally Championship no other budget currently exists to fund this international event and it is recommended that the Committee agrees to refer any financial support agreed to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to give priority to the funding of the international event when considering any in-year re-allocations.</p> <p>3.16 There are currently no financial implications relating to submitting an Expression of Interest to host the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. A future report will be presented to Committee.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.17 A full Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the cultural strategy and continues to be monitored. Equality and Good Relations will be included in the terms and conditions attached to any funding agreements.</p> |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>   |
|            | <b>None</b>  |

This page is intentionally left blank



|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Christmas Programme 2021  |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 12 January 2022   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | John Greer, Director of Economic Development  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture & Tourism<br>Lisa Toland, Senior Manager, Economy |

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

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

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report</b>  |
| 1.1        | The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a summary of activity delivered as part of a Christmas programme in November-December 2021.   |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1        | Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the contents of this report and that further information on the socio-economic impact of activity will be presented in due course.</li> </ul> |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 3.1 | Members will be aware that in January 2021, SP&R Committee agreed the recommendation that events delivered directly by Council would be suspended until September 2021 due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.  |
| 3.2 | On an annual basis, the Council's City Events Unit delivers a series of large-scale public events, which are free to access by both citizens and visitors to the city, on behalf of Belfast City Council. This is further supported by the activity of other teams included the Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts Unit who support a number of annual programmes and activities and the Markets Unit who manage the delivery of the Christmas Market at City Hall in addition to year round activity at St George's and Smithfield markets.   |
| 3.3 | In June Committee agreed to adapt the standard approach to delivering events and to focus Council activity on two key programmes whilst maintaining financial support for ongoing activity delivered by the cultural sector across the year including events and festivals. The first of these Council led events was the Maritime Weekender in September 2021 in partnership with the Maritime Belfast Trust. Over 40,000 people attended across the 2 days with a diverse and innovative programme that ensured optimum consideration for public safety. The second programme was to focus on Christmas 2021. The challenge for officers was to design a programme that continued to be cognisant of safety considerations and have the ability to respond to a changing environment whilst meeting the needs of city stakeholders including those businesses impacted by the pandemic. |
| 3.4 | As well as responding to the pandemic the programme also aimed to meet the development objectives set out in the ten-year Cultural Strategy including long-term recommendations for events in the city including better strategic alignment across the Council in the design and, delivery of these event based programmes.   |
| 3.5 | <p>These factors combined in such a way that the re-opening of the city, the easing of restrictions and the ongoing impact of Covid-19 accelerated the need to consider the role of events in a wider programme of seasonal animation and recovery that would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve the cultural vibrancy of the city</li> <li>- Foster civic pride</li> <li>- Position the Belfast brand</li> <li>- Support the local culture, arts and events sectors</li> <li>- Deliver direct economic benefits</li> <li>- Support businesses</li> </ul>  |
| 3.6 | Cultural animation and creative interventions were identified as fundamental in welcoming people back into the city and played a significant role in creating an authentic and open environment at Christmas. This year's programme involved a combination of creative initiatives such as street performance, projections, music, window dressing and lighting   |



|      |   |
|------|---|
|      | installations all inspired by the theme 'Once Upon a Time in Belfast'; utilising local artists, creatives and designers to create an authentic and engaging experience for all throughout the festive season. However, the concept was designed against the backdrop of the on-going pandemic.  |
| 3.7  | <p>The main components of the Christmas programme were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Christmas lighting scheme</li> <li>- City dressing and additional lighting</li> <li>- Enchanted evenings as part of the opening weekend</li> <li>- Weekend animation</li> <li>- 2 Royal Avenue</li> <li>- Christmas Market</li> <li>- Marketing and Communications</li> </ul>  |
| 3.8  | Belfast's Christmas celebrations officially began on Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 November with the <i>Once Upon a Time in Belfast</i> opening weekend event, which took place both evenings from 6.30pm-9pm. This replaced the 'traditional' Christmas Lights Switch On.  |
| 3.9  | Operationally, the format of the new 'Opening Weekend' event presented challenges, particularly around permissions for use of buildings, windows, and city centre spaces. However, the weekend event proved to be successful. Despite concerns over moving away from the traditional switch on format, the new approach offered increased value for money and audience satisfaction in an environment that was designed to prioritise public safety.  |
| 3.10 | Estimated audiences over the 2 evenings (20 & 21 November) was 15,000, with the event primarily taking place in the City Centre across key zones which included Donegall Place, Cornmarket, Royal Avenue, Fountain Street, Fountain Lane, Queen Street, Castle Street, Castle Lane, Berry Street, Rosemary Street and Lower Garfield Street. The audience profile was similar to the previous format with a strong focus on families.   |
| 3.11 | <p>Belfast City Council commissioned an independent socio-economic survey for the <i>Once Upon a time in Belfast</i> event. Results included the following feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 65% of visitors were from the Belfast City Council area, and a further 35% from elsewhere with a small percentage of visitors from Republic of Ireland (3%).</li> <li>- 54% attended the event with children.</li> <li>- 84% gave the event a rating of 8 out of 10 or above, including 27% who rated it as 'Extremely good'.</li> <li>- 92% of visitors agreed that the event improves the city's reputation as a host for events like these and as a place to visit.</li> </ul> |

|      |  |
|------|--|
|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 69% of visitors said they would 'definitely' revisit the <i>Once Upon a Time in Belfast</i> event in future years, while 99% agree there should be more events like this in Belfast.</li> <li>- 98% believe that events like this encourage people to come to Belfast, and 93% said that such events improve their sense of well-being and community.</li> </ul>  |
| 3.12 | 33 Belfast based organisations from the cultural, arts and theatre/performance sectors were engaged to take part in this event and provide the animation over the 2 nights, with an additional 2 companies coming in from GB and 1 from Ireland. The entertainment onsite was a mix of music, dance, street performance, comedy and theatrical performance under the overall creative banner of <i>Once Upon a Time</i> .  |
| 3.13 | In addition, a music programme was curated across the Autumn/Winter period including several music elements for the opening weekend including performances at Rosemary Street Presbyterian Church and music on Berry Street and Lower Garfield Street.   |
|      | <b>Window Animation</b>  |
| 3.14 | A festive window display was commissioned for a large vacant unit on Royal Avenue via local cultural organisation ArtsEkta who have been working with local youth groups to develop large scale illuminated lantern sculptures of the city's landmarks as part of their Luminate project. This ran from 20 November – 4 January. A second festive window display was also commissioned on Royal Avenue working with Big Telly Theatre Company as part of their Elf Factory production. These displays along with window vinyls with <i>Once Upon a Time</i> themed artwork transformed this area of Royal Avenue for the festive period. |
| 3.15 | New to the programme this year was live window animation on the opening weekend (20 & 21 November) in two of the main retail stores on Donegall Place. This included dance, music and comedy theatre sketches running throughout the event aligned to the fairytale Christmas theme. This proved to be extremely popular with audiences and something to be built upon for future years. The Visit Belfast window was also dressed during this period.   |
| 3.16 | Belfast City Centre Management's annual Festive window competition returned in November and December aimed to encourage retailers to dress their windows for Christmas. This year's winners spanned four categories: Retail (Independent), Retail (Multiple), Hospitality and a Wild Card. The Wild Card category was based on the theme, <i>Once Upon a Time</i> , adding to the schedule of events that Belfast City Council was already hosting this festive season aimed at attracting footfall and improving vibrancy.  |
|      | <b>Lighting and illumination</b>   |
| 3.17 | Members will be aware of the consistently positive public response to the lighting of City Hall. Therefore, a temporary scheme was devised for Council's recently acquired heritage assets   |

|      |   |
|------|---|
|      | on Royal Avenue at the former Tesco site and the Bank of Ireland building. A key highlight of the weekend event was the 3D Mapped projection on 2 Royal Avenue which then continued with a 7-week window projection. The show both evenings ran every 10 minutes from 6.30pm-9pm and was a bespoke design aligned to the event theme.   |
| 3.18 | Another highlight for the Christmas period was the illuminations of the old Bank of Ireland Building at the bottom of Royal Avenue which ran from 20 November until 4 January 2022. The lighting up of the Bank of Ireland building from the inside out received significant coverage on social media and acted as an effective lead in raising awareness in advance of the December announcement on Belfast Stories. This is a temporary intervention however consideration is being given to longer-term initiatives.   |
| 3.19 | Additional illuminations across the 2 nights included Fountain House above Primark on Donegall Place, the Mayfair building in Cornmarket and on Queen Street above the former Craftworld store.   |
|      | <b>Christmas Lighting Scheme</b>  |
| 3.20 | 2021 was the second year of a three-year lighting scheme that focuses on main city centre areas. Following feedback from the retail and hospitality sectors improvements were able to be made to the scheme within the agreed scope of works. This included re-instating lighting along Ann Street. Feedback on the scheme was positive however there continues to be requests for an extension of the scheme including arterial routes. This currently cannot be facilitated within existing contracts or budgets however consideration should be given as part of a review exercise in advance of any new scheme from 2023 onwards. This should also consider the strategic context and recommendations of the lighting strategy as well as trends from elsewhere that increasingly targets investment at schemes that can provide year-round animation and lighting. |
|      | <b>2 Royal Avenue</b>   |
| 3.21 | Having secured funding from Tourism NI, a cross-Council team worked together to transform the former Tesco building at 2 Royal Avenue into a meanwhile venue. Throughout December programming focussed on music in recognition of Belfast's designation as a UNESCO City of Music. The opening of the building received extensive positive media coverage including broadcast and digital as well as positive public feedback across social media platforms.  |
| 3.22 | The music programme celebrated the diversity of the city's cultural and music offer presenting opportunities to showcase a range of artists. These free to access events were complemented by a wider programme that included children's workshops and artisan markets. Audience profile and feedback is currently being collated as part of the monitoring requirements attached to the funding. These will be reported back to Committee in due course. A new programme is in development to run from January to March including the  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>setting up of a booking system to ensure access to the space for as many local cultural and community organisations as possible.</p> <p><b>Christmas Market</b></p> <p>3.23 The Christmas Market ran from Saturday 20 November to Thursday 23 December 2021 with extended hours Thursdays to Saturdays. This was the 16th year of the Belfast Christmas Market in the grounds of Belfast City Hall with no market taking place in 2020. As a continental Christmas Market, traders came from over 22 different countries selling a diverse range of authentic continental products. This was alongside a good representation of local traders that increased from 30% to around 50% in 2021.</p> <p>3.24 Prior to the opening of the market the NI Executive introduced new Covid restrictions applicable to the Christmas Market to be implemented from the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and were fully mandatory from the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021.</p> <p>3.25 While the market finished its run just before Christmas and full data has not been collected, it is estimated that footfall for 2021 is in the region of 700,000 compared to 1.26m in 2019. However, it should be noted that all information gathered is preliminary, especially footfall figures, as none of the economic algorithms and equations have been applied. Event organisers felt that a reduced number of office workers in the city centre impacted overall footfall figures and the specific nature of sales with a reduction in food and beverage sales compared to an increase in gift and craft sales. Footfall further reduced in the immediate run into Christmas and it is thought that this was due to public concerns over the Omicron variant of the virus. Despite these challenges the market made an important contribution to the overall Christmas experience in the city.</p> <p>3.26 The support for the local economy through the delivery of the market included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Just less than 50% of traders now come from within NI.</li> <li>- Those traders from outside NI support the local economy by employing additional local staff and using local accommodation providers and services.</li> <li>- The construction and facilities management associated with the market was delivered by local companies.</li> </ul> <p><b>Marketing and Communications Activity</b></p> <p>3.27 In addition to the campaign delivered by Visit Belfast, Council's marketing and communications team delivered extensive activity commencing in early November. <i>Once upon a Time in Belfast</i> event was one segment of a wider <i>Come On In</i> campaign which had outdoor, radio and digital presence further supplemented by print and online media coverage. Council provided a strong social media presence in the run up to the event from early November, with daily messaging right through the Christmas period. In 2021 a special</p> |
|--|---|

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | <p>edition 20-page A5 booklet was produced for the first time and circulated to 158,000 homes week beginning 15 November.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.28 There are no financial implications to this report.</p> <p><u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>3.29 None.</p> |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>   |
|            | None.  |

This page is intentionally left blank



|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Consultation on the draft Smart Belfast Urban Innovation Framework   |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 12 January 2022  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Planning and Place  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive<br>Deborah Colville, City Innovation Manager<br>Mark McCann, City Innovation programme lead |

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

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

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>  |
| 1.1        | To present to Members with the refreshed Smart Belfast urban innovation framework and consultation with stakeholders, prior to the publication of a finalised framework in April 2022.  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1        | The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the contents of the attached Smart Belfast urban innovation framework.</li> <li>2. Note plans for individual party briefings from early in 2022.</li> </ul> |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |
| 3.1        | <b>Smart Belfast framework refresh</b>  |

|     |   |
|-----|---|
|     | <p>First devised in 2017, the Smart Belfast framework aims to foster an environment that supports collaborative innovation between our partners from across industry, academia and the public sector in order to address urban and economic challenges. It is based on the understanding that Belfast's more complex challenges will often require novel solutions that are difficult for the public sector to develop on its own.</p>  |
| 3.2 | <p>This refreshed framework incorporates the practice and learning of the past four years, and reflects the challenges and opportunities of this pandemic era. We have sought to consider how digital innovation can best contribute to the Council's priorities for city growth, economic recovery and our response to climate change.</p>   |
| 3.3 | <p>Smart Belfast also reflects the growing impact of new technologies on urban policy and planning. It seeks to maximise opportunities represented by new investments, including the Belfast Region City Deal digital programme, and the emergence of Innovation City Belfast as a regional partnership for innovation.</p>   |
| 3.4 | <p>The framework has two main sections. In the first, we set out specific plans for a Belfast 'Smart District' and how this location can act as a place where the Council and its partners can directly develop and test real-world innovative policies and interventions in an environment that supports innovation and experimentation.</p>   |
| 3.5 | <p>It is proposed that the Smart District will be particularly important in leveraging innovation to support the delivery of the new Bolder Vision for the city centre. As such the initial geography of the District is co-terminous with the city centre. Thematic areas where the District is likely to make a significant contribution include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Re-imagining the future of the high street</li> <li>- Supporting the creative environment for the planned Belfast Stories investment</li> <li>- Bringing innovation in design and development to support healthy urban neighbourhoods</li> <li>- Contributing to sustainable multi-modal travel</li> <li>- Supporting the energy transition to zero carbon</li> <li>- Digitising and modernising city operations and services.</li> <li>- Building community capacity and skills to navigate the opportunities and challenges of our data-driven society and economy.</li> </ul> |



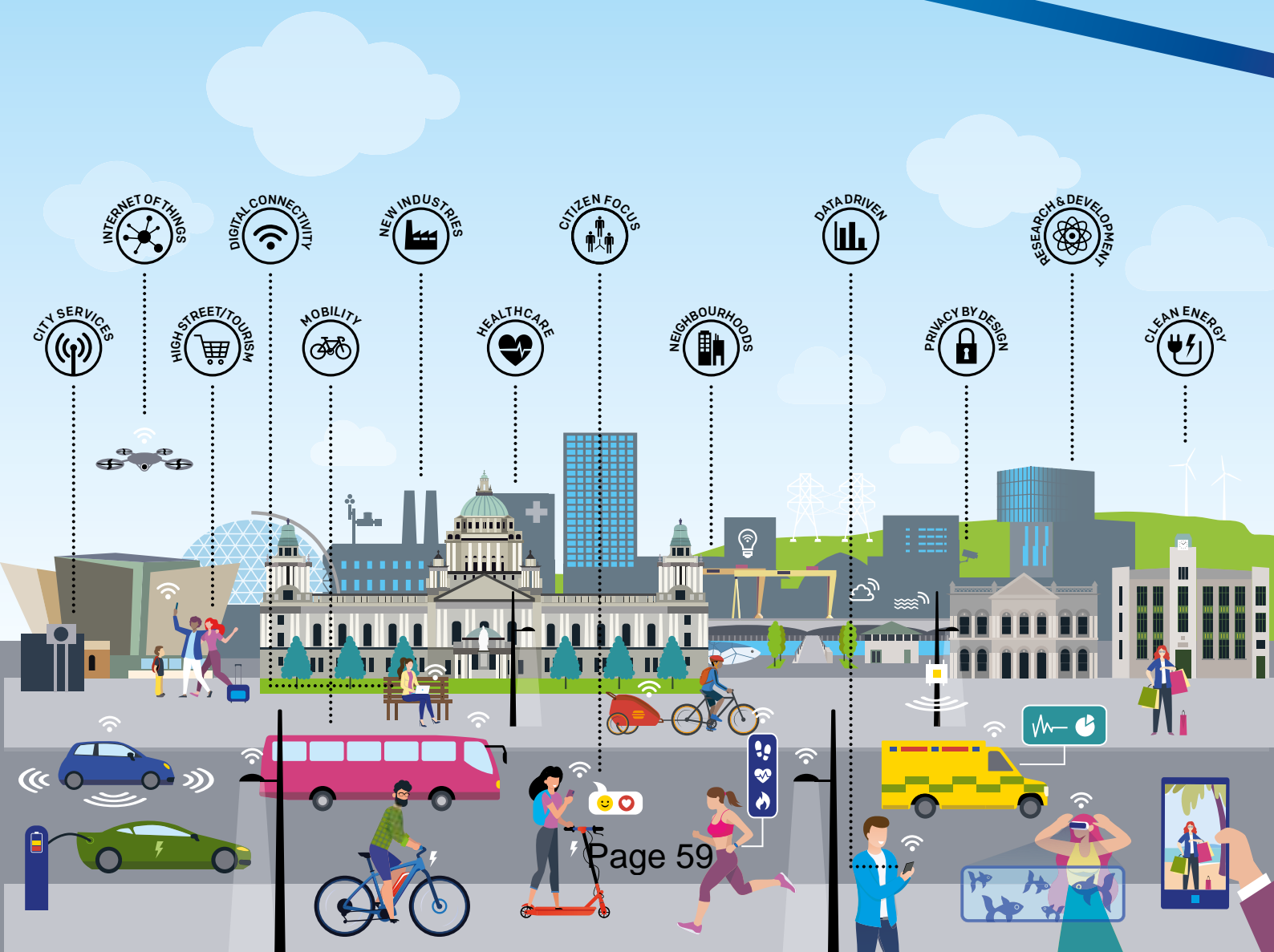
|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 3.6 | <p>In the second section of the framework, we describe the wider urban innovation ecosystem that is needed to deliver innovation initiatives. Based on the learning from the last four years, and building on global research we propose eight ‘pillars’ for this ecosystem that partners, collectively, have a role to play in strengthening.</p>   |
| 3.7 | <p><b>The initial project pipeline</b></p> <p>A number of major projects associated with the District are already under way or at an advanced development stage. This initial project pipeline includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The delivery of €7.9 million ‘Hub-In’ Horizon 2020 project that aims to transform the Maritime Mile through community-based innovation and local enterprise.</li> <li>- The development of a new £20 million ‘Innovation for Societal Impact Fund’ to support collaborative innovation between the city region SMEs, researchers and public bodies. The fund will seek to address major urban challenges while at the same time supporting the growth of our region’s most innovative sectors.</li> <li>- The £2.5 million Connected Places Catapult ‘Homes for Healthy Ageing’ programme seeking to bring innovation to issues around loneliness in older people.</li> <li>- The €1m ‘Access to Finance’ project that is working with local SMEs and Economic Development teams to design new tools for designing future grant programmes and interventions.</li> <li>- The Innovative Procurement Playbook project with Sejong, South Korea, which aims to improve our understanding of the challenges of innovative procurement and of exporting innovative products to international markets.</li> <li>- We are also working with the mobile industry, asset owners, businesses and public sector partners to develop a £30 million Belfast Region City Deal proposal that aims to accelerate the roll-out of advanced wireless connectivity across the Smart</li> <li>- District, university campus areas and Titanic Quarter.</li> </ul> |
| 3.8 | <p><b>Consulting on the new framework</b></p> <p>From January to April 2022 we will be engaging through a number of channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Party Group briefings</li> <li>- The Belfast City Council ‘Your Say’ platform where organisation and individuals can respond formally to a series of questions on each element of the framework</li> <li>- A public Smart Belfast webinar series will offer insights into urban innovation practice form keynote speakers and more detail on the delivery of the programme</li> <li>- Community focused workshops on the citizen in a smart city.</li> </ul>  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 3.9        | Following a successful consultation, it is proposed that the framework is publicly launched in April 2022.   |
|            | <b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>   |
| 3.10       | Resource planning for new projects will form part of the detailed planning for the new framework. Current projects have been identified in the existing City Innovation team budget. |
|            | <b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>  |
| 3.11       | An equality screening will be carried out as part of the consultation programme.   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>   |
|            | Appendix 1 - Consultation draft of the Smart Belfast urban innovation framework.   |

# SMART Belfast

## Belfast Urban Innovation Framework

2022 - 2027



# Engaging on this framework

**This refresh of Belfast City Council's urban innovation framework, 'Smart Belfast' is the product of a series of extensive engagement activities, review, and best practice research over the past 12 months.**

Much of the work was facilitated initially by the Connected Places Catapult who worked with city partners, local industry and public officials to develop a shared digital innovation ambition for the city and the region. Many of the elements regarding both the Smart District and the urban innovation ecosystem are the outworking of this engagement.

Subsequently, we have engaged with local stakeholders on the specifics of the Smart District as a delivery mechanism for the city's innovation ambition. This work was supported by German Smart Cities consultants, BABLE, Fraunhofer IAO, Fraunhofer FOKUS, and Eindhoven Brainport.

We want to extend our thanks to the many hundreds of individuals and organisations who have engaged enthusiastically in the process.

Belfast City Council now wishes to share a draft of the refreshed framework which brings together the outputs of this process. We are keen to get constructive contributions from stakeholders to ensure that the final framework is robust and makes a difference to our city's urban ambitions.

**From January to April 2022 we will be engaging through a number of channels:**

- The Belfast City Council Your Say platform where you and your organisation can respond formally to a series of questions on each element of the framework: **[yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk](https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk)**
- A public Smart Belfast webinar series will offer insights into urban innovation practice and more detail on the delivery of the programme
- Individual stakeholder briefings
- Community focused workshops on the citizen in a smart city.

Core to the Smart Belfast methodology is a commitment to user-centric co-design. The role of the Citizen Office of Digital Innovation (CODI) is central to this approach, working directly with communities on the emerging project portfolio to ensure it meets end-user needs.

The final framework is expected to be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of Belfast City Council in late April 2022.

For full details please visit our website **[smartbelfast.city](https://smartbelfast.city)**



# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1. Smart Belfast</b>                                  | <b>4</b>  |
| • Introduction   | 5         |
| • Our journey  | 6         |
| <b>2. Urban innovation in the post-Covid world</b>       | <b>8</b>  |
| • A new focus for urban innovation                       | 9         |
| • What is the Bolder Vision for Belfast?                 | 9         |
| • Urban innovation's contribution to the Bolder Vision   | 10        |
| • Making it happen: The Belfast Smart District           | 12        |
| • The enablers   | 14        |
| • The first projects                                     | 18        |
| <b>3. Enhancing Belfast's urban innovation ecosystem</b> | <b>22</b> |
| • The drivers of urban innovation                        | 23        |
| • Belfast's digital innovation strengths                 | 25        |
| • The pillars to support urban innovation                | 26        |
| 1. Collaborative leadership                              | 26        |
| 2. Urban challenges                                      | 27        |
| 3. The citizen   | 28        |
| 4. A vibrant innovation economy                          | 29        |
| 5. Data environment                                      | 30        |
| 6. Financing, procurement and adoption                   | 31        |
| 7. Technology infrastructure                             | 32        |
| 8. Place-making  | 33        |
| <b>4. City Innovation Office</b>                         | <b>34</b> |
| • The team   | 35        |
| • Key partners   | 35        |

# 1.

# Smart Belfast

# Introduction

**Belfast City Council and its partners are refreshing Smart Belfast. First devised in 2017, this framework aims to nurture an environment in which innovators from across industry, academia and the public sector can work together to address Belfast's major urban and economic challenges.**

Our framework refresh seeks to incorporate the many important ideas, opportunities and priorities that have emerged in this post-Covid world. In particular, we have sought to maximise the opportunities represented by the Belfast Region City Deal investments that are planned for the coming decade. We have also been keen to reflect on the growing impact of new technologies on our lives and the implications for urban policy.

This document has two sections. In the first, we set out our specific plans for a Belfast 'Smart District' and how it will seek to directly support the new Bolder Vision for our city centre.

In the second section, we consider how global trends in technology are affecting our city and its economy. We identify a number of underlying supporting 'pillars' that Belfast should have in place in order to maximise the potential for urban innovation and what partners need to do to strengthen these pillars.

## Smart Belfast 2017-21: Key Deliverables

**The first Smart Belfast Framework was developed by Belfast City Council's City Innovation team. Set up in 2017, the team works with partners from industry and academia to address major urban challenges through digital innovation.**

**It has delivered a range of projects, attracted substantial investment, and influenced the conversation about the impact of digital technologies on our city.**

The team has:

- Leveraged £10.2 million of investment
- Delivered 47 innovation projects
- Worked with over 200 SMEs and stakeholders
- Hosted over 30 events with 4,100 participants
- Attracted \$1 million to establish the Belfast Office for Resilience
- Built Northern Ireland's first free-to-use Internet of Things network
- Showcased the best of Belfast at four international tech conferences
- Developed a £120 million digital investment business case for the Belfast Region City Deal
- Brought forward recommendations for the establishment of a Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner
- Informed the design and initiation of Innovation City Belfast, the city's innovation leadership partnership
- Established the Digital Catapult's Immersive Lab NI

# Our journey

2017

Launch of the Smart Belfast Framework 2017-2021

2017-2021

Delivered a series of challenge competitions focused on mobility, health, tourism, animating the public realm, managing city assets and economic forecasting

2018

New City Innovation Office set up

2018

Built NI's first free-to-use Internet of Things network

2019

Strategic business case for a Belfast Smart District approved as part of the Belfast Region City Deal

2017

Successful funding bid to the Rockefeller Foundation to establish a Belfast Commissioner for Resilience

2017

Smart Belfast Collaborative Growth programme launched in partnership with Invest NI

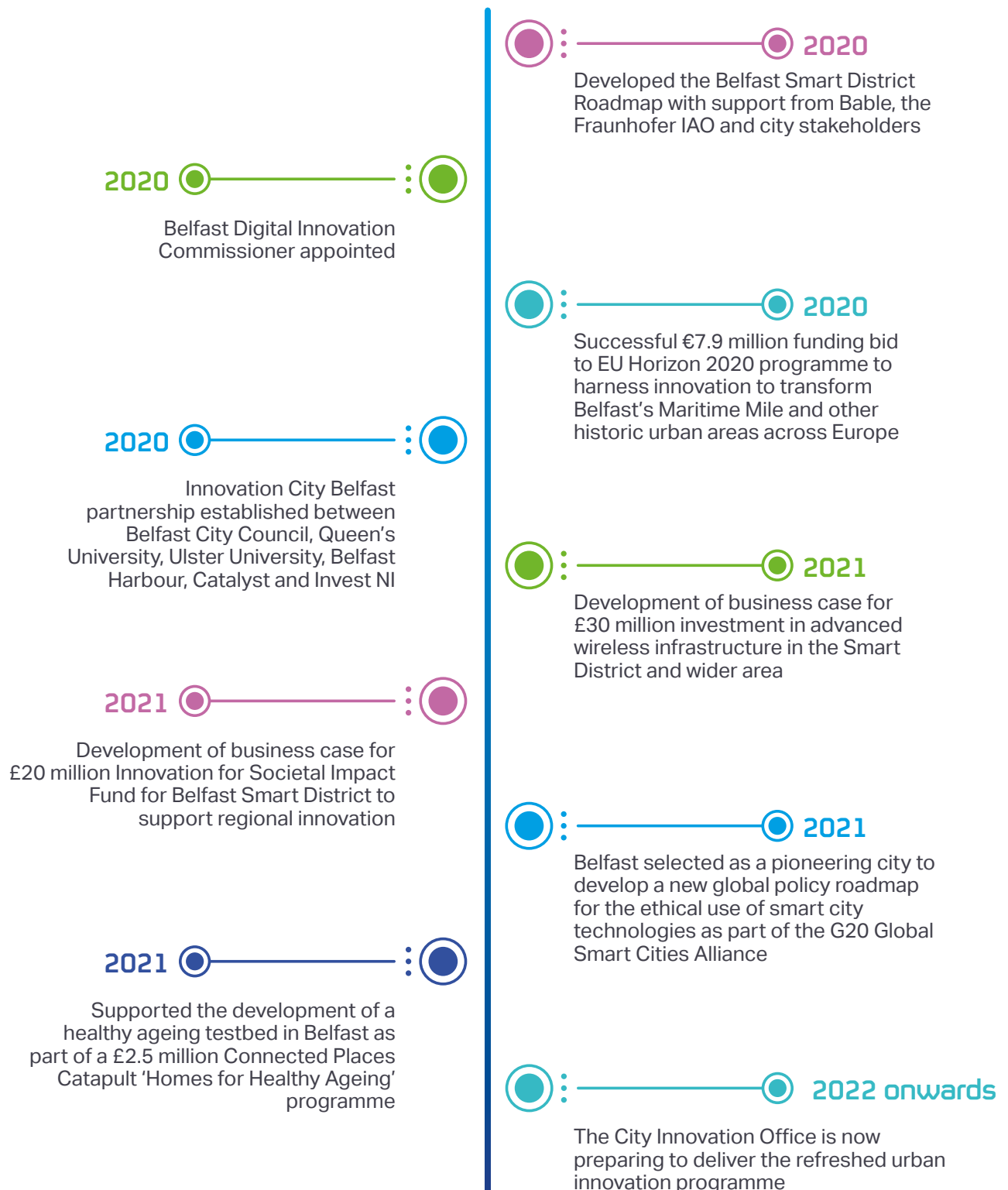
2018

Founder member of the All Ireland Smart Cities Forum

2019

Established the Digital Catapult's Immersive Lab NI





2.

# Urban innovation in the post-Covid world

# A new focus for urban innovation

**In the initial aftermath of the Covid pandemic, Belfast's urban innovation framework is being re-focused to directly contribute to challenges associated with this new urban context.**

In particular, Smart Belfast will align strongly with the new vision for the city centre. The Bolder Vision recognises the importance of the interconnections between climate, the economy, urban design, health and resilience in shaping a sustainable future for our city. The outcomes that it seeks to achieve are ambitious and will require council and its partners to address a series of complex policy challenges. We believe that Smart Belfast has an important role to play in contributing to these challenges by unlocking the power of digital innovation. In the following section we:

- Describe the aims and themes of the Bolder Vision
- Explain how a new 'Smart District' for the city can support this vision
- Set out how the District can generate opportunities for SMEs and government to test new ideas for constructing a city centre for the 21st century, and
- Describe the mechanisms to scale, replicate and apply proven successes across the wider city and region.

The Smart District is built on the experience and learning of other places and seeks to nurture digital innovation in those urban areas where it will have the best chance to initially succeed and grow. This will by no means be an exclusive focus, as there will be times when other locations or a citywide approach will be more appropriate for individual projects.



## What is the Bolder Vision for Belfast?

It's an ambitious blueprint to explore a shared approach to creating a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city. Developed jointly by Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities and the Department for Infrastructure, it reflects that the change that needs to happen to ensure economic and environmental resilience is embedded within the liveability and mobility landscape of Belfast.

Bolder Vision is underpinned by eight Themes for Change to transform Belfast city centre by 2035.

Digital innovation has a significant contribution to make in achieving the Bolder Vision. In particular the Smart District, which will be coterminous with the city centre, offers a rich, unique environment in which to innovate with communities, business, universities and planners.

### Themes for change

City centre as an inclusive place to live, work and visit

Community focused regeneration

Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport

Remove reliance on car travel

Active and inclusive public realm and green spaces

Vibrant and safe streets

Embracing our rivers

Overcoming severance with surrounding communities

# Urban innovation's contribution to the Bolder Vision

Based on the Bolder Vision's themes for change, and our work with Bable and Fraunhofer IAO, we have identified key thematic areas where digital innovation can offer the most value to the city.

We will continue to work with businesses, universities, public sector bodies and citizens to develop a series of transformative digital innovation projects in these focus areas:



## Reimagining our high street

Major retail, residential and public space investments are planned for the city centre over the coming decade. As online retail transactions continue to grow, the Smart District will provide access to the technological innovations to support retailers, businesses and city planners, to successfully navigate to a new form of high street.



## Belfast Stories

We are planning a new world-class visitor attraction to complement the global success of Titanic Belfast which recently welcomed its six millionth visitor.

The Covid crisis and the likely long-term reduction of foreign travel requires us to think deeply about how digital innovation can help us tell our story to the world. We have opportunities to work with Belfast Stories, Future Screens NI, and the city's creative sector to explore our story in new ways.



## Healthy urban living

We aim to grow the city centre's residential population with major investments in student housing and multigenerational homes. As the city balances sustainable densification with the post-Covid challenges, we have an opportunity to work with planners, investors and our life and healthcare innovators to rethink the design of our urban neighbourhoods.



## Sustainable urban mobility

Belfast has ambitious plans to transform mobility by encouraging many more people to switch to public and active transport options. This is particularly important over the coming years both as part of our commitment to challenging emissions targets and in response to the impact of Covid on working and transport patterns. There are also a whole range of new mobility solutions coming online that is likely to disrupt our current mobility model, e.g. e-scooters, e-bikes, EV single use car rental, autonomous vehicles.

Such a significant large-scale switch in behaviours will require a variety of infrastructure investments, incentives, and programmes. Smart Belfast will support the mobility transition by providing city managers and planners with an Urban Mobility Platform that integrates new and existing datasets into a coherent set of decision-making tools.

## Reskilling for the AI economy

Working with communities, our universities, colleges, schools and industry to deliver a programme to prepare our citizens for the challenges and opportunities of a data-driven economy. The city's recovery, including the leap to remote-learning, presents an opportunity to rethink how we design and deliver education and training. Artificial Intelligence is expected to impact on 70,000 jobs across the region.



## Energy transition

The local energy system in Belfast needs to undergo a profound transition. The availability of secure, sustainable energy is increasingly a prerequisite for FDI location scouts. As well as offering benefits to reducing emissions, digital technology is energy-hungry and a city with ambitions to lead on digital needs to have in place a renewable energy strategy.

To support increasing investments in renewables, grid balancing services and flexible loads need to be provided to reduce renewable electricity generators' exposure to power price volatility risk.

Hydrogen produced from renewable electricity could play a role in our urban energy systems. Smart Belfast aims to support projects that maximise the installed wind energy capacity, by converting potentially curtailed wind electricity into hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen can be used to power transport such buses in the Smart District; the oxygen to improve wastewater treatment efficiency; and waste heat to warm homes and buildings.

## Digitalising city operations

Currently, different public agencies are responsible for different city services and usually these services are managed entirely independently of each other. Utilising the Internet of Things, a shared urban platform, and training for exploiting new data technologies, will generate opportunities to build a more fine-grain, real-time, holistic understanding of the city. This will create an environment for more effective, resilient and innovative urban services across many agencies.



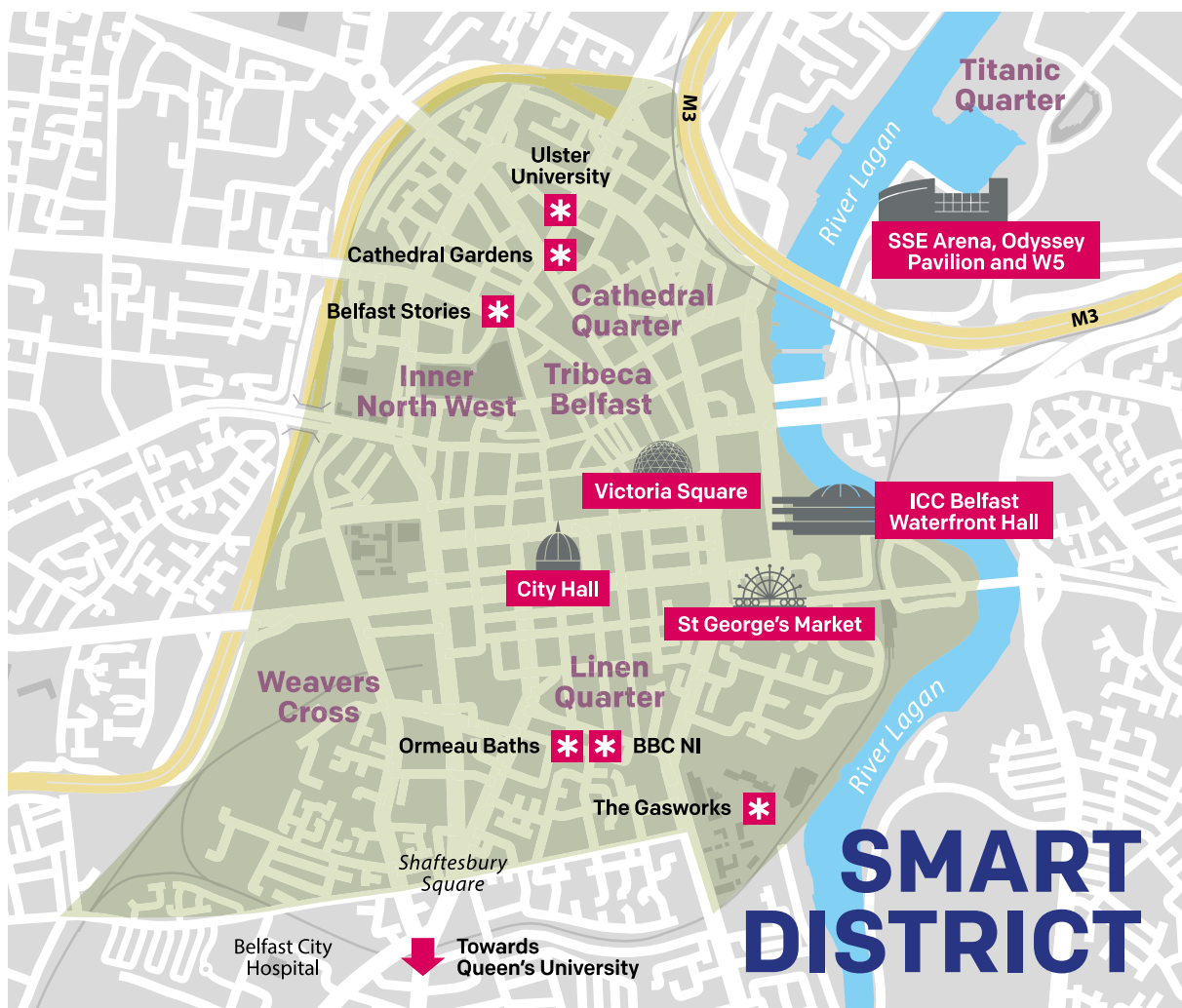


# Making it happen: The Belfast Smart District

**A key learning from the first iteration of Smart Belfast is the importance of place. If urban innovation is to flourish then we need to foster conditions that will encourage creativity, knowledge-sharing and experimentation. We need a place where there can be a free exchange of ideas, talent and resources between researchers, innovators, start-ups, investors, and public officials in a physical place. If we want to contribute truly innovative thinking to the Bolder Vision, then we need to nurture a place for urban innovation. We are calling this place-based approach the Belfast Smart District.**

Belfast's city centre is an ideal location to deliver a successful Smart District. As well as offering a range of key characteristics and opportunities, it also has the same geographical focus as the Bolder Vision.

Although the city centre is our initial focal point for urban innovation activity, our approach is to use this location to spur innovation with the overall aim of replicating, adopting and scaling successful projects and ideas across the wider city.



## Key components of the Belfast Smart District

Coterminous with the existing boundary of the city centre, the Belfast Smart District proposal draws upon research by the Brookings Institute, Connected Places Catapult, and the experience of over 100 other cities worldwide. It is also informed by extensive engagement with local stakeholders facilitated by German Smart Cities body, Bable.

The Smart District area has been shaped by a number of key success criteria:

### 1. A challenge rich environment

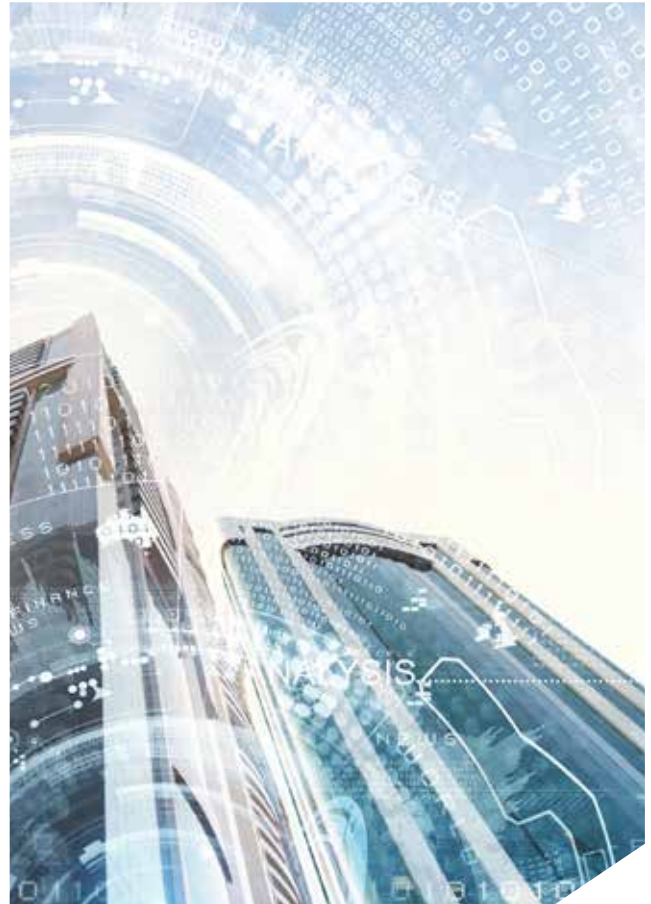
The district should be a place where innovators can solve problems for the city. It is the laboratory for real-world experimentation, trials and testbeds. It should help bring ideas out of the lab and into the streets. And then onwards for adoption across the entire city and region.

### 2. Size

The geography needs to be large enough to deliver substantial projects, but not so large that resources for management and delivery are spread too thinly.

### 3. Opportunity and investment

It must to be a place where substantial public and private investments are being planned. And where organisations are already delivering projects and programmes. These provide opportunities to leverage this investment for innovation.



### 4. People

Innovation is all about people. The district needs to be a place where people want to meet, live, work and play. This generates opportunities to share knowledge, exchange ideas and invest together.

### 5. Innovation actors

The district needs to be close to universities, SME incubators, and enterprises with a commitment to investing in local innovation.

### 6. Data and connectivity

The backbone and fundamental resource for digital innovation. State-of-the-art fibre and advanced wireless connectivity should be within the reach of any innovator. A place where huge quantities of data are generated, stored and shared - in ways that are transparent, secure, trusted and accessible.

### 7. A showcase to the world

The Smart District is our showcase to the world, demonstrating our ability to innovate, to build great products and services. And to provide an example of how a city can address the great urban challenges of the twenty-first century.

# The enablers

**Drawing from the work of other cities, and our own research and local engagement with stakeholders, we have identified a set of enablers that are needed to make our Smart District a success. We briefly describe each of these below, setting out its purpose and some of the key strands of work needed to put each in place. (NB: Many of these tasks also contribute to strengthening the pillars of the wider urban innovation ecosystem described in Section Three).**

## 1. Build governance and operational capacity

The District requires a quadruple helix partnership - working with industry, academia, public bodies and citizens - to set goals for the District, to help define priorities and the project portfolio, and to ensure an approach that maximises the range of opportunities in the district. This group, convened by Belfast City Council, will include business, academia, public sector and the citizen. It will interconnect with the work of Innovation City Belfast, the Bolder Vision steering group, and others to ensure the District contributes to wider economy and societal goals.

Operationally, the Smart District will be supported by Belfast City Council's City Innovation Office which will develop the District's governance body, and provide the resources and expertise necessary to deliver the enablers and to co-ordinate the District project portfolio.

### Key tasks

1. Establish the Smart District governance arrangements.
2. Develop detailed three-year operational and resourcing plans.
3. Develop a reporting and insights model to track the performance and impact of the District
4. Establish an agile operational model that can co-opt resources from key-partners, such as university research and private sector expertise.

## 2. Establish a sustainable financing model

Belfast City Council has committed a core operational resource for the District. However, longer term sustainability will be dependent on a blend of funding and financing mechanisms. Initially, the core investments will come from the Digital pillar of the Belfast Region City Deal which will make substantial funding available for challenge funds and to support necessary infrastructure investments.

We will also seek to leverage other substantial public and private sector investments that are planned for the city, and seek to influence their priorities to enhance the District. For example, other cities have worked with developers to ensure that new builds or street works can facilitate the rapid deployment of fibre and wireless connectivity.

There is also substantial public funding for digital innovation available from UKRI, DCMS, Innovate UK, Horizon Europe, etc. A functional Smart District becomes a serious attractor for such funding by adding weight to project applications from academia and industry.

Over the longer term, some smart districts have established special purpose vehicles that are able to use a mix of private and public investment to create a self-sustaining smart district programme. Belfast would seek to explore this at the conclusion of this plan.

### Key tasks

1. Design and deliver the £20 million Innovation for Societal Impact Fund.
2. Design and deliver the Equity and Grant challenge fund programme.
3. Opportunity analysis of forthcoming Government funding opportunities that align with Smart District objectives.
4. Engagement with District investors (both public and private) on co-investment opportunities.
5. Develop an 'access to finance' intelligence hub - for use by all partners including SMEs and public sector to navigate the complexity of the funding landscape.



## Funding for Innovation

The Smart District will draw upon Belfast Region City Deal Funding, and other sources, to offer a menu of funding options. These will be designed to encourage SMEs, innovators, academia and the public sector to collaborate on smart district challenges - while at the same time supporting the private sector to invest more in R&D. Complementing existing funding support, this menu of options may include:

- **Start-up challenges** to help build early stage innovators' capacity and to support their entry to market. Challenges are broad to attract a wider pool of innovators with staged funding to funnel and target investment support.
- **District-centred Prizes** bring the District's stakeholders and innovators together to develop solutions and focus more on early stage innovations that need to be tested and developed.
- **Spotlight Prizes** focusing on urban problems that have been neglected. Usually existing solutions to these problems or issues lack nuanced understanding of end users' needs.
- **Testbed Prizes** stimulate innovation in support of policy or regulatory objectives and to inform future policy in the District. These will be of particular interest to city planners and regulators with an interest in deploying innovation across the city.
- **Breakthrough Prizes** are used to create transformative solutions to difficult problems. They are often ambitious projects with tightly-defined goals seeking technological solutions, offering larger funding pots and longer time-frames.
- **Scaling Prizes** scale transformative solutions to achieve wider impact. These typically target a small pool of innovators and set quantifiable targets to reward scaling to kickstart a potential market.
- **Small Business Research Initiative** - SBRI provides a further mechanism for public sector bodies to explore innovation solutions in a pre-commercial procurement phase. Their aim is to support the development of new solutions not available on the market.

## 3. Communications and engagement

Engagement is at the heart of a successful Smart District. Within Belfast city centre there is an existing innovator community and a complex range of other stakeholders, investors, businesses, universities, service providers, residents and other partners. Much of the early work in the District involves engaging with these stakeholders on the innovation implications of the Bolder Vision, associated opportunities, challenges, and the potential for collaboration.

While Belfast City Council is leading on the Smart District, we recognise that its success is very much dependent on collaboration and a sense of common purpose. Our approach is user-centric, with a commitment to adopting Living Labs methodologies in the design and delivery of projects.

We also want to share the learning and the successes from our District with the wider city, region and the world. We want the District to be a place where innovators (from large international enterprises to two-person start-ups) want to be.

### Key tasks

1. District level engagement programme with stakeholders with a focus on an opportunity audit.
2. Deliver a marketing and communications campaign, with a focus on online marketing channels, to share the ambition for the District and its contributory relationship with the Bolder Vision.
3. Work with Invest NI and others to utilise the District in the support of the wider promotion of the city as a place to invest.
4. Build an online learning and playbook resource to support the wider replication and adoption of Smart District successes across the city and region.

## 4. Supporting citizen co-design

Alongside wider engagement with partners, the role of the citizen is particularly important in the acceptance and adoption of urban innovation. The District, and the projects associated with it, cannot be imposed on the citizens who live or work in the city centre. Projects are more effective and better targeted if they are co-designed with the end-user. This co-design approach adopts some techniques from the software industry, but also requires community capacity building and tailored engagement to ensure that projects are trusted and meet the people's needs.

This is not about training in technology or software development. It is about understanding challenge definition, the innovation process, and the opportunities and issues associated with smart city technologies. The approach, of course, can act as an 'on-ramp' to more formal skills development and education opportunities for individuals and communities.

### Key tasks

1. The design and delivery of the Citizens Office of Digital Innovation (CODI) programme - a capacity-building programme aimed initially at Smart District end-users.
2. Work with city partners to develop a shared 'Living Labs' methodology to support the design of significant Smart District projects.
3. Inform the wider skills agenda of key partners.

## 5. Enhancing digital and data connectivity

Our ambition is to make the Smart District one of the most digitally connected spaces in the world. The aim is to offer easily accessible, ubiquitous, low-cost, low latency, high capacity connectivity, on an architecture that encourages innovation and discourages vendor lock-in and legacy systems.

This is a challenging undertaking in a dense urban environment, but we believe that with necessary private and public sector investments, we can make the District the primary location for digitally connected innovators.

We also want the District to be a data-rich environment. We expect our partners, projects and technologies will generate huge quantities of novel data. Such data becomes an important catalyst for innovation if it can be made available to partners in a safe, transparent and open fashion. Working from a set of agreed data principles, we aim to work with partners to establish a data architecture and urban data platform for the city.

### Key tasks

1. Deliver a Belfast Region City Deal business case for £30 million investment to support advanced wireless networking across the District.
2. Work with public sector and other partners on a 'Site as a Service' product that ensures relevant physical assets are available for the rapid deployment of connectivity.
3. Deliver a feasibility study and Belfast Region City Deal business case for £5 million investment in an urban data platform for the District and wider region.
4. Develop and adopt a shared technology architecture with partners to support an open architecture that fosters collaboration on open innovation.
5. Develop and deliver a 'Data for Innovation' plan for Belfast City Council as lead organisation of the Smart District.
6. Work with partners to pilot, showcase and scale connectivity demonstrators in the District.
7. Seek to maximise the investments in Belfast's Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN).





## 6. Trial and Testbed environment

We want to make the Smart District the go-to location for universities and businesses to develop proofs of concepts, test proto-types, trial new products and services. And to be the place where commercial solutions are deployed and showcased to the city and the world.

To do so, we are working with the universities, businesses, asset owners, regulators, health and safety organisations and others to identify, reduce or remove the barriers that often make such work difficult in the real-world environment. We also want to establish cohorts of engaged end-users who can work with innovators to co-design and participate in the development of new urban solutions.

### Key tasks

1. Work with institutions (e.g.) Information Commissioner's Office, Ada Lovelace Institute, Financial Conduct Authority, Health and Safety Executive, university ethics committees and others to develop a supportive urban 'sandbox' environment.
2. Deliver engagement and capacity building programmes to develop citizen cohort groups.
3. Work with public sector partners on a joint barrier-busting resource that will seek to remove unnecessary administrative burdens on innovation projects.

## 7. Replication, scaling, and showcase

While the District is the initial focus for urban innovation, the longer-term aim is to take the hard-won learning and successes from projects developed in the District and scale or replicate them across the wider city and region. So, for example, if a mobility project is shown to have encouraged greater uptake of active travel in the District, then the project can be adopted by agencies across the rest of the city. We might also want to showcase this success at a national or international level, particularly if it's associated with a novel solution that can be commercialised by the SME that developed it.

For this to work, we need mechanisms to track and capture details of the project portfolio. We will work with city partners to share learning. And establish promotional channels to ensure that learning and successes are celebrated and showcased across the world.

The 'first customer' is an important role for SMEs that have developed a novel product. Our aim is to work with our public sector partners to encourage innovative procurement of products developed in the District.

### Key tasks

1. Put in place a knowledge capture mechanism for District projects that will be available to all stakeholders.
2. Develop an innovative procurement playbook for public sector partners with Connected Places Catapult and Invest NI.
3. Work with Invest NI, Innovation City Belfast and others on a joint marketing plan to showcase the District and the work of its researchers and SMEs.

# The first projects

Outlined below are the initial Smart District projects that are already under way or are at a design stage. Our aim is to develop a full project pipeline through a co-design process with partners shaped by the following criteria:

1. The project should contribute to the aims of the Bolder Vision.
2. It should be 'challenge-led', addressing issues where digital innovation can make a significant contribution.
3. The project should have the potential for replication elsewhere in the city and region.
4. The project should require a collaborative approach with private, public and academic innovators.
5. The project should be able to demonstrate a route to commercialisation or contribute to city's wider economic objectives.



| Date        | Projects already underway   | Key objectives  | Theme   |
|-------------|---|---|---------|
| 2020 - 2024 | <p><b>Transforming the Maritime Mile Through Innovation</b></p> <p>Belfast is a lead city in €7.9 million 'Hub-In' Horizon 2020 project that aims to transform historic urban areas through innovation.</p> <p>We have teamed up with the Maritime Belfast Trust on a four-year programme to develop an entrepreneurial hub on the city's Maritime Mile. Working with nearby communities we'll support people to develop entrepreneurial and digital innovation skills and foster new business opportunities in the Maritime Mile.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transform Belfast's Maritime Mile through innovation.</li> <li>• Support communities to develop entrepreneurial and digital innovation skills.</li> <li>• Share knowledge and best practice with other European cities.</li> <li>• Create new jobs and sustainable opportunities for local communities.</li> </ul> | Economy |
| 2021 - 2022 | <p><b>Homes for Healthy Ageing Testbed</b></p> <p>A testbed trialling new approaches to tackling isolation and loneliness in older people as part of the £2.5 million Connected Places Catapult 'Homes for Healthy Ageing' programme.</p> <p>Led by a local consortium, including Belfast City Council, the project will provide funding and expertise to support the first steps towards an ambitious Healthy Urban Neighbourhood located within the Smart District.</p> <p>The testbed will identify the critical features of a successful health testbed where products and services can be safely developed with local communities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle isolation and loneliness in older people.</li> <li>• Enable local SMEs to trial new innovative products and ideas.</li> <li>• Gain learnings and insights that will inform the development of a Smart Healthy Neighbourhood within the Belfast Smart District.</li> </ul>                                   | Health  |



| Date        | Projects already underway   | Key objectives   | Theme    |
|-------------|---|--|----------|
| 2021 - 2022 | <b>Navigating the post-Covid economy</b><br>Working with award-winning SME, nquiringminds, the city is creating an 'economic analyser' tool that uses Artificial Intelligence, statistical techniques and scenario modelling to support the city's route towards economic recovery and resilience in a post-Covid world.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide insights to help plan for economic resilience and long-term growth.</li> </ul>  | Economy  |
| 2021 - 2022 | <b>Access to Finance for Innovation</b><br>We are working with Fintech Scotland, the University of Edinburgh, Invest NI, and FinTech NI on a unique platform to facilitate better access for SMEs to public and private finance.<br><br>This €1m project, pioneered by Belfast's Xpand Group, will also enhance engagement and the measurement of impact. It will also provide managers with new tools for designing future funding programmes and interventions.<br><br>Initially focusing on the FinTech sector, the project will inform wider engagement across the digital economy including contributing to the design of the £20 million Smart District challenge fund. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and accelerate business growth.</li> <li>• Engage with SMEs and facilitate access to funding support.</li> <li>• Better understand the impact of investments.</li> </ul>                        | Economy  |
| 2021 - 2022 | <b>Urban Mobility Pilot</b><br>The pilot will demonstrate the innovative use of cutting-edge technologies such as AI, data analytics, cloud computing, and IoT to help plan and measure interventions designed to nudge people's mobility choices.<br><br>The project is a collaboration between Innovation City Belfast, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and local software company Kainos. It will initially focus on the roll-out of the city's new Active Travel Hubs at Queen's University and Ulster University. The learning will inform the future design of the urban data platform and a shared 'digital twin' for urban mobility.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support active travel.</li> <li>• Inform planning and measure impact of active travel initiatives.</li> </ul>   | Mobility |
| 2021 - 2022 | <b>Innovative Procurement Playbook</b><br>We are working on a collaborative project with Sejong in South Korea to improve our understanding of challenges related to innovative procurement - and how SMEs can be better supported to export to other smart cities across the world.<br><br>Led by Connected Places Catapult and funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the project will include a challenge competition for Belfast SMEs and, ultimately, develop a playbook for cities seeking to support innovative local businesses seeking to export.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase innovative product exports to South Korea.</li> <li>• Attract FDI from South Korean investors.</li> <li>• Accelerate routes to commercialisation and procurement for NI businesses.</li> </ul> | Economy  |

| Date        | Projects already underway   | Key objectives   | Theme        |
|-------------|---|--|--------------|
| 2021 - 2022 | <p><b>Northern Ireland Public Data Panel</b></p> <p>Working with regional agencies to develop the role of Public Data Panels to support active citizen involvement in the design of data-driven projects that seek to address societal challenges.</p> <p>We are working with the Northern Ireland Trusted Research Environment and Administrative Data Research Centre NI to develop a pilot panel to consider public data questions, such as the use of data for research, data legislation, ethics, privacy and other issues.</p> <p>The findings will contribute to an application for commissioning and potential establishment of a panel to help with such questions on a more permanent basis.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the use of public data and consider key issues such as ethics, legislation and privacy.</li> </ul>   | Data         |
| 2021 - 2023 | <p><b>Mapping assets for digital investments</b></p> <p>We are working with a range of public and private sector asset owners to better understand how information and access to Belfast's physical assets can support the faster deployment of new technologies in our city.</p> <p>Access to publicly owned assets, such as buildings, rooftops and street furniture, are playing a critical role in the roll out of digital connectivity, EV charging infrastructure, District Heating systems, hydrogen networks etc.</p> <p>The aim is create a 'digital twin' of the Smart District that can be used by partners to future-proof our city.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise opportunities for using publicly owned assets to support projects in the Belfast Smart District and across Belfast.</li> <li>• Better understand how assets can be used - the benefits, challenges, practicalities and solutions.</li> </ul> | Connectivity |
| 2021 - 2024 | <p><b>Accelerating Advanced Wireless connectivity</b></p> <p>We are working with the mobile industry, asset owners, businesses and public sector partners to develop a £30 million Belfast Region City Deal business case that aims to accelerate the roll-out of advanced wireless connectivity across the Smart District, university campus areas and Titanic Quarter.</p> <p>Advanced wireless connectivity will be the backbone of the future economy and will play a critical role in advanced manufacturing, connected health, tourism, retail, digital twins and the Internet of Things. The Belfast proposition seeks to establish conditions that will attract early private sector investment in this connectivity in support of the city's economic ambitions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accelerate the roll out of world-class advanced wireless connectivity in Belfast.</li> <li>• Support the future economy and development of modern city services.</li> </ul>   | Connectivity |

| Date        | Projects already underway  | Key objectives  | Theme   |
|-------------|--|---|---------|
| 2022        | <p><b>Urban Data Platform</b></p> <p>We will work with our universities, businesses and public sector partners on a feasibility study for a £5 million Belfast Region City Deal investment in a shared urban data platform and architecture for the city.</p> <p>This platform will serve as the basic infrastructure for a multitude of data-driven projects initially for the Belfast Smart District, but quickly growing to include the wider city.</p> <p>An urban data platform is crucial for optimal data processing and analytics in areas such as urban mobility, energy management, planning, climate adaptation and mitigation.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase availability and accessibility of data.</li> <li>• Provide insights and inform business decisions.</li> <li>• Support data-driven projects.</li> </ul>              | Data    |
| 2022        | <p><b>Citizen Office for Digital Innovation (CODI)</b></p> <p>CODI is a co-creation programme with citizens and partner organisations to equip urban change-makers with the practical skills, toolkits, and techniques to navigate the challenges and opportunities of a data-rich smart city.</p> <p>As the impact of digital innovation is felt across all aspects of city life, CODI aims to work with communities, policy-makers and the individual citizen to build awareness, capacity and opportunities for collaborative codesign. CODI will work with local SMEs and innovators to develop practical materials and programmes that will equip communities to use new technologies such as AI, Big Data, and the Internet of Things for positive societal impact. CODI's capacity building programme will also act as an on-ramp for more formal education and training opportunities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen engagement and upskilling in areas of data and innovative technologies to support co-creation of solutions to tackle societal challenges across the city.</li> </ul> | Data    |
| 2022 - 2023 | <p><b>The Innovation for Societal Impact Fund</b></p> <p>We are working with Belfast Region City Deal partners to design a new £20 million fund that supports collaborative innovation between city region SMEs, researchers and public bodies. The programme will seek to address major urban challenges while at the same time supporting the growth of our region's most innovative sectors.</p> <p>The initial iteration of the fund will be open to SMEs from across the region and focus on a number of the thematic areas of the Bolder Vision.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle urban challenges through collaborative innovation.</li> <li>• Support business growth.</li> </ul>   | Economy |

3.

# Enhancing Belfast's urban innovation ecosystem



**The work of Smart Belfast is based on the understanding that innovation has an increasingly dominant role to play in both urban and economic policy. The ambition of Smart Belfast is to find ways to harness such innovation to support Belfast's transformation.**

We recognise that this must be a collective effort. Belfast City Council can offer a leadership and convening role, but ultimately, partners across the city need to work together to cultivate an urban innovation ecosystem.

In the previous section we set out how Belfast City Council are repurposing its programme for urban

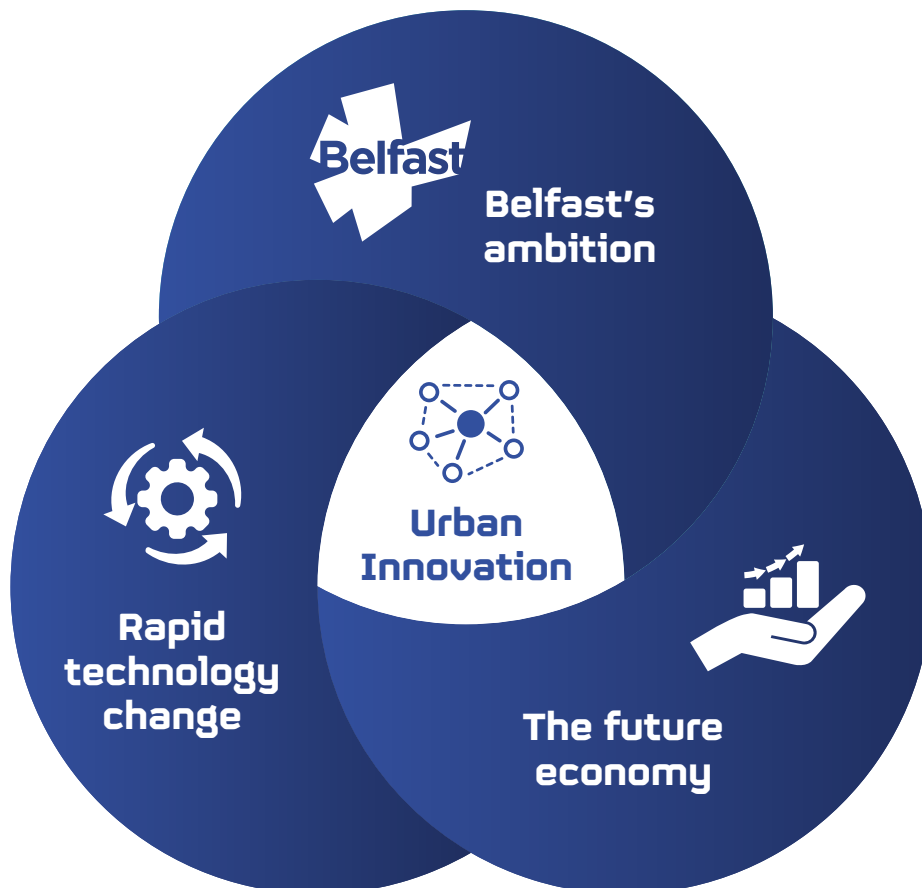
innovation, Smart Belfast, to focus on supporting the delivery of the city's new Bolder Vision and other new priorities in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic.

**In this section we:**

- Set out the strategic drivers for the Belfast urban innovation ecosystem;
- Describe some of the existing strengths that Belfast can draw on; and
- Identify the pillars of this ecosystem and what, collectively as a city, we need to do to grow them.

# The drivers of urban innovation

There are three interconnected strategic drivers that support the need for growing our urban innovation ecosystem:



## 1. Achieving Belfast's ambitions

Worldwide, cities are facing difficult urban challenges and the next decade will be crucial period for action. Belfast is no different. Our city is seeking to confront climate change; post Covid recovery; inclusive economic transformation; and specific transformational challenges around mobility, housing, energy and healthy urban living.

A host of plans and strategies are underway or being developed both at a strategic level and on the ground. Whether it is Reset for Growth, the Belfast Agenda, Renewed Ambition, the city centre's Bolder Vision, or The Belfast Resilience strategy, each plan represents a hugely challenging undertaking. Collectively, they represent a large number of 'wicked' systemic challenges that are not amenable to traditional public policy interventions. Urban innovation will play a major role in unlocking solutions.

## 2. The future economy

National, regional and urban economies are undergoing profound change - and this has implications for sector growth, productivity, and the future of work. Much of this change is being accelerated by digital innovation, but is also influenced by the need for a systemic response to climate change, globalisation and more recently, Covid and its long-term impact.

There are a number of important policies at a Northern Ireland and at a UK level that are attempting to map a path towards a more productive, sustainable economy - and which acknowledge the central role that digital innovation plays. These include the Belfast Region City Deal ambition, the recent Northern Ireland 10X Vision and the UK Government's Innovation Strategy. Each is based on the assumption that our current economy is likely to experience profound change and that it is important for cities, regions and nations to actively plan for these changes.

The Northern Ireland 10X Vision aims to harness innovation to drive growth in five key clusters to make us one of the most advanced small economies in the world. The approach acknowledges the importance of place-making, nurturing local talent and harnessing new technologies.

## 3. Rapid technological change

Advances in digital technologies are almost exponential with computing power doubling every 18 months and the cost of technologies dropping dramatically. Digital technologies are finding their way into many aspects of the economy and wider society, driving radical change. Emerging technologies such as AI, 5G, robotics, digital currencies, the Internet of Things, quantum computing, Cloud and Edge computing are accelerating these trends and will have implications across our economy, for jobs, public services, and on the design and management of our cities.

The UK Government's Innovation Strategy acknowledges the transformational impact of digital technologies on the national economy and their centrality to future prosperity and in addressing major public policies in areas such as climate change and public health. A series of accompanying national strategies for 5G, AI, digital and data all seek to harness these technologies for societal and economic impact.

The purpose of Smart Belfast is to understand the interconnections between these three strategic drivers and foster the conditions that will allow Belfast to better harness digital innovation to deliver on its wider ambitions.



**Our central argument is this: in a complex world it is no longer advisable to plan economic, infrastructure, technological, or urban programmes in isolation as independent strands of work. Cities need a holistic approach. We believe this is best done at a level of place.**

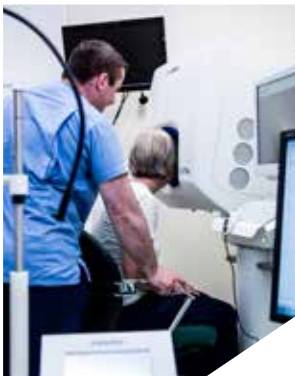
# Belfast's digital innovation strengths



Belfast identified as one of the world's top 10 Digital Economies of the Future (the only UK city other than London).



2nd fastest growing knowledge economy region in UK.



#1 international investment location for US cybersecurity development projects.



#1 global destination for financial technology investment.



#1 European destination city for new medical software development projects.



NI best place to work in digital in the UK (by salary to cost of living).



26% of all job openings here in 2019 were in digital technology - the highest in UK.



300% increase in R&D investment by local businesses over the last decade.



10X increase in venture capital funding over the last decade.



Top 20 universities in UK.

# The pillars to support urban innovation

## 1. Collaborative leadership

**To enhance Belfast's urban innovation ecosystem, we have identified eight supporting pillars. Associated with each pillar are a series of proposed actions for city partners. These actions are based on examples of existing practice right here in the city or are drawn from best practice in other cities across the world. Further work is required with partners to build agreement on these proposals.**

Cities that have been most successful in harnessing digital innovation to meet their objectives have developed effective partnerships that foster collaboration across sectors and boundaries.

A 'triple-helix' model brings industry, academia and public institutions together to find opportunities for collaborative gain. They adopt an agile, data-driven, citizen-led approach that is open to experimentation and responsive to rapid change.

### What are other places doing?

- Eindhoven Brainport's triple-helix model has enabled them to rapidly respond to a major economic crisis and successfully attract global technology companies and knowledge institutions to make Eindhoven a key contributor to the Dutch economy. Industry and academia also work with city's government to tackle urban challenges.
- Forum Virium, a non-profit company owned by Helsinki City Council, is one of the world's leading innovation organisations. It was established to boost urban innovation through public-private collaboration and has attracted millions of euro to help the city meet its sustainability and climate goals - while at the same time providing an urban environment for hundreds of local businesses to innovate.

### What is Belfast doing?

- A new partnership, Innovation City Belfast, is building on the foundations of a triple-helix model to establish Belfast as a globally significant destination for innovation and help to address the city's major economic, social and environmental challenges.

### Key partner tasks

1. Develop a collaborative body to identify and align Belfast's policy priorities with digital innovation opportunities - particularly in relation to our Bolder Vision and climate obligations.
2. Develop an agile delivery vehicle to facilitate public/private co-investment in urban innovation projects.
3. Develop mechanisms to facilitate a citizen co-design approach and provide ethical oversight for innovation projects.
4. Establish a city-level evidence and intelligence resource to support prioritisation and to measure impact.
5. Create a shared Belfast urban innovation investment proposition that supports the city's urban objectives.

## Innovation City Belfast

Six of the city's key institutions - Belfast City Council, Belfast Harbour, Catalyst, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, with Invest NI as an advisory partner - have come together to form a new partnership, Innovation City Belfast (ICB), to drive a shared digital innovation ambition for the city. Its key objectives include:

- Influencing regional and UK policy and programmes
- Attracting substantial new public and private sector investment in innovation
- Supporting the rapid growth of high potential knowledge economy clusters
- Supporting a skills agenda that prepares our workforce for the future economy
- Developing place-based innovation ecosystems
- Maximising the economic and social impact of the Belfast Region City Deal innovation and digital investments.



## 2. Urban challenges

A 'challenge-led' approach has been adopted by governments and institutions across the world. The approach recognises the limitations of traditional public policy interventions and public procurement in tackling some of the more intractable problems in society. Instead, the challenge-led approach seeks to use other means to co-opt industry and academia to work with government in finding innovative solutions to these 'wicked' challenges.



### What are other places doing?

- The challenge-led approach is heavily influenced by the work of Mariana Mazzucato at the Institute of Innovation and Public Purpose. The approach is the basis for the European Union's €95 billion Horizon Europe programme and the UK's Industrial strategy. It's been used successfully by the US Government via its \$58 billion Small Business Innovation Research program.
- 'Smarter London Together' outlines how London is preparing to embrace and exploit digital innovation to achieve its own ambitions. London Mayor Sadiq Khan has set five missions which underpin his commitment to strengthening London's digital innovation economy while also addressing societal challenges.

### What is Belfast doing?

- Belfast and Northern Ireland have previously adopted elements of the approach - mainly through the city's Smart Belfast programme and through the Department for the Economy's Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) programme.
- A new £20 million Innovation for Societal Impact Fund has been proposed as part of the Digital pillar of the Belfast Region City Deal. This will seek to support the most innovative companies in our economy by incentivising them to work on some of the most important problems that our city faces.

### Key partner tasks

1. Work with city leaders to define specific challenge areas aligned to urban policy priorities - particularly in relation to the Bolder Vision and our climate agenda.
2. Work with Belfast Region City Deal partners to design and deliver the £20m mission-orientated Innovation for Societal Impact fund.
3. Build capacity amongst city partners (including the SME sector, public bodies, communities and university research partners) to support participation in challenge-led programmes.

### 3. The Citizen

In the past some cities were 'technology-driven' - investing in the latest technologies with the expectation that they would, by default, generate opportunities and solutions to urban challenges. Most of these experiments have had mixed results - often based on a failure to understand the nature of the urban challenge or the needs of the citizen. The technologies were often unsuited to local need and met opposition from citizens and communities who had not been involved in their design.

The more recent wave of smart cities - including Smart Belfast - have sought to place the needs of the citizen at the heart of the approach to digital innovation. Such an approach needs to align closely with public policy priorities; and engage directly with the citizen in an open and informed way. There are a number of ways to do this.



#### What are other places doing?

- Living Lab methodology has proven particularly successful and has been adopted by over 470 cities and institutions. Living Labs are defined as user-centred, open innovation ecosystems based on a systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in urban communities and settings.
- Another methodology is Nesta's 'Collective Intelligence' initiative which harnesses the power of people, data and technology to solve urban problems.

#### What is Belfast doing?

- Belfast's proposed 'Citizen Office for Digital Innovation' takes this approach a step further - working with citizens to provide citizens with the tools, skills and technologies to collaborate on solving our city's challenges. At the same time, such an approach can act as an on-ramp to more traditional education and skills programmes.

#### Key partner tasks

1. Deliver an entry level engagement programme to raise awareness of the digital ambition, objectives and projects.
2. Design and deliver a 'first cohort' capacity-building programme to create awareness, build capacity and establish processes to support citizen co-design on a number of early digital innovation projects.
3. Develop a Belfast-focused shared resource to support current and proposed Living Labs in the city to ensure the design and delivery of a portfolio of collaborative innovation projects.

## 4. A vibrant innovation economy

The engine for digital innovation is a successful, growing urban economy. Without a critical density of talent, start-ups, entrepreneurs, innovators and engaged industry partners, Belfast will struggle to harness digital innovation to achieve the city's economic and social goals.

Fortunately, Belfast has enviable strengths to draw upon. We are home to a vibrant tech sector, a workforce with world-class educational attainment and a growing skills pipeline that is responsive to the needs of a modern economy.

We have globally recognised centres of research excellence and strong digital economy clusters in areas such as FinTech, cyber security and bioscience, with emerging clusters in life and health sciences. Belfast needs to consider the specific implications of radical technological change on our economy, on businesses, on jobs and its potential to exacerbate economic exclusion.

### What are other places doing?

- The Finnish government has developed national plans designed around long-term analysis of the impact of automation and AI on jobs and the types of skills needed in the 2020s and beyond.

### What is Belfast doing?

- Northern Ireland's 10X Vision places innovation at the heart of the government's economic priorities and the Belfast Region City Deal plans to invest over £320 million in digital and innovation projects designed to supercharge innovation across the city region. Belfast City Council is developing its new economic strategy to build upon this emphasis on innovation as a driver for success.



### Key partner tasks

1. Deliver the Belfast Smart District, a unique innovation environment to accelerate development and adoption of digital and data-driven technologies to tackle urban challenges
2. Support Innovation City Belfast (ICB) in the development of a place-based approach to digital innovation. This includes the Belfast Innovation District which aims to support business cluster growth built around research excellence.
3. Work with ICB on the design and delivery of an Inclusive Innovation programme to support communities to access and benefit from the success of a growing innovation economy.
4. Work with partners to prepare our citizens, businesses and wider society for the disruption and opportunities associated with digital innovation.
5. Develop a shared platform to better engage with SMEs and entrepreneurs, providing more targeted support.
6. Work with ICB on an insights and impact platform to support the design of interventions, measure their impact, and provide quantitative evidence for investors and funders.
7. Identify and develop models of funding to align societal challenges with cluster growth, research and innovation.



## 5. Data environment

Data is a fundamental asset for global digital transformation and a key element to drive forward Belfast's innovation economy. It fosters new industries and products, supports world-class research and creates significant competitive advantages. It also plays a major role in understanding and addressing societal challenges and designing new and better public services.

There are existing limitations which prevent Belfast from realising the full potential of data. These include insufficient data analytics capability, a lack of understanding of data as an asset, limited data sharing, poor interoperability and data quality as well as a lack of necessary skills and data literacy, and a sluggish data governance environment. There is also an increasing lack of trust from the public in the collection and use of data.

### What are other places doing?

- UK Government, through its National Data strategy, has acknowledged the important role of data to the economy. It has established institutions such as the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation and the Alan Turing Institute. It has also conducted work on 'data trusts' that seek to create an environment in which the citizen, industry and academia are involved in transparent data sharing environments.
- A number of cities have recognised the centrality of data to the wider urban agenda - and are creating environments where data can be exploited directly for the city's goals. These include London's Smarter London Together Roadmap, Barcelona's DECODE project and Helsinki's My Data.



### What is Belfast doing?

- The Northern Ireland Government's 'Open Data NI' platform recognises that opening public sector data promotes transparency, accountability and efficiency, but also encourages commercial opportunities and drives economic growth and innovation.
- The Administrative Data Research Centre, one of four UK centres, has been developed by Queen's University, Ulster University and the NI Statistics Research Agency to facilitate easier access to administrative data for research projects undertaken by accredited researchers.
- Belfast Region City Deal Partners, working with Fraunhofer FOKUS, have developed proposals for a shared data architecture and platform that aims to encourage collaborative innovation between industry, academia and government in the design of new products and services. The proposals seek to create a transparent and secure environment in which the value of data can be unlocked for the city.

### Key partner tasks

1. Promotion and adoption of the Belfast Data Manifesto to support the city's digital innovation ecosystem.
2. Enhance data leadership particularly amongst public sector bodies.
3. Encourage use of open standards and promote interoperability between urban data systems in the city.
4. Develop public sector workforce data capability.
5. Develop a shared urban data environment for businesses, citizens, academia and the public sector that supports collaborative innovation on urban challenges and delivery of enhanced public services.
6. Work with partners and UK regulators to create a 'data sandbox' environment to support the novel use of data in the public realm.
7. Develop a Citizens Office for Digital Innovation (CODI) programme - to build awareness, capacity and skills with citizens and stakeholder groups to support co-design of urban data projects.



## 6. Financing, procurement and adoption

Investment in innovation and R&D is a defining characteristic of successful economies. It allows companies to adopt new ideas; it provides opportunities for SMEs to take risks and grow; and it supports research in our universities.

While NI business investment in R&D has grown, it's from a low base compared to other UK regions. Nesta's 'The Missing £4 billion' report suggests NI has missed out on hundreds of millions of government investment in innovation.

The lack of access to 'real world' testbed environments also denies companies the opportunity to develop, test and scale solutions, and showcase to potential buyers. This environment is fundamental for de-risking innovation, accelerating adoption and facilitating routes to commercialisation.

### What are other places doing?

- Innovate UK manages funding programmes, including the Knowledge Transfer Network, to drive innovations and grow the UK economy.
- The US Government's Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer programmes have awarded \$54 billion to American SMEs since 1982 to encourage R&D with the potential for commercialisation..
- CivTech Scotland offers SMEs the opportunity to work with innovation teams to develop products that address public sector challenges.

### Belfast Region City Deal - £120m digital funding

1. A **£54m Challenge Fund** will focus on addressing the regional Grand Challenges of Artificial Intelligence, Health and Wellbeing and Sustainability and Resilience.
2. A **£39.5m Infrastructure Enabling Fund** will invest in world-class digital connectivity and data infrastructure.
3. A network of **Regional Innovation Hubs** will ensure diffusion of innovation and skills throughout the region.

### What is Belfast doing?

- Invest NI provides SME support for innovation including funding, loans and equity investments as well as help to develop R&D proposals and collaborative networks.
- Innovation City Belfast is playing a growing advocacy role in terms of making the case to both government and the private sector for Belfast as a place to invest in innovation.
- The Belfast Region City Deal is investing £320 million in digital innovation including equity, grant and challenge funding to support R&D.
- Working with Fraunhofer IAO, Belfast Region City Deal partners have developed a toolkit to support the financing of smart city projects.
- Belfast City Council is working with Connected Places Catapult and South Korean city Sejong on the challenges of procuring innovation locally and selling innovative products internationally.

### Key partner tasks

1. Develop and deliver the £54 million Belfast Region City Deal Challenge Fund programme.
2. Advocacy programme with ICB to attract greater government investment in innovation.
3. Work with ICB to develop a city level 'red carpet' service to attract private sector innovation investment.
4. Programme to enhance procurement and adoption of innovation solutions in public sector.
5. Development of a vehicle designed to facilitate public and private sector co-investment in significant smart city projects.
6. Develop an 'access to finance' platform to support SMEs, fund designers and public policy managers to reduce administrative burdens and provide clarity of the funding landscape.



## 7. Technology infrastructure

The UK Digital Strategy notes that for *'businesses to thrive and grow, government needs to create the conditions and set the framework for investment in widespread and up-to-date infrastructure.'*

Digital innovation is dependent on the existence of accessible, world-class connectivity and data infrastructure. Collaboration innovation flourishes best in a technological environment that encourages open systems, open interfaces, open data and the use of open source software.

Urban data platforms, and the open data ecosystems in which they exist, are designed to unlock urban data to support city services and understanding urban challenges. Places such as Barcelona, Copenhagen, Warsaw, and Helsinki also use these platforms to encourage SME innovation and support university research.

### What are other places doing?

- The Mayor of London's Smart London Board has developed a set of criteria to guide emerging technology in London. This charter is to ensure these are transparent and designed around the needs of Londoners, including privacy and cyber security.
- There are also major initiatives for common urban technology reference architectures, the most significant being that developed by the EU's Smart Cities Marketplace and Germany's 'Reference Architecture Model Open Urban Platform'. Both architectures encourage open standards for technology adoption by cities, the utilization of open interfaces with the goal of fostering an inter-operable Smart City ICT ecosystem.



### What is Belfast doing?

- Working with Fraunhofer FOKUS, Belfast Region City Deal partners have developed a proposed roadmap for the city to encourage an open architecture.
- The Belfast Region City Deal is establishing a £40 million Infrastructure Enabling Fund (IEF) to invest in shared digital infrastructure. IEF is likely to be used initially to support the deployment of advanced wireless networking across the Belfast Smart District.
- A Belfast Urban Data Platform will enable data to be shared by industry, academia and the public sector. It will provide common standards, APIs, an open architecture and shared expertise and technologies to enhance data discovery and facilitate greater collaborative innovation, research and delivery of services within the city region.
- Plans for a digital twin in Belfast - underpinned by City Deal investment in advanced wireless connectivity, shared data infrastructure and the ability to develop ideas within the Smart District environment - will provide researchers, industry, service providers and policy makers with a data-rich, virtualised environment in which to explore and develop innovative approaches.

### Key partner tasks

1. Work with partners to develop a shared open city architecture for technology to guide adoption and procurement.
2. Deliver the £30m advanced wireless investment proposition for the Belfast Smart District, Innovation District and Smart Port.
3. Develop and deliver the £5 million urban data platform enabling industry, academia and the public sector to generate, manage and analyse data in ways that spur collaboration and open innovation.
4. Design the Smart District as a testbed where new, emerging technologies can demonstrate their potential to address societal challenges and inform future policy and interventions.
5. Support the development of digital twins to enhance the planning and management of urban systems including mobility and energy systems.

## 8. Place-making

To fully harness the potential of urban innovation for economic and social goals, Belfast needs to take a whole-place perspective that recognises its unique historical and geographical characteristics and the role they play in supporting our innovation ambitions.

While innovation strategies often focus on elements such as skills, business development and enabling digital infrastructure, there are other place-based elements that are equally important in the innovation mix. We also need to address factors such as quality of urban life, housing, mobility, cultural and retail offerings. A thriving, creative urban environment is the best place to enable urban innovation to spark.

The development of smart and innovation districts is an important focus for much of this work. But success depends on their relationship with the wider city and how the benefits and opportunities that accrue can be shared with and accessed by citizens and communities. There are successful examples of such 'whole place' approaches in cities across the world including Barcelona, Berlin, Stockholm and Toronto.

### What are other places doing?

- Influential work by the Brookings Institute on innovation districts has shown that success does not rely exclusively on traditional economic factors. City leaders need to foster places where people want to live, work and play, fuelling demand for more walkable neighbourhoods where housing, jobs and amenities intermix.
- This relationship between thriving cities and success in innovation is a core rationale of the UK Government's Connected Place Catapult which works to support cities to integrate thinking on the role of the public space and social connectivity.



### What is Belfast doing?

- Innovation City Belfast partners have committed to the development of two complementary districts.

The Smart District will focus on the city centre and will aim to encourage industry, communities, public officials and universities to collaborate on Belfast's key societal challenges, whilst at the same time supporting innovation across our SMEs.

The Innovation District centred on Queen's Island will focus on the growth of a small number of business clusters with potential for significant growth and will seek to build the relationship between industry, innovators and university research.

Belfast has chosen to develop both types of district side-by-side. We believe that they are complementary and will allow Belfast to offer a uniquely rich innovation environment.

### Key partner tasks

1. Lead on the design and implementation of the Belfast Smart District programme to support the future of our city centre and the wider adoption of digital innovation in addressing Belfast's major urban challenges.
2. Work with Innovation City Belfast on the development of the Innovation District to support the growth of key innovation clusters that are important to our future economic success.
3. Support the design and delivery of the Belfast Bolder Vision - ensuring that digital innovation is integrated into the vision's plans for the city.
4. Work with the city's planners to ensure that the longer-term implication and opportunities associated with digital innovation are integrated into future plans for Belfast.

4.

# City Innovation Office

# City Innovation Office

## The Team

- City Innovation Manager and Head of Smart Belfast Programme
- Innovation Programme lead
- Advanced Wireless Programme Lead
- Smart District Programme Manager
- Grants and Equity Funds Manager
- Innovation for Societal Impact Fund Manager
- City Innovation Broker (x2)
- City Innovation Programme Officer (x2)
- Insights and Impact Project Manager
- Hubs of Innovation Project Manager

## Strategic Advisors

- Belfast Digital Innovation Commissioner
- Connected Places Catapult
- Innovate UK
- Invest NI

# Key partners

A number of organisations have been important in the development of this framework. They include:

- Bable
- Belfast Harbour
- Belfast Region City Deal Executive Board
- Brookings Institute
- Catalyst
- Connected Places Catapult
- Digital Catapult NI
- Eindhoven Brainport
- European Network of Living Labs
- Forum Virium
- Fraunhofer FOKUS
- Fraunhofer IAO
- Global Institute on Innovation Districts
- Innovation City Belfast
- Institute of Innovation and Public Purpose
- Invest NI
- Nesta
- NI Department for the Economy Innovation Team
- Queen's University Belfast
- TM Forum
- Ulster University

# SMART Belfast

City Innovation Office  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall, Belfast BT2 8BP



+44 (0)28 9032 0202



smartbelfast@belfastcity.gov.uk



www.smartbelfast.city



#smartbelfast



**Belfast**  
City Council



|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Subject:           | Update on Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and National Development Plan |
| Date:              | 12 January 2022  |
| Reporting Officer: | John Greer, Director of Economic Development                             |
| Contact Officer:   | Cathy Keenan, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager                     |

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

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

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>   |
| 1.1        | The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a progress update on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) and work on a development plan, strategy and action plan to progress this work. |
| 1.2        | The report also provides members with a synopsis of the Republic of Ireland Government's Shared Island Initiative and draws out elements of the National Development Plan aligned                            |



|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            | with cross border economic co-operation, with specific reference to the Dublin-Belfast corridor.  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1        | <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the contents of this report and progress to date to develop the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |
| 3.1        | At its meeting on 9 June 2021, Members were provided with an update on progress to support the development of the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor including proposals for work on a development plan and governance structure involving business and elected representatives. Members noted the progress to date and endorsed the approach.  |
| 3.2        | <p>Since the last committee update, the DBEC group proceeded with the commissioning of a development plan, strategy and action plan for the partnership. Belfast City Council acted as lead partner on the tendering and contract management of this work. The development plan is progressing well. It is being supported by a working group of officials from across the partnership. Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of successful corridors, including staffing, funding, legal and governance structures including powers and purpose, and successful initiatives or projects carried out by the partners</li> <li>Review of existing cross border structures/entities and funding, legislative environment</li> <li>Review of existing research and delivery in priority sectors to identify gaps in provision/research, areas of alignment and potential for collaboration</li> <li>Identification of options to support the development of a DBEC entity aligned with the partnership's ambitions including recommended governance, legal and operating structures</li> <li>Development of a detailed resource plan to support the delivery of the DBEC entity including identification of potential sources of funding.</li> </ul> |
| 3.3        | To date, the delivery team has undertaken research in relation to future governance, operational, legal and resourcing models for the partnership. This has included a comparative analysis of other corridors and consultations with existing cross border institutions and relevant internal and external stakeholders. The next steps for stage 1 include finalising consultations with cross border bodies and preparing the implementation and resourcing plan. Once approved the delivery team will proceed to stage 2 of the project.  |



|     |   |
|-----|---|
|     | <p>Since the previous update, the inaugural meeting of the Dublin Belfast Political Oversight Group took place on 23 November 2021 at City North Hotel, Dublin. The CEOs of the council partners attended the meeting along with the three elected representatives from each council. A Chair and Vice Chair of the group were elected to serve a one-year term. The Chair is Councillor Pete Byrne from Newry Mourne and Down District Council and the Mayor of Fingal, Councillor Seána Ó Rodaigh, of Fingal County Council was elected as Vice-Chair. The team delivering the development plan used this session as an opportunity to undertake a consultation workshop with elected representatives and officials and this will feed into the development plan.</p> |
| 3.4 | <p>It was previously decided to delay the convening of a business advisory group until work on the development plan and strategy has progressed. It is expected that the private sector will be consulted as part of the current work.</p>  |
| 3.5 | <p>One of the key considerations in the development plan will be to look at how this work can support the delivery of key commitments by the NI Executive and the RoI government. In the case of the latter, this will include reference to the renewed National Development Plan (NDP) which outlines strategic economic investment plans to 2030. The plan also sets out investment commitments relating to the Shared Island Initiative (launched in October 2020) which aims to enhance co-operation, connection, and mutual understanding on the island of Ireland, as well as East-West.</p>  |
| 3.6 | <p>The Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor Initiative is referenced within the NDP, notably: “The Government will continue to support fully the work of cross border local authority partnerships and pursue opportunities for collaborative investment and working in implementing the Shared Island NDP investment priorities”.</p>  |
| 3.7 | <p>Some potential opportunities identified through this document include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announcement of €50 million through The Shared Island Fund in Budget 2021 to advance key projects and a commitment to a total of €500 million to this fund out to 2025</li> <li>• The plan will support the purchase of new and additional fleet for the Dublin-Belfast Enterprise service allowing for trains to move to an hourly frequency when the new fleet is introduced by 2027. This All-Island Strategic Rail Review is also currently underway, led by ARUP consultants</li> </ul>   |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for a joined-up approach to environmental protection and sustainability across the island, including an electric vehicle and sustainable transport network</li> <li>• Development of a National Clustering Policy that will set out Ireland's approach to promoting the emergence and further growth of large scale, self-sustaining, business clusters</li> <li>• Creating new all-island research centres and innovation is identified as a priority. A funding allocation of €40m to support cross border academic research was announced in summer 2021 and a call for projects closed in November 2021.</li> </ul> |
| 3.8        | <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The work on the development plan will be resourced from the 2021/22 Enterprise and Business Growth budget.</p>  |
| 3.9        | <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of this project.</p>  |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>   |
|            | N/A  |



|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Update on the Renewed Ambition 2022 Programme                    |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 12 <sup>th</sup> January 2022                                    |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development    |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Marie Miller, Marketing Manager, City Regeneration & Development |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Restricted Reports</b>   |   |
| <b>Is this report restricted?</b> <span style="float: right;"> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </span>            |   |
| <b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>  |   |
| <b>After Committee Decision</b><br><b>After Council Decision</b><br><b>Some time in the future</b><br><b>Never</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/>  |
| <b>Call-in</b>  |   |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> <span style="float: right;"> <b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> </span> |   |
| <b>1.0</b>  | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>  |
| 1.1   | The purpose of this report is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Members on the Renewed Ambition Partnership Programme for 2022 aimed at delivering regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and wider City Region</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2.0</b>  | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1   | The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the update on the programme of work which is being delivered via the Renewed Ambition Partnership Approve entering into contractual arrangements on behalf of the Renewed Ambition Partnership with event organisers for UKREiF - the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum, noting that attendance at this event will be funded through the Renewed Ambition Partnership.</li> </ul> |
| <b>3.0</b>  | <b>Main Report</b>  |
| 3.1   | <b>Background</b>   |

|     |   |
|-----|---|
|     | <p>At the meeting of the City Growth &amp; Regeneration Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021, an update was provided on the Renewed Ambition Programme – a public-private partnership programme of work underpinning regeneration, development and infrastructure activities in the city. This was accompanied by a presentation from representatives from the Renewed Ambition Taskforce who provided an update on the programme of activity to date. This included proposed areas of focus for the 2022 programme aligned to securing investment and regeneration for the Belfast region. A key objective is to build awareness of the Belfast investment proposition aimed at attracting investment and creating employment opportunities to support the delivery of regeneration projects across the City, with a focus on creating the physical, digital and social infrastructure / assets we need for inclusive sustainable growth.</p>  |
| 3.2 | <p><b>2022 Programme of Activity</b></p> <p>In 2021, the Renewed Ambition programme delivered a structured five pillar programme focused on activities that help to ensure Belfast and the wider region is positioned to continue to attract investment and deliver on inclusive growth.</p>  |
| 3.3 | <p>It is proposed that the 2022 programme will continue be delivered as a collaborative programme of activity across the following key pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research – Research aligned to the impact of real estate investment to inform the city proposition and narrative.</li> <li>• Events - Programme of content aimed at the local and international real estate audience which aims to showcase the Belfast Region for future investment though participation at virtual and in-person conferences and showcase events.</li> <li>• Engagement and Advocacy - Programme of engagement and advocacy to facilitate two-way conversations with policy makers and showcase real estate opportunities to the investor community. This aims to position the Belfast Region positively and seeks to identify and try to address barriers that investors, developers and occupiers may face when they consider Belfast as a destination.</li> <li>• Communications - Media engagement reinforcing positive messaging around Belfast's investment proposition through international marketing and communication campaigns targeting the national and international real estate investment and development community.</li> <li>• Repository - A shared access repository on the Invest in Belfast website which facilitates sharing of data, marketing collateral and intel to help ensure</li> </ul> |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
|     | consistent messaging and shared narrative is used by all partners when promoting the city region.  |
| 3.4 | <p>The Renewed Ambition Taskforce have agreed that overarching objectives of the programme for 2022 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build collaboration and partnership in the city and wider region</li> <li>• Continue to promote and market Belfast locally and outside Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Increased engagement and advocacy with all key stakeholders, in particular target investors and government</li> </ul>  |
| 3.5 | <p>These objectives form part of an overall Belfast proposition for economic growth and investment. Having the right physical, digital and social infrastructure in place is essential for the creation of jobs and delivery of sustained, inclusive growth. It also aligns with a key action from the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission report within the context of 'Positioning the City to Compete' and delivering a Global Future'.</p>  |
| 3.6 | <p>As set out in the September 2021 CGR report, from a Council perspective, the key aims of the Renewed Ambition Partnership and the 2022 Programme includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Securing longer term institutional investors to support agreed regeneration plans of the Council and partners including investment to deliver housing development at scale;</li> <li>– Securing investment in the built environment on a city-wide basis to facilitate opportunities for jobs and business, communities and providing physical and social infrastructure to deliver on inclusive economic growth;</li> <li>– Waterfront regeneration and key infrastructure, connectivity and innovation related projects;</li> <li>– Investment to help address dereliction and support the re-use and preservation of heritage assets</li> <li>– Investment in tourism and cultural products to underpin regeneration priorities</li> <li>– Investment in clean tech, environmental and sustainability initiatives</li> </ul> |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 3.7  | In terms of events, due to the on-going health pandemic, the programme will include a hybrid of in-person and virtual events aimed at showcasing Belfast to a global investment audience and will potentially include a Belfast presence at UKREiiF.   |
| 3.8  | UKREiiF, the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum, is a new three-day event which is due to take place in Leeds on 17-19 May 2022. This will also be subject to Covid restrictions in place at the time.   |
| 3.9  | Supported by local authorities, developers and investors from across the UK, this event is to gather the key players and decision makers within the investment and real estate markets to highlight investment and development opportunities, whilst connecting and facilitating new relationships to drive inclusive economic growth through development and regeneration.  |
| 3.10 | The event aims to accelerate the Levelling Up agenda through investment in real estate and encouraging and energising support to transition to a more sustainable and Net Zero mindset within the real estate industry through a three day programme of seminars, including keynote presentations and panel discussions, with an estimated over 3,000 attendees. Attendees are to include representatives from local and central government, national and multinational investment firms, institutional investors, pension funds and the real estate supply chain.   |
| 3.11 | Key themes across the programme of activity at the event are the UK's Net Zero Target; Social Value and Inclusive Growth; The Future of Real Estate; Building Better Communities and a focus on securing inward investment. Areas of focus include Levelling up across the UK and in particular cultivating the development of greener, smarter, healthier places while driving inward investment; Building Net Zero UK – and the role that the built environment can play its part in creating net zero UK; and facilitating shared learning across the real estate on how to embed social value within the private sector. |
| 3.12 | From the Council's perspective, the emerging event themes align with our priorities and programmes of work focussed on Net Zero / Climate; A Bolder Vision; Belfast Region City Deal Projects; housing led regeneration including the potential for institutional investment; social value and delivering sustainable inclusive growth.  |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 3.13 | The event includes a dedicated exhibition space with over 80 exhibitors aimed at providing a platform for local authorities to showcase investment opportunities to investors, developers, and occupiers. Confirmed UK cities exhibiting include Birmingham, Edinburgh, Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester and Liverpool.  |
| 3.14 | The Renewed Ambition Partnership have proposed that the Belfast Region Partnership team take a stand in the exhibition area and organise a three-day programme of activity including focused investor seminars, participation in forums and round table discussions with a key objective of showcasing investment opportunities within Belfast and the wider City region, notably investment in housing, innovation, net carbon zero, key regeneration projects and Belfast Region City Deal projects.   |
| 3.15 | Discussions are on-going with the event organisers to maximise Belfast Region's presence to delegates, including securing speaking opportunities on the main stage programme and fringe events.  |
| 3.16 | As previously outlined to Committee, the Renewed Ambition Partnership is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institution partners. Work is on-going to secure further private and public sector sponsorship and, as in previous years, it is envisaged that external funding will again form the majority of the overall budget for delivery of the 2022 programme. In addition to key private sector sponsors, the Belfast Region City Deal partner councils have also indicated, subject to relevant Council approvals, that they wish to continue to support the programme into 2022 to continue to build on the collaborative approach.   |
| 3.17 | <p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>The Renewed Ambition Partnership is delivered as a public private sector sponsorship fund and is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institutions. Work is on-going to secure sponsorship and as in previous years, it is envisaged that external funding will again form the majority of the overall sponsorship income for delivery of the 2022 programme, including the Belfast presence at UKREiiF. As well as private sector partners, the Belfast Region City Deal partner councils have also indicated, subject to relevant Council approvals, that they wish to continue to support the programme into 2022 to continue to build on the collaborative approach.</p> |

|      |   |
|------|---|
|      | <p>The Renewed Ambition Partnership (RAP) Taskforce, the governing body for the Partnership, have agreed that a Belfast presence at UKREiiF should be included in the RAP 2022 programme of activity, with associated costs being funded through the Partnership sponsorship. It is envisaged that the maximum budget to deliver this event will be £40,000.</p> <p>Approval is sought for officers to enter into contractual arrangements on behalf of RAP with event organisers for UKREiiF, noting that this will be funded through the sponsorship secured from public and private partners to deliver the wider Renewed Ambition Programme.</p> <p>Council had previously agreed a contribution of £80,000 for the 2022 Renewed Ambition Partnership.</p> <p>Approval for any officer attendance at UKREiiF will be sought in line with the corporate travel policy and subject to prevailing Covid guidance in place at the time.</p> |
| 3.18 | <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>   |
| 4.0  | <b>Appendices – Documents attached</b>  |
|      | None  |





|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Subject:           | Community Planning Update: City Development Board          |
| Date:              | 12 January 2022  |
| Reporting Officer: | Alistair Reid, Strategic Director Place and Economy        |
| Contact Officer:   | Cathy Reynolds, Director City Regeneration and Development |

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

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

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>   |
| 1.1        | The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on community planning with a specific focus on the work being taken forward by the City Development Board.  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| 2.1        | <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <p>(i) Note the on-going work being progressed through the Belfast Agenda's City Development Board.</p> <p>(ii) Note the alignment and synergies with the work of the Committee.</p> |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | <p>(iii) Note the feedback from the City Development Board Workshop on 19 November and the priority areas identified by partners, as well as support from non-statutory partners including DfI, DfC and SIB and the private sector to lead focused discussions and coalesce with partners.</p> <p>(iv) The role and ongoing opportunities for Elected Members to input and shape the work being taken forward through Community Planning Partnership, including the refresh of the Belfast Agenda and associated delivery plans, over the coming months and years.</p>   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>   |
| 3.1        | <p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that a series of delivery focused Boards have been established to enable and encourage greater collaboration across city partners to deliver the ambitions and priorities set out within the Belfast Agenda and address key challenges facing the city and its communities.</p>  |
| 3.2        | <p><u>City Development Board Update</u></p> <p>Members will also be aware the work underway to review and refresh the Belfast Agenda for the period 2022-2026. Since the launch of the review in September 2021, we have been continuing the conversation with our city partners, including through the established Delivery Boards, to help shape the refresh the Belfast Agenda.</p>   |
| 3.3        | <p>On 19 November a workshop was held with the City Development Board, chaired by Neil McInroy former Chief Executive of CLES. The workshop had a strong attendance with representation across the VCSE, statutory partners, Belfast Chamber as well as representatives from the local development community. The session also involved Senior Officials within DfI, DfC, NIHE and SIB with focused discussions amongst the Board members to secure collective agreement on actions and interventions. Specifically, the workshop focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking stock of the current priority themes of the City Development Board in the context of Belfast Agenda commitments through the lens of Housing-Led Regeneration; Regeneration and Investment; Future City Centre; Connectivity, Access and Active Travel.</li> <li>• Securing collective agreement on a small number of priority interventions that the Board can drive forward over the coming 4-years.</li> </ul> |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 3.4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaping and influencing the refresh of the Belfast Agenda and associated delivery plans.</li> </ul> <p>The out-workings of this workshop will feed into subsequent engagement phases, enabling the co-design of action plans and a relevant, refreshed Belfast Agenda which can deliver a positive impact for everyone in the city.</p> <p>A number of key overarching areas which emerged during the workshop discussions are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was felt that City Development should be drawn out as an additional priority in the ongoing refresh of the Belfast Agenda.</li> <li>• There was general consensus that the priorities are the right ones with housing led regeneration and connectivity in its widest sense highlighted as particularly important priorities for the city, with delivery of A Bolder Vision for Belfast viewed as being critical.</li> <li>• A permanent residential population in the city core is critical to the next stage of city development, alongside the development of housing regeneration across the city.</li> <li>• It was discussed that a holistic approach should be taken to connectivity, access and active travel - important that this was considered collectively across all partners particularly given its cross-cutting nature and the number of different stakeholders involved.</li> <li>• The opportunity to take forward the framework of the Council's Future City Centre Programme as a collective partnership approach to help address the challenges issues impacting upon the city centre.</li> <li>• The importance of the city centre for economic reasons but also the need to create experiences within the city centre which would encourage people to visit and dwell.</li> <li>• Importance also of neighbourhood centres /arterial routes and ensuring complementarity with the city centre.</li> <li>• Diversification of the city centre offer is critical to include residential, culture and leisure type uses creating a 24 hour, 15 minute city. Need to create the conditions to make the city centre an attractive place to live.</li> <li>• Given the significance of the climate agenda, activities to reduce carbon and support climate adaption are important, and that we align the work of the City Development Board with the Resilience and Sustainability Board.</li> </ul> |
|-----|--|

|     |  |
|-----|--|
|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The availability of land/space across the city was highlighted as an opportunity to enable and unlock city development priorities, including housing, specifically in relation to targeting dereliction and vacancy.</li> <li>• Important to work with developers to encourage sustainable development and maximise opportunities to maximise wider social benefits including more green space, sustainable initiatives, and support increased biodiversity.</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to protecting and enhancing our environment and built heritage as part of future focus of the Board.</li> <li>• Belfast needs to compete with other cities. Its investment proposition should be reinforced and shared amongst partners. Measure what is in the Belfast Agenda – have clear targets, indicators and measure progress.</li> <li>• Master-planning, placemaking and good urban design are very important for successful city development.</li> <li>• Co-ordination of activities important particularly given the disparate nature of powers and resources across various stakeholders. Lots of activity – who is the conductor? Role of Community Planning viewed as being critical to help drive progress.</li> </ul> |
| 3.5 | <p>In addition to the workshop it is important to note that there have been other significant areas of work which have already commenced and/or are emerging across the City Development Board's four priority themes – some examples are outlined below.</p>  |
| 3.6 | <p><b>Housing-Led Regeneration</b></p> <p>As reported to the Committee in December under a Housing Led Regeneration update report, a Housing-Led Regeneration Delivery Group has been established under the auspices of the Community Planning Partnership; City Development Board and is chaired by NIHE Chief Executive and membership including BCC, DfC, SIB and LPS. Of particular relevance to this Committee is the direct alignment with this group and the work around progressing the both the city centre and city-wide strategic site assessments and seeking to unblock some of the challenges impacting on the delivery of housing regeneration. To note also the alignment with recommendations in relation to housing as presented within the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission "Reset for Growth" report. This includes the recommendations around establishing a delivery vehicle to utilise public sector land and undertake land assembly to facilitate housing at scale across the city centre.</p>  |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 3.7 | <p><b>City Regeneration and Development</b></p> <p>There is now a focused drive with partners to consider how we reflect the considerations of the Board in relation to the priority area of City Regeneration and Development on a city wide basis. This involves looking at how partners can best work together to ensure our strategic intent is taken forward. In relation to key areas of discussion from the workshop and opportunities to add value these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important that we clearly understand the key regeneration and place-shaping powers required to support the focus and ambitions of the Board and how these can be best levered amongst partners to deliver on priorities.</li> <li>• Consideration of how major consented and proposed development / regeneration schemes can be maximised in terms of wider economic, social and environmental impacts. Consideration also of the challenges impacting upon the delivery of such schemes and the role that partners could play to unlocking some of these barriers and ensuring that the wider economic, social and environmental impacts are realised.</li> <li>• Partnership opportunities for financing should be explored and consideration of the role of this Board and the other CPP Boards in identifying external funding opportunities and collectively prioritising projects or priority areas for external funding opportunities amongst partners.</li> <li>• Highlighted the importance of enhancing access and connectivity to the arterial routes and communities.</li> <li>• Accelerate investment opportunities to bring forward mixed tenure city centre housing stock and to maximise the wider regeneration benefits for the city centre and how we may enhance / educate perceptions of city living.</li> <li>• Highlighted the need for a targeted and holistic approach to addressing the challenges around dereliction and vacancy in both local neighbourhoods and city centre. Consideration to be given as to how best to scope strategic opportunities for existing vacant / derelict space and explore potential opportunities to bring forward proposals for meanwhile uses in vacant spaces pending longer term development and also consider opportunities for enhanced greening. This would link in with the housing led regeneration work.</li> <li>• Important that we secure clear ownership and accountability for implementation and delivering outcomes.</li> </ul> |
|-----|--|

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 3.8  | <p><b>Connectivity, Access and Active Travel</b></p> <p>Progression of A Bolder Vision (ABV) was highlighted as being a critical priority although reiterated that this would require the support and buy in of a number of partners and Government Departments and aligned resourcing (financial and delivery). The Board highlighted the opportunities which are presented through the ABV proposals, specifically on strengthening the city core and addressing perceived severance to surrounding communities and enhancing connectivity. Highlighted also was the criticality of progressing the Belfast Metropolitan Travel Plan and new Belfast Local Area Plan to act as key enablers and drivers to unblock the city and region's growth ambitions. In addition, enhanced public transport options including extension of the Glider; delivery of key greenway projects; policy changes and modal shift; improvements to critical inner ring road junctions and waterfront development were also considered as priority areas.</p> |
| 3.9  | <p>It was highlighted that connectivity was not just about active travel but also enhanced public transport options; treatment of the inner ring road (including key junctions); maximising the waterfront and blueways; removing severance and barriers to movement between city centre and surrounding communities.</p>   |
| 3.10 | <p>The Board felt that it was important that connectivity, access and active travel should be considered collectively across all partners particularly given its cross-cutting nature and the number of different stakeholders involved. It was felt that a holistic approach and better co-ordination was needed of the various policies plans, projects and proposals across all partners, to ensure a collective and cumulative impact. It was considered that the Board could play an important role in this as part of the forward priority actions for the Board. Members will also note that they had previously agreed that an overarching Connectivity Framework be brought back as part of this Committee's workplan.</p>   |
| 3.11 | <p><b>Future City Centre</b></p> <p>As previously reported to Committee in October, a City Centre Delivery Group is to be established to drive collaboration and delivery. It was felt that the framework adopted by Councils' Future City Centre (FCC) programme provides an opportunity to harness added value through a collective partner approach in driving this programme forward. In relation to feedback from the workshop on this priority area the following key considerations have been collated:</p>  |

|      |  |
|------|--|
|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlighted the ongoing work of the High Street Taskforce and the importance of engaging with this and seeking to secure appropriate funding and clarity of responsibility for delivery.</li> <li>Development of a specific action plan for the city centre, with commitment from all partners to the delivery of specific projects and programmes. The Council's Future City Centre Programme was considered as a sound basis for developing this action plan.</li> <li>Important that we adopt an experience-based approach to creating a destination of choice. We need to ensure that we are utilising all the skill sets that we have in the city to ensure that this happens.</li> <li>Access and utilising the waterfront, as a unique selling point for the city, should be a priority.</li> <li>Need to revisit the governance and possible extension of place-shaping regeneration powers.</li> <li>Potential to bring empty shops back to life by making ground floors active for meanwhile space. Noted that BCC was bringing forward a Vacancies Programme and better utilising under-utilised sites (e.g., Council owned surface-level carparks which have been subject to Council's Strategic Site Assessments).</li> <li>Address dereliction and vacant sites (public and private sector owned) via use of greening/biodiversity and meanwhile uses pending longer-term development.</li> <li>Activity around enhancing the heritage offering should be progressed.</li> <li>Highlighted the need to consider, identify and bring forward smaller-scale actions including tactical regeneration, activation of space, improved lighting, meanwhile uses etc which can add vibrancy and deliver quick wins.</li> <li>Opportunities to explore potential asset transfer, including within the public sector.</li> </ul> |
| 3.12 | <p>The immediate focus with the Board is now working to translate the proposals and activities from the workshop into a composite action plan. A co-design approach is being adopted whereby actively engaging with key partners and stakeholders to help shape and to secure buy-in and commitment and importantly the resources to support implementation.</p>   |
| 3.13 | <p><u>Role of Elected Members</u></p> <p>Elected Members will be engaged as part of this process and help shape the priorities and action plans going forward for the next 4-years. The All-Party Members Working Group will be a key platform for Members to have line-of-sight and input into the work being taken forward</p>   |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | through Community Planning and the respective delivery boards. Regular update reports will also be brought to this group alongside the Committee for consideration and input.  |
| 3.14       | <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Any financial implications arising from this report will be covered from existing budgets. The review process will involve the participation of all community planning partners, who will need to commit their resources to the review process and the agreed action plans.</p> |
| 3.15       | <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no equality, good relations or rural need implications in this report.</p>   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices -Documents attached</b>  |
|            | None   |