

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



**Belfast
City Council**

8th February, 2021

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet remotely, via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 9th February, 2022 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

RONAN CREGAN

Deputy Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

2. Restricted Items

- (a) Continental Market - Proposed Procurement Approach (Pages 1 - 6)
- (b) A City Imagining Investment Programme Update (Pages 7 - 86)

3. Matters referred back from Council

- (a) Notice of Motion - Free Public Transport for Young People - Responses (Pages 87 - 92)

4. Regenerating Places & Improving Infrastructure

- (a) Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker (Pages 93 - 96)

- (b) All Island Strategic Rail Review Consultation Process (Pages 97 - 130)
- (c) DfC Consultation on Draft Housing Supply Strategy (Pages 131 - 212)
- (d) Supporting Vibrant Business Destinations: Update (Pages 213 - 218)
- (e) City Place-Making and DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme Update (Pages 219 - 226)

5. **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

- (a) External Market Application - Banana Block (Pages 227 - 230)
- (b) City of London Visit - 8th March 2022 (Pages 231 - 234)
- (c) Cultural Strategy Update - Artist Studios and Maker Spaces (Pages 235 - 242)

6. **Strategic and Operational Issues**

- (a) Notice of Motions - Quarterly Update (Pages 243 - 252)
- (b) Consultation Response: The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 (Pages 253 - 278)

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

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
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Subject:	Responses from Translink and Minister for Infrastructure re Notice of Motion – Free Public Transport for Young People
Date:	9th February 2022
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place and Economy
Contact Officer:	Carolyn Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To note the correspondence received regarding the Notice of Motion re Free Public Transport for Young People.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the correspondence as set out in the report.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Committee will recall that, at its meeting on 10th January, 2022, the Council agreed to the following motion:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“This Council supports the promotion and expansion of sustainable transport in Belfast as a critical step to averting climate change, address the significant levels of air pollution, reduce congestion and improve public health. Extending and improving uptake of sustainable transport is key to our City playing its part in averting climate breakdown. In order to create a societal shift in how people</p>

	access public transport, this Council therefore calls upon the Minister for Infrastructure and Translink to introduce a pilot of free public transport for young people in Belfast which will also include the West Belfast taxi association and the Shankill taxis.”
3.2	Accordingly, Democratic Services wrote to the Minister for Infrastructure and Translink and a response has been received on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure from her Private Secretary (appendix 1) and from Translink (appendix 2).
3.3	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Response from Minister for Infrastructure</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Response from Translink</p>



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

Sara Steele
Democratic Services Officer
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 0105
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference: SS 10.01.2022
Our reference: CORR-0114-2022
7th February 2022

Dear Ms Steele

Free Public Transport for Young People

Thank you for your email to Minister Mallon received on 26 January 2022 advising of the Belfast City Council motion calling for a trial to provide free travel for young people on public transport services within Belfast. The Minister has read your letter and asked me to respond.

The Minister welcomes the motion and notes the interest shown by councillors to explore ways to address the impacts of climate change and the role that sustainable transport may play. Concessionary travel, which is available to a range of vulnerable groups including children aged 5-16, connects people and opportunities through the public transport network. Improving access to public transport helps to protect the environment by encouraging people to travel more sustainably.

Minister Mallon has recently announced her intention to extend free travel across Northern Ireland for people with disabilities who currently pay half fare and to widen the range of services facilitating concessionary travel by extending the Scheme to new operators (including some in Belfast) who have already indicated or expressed an interest in joining. This is in the context of the current budget consultation and the proposal for the associated ring funding of such a move.

As you will be aware, the current public transport network faces financial challenges each year. Given that Translink operate one of the widest public transport networks within these islands, there is a significant cost to running these important services as fare revenue is not sufficient to cover them.

In that regard, the Department for Infrastructure provides a subsidy to Translink to offset the remaining cost of the network with a contractual obligation to maintain the organisation's going concern status. However, as the Department has faced significant budgetary constraints since 2014/15, this has meant that opening baselines for the public transport network are below what is required to operate it. This has meant that in

many years Translink has delivered the public transport network at significant losses. This challenge remains as we look forward to future years.

Minister Mallon would be very keen to offer young people free travel however it would require a significant increase in funding from the Executive to the Department. Please be assured that the Minister continues to make the case around the Executive table for increased funding for our public transport services, not only to maintain existing services but to expand it given the economic, social justice and environmental benefits it delivers.



KATHRYN MCFERRAN
Private Secretary to the Minister

Ms Sara Steele
Belfast City Council – Legal and City Services Department
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

1st February 2022

Dear Sara,

Ref: SS 10.01.2022 Free Public Transport for Young People

Thank you for your recent letter in relation to Belfast City Council's passing of a motion in favour of free public transport for young people, as tabled by Councillors Smyth and O'Hara.

Translink would be broadly supportive of such a policy on the public transport network in Northern Ireland. We believe that such a step would help to tackle climate change, air pollution and congestion both in the short and long-term and play a role in forming life-long sustainable travel habits for a Net Zero Northern Ireland, in keeping with the Executive PfG and Belfast City Council's Belfast Agenda. It would also have a key role in enhancing social inclusion, as well as making access to education, apprenticeships and employment much easier for many young people in Northern Ireland.

However, we wish to emphasise that such a policy, as well as the details associated with a pilot, is ultimately a matter for the Department for Infrastructure. This would include consideration of the affordability of this policy given the pressures that continue to reside on the Department's budget.

It is worth noting that Translink already provides a yLink card for use by young people, which provides access to 1/3 discounts on public transport in Northern Ireland; in recognition of the detrimental impact of the pandemic on young people, Translink has suspended the upfront cost of £8, associated with this.

I hope you will find this of use. Please do not hesitate to contact my office should you require additional information.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Conway
Group Chief Executive, Translink

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Subject:	Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker
Date:	9 th February 2022
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration & Development

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To provide Members with an update on the Regeneration Development Tracker for 2021 as aligned to the eight core policies of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS). The detail of this will be provided by way of a presentation at Committee.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. An updated Regeneration Development Tracker for 2021, as aligned to the eight core principles set out in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (as outlined below), will be provided by way of a presentation to be made to this Committee on 9th February. II. A further comprehensive summary report on the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy will be brought back to Committee in the

	near future, which will provide a detailed update on the various thematic areas, projects and Special Action Areas as identified within BCCRIS.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) was produced by the Council in 2015 and was subsequently adopted by DfC. It represents the agreed regeneration policy for the city centre. It sets out the context for developing the city centre and connecting to the city around and outlines our aspirations for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and it's connectivity with the surrounding area. The strategy is based on eight core policies for the city centre and a series of potential projects that translate the policies into action. The eight core policies are as follows:
3.2	<p>1) Increase the Employment Population</p> <p>Capitalise on Belfast's advantage of competitive costs of space and labour and a well-educated workforce. Support the development of new grade A office space and better connect the existing office provision within the centre so that appropriate space is available for firms.</p>
3.3	<p>2) Increase the Residential Population</p> <p>A significant residential population will be critical for the successful functioning of the city centre. There is a need to establish strong market confidence in the centre; remedy any key deficiencies in terms of liveability, attractiveness and connectivity and ensure connections with existing communities. Consider financial models to underpin and support increased city centre living and bring forward publicly owned sites and support the development of key privately owned sites.</p>
3.4	<p>3) Manage the Retail Offer</p> <p>Address the retail decline of the centre through a targeted and proactive approach to regeneration of retail areas and management of the city centre retail offer.</p>
3.5	<p>4) Maximise the Tourism Opportunity</p> <p>Take tourism in Belfast up a level by complimenting the existing offer with another big attraction and fostering the general buzz and activity of the centre. Establish Belfast as a key tourism location and work in partnership to amplify the Belfast brand related to music, food, literary and cultural events.</p>

3.6	<p>5) Create a Regional Learning and Innovation Centre</p> <p>Address Belfast's low level of innovation and by building on the strength of existing institutions in the centre and provision of flexible space for new businesses. Work with partners to support the continued investment in the city through education, research and development and job creation.</p>
3.7	<p>6) Create a Green Walkable Cyclable Centre</p> <p>Reduce the area of tarmac and increase green space in the city centre through provision of new open spaces, a comprehensive street scaping programme, develop key bike arterial routes, development of the Lagan Corridor as a recreational spine. Revitalise the public realm and implement Streets Ahead and address issues with the Inner Ring Road.</p>
3.8	<p>7) Connect to the Surrounding City</p> <p>Reduce barriers between the city centre and the communities that surround it by connecting to activity in adjacent neighbourhoods, developing new access points such as walkways, crossing routes over the River Lagan, potential reconfiguration of road infrastructure, improving pedestrian crossings where feasible, street scaping key corridors and improving the built form relationship at the edge of the city centre.</p>
3.9	<p>8) Enhance Shared Space and Social Impact.</p> <p>Ensure that the city centre is a welcoming and attractive place for everyone in Belfast through the design and programming of space.</p>
3.10	<p>BCCRIS also identified 5 Special Action Areas as parts of the centre where more intensive masterplans or interventions should be prepared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inner North - Inner West - North East Corridor - Transport Hub and South Centre - Oxford Street and Eastern Bank
3.11	<p>Belfast continues to face a range of economic, social and environmental challenges not envisaged when BCCRIS was adopted. Despite this, the priorities within BCCRIS,</p>

3.12	<p>together with Council's Future City Programme and the Bolder Vision remain very relevant.</p> <p>Whilst various reports have been brought to Members in respect of individual projects and programmes of work aligned to BCCRIS, a comprehensive summary report will be brought back to Committee in the near future, which will provide an update on the various thematic areas, projects and Special Action Areas and recommendations as appropriate in respect of key areas. The Regeneration Development Tracker presentation being brought to Committee on 9th February provides a snapshot of activity during 2021 within Belfast City Centre (including Titanic Quarter) against the eight core policies of BCCRIS.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None



Subject:	All-Island Strategic Rail Review consultation response
Date:	09 February 2022
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration and Development

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the draft submission to the All-Island Rail Review consultation that closed on 21 st January 2022. A draft response was submitted on behalf of Belfast City Council on the basis that this was subject to agreement by this committee, and subsequent Council ratification in March.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the Council's consultation response submission to the All-Island Strategic Rail Review enclosed with this report at Appendix 1. Members are to note that this

	response was submitted by the closing date of 21 January 2022 but on the basis that it remained subject to the approval of this Committee and subsequent Council ratification in March.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	On 7 th April 2021, Infrastructure Minister Nichola Mallon and the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan T.D. announced the launch of an all-island Strategic Rail Review. The Strategic Rail Review consultation paper was subsequently published on 29 th November 2021 and aims to consider how the rail network on the island of Ireland can improve sustainable connectivity between major cities, enhance regional accessibility, including to the North West, and support balanced regional development and consider rail connectivity to international gateways - sea and airports. In addition, the Review will consider the feasibility of higher speeds on the network and whether there is a potential to increase use of the network for freight.
3.2	The New Decade New Approach Deal was published in January 2020 to restore the power-sharing Executive in Northern Ireland and includes various commitments to address the ongoing challenges in Northern Ireland relating to our public services particularly in our health service, education, housing, justice and a commitment to grow the economy. It also includes a commitment <i>to achieve greater connectivity on this island – by road, rail and air.</i>
3.3	More specifically the deal sets out, <i>The Irish Government is supportive of serious and detailed joint consideration through the North South Ministerial Committee of the feasibility of a high-speed rail connection between Belfast, Dublin and Cork, creating a spine of connectivity on the island, which could be progressed as a priority.</i>
3.4	The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 22 nd September 2017, agreed to co-fund, along with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Louth County Council, Fingal County Council and Dublin City Council a pre-feasibility study on a potential Belfast - Dublin fast rail link. As reported to this Committee on 9 th January 2019, Belfast City Council, along with these five Local Authorities, carried out a pre-feasibility study to inform the potential benefits of a higher speed rail link between Belfast and Dublin. The Committee also agreed to proceed to a Strategic Outline Business Case in conjunction with

	<p>the other partner Councils and private sector funding. The next stage of this work has not progressed due to the pending All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review and the partners preference to bring forward an holistic approach to rail provision across the island. Officers have, through DfI and the initial consultancy team, provided the outworkings from the pre-feasibility stage into the Strategic Rail Review and will continue to engage through these forums and report back to Committee at the appropriate stages.</p>
3.5	<p><u>The rail network and how we use it:</u></p> <p>The overall market for intercity travel along this corridor is around 5m journeys per year. The rail service currently captures less than 20% of this market. Facilitating a shift away from private car to rail will deliver environmental and health benefits as well as economic growth.</p>
3.6	<p>A survey of the Belfast-Dublin Enterprise customers in 2019 found that just over half of people were regular customers, with 31% of people travelling at least once a week on the service, and 24% travelling at least once a month. Therefore, it is fair to say that a small percentage of people travel by rail for commuting, particularly outside Dublin and Belfast. However, across the island of Ireland, rail has experienced a growth in passenger numbers of 37% since 2011. Within each jurisdiction the growth in rail passenger journeys has been approximately 34% in Ireland and 45% in Northern Ireland.</p>
3.7	<p>The development of a Belfast – Dublin high speed rail connection is seen as a potential gamechanger that would raise productivity and generate economic growth, thereby lifting living standards along this corridor and beyond. The Enterprise train service takes approx. 2hrs and has issues in terms of frequency of service and existing rail infrastructure restrictions. The vision of a 60-minute journey time with up to two trains per hour would put the Belfast-Dublin corridor on a par with Frankfurt-Cologne and other comparable routes as identified within the pre-feasibility work.</p>
3.8	<p>The Dublin to Belfast economic corridor accounts for more than 1 million jobs, and strong growth is expected over the next 15 years. Belfast alone has a target to add 46,000 jobs in the period 2020-35, as set out in the Belfast Agenda. An improved rail service has the potential to better match employers and employees and would serve longer distance commuting. The Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast developed by the Belfast Climate Commission and launched alongside our Resilience Strategy identifies enhanced public</p>

	transport as one of a number of measures that would contribute to significant carbon reduction in Belfast.
3.9	<p><u>Context</u></p> <p>The Review aims to use a data-driven, evidence-based approach to transparently show trade-offs between different objectives and identify viable options for the future of rail across the island of Ireland. The Review will be delivered over three phases:</p> <p>Phase 1: Review of the current context and role of rail through policy review, data analysis, environmental considerations, development of rail case studies, and consultation to gauge stakeholder and public priorities</p> <p>Phase 2: Identification of different service and connectivity concepts to address issues and opportunities for rail, applying the insights from Phase 1 to inform the selection of potential options</p> <p>Phase 3: Final appraisal of the developed concepts</p>
3.10	<p>Belfast Council All-Island Rail Review Consultation Response</p> <p>Members are asked to approve the Council’s consultation response submission to the All-Island Strategic Rail Review enclosed with this report at Appendix 1. This response was submitted in line with the time frames outlined within the Consultation, however included a caveat that the response remains subject to agreement by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, and subsequent Council ratification in March. We will advise the consultation team of any further comments or amendment requests following this Committee meeting and the Council meeting in March.</p>
3.11	<p>The consultation invited respondents to rank a number of policy opportunities that a better connected and higher/high speed rail network presents for our island economy. We have proposed a ranking in the following order with a corresponding summary of our response to each policy area:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve All Island Connectivity Between Major Cities

	<p>The Belfast to Dublin Higher Speed Rail project aspires to achieve a 60-minute journey time with provision of at least 2 trains per hour: one fast and one semi-fast, delivering good end to end connectivity and opportunities for other locations along the economic corridor.</p> <p>2. Foster economic activity</p> <p>There is huge economic potential in developing our rail corridors; for efficient freight movements, connecting workforces, and supporting tourism. In Northern Ireland rail is critical to supporting the growth of the economy and potential new industrial opportunities.</p> <p>3. Contribute to Decarbonisation</p> <p>Rail is seen as a key enabler of decarbonisation. When looking at the Belfast – Dublin Rail corridor, alternative routes will need to be explored to ensure maximum efficiency and impact of the service in a bid to shifting passenger travel from private motor vehicles to rail.</p> <p>4. Encourage Sustainable Mobility</p> <p>Our vision for the future of rail is a high-speed network that enhances inter-city and regional connectivity on the island of Ireland that will enhance our economy whilst advancing our decarbonisation goals and bring about sustainable mobility.</p> <p>5. Achieve Economic & Financial feasibility</p> <p>With significant plans for investment in transport infrastructure, delivering greater value for money is key. Improved rail links can facilitate better matching between employers and employees which will support economic growth.</p> <p>6. Enhance Regional and Rural Accessibility</p> <p>Improving regional access means better economic and social connections, increasing access to opportunity, and supporting balanced regional development. It is imperative that step change measures towards rail provision in the North West are brought forward.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	<p>Appendix 1: Consultation on All-Island Strategic Rail Review: Belfast City Council response submission</p> <p>Appendix 2: All Island Strategic Rail Review Consultation Paper November 2021</p>

Consultation Form

1. Of the goals listed below, please rank them in terms of importance to you (by clicking and dragging), with the first being most important and the last least important.

1. Improve All Island Connectivity Between Major Cities
2. Foster economic activity
3. Contribute to Decarbonisation
4. Encourage sustainable mobility
5. Achieve economic and financial feasibility
6. Enhance Regional and Rural Accessibility

2.1 Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of a group/organisation?

Organisation

2.2 What is your organisational vision for the future of rail in your area, or across the island?

Our vision for the future of rail is a high-speed network that enhances inter-city and regional connectivity on the island of Ireland that will enhance our economy whilst advancing our decarbonisation goals and bring about sustainable mobility. There will be increased frequency of rail services and reduced journey times on the Belfast – Dublin Enterprise line that will greatly improve the economic attractiveness and integration across the Belfast - Dublin region. This will bring benefits to the wider economic corridor and greatly expand the access to markets and manpower resources employers across the region and especially within the well-connected cities and hubs.

Our vision is for the region to have a comprehensive, integrated, frequent, reliable and high-speed rail network that will maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits for our residents, workforce, visitors and investors. It should ensure we will have rail infrastructure that supports inward investment into Belfast, building on the social, economic and environmental advantages of a high-speed rail network between the islands two principal cities, enhancing opportunities for economic growth, employment and homes, creating attractive environments for businesses and residents.

2.3 Are there any key gaps in rail provision in in your area, or elsewhere where you would like to travel by rail?

Belfast – Dublin Higher Speed Rail

Five Local Authorities (Belfast City Council, Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, Louth County Council, and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council) co-commissioned a study into a potential strategic economic benefit of a high-speed rail connection between Belfast and Dublin. In July 2019 ARUP published the policy paper entitled *Accelerating Economic Growth and Environmental Change through Investment in Rail -Transforming Connectivity between Belfast and Dublin*. The policy paper is enclosed with this submission at Appendix 1. It included the following findings on the Eastern Economic Corridor:

- The Enterprise train service is slow and infrequent. The vision of a 60-minute journey time with up to two trains per hour would put the Belfast-Dublin corridor on a par with Frankfurt-Cologne
- The overall market for intercity travel along this corridor is around 5m journeys per year. The rail service currently captures less than 20% of this market
- The Belfast to Dublin corridor accounts for more than 1million jobs and is expected to grow to c.3.3M by 2031. Belfast has a target to add 46,000 jobs in the period 2020-35

- With over 3.1m car journeys per annum along the Dublin to Belfast corridor, representing 67% of the market share, increasing the mode share of rail travel on this corridor could greatly reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality in the island of Ireland
- Improved rail connectivity would boost access to jobs, employees and customers. Many more locations would become feasible for households and businesses, allowing growth to be more evenly distributed
- Improved rail links can also facilitate better matching between employers and employees which will support economic growth and bring closer together the island's top three universities
- Improving access to Dublin airport will enhance the overall connectivity benefits along the Belfast to Dublin corridor, ensuring a larger part of the island benefits from international links

Urban Rail Capacity

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI), in conjunction with Translink, published the *Railway Investment Prioritisation Strategy (2014)* to set out the strategic direction for future railway investment over the next 20 years and the high-level initiatives that need to be delivered to support the Strategy. To increase urban rail capacity in Belfast the strategy identified a number of key projects:

- A third track between Adelaide to Great Victoria Street would enable additional timetabling of trains on this section of line
- Dualling of the Dargan Viaduct would improve timetabling on the Derry and Larne lines and facilitate a possible Gamble Street / Donegall Quay Halt more effectively integrated with the northern city centre.
- A third line between Lagan Junction to Central Station could relieve future pressures on this heavily trafficked section of track and result in improved timetabling of services into Belfast linking with the TEN-T Core Network which is being considered in the Translink 2021 Network Utilisation Strategy.

Belfast International Airport Rail Link

The Railway Investment Prioritisation Strategy acknowledged that a re-opened Antrim to Knockmore/Lisburn line could present an opportunity to establish a rail link to Belfast International Airport, although such investment is less likely to be fully economically viable without further airport passenger growth or the more sustainable spatial development and planning of the area that could be serviced by the reopened route.

Gamble Street Halt

A new railway station on Gamble Street, near Corporation Street, is a long-term ambition to create an additional public transport node in the northern part of the city centre, within the high accessibility zone identified in *Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2015*. The *Greater Clarendon & Sailortown Masterplan (2016)* strongly recommends a new rail halt at Gamble Street, or the general area. The Masterplan Delivery Framework (April 2018) suggested that there may be important engineering issues that could impact on the viability of a Gamble Street Rail Halt.

Shore Road

Despite there being a two-way rail corridor along the Shore Road that leads to Yorkgate station and later to all rail stations in the city, there are no stations between Yorkgate and Whiteabbey. The rail line along Shore Road is barely accessible for those living in the area. Plans to increase rail service

frequency already exist as part of the Transport Hub initiative and should be applied to the section of rail along Shore Road, together with new stations that would allow Shore Road residents to use it.

It is recognised that a modern, integrated, well-connected and reliable public transport network is key for Belfast. The success of Belfast Rapid Transit (Glider) Phase 1 has already started to enhance the image of public transport travel in Belfast, and it is acknowledged that significant increases in patronage levels along the BRT corridors of the East, West and Titanic Quarter has been achieved.

BRT Phase 2 is one of several strategically important projects that will be introduced within the City Centre over the next several years, including vital public sector projects and initiatives such as The Belfast Region City Deal, the Belfast Transport Hub, Belfast Streets Ahead 3 & 5, and York Street Interchange. These projects are critically important elements within the ongoing development of a green, walkable, cyclable network of streets and places that 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 within and around it.

An increase in frequency on this section could be achieved with an intermediate terminus around the Ulster University Jordanstown campus which would extend the project's benefits to students as well as residents of Whiteabbey. This leverages existing infrastructure efficiently and has the potential to create an excellent transit improvement with greater capacity for those in the North of the City and adjoining council areas.

Wider Railway Improvements

In terms of the wider region the rail network coverage maps enclosed with the consultation document show a glaring omission of rail provision in the North West. It is imperative that step-change measures towards rail provision in the North West are brought forward in the form of enhanced services for other modes that provide the accessibility and options in the short to medium term.

The DfI commissioned a feasibility study in November 2020 to consider half-hourly train services on the Derry - Belfast railway line. The 2021 review of the Network Utilisation Strategy by Translink reviewed the benefits of investment in re-instated rail routes such as the potential Armagh to Portadown link or other strategic dualling or passing loop along existing corridors.

The journey time to Dublin city centre from Belfast currently exceeds two hours and needs to be reduced with a potential connection to Dublin airport. The number of services provided on some rail lines is constrained due to the need for some services to share the same track and therefore a new heavy gauge line potentially bypassing the busy DART service between the city centre and Malahide could increase the number of intercity services that could be provided and simultaneously reduce journey times.

The Belfast to Dublin Higher Speed Rail project aspires to achieve a 60-minute journey time with provision of at least two trains per hour: one fast and one semi-fast, delivering good end to end connectivity and opportunities for other locations in the corridor. The Derry - Portadown line via Omagh could provide a vital and viable connecting service to an upgraded Enterprise. The network enhancement to cover the three airports with the reopened Crumlin line would further supplement network penetration and integration across different modes. However, such investment is less likely to be fully economically viable without further airport passenger growth or the more sustainable spatial development and planning of the area that could be serviced by the reopened route.

3.1 Would you consider the area of your main place of residence:

N/A

3.2 Would you consider the area of your main place of work:

N/A

4. Please select your Council/Council Area:

Belfast City Council and Belfast – Dublin Economic Corridor

5. If you have any further comments, which have not yet been captured that you feel may be of value in the development of Review, please add them below:

Belfast City Council asks that the following comments and observations be taken into consideration as part of the development of the Review:

- The **Belfast Region City Deal** points to investment in infrastructure as a key tenet of connecting our region and beyond. For a region to be successful, modern and world class infrastructure needs to be in place. This enables economic growth, builds the connections to markets and opportunities and is a key consideration for inward investors. As such, investing in the extension and enhancement of our rail infrastructure is seen as a priority linked in delivering balanced economic growth and making sure the job opportunities that we create can be accessed by all communities.
- Belfast City Council would like to see the enhancement of the potential and **use of existing infrastructure** as a priority linked to the GVA and opportunities for sustainable economic growth across the island. Where feasible, however, when looking at the Belfast – Dublin Rail corridor, alternative routes will need to be explored to ensure maximum efficiency and impact of the service. In particular, there is potential to build a more resilient network of low carbon rail services that would contribute significantly to our decarbonisation targets.

Rail is a key enabler of decarbonisation in the transport sector and we welcome the proposed electrification of Enterprise rolling stock under the planned improvements to the rail network. We understand the recent trainsets purchased by Translink can be converted into electric units which is what we want to see in terms of future-proofing for electrification.

- **Frequency of service and integration** are obviously a hugely important considerations in the context of rail service provision and especially crucial within the metropolitan network. Arguably we should be aspiring to frequencies not exceeding 10 minutes at peak times. With the provision of additional stops, particularly in the North of the city, this would see public transport become genuine viable alternative to the less sustainable forms of transport.
- **Freight considerations** are not clear as part of the consultation and are not currently part of network in NI and issue in relation to connectivity to ports, mineral and manufacturing centres etc. The potential to use the railway system for freight transport on an all-Island basis could support more effective use of existing and proposed infrastructure thereby contributing to longer term goals around climate change and sustainability. This potential therefore requires clear appraisal as part of any Review.

- **The timescale** for the review and actual outputs or options for the next stages is critical. There will be real issues around potential viability, both financially and in terms of the enhanced connectivity they can deliver in the medium to long term.
- The consultation paper does not provide any clarity on how the **infrastructure capacity** of the current network or any protected corridors from previous lines have been assessed or will be considered taking account of projected viability from an operational or service perspective.
- **Integration is critical** and this review should not be seen as review of rail services in isolation from all other modes of public transport provision. The provision of integrated public transport services in Northern Ireland is significantly inferior to the connectivity, frequency and quality of rail, tram and bus services provided in other parts of the UK and Ireland. It will be important to future-proof the development of our strategic transport services, both rail and bus, through the integration with local transport networks.

In the consideration of all proposals the opportunities for enhanced access to the transport network at our railway halts should be a key consideration. As an example, the absence of the rail linked Park and Ride facility at Templepatrick reduces the potential for interchange and passenger choice in terms of access to the network and multi modal trips.

- It is not clear how this review will feed into the **Transport Plans** or RDS processes. Regional and sub-regional hubs appear to have a narrow interpretation whereas these are critical in relation to other modes and broader connectivity.
- Clarity is needed in respect of the hierarchy and the **purposes of rail network in the different areas** – short distance commuting, longer distance connectivity and regeneration potential from new connections linked to spatial development priorities. Again, freight and enhanced use of the infrastructure may be important in this regard in respect of the longer-term viability or business cases.

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All Island Strategic Rail Review

Consultation Paper

November 2021



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Ministerial Foreword

We firmly believe in the untapped potential of rail to contribute toward social and economic development across the island of Ireland, providing faster and more frequent connectivity, connecting communities, as well as helping us meet our ambitious climate action objectives.

If we are to tap that potential, then we believe there is a need to comprehensively and objectively examine how rail could deliver benefits across the island of Ireland and that is why we are undertaking this Review.

The Review expands on the commitment under the New Decade, New Approach agreement to examine the feasibility of a high/higher speed rail link between Belfast, Dublin and Cork and will look at ways to improve our current rail infrastructure, including the feasibility of high/higher speeds and electrification, better connections to the North-West, and role of rail in the efficient movement of goods.

The results will give our Departments an evidence-informed approach to delivering low carbon rail services and building a more resilient network to support sustainable growth across the island of Ireland.

The aim of this Review, and the evidence base that will underpin it, is to show the trade-offs in outcomes against objectives for alternative network options, outlining a potential investment framework for the coming decades. This Review will show the difference in network option outcomes that have clear blue water between them, ensuring stakeholders understand the impact of competing objectives to aid our decision-making.

We understand how valuable consultation is to the development of a Review of this magnitude, which is why engagement is an essential part of the process throughout.

In this Consultation Paper, we invite everyone to share their views.

While several questions are posed, we would urge participants to raise other issues which they believe may assist in developing the Review. The responses to this paper will help inform the development of an improved rail network on the island.

We look forward to hearing from you.



Eamon Ryan T.D.
Minister for Transport



Nichola Mallon MLA
Minister for Infrastructure

SIGNED

Inside the process

In April 2021, the Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan T.D., and the Minister for Infrastructure, Nichola Mallon MLA, announced the launch of an all-island Strategic Rail Review (the 'Review').

This Review will consider how the rail network on the island of Ireland can improve to promote sustainable connectivity into, and between, the major cities, enhance regional accessibility and support balanced regional development.

The Review will look at how the railways are used, how they could be used in future and how the network can evolve to serve the people on the island of Ireland and achieve policy goals.

In addition, the Review will consider the feasibility of high (above 200km/h¹) / higher (up to 200km/h) speeds on the network and whether there is potential to increase use of the network for freight.

The Review's focus is not on commuter rail services within the major cities, but it will consider the interactions between proposed improvements to inter-urban rail and existing, or proposed, commuter rail services.

Today's rail network across the island of Ireland covers around 2,300 kilometers. This review will look at the network's current conditions and connectivity and identify ways that it can support wider policy objectives.

A Steering Group has been established to support this Review, chaired by the Department of Transport and composed of Department of Transport and Department for Infrastructure representatives, the Rail Operators and other key stakeholders.

The Review aims to use a data-driven, evidence-based approach to transparently show trade-offs between different objectives and identify viable options for the future of rail across the island of Ireland. The Review will be delivered over three phases:

- **Phase 1:** Review of the current context and role of rail through policy review, data analysis, environmental considerations, development of rail case studies, and consultation to gauge stakeholder and public priorities
- **Phase 2:** Identification of different service and connectivity concepts to address issues and opportunities for rail, applying the insights from Phase 1 to inform the selection of potential options
- **Phase 3:** Final appraisal of the developed concepts

A key element of the Review will be gaining insights from all stakeholders, which will add significant value to the Review. The purpose of this Consultation Paper is to provide information about how we are going about this Review, its purpose, and give everyone an opportunity to provide information that will inform the consideration of options.

To facilitate this, we ask the public to share their view on the future of rail, framed by the proposed high-level goals and objectives set out in this paper. Alongside this, we will invite key rail stakeholders on the island of Ireland, to share informed insights that could aid the Review.

Further information on how you can contribute to the Review is outlined at the end of this Consultation Paper.

¹ https://www.uic.org/com/enews/nr/596-high-speed/article/the-definition-of-high-speed-rail?page=thickbox_enews

The policy opportunity

Rail is recognised on this island as an important asset to enable a better quality of life and more sustainable travel

The Government of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive both have ambitions to improve the transport system, recognising the important role that it plays in quality of life, economic activity, and the environment.

These key policy opportunities are relevant when planning for the future of the rail network.

Policy Opportunities

Decarbonisation

Several policies and strategies aim to address decarbonisation in the transport sector, including through developing alternative fuelled transport and reducing travel by car. Rail is seen as a key enabler with a move towards electric or hybrid trains, as well as through shifting passenger travel from private motor vehicles to rail, as this will reduce the carbon emissions associated with the use of diesel and petrol.

Opportunity for rail to contribute towards:

Climate action, clean energy, air quality.

Network Connectivity

Policies and plans identify the importance of investment in north-south connectivity, as well as enhancing links between major cities; including consideration of the potential for high/higher speed rail.

Opportunity for rail to contribute towards:

Supporting transport needs, compact growth, quality of life.

Regional Accessibility

Regional accessibility is a key element of many policies at the national and regional level, including a focus on improved connectivity to and from the North-West. Improving regional access means better economic and social connections for people who do not live in the seven major cities, increasing access to opportunity, and supporting balanced regional development.

Opportunity for rail to contribute towards:

Regional and rural development, inter-regional connectivity, quality of life.

Sustainable Mobility

Policies at every level of Government support sustainable mobility aims, with a focus on providing alternative travel options to reduce private motor vehicle use, integration of public transport services - with each other and with active travel networks, and managing travel demand, including through integrating transport and land use planning through strategies like compact growth.

Opportunity for rail to contribute towards:

Quality of life, low-carbon society, compact growth, integration, alternative travel options, managing travel demand.

Strong Economies

Better connecting major cities, ports and airports can facilitate new economic opportunities. At a regional level, the three regional assemblies in Ireland acknowledge the economic potential of rail corridors; for efficient freight movements, connecting workforces, and supporting tourism. In Northern Ireland rail is critical to supporting the growth of the economy and potential new industrial opportunities.

Opportunity for rail to contribute towards:

Economic growth, efficient movement of people and freight, balance regional and urban growth, connecting people to jobs, international connectivity, economic competitiveness.

Economic and Financial Feasibility

With significant plans for investment in transport infrastructure, delivering greater value for money is key. Ireland's Public Spending Code requires that for a project to proceed it must be the 'best means to a particular policy goal,' while Northern Ireland's Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation aims to assess what is best for the people of Northern Ireland and to deliver maximum benefit.

Opportunity for rail to contribute towards: Efficiency, meeting demand, optimising benefit, accountability.

Goals and Objectives

To guide the development of the Review, six goals, with supporting objectives, have been drafted and are to be confirmed by completion of the first phase of the review.

These address relevant policy objectives in both jurisdictions and will be used to help understand which options best support those policy objectives. Potential options will be reviewed against these goals.

Goal	Objectives
Goal 1: Contribute to Decarbonisation	To reduce the carbon emissions associated with rail's construction, operation, and maintenance.
	To reduce the carbon emissions from motor vehicle travel.
Goal 2: Improve All Island Connectivity Between Major Cities	To provide an attractive public transport choice for travel between the seven major cities of Belfast, Cork, Derry/ Londonderry, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Waterford
Goal 3: Enhance Regional And Rural Accessibility	To give people in rural and regional areas better access to economic opportunities, health, education, and civic services.
	To improve inter-regional accessibility.
Goal 4: Encourage Sustainable Mobility	To help manage demand through compact growth and better integration of public transport with land use.
	To enhance the integration of rail with other transport modes.
	To reduce reliance on private passenger vehicles.
Goal 5: Foster Economic Activity	To contribute to balanced economic growth between urban and regional areas.
	To support the efficient movement of goods to and from economic centres and international gateways.
	To support the efficient movement of people between economic centres, and to and from economic centres and international gateways.
Goal 6: Achieve Economic And Financial Feasibility	To plan investment in rail that is financially feasible.
	To access potential funding.
	To ensure the benefit cost ratio of investment in the railway network is considered alongside meeting objectives.

Ongoing projects for the rail system

Improvements to the rail network and services are already in planning, some of these are shown in the below table.

Title	Purpose	Location	Status
Additional Rail Fleet	41 InterCity Railcars are under construction and scheduled for service entry by 2023.	Greater Dublin Area (largely)	In construction
Belfast Transport Hub	The new Belfast Transport hub will be the main, transport gateway to Belfast, creating a sense of arrival in a modern, progressive city, with rail, bus and coach connections to all parts of Northern Ireland and beyond, scheduled for completion by 2025.	Belfast	Enabling Works
Cork Commuter Rail Programme	A series of projects to develop and expand rail infrastructure and services in the Cork Metropolitan Area. Phase 1 of the Programme has been included in Ireland's National Recovery & Resilience Plan for delivery by 2026.	Cork Metropolitan Area	Strategic Assessment
DART+	A series of projects to develop and expand the DART network in the Greater Dublin Area, with approval of the Preliminary Business Case expected by end 2021.	Greater Dublin Area	Preliminary Business Case
Dublin-Cork Line Speed Improvements	A programme of works over the coming years to improve line speeds on the Dublin – Cork line.	Multiple	In construction
Enterprise Rolling Stock Replacement	Replacement of the Enterprise fleet to provide 9 new inter-city train set for hourly service frequency on the Belfast-Dublin corridor by 2027. Rolling stock to be future proofed for electrification.	Belfast - Dublin	Pre-Planning
Lisburn Area Renewals	Renewal of existing Track and Signalling within the Lisburn Station Limits and enhanced capacity by 2024.	Lisburn	Pre-Construction
National Train Control Centre	The existing Iarnród Éireann central train control centre is due for replacement due to capacity constraints with the IT systems nearing life expiration, with the replacement system expected to be fully operational by 2026.	Dublin, with network wide benefits	In construction
New Trains 3 Programme	Provision of 21 additional carriages to integrate with existing class 4000 during 2022.	NIR Network Wide	Construction
Park and Ride Programme	Provision of additional Park and Ride spaces throughout the network at existing stations over the period 2023 to 2025.	Ballymena, Bellarena, Moira, Mossley West, Trooperslane	Planning
Station Development Programme	Enhance facilities at existing Rail Stations on the network over the period 2023 to 2025.	Yorkgate, Lurgan, Ballymena, Posnett St.	Planning

The rail network and how we use it

Rail network coverage and population density:

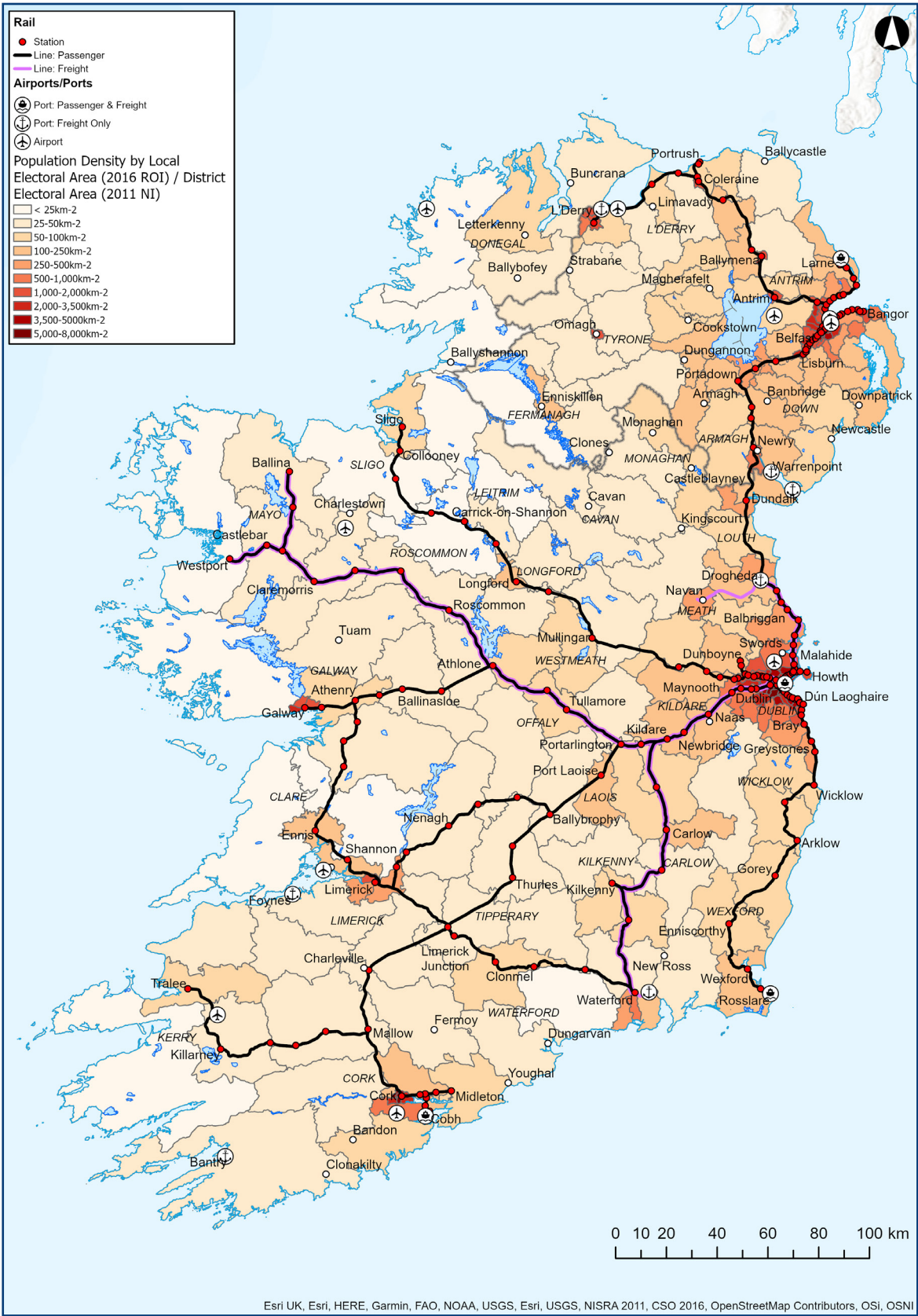


Figure 1. Rail network coverage and population density

The densely populated eastern side of the island of Ireland has the most rail network coverage

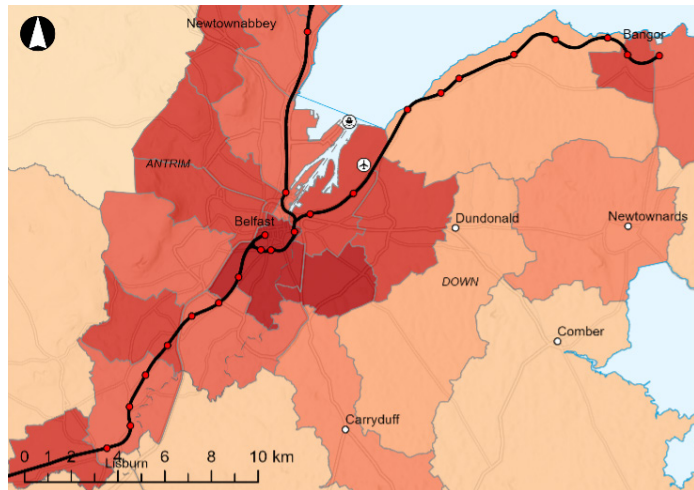


Figure 2. Rail network coverage and population density - Belfast

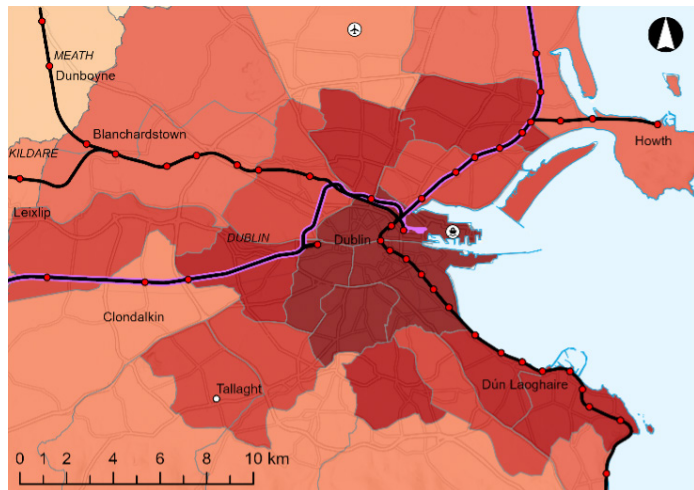


Figure 3. Rail network coverage and population density - Dublin

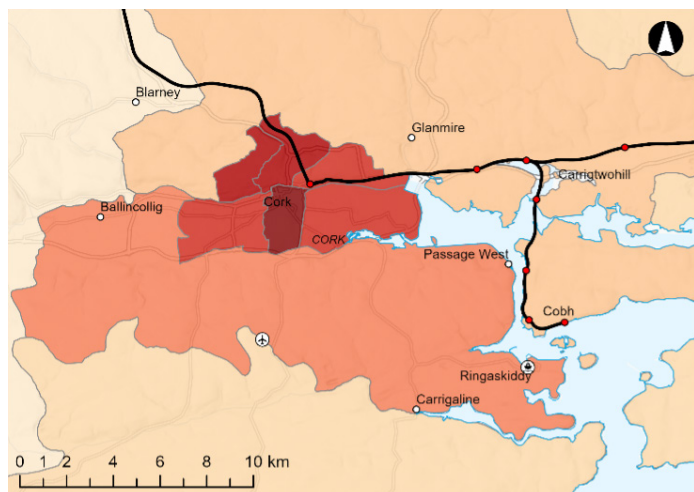


Figure 4. Rail network coverage and population density - Cork

The population density of the island of Ireland is highest along the east coast, particularly around the two largest cities of Dublin and Belfast, and the corridor between them.

Relatively high population densities are found in Leinster and eastern Ulster, as well as in the vicinity of the other major cities of Cork, Derry/Londonderry, Galway, Limerick, and Waterford. The areas of lowest population density are found along the western seaboard outside the main cities and regional centres.

There are approximately twenty rail lines for passenger travel on the island of Ireland. These mainly support intercity train services and, between them, stop at 199 stations across the network.

The island of Ireland's rail network is centred on Dublin and, to a lesser extent, Belfast. The network is most extensive in the south and the east of the island. At its peak in the early twentieth century, almost every town in Ireland was served by rail. While the network contracted in the mid-twentieth century some routes have reopened in recent decades, including lines from Cork to Midleton, Ennis to Athenry, and Whiteabbey to Antrim.

Enhancements to the existing track and stations have also occurred in recent years, such as four-tracking between Inchicore and Hazelhatch and the introduction of hourly services between Derry/Londonderry and Belfast.

Most rail corridors radiate from the two cities or branch off the main routes to them. The route from Waterford to Athenry via Limerick is the only key cross-country link that does not connect directly to Dublin or Belfast.

Five counties in Ulster on either side of the border (Donegal, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Monaghan, and Cavan) have no connection to the rail network. The network's focus on Dublin and Belfast necessitates lengthy and circuitous routes for rail travel within and across many of the regions.

Each of the seven major cities serves as a terminus for rail services. Dublin, Belfast, and Cork each have a suburban rail network, while the other major cities only have one station each. The rail networks for the three cities with suburban services are shown in more detail on the left.

There are three rail freight services on the network, including the recently opened Ballina to Waterford Port. These services connect Ballina, Westport, and Navan to the ports of Waterford (Belview) and Dublin. The freight lines from Mayo share track with passenger services along the corridor from Mayo to Enniskillen, along with the corridor from Kildare to

Waterford for services to Belview. Freight services to Navan share track with passenger services between Dublin and Drogheda before continuing to Navan on a line which is no longer served by passenger trains. There are no rail freight operations in Northern Ireland.

As an island, ports and airports are the main international gateways. Four of the island's ports are connected to the rail network (Larne and Rosslare for passengers and Belview and Dublin for freight).

No airport on the island currently has a rail connection, but all three airports in Northern Ireland are located adjacent to a rail line. The Lisburn – Antrim line next to Belfast International Airport is disused, there is no station at City of Derry Airport, and for Belfast City Airport the closest station is over a one kilometre (0.6 miles) walk away on the other side of a dual carriageway. Kerry Airport is likewise located around one kilometre from the nearest station.

The proposed MetroLink in Dublin will provide a metro connection to Dublin Airport. While this will not be a direct connection to the national rail network, it will allow for interchange with the mainline rail network at Glasnevin.

Rail's passenger mode share: **Travel to work**

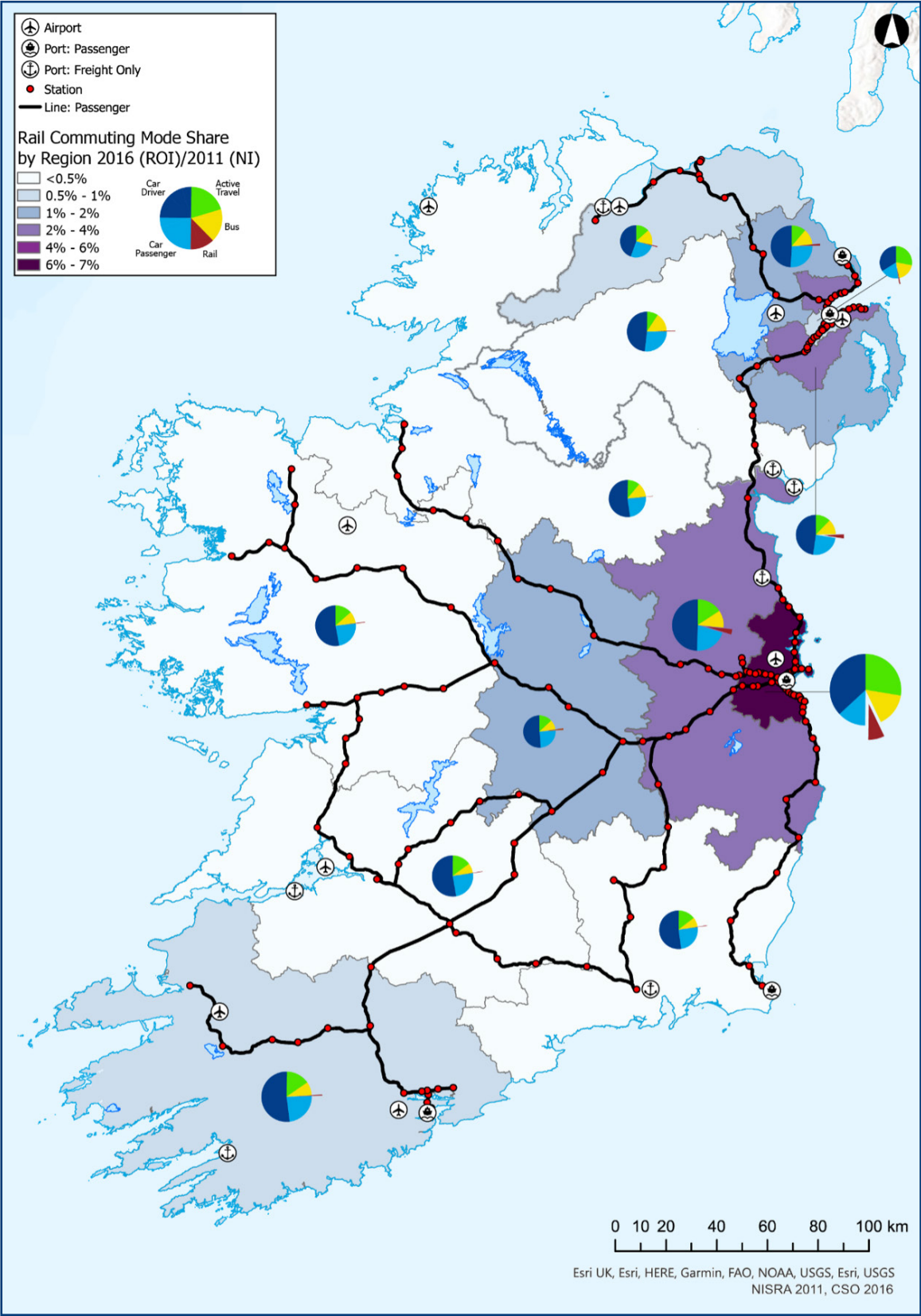


Figure 5. Passenger travel mode share to work

A small percentage of people travel by rail for commuting, particularly outside Dublin and Belfast

The proportion of people travelling to work, school, or university by rail varies across Ireland. In Dublin, where rail has its largest share of commuting trips, overall share of travel by rail is 7%. The regions around Belfast and Dublin are the only others where rail's commuting mode share exceeds 2%.

In much of the west, northwest, and southeast, rail has a negligible mode share. This reflects the limited coverage and number of services on much of the rail network, as well as the impact of car-centric low density development patterns in recent decades. Those in more rural regions who travel by train are more likely to do so for occasional long-distance business and leisure trips, rather than regular commuting.

A survey of the Belfast-Dublin Enterprise customers in 2019 found that just over half of people were regular customers, with 31% of people travelling at least once a week on the service, and 24% travelling at least once a month.

The car, including drivers and passengers, is the dominant mode for commuting in all regions, accounting for half of commutes even in Dublin and exceeding three-quarters of all commuting trips in several regions.

Buses have a higher mode share than rail but do not exceed the 10%-20% range in any region. The active modes of walking and cycling have their highest share in Belfast and Dublin, accounting for more than a quarter of commuting trips in each.

The pie charts on these maps show the proportion of trips to work for residents in each region taken by each mode of transport: walking/cycling, bus, rail, car passenger, and car driver. The size of each pie charts is proportionate to the number of people commuting in each region.

Journey purpose of rail trips

Visiting friends and family and other leisure activities account for almost half of all rail journeys across the Iarnród Éireann Intercity network. A survey of 3,700 InterCity passengers in 2020 found that only 12% of passengers were travelling for commuting to work, while 14% were travelling to third level education institutions, as shown in Figure 6.

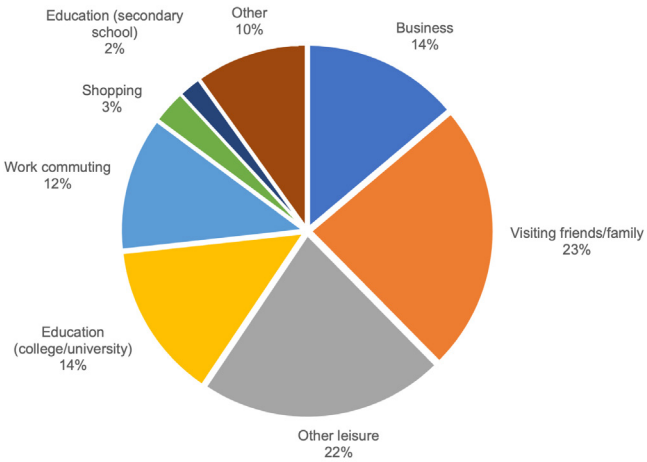


Figure 6. Journey purpose for InterCity rail journeys, Iarnród Éireann 2020

Passenger trends: Passengers at rail stations



Figure 7. Passenger numbers per rail station

Large stations that support several rail lines have the most passengers

According to annual statistics from Translink and annual figures extrapolated from the NTA National Rail Census, Connolly Station in Dublin is the busiest station on the island with around 10.4 million passenger boardings and alightings per annum on average between 2017 and 2019. This corresponds to approximately 200,000 passengers per week.

Pearse, Heuston, and Tara Street in Dublin, along with Great Victoria Street in Belfast, also have high passenger numbers with around 8.5 million, 6.3 million, 5.5 million and 5.2 million passengers per year, respectively.

Of the other major cities, Cork Kent station has the highest annual passenger numbers with around 2.3 million, followed by Galway Ceannt station with around 1.0 million, Limerick Colbert station with around 750,000, Derry/Londonderry with around 500,000, and Waterford Plunkett station with around 275,000.

Outside of the seven major cities, the stations with the highest annual passenger numbers are Bangor with 1.6 million, Balbriggan with 1.3 million, Limerick Junction with 1.1 million (although these are almost all transferring passengers), and Sallins and Naas Station with around 1.0 million.

Of the three cities with urban rail networks, the network in Dublin (including stations to Drogheda, Maynooth, M3 Parkway, Newbridge, and Greystones) has 79.2 million passenger boardings and alightings per year. The network in Belfast (including stations to Whitehead, Mossley West, Lisburn, and Bangor) has 18.9 million, and the network in Cork (including stations to Mallow, Midleton, and Cobh) has 4.4 million.

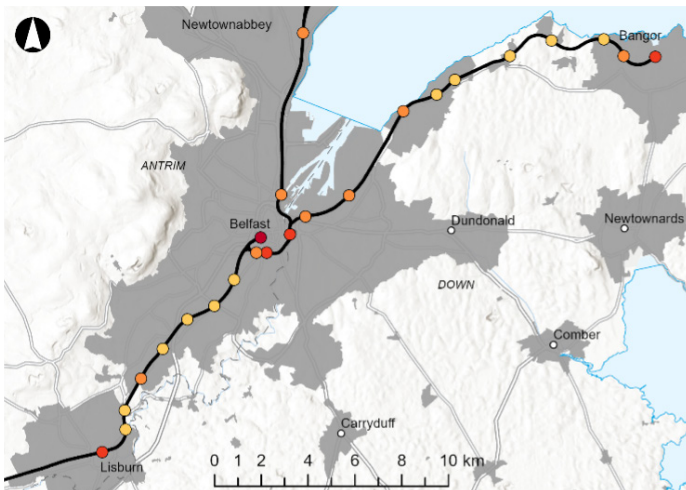


Figure 8. Passenger numbers per rail station - Belfast

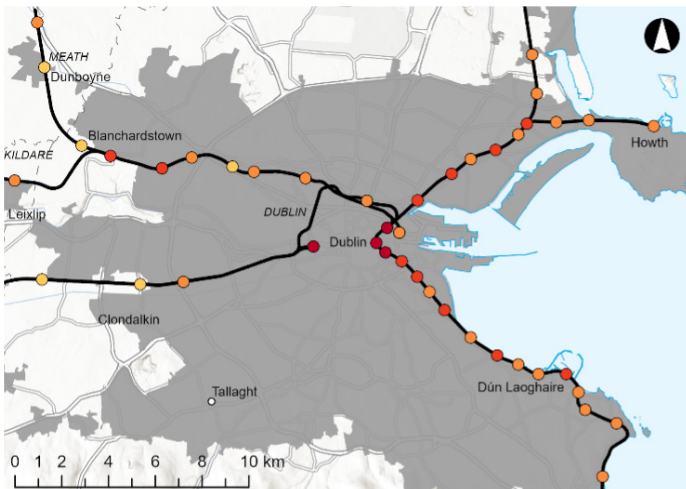


Figure 9. Passenger numbers per rail station - Dublin

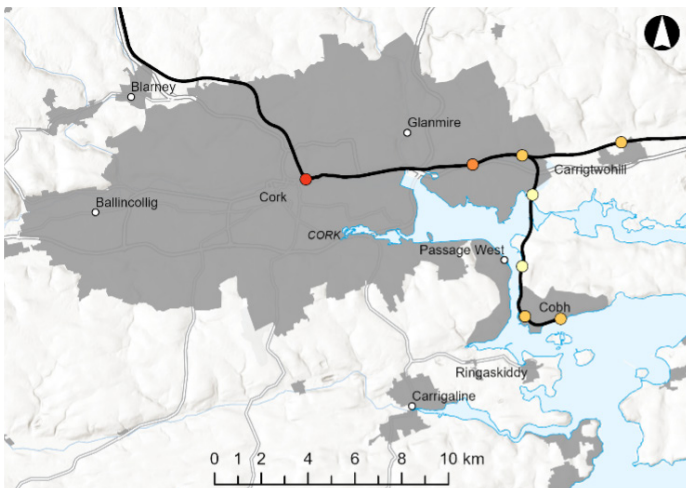


Figure 10. Passenger numbers per rail station - Cork

Rail and bus travel trends

Around twice as many regional bus journeys are taken on the island of Ireland, compared to rail journeys

In 2019, 127 million regional bus journeys (excluding city services) were taken across the island of Ireland, compared with 65 million rail journeys.

The number of annual rail and regional bus passenger journeys follows a similar trend to economic performance in both Ireland and Northern Ireland. The demand for rail and regional bus services started to decline after the economic recession in 2008. Regional bus travel remained largely steady between 2010 and 2017, but recently grew 9% between 2017 and 2019. Across the island of Ireland, rail has experienced a growth in passenger numbers of 37% since 2011. Within each jurisdiction the growth in rail passenger journeys has been approximately 34% in Ireland and 45% in Northern Ireland.

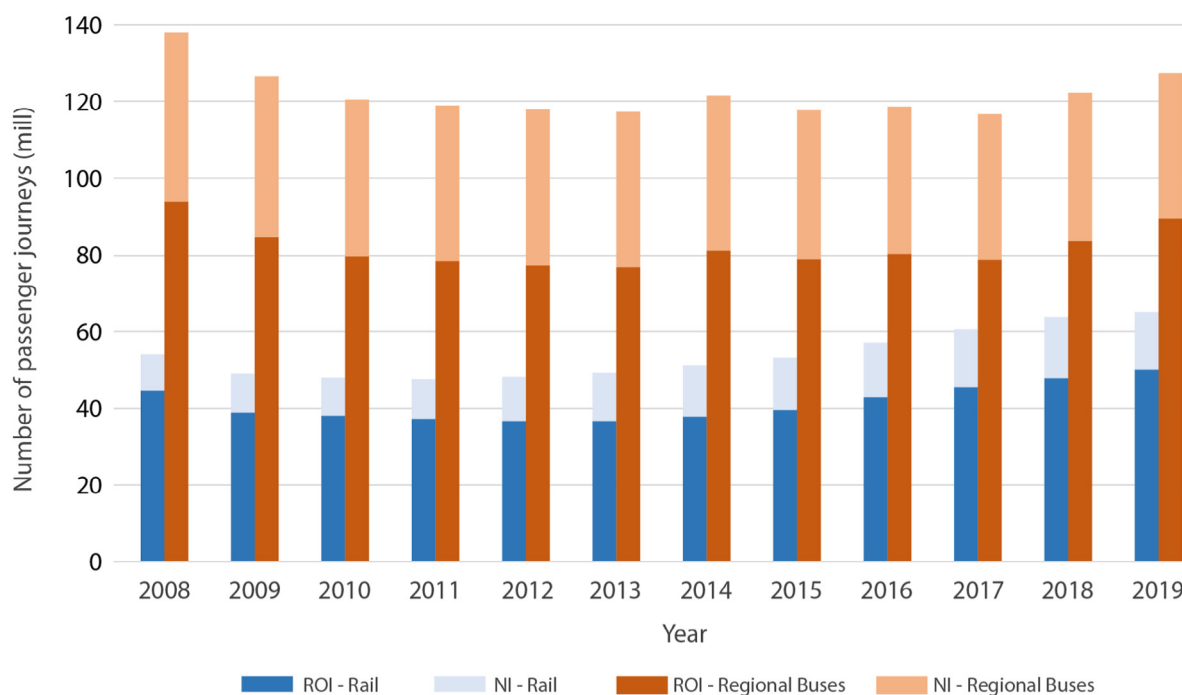


Figure 11. Annual rail and regional bus passenger journeys (mill.),
[Source: CSO, Department for Infrastructure, NISRA]

Car travel trends

The distance travelled by car has also increased slightly over the past 10 years

Analysis over the same period shows that the average distance travelled by car increased slightly across the island of Ireland, from 8,900km (5,500 miles) in 2008, to 9,200km (5,700 miles) in 2019. This fluctuated over the period, with Ireland experiencing a drop to 8,600km (5,400 miles) in 2012 followed by strong growth over the period 2013-2017, peaking at 10,000km (6,300 miles) in 2017. This then declined again to 9,400km (5,800 miles) by 2019.

The initial decline and growth to 2017 is explained by the impact of the economic recession and subsequent recovery, while the more recent decline is likely influenced by increased congestion in urban areas encouraging a change in travel patterns. The growth in public transport journeys indicates that a shift from driving to public transport is occurring.

Northern Ireland's average car distance travelled per person dropped to 7,300km (4,600 miles) in 2015, before climbing between 2017 and 2019 to 8,600km (5,300 miles). This growth was in line with several new road projects that opened in previous years including the A2 Shore Road, the A31 Magherafelt bypass, and the A8 Larne dual carriageway.

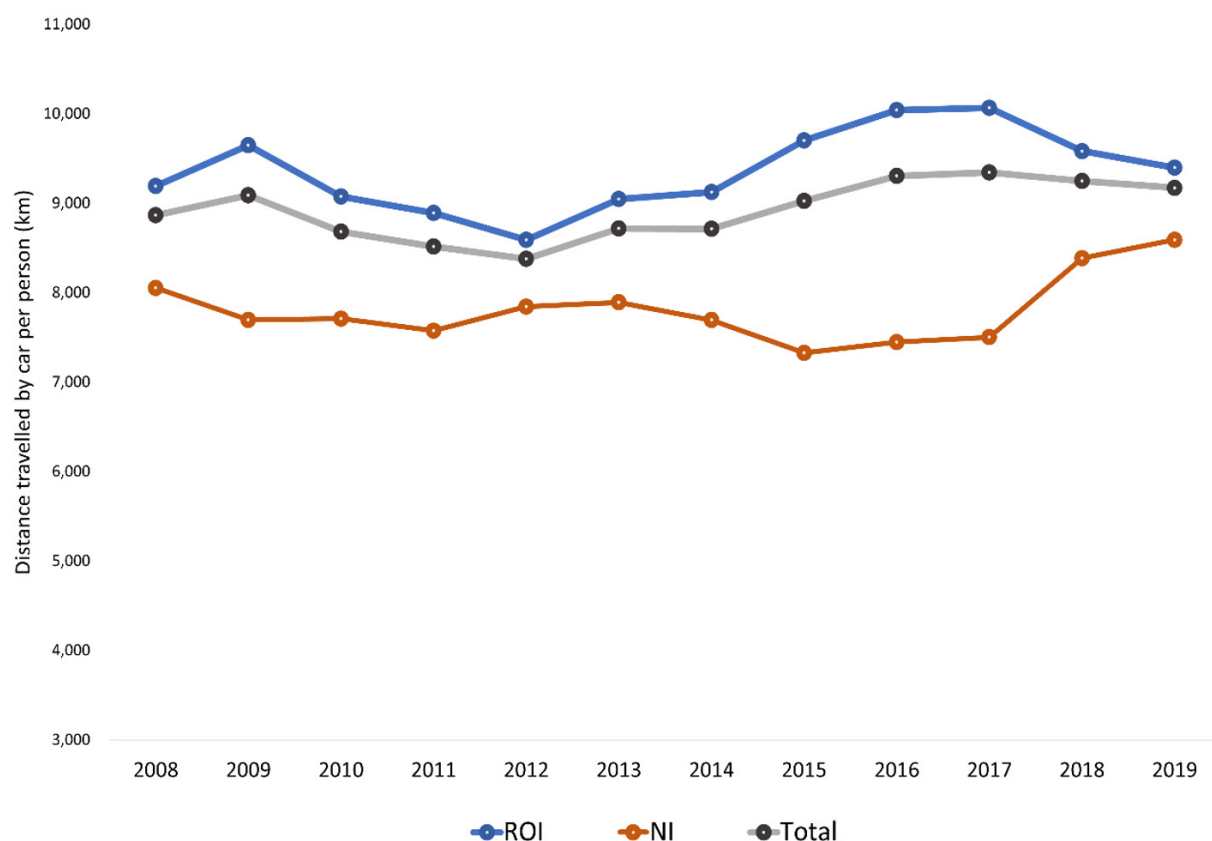


Figure 12. Average annual distance travelled by car per person (km)
[Source: CSO, Department for Infrastructure, NISRA]

Service frequency for each station

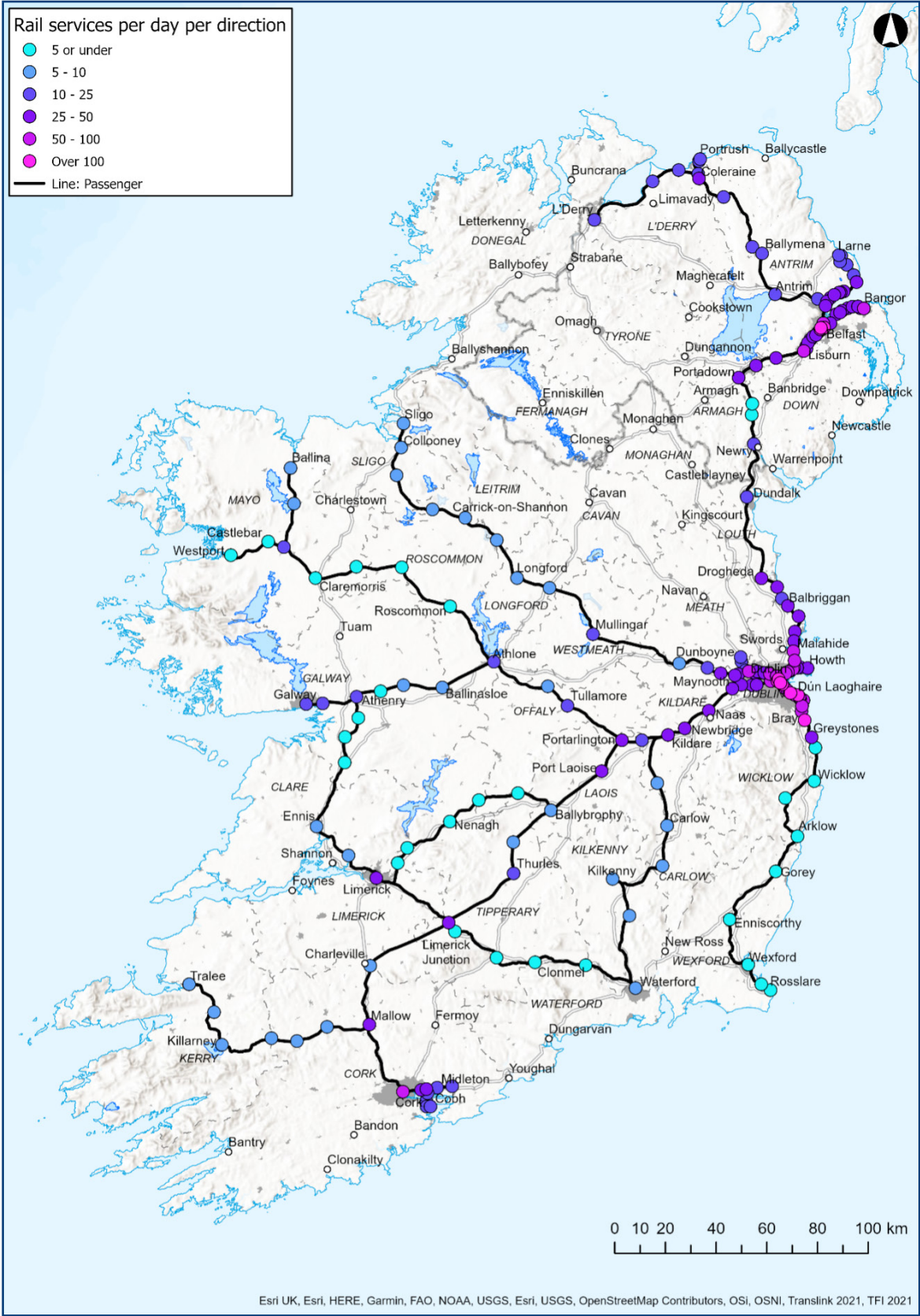


Figure 13. Service frequency per rail station

Some regional train stations have as few as two services per day in each direction

The number of rail services at each station varies significantly across the network. The station with the highest number of services is Dublin Connolly which has trains every three to four minutes in each direction across all lines at peak times. Services at Connolly include the DART, Intercity services to Belfast, Sligo, and Rosslare, and Commuter services along each of the four lines radiating from Dublin. The other Dublin city centre stations of Tara Street, Pearse, and Grand Canal Dock are the next busiest stations; likewise served by DART, Commuter, and some Intercity services.

The most frequently served stations outside of Dublin are Lanyon Place and Great Victoria Street in Belfast along with Cork Kent station. At the other end of the range, stations such as CloughJordan, Roscrea, Carrick-on-Suir, Tipperary and Clonmel only have two services scheduled in each direction per day.

The lines with the highest frequencies are generally those in the vicinity of Dublin, Belfast, and Cork, while the lowest frequencies are found on the Limerick Junction – Waterford, Limerick – Nenagh – Ballybrophy, Ennis – Athenry, Athlone – Westport, and Greystones – Rosslare routes.

The number of services provided on some rail lines is constrained due to the need for some services to share the same track. The Belfast-Dublin enterprise service shares the same track as the DART service to Malahide, limiting the number of intercity services that can be provided. The route from Dublin to Rosslare south of Greystones has notably lower frequencies than other routes to Dublin, reflecting the capacity constraints of its single-track line south of Bray and shared track with DART services in Dublin.

There is a strong correlation between service frequencies and passenger numbers at stations. While this generally reflects the distribution of population density, examples such as the Rosslare line, which serves a relatively densely populated corridor and is close to Dublin, suggest that low levels of service might dampen demand for rail. In locations with low frequencies, rail is generally a viable option only for occasional long-distance travel and plays little role in regular travel patterns. With the increase in hybrid working patterns, higher levels of occasional longer-distance commutes to urban centres presents an opportunity for rail.

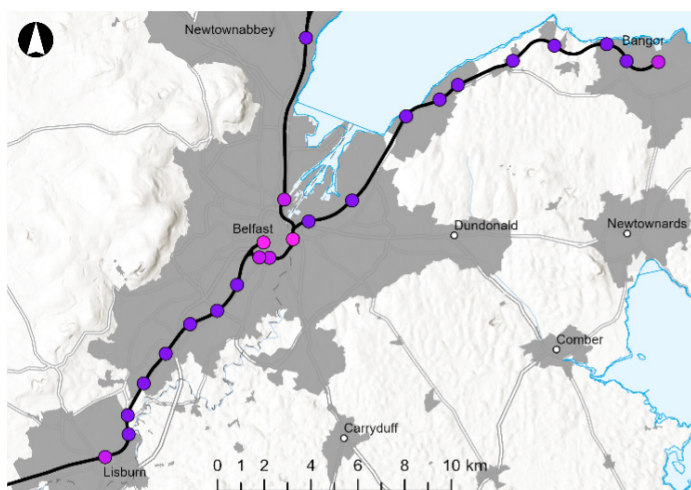


Figure 14. Service frequency per rail station - Belfast

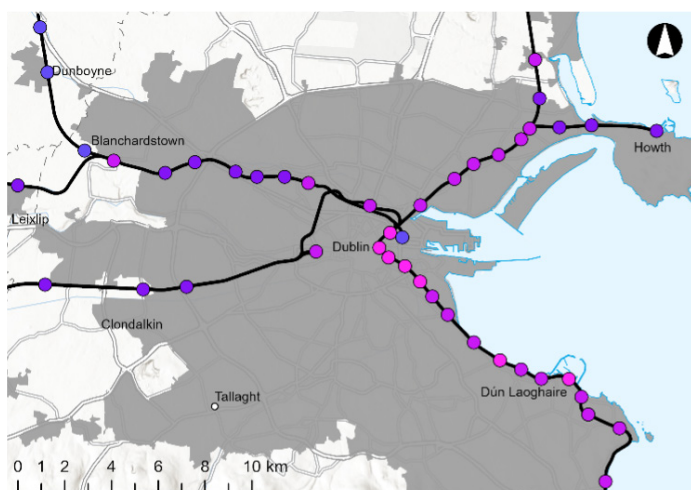


Figure 15. Service frequency per rail station - Dublin

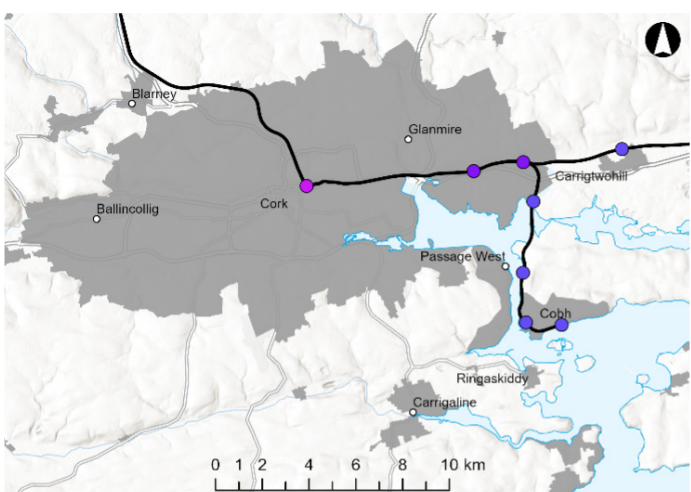


Figure 16. Service frequency per rail station - Cork



Accessibility

The rail network has a key role in opening opportunities to travel for those with mobility impairments. One key measurement of accessibility is whether passengers in wheelchairs can independently access all platforms at their origin and destination stations. Historically footbridges provided access to other platforms at many stations which presented challenges for those in wheelchairs, although in recent years lifts and ramps have been added to stations across the network. Maintenance of lifts has been an issue in recent years, with lifts at some locations being out of order for up to several weeks consecutively.

Across the island's rail network, 139 stations provide full wheelchair access to all platforms, 43 require passengers to contact the operator prior to travel, while 17 currently have at least one platform that is not accessible. A significant proportion of the stations without full independent access for wheelchair users are located in the Dublin, Belfast, and Cork suburban networks, with the majority of stations in Dublin requiring arrangements to be made prior to travel.

Figure 17. Platform accessibility

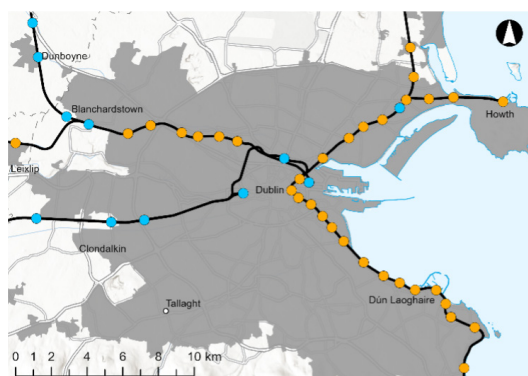


Figure 18. Platform accessibility - Dublin



Figure 19. Platform accessibility - Belfast

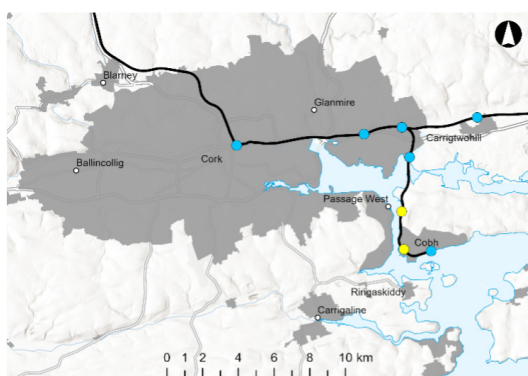


Figure 20. Platform accessibility - Cork

Travel times by different modes

The same journey can take different lengths of time, depending on the transport mode

Data sourced from Google Maps shows that travel between some towns and cities can take more than twice as long by rail, compared with travel by bus or car. This has been exacerbated by the major expansion of the motorway network in recent decades compared with more limited investment in the rail network.

The rail system on the island of Ireland is generally based around discrete services to the major urban centres. On these routes rail is generally competitive with other modes as it is unaffected by congestion in urban areas.

However, interchange between services can sometimes involve significant waiting times. As a result, for some journeys requiring interchange rail is less competitive than other modes in terms of journey times. This is particularly noticeable for locations that are within the same region, but connected by different radial rail routes to Dublin, although trips between major cities are also impacted.

An example of the former is Wexford to Waterford, which takes six hours by rail but under one hour by car. An example of the latter is the Cork to Belfast route which takes almost seven hours by train, and six hours by bus, but only four and a half hours by car. Rail is competitive with driving between Cork and Limerick despite the need for interchange as the two cities are not linked by motorway.

For towns such as Letterkenny and Omagh, which are not currently served by the rail network, using the rail network requires either driving or taking a bus to the nearest town or city with a train station. The lack of integration between rail and bus timetables can contribute to uncompetitive public transport journey times.

Table 1. Journey travel times between cities and towns, 09:00 weekday departure

Origin - Destination	Journey Times		
	Drive Time	Rail Time	Bus Time
Athlone - Galway	1hrs 01min	1hrs 01min	1hrs 18min
Dublin - Belfast	1hrs 56min	2hrs 15min	2hrs 42min
Coleraine - Bangor	1hrs 23min	2hrs 39min*	3hrs 08min*
Port Laoise - Dublin	1hrs 19min	0hrs 55min	2hrs 05min
Cork - Belfast	4hrs 18min	6hrs 44min*	5hrs 50min*
Cork - Limerick	1hrs 33min	1hrs 41min*	1hrs 45min
Wexford - Waterford	0hrs 50min	06hrs 01min*	0hrs 50min
Tralee - Cork	1hrs 46min	2hrs 40min*	2hrs 15min
Newry - Belfast	0hrs 47min	1hrs 49min*	1hrs 40min
Coleraine - Derry/Londonderry	0hrs 46min	0hrs 51min	1hrs 14min
Clonmel - Limerick	1hrs 25min	1hrs 47min*	1hrs 28min

**Indicates that interchange is required for journey*

Get involved



Thank you for taking the time to engage with this Consultation Paper.

We invite interested members of the public to share their thoughts via an online public consultation form.

The public consultation will launch on **Monday 29 November 2021** and will remain open for submissions until **Friday 21 January 2022**.

Interested parties can find all the relevant information at the consultation website: www.strategicrailreview.com and will be invited to share insights on several areas framed by the information in this paper.

In addition to a public consultation, we will be engaging directly with specific stakeholders in a targeted consultation, identified as those having a significant interest in the future of rail on the island of Ireland. This consultation will take place in the duration that the public consultation is open.

The output of these consultations will feed directly into the Review and support the development of high-level scenarios for the future of the rail network.





Subject:	DfC Consultation on Draft Housing Supply Strategy
Date:	9 th February 2022
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Deirdre Kelly, Programme Manager Paula Conway, Development Surveyor

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to consider the Council's response to the public consultation by the Department for Communities (DfC) in relation to the Draft Housing Supply Strategy.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that DfC has published a consultation on the Draft Housing Supply Strategy (Appendix 1), with a closing date of 9th February 2022 for responses. Approve the appended (Appendix 2) draft response to the consultation for submission to DfC, noting that this has drawn upon the extensive Call for Evidence Council submission from July 2021 (as per Council ratification in September 2021), as well as comments from Members at the CG&R Committee Housing Led Regeneration Workshop on 26th January 2022. Given the deadline for submission the response will be submitted as draft pending Council ratification in March 2022.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Draft Housing Supply Strategy</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Communities Minister announced in her statement to the Assembly on 3rd November 2020 that officials were to commence work on the development of a fundamental Housing Supply Strategy (HSS), as a key part of the housing programme to help meet Programme for Government commitments to reduce housing stress and increase housing supply.</p>
3.2	<p>In May 2021, the Minister launched a public Call for Evidence (CfE) to inform this new Housing Supply Strategy. Council submitted an extensive response to the Call for Evidence in July 2021. This response was brought via Party Group Leaders and CG&R Committee in August 2021 and the final response ratified by Council in September 2021.</p>
3.3	<p>Members will recall that the Department outlined the development of HSS would be delivered in six phases as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase 1 - Pre-development work (completed) Phase 2 - Call for Evidence and Research Review (completed) Phase 3 - Engagement (completed) Phase 4 - Data synthesis (completed) Phase 5 - Triangulation of Evidence/Policy Options (completed) Phase 6 - Consultation on Draft Housing Supply Strategy
3.4	<p>This current and final phase, phase 6 Consultation on Draft Housing Supply Strategy, emphasises the central role of people, places, and communities in considering and delivering on housing needs and demands. The Department have advised that collaborative working across central and local government and with the private and voluntary and community sectors, as well as the lived experiences of a range of users, have been used to help shape solutions to help ensure the Strategy will make a difference</p>

	<p>to the challenges facing the housing supply system. Responses to the questions within this consultation will be analysed, along with any other sources of evidence and information to help finalise the Housing Supply Strategy</p>
3.5	<p>The department published the consultation on the Draft HSS on 8th December 2021 with a closing date of 9th February 2022. The Department has highlighted that it welcomes and encourages responses from all interested parties, and they are keen to hear from a wide range of bodies, groups, and individuals from within the housing and related sectors as well as more generally across society.</p>
3.6	<p>The publication of this draft Strategy has been supported by a series of focused engagement events held throughout the duration of the consultation period, including public workshop sessions. This included a session held virtually on Friday 14th January 2022 attended by a number of Council Officers, as well as by representatives from other local Councils and community planners. Officers highlighted various issues which have also been reflected in the current draft response as appended. It is intended that the final Strategy will be published in March 2022.</p>
3.7	<p>The draft Housing Supply Strategy, informed by the Call for Evidence exercise in 2021 and other evidence, sets out a pathway and framework for action until 2037. DfC has indicated that this is the first step in a 15-year journey that will set a direction of travel to transform supply while recognising that the range of housing supply “whole system challenges” identified require “whole system solutions”. This approach recognises that housing is an integrated system, with what impacts on one sector often having a ripple effect across the whole housing market. The key components of the Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Context - where we are now in terms of housing supply, where we need to be and how we are going to get there. This covers the Whole System Approach, the Strategy vision and objectives and potential indicators that will be used to measure our progress. • Creating Affordable Options - how we will supply the right number and type of affordable homes in the right places to meet our housing needs and demands. This section addresses key issues including how we address our infrastructure constraints, optimise funding opportunities and create the right policy and legislative framework to support housing supply. • Prevention and Intervention - how we can prevent homelessness and reduce housing stress, as well as providing the right housing solutions and support for those most in need. This section focuses on providing more diverse housing types

	<p>and alternative models of housing to meet different housing needs and recognising the importance of a holistic approach to housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and Safety - how we will improve the quality, efficiency, and design of homes, to ensure a high standard for everyone regardless of the type of home. Consideration is given to diverse range of areas, including building regulation, work to improve the private rented sector and protect our social housing. • Better Places - how we will build and maintain thriving and inclusive communities and places with community wealth building at the heart, which prioritises a people-centred approach to rebuilding our local areas into places that support the wellbeing of those who live there. The section considers options around mixed tenure, place-shaping, and the role of Local Development Plans in achieving this. • Decarbonisation – sets out how the construction of new housing and the retrofitting of existing homes will play a key role in meeting our carbon reduction targets. Also set out is how we will support people in delivering these ambitions and ensure a just transition for everyone. • Delivering the Strategy – how we will deliver the Strategy over its lifetime, including a focus on doing things differently and the role of action plans in achieving our objectives. <p>The Consultation consists of 14 questions under the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Framework • Measurement • Delivery and Oversight • Action Planning • Citizen Engagement • Equality • Rural • General
3.8	
3.9	<p>Council's draft response highlights a number of key considerations relevant in developing and delivering the Housing Supply Strategy to ensure the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda are realised in relation to Housing Supply, to meet the demands of attracting 66,000 additional residents to the city. The draft response is attached at Appendix 2 and it worth highlighting a number of key points made in the response:</p>

- There are currently a **number of policy, financial and structural challenges to delivery of placemaking housing regeneration schemes via public /private partnerships** and this is significantly impacting on the ability to delivery of regenerative housing at scale. Council would propose that a Task Group be set up to undertake a sharp, short, and focused review of these challenges and the mechanisms to overcome. This is critical to understand and deliver on optimal ways of working and delivery vehicles that involve the public sector working with the private sector and funders to bring forward appropriate housing development opportunities in a more agile way thus ensuring the required processes, delivery vehicles, funding and supporting infrastructure are aligned to deliver agreed outcomes to provide for appropriate housing development at scale whilst ensuring proper integrated placemaking.
- **Homeless Demographic** – According to NIHE figures at the end March 2021 at least 11,781 Belfast households were on the waiting list for a social home. At least 8,689 of them were living in housing stress, and of this group, at least 6,851, equivalent to 4.8% of Belfast households, were recognised as Full Duty Applicant homeless. It is therefore important to highlight that Housing supply is not just about mixed tenure (social, affordable, private) but the homeless demographic has an increasing level of unmet need also. There is a pressing need to articulate how this will be reflected within the Housing Supply Strategy.
- **Infrastructure** - There is a need to ensure that the resourcing deficit with required wastewater infrastructure including exploration of the potential for alternative funding models, is urgently addressed to ensure this does not prohibit housing development. The HSS should demonstrate that there is a clear route map to show how the housing growth ambitions can be facilitated in terms of all the requisite infrastructure requirements and particularly in relation to the wastewater infrastructure.
- **Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission: ‘Reset for Growth’ Report** – highlighted a number of key points which are relevant to the development and delivery of the Housing Supply Strategy and of particular note are the strong recommendations around the need for structural models to support public-private collaboration and Housing Investment Funds, with relevant extracts as below:
 - *Renewed Future City – Housing:* There are a number of levers required to action the commitments of the Belfast Agenda at the pace and scale necessary to make an impact, which are not currently in place. A number of

key gaps have been identified, principally in terms of the structural models required to support public-private collaboration and access to finance to bring forward developments. The Commission propose the establishment of a number of new institutions, namely Strategic Land Partnerships and Housing Investment Funds. The Commission feel that the scale of the task will require further intervention, particularly in stimulating private sector development, including affordable housing provision. For this reason, they suggest that the regional government and the Treasury should consider developing a Housing Investment Fund. This model has been successful in stimulating new housing construction at scale across a range of classes in many UK cities.

- **Key Proposition:** Create sustainable, vibrant communities in the city centre, delivering 11,500 new homes by 2035. The Commission's proposals to accelerate delivery include Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and Department for Communities (DfC) establishing a delivery vehicle to utilise public sector land and undertake land assembly to facilitate new low carbon housing at scale across the city centre. (Note – as Members are aware a Housing Regeneration Group has now been set up under the Community Planning Partnership: City Development Board with BCC, NIHE, LPS and DfC, with a key focus of the group in identifying and utilising public sector lands). Vehicle should also develop housing mix, amenities, and neighbourhood development plan for city core. Target: 11,500 new homes in 10 years. Create new financial instruments including Housing Investment Funds to address market challenges related to risk and yield.

- **Funding** – Council advocate for consideration of how FTC and the Northern Ireland Investment Fund, Levelling Up Funds or other funding can be best utilised or refocused to support housing led regeneration priorities and unlock development. Of critical importance, particularly where there are viability issues and to underpin proper placemaking, there is a need for funding to facilitate enabling infrastructure for housing development. Specific funding for this should be prioritised in order to bring forward housing led regeneration schemes at scale.
- **Collaboration** – There is a need to ensure commitment to a collaborative public - private sector approach to unlocking key challenges with identified major city housing led regeneration schemes, recognising that these will not only contribute to housing supply but can act as a catalyst for inclusive economic growth. Council

would advocate for optimal stakeholder/delivery vehicles for progression. This includes the need for the Department to continue collaboratively working with the Council, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Housing Associations, and the private sector to bring forward mixed tenure residential development across the city, and particular exemplar schemes within the city centre, including the strategic use of public sector lands and addressing current policies which inhibit Housing Associations to maximise housing led regeneration delivery.

- **Planning Policy** –the submission does question the credibility of the HGIs and the proposed regional housing target. Although the Strategy refers to the Review of the Planning Act and reform in planning, which are undoubtedly important to housing delivery, the evidence doesn't seem to support this overly simplistic assertion given the degree of extant permissions that exist as illustrated in the housing monitor annually.
- **Current Policy and Legislation** – in relation to ensuring the appropriate policy frameworks are in place to accelerate housing supply, it is understood that there are issues with the current Housing Association Guidelines, which strongly need addressed. Our current understanding would suggest that the following issues need to be addressed:
 - **Land:** These require a housing association to have acquired land ownership prior to award/payment of grant assistance (land purchase, construction). However, where the land is currently in public ownership then there is scope, utilising the Development Brief process, for reflecting this public ownership of land as distinct from privately owned thereby potentially negating the need for the housing association to initially acquire a site. This ties directly into when a housing association would be expected to then pay to acquire publicly owned land and to explore potential for deferred terminal payment or equity ground rent payment approaches which will also assist with de-risking development.
 - Delivery of private sector tenure as part of a mixed tenure development is also currently impeded by **Article 15** of the Housing Order with limitation on delivery of private housing by housing associations to the existing co-ownership model only (i.e., no private sales or rentals). With the desire for city centre development to be delivered across all three housing tenures there is an urgent need to address this policy issue if this objective is to be advanced.
 - **Barriers:** BCC have commented through the Call for Evidence response that the 3 main barriers to delivery of the Housing Supply are Funding, Delivery Vehicles & Land. Delivery of joined up policies and having supported and properly joined

3.10	<p>up infrastructure, with all 3 having to be overcome to support the development and growth ambitions of the Belfast Agenda, will be required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current lack of a policy on affordable housing, aligned to the revised definition of affordable housing, represents a risk to housing associations developing a business case in absence of affordable housing products. ○ Whilst not policy per se – lack of a city centre waiting list impacts on clarity for housing associations on latent demand. ○ Rent Levels – welcome clarity on whether the housing supply strategy will cover rent levels and controls, however mindful that this may be picked up in other legislation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Bolder Vision – which has ‘<i>Promote City Centre Living</i>’ as one of its 4 key moves aimed at encouraging city centre living by ensuring the enabling infrastructure is in place to facilitate city centre living with place making at its heart. It highlights the importance of providing greater quality, choice and affordability of accommodation and of critical importance is establishing a city-wide network of people friendly routes and city parks to create and underpin a liveable city centre. Council believes that the delivery of A Bolder Vision priorities via the joint BCC/DfI/DfC approach will be critical to the successful delivery of city centre living. From a Belfast perspective therefore, Council would highlight that the future delivery of A Bolder Vision is intrinsically linked to the HSS and should be embedded within Central Government /Executive priorities. ● High Street Task Force – city centre living is critical to the reimagining and future sustainability of the high street / city centre and should be central to the High Street Task Force recommendations and embedded within Executive funding priorities. Increased City Centre Living is also a key area within the Council’s Future City Centre Programme which is charting the way forward for the diversification and sustainability of city centre uses. The Future City Programme is a multi-faceted programme that seeks to bring together a number of strategic initiatives and projects within one overall programme approach to address the issues impacting upon the city centre. It includes projects and interventions across various pillars of work centred on regeneration and connectivity, increased city centre living, investment, inclusive economic and cultural growth. <p>Responses have been coordinated from across Council and draw on the Call for Evidence submission from July 2021, which was ratified by Council in September 2021, as well as</p>
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	comments from Members following the Housing Led Regeneration Workshop on 26 January 2022.
3.11	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> There are no finance or resource implications associated with this report.
3.12	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	Appendix One: Housing Supply Strategy 2022 – 2037 Appendix Two: Draft Response to Housing Supply Strategy 2022 - 2037

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Housing Supply Strategy

2022 - 2037

December 2021

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Ministerial Foreword

We all want a housing system which provides quality homes in places where people want to live.

Access to a safe and secure home is a basic human right – essential to our health and well-being; and also contributing to tackling the climate crisis. But, as evidenced by the 44,988 households on the Social Housing Waiting list, 31,267 of which are in housing stress, too many of our citizens are being denied this basic right. Moreover, these numbers continue to rise. Behind all data are people, individuals and families who have consistently told us that the current system is not working.

My aim for this Strategy is to create a housing system that can deliver 100,000 plus homes over its 15 year lifetime. I want at least a third of these homes to be social homes. I also have an ambition to deliver a significant number of intermediate homes. The outcome of work to develop new intermediate products and the Housing Executive Strategic Housing Market Assessment will inform how many homes of this tenure are required.

Importantly these homes will be of good quality and deliver for a wider range of needs, including the needs of our ageing population, those with disabilities and our children and young people.

Transforming housing supply will require not only a collective response from the Executive but real collaboration that includes local government, community groups, construction industry and financial bodies. It must also major on engaging with those people who are most in housing need.

This approach is built on the principle that those who are most affected by poor housing are best placed to help design or redesign it.

My Call for Evidence was the first stage in this process of a partnership approach to the transformation of our housing supply. I heard what you said loud and clear and would like to thank you for your considered thoughts and proposals, which have informed and shaped this draft Housing Supply Strategy.

The stark reality as emphasised by responses to my Call for Evidence is that we need to change how we do things and acknowledge that unless we do, many individuals and families will have to live in homes that don't meet their needs and indeed will lose hope that their circumstances will change for the better in the near future. Waiting lists and housing stress continue to rise, and there are issues facing renters; issues that have been amplified throughout the pandemic. People are living longer, which is something to be celebrated, but our current housing stock does not reflect the changing needs of our population. We know that limitations on the right sort of housing options are a major contributor to inequality and deprivation in our society.

It is within this context that proposals for change are set out which will challenge all of us to think differently about how we work together. I do not underestimate the scale of the challenge and success will require the maturity to take difficult decisions. But, as confirmed in the Call for Evidence, there is a growing demand for this change from a large and diverse range of stakeholders.

Many of you emphasised that a key support for the partnership work needed to transform housing supply is the delivery of the commitment to have a standalone Housing Outcome in our next Programme for Government. I am on record as stating that a Housing Outcome is essential and I will continue to press for this commitment to be fulfilled. Moreover, the Vision for the Strategy is reflective of the focus of this Outcome, as envisaged within New Decade, New Approach.

I take great pride in saying that this draft Strategy has been the outcome of an extensive partnering and engagement process but this is only the first step in a 15 year journey. The Strategy provides a framework and a clear direction of travel to build truly sustainable communities, which will be supported by a wide programme of evidenced based actions driven through a collaborative and partnership-based approach and underpinned by a full Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impact Assessment.

My Executive Colleagues and I have already initiated work to progress some of these supporting policies and interventions, which will help transform our housing supply. This includes revitalisation of the Housing Executive, ring-fencing the Social Housing Development

Programme budget for areas of acute housing need, development of new Affordable Housing Products and progressing work to ensure that rents across all sectors are fair including consideration of rent regulation, the wider reform of the Private Rented Sector, the development of the Green Growth and Energy Strategies, the establishment of an Infrastructure Commission and the uplift of building regulations, all of which complement and support this Strategy.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support and I would urge you to avail of this further opportunity to shape the development of the final Strategy.

Finally, I have been clear that for this Strategy to succeed we will need the collective will and support of the Executive. Following this consultation period I will bring the final Strategy to my Executive colleagues for discussion and consideration.



Deirdre Hargay
Minister for Communities

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the wide range of individuals who contributed to the development of this draft Strategy. That includes the Housing Supply Strategy Project Board and the Virtual Housing Panel, colleagues from other departments, the Housing Executive and the Strategic Investment Board, representatives from the Housing Associations, Local Government

and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sectors, professional bodies and the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence and, of course, those individuals and organisations¹ who responded to the Call for Evidence and participated in parallel engagement events.

¹ Details are provided in the Call for Evidence Summary Report which is published alongside this Strategy at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-new-housing-supply-strategy>

Executive Summary

Introduction

New Decade New Approach² and the draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework,³ both recognise the importance of housing in achieving social cohesion, economic development, political stability, supporting citizens to live prosperous and fulfilling lives and a new focus on addressing housing stress and homelessness. The need to tackle these issues, through increasing social and intermediate housing supply and, more specifically, the delivery of this Housing Supply Strategy, are also priority activities in the Executive's Covid-19 Recovery Plan.⁴

Our housing supply challenges are substantial and deep rooted, as illustrated by increasing levels of housing stress and homelessness, the widening gap between housing requirements and new housing supply and the growing affordability and accessibility problems facing both first time buyers and renters. The Housing Supply Strategy is a long-term framework for the transformational change needed to tackle these challenges.

Strategy Development

Pre-development work to progress a Housing Supply Strategy commenced in 2019. The work was interrupted by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, beginning again in earnest at the end of 2020 and culminating in a Call for Evidence being launched by the Minister for Communities in May 2021. This was followed by a period of substantial information gathering and assessment, including extensive stakeholder engagement with delivery partners, wider stakeholders and service users.

The Call for Evidence Summary Report can be found at this [link](#).

This and other evidence informed the development of the Strategy and sets out a direction of travel from 2022 until 2037. The rest of this report sets out the key components of the Strategy in terms of:

- **Strategic Context** - where we are now in terms of housing supply, where we need to be and how we are going to get there. This covers the Whole System Approach, the Strategy vision and objectives and potential indicators that will be used to measure our progress.
- **Creating Affordable Options** - how we will supply the right number and type of affordable homes in the right places to meet our housing needs and demands. This section addresses key issues, including how we: address our infrastructure constraints, optimise funding opportunities and create the right policy and legislative framework to support housing supply.
- **Prevention and Intervention** - how we can prevent homelessness and reduce housing stress, as well as providing the right housing solutions and support for those most in need. This section focuses on providing more diverse housing types and alternative models of housing to meet different housing needs and recognising the importance of a holistic approach to housing.

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade__a_new_approach.pdf

³ <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-programme-government-draft-outcomes-framework-2021>

⁴ Building Forward: Consolidated Covid-19 Recovery Plan | The Executive Office ([executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk](https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk))

- **Quality and Safety** - how we will improve the quality, efficiency and design of homes, to ensure a high standard for everyone regardless of the type of home. Consideration is given to diverse range of areas, including building regulation, work to improve the private rented sector and protect our social housing.
- **Better Places** - how we will build and maintain thriving and inclusive communities and places with community wealth building at the heart, which prioritises a people-centred approach to rebuilding our local areas into places that support the wellbeing of those who live there. The section considers options around mixed tenure, place-shaping and the role of Local Development Plans in achieving this.
- **Decarbonisation** – sets out how the construction of new housing and the retrofitting of existing homes will play a key role in meeting our carbon reduction targets. Also set out is how we will support people in delivering these ambitions and ensure a just transition for everyone.

- **Delivering the Strategy** – how we will deliver the Strategy over its lifetime, including a focus on doing things differently and the role of action plans in achieving our objectives.

Our Strategic Framework

A summary of our Strategic Housing Supply Framework is outlined in the diagram overleaf (Figure 1). It reflects the partnership approach taken in its development and outlines the link to the Programme for Government outcomes, the vision for the Strategy, the enabling principle that will drive the transformation of housing supply, the long-term timeframe against which we will deliver on the vision and the five interconnected objectives which detail the key areas of work needed to address the challenges to housing supply. We also outline a series of indicators which demonstrate how we will measure progress. Finally, the Framework recognises the core enabling elements required to achieve all of this as outlined in our delivery section.

Figure 1 – Housing Supply Strategy – Strategic Framework

Strategic Framework – Investing and Building to Transform our Housing Supply							
Long term outcomes	Draft Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes	We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment.		We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives.		People want to live, work and visit here.	
	Vision	“Everybody has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate for their needs and is located within a thriving and inclusive community.”					
	Enabling Principle	Adopting a whole system approach, collaborate with central and local government and the third and private sectors to inclusively transform supply.					
	Timeframes	The Strategy will set out long term policies and interventions over a 15 year period to 2037 but will be divided into enabling action plans over 1-3 year periods.					
2037 Objectives	Objectives	Objective 1 - Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet housing need and demand	Objective 2 - Prevent homelessness and reduce housing stress and improve and prioritise housing solutions for those who are most in need	Objective 3 - Improve housing quality	Objective 4 - Ensure the provision of housing options that contribute to the building and maintenance of thriving, inclusive communities and places		Objective 5 - Reduce whole-life carbon emissions from both new homes and existing homes and support a ‘just transition’ to carbon neutrality
Indicators	Indicators we will use to monitor progress	Stress and Supply	Homelessness	Affordability	Satisfaction	Quality and Energy Efficiency	Community & Place
		Number of households in housing stress.	Number of households who are homeless (presentations and acceptances)	Proportion of households spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs	Proportion of households who report being either “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied” with their house or flat	Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings	Indicator(s) in development
		Housing Stock figures.				Percentage of homes that meet the Fitness Standard	
Delivery	Principles	Provide leadership across central government, local government and third sector in relation to housing supply					
		Underpinned by the principles of equality, fairness and good relations and engaging with those most affected by poor housing					
		Review and implement necessary legislative and regulatory changes to support housing supply and deliver the Strategy					
		Provide governance and oversight arrangements to support the delivery of the Strategy					
		Monitor evidence to support policy development					
		Maximise the availability of public finance to deliver housing					

Programme for Government

The strategic framework evidences that housing is central to the achievement of the Executive's social, economic and environmental objectives and therefore the need for a standalone PfG Housing Outcome. In this context, the Strategy adopts a vision that is reflective of the focus of a standalone Housing Outcome, as envisioned within New Decade, New Approach.

The framework also demonstrates how the Housing Supply Strategy will contribute to three of the draft Programme for Government outcomes, namely:

- We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment;
- We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives; and
- People want to live, work and visit here.

Though not specifically referenced in the framework, it is worth highlighting that the Strategy and housing policy more generally also have the potential to make a substantial contribution to delivering on other draft outcomes, including that:

- Our Children and Young People have the best start in life;
- Our economy is globally competitive, regional balanced and carbon neutral; and
- We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives.

In addition, the Strategy will make a significant contribution to the delivery of other cross cutting Executive strategies including the Green Growth Strategy, the Energy Strategy, 10X Economy, the Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030 and the Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031.

Our Commitment to Delivery

We have developed this Strategy in the context of persistently increasing numbers of people living in housing stress and the growing waiting list. It has been progressed with a partnership approach and we have engaged through a range of mechanisms with a wide variety of stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors. This approach is built on the principle that those who are most affected by poor housing are best placed to be advocates for better housing and help us design and redesign our housing.

While this Strategy sets out the direction of travel to transform supply, we will also bring forward more detailed policy proposals which will be subject to consultation and engagement in their own right. Work to develop the first of these proposals will commence immediately following the approval and publication of the final Strategy. It is anticipated that this will be post March 2022. The Strategy will be subject to ongoing review and we will report on progress on an annual basis.

We will provide the necessary leadership and coordination across all levels of government. Key to our success will be the establishment of a “joined up” response unlocking the combined skills and resources of central government, local government, the housing sector, wider public sector and the third sector to transform supply.

Investing in our Supply

We know that achieving the ambitions in this Strategy will need significant investment. Whether that is investment in our Social Housing Stock, improving quality in our Private Rented Sector or constructing new homes for private sale, we will need to be creative and learn to think and act differently.

Some of this investment will of course need to come from the state, however public funding on its own will not be enough. The Call for Evidence highlighted issues around sources and constraints in accessing finance and the potential impact of Covid-19 on lender risk. Some potential financial solutions were also identified, most notably, capital markets financing (bonds) for affordable housing and increase in demand for Environmental Social Governance (ESG) investments. Alongside significant annual investment in the Social Housing Development Programme the Department will continue to explore new approaches to financing the housing market through, for example, routes providing incentives to Registered Housing Associations and changes in Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) funding.

If we are to achieve our objectives it is likely that a wider range of sources for financing will be needed such as charitable trusts and foundations, Credit Union Loans, Capital markets: from the sale of long-term bonds and developer contributions. The benefits of housing co-operatives, community-led housing and self-build initiatives will also need to be explored further and the move towards an energy system based on low carbon networks, technologies, buildings, vehicles, industry and infrastructure will also require major investment and skilled personnel.

In the face of constrained public finances and international economic uncertainty the investment challenge is substantial. Difficult decisions will need to be made. However through active collaboration between public, private and charitable partners, maximising current policy levers and developing new ones we can find solutions and create opportunities.

Strategic Context

Where we need to be

Our vision for the Strategy encapsulates the future picture of housing supply, one that delivers on our housing needs and demands and contributes to better outcomes for all our citizens but, most notably, those in most housing need.

“Everybody has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate for their needs and is located within a thriving and inclusive community.”

This vision recognises that good housing is about more than bricks and mortar: they are homes, not just houses. It encompasses issues such as affordability, accessibility, sustainability, quality and security of tenure – all of which can apply differently to people and at different times in their lives. Crucially, this vision seeks to put people at the centre of housing supply and sustainable places, with a focus on delivering on objective need, underpinned by principles of fairness, equality and good relations.

The aim for this Strategy is to create a housing system that can deliver upwards of 100,000 homes over its 15 year lifetime. At least a third of these homes will be social homes. The Minister also has an ambition to deliver a significant number of intermediate homes. The outcome of work to develop new intermediate products and the Housing Executive Strategic Housing Market Assessment will inform how many homes of this tenure are required

We know we need to improve our understanding of what this means in terms of the design and specification of our homes and how many homes of different types we require. We have committed to achieving this in the Strategy. We also know that we may have to update our thinking on this and other issues across the lifespan of the Strategy. This is why the Strategy will be a living document.

The strategic framework is aimed at unlocking, with immediate effect, the conditions required to transform supply for current and future generations. This will be achieved through a series of detailed delivery plans, starting in 2022/23, which will build further upon the actions already outlined in the Strategy.

Where we are now

Housing here in the past twenty years has been characterised by three key underlying trends:

- a steady increase in the need and demand for housing in response to population change and the growth in the number of households;
- affordability issues linked to a significant increase in the number and proportion of households individuals, families, workers and students renting privately and an associated relative decline in home ownership; and
- a widening gap between the overall requirement for new housing (private and social) and the annual rate of construction

There are a number of wider trends which have and will continue to impact on housing and other policy. These key trends are summarised at Annex A.

Increasing Need and Demand NI's housing stock has continued to grow over the past 20 years (current stock is 814,210 homes). There was steady growth in the number of dwellings between 2012 and 2021 – an annual average rate of growth of almost 6,200. However, this is much lower than the rates of growth experienced in the years leading up to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). Between 2001 and 2006 the housing stock increased at an annual average rate of 11,500.⁵

Household projections

The most recent mid-year population estimates showed that there were approximately 1.90 million people living in NI,⁶ a figure that had increased at an average annual rate of 0.5% pa over the previous five years. The most recent (2016) household projections estimated that in 2021 there would be a total of 744,754 households compared to 725,127 in 2016 – an annual average rate of growth of 0.54% over the previous five year period.⁷

A key driver for household formation is that our population continues to age (estimates are that over 65s now make up almost 17% of the total population and from mid-2028 will outnumber those aged under 16 years)⁸ and the tendency

for the older population to live in either one or two adult households without children. By 2041, these two household types are projected to account for three fifths (60.3 per cent) of all households.⁹

This points to a key issue in relation to housing supply - how we meet the needs and aspirations of an ageing population in the context of a rising dependency ratio (the number of people of working age compared to those who have retired) which has important economic, and therefore funding, ramifications.

Increasing Housing Need

The Common Waiting List for social housing also provides a number of key indicators of increasing housing need. Figure 2 provides a graphic illustration of the substantial increase in the number of households in urgent need ('housing stress')¹⁰ since the early 2000s. In March 2003 there were approximately 13,000 in housing stress. This rose to almost 21,000 by March 2011 and reached a new peak of 27,745 in March 2020. Indications are that housing stress has continued to rise significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

⁵ Source: Annual Housing Statistics, LPS

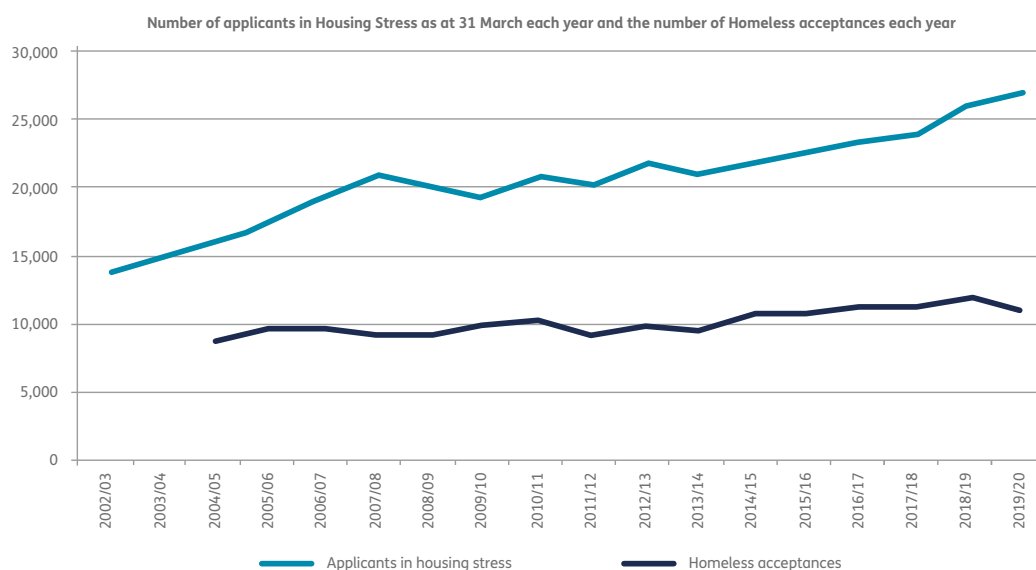
⁶ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2020-mid-year-population-estimates-northern-ireland>

⁷ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-household-projections-2016-based>

⁸ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2020-mid-year-population-estimates-northern-ireland>

⁹ <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-household-projections-2016-based>

¹⁰ Housing stress is defined as those who are awarded 30 points or more within the Housing Selection Scheme. Points are awarded under four categories (1) intimidation (2) insecurity of tenure (3) housing conditions (4) and health and social wellbeing issues.

Figure 2: Increasing Housing Stress and Numbers Accepted as Homeless, 2002/03-2019/20

Source: Department for Communities (DfC): Housing Statistics

Figure 2 also illustrates that the number of households accepted as homeless in NI has also risen significantly over the past 15 years, though on the basis of a more subdued trajectory. In 2004/05 approximately 8,500 households were defined as homeless, a figure that rose to almost 10,500 in 2010/11 and reached a peak of 12,512 in 2018/19 before falling back to 11,323 in 2019/20. During 2020/21 there was a further significant drop to 9889 (13%) in the overall number of homeless households due to the pandemic but this has created pent up demand.¹¹

Affordability

The most striking trend over the last 20 years, has been the rapid rise of the private rented sector.¹² A major part of the explanation for this lies in the increasing difficulties that first time buyers faced in relation to accessing owner occupancy. Following

the sharp fall in house prices, the nature of the affordability issue changed. A new version of this index developed in 2012, gave more weight to the challenges faced by first-time buyers accessing mortgage finance, and, in particular, attempting to save for a deposit. The most recent iteration of this Affordability Index based on a combination of repayment and access affordability measures, showed that between 2017 and 2018 there was a deterioration in affordability in terms of house price to income ratios and the ability to save for a deposit¹³. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy and on the labour market in combination with rising house prices¹⁴ has exacerbated the affordability challenge for first-time buyers. The growing affordability problem is compounded by ongoing increases in rental prices in the private rented sector. The Ulster University/ Housing Executive private rental index recorded a

¹¹ Most of this reduction can be accounted for by a significant reduction in acceptances for two reasons: 'Accommodation not reasonable', a category that largely addresses the housing needs of older people and/or those in poor health, and 'Loss of [private] rented accommodation'. In the case of the former, the need for older people and particularly those with poor health to 'shield' and, in the case of the latter, the additional security of tenure for private tenants introduced in response to the pandemic.

¹² Successive House Condition Surveys carried out by the Housing Executive demonstrated the large proportional increase in private renting over a 10-year period: from 12.1% of households in 2006 to 17.5% in 2011 and 18.3% in 2016. These statistics would indicate that most of the rapid growth period was between 2006 and 2011, and the most recent figure available (from the 2017-18 Family Resources Survey) would confirm that the proportion of households has remained fairly constant since 2016 at 18%.

¹³ <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Research/House-Prices-And-Affordability/Affordability-in-the-private-housing-market.aspx?/>

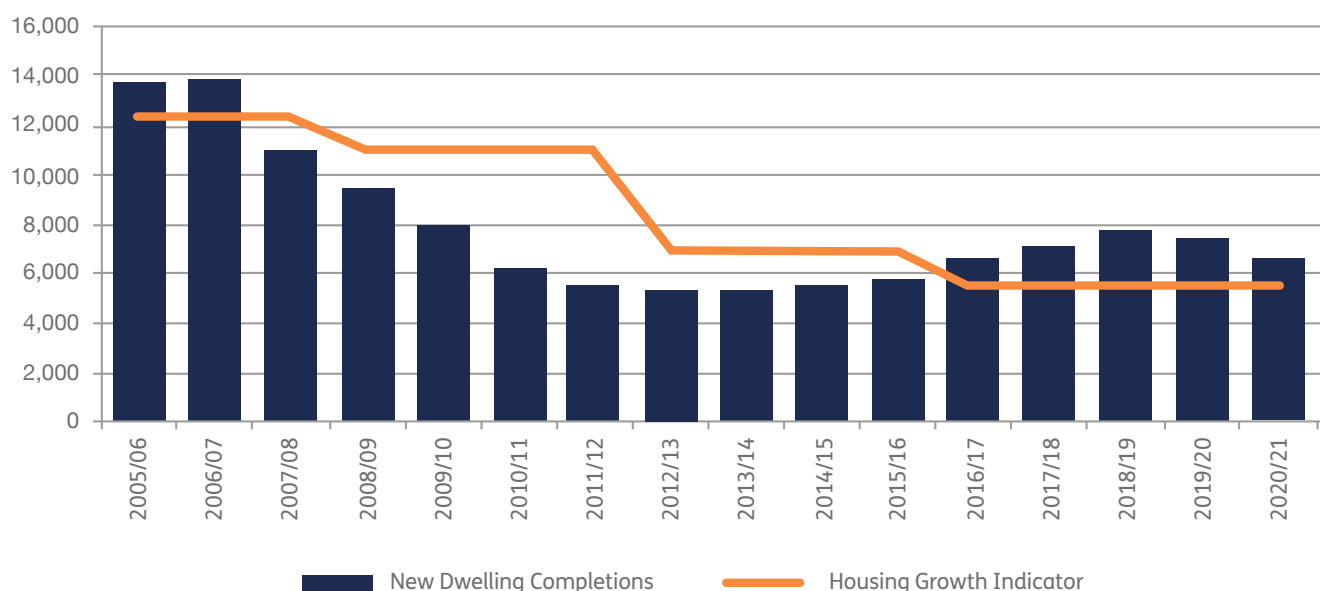
¹⁴ NISRA's hedonic house price index shows an increase of 9.0% between Q2 2020 and Q2 2021. UU/NIHE NI Quarterly House Price Index likewise shows an increase of 9.2% over the same period, while PropertyPal Housing Market Trends: Q2 2021 - shows an annual increase of 7.3% in its house prices.

4.2% increase in average rents between H2, 2020 and H2, 2021. More recent analysis produced by Propertypal shows that this upward path continued into Q2, 2021, with heightened demand and fewer available properties resulting in an annual rate of increase of 5.8%.¹⁶ Affordability issues will then have to be a key factor in considering our supply challenges and solutions.

The widening gap in housing supply

As outlined in the Call for Evidence and in this Strategy, the causes of the widening gap between overall housing requirements and new supply are multi-faceted. Figure 3 illustrates the development of this undersupply over the last 15 years. It shows a substantial gap emerging between new dwelling completions and estimates of future overall requirements in terms of Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs) in the years following the GFC.

Figure 3: The Gap between New Dwelling Completions and HGI's 2005/06-2020/21



Source: DfC Housing Statistics and Regional Development Strategy Housing Growth Indicators

Revised HGI's based on NISRA's 2016 household projections envisaged an annual average of 5,700 from 2016/17 onwards¹⁷, and since 2016 housing completions have exceeded this revised figure as outlined in Figure 3. In 2017, the Department for Communities' Housing Symposium, in recognition of the growing gap between supply and overall requirements had already recommended an overall delivery target of 8,000 new dwellings per annum

– but even this was based on increasingly outdated estimates of the number of households. As such, there is general agreement that a significant increase in new housing completions is required to underpin the strategic priorities of the NI Executive and that a new integrated, transparent model for estimating future requirements based on scenario planning and integrating demographic, economic and stock information at a strategic level, would

¹⁵ <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Research/Private-Rental-Market-CURRENT/private-rental-market-NI-July-December-2020.aspx?ext=>

¹⁶ <https://www.businessfirstonline.co.uk/our-guest-bloggers/propertypal-housing-market-trends-q2-2021/>

¹⁷ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/2016-based-housing-growth-indicators-hgi>

be of considerable benefit. The Housing Executive has a research project (the Strategic Housing Market Analysis – SHMA) in its current programme to address this issue, with this work anticipated to complete in mid-2022. We have also committed to work to better understand the types of housing required to meet the range of housing needs.

Although the housing market here has been characterised primarily by the three trends outlined above, other long-term trends have also developed that are now coming to the forefront of our housing supply considerations.

Quality and Energy Efficiency of Homes

As emphasised by the vision and objectives, improving housing supply must also factor in issues of quality and contribute to our net zero objectives. The Housing Fitness Standard¹⁸ is the statutory basis for inadequate or unfit housing, which applies across all tenures of housing and sets the legal threshold, below which no one should be expected to live. House Condition Surveys (HCS) have been used to assess dwelling conditions against the statutory fitness standard since 1974¹⁹. These surveys provide a measurement of the level of unfitness in NI and consequently have demonstrated the substantial progress made in improving housing conditions. However, the relative importance of the Fitness Standard has declined due to the very low proportion of the stock (1.1% of

occupied stock) failing on this quality measure. The Call for Evidence also highlighted that for many, its value falls short as a means of dealing with modern housing challenges.

Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency is a key factor for thermal comfort which impacts on fuel poverty and is a primary issue when we consider housing quality and wider environmental impacts.²⁰ The 2016 House Conditions Survey found that NI housing stock had an average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of 65.83 out of 100. It also noted that approximately half of all dwellings had an Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) within bands A-C.²¹ That said, no dwellings were found in Band A and only 4% in Band B, while more than one-third (36%) of dwellings were found in Band D and 11% in Band E. The HCS also highlights that older houses (and as might be expected due to this, older households) and dwellings in rural areas were less likely to fall within the three highest bands.

Both the construction of new housing and the retrofitting of existing homes will play a key role in helping to achieve the target of reducing all carbon emissions by 56% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels and 100% by 2050.

There is also another consideration for which trends are more difficult to measure or establish, but are an important aspect of supply.

¹⁸ The current Fitness Standard was enshrined in Schedule 5 of the Housing (NI) Order 1992. The Fitness Standard remains the only statutory broad measure of housing quality in NI.

¹⁹ The NI Housing Executive was established by the Housing Executive Act, 1971. One of the legislative requirements was that Housing Executive “regularly examine housing conditions and requirements”. It undertook the first NI House Condition Survey in 1974, a comprehensive survey that estimated that almost 90,000 homes (20%) were statutorily unfit for human habitation (approximately three times the proportion for England at that time). Indeed, approximately 40 per cent of NI’s population lived in dwellings that were unfit, in disrepair or lacked basic amenities.

²⁰ The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the Government’s standard method of rating the energy efficiency of a dwelling. It has a range of factors that contribute to energy efficiency, such as, materials used for construction, the efficiency and control of heating systems and fuel used for space and water heating. The rating is between 1-100. The higher the number, the lower the running costs.

²¹ The 1-100 SAP energy efficiency rating is also represented in an A-G banding system which is the basis for the production of an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). ‘Band A’ rating represents low energy costs and ‘Band G’ rating represents high energy costs.

Quality of Place

It was clear from the Call for Evidence responses that quality should also refer to more than just the build of the home itself. It should also take into account the quality of design and the environs of the home which may then have a potential subsequent impact on wellbeing and health. Whilst the indicators for quality and efficiency of the building are more straightforward to define, quality of place has a potentially much broader scope that may consider factors such as access to open space, feeling of safety, visual amenity or even the attractiveness of an area to existing and potential future residents. With this in mind, work is underway to identify suitable indicators that can measure this.

Housing Equality

Not all groups experience the same housing challenges and a key objective of the Strategy is to address inequalities by improving and prioritising housing solutions for those who are most in need. For example, the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Strategy suggests different experiences by gender in terms of homelessness and the impact of housing costs on those on marginal incomes. An example with age is the fact that older people (75+) are more likely to live in housing that has higher than average basic and urgent repair costs to bring their dwelling into good repair. Under religious belief there are a higher proportion of lead applicants on the waiting list for social housing that are in housing stress from the Catholic community, relative to the Protestant community. There remain inequalities in terms of the access to suitable housing for individuals with a learning disability to live independently and many individuals with a disability still live in homes that are unsuited to their disability-related needs.

However, as covered in more detail in the draft EQIA, there can be intersections between different equality categories that have a bearing on housing outcomes. For instance, the complexity of the relationship between gender and housing. The updated data shows that more women than men experience poverty both before and after their housing costs are accounted for. Within this there are likely to be intersectional issues at play, with for example dependents/ caring responsibilities and marital status influencing these trends. This underlines the importance of not looking at gender in isolation. Further data disaggregation and related research is required to gain a better understanding of the causality of many of the key inequalities that appear to exist (when looking at housing experiences through the lens of a single equality category).

Similarly, there are structural complexities in terms of housing provision for those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds as a result of the impact of British immigration policies. Labour market practices and the social security system on shortfalls in income make it particularly hard for BAME groups to afford housing increasing risk of further housing issues, destitution and homelessness.²²

Some of the key inequalities identified are already being actioned through existing initiatives that will be further developed through this Strategy, including the Housing Executive's Irish Traveller Accommodation Strategy 2020-25 and 'Ending Homelessness Together 2022-2027' Strategy and Reset Plan. Moreover, the EQIA is only the first stage in an evolving focus on the inequalities that may be experienced by section 75 groups in respect of housing outcomes and evidence from ongoing monitoring will help shape actions to mitigate negative impacts throughout the Strategy.

²² https://www.jrf.org.uk/file/58774/download?token=Obw_6Nkv&filetype=briefing

How we will get to where we need to be

Whole System Approach

As the 'where are we now' summary illustrates, not one single overarching challenge (or problem) is affecting housing supply. When we look at the drivers of need and demand and the levers adopted to address need and demand, it is

apparent that housing supply is a complex and multifaceted issue. Moreover, many of these facets are interrelated, as summarised in Figure 4. For this reason, a 'whole system' approach, which has not been attempted in the past, can help unlock new solutions.

Figure 4 Housing Supply as 'Whole System' approach



Levers adopted to meet demand include finance, provision of land, the planning system, innovation and skills. The Call for Evidence highlighted the potential for more options and flexibility around design standards/regulations to open opportunities to improve the quality of supply and accessibility for a range of individuals. The opportunity to adapt, recycle and re-use existing buildings to increase supply and create thriving communities was also flagged by numerous respondents. The benefits of innovative delivery methods, construction techniques and the skills required to utilise these have equally been identified as missed opportunities. And, most significantly, the opportunities associated with working collaboratively across the systems of central and local government as well as the third sector and private sector to transform supply, was highlighted repeatedly.

Utilising a 'whole system' lens also illustrates the central role of people, places and communities. Creating sustainable, high quality and affordable places where people wish to live, work and play can help tackle inequalities and enable communities to thrive. Whilst the new Strategy will naturally focus on supply, we must not lose sight of the importance of understanding the needs of people, places and communities when developing the Supply Strategy. We will make sure that communities have a greater say in the supply process, through community planning and stronger engagement in planning and regeneration processes.

The Enabling Principle

Our Enabling Principle outlines how we wish to work with others, recognising that the range of housing supply “whole system challenges” require “whole system solutions”, so working collaboratively across central and local government and with the private and voluntary and community sectors will be crucial in making a difference to the challenges facing the housing supply system. The lived experiences of those “in the system” need to help us shape solutions.

“Adopting a whole system approach, collaborate across central and local government and the third and private sectors to inclusively transform supply.”

Our Objectives

The Housing Supply Strategy is centred on delivering **five key objectives**:

- 1) Creating Affordable Options:** Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet housing need and demand;
- 2) Prevention and Intervention:** Prevent homelessness, reduce housing stress and improve and prioritise housing solutions for those most in need;
- 3) Quality:** Improve housing quality;
- 4) Better Places:** Ensure the provision of housing options that contribute to the building and maintenance of thriving, inclusive communities and places; and
- 5) Decarbonisation:** Reduce whole-life carbon emissions from both new homes and existing homes and support a ‘just transition’ to carbon neutrality.

The Housing Supply Strategy is a 15-year policy framework in recognition that many of the transformations required are complex in nature, with some requiring a longer timeline to deliver on, than others. These policies must also be resilient to longer term issues such as demographic, economic and environmental change and technological advances. The Strategy must also be flexible enough to accommodate emerging issues. This will be achieved by keeping the Strategy under review and throughout the action planning process.

More about the framework and the proposed work under each of our specific objectives is detailed later in the document, including a more detailed outline of our long term policies, which set out the direction of travel and provide the context for development of action plans. Also detailed, under the banner of initial enabling activities, are actions we are already progressing or are committed to progressing, which we consider will make an important contribution to delivering our objectives by helping to create new sustainable housing options and better outcomes for our citizens.

As previously highlighted, the five key objectives are interconnected. As such, the policies and actions underneath each will actually have a much broader impact in achieving the Strategy vision. We have mapped these linkages at **Annex B**.

Data and Evidence

We are committed to developing an on-going housing evidence programme to support and inform all aspects of the Strategy. We will work with others to improve the data quality, availability and coverage to improve our understanding and measurement of the impact of our actions in helping to achieve our vision.

We will monitor and report on this Strategy on an annual basis. The first progress report will cover the enabling period 2021/22 – 2022/23 and will be published in 2023/24.

Indicators

It is proposed that the measurement of the impact of the Housing Supply Strategy will be monitored and reported upon with reference to a basket of indicators. Initial indicators include:

- Housing Stock figures (Source: Land and Property Services, DoF). We will be examining if and how we can get a more nuanced picture of the supply picture against housing need when work on the new Housing Executive Strategic Housing Market Analysis is complete (this is likely to be mid 2022);
- Number of households in housing stress (Source: Housing Executive);
- Number of households who are homeless both presentations and acceptances (Source: Housing Executive);
- Proportion of households spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs (Source: Family Resources Survey);
- Proportion of households who report being either “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied” with their house or flat (source: Continuous Household Survey);²³

- Percentage of homes that meet the Fitness Standard (Source: House Conditions Survey). This will be more relevant post completion of work to review the standard; and
- Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings - this is the measure for assessing energy ratings for homes (as collected through the House Conditions Survey). We are also working to assess if and how we might supplement this indicator (given that the HCS is only conducted every five years) with Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) data.²⁴

We will also factor in indicators included in other relevant Strategies, for instance, those outlined in the Energy Strategy options consultation in relation to household energy expenditure relative to all expenditure,²⁵ households in fuel poverty²⁶ and greenhouse gas emissions from energy related sectors (specifically residential properties)²⁷. We will also continue to develop our evaluation framework as we progress our housing evidence programme. This work will include expanding the range and nature of the indicators collated and analysed as we work to address the series of complex issues, which impede supply.

In accordance with the Outcomes Based Accountability, individual interventions or programmes will be monitored using report cards which detail the quantity of work done; the quality of work done; and the impact of this work.

²³ A recent OECD study (OECD (2021), “Building for a better tomorrow: Policies to make housing more affordable”, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Policy Briefs, OECD, Paris) , highlights the advantages and limitations of a range of metrics to measure affordability (and quality) of housing and suggests that given the limitations of each, it is preferable to use a number of metrics including the perception of individuals. This is a new question added to the CHS in 21/22 so data will not be available until September 2022. Respondents to the Call for Evidence also highlighted the somewhat arbitrary nature of ratios with the explanation that they do not provide an adequate understanding of individual affordability.

²⁴ SAP is assessment of the energy performance rating of a home. The higher the SAP rating, the lower the energy costs and subsequent carbon emissions. SAP calculations are used to form the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). The HSC is a representative sample so therefore can be used to make inferences about all homes in NI. For EPC will only be new homes or homes that have been sold since EPC was introduced (30 December 2008), with the added issue of certificates only being valid for 10 years

²⁵ Source: Living Costs and Food Survey

²⁶ Produced using modelling work from the House Conditions Survey.

²⁷ Source: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (Devolved Administrations - Greenhouse Gas Reports - NAEI, UK (beis.gov.uk))

Objective 1: Creating Affordable Options

Creating Affordable Options: Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet housing need and demand.

Introduction

We need to create new, better and more affordable housing options for citizens.

To ensure that we get the right number and types of houses in the right places we need to improve our understanding and estimation of future housing requirements, including understanding different needs. Furthermore, as highlighted in the Call for Evidence, we need to have a better understanding of our current stock, including tenure, location and condition to establish a more robust picture of the supply gaps. Work is progressing to identify and address our housing data gaps, including the development of a Strategic Housing Market Analysis model but we do not need to wait until this work completes before we take action.

This is because we know from the evidence that we have available to us now, that:

- A significant increase in housing completions is necessary (given the widening gap between overall housing requirements and new supply);
- There are increasing affordability challenges for renters and prospective home purchasers; and
- Housing stress continues to increase (despite significant investment in social housing)

Achieving this objective must involve an increase in supply across all tenures and establishing 'new intermediate products' to provide alternative options outside of what is currently available.

Evidence (including that provided through the Call for Evidence process) has confirmed that the key levers we need to unlock to substantially increase supply across tenures are:

- Exploiting existing financial resources (including Financial Transactions Capital) to greater effect and investigate the potential for new sources;
- Addressing infrastructure constraints, most notably, waste water, transport, energy and the digital network;
- Increasing land availability in areas of need and demand, including through improving our knowledge of public land (both central and local government) that may be suitable for housing; and
- Creating the right policy and legislative environment, including better utilising the powers already in place to support new supply and reuse/adapt existing buildings, for example land acquisition, rating and planning powers.

Long Term Policies and Interventions

The long term policies and interventions we are proposing to meet this objective and address the needs described include:

- **Work collaboratively and innovatively with the private, public and third sectors to address issues around land availability and considering issues such as: local services, infrastructure constraints, sustainable drainage, digital connectivity and transport.**
- **Enhance our open data platforms to improve access to housing, land, property and planning data, creating better transparency and unlocking opportunities to transform supply.**

- **Ensure our housing policy and legislative framework enables us to deliver the housing supply to meet our current and future needs and demand patterns.**
- **Support upskilling, reskilling, delivery of apprenticeships and training for both existing workers and new workers in order to underpin a modern integrated housing system. This will include ensuring that public procurement spend contributes to the Executive's objectives, including creating jobs in deprived areas and ensuring security of our wider supply chain.**
- **Work innovatively to optimise access to alternative forms of public and private finance such as Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) and institutional funding to develop and deliver new and affordable housing products.**

Existing and New Enabling Activities

We will:

- Build more social houses, especially where they are most needed. This includes ring-fencing Housing Association Grant funding and seeking the prioritisation of water infrastructure for new housing in areas of most acute housing need.
- Progress Housing Executive Revitalisation. Revitalisation will focus on options which will enable a revitalised Strategic Housing Authority and sustainable social landlord, that can maintain and provide good quality and affordable homes for current tenants and future generations;
- Commission work aimed at critically evaluating current measures of affordability with

reference to best practice in other jurisdictions and, if appropriate, recommending a measure or measures best suited to the NI context;

- Ensure that rents are fair for tenants as well as landlords across all tenures
- Work collaboratively to extend the scope of the Government Land and Property Register (GLPR) Programme to digitally map all land and property holdings for both Central Government and Local Government in NI. This will support efforts to identify land for social, affordable, and private new build, along with existing buildings suited to adaptive reuse, which can contribute towards supply. This development will underpin a Geographic Information System (GIS) enabled dataset which will in due course support a whole system based approach.
- Support the establishment of an Infrastructure Commission for an expert led, strategic and public engagement approach to long term infrastructure planning; and the establishment of a cross-departmental working group to determine the best organisational classification for the Commission, its cost, including remuneration, the appointment process of its members and its reporting arrangements;
- Undertake an assessment of Registered Housing Associations' powers, alongside the review of the legislative framework to ensure that Associations can fully participate in creating and delivering new housing options and mainstreaming mixed tenure;
- Support the Review of the Implementation of the Planning Act²⁸ – a number of issues were raised in the Call for Evidence around the planning system mainly to do with timescales for application decisions and LDP preparation.

²⁸ The Planning Act (NI) 2011 provided the legislative basis for the reform of the NI planning system. The reforms were comprehensive, impacting on every aspect of planning, including how development plans are drawn up, how development proposals and applications are managed and the way in which these functions are delivered. DfI issued a Call for Evidence in relation to helping inform a review of the implementation of the Planning Act in February 2021. DfI is currently assessing the wide ranging responses to the Call for Evidence and is giving careful consideration to the proposals which have emerged. The review will also reflect on any potential legislative amendments which may arise from parallel work to improve the planning system through the Planning Forum and the Planning Engagement Partnership.

It is intended that a DfI report on this review will consider actions which can be taken forward to improve the planning system.

- Support the work of the Planning Forum in the implementation of recommendations made in the independent report on the role of statutory consultees in the planning process, with a focus on improving processes and timeframes for determining major and economically significant planning applications. The role of statutory consultees was an issue that was raised throughout the Call for Evidence.
- Examine options for ensuring the ratings system responds over time to a range of emerging strategic opportunities and challenges, including for example decarbonisation, making better use of underused assets for domestic use and preventing dereliction.
- In line with the new procurement policy introduced by the Department of Finance, implement the mandatory scoring of social value within public procurement contracts by June 2022, in all applicable publically funded housing development schemes to ensure opportunities to maximise the use of social clauses.
- Consider how existing powers can be used better to achieve housing and regeneration in areas of greatest housing need and examine how statute and legislation might better support the release of land and buildings for the delivery of housing.
- Continue to deliver current intermediate shared ownership housing to help those on lower incomes meet their aspirations to home ownership. This includes the delivery of a new pilot shared ownership scheme aimed at assisting those who are over 55 to move to a home more suitable for their needs.
- Bring new affordable housing products to the market, such as, Intermediate Rent by 2023. Intermediate Rent seeks to provide high quality, well managed, affordable homes for rent for tenants who cannot or do not wish to access home ownership and would be unlikely to attain sufficient points to have a realistic chance of accessing social housing in an area of choice.
- Commence a research project to determine the housing data we need that will establish a 'whole system' view of housing supply, including a more granular picture of the different types of homes we need to meet the different needs of our citizens. This will build on the Housing Executive's Strategic Housing Market Analysis.

Objective 2: Prevention and Intervention

Prevention and Intervention: Prevent homelessness, reduce housing stress and improve and prioritise housing solutions for those most in need.

Introduction

This objective recognises that housing issues are a major contributor to inequality and insecurity in our society. Indeed, the impact on the accessibility, adequacy and sustainability of local housing, and in turn inequalities in housing demand and supply in the last couple of years caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, has shone a light on these inequalities. As such, equality and human rights considerations are fundamental to achieving the vision for the Strategy and require a “whole system” approach.

Prevention of homelessness and reducing housing stress is the focus for this work. Work to increase housing supply and affordable options will make a substantial contribution to achieving this objective but success is also about ensuring improved affordable housing solutions for a wider diversity of needs including those of older people, those with disabilities (which in itself covers a wide spectrum of needs including physical and learning differences) and for other vulnerable people, including children in care, those individuals leaving the criminal justice system and those who are victims of domestic violence. Consequently, this objective also recognises the inextricable link between housing and the social care and support system and the need to have a continuum of support from temporary to permanent accommodation.

This objective also reflects what we heard in the Call for Evidence, including the need for us to:

- Focus on homelessness prevention;
- Learn lessons from elsewhere on approaches to increase stability and security for people in poverty, such as the Housing First model;²⁹
- Build on existing positive developments including interdepartmental working through the Covid -19 pandemic;
- Progress an holistic approach to housing provision, recognising the importance of wraparound and support services in the development and provision of housing solutions for those who have different needs;
- Protect our current social housing stock; and
- Future proof our homes so they are more easily adaptable to meet changing needs (this links closely with quality and design, which is more explicitly covered under Objective 3).

It also recognises that an effective and fair social housing allocations system is fundamental to easing housing stress and making sure allocations to social housing are being based on objective need. In this context it is noted that many of you who responded to the Call for Evidence referenced the points system, which determines an individual’s position on the social housing waiting list, highlighting that the award of some points, such as those for intimidation, can result in some individuals getting priority over those who have been on the waiting list for a long time.³⁰

²⁹ Housing First is an internationally recognised model of combatting long-term homelessness for people with complex needs. A Housing First service prioritises permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness from the outset. The intention is that housing should be available even if a person experiencing homelessness refuses treatment for their substance use or mental health issues and then a flexible support package covering mental health, substance use, employment and other issues is provided for the service users in their new home by a multi-disciplinary team. This is done with a view to reconnecting them to their community and ensuring stability in their accommodation.

³⁰ On applying for social housing, an individual’s position on the waiting list is determined by the points awarded. Points are awarded under four categories (1) intimidation (2) insecurity of tenure (3) housing conditions (4) and health and social wellbeing issues.

Long Term Policies and Interventions

The long term policies and interventions we are proposing to meet this objective and address the needs described include:

- **Deliver housing solutions for citizens who are most in need, recognising the inequalities identified through the Equality Impact Assessment developed to support this Housing Supply Strategy**
- **Develop and implement new policies that will support the delivery of a more diverse range of housing types/alternative models of housing to meet all housing needs**
- **Improve our response to homelessness with a focus on prevention and learning the lessons from what worked so well during the pandemic as well as innovations from elsewhere**

Existing and New Enabling Activities

Building on the activities outlined under Objective 1, we will:

- Support the Housing Executive in the delivery of its Ending Homelessness Together 2022-2027 strategy. The focus of the Strategy links strongly to the Call for Evidence responses, mostly notably the need to prevent homelessness, support exiting into settled accommodation and extend Housing First provision. The Strategy also recognises that services must be tailored to appropriately take account of differences in those individuals and households presenting as homeless. Equality issues are central to the strategy and will also be central to monitoring its delivery.
- Progress the delivery of the Interdepartmental Homelessness Action Plan to provide a cohesive and co-ordinated response to the provision of non-accommodation services to those who are homeless or are at most risk

of homelessness. Responses to the Call for Evidence, including the need for better joined up policy in relation to mental health and drug addiction support and the need to focus on homelessness prevention for groups including those leaving the criminal justice system and people with a disability, will inform the focus of future actions;

- Assist the Housing Executive in the delivery of its Older People's Housing Strategy 2021/22-2026/27. Delivery of this Strategy includes working with partners to incorporate better design principles into social housing (both new and existing) that is reflective of the needs of older people (recognising that older people are not a homogenous group), encouraging council planners to incorporate the requirement that all new build housing should meet lifetime home standards and exploring the use assistive technology has to play in supporting independent living and sustaining and supporting tenancies.
- Support the Housing Executive to deliver the Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy³¹ to provide access to affordable, good quality, culturally appropriate housing accommodation which fosters a sustainable, vibrant Irish Traveller community and promotes inclusion, a sense of belonging and security. This Strategy proposes a number of key actions, including those designed to better understand Traveller specific accommodation needs and improve fitness standards for caravans (which also links closely to Objective 3) and details an implementation plan laying out a work programme over the next five years.
- Support the development and implementation of a 3-year Strategy for the Supporting People Programme, in partnership with delivery agents and users. As emphasised by

31 <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Irish-Traveller-Strategy/Irish-Travellers-Accommodation-Strategy-2021-2026.aspx>

many respondents to the Call for Evidence, the Supporting People Programme plays a fundamental role in helping people attain and maintain their independence. The new Strategy is designed to meet the existing and emerging needs of those who are homeless, older people, younger people and those with a disability.

- Examine options for alternative models of supported housing that addresses anticipated and emerging need. The current model of delivery of Supported Housing has remained unchanged since the mid-1990s. This work will include an examination of ‘what works’ in other jurisdictions, including evidence or learning from or changes to service provision because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Progress work to better understand the housing experiences of Section 75 groups, with reference to multiple identities and intersections between different equality categories. This is a key evidence gap identified in the Housing Supply Strategy EQIA;
- Continue to prioritise and improve housing adaptations to both social and private homes. This will build on the success of a new pilot approach for Housing Executive homes tested in pilot areas. It will also involve us working with the Housing Executive to examine the adaptations process, including the updating of the adaptations toolkit and identifying any policy gaps.
- Ensure an effective and fair social housing allocations system based on objective need through implementing the 18 recommendations of the Review of the Common Selection Scheme³² and examining further options on the issues of intimidation points and interim accommodation points;
- Bring forward a consultation on the future of the Housing Executive House Sales Scheme; and
- Work with local government and housing delivery partners to ensure that plans and policies support the delivery of a range of housing types and sizes, to meet the needs of a changing demographic and lifestyles.

³² <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/fundamental-review-social-housing-allocations>

Objective 3: Quality

Quality: Improve housing quality

Introduction

At the most basic level, achieving this objective is about ensuring that nobody has to live in inadequate housing. Our aim is for all homes to be of good quality meaning that everyone can expect the same high standards no matter what kind of home or tenure they live in.

As confirmed in the Call for Evidence:

- Our Housing Fitness Standard now lags behind that in place in other jurisdictions and is, therefore, limited as a tool for addressing our modern housing challenges and complimenting the NI Executive's wider policy agenda;
- There are particular issues with the quality, security and safety of our Private Rented Sector; and
- Many of our social homes are at risk unless we secure the investment necessary to allow these homes to maintained and enhanced.

It is also about supporting the principles of tenure-neutral standards and requiring housing developers and homeowners to ensure their properties meet current and future fitness standards. It must also necessitate action to ensure our buildings are fit for the future and meet our 2050 Net Zero Carbon objectives.

Linked to Objective 2, other issues around quality and design also include considerations around whether our homes are designed to best meet our needs. In this respect, stakeholders emphasised

the need for good design, so that accessibility does not compromise the attractiveness of their home or demarcate their home as different from surrounding homes.

Of course, issues of quality and safety also include surrounding areas and are directly linked to creating better places (Objective 4).

Long Term Policies and Interventions

The long term policies and interventions we are proposing to meet this objective and address the needs described include:

- **Update existing policies and develop new policies that will ensure our housing standards support the delivery of higher quality homes across all tenures**
- **Work collaboratively to ensure the design of our homes support those with care needs to live independently if they wish to do so**

Existing and New Enabling Activities

Building on the activities outlined under Objectives 1 and 2, we will:

- Undertake a comprehensive review of fitness standards applicable for all tenures.
- Support the timely uplift of building regulations for new homes and, where appropriate, the implementation of features of the Building Safety Bill (developed in the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster). In relation to the latter, this will include consideration if and how the role of a New Homes Ombudsman can support the delivery of high quality homes;

- Put the needs of tenants at the heart of ensuring that the PRS is suitable for a wider range of households. Specifically we will deliver new legislation that will improve the safety, security and quality of the Private Rented sector. In doing this we will aim to strengthen enforcement powers to uphold standards in the PRS by :
 - restricting rent increases to once in a 12 month period;
 - extending the notice to quit period a landlord must give a tenant;
 - setting limits on tenancy deposit amounts; and
 - making it a mandatory requirement for private landlords to provide smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and to carry out periodic electrical checks.

We will then take forward further work to address other cross cutting issues, including regulating letting agents and establishing specific grounds for eviction.

- Work with the Housing Executive to address its investment challenges in order to improve and maintain its existing social homes.
- Regularly review the Housing Association Guide to examine if and how we can enhance the design of our social housing to better meet the diversity of housing needs. This work will be informed by a wide range of evidence, including pilot projects.

Objective 4: Better Places

Better Places: Ensure the provision of housing options that contribute to the building and maintenance of thriving, inclusive communities and places;

Introduction

Doing things differently through working across departments and sectors can create new solutions to stubborn housing issues and will help achieve better outcomes for our communities. In order to achieve this, we need to agree a definition of what we mean by ‘sustainable homes and communities’. We will build on the definitions outlined in the DfI Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)³³ on core planning principles and in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 on sustainable communities and cohesive communities,³⁴ and note that the location of housing providing convenient access to key services by walking, cycling and public transport are key considerations reducing the need for motorised transport to access daily services.

These definitions describe sustainable communities as places where people want to live, work and play, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run and offer equality of opportunity and good services to all.

Building and maintaining thriving and inclusive communities and places can support the wellbeing of those who live there. One of the key ingredients in the creation of such places is the provision of a range of affordable housing options across a mix

of tenures that meet people’s needs across all stages of their lives. Coupled with this, these places should be located close to employment, recreation, shopping, community facilities and public transport services, and built with the necessary enabling infrastructure that takes account of future growth as well as addressing changes in demography, technology or climate change.

Our Strategy recognises the variety of urban, suburban and rural places that exist here and the myriad of challenges faced by different target groups within communities in these places. We acknowledge that a one size fits all approach to housing supply and place shaping will not work. Our approach will be more nuanced and dovetail with local Council led Community Plans and their Local Development Plans. Helping people to help design and access a range of housing options in the places and communities in which they want to live, is a cornerstone of this Strategy. We also recognise that the benefit of providing options that allow communities and places to thrive will have a potential concurrent effect of reducing stress on other parts of the public sector, for example the health and social care systems.

The Strategy recognises the need not just to build new homes and to protect existing supply but also to build and maintain the inclusive and cohesive places in which homes are located. This means taking a more integrated, person and community-focused approach to the creation of sustainable and thriving places, where the voices of local people have a say and they can take responsibility with others in how their areas are developed and maintained.

³³ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/SPPS.pdf> - Pg 12 para 3.6 and section 4.5 under core planning principles.

³⁴ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/regional-development-strategy-2035.pdf>. Pg 40 para 3.9 and 3.11.

Community wealth building is one such community-focussed approach. Community wealth building is a new people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people. Activity encompasses embedding social value in procurement (as referenced in Objective 1) and Community Asset Transfer.

The provision of a range of housing options is a key element of this Strategy. In this context 'options' can refer to a mixed tenure approach to housing provision, but also to the types of houses being provided within tenures. The advantage of mixed tenure in new or existing housing developments is that it creates a balanced social mix and as a result, communities are likely to be more diverse resulting in a more cohesive community and may be more tolerant of one another. In terms of housing options within tenures, these also have significant potential to help build and sustain diverse communities and places; for example, affordable and accessible housing options for those who are older and/or those who have disabilities or who have other particular housing needs; independent living options; affordable housing in rural settlements to sustain rural communities and to provide young and older people with options to be able to stay close to their families and support networks.

The Strategy also understands the impact of poverty and low-incomes in relation to housing affordability and sustainability and the differential impacts on Section 75 groups. That said, as previously highlighted, further data disaggregation and related research is required to gain a better understanding of the causality of many of the key inequalities that appear to exist when looking at housing experiences. There is a commitment to progress work to help achieve this understanding under Objective 2.

The Strategy also recognises the wider social and economic impacts and consequences of the segregation of housing here and the lack of integration across our communities and the benefits of creating more shared housing areas.

Long Term Policies and Interventions

The long term policies and interventions we are proposing to meet this objective and address the needs described include:

- **Putting place-shaping at the heart of our actions by developing policies that will support delivery of housing led regeneration, encourage mixed tenure and promote shared housing**
- **Ensure the planning system, including Local Development Plans, help support the delivery of the appropriate supply of housing, reflecting the changing nature of need and demand with consideration to wider policy influences including adaptive reuse and climate change.**
- **Work in new and different ways with local Councils and Community Planning Partnerships to realise opportunities to increase and maintain housing supply and help create sustainable and inclusive urban and rural places.**

Existing and New Enabling Activities

Building on the activities outlined under Objectives 1 -3, we will:

- Continue to progress and support the delivery of the Shared Housing Programme;
- Support the development of town and city centre waiting lists to provide improved housing options supported by accompanying soft and hard infrastructure that creates attractive and cohesive spaces in which people wish to live;

- Work with the Housing Executive, local government and housing delivery partners to mainstream mixed tenure in both social and private housing developments. This will involve the development of a mixed tenure policy;
- Develop a housing-led regeneration policy to focus on the reversal of physical, social and economic decline in areas of social deprivation and which takes account of the changing use of our villages, towns and city centres;
- Contribute to the implementation of the Housing Executive's 'Reaching Rural' 2021-2025 Strategy. The Strategy contains a key theme of 'Enabling the provision of affordable rural homes' and explicitly acknowledges many of the issues raised through the Call for Evidence, including hidden housing need, higher occurrence of less energy efficient homes and fuel poverty and infrastructure constraints. Also of direct relevance to the Call for Evidence, the Strategy commits to examine how community led housing can help address housing supply issues faced by rural communities.³⁵
- Explore the potential for Community Wealth Building approaches, including Community Asset Transfers to assist in the delivery of affordable housing which responds to local housing needs. This will include consideration of, if and how we can measure social value in the disposal of public land and property.
- Undertake research in new approaches to place making and their applicability to urban, suburban and rural areas. This could include sustainable approaches to contemporary place-making such as plot-based urbanism or gentle density alongside mechanisms for meaningfully engaging communities in place shaping and place making activities locally.
- Research and investigate how best to work with multiple agencies and other stakeholders to develop innovative demonstration projects to address the housing needs of those most in need.

³⁵ [https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Consultation-Draft-Rural-Strategy-2021/Draft-Rural-Strategy-2021-2025-\(PDF-1-5MB\).aspx](https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Documents/Consultation-Draft-Rural-Strategy-2021/Draft-Rural-Strategy-2021-2025-(PDF-1-5MB).aspx)

Objective 5: Decarbonisation

Decarbonisation: Reduce whole-life carbon emissions from both new homes and existing homes and support a 'just transition' to carbon neutrality.

Introduction:

Within New Decade New Approach,³⁶ the Executive committed to tackling climate change head on. This Strategy will support this existing commitment.

The Strategy recognises the key role that both the construction of new housing and the retrofitting of existing homes will play in helping to achieve an ambitious target of reducing all carbon emissions by 56%, by 2030 compared to 1990 levels – and ultimately to achieve net zero by 2050.³⁷ Measures to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock are undoubtedly a cost-effective intervention over the long-term that help reduce emissions and address fuel poverty. Location of housing will also be an important factor in reducing carbon. This links to Objective 4.

Based on current practices, technologies and building standards, constructing new homes using traditional practices and materials will generate pollutants that accelerate global warming. Similarly, heating existing, less thermally/energy-efficient homes will mean we continue to burn more fossil fuels – which is also detrimental for the environment.

People are concerned about the impacts of the energy transition, particularly how it may change their everyday lives as well as the costs associated with achieving carbon neutrality. It is the responsibility of government to help by clearly setting out the changes that are required and

implementing mechanisms to support people through the transition period, including behavioural change. Careful consideration (and tailored support) must be given to those most in need, including those disadvantaged and/or marginalised groups. It is also vital that we continue to engage with people throughout the transition to carbon neutrality.

This transition to carbon neutrality, although challenging, presents a major opportunity for the housing sector, a chance to make a fundamental change in its ambitions, processes and social contribution.

Long Term Policies and Interventions

The long term policies and interventions to support a just transition and an equitable decarbonisation of both new and existing supply are:

- **Protect and optimise existing supply, across all tenures, with consideration to retrofit, adaptive reuse and climate resilience.**
- **Support the vision and objectives of the Green Growth and Energy Strategies, with an emphasis on improving the energy efficiency of homes and ensuring a just transition to decarbonised solutions.**

Existing and New Enabling Activities

Building on the activities outlined under Objectives 1 -4, we will:

- Ensure that green growth is central to all our supply policy and budgetary decisions and support the new Green Growth test proposed under the Executive's draft Green Growth Strategy which seeks to ensure delivering Green Growth is a budgetary priority across the public sector.

³⁶ 2020-01-08_a_new_decade_a_new_approach.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

³⁷ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-Last-Of-Its-Kind.pdf>

- Support the delivery of initiatives in the Energy Strategy options consultation that have a housing focus, including:
 - Improving information and advice on energy efficiency and transitioning to net zero;
 - Ensuring energy is affordable for those on low incomes;
 - Enhancing energy efficiency of homes; through:
 - Enhanced building regulations
 - Setting Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)
 - Development of new approaches to support retrofit of existing homes; and
 - Identifying and addressing key skills needed.
- Deliver a new Fuel Poverty Strategy within the context of decarbonisation and just transition;
- Put in place minimum standards for the PRS, as part of a wider Executive policy to set MEES for all domestic tenure types (this also links to Objective 3 in relation to actions to improving quality and addressing affordability challenges in this sector).
- In line with the Energy Strategy options consultation, work with social and intermediate housing providers to ensure the homes they build are Net Zero ready by 2026/27.
- Make increased funding available to enable Housing Associations to build new homes to an energy efficiency standard that exceeds Building Regulations. This will reduce heating costs for tenants, remove the need for expensive retrofitting, and increase expertise and knowledge of low energy housing in the sector in advance of future clarification on Net Zero requirements and uplifts in building regulations.
- Work with social and affordable intermediate housing providers to advance decarbonisation in existing homes, to meet our climate change targets, improve the quality of homes and reduce heating costs for tenants.

Delivering the Strategy

Definition of Success

The aim for this Strategy will be to create a housing system that can deliver upwards of 100,000 homes over its lifetime. Crucially these will be homes of the right quality, right type, right cost and in the right locations to meet our current and future housing needs and demands.

To this end this Strategy is based on the assumption that as an Executive we will:

- Prioritise housing and deliver for those most in need;
- Grow the economy;
- Address investment in Infrastructure;
- Improve our Planning System;
- Release public sector land (both local and central government owned) where appropriate;
- Invest in modernising our skills;
- Secure the necessary funding for our decarbonisation requirements; and
- Maximise the availability of public and private finance.

Delivery Roadmap

The Housing Supply Strategy will be delivered through a series of detailed Action Plans, each of which will align with budget periods. By adopting this approach, we will ensure the actions that underpin the Strategy, are aligned to an ever-changing social, economic and environmental context. This will ensure the Strategy remains relevant and appropriate and provides a dynamic model for delivery, which is both flexible and focused.

To ensure delivery remains focused on our vision and objectives we will be:

- **Working Collaboratively:** across the system of government to transform supply
- **Thinking Differently:** acknowledge that transforming supply means protecting existing homes as well as providing new homes
- **Promoting Change:** by taking forward new and different solutions with both existing and new delivery partners

Working Collaboratively

Implementing this Strategy will require coordination across local and central government as well as new and different arrangements with both the third sector and private sector. To provide leadership and co-ordination across both central and local government landscapes we will implement a new Programme Structure to coordinate delivery of the Strategy and associated policies.

We will contribute to and work alongside wider and related work streams, including the delivery of the Energy Strategy, the Green Growth Strategy, the new Anti-Poverty Strategy, the Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030, the Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031 and the ambitions of 10X Economy. We will work with delivery partners and stakeholders to map where current capabilities and responsibilities exist and identify gaps or constraints in delivering our vision. We will then set out our plans for delivery of the Strategy.

Thinking Differently

This new approach is about collaborating to provide ‘whole system’ solutions and capitalising on the different strengths, expertise and experience of partners. Progressing this approach will include the ongoing development and stewardship of action plans.

Promoting Change

Delivering on our supply needs is not just about building more homes, rather it involves ensuring that we have the right types of homes in the right places and we protect and enhance the homes we already have. It is also about unblocking barriers, while exploring new ways of doing things and working better with both new and existing partners.

Review and implement necessary legislative, policy and regulatory changes

New legislation, policies and procurement protocols are likely to be required to underpin the delivery of the Strategy. We will identify where new powers and policies are needed to enable strategy delivery and set out a framework for implementing these.

Produce a comprehensive evidence base to inform policy decisions

We will publish an outline of the research, modelling and analysis that will support the Strategy moving forward.

Equality and Rural Needs

We will also establish monitoring systems for the EQIA and Rural Needs Impact Assessment which accompanies this Strategy and this information will help shape actions to address identified housing inequalities throughout the Strategy.

Monitoring

We will carry out a strategic review of this Strategy every five years. We will publish annual progress reports on this Strategy and it will be updated as necessary.

Progress reports will:

- Track our identified metrics and monitor progress;
- Refresh and update the action plan, including new actions identified; and
- Provide an overview of strategic developments

The first progress report will be published covering the period to March 2023.

Questions

Consultation Questions: We would like to thank you for your input so far and we would urge you to contribute to shape the development of the final strategy.

Responses to the questions should be made via the Citizenspace survey which can be found on the Housing Supply Strategy consultation **webpage**.

If you are unable to complete the survey online please contact the Housing Supply Strategy team by email: **dfchousingsupplystrategy@communities-ni.gov.uk**

Strategic Framework

- 1 The Call for Evidence consultation showed that there was broad support for the proposed vision, objectives and timeframe for the Strategy. Based on the comments received we have updated these for the draft Strategy – are you content with these?
- 2 The assessment of the Call for Evidence has enabled us to develop a total of 15 longer term policies and interventions that will provide the basis to develop appropriate action plans. Do you agree with the focus of these 15 high level long term policies and interventions?
- 3 The Strategy includes an enabling principle to: ‘Adopt a whole system approach, collaborate with central and local government and the third and private sectors to inclusively transform supply.’ Do you agree with the proposed enabling principle?

Measurement

- 4 Do you agree with the proposed ambition to deliver 100,000 plus homes over the 15 year lifespan of the Strategy?
- 5 Do you agree with the proposed indicators to measure the success and progress of the Housing Supply Strategy?
- 6 Are there any additional indicators that you consider would add value in measuring success and progress?

Delivery and Oversight

- 7 How can we best ensure that key strategic partners such as other Departments, local government, the Voluntary & Community sector and private sector can participate in the delivery and oversight of the Supply Strategy delivery?

Action Planning

- 8 Are there any proven or new approaches you are aware of, that you believe would help us work best with other organisations to develop and deliver the action plans?

Citizen Engagement

- 9 There was broad support in the Call for Evidence for the need to engage local communities in housing supply to create sustainable, thriving and inclusive communities. In what way do you consider this could best be achieved and do you have any examples of best practice in this area?

Equality

- 10 Do you agree with the findings of the EQIA?

11 Are there any other inequalities that have not been highlighted in the EQIA that you believe the EQIA needs to note?

12 Do you agree with the immediate next steps as outlined in Section 5 of the EQIA?

Rural

13 The Rural Needs Impact Assessment outlines that the development of the Housing Supply Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on people on Rural Areas? Do you agree with this assessment?

14 Is there any other evidence, information or issues you think should be considered in this screening?

General

We would welcome any other comments or suggestions you have that you consider are relevant to developing and delivering the Housing Supply Strategy.

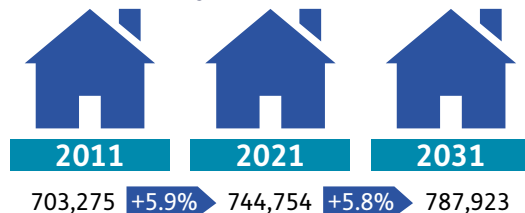
Annex A – Key Trends Impacting on the Housing Market

Key Trends Impacting the Housing Market

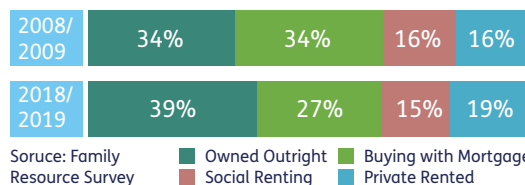
NI Household Projections 2011-2031 Source NINIS



NI Household Projections 2011-2031



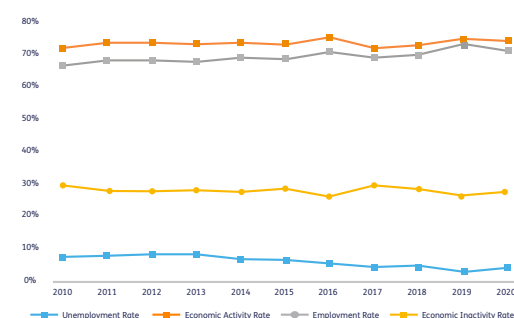
Tenure 2008/09 - 2018/19



Economic Inactivity*



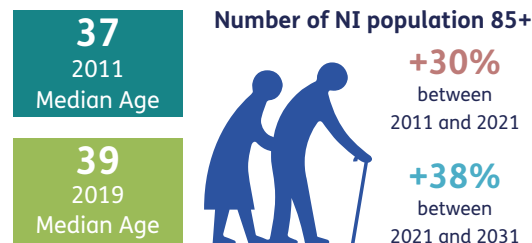
NI Labour Market Trends 2010-2020



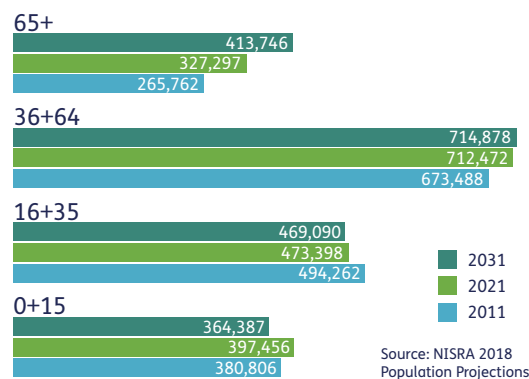
Source: NISRA Labour Market Report



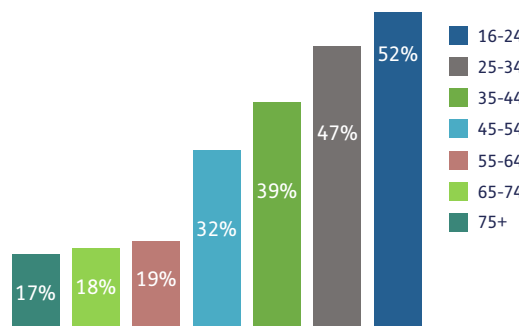
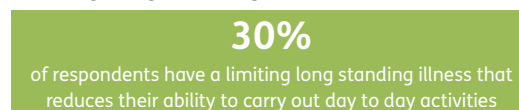
NI Average Household Size: 2011-2031



Population Age Profile



Limiting Long Standing Illness



Source: Health Survey NI 2019/20

Workers in NI are Low Paid, Insecure Employment*

*This includes those earning less than the living wage; and in temporary employment, self-employment or those who report volatile pay and/or hours.

Annex B – Long Term Policies and Interventions – How they Contribute to Objectives

Policies and interventions	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
Work collaboratively and innovatively with the private, public and third sectors to address issues around land availability and considering issues such as: local services, infrastructure constraints, sustainable drainage, digital connectivity and transport.	Primary ³⁸	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enhance our open data platforms to improve access to housing, land, property and planning data, creating better transparency and unlocking opportunities to transform supply.	Primary	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure our housing policy and legislative framework enables us to deliver the housing supply to meet our current and future needs and demand patterns.	Primary				
Support upskilling, reskilling, delivery of apprenticeships and training for both existing workers and new workers in order to underpin a modern integrated housing system. This will include ensuring that public procurement spend contributes to the Executive's objectives, including creating jobs in deprived areas and ensuring security of our wider supply chain.	Primary				
Work innovatively to optimise access to alternative forms of public and private finance such as Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) and institutional funding to develop and deliver new and affordable housing products.	Primary	✓			
Deliver housing solutions for citizens who are most in need, recognising the inequalities identified through the Equality Impact Assessment developed to support this Housing Supply Strategy		Primary		✓	
Develop and implement new policies that will support the delivery of a more diverse range of housing types/alternative models of housing to meet all housing needs		Primary		✓	
Improve our response to homelessness with a focus on prevention and learning the lessons from what worked so well during the pandemic as well as innovations from elsewhere		Primary			

³⁸ The Primary objective is the objective it is captured under within the Strategy.

Policies and interventions	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5
Update existing policies and develop new policies that will ensure our housing standards support the delivery of higher quality homes across all tenures	✓		Primary	✓	✓
Work collaboratively to ensure the design of our homes support those with care needs to live independently if they wish to do so			Primary		
Putting place-shaping at the heart of our actions by developing policies that will support delivery of housing led regeneration, encourage mixed tenure and promote shared housing.	✓			Primary	
Ensure the planning system, including Local Development Plans, can deliver the appropriate supply of housing, reflecting changing nature of need and demand and with consideration to wider policy influences including adaptive reuse and climate change.	✓			Primary	✓
Work in new and different ways with local Councils and Community Planning Partnerships to realise opportunities to increase and maintain housing supply and help create sustainable and inclusive urban and rural places.				Primary	
Protect and optimise existing supply, across all tenures, with consideration to retrofit, adaptive reuse and climate resilience.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Primary
Support the vision and objectives of the Green Growth and Energy Strategies, with an emphasis on improving the energy efficiency of homes and ensuring a just transition to decarbonised solutions.	✓				Primary

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**Belfast City Council Response to the Department for
Communities Housing Supply Strategy 2022 -2037**

February 2022

DRAFT

Questions

Strategic Framework

1. The Call for Evidence consultation showed that there was broad support for the proposed vision, objectives, and timeframe for the Strategy. Based on the comments received we have updated these for the draft Strategy – are you content with these?
2. The assessment of the Call for Evidence has enabled us to develop a total of 15 longer term policies and interventions that will provide the basis to develop appropriate action plans. Do you agree with the focus of these 15 high-level long-term policies and interventions?
3. The Strategy includes an enabling principle to: 'Adopt a whole system approach, collaborate with central and local government and the third and private sectors to inclusively transform supply.' Do you agree with the proposed enabling principle?

Measurement

4. Do you agree with the proposed ambition to deliver 100,000 plus homes over the 15-year lifespan of the Strategy?
5. Do you agree with the proposed indicators to measure the success and progress of the Housing Supply Strategy?
6. Are there any additional indicators that you consider would add value in measuring success and progress?

Delivery and Oversight

7. How can we best ensure that key strategic partners such as other Departments, local government, the Voluntary & Community sector, and private sector can participate in the delivery and oversight of the Supply Strategy delivery?

Action Planning

8. Are there any proven or new approaches you are aware of, that you believe would help us work best with other organisations to develop and deliver the action plans?

Citizen Engagement

9. There was broad support in the Call for Evidence for the need to engage local communities in housing supply to create sustainable, thriving, and inclusive communities. In what way do you consider this could best be achieved and do you have any examples of best practice in this area?

Equality

10. Do you agree with the findings of the EQIA?
11. Are there any other inequalities that have not been highlighted in the EQIA that you believe the EQIA needs to note?
12. Do you agree with the immediate next steps as outlined in Section 5 of the EQIA?

Rural

13. The Rural Needs Impact Assessment outlines that the development of the Housing Supply Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on people on Rural Areas? Do you agree with this assessment?
14. Is there any other evidence, information, or issues you think should be considered in this screening?

Strategic Framework

1. The Call for Evidence consultation showed that there was broad support for the proposed vision, objectives, and timeframe for the Strategy. Based on the comments received we have updated these for the draft Strategy – are you content with these?

The Housing Supply Strategy Call for Evidence proposed the vision that *‘Every household has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate for its needs’*. The proposed vision for the Housing Supply Strategy adds new element of ‘Everyone’ having access to a home in a *‘thriving and inclusive community’*. This revised vision is welcomed as it encompasses issues such as affordability, accessibility, sustainability, quality, and security of tenure. Additionally, this vision recognises the need not just to build new homes and to protect existing supply but also to build and maintain the inclusive and cohesive places in which homes are located. It focuses on creation of sustainable and thriving places, where the voices of local people have a say, and they can take responsibility with others in how their areas are developed and maintained.

The Council can see clear alignment and synergies between the proposed vision for the Strategy and the Belfast Agenda (the Community Plan for the City) which focuses on inclusive growth where no one is left behind, with the vision and outcomes being long-term and intended to improve the lives of everyone in Belfast. Moreover, the proposed vision for the Strategy is aligned with a number of corporate strategies and strategic priorities for the Council, including the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, the Belfast Resilience Strategy, the Local Development Plan (LDP) draft Plan Strategy, the Inclusive Growth Strategy, and the Good Relations Strategy.

The aim for the Housing Supply Strategy will be to create a housing system that can deliver upwards of 100,000 homes over 15 years. It is centred on delivering five key objectives:

- Increase housing supply and affordable options across all tenures to meet housing need and demand.
- Prevent homelessness, reduce housing stress, and improve and prioritise housing solutions for those most in need.
- Improve housing quality.
- Ensure the provision of housing options that contribute to the building and maintenance of thriving, inclusive communities, and places; and
- Reduce whole-life carbon emissions from both new homes and existing homes and support a ‘just transition’ to carbon neutrality.

Housing is integral to creating sustainable communities. Consultation and engagement gathered to inform the development and priorities of the Belfast Agenda for the city, found that affordable and

safe housing is fundamental to the quality of life of Belfast citizens. Council has committed to collaborative working through Community Planning to maximise the benefits of housing investment in the city, increasing the tenure mix, growing the population of the city centre, and helping to create sustainable communities. The Belfast Agenda is also seeking to deliver increased social and affordable housing in the city and will measure outcomes through housing supply and housing stress indicators. This included specific targets for the delivery of 1,800 social housing units to 2021 and recognised the need to agree city-wide targets for affordable housing.

Furthermore, the Living Here priority of the Belfast Agenda places a significant emphasis on housing whilst the City Development Board has recognised housing led regeneration as a key priority area. The Resilience and Sustainability Board has identified 30 programmes which will improve Belfast's resilience including housing focused areas.

In the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS – the policy framework for the city centre developed by the Council and adopted by the Department for Communities), a key priority area is to increase the residential population within the city centre: the proposed objectives will be a key enabler to this alongside collaboration between Council and the public and private sectors.

There is also a strong degree of alignment between the overall Strategic Aims and Objectives of the Housing Supply Strategy and the city's LDP, as well as the policy aims set out specifically in relation to housing.

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

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

Furthermore, Council welcomes the aim of the Strategy to prioritise housing solutions for those most in need. To help address this in the future, the Belfast LDP seeks to improve the adaptability and accessibility of new housing through the requirements for all new housing to meet a number of criteria intended to improve adaptability and accessibility of units, as well as a proportion of all new homes across all tenures to be wheelchair adaptable (see Policy HOU7).

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

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2. The assessment of the Call for Evidence has enabled us to develop a total of 15 longer term policies and interventions that will provide the basis to develop appropriate action plans. Do you agree with the focus of these 15 high-level long-term policies and interventions?

The Strategy sets out a number of long-term policies and interventions over a 15-year period to 2037, of which the most significant from a Council perspective include:

- Working collaboratively and innovatively with the private, public and third sectors to address issues around land availability and considering issues such as local services, infrastructure constraints, sustainable drainage, digital connectivity, and transport:

The Council believes a collaborative approach involving community, landowners and other stakeholders sits at the heart of all future plans for housebuilding, with placemaking an integral part of this. It is also key that there are strong collaboration across-Government departments so that, for example, there is strong alignment between the policy frameworks and stated outcomes for both planning and housing policy. This is particularly relevant around the supporting infrastructure required, there is a need to ensure that the resourcing deficit for required wastewater infrastructure including exploration of the potential for alternative funding models is addressed to ensure this does not prohibit housing development. In addition, there is a critical need to ensuring we have sustainable transport options, if we are to meet housing growth ambitions, we will need to work collaboratively to deliver on alternative travel options and end car dominance, which has been identified as one the key moves within A Bolder Vision.

In relation to land availability, we welcome recognition that there should be a greater use of public land for housing, as well as recognition that local government has a key role in this alongside central government. It should be noted that the LDP process is the most appropriate mechanism for the consideration of the suitability of any available land for housing, but we recognise that within this context public sector land assets could have an important role to play. It is important that more is done to enable the public sector bodies to dispose of land with a sole objective of obtaining stated regeneration outcomes, especially in cases where this can only be facilitated where the best price that could be obtained for land is not the over-riding consideration. There is also a strong case to be made for re-commencing work to extend regeneration powers to local Council's to further facilitate this objective.

Alongside public sector land, more should also be done to ensure there is a ready supply of private land for housing and we would like to see early actions to disincentivise land speculation and land-banking within the private sector, as well as incentives to help de-risk private development where viability is marginal leading to market failure. The annual housing land availability monitor in Belfast identifies land for over 20,000 new housing units, most of which

has received planning consent, suggesting that the planning system is not the primary barrier to delivery.

- Working innovatively to optimise access to alternative forms of public and private finance such as Financial Transactions Capital (FTC) and institutional funding to develop and deliver new and affordable housing products:

We welcome that the policies will include significant committed investment and funding streams. The recently published Reset for Growth Report from the Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission has found that Belfast presents a unique opportunity to position a significant housing building programme at the heart of its economic recovery plans. The Commission sees this investment in housing stock as having the potential to address a number of economic and social problems. These findings should be used in support of ensuring significant investment and funding is aligned to delivery plans.

- Supporting the delivery of a more diverse range of housing types, delivery of housing solutions for those who are most in need and provide lifetime homes. Encouraging mixed tenure and promote shared housing. Delivering higher quality homes; AND Putting place-shaping at the heart of our actions by developing policies that will support delivery of housing led regeneration, encourage mixed tenure development, and promote shared housing AND Ensuring the planning system, including Local Development Plans can deliver the appropriate supply of housing, reflecting the changing nature of need and demand and with consideration to wider policy influence including adaptive reuse and climate change:

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

The Council believes that housing led regeneration policy contributes to reversing the physical, social, and economic decline of town and city centres. The delivery of homes offers significant opportunities to help achieve balanced communities through well-linked, accessible, inclusive, mixed-tenure neighbourhoods. Combined with creating opportunities for communities to access local employment shopping, leisure and social facilities ensuring that they can live full independent lives in an inclusive, cohesive, and sustainable community. Provision of good quality shared social and community infrastructure is critical for social cohesion and contributes

to the creation of lifetime neighbourhoods. Accessibility cannot compromise attractiveness and the Council therefore supports the need for good design.

We recognise that there is a need for a broader range of affordable housing products available to help deliver these ambitions and note the on-going work in relation to the development of an affordable rent policy and model for NI and to explore the scope for private sector leasing. Whilst this work is to be welcomed, it should be noted that progress on practical delivery of mixed tenure development is required now to maximise the potential of existing proposals both within the planning system at present and those recently granted approval. Furthermore, the imminent adoption of the Plan Strategy for Belfast will necessitate the need for workable solutions for mixed tenure development in a far broader range of circumstances in the very near future.

Within this context, as well as ensuring that Housing Associations can fully participate in creating and delivering new housing options across all tenures, consideration should be given as to how private sector developers can better contribute to affordable housing tenures. This is particularly pertinent in a higher density, City Centre context where retaining ownership of rental properties may be central to the investment models required to ensure developments can be delivered (e.g., Build to Rent). Consideration should be given to enabling the private sector to deliver affordable homes directly, as well as in partnership with Housing Associations.

- Protecting and optimising existing supply, across all tenures, with consideration to retrofit, adaptive reuse and climate resilience AND Supporting the vision and objectives of the Green Growth and Energy Strategies, with an emphasis on improving the energy efficiency of homes and ensuring a just transition to decarbonised solutions.

The Council is committed to inclusive growth so that the success of the city reaches every citizen. Our aim is to connect all residents with economic growth and create vibrant communities where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed. Therefore, we strongly agree that a Housing Supply Strategy should consider both the provision of new homes and protecting existing supply.

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

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

have therefore embedded environmental resilience within the emerging LDP and consider this provides good alignment with the emerging Housing Supply Strategy.

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3. The Strategy includes an enabling principle to: ‘Adopt a whole system approach, collaborate with central and local government and the third and private sectors to inclusively transform supply.’ Do you agree with the proposed enabling principle?

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

To ensure effective delivery of any strategy there is a need to ensure cross-cutting collaboration and policy coordination across all relevant public sector bodies, as well as exploring opportunities to work with third and private sectors.

Working collaboratively across central and local government and with the private and voluntary and community sectors will be crucial in making a difference to the challenges facing the housing supply system. It is essential to realise the full place making potential of an area. It will also help to ensure delivery remains focused on the vision and objectives included within the Strategy.

Measurement

4. Do you agree with the proposed ambition to deliver 100,000 plus homes over the 15-year lifespan of the Strategy?

The aim for the Housing Supply Strategy is to create a housing system that can deliver upwards of 100,000 homes over its 15-year lifetime. The 15-Year timeframe for the Housing Supply Strategy is welcomed and aligns with the timeframe for the delivery of the growth ambitions envisaged for Belfast as a city through the delivery of the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda and emerging LDP. We believe that this long-term view is required, supported by short-term action plans and interventions.

Whilst the figure of 100,000 new homes is considered realistic in terms of recent housing delivery rates, the Council note that it is relatively unambitious given that house building over the last 11 years has averaged 6,200 new homes, compared to just over 6,600 required to deliver 100,000 new units by 2037.

Perhaps of greater importance is where these new homes are to be delivered, rather than the overall number. For example, the latest housing statistics from the Department for 2019/20 show that over 25% of the new homes delivered were private single dwellings in rural areas of the Region, which places an unsustainable pressure of supporting infrastructure and the environment and causes increased pressures for existing employment and service centres within the larger urban areas.

Furthermore, there is a significant disconnect between the areas in which housing is most needed, most notably within the social and affordable housing sectors. For example, recent delivery shows that the highest rates of housing growth have been seen in Newry, Mourne and Down and the Mid Ulster Districts, whilst the greatest level of need in terms of social housing and the greatest affordability pressures are seen in Belfast and the North West/Derry.

To illustrate this point, there are currently 11,858 people on the social housing waiting list in Belfast, which represents over 27% of the Regional social housing demand. However, the Housing Growth Indicators (HGIs), which are published by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to provide a starting point for planning for future housing growth, suggest only 8.7% of new housing should be within Belfast. The Council has therefore undertaken its own work to inform the LDP draft Plan Strategy and have proposed a far more ambitious target of 31,600 new homes to 2035. This again highlights the need for a joined-up policy environment across different Departments of Regional Government, as well as broad alignment at local level.

The consultation document states (page 33) that 'the Housing Supply Strategy will be delivered through a series of detailed Action Plans, each of which will align with budget periods. The Strategic framework adds (page 8) that 'long term policies and interventions over a 15-year period to 2037 will be divided into enabling action plans over 1–3-year periods. Given the medium to long term nature

of housing delivery at scale, it is imperative that the action planning and funding processes provide an appropriate multi-year framework to support the development of a robust process of action planning, funding, performance management, monitoring, and review. The Council would welcome further discussion on this overall delivery framework and how it may align with similar processes at a local level designed to delivery community planning and other strategic priorities.

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5. Do you agree with the proposed indicators to measure the success and progress of the Housing Supply Strategy?

The measurement of the impact of the Housing Supply Strategy will be monitored and reported upon with reference to a basket of indicators which include:

- Housing Stock figures.
- Number of households in housing stress.
- Number of households who are homeless both presentations and acceptances.
- Proportion of households spending 30% or more of their household income on housing costs.
- Proportion of households who report being either “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied” with their house or flat.
- Percentage of homes that meet the Fitness Standard.
- Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings - for assessing energy ratings for homes.

Council agrees that the measurement of the impact of the Housing Supply Strategy needs to be monitored and reported.

6. Are there any additional indicators that you consider would add value in measuring success and progress?

Whilst Council understands there is already a significant amount of data available in relation to existing housing stock there is always room for improvement, and we would support a robust approach to addressing this. There is also a need for alignment in relation to future housing requirements across a range of tenures that are both calculated and articulated, which we understand is being considered in depth by the NIHE. It is important from a local government perspective that these associated indicators are available at a District level, as well as Regionally, as this will allow for greater alignment with monitoring processes that are already in place locally.

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

This results in a current context in Belfast where the HGIs suggest a housing growth of 7,400 units between 2016 and 2030, whilst the NIHE's latest Housing Market Analysis estimate the future social housing need alone of over 6,000 units between 2020-2035. Clearly a significant disconnect, without even considering the range of broader housing tenures.

Whilst we welcome recognition that the NIHE's new approach to Housing Market Analysis may provide useful indicators to provide a more nuanced picture of the supply picture against housing need, it is also recognised that this is currently undertaken in an ad-hoc manner and without the necessary frequency to provide a robust monitoring framework. Considerations should therefore be given as to how a more regular programme of locally focused housing market analysis could be provided for this purpose.

Council agrees with the number of households in housing stress indicator to measure the success and progress of the Housing Supply Strategy. For example, the Belfast Agenda - the community plan for the city, created and being delivered via the Community Planning Partnership – will seek to deliver increased social and affordable housing in the city and will also measure outcomes through housing supply and housing stress indicators. By 2021 the Belfast Agenda had committed to delivering 1,800 social housing units and agreeing a city target for affordable housing. Since publishing the Belfast Agenda 1,391 new social homes have been built across the city.

Delivery and Oversight

7. How can we best ensure that key strategic partners such as other Departments, local government, the Voluntary & Community sector, and private sector can participate in the delivery and oversight of the Supply Strategy delivery?

Housing Supply faces a huge range of related and interdependent challenges that requires a new approach to unlocking the necessary solutions. To ensure effective delivery of any strategy there is a need to ensure cross-cutting collaboration and policy coordination across all relevant public sector bodies, as well as exploring opportunities to work with third party and private sectors. This partnership approach is particularly important in the context of Belfast and Northern Ireland as a whole, given the fragmented governance, financial complexities, planning, interface issues, land availability and housing stress. This approach is also reflective of the process adopted in the development and delivery of the Belfast Agenda. The approach provides a potential opportunity to link to the Community Planning Partnership processes and structures to support the delivery of the city's growth ambitions.

BCC has commented through the Call for Evidence response that the 3 main barriers to delivery of the Housing Supply are Funding, Delivery Vehicles & Land. Delivery of joined up policies and having supported and properly joined up infrastructure, with all 3 having to be overcome to support the development and growth ambitions of the Belfast Agenda, will be required.

As part of the Belfast Community Planning process the CPP City Development Board has identified housing regeneration as a priority. Specifically, in relation to the use of public sector lands a partnership Delivery Group, under the City Development Board, has been created. Through this partnership working the Group's objective is to support integrated planning and greater collaboration across partners in relation to the assessment and identification of city-wide public-sector lands to facilitate housing led regeneration, as well as identifying potential strategic land opportunities across all sectors (which includes the private, community and voluntary sector), either on their own or in conjunction with adjoining public sector owned lands. It is also intended that this group will explore mechanisms to establish partnerships for development of homes and ways of investing in housing throughout the city, as well as identifying barriers to delivery and potential solutions. It will also consider how best to maximise the wider regeneration benefits, connectivity and place making potential of identified housing development opportunities. By having similar focused aims and objectives across all partners ensures that the Housing Supply Strategy can be delivered within a co-ordinated approach with all stakeholders committing to timeframes, aims and objectives thereby supporting a holistic and joined up approach.

Belfast City Council has been undertaking Strategic Site Assessments in respect of its own lands, as well as adjoining public sector lands and private sector as appropriate to bring forward opportunities for housing led and mixed-use regeneration. Council have been working closely with the Department for Communities and NIHE in this regard.

Belfast City Council and partners including NIHE, LPS, DfC and SIB have taken forward the approach advocated for within the Innovation & Inclusive Growth Commission 'Reset for Growth' report around the establishment of a Strategic Land Partnership. This collaborative approach brings together public and statutory bodies to drive forward more effective use of public lands, providing a stable, sustainable supply of land for housing or other development types in line with strategic ambitions. The focus of this group is to identify physical assets suitable for assembly into investable propositions of scale, and importantly will look at the availability of both public and private sector land. There are currently a number of policy, financial and structural challenges to delivery of placemaking housing regeneration schemes via public /private partnerships and this is significantly impacting on the ability to delivery of regenerative housing at scale. We would propose that a Task Group be set up to undertake a sharp, short, and focused review of these challenges and the mechanisms to overcome. This is critical to understand and deliver on optimal ways of working and delivery vehicles that involve the public sector working with the private sector and funders to bring forward appropriate housing development opportunities in a more agile way thus ensuring the required processes, delivery vehicles, funding and supporting infrastructure are aligned to deliver agreed outcomes to provide for appropriate housing development at scale whilst ensuring proper integrated placemaking.

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

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

At present there are also a number of gaps principally in terms of the structural models required to support public-private collaboration and access to finance to bring forward developments. Innovative finance solutions, investment funds and public sector interventions will be required to unlock this.

Action Planning

8. Are there any proven or new approaches you are aware of, that you believe would help us work best with other organisations to develop and deliver the action plans?

Council welcomes the details outlined within “Delivering the Strategy”, in that the Housing Supply Strategy will be delivered through a series of detailed Action Plans, each of which will align with budget periods. In our response to the Call for Evidence we called for significant committed investment and funding streams in order to gain traction and create the needed catalytic effect in housing supply. The Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission, Reset for Growth Report has found that Belfast presents a unique opportunity to position a significant housing building programme at the heart of its economic recovery plans. The Commission sees this investment in housing stock as having the potential to address a number of economic and social problems. These findings should be used in support of ensuring significant investment and funding is aligned to delivery plans.

Council would advocate for the approach taken with Community Planning, in Belfast, to assist in working with other organisations to develop and deliver the action plans. As touched on in the previous question, Council have led the community planning process. We worked with partners, including representatives from the statutory, business, higher education, and community and voluntary sectors, to develop a long-term plan to improve the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the city. Council feels that we can continue to develop and improve our collaborative actioning and delivery through strategic partnerships we have forged across the city and utilising the structures that are there to support these for example the Community Planning Partnership and associated boards. These partnerships will go some way to enabling the delivery of new and regenerated inclusive, healthy, sustainable, resilient, and liveable city centre neighbourhoods. We believe that community planning provides a good platform to bring partners and stakeholders together with a clear focus on place including as a priority area Housing Led Regeneration. We would recommend, however, that urgent consideration is given to refreshing the legislative basis of community planning in Northern Ireland to bring it more in line with other jurisdictions such as Scotland and Wales. There is a need to strengthen the role of central government in the process and encourage and enable community planning partners to commit shared resources to implement agreed action plans and programmes of activity to truly add value and unlock growth potential and ambitions to assist with delivering on housing aspirations.

The Community Planning Partnership in Belfast consists of a number of Boards aligned to the pillars of the Belfast Agenda. The City Development Board is of particular relevance, which has representation from across government departments, VCSE, anchor institutions and local development community. This structure provides a key vehicle for the delivery of a joined-up action plan to deliver on outcomes, with a priority themed area of Housing Led Regeneration.

As part of this Council officers and partners brought forward proposals for the establishment of a Housing Led Regeneration Group. This group currently includes representatives from BCC, NIHE, SIB, DfC & LPS and is chaired by the Chief Executive of NIHE. Aligned to the Terms of Reference of this group, the immediate task is site identification across the city with the key purpose as follows:

- To support integrated planning and greater collaboration across partners in relation to the assessment and identification of city-wide public-sector lands to facilitate housing led regeneration, as well as identifying potential strategic private sector land opportunities, either on their own or in conjunction with adjoining public sector owned lands.
- To explore mechanisms to establish partnerships for development of homes and ways of investing in housing throughout the city, as well as identifying barriers to delivery and potential solutions.
- To consider how to maximise the wider regeneration benefits, connectivity and place making potential of identified housing development opportunities.
- Contribute to realising the ambitions and opportunities which will deliver on the city's housing and population growth targets as set out in the Belfast Agenda.

As mentioned previously the Innovation & Growth Commission 'Reset for Growth' report had recommended that a Strategic Land Partnership be established to identify assets suitable for assembly into investable proportions of scale for housing. In order to accelerate delivery their proposition was that BCC, NIHE and DfC establish a delivery vehicle to utilise public sector land and undertake land assembly to facilitate new low carbon housing at scale across the city. This proposition was also to include the identification of private sector lands and involvement of the private sector. The establishment of the Housing Led Regeneration Group therefore aligns with these recommendations and provides an opportunity to coalesce around the work of the various partners to try and drive forward housing opportunities.

Citizen Engagement

- 9. There was broad support in the Call for Evidence for the need to engage local communities in housing supply to create sustainable, thriving, and inclusive communities. In what way do you consider this could best be achieved and do you have any examples of best practice in this area?**

The Council is committed to early engagement with local communities and stakeholders to ensure from the outset they are involved in shaping places that will encourage sustainable, thriving, and inclusive communities.

The Council has sought to encourage wide-ranging and comprehensive discussions on the Belfast Agenda and more recently the review of the Belfast Agenda (The Belfast Agenda: Continuing the Conversation), LDP and key planning policies that will guide future development to deliver the tangible social, economic, and environmental benefits for the city.

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

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

Council understands that housing supply requires a people-focused approach to the planning and design of new and future developments and places therefore Council places great emphasis on collaborative engagement between applicants and stakeholders in advance of a full planning submissions.

Pre-Application Discussions (PAD) provide an opportunity for early consideration and engagement on design considerations and will generally produce better outcomes, particularly for housing schemes, as it provides the opportunity to work through issues such as design and access, transport, parking including green travel measures, heritage and conservation issues, and environmental issues.

Council recognises the importance of providing a planning system that is clear, transparent, and accessible to different user groups so that people have the opportunity to participate and are not

disadvantaged by the planning process. Finding and maintaining effective means of communication is unquestionably central to the collaborative process of place making. Through providing the opportunity for active participation from early onset instils ownership and pride in the outcome, which will greatly encourage its ongoing success and contribute to vibrancy, adaptability, and diversity thus creating sustainable, safe, and thriving communities.

Council has also led on various non statutory Masterplans and regeneration plans focused on the regeneration and 'place making' of specific areas, with community participation being integral to this process. Consultation and engagement have included workshops, events, and discussions in the heart of communities where residents, landowners and other stakeholders can become involve realising the full place making potential of an area.

Council believes regular, collaborative, and inclusive community engagement is fundamental to shaping our city at all levels. The Belfast City Council Consultation and Engagement Framework, 2020, sets out a pathway to how we listen, consult, and involve people. We are committed to ensure that all voices have an opportunity to be heard, particularly those who may find it more difficult to participate because of disability, age, language, caring responsibilities, or any other circumstance. Our consultation is guided by the principles contained in the Equality Commissions guidance "Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 - A Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010)" and our Equality Scheme - chapter 3, 'Our arrangements for consulting.

As well as traditional methods of consultation, Council has invested in digital technology and has created a dedicated online engagement platform to make it easier for residents and stakeholders to share their thoughts and ideas at an early stage and encourage open and ongoing dialogue. Your Say, noted in the Housing Supply Call for Evidence, is a platform where residents and other interested parties can submit ideas and comments and get involved in online forums and much more.

Council feels that we can continue to develop and improve our means of engagement through strategic partnerships we have forged across the city and utilising the structures that are there to support these for example the Community Planning Partnership and associated boards. Council would advocate that effective community engagement sits at the heart of all future plans for house building / supply with placemaking an integral part of this.

Equality

10. Do you agree with the findings of the EQIA?

The Council has submitted through the call for evidence that it is satisfied with the framing of local demand based on the constructs of accessibility, adequacy, and sustainability. The EQIA has examined data across all section 75 groups and rightly recognises that not all groups experience the same housing challenges and welcomes that inequalities will be addressed by improving housing solutions for those most in need. This also acknowledges the increasing diversity within Belfast and the historic and systematic inequalities in relation to housing, particularly in Belfast, where public segregation in Belfast has increased to 94%

11. Are there any other inequalities that have not been highlighted in the EQIA that you believe the EQIA needs to note?

The Strategy's vision statement:

"Everybody has access to a good quality, affordable and sustainable home that is appropriate to their needs and is located in a thriving and inclusive community" ...provides an opportunity to maximise equality of opportunity and good relations. It is recognised that it can be difficult to engage with some harder to reach groups. However, it is imperative that vulnerable groups such as young people leaving care, victims of domestic violence, refugees and others are not overlooked.

The Council has previously highlighted that data gaps and how they relate to inequalities have been evidenced through the increased use of the Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) methodology for example in community planning. Increasing the ability to extract knowledge and insights from structured and unstructured data is becoming central to how we apply actionable insights across areas. The centrality of the work to address data gaps, as identified by the ECNI and the Wallace Report is fundamental to addressing vertical and horizontal inequalities.

12. Do you agree with the immediate next steps as outlined in Section 5 of the EQIA?

The Council agrees that the Housing Supply Strategy must be set in the context of persistent inequalities in housing supply across Northern Ireland and welcomes the positive ways in which the EQIA will lessen the severity of any adverse impact on any relevant equality categories.

The HSS as a long-term framework for guiding transformational change and the challenges associated with housing supply is needed to address those challenges which are contributing to increased levels of homelessness and housing stress, the gap between housing requirements and new housing supply and the affordability and accessibility problems faced by renters and first-time buyers.

The Council welcomes that the strategy acknowledges the critical importance of considering housing supply through the lens of equality of opportunity and good relations and the commitments to learn from elsewhere on the approaches to increase stability and security for people in poverty such as the 'Housing First' model and the interdepartmental working through the covid-19 model.

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

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

The Council agrees that the current social housing stock needs to be protected and a fair social housing allocations system implemented which will ease housing stress. The impact of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations is welcomed through the development of a monitoring framework which will consider the impact of investment.

Rural

13. The RNIA outlines that the development of the Housing Supply Strategy is likely to have a positive impact on people in Rural Areas. Do you agree with this assessment?

The Council agrees that the development of the HSS will impact positively on people in rural areas. The assessment rightly identifies the challenges to housing supply in rural areas and acknowledges that specific policies emerging from the Strategy will be subject to RNIAs as necessary.

The rural hinterland for the Belfast City Council area is relatively small compared to other districts. That said, within the Local Development Plan Draft Strategy there is provision for small levels of rural housing provision. The Council acknowledges that community led housing can be an innovative approach with the potential to provide homes that are affordable to buy or rent, whilst sustaining local economies and public services. This in turn should mitigate against:

Poverty

Poor Health and Wellbeing

Economic Inactivity

Homelessness and displacement of homelessness into regional cities.

14. Is there any other evidence, information, or issues you think should be considered in this screening?

The Council recognises that since the start of the covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, government advice has recommended that employees who 'can work from home, should work from home'. This has been particularly challenging for those living in rural areas where access to broadband has been a greater issue than in rural areas and welcomes the recent announcement by the Economy Minister, Gordon Lyons that public funding of £32 million will be utilised to extend gigabit capable broadband coverage to reach an additional 8,500 homes and businesses in predominantly rural areas in Northern Ireland.

General

We would welcome any other comments or suggestions you have that you consider are relevant to developing and delivering the Housing Supply Strategy.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation process and are keen to stay engaged in this very important area of work, to ensure the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda are realised in relation to Housing Supply, to meet the demands of attracting 66,000 additional residents to the city. We would like to take this opportunity to provide further comment which is relevant to the development and delivery of the Housing Supply Strategy:

- There are currently a **number of policy, financial and structural challenges to delivery of placemaking housing regeneration schemes via public /private partnerships** and this is significantly impacting on the ability to delivery of regenerative housing at scale. Council would propose that a Task Group be set up to undertake a sharp, short, and focused review of these challenges and the mechanisms to overcome. This is critical to understand and deliver on optimal ways of working and delivery vehicles that involve the public sector working with the private sector and funders to bring forward appropriate housing development opportunities in a more agile way thus ensuring the required processes, delivery vehicles, funding and supporting infrastructure are aligned to deliver agreed outcomes to provide for appropriate housing development at scale whilst ensuring proper integrated placemaking.
- **Homeless Demographic** – According to NIHE figures at the end March 2021 at least 11,781 Belfast households were on the waiting list for a social home. At least 8,689 of them were living in housing stress, and of this group, at least 6,851, equivalent to 4.8% of Belfast households, were recognised as Full Duty Applicant homeless. It is therefore important to highlight that Housing supply is not just about mixed tenure (social, affordable, private) but the homeless demographic has an increasing level of unmet need also. There is a pressing need to articulate how this will be reflected within the Housing Supply Strategy.
- **Infrastructure** - There is a need to ensure that the resourcing deficit with required wastewater infrastructure including exploration of the potential for alternative funding models, is urgently addressed to ensure this does not prohibit housing development. The HSS should demonstrate that there is a clear route map to show how the housing growth ambitions can be facilitated in terms of all the requisite infrastructure requirements and particularly in relation to the wastewater infrastructure.
- **Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission, Rest for Growth** – whilst Council referred to the IIGC RfG report within responses to questions outlined in the consultation,

and have made further comments which align to the recommendations, we would like to specifically highlight a number of key points which are relevant to the development and delivery of the Housing Supply Strategy particularly around the need for structural models to support public-private collaboration and Housing Investment Funds:

- Renewed Future City – Housing: The Commission considers that the policy position, as articulated through the Belfast Agenda, remains sound. However, their view is that the levers required to action these commitments at the pace and scale necessary to make an impact on these ambitions are not currently in place. They identified a number of key gaps, principally in terms of the structural models required to support public-private collaboration and access to finance to bring forward developments. The Commission propose the establishment of a number of new institutions, namely a Strategic Land Partnerships and Housing Investment Funds. The Commission note the Department's work on developing a Housing Supply Strategy, however they outline that It is critical that this ambition will be matched with appropriate levels of funding and policy changes to deliver significant impact. The Commission feel that the scale of the task will require further intervention, particularly in stimulating private sector development, including affordable housing provision. For this reason, they suggest that the regional government and the Treasury should consider developing a Housing Investment Fund. This model has been successful in stimulating new housing construction at scale across a range of classes in many UK cities.

	Strategic Land Partnerships	Housing Investment Funds
What is it?	The purpose of strategic land partnerships across the public sector will be to identify physical assets suitable for assembly into investable propositions of scale for housing or other development purposes	Housing Investment Funds will be dedicated funds that provide financing through a range of innovative vehicles aimed specifically at bringing forward housing development at pace
How will it work?	Strategic Land Partnerships will bring together public and statutory bodies to make more effective use of public lands, providing a stable, sustainable supply of land for housing or other development types, in line with strategic ambitions	These vehicles will address market challenges related to risk and yield that have historically acted as a barrier to investment in housing in Belfast and Northern Ireland, they will work by de-risking investment
Who needs to be involved?	Relevant public sector organisations including Department for Communities, Belfast City Council (for Belfast investment projects), Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Department of Finance as well as other major public sector land owners and private sector as appropriate	Partners to include local councils and other public sector land owners and private sector as appropriate
What advantages would it have?	Simplified governance and management process to release land for agreed uses, supporting delivery of strategic ambitions relating to housing and economic growth	It would provide assurances to the market to support the delivery of city and regional ambitions and would potentially lever additional resources for investment

- Key Proposition: Create sustainable, vibrant communities in the city centre, delivering 11,500 new homes by 2035. The Commission's proposals to accelerate delivery include Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and Department for Communities (DfC) to establish a delivery vehicle to utilise public sector land and undertake land assembly to facilitate new low carbon housing at scale across the city centre; (Note – as above a Housing Regeneration Group has

now been set up under the Community Planning Partnership: City Development Board with BCC, NIHE, LPS and DfC, with a key focus of the group in identifying and utilising public sector lands). Vehicle should also develop housing mix, amenities, and neighbourhood development plan for city core. Target: 11,500 new homes in 10 years; Create new financial instruments including Housing Investment Funds to address market challenges related to risk and yield.

- **Funding** – Council advocate for consideration of how FTC and the Northern Ireland Investment Fund, Levelling Up Funds or other funding can be best utilised or refocused to support housing led regeneration priorities and unlock development. Of critical importance, particularly where there are viability issues and to underpin proper placemaking, there is a need for funding to facilitate enabling infrastructure for housing development. Specific funding for this should be prioritised in order to bring forward housing led regeneration schemes at scale.
- **Collaboration** – There is a need to ensure commitment to a collaborative public - private sector approach to unlocking key challenges with identified major city housing led regeneration schemes, recognising that these will not only contribute to housing supply but can act as a catalyst for inclusive economic growth. Council would advocate for optimal stakeholder/delivery vehicles for progression. This includes the need for the Department to continue collaboratively working with the Council, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Housing Associations, and the private sector to bring forward mixed tenure residential development across the city, and particular exemplar schemes within the city centre, including the strategic use of public sector lands and addressing current policies which inhibit Housing Associations to maximise housing led regeneration delivery.
- **Planning Policy** – Council notes the submission does question the credibility of the HGIs and the proposed regional housing target, which we understand was also the focus of discussion at one of the virtual consultation events. Although the Strategy refers to the Review of the Planning Act and reform in planning, which are undoubtedly important to housing delivery, the evidence doesn't seem to support this overly simplistic assertion given the degree of extant permissions that exist as illustrated in the housing monitor annually.
- **Current Policy and Legislation** – in relation to ensuring the appropriate policy frameworks are in place to accelerate housing supply, it is understood that there are issues with the current Housing Association Guidelines, which strongly need addressed. Our current understanding would suggest that the following issues need to be addressed:
 - **Land:** These require a housing association to have acquired land ownership prior to award/payment of grant assistance (land purchase, construction). However, where the land is currently in public ownership then there is scope, utilising the Development Brief process, for reflecting this public ownership of land as distinct from privately owned

thereby potentially negating the need for the housing association to initially acquire a site. This ties directly into when a housing association would be expected to then pay to acquire publicly owned land and to explore potential for deferred terminal payment or equity ground rent payment approaches which will also assist with de-risking development.

- Delivery of private sector tenure as part of a mixed tenure development is also currently impeded by **Article 15** of the Housing Order with limitation on delivery of private housing by housing associations to the existing co-ownership model only (i.e., no private sales or rentals). With the desire for city centre development to be delivered across all three housing tenures there is an urgent need to address this policy issue if this objective is to be advanced.
- **Barriers:** BCC have commented through the Call for Evidence response that the 3 main barriers to delivery of the Housing Supply are Funding, Delivery Vehicles & Land. Delivery of joined up policies and having supported and properly joined up infrastructure, with all 3 having to be overcome to support the development and growth ambitions of the Belfast Agenda, will be required.
- Current lack of a **policy on affordable housing**, aligned to the revised definition of affordable housing, represents a risk to housing associations developing a business case in absence of affordable housing products.
- Whilst not policy per se – lack of a **city centre waiting list** impacts on clarity for housing associations on latent demand.
- **Rent Levels** – welcome clarity on whether the housing supply strategy will cover rent levels and controls, however mindful that this may be picked up in other legislation.
- **A Bolder Vision** – which has '*Promote City Centre Living*' as one of its 4 key moves aimed at encouraging city centre living by ensuring the enabling infrastructure is in place to facilitate city centre living with place making at its heart. It highlights the importance of providing greater quality, choice and affordability of accommodation and of critical importance is establishing a city-wide network of people friendly routes and city parks to create and underpin a liveable city centre. Council believes that the delivery of A Bolder Vision priorities via the joint BCC/DfI/DfC approach will be critical to the successful delivery of city centre living. From a Belfast perspective therefore, Council would highlight that the future delivery of A Bolder Vision is intrinsically linked to the HSS and should be embedded within Central Government /Executive priorities.
- **High Street Task Force** – city centre living is critical to the reimagining and future sustainability of the high street / city centre and should be central to the High Street Task Force recommendations and embedded within Executive funding priorities. Increased City Centre Living is also a key area within the Council's Future City Centre Programme

which is charting the way forward for the diversification and sustainability of city centre uses. The Future City Programme is a multi-faceted programme that seeks to bring together a number of strategic initiatives and projects within one overall programme approach to address the issues impacting upon the city centre. It includes projects and interventions across various pillars of work centred on regeneration and connectivity, increased city centre living, investment, inclusive economic and cultural growth.

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Subject:	Supporting Vibrant Business Destinations: update
Date:	9 February 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Cathy Keenan, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the work to support local commercial districts through the Supporting Vibrant Business Destinations programme. This programme aims to work with business/traders associations to develop and deliver interventions that can drive footfall and create vibrancy in those areas.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the update on the work to support the delivery of area-based Vibrant Business Destinations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that the pilot initiative is currently open to Expressions of Interest from local business/traders groups located outside the city centre and Business Improvement Districts • Note that this work is intended to complement a wider programme of support and activity that is taking place within the city centre, including the targeted interventions to address vacancies and previous business support interventions through the Revitalisation Programme.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>At its meeting on 13 October 2021, members were provided with an overview of the proposed approach to supporting local business associations to develop and deliver interventions that will drive footfall and create vibrancy in those areas.</p>
3.2	<p>Members are reminded that the overarching purpose of the pilot initiative is to strengthen the competitiveness of our local business destinations, focusing on actions which aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of shared and safely accessible commercial areas • Support the diversification of business destinations outside of the city centre • Bring together key stakeholders to benefit business destinations outside of the city centre • Improve the quality of urban design, distinctiveness, and townscape quality.
3.3	<p>Members were advised that, following discussion with the Department for Communities (DfC), an opportunity was identified to secure resources through the DfC Revitalisation programme. This pilot programme is in keeping with work undertaken by the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) to develop a “Living High Street Toolkit”. The basis of the toolkit is about building capacity, taking ownership and driving forward change within high street business communities. DfC considered that this pilot initiative could inform future approaches and funding investments. This model has emerged as a short-term priority for the work of the High Street Task Force so the Belfast interventions will be useful pilots to shape future activity.</p>
3.4	<p>Given the feedback from the businesses and the need to support these organisations with advice and funding, the Enterprise and Business Growth Team secured funding of £475,000 from the Department for Communities (DfC). This funding will be supplemented by a £30,000 contribution from council resources for the delivery of advice and support to assist</p>

	<p>with the scheme. The pilot initiative aims to support up to 10 business associations to a maximum of £40,000 each for expenditure on a range of eligible activities. The objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase engagement and partnership working between statutory partners and local business associations • Support the development of area-based actions plans which address specific local concerns and deliver specific, measurable benefits over the short/medium and long term • Increase footfall and sales as a direct result of marketing and promotional activity; generating new customers or sustaining customer loyalty through increasing sales revenue, increasing the number of new customers or developing repeat business • Enhance the profile of the area with a view to stimulating economic activity • Support the growth and development of businesses engaged in associated activity • Support the sustainability of businesses and local business associations.
3.5	<p>The initiative will operate over a 21 month time period and will have a two-stage application process. Stage one involves the completion of an Expression of Interest (EoI) by 31 May 2023. The basic eligibility criteria include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups or established associations must be led by the business community (including social enterprises and cooperatives) to address locally-based issues and be committed to becoming a constituted association. • Groups or established associations must be made up of retail/hospitality/consumer facing businesses located on road frontage/local high streets • The priority focus is on arterial routes and routes with a minimum number of 15 confirmed businesses located on road frontage • Group membership should be representative of the businesses in the eligible area – both by volume and by business type • Business membership must represent predominantly owner-occupiers and independent traders, however can involve representation from community organisations.
3.6	<p>At stage 1, groups will be supported to become formally constituted, where they aren't already, and to develop area-based action plans. The action plans will provide an analysis of the locality, the physical environment, existing provision and key challenges and opportunities. It will identify priority issues to be addressed to improve the business</p>

	environment through engagement with with existing businesses and stakeholders in the area. The action plans will form the basis for moving to a stage 2 application.
3.7	A successful Stage 2 application will enable the group to draw down funding to support their action plan delivery. An overview of support is included in Appendix 1.
3.8	The Enterprise and Business Growth Team is coordinating this programme of work in partnership with the City Regeneration and Development Team, with input from officers across the council along with DfC and Department for Infrastructure (DfI).
3.9	Communications and marketing activity has commenced to raise awareness of the pilot project. Officers are currently receiving Expressions of Interest and engaging with applicants offering advice and guidance as required.
3.10	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The programme is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. It will go through a process of equality screening which will ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts. It will be available to business groups all across the city, in line with the agreed criteria.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The activities outlined within this report are resourced through income from DfC, as previously noted. The £30,000 from Council resources was included in the estimates that have previously been approved by this Committee.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1 – Area based support programme overview

Appendix 1

Offer	Key area / Activity
Marketing and Footfall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EBG funding up to £6,000 per group e.g. marketing plan, promotional activity for the area, development of area based campaigns (only activity that does not duplicate other provision) Access to 1-1 mentoring and workshops through existing provision to support individual business development 	<p><u>Advertising</u> - Branding, Marketing/Advertising Material, PR and Social Media Campaigns, visitor experience development, seasonal window displays, promotional items</p> <p><u>Business Development</u> – Business support and networking opportunities, click and collect pilots, website development, footfall counters, loyalty cards, marketing campaigns, mystery shopper visits, promotional shopping events, discount cards, meanwhile use</p>
Look and Feel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to funding to address capital requirements in the area. Up to £30,000 based on area need and subject to relevant approvals aligned with drawdown on cluster grants. Funding can also support area lighting schemes and initiatives to enhance active travel in an area. Ongoing engagement and alignment with City and Neighbourhood Services and other relevant interventions. 	<p><u>Environment</u> (excluding shop-front improvements, as focus on area enhancement not individual businesses) – seasonal lighting, community gardens, decorative street furniture/dressing, environmental improvements, floral displays, mural projects/painting schemes. This also includes activity focused on increasing active travel in an area. It is the responsibility of the association to ensure all of the required statutory approvals are in place and to ensure any capital items are managed and stored appropriately.</p>
Animation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to funding to support animation, events, tourism, culture, arts and heritage activity up to £4,000. Ongoing engagement and alignment with other relevant interventions such as Belfast Canvas, other funded events, City of Music Programme and local tourism action planning. 	<p><u>Events</u>- markets/fairs, Christmas lights, food/fashion events, music events, on street animation including hire of event space, marquee, stalls, IT equipment etc. It is the responsibility of the association to ensure all of the required statutory approvals are in place.</p> <p><u>Arts/Heritage</u> – exhibitions, trails, events, festivals and workshops, public art</p>
Partnerships <p>Networking opportunities with businesses in other traders associations Opportunities to lobby / feed into departmental working groups e.g. High Street Task Force Connections/access/signposting to other council sections/Support Services and external partners</p>	<p>Business Development / Area based development</p>

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Subject:	City Place Making and DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme Update
Date:	9 th February 2022
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues To update Committee on the ongoing DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme including an Extension of Time to the Programme and the reallocation of underspends. To also update Members on upcoming Ministerial Advisory Group Design Review Workshops and the ' <i>Connecting Communities in North Belfast to the Wider Regeneration of the City</i> ' Seminar being organised by Healthy North Belfast
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Committee Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that an Extension of Time has been formally granted for the DfC Covid -19 Revitalisation Programme until September 2022.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the current level of underspend within the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and reallocation of funding to the Church Lane & Linen Quarter schemes. • Agree the reallocation of underspend from the Council funded (Non-Recurring money agreed at June 2021 SP&R) from the Business Cluster and Community Grant Scheme underspend to the previously agreed Linen Quarter Bid projects, with the remaining underspend to be allocated to the wider Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme. • Agree that given timescales, and in line with the CG&R Committee approval in August 2021 that future underspends realised within the programme are utilised to meet additional costs on previously agreed and committed projects, that this Committee delegate authority to the Director of City Regeneration and Development to reallocate the remaining unallocated underspend and any further underspends to meet cost increases on previously agreed and committed projects and to report back to this Committee retrospectively. • Note the proposed Ministerial Advisory Group Design Review Workshops and agree the attendance of the CG&R Chair and Deputy Chair or their nominated representatives. • Note the upcoming '<i>Connecting Communities in North Belfast to the Wider Regeneration of the City</i>' seminar which is being held on 9 February.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The CG&R Committee have received regular updates and provided approvals relating to the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, providing updates on the £4.039m capital programme including providing approvals on time and budget implications. In August 2021 Members were updated on the Extension of Time to the programme from September 2021 to March 2021, and Members agreed that any further underspends realised within the Programme are utilised to meet any additional costs incurred on previously agreed and committed projects with updates on these reallocations to be brought to this Committee at a future date.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Main Report</u></p> <p><u>Extension of Time</u></p> <p>A summary status update of the projects within the Programme are included within Appendix 1 of this report. Members are asked to note in particular the status of the Castle Place Kiosk</p>

	<p>and the Entries Phase 2 which are at risk of overrunning the Programme deadline of March 2022 due to ongoing Statutory Process. While officers are working with the Statutory Agencies to bring these issues to a close Members are asked to note that an Extension of Time until September 2022 has been requested and approved by DfC to enable these matters to be addressed. The remaining elements of the programme are expected to be complete by March 2022 although this is still very much dependant on ongoing Covid-19 and supply chain issues.</p>
3.3	<p>Reallocation of Underspend</p> <p>The following underspends have been realised within the DfC Covid 19 Revitalisation programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid-19 Business Grants – an underspend of £57,284 realised following applications withdrawing from the process or differences in awarded amounts vs actual spend as previously reported to Committee. • Thrives Project – an underspend of £8k due to funding contribution from DfI. • In addition to the underspend a overspend of £7,548 was realised in the Public Safety Signage and Messaging project.
3.4	<p>In order to keep schemes on programme, and in line with the approvals of this Committee in August 2021, £50k of the DfC Revitalisation underspend has been reallocated to the Church Lane project to provide additional lighting, murals and planting along Church Lane, and also encapsulating Coles Alley to address substantial ASB issues in the area, following ongoing engagement and development work with BIDOne and the areas stakeholders. It is also proposed to reallocate £7,736 to the Linen Quarter suite of projects as further defined in item 3.6 of this report.</p>
3.5	<p>In additional to the DfC funding for the programme it was agreed at SP&R in June 2021 that Council would allocate a further £450k from Non-Recurring Monies to meet the outstanding demand of the Business Cluster & Community Grant scheme. All applications have now been assessed and notified, with 51 successful applicants. This process resulted in a £81,631 underspend within the Councils Non-Recurring allocation.</p>
3.6	<p>With regard to the remaining underspend Members are asked to approve the reallocation of Council provided Non-Recurring money from the Business Cluster and Community Grant scheme to the wider Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme. It is proposed that this reallocation, in combination with the remaining identified Revitalisation underspend, will:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional funding (£32.3k) to the suite of projects currently been brought by the Linen Quarter Bid (the Brunswick St Hub, the Linenhall Parklet and the Linenhall Boardwalk) to meet cost escalations and additional works provisionally agreed with Council Officers. This will be added to the £7.7k from the Revitalisation Fund as item 3.4 above to provide additional funding to the Linen Quarter projects of £40k. It should also be noted the Linen Quarter Bid have provided, through private funding, a total of £176k to meet the overall project costs. • Be reallocated by Officers to meet any further cost escalations within the agreed and committed projects to ensure that the projects remain on track, with reports to be brought back to this Committee at a future date.
3.7	Members are also asked to note that the Belfast Entries Project won the 2021 Excellence in Place-making Award for the Ulster Region, recognising the extensive public-private partnership work across over 60 stakeholders, funders and contributors to bring forward a truly iconic project on our historic lanes and entries.
3.8	<p>Ministerial Advisory Group Workshop</p> <p>The Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) have recently contacted Councils advising on proposals that they recognise can assist in delivering on net zero commitments through the influence of Briefing and Design Reviews.</p>
3.9	Over the last year, MAG has been focussing its efforts on ways of increasing the impact that they can have on delivering positive outcomes of better urban and rural places across the region. Participation in the Design for Planet event as part of COP26 further emphasised the requirement for us all to re-double our efforts, putting Climate Change at the forefront of our attention.
3.10	MAG are now proposing to roll out a series of workshops with each Council to discuss how the Design Review processes can be optimised to deliver best outcomes. They are keen to run a series of sessions for key decision-makers/influencers in Councils, combining Elected Members and officers. They have expressed that they are keen for Belfast City Council to participate in such a session (hosted virtually), which is being planned for early this year.
3.11	MAG advise that to enable building capacity quickly across the region, they are planning to have two Councils per session. To enable sessions to be participatory, they are anticipating

3.12	<p>limiting numbers to 7 or 8 per council. It is proposed that Belfast City Council nominate two Elected Members (CG&R Chair and Deputy Chair or nominees) and six officers to participate. It is felt that the Council's participation in this series will help strengthen the work which Council are bringing forward in the built environment.</p> <p>Connecting Communities in North Belfast to the Wider Regeneration of the City Seminar</p> <p>As reported to this Committee in January 2022 Healthy North Belfast, in conjunction with Ashton are bringing forward a seminar 'Connecting Communities in North Belfast to the Wider Regeneration of the City' (previous working title was 'Joining the City' Seminar). This seminar will also include representatives from DfI, Ulster University and Council. 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 outworking's 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 workshop is now confirmed for the 9th February, 9:15am – 12:30pm, with log-in details as per this link:</p> <p>https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/connecting-communities-in-north-belfast-to-wider-regeneration-of-the-city-tickets-251299111407</p>
3.13	Finance & Resource Implications
	<p>All costs associated with this paper will be met from the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Capital Programme, and, subject to Committee approval, the reallocation of the SP&R agreed (June 2021) Non-recurring underspend from the Business Cluster and Community Grant scheme to the DfC Revitalisation Programme.</p> <p>Any further underspends realised within this programme are proposed to be reallocated under delegated authority to the Director of City Regeneration and Development to meet any additional costs on previously agreed and committed to projects and will be reported back to this Committee retrospectively.</p>
3.14	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
	<p>Equality of opportunity and good relations, and disability duties screening is complete on the overall programme with mitigating actions agreed and implemented.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	Appendix 1 – DfC Covid19 Revitalisation Programme - status overview

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Appendix 1 - DfC Covid19 Revitalisation Programme - status overview

Programme Headline Category	Project	RAG	Status
Revenue funding	Additional Street Cleansing & Neighbourhood Safety		Complete
	Belfast Gift Card		Complete
Enhanced Christmas Offering including animation, lighting and marketing	Marketing & branding		Complete
	Animation		Complete
	Feature Lighting Linen Quarter		In progress - procurement underway
	Feature Lighting BID One		Delivery underway with construction due to complete March 2022
	Feature Lighting Cathedral Quarter Bid		In progress – due to complete March 2022
Signage & Dressing	Public Safety signage and messaging		Complete
	Public messaging and communication		Complete
	Adelaide Street - parklet and public realm		In progress: Expected delivery by March 2022. Note this is now funded completely by DfI outside of the Revitalisation Programme
Physical Interventions & Streetscape Improvements	Covid-19 Business Grants (up to £2.5k)		445 businesses have claimed their funding allocations funding with an underspend of £58k
	Business Cluster & Community Grants (capital grants £10 - £25k)		In progress: 51 applications approved; Officer liaising with organisations to support delivery/progress statutory approvals. Underspend realised of £81k
	Entries Phase 2		In progress – Statutory process with DfI ongoing
	Union Street Pedestrianisation		In progress – delivery due March 2022.
	Cathedral Quarter - Exchange Place/Warehouse Entry		In progress – pending finalisation of planning delivery due March 2022.

	Castle Place Hub		In progress: DfI civils works due to complete March 2022. Ongoing work regarding Planning Issues
	Linen Quarter Hub		In progress – due to complete March 2022.
Access & Connectivity	Linen Quarter Parklets		Completed (launched 2 July)
	Linen Quarter Boardwalk		Complete
	DfC and DfI Budget allocation for Bolder Vision Phase 2		In progress – Draft document to be presented to Committee and Ministers March 2022
	City Wide Parklets		Included within Community & Business Cluster Grant funding. Update as above
Sustainable active travel initiatives	Connectivity Scheme in Church Lane area		In progress – Due to complete March 2022
	Replacement/upgrade of Belfast Bikes		Completed
	Expanding Belfast Bike network		In progress - Order placed for 4 new docking stations (as agreed CGR May)
	Electric Bike Trial <i>[E-cargo delivery pilot]</i>		Complete
	Covered Citywide cycle stands		In progress – units ordered and pending delivery for installation
	Expanding Sustainable Transport Hub network <i>[Cathedral Gardens ATH; QUB Cycle Hub]</i>		In progress – due to complete early April 2022
Monitoring & Evaluation	UU Study allocation		Complete
	Monitoring & evaluation of the Revitalisation Programme		In progress - procurement scoping; reliant on programme completion



Subject:	External Market Application – Banana Block
Date:	9 February 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Lisa Toland, Senior Manager, Economy

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise members of a request received to hold a monthly Saturday afternoon market at Portview Trade Centre, Newtownards Road, from March to December 2022 Seek approval to grant the markets licence, in line with the Council's Markets Rights Policy.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant a market licence to Firefox to hold monthly Saturday afternoon markets in the Banana Block, Portview Trade Centre, between March and December 2022.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that anyone wishing to operate a market or car boot sale within Belfast must apply to Belfast City Council for permission to do so. Depending on the scale and nature of the event, it may need authorisation from the City Growth and Regeneration Committee to take place.</p>
3.2	<p>An application of this scale has recently been received on behalf Firefox Events for a market to be held in Banana Block at Portview Trading Centre, Newtownards Road. The market will be held monthly from February 2022 to December 2022 and will involve up to 40 traders at each event.</p>
3.3	<p>In keeping with the current NI Executive regulations, markets are currently permitted to operate, subject to appropriate risk assessments being in place. As part of our approval process for any market, as and a condition of granting a licence, officers request evidence of support from the land owner, consider the implications on adjacent properties and activities and ensure compliance with all relevant regulations and statutory requirements. For this market, this will include consideration of guidelines and additional restrictions in place as a result of COVID-19, recognising that these are subject to change. Officers will also work closely with colleagues in our Corporate Health and Safety Unit (CHSU) and in the Environmental Health team to ensure that the organisers and stall holders are compliant with all relevant regulations as a condition of securing and maintaining the licence.</p>
3.4	<p>The purpose of the market is to showcase the range of food and drinks produced in Northern Ireland. It is intended that the market will operate between 2-7pm, meaning that it will complement rather than compete with the offer at St George's Market.</p>
3.5	<p>All of the traders are local to Northern Ireland and are producing local and artisan products. The majority of the vendors who participate in the market are using sustainable production methods for their products. There is little to no waste produced on site and they operate a robust waste management recycling system.</p>
3.6	<p>The Banana Block is an area of approximately 15,000 sq ft and it is proposed that the space is used for a maximum of 40 traders, meaning that it would comfortably comply with social</p>

	distancing requirements and provide a healthy environment for traders and visitors. In addition to the market stalls, it is proposed that there will be local talent and performances as part of the offer.
3.7	The organisers have strong working relationships with Eastside Partnership and other local stakeholders, and the businesses and residents in the area are fully supportive of this regular market. In particular, the organisers have been working closely with the teams responsible for delivering the regular CS Lewis Square markets and the council's team at St George's Markets to ensure that there is a complementary offer.
3.8	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Subject to final attendance numbers, it is expected that the market will generate income of around £2,000 through the application fee and stall fees.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no Equality and Good Relations considerations attached to this report. The market will be widely promoted across the city and beyond.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None

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Subject:	City of London Visit 8 March 2022
Date:	9 February 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Cathy Keenan, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update of a planned visit to the City of London on the 8 March 2022 which aims to profile Belfast and the region's leading role in Financial Services and Fintech in partnership with City of London Corporation. The report seeks approval for member and officer attendance.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the update to note the aim of the event and the broad itinerary.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree attendance by the Lord Mayor, Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or nominees.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that Belfast City Council has been working to build and sustain key strategic relationships with city partners in an effort to profile the city in key growth sectors and to drive Foreign Direct Investment aligned with the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda.</p>
3.2	<p>In 2017 City of London Corporation launched a regional strategy with the aim of delivering increased investment across the UK and encourage UK based financial and professional services firms to export their products and services. As part of this strategy COLC has committed to engage with cities across the UK, of which Belfast is one. Since then Belfast City Council and the City of London Corporation have worked collaboratively to cultivate a positive working relationship and partnership to continue to foster innovation, growth and economic prosperity. Together we have successfully delivered a series of events with the COLC to showcase Belfast as a location of choice for the Fintech sector. This proposed event is intended to continue and enhance this relationship, showcase the latest developments in Belfast and present the numerous opportunities that exist for the future.</p>
3.3	<p>The event will take place on the 8 March 2022 at the Guildhall London from 6.30pm – 8.00pm. The aim of the event is to publicise Belfast and the region's leading role in Financial Services & Fintech, and highlight future investment opportunities stemming from City Deal investments such as the Global Innovation Institute and Digital Twin.</p>
3.4	<p>The event will be hosted by Catherine McGuinness, Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, City of London Corporation and will include a panel discussion chaired by Andrew Jenkins, Fintech Envoy for Northern Ireland and will include a number of sector experts such as, Clare Guinness, Belfast Innovation District Director and Nikhil Rathie CEO FCA, and Jayne Brady, NI Civil Service.</p>
3.5	<p>Belfast has established a reputation as a Fintech global innovation hub with close positive relations with the City of London. This was highlighted in the Kalifa Fintech Review published in February 2021 in which Northern Ireland was identified as one of the top 10 clusters across the UK, with specialisms in the area of Reg Tech, Wealth Tech and Insure Tech. In</p>

	<p>partnership with Fintech NI we have worked to develop a Fintech Strategy and Action Plan for Northern Ireland, which highlights the Fintech cluster which is now estimated to be worth a significant £392million per year to the NI economy. The action plan identifies a route map to further growth, focusing on addressing barriers to skills and talent, supporting the sector to make greater connections with investors, and helping develop networks that will enable new Fintech businesses to scale quicker. This event will provide an opportunity to address some of the action plans recommendations by showcasing the positive proposition the city has to offer, highlighting our areas of expertise and future investments to support the sector's growth and development in addition to how the council and our partners are working to drive inclusive innovation, and develop skills pathways in growth sectors.</p>
3.6	<p>Event attendees will include senior representation from key stakeholders across the sector, fund managers and representatives from financial services and fintech businesses from Belfast and London, in addition to Catherine McGuinness, Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. It is therefore proposed that the committee agree to the attendance of the Lord Mayor and representation from the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee or a nominee, who will be accompanied by relevant senior officers. The approximate cost of travel and subsistence to attend the event is £300per person. The City of London Corporation are covering all costs associated with the management and delivery of the event.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>The proposed project referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The activities outlined within this report will be resourced through the existing Enterprise and Business Growth budget for 2021/22.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	None

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Subject:	Cultural Strategy Update – artist studios and maker spaces
Date:	9 February 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the investment model for the cultural strategy and to set out proposals for a dedicated programme of work to support artist-led organisations in the city.
2.0	Recommendations

	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree to open a new funding scheme for artist led organisations to provide financial and development support as set out at 3.7 subject to officer recommendations being approved at a future meeting of Committee. - Agree to develop long-term options for the sustainable provision of artist studios in the city aligned to the priorities of the cultural strategy to be presented to a future meeting of Committee. - Agree to write to the Department for Communities and Arts Council of Northern Ireland to request that a joint response is taken forward to the current crisis in studio provision. - Agree for officers to operate a rolling support programme of micro-grants to artist-led organisations as set out at 3.13 to be approved by delegated authority.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><i>A City Imagining</i> cultural strategy for Belfast recognises the need for long-term commitment over a decade in order to drive transformation. It presents a dynamic model for change to ensure resilience to external factors and potential social, economic and environmental shifts. While the full impact of Covid-19 still remains unknown and the level of change to the city's cultural and community infrastructure is uncertain, the strategy remains valid presenting a strong framework for a robust and long-term recovery plan</p>
3.2	<p>In support of the ambitions set out in this strategy an Investment Model was agreed with phased implementation and is included at appendix 1. To date this has resulted in the introduction of a number of funding strands and employment opportunities for cultural organisations and practitioners. These have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural multi-annual grants - Small grants including Community Festival Funding - Micro-grants and Leadership Awards - Creative Bursaries - Pathfinder Development Awards
3.3	<p>The diversification of the investment model recognised that the one sizes fit all model of funding does not deliver the best outcomes for the city and fails to increase the sustainability of the sector. Therefore, the design of these new programmes has been based on engagement with the sector and learnings from other cities. However, from the outset it was recognised that a targeted programme of support was required for artist studios and maker-spaces. This in part is due to the value of artist-led spaces not being effectively captured</p>

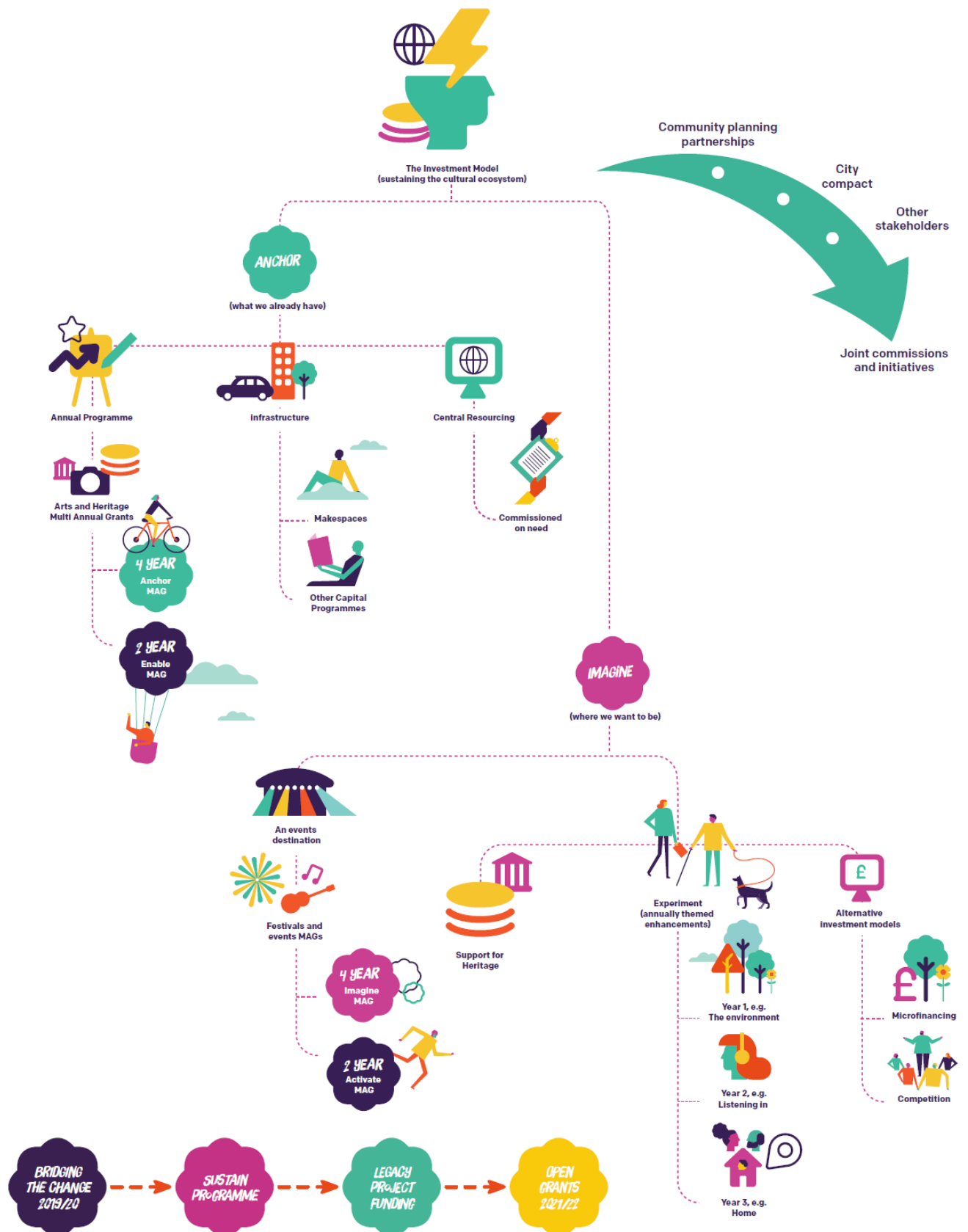
	<p>through traditional metrics such as income generated through ticket sales or audience figures. With the cultural multi-annual grants (4 year and 2 year) being agreed in February 2020 it was agreed that an alternative form of funding would be developed for artist-led spaces with the latest audit identifying 17 studios/ artist-led organisations in Belfast directly supporting an estimated 450 artists. Belfast City Council's current support programmes do not include any of these organisations as annual or multi-annual clients. Therefore, as Council is due to enter into another two-year cycle of funding, it is proposed that a complementary three strand programme for artist-led organisations is introduced and is detailed below.</p>
3.3	<p>The need</p> <p>The need for this programme has accelerated with the further decline in security of tenure for these groups with no organisation having a tenancy agreement for 3 years or more. Of the 17 organisations identified, 15 were on agreements for less than a year with 7 of these less than 9 months and many on month to month rolling contracts including licenses and tenancy at will agreements. (Source: Jane Morrow, PhD Researcher: the precarity of artists' studios in Belfast).</p>
3.4	<p>Case study: The Council has been working with Flax Art Studio and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland since 2014 to develop an artist and needs led solution to the provision of sustainable, affordable and appropriately specified studio space in the city. These studies demonstrated the potential for growth and the economic and social impact of studios as well as recommendations to address challenges relating to governance, capacity building, financing and acquisition. This work considered examples from elsewhere including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WASPS Artist Studios, Scotland - Broadstone Studios, Dublin - Fire Station Artist Studios, Dublin - National Sculpture Factory, Cork - ACME Studios, London
3.5	<p>From 2004 to 2018, Flax Art occupied premises on Corporation Street amounting to 1320 m2 of space that accommodated seven large and 11 smaller studios for 21 visual artists. It also accommodated a space for international residencies and a small workshop area.</p> <p>When Flax was required to vacate the premises in 2018 and in the absence of funding to acquire new premises, the organisation took the decision to take on 5200m2 at Havelock House as an opportunity to demonstrate proof of concept in relation to viable growth in</p>

	<p>provision. Since 2018, this pilot has confirmed many of the principles captured via the review of best/existing practice. It has confirmed that need exists, that visual artists are reliable tenants, and that Flax has the capacity and skills to diversify its income base through introducing new income streams. The result has been a main location at Havelock House where Flax provides subsidised studio space for almost 100 artists in Belfast. 31 emerging artists are supported at a temporary satellite site on North Street and 15 artists at a second satellite space on High Street. They also provide space for 7 production resident artists, 20 workshop members and 1 film-maker in residence, and co-working space for Nerve Belfast, the NI Screen Curator in Residence, Dumbworld and OGU Architects. However, in January 2022 Flax received notification of that their lease would not be extended and they must relocate their artists by the end of March 2022.</p>
3.6	<p>Cultural Mapping</p> <p>As part of the implementation of the cultural strategy, the Council commissioned a cultural mapping of the city to assess current assets and gaps in infrastructure. The full draft of this report will be presented to Committee in quarter one of 2022/23 year. However, the draft report identifies <i>Space to Work</i> as the highest priority under short term recommendations as well as a key strategic priority for long-term action. Building on these recommendations and the investment model included within the cultural strategy a three-strand programme is proposed.</p>
3.7	<p>Proposed Programme</p> <p><i>Strand one: organisational funding</i></p> <p>The purpose of this strand of work is to provide financial and developmental support to organisations similar to the support offered under cultural multi-annual grants (CMAG). CMAG focuses on supporting wide ranging public facing programmes with criteria designed to assess impact against all of the themes of the cultural strategy. The most recent outcome of this process, with the failure of any studio or artist-led organisation to secure funding, reinforces the need identified in the wider investment model to establish more target schemes of funding. The criteria for a new programme will focus on the specific priorities within the strategy focused on supporting the cultural ecosystem of the city. Given that successful applicants will be in receipt of public funding, it is proposed that funding is accompanied by a health audit that identifies additional requirements in relation to a number of areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governance and management - Sustainability including environmental planning and policies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion including accessibility
3.8	Where organisations require assistance to identify potential premises there is scope to align this to the existing work programme being undertaken by City Regeneration and Development.
3.9	It is proposed that this scheme opens in March 2022 with recommended awards to be presented to Committee for approval in May 2022.
3.10	<p><i>Strand two: strategic review</i></p> <p>In line with the cultural mapping and the work undertaken to date it is proposed a strategic review of artist studios and maker-spaces in Belfast is undertaken with a number of long-term recommendations presented to Committee. The scope of this work will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o analysis of existing strategies, studies and reports as well as primary research, to ascertain resource needs. o review of benchmarking with other cities with a focus on models of sustainability such as forms of financing. o analysis and mapping of current and potential availability, quality, and suitability of sectoral accommodation within the city. o recommendations on the role of artist spaces in city development with investment models to include public sector, private sector and partnerships.
3.11	<p>This work will be aligned to key priorities with the cultural strategy, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority 5: Embedding cultural impact in city development and local placemaking. - Priority 6: Investing in connected, resilient and sustainable infrastructure of quality cultural spaces across the city.
3.12	This strand of work will be taken forward with the sector through an agreed programme of co-design to be agreed through a series of initial engagement sessions.
3.13	<p><i>Strand three: Micro-grants rolling programme</i></p> <p>Consultation and engagement with the sector have demonstrated a need for more agile funding schemes that are available year-round and operate at a micro-grant level. It is proposed that a scheme offering a maximum of £1000 is introduced to support career development and support for individual artists working within artist-led organisations.</p>

3.14	<p>As part of cultural multi-annual grants, organisations are required to demonstrate how they provide training and support for those artists that work with them. The fact that many artist-led organisations either do not receive funding or have much lower levels of funding, often managed on a voluntary basis, means that their business model does not allow for re-investment in infrastructure, equipment or skills development. The criteria for this fund will align to theme three of the cultural strategy: <i>A City Exploring</i>.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.15 The existing departmental budget for Culture and Tourism includes provision for sector support. It is proposed that £150,000 is allocated to this programme as follows:</p> <p>Strand One - Organisational Funding: £100,000</p> <p>Strand Two - Strategic Review: £30,000</p> <p>Strand Three – Micro Grants: £20,000</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.16 Officers will work with partner organisations to ensure that engagement includes a wide range of groups, artists and individuals across the city and criteria for funding will respond to the Equality Impact Assessment carried out as part of the cultural strategy, <i>A City Imagining</i>.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	Appendix One: <i>A City Imagining</i> Investment Model

Appendix One: A City Imagining Investment Model



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Subject:	Notices of Motion – Quarterly Update
Date:	9 th February 2022
Reporting Officer:	Alistair Reid, Strategic Director of Place & Economy
Contact Officer:	Deirdre Kelly; Programme Manager Jelena Buick, Business Research & Development Officer Clare Hutchinson, Policy and Performance Analyst

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	This report provides a quarterly update on the Notices of Motion that City Growth & Regeneration are responsible for, in line with the agreement at SP&R Committee that all Standing Committees will receive a quarterly update.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notes the updates to all Notices of Motion that this Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and - Agrees to the closure of a number of Notices of Motion, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.5 below.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>At SP&R Committee on 25th October 2019, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:</p> <p>“That this Council notes that other Councils produce a monthly status report in relation to Notices of Motion; and agrees Belfast City Council adopts a similar practice and produces a monthly Notice of Motion Update which will be brought to each full Council Meeting, detailing the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Date received 2. Notice of motion title 3. Submitted by which Councillor 4. Council meeting date 5. Committee motion is referred to 6. Outcome of committee where Notice of Motion will be debated 7. Month it will be reported back to committee 8. Other action to be taken.”
3.2	<p>Following Committee’s consideration of the report on the quarterly update of Notices of Motion in November 2021, it was agreed to close 2 Notices of Motion. All subsequent Notices have been added to the database in Appendix 1 which shows 21 active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which this Committee is responsible.</p>
3.3	<p>Notice of Motion Updates</p> <p>As previously noted by Committee, given the current pressures in responding to the pandemic, it has been difficult to afford the usual time towards progressing Notices of Motion. Nevertheless, there has been progress in a number of notices of motion (see Appendix 1).</p>
3.4	<p>Closure of Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance</p> <p>At SP&R Committee on 20th November, it was agreed that Notices of Motion could be closed for one of two reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Category 1 - Notices of Motion which contained an action that has been completed. All Notices of Motion within this category contained a specific task that has since been completed. It is worth noting that, when Committee agree to action a Notice of Motion, there are sometimes additional actions agreed alongside the Notice of Motion. As these are not technically part of the Notice of Motion, they are taken

	<p>forward through normal committee decision making processes. The Notice of Motion can therefore be closed, but additional actions related to it will continue to be progressed and reported to the committee. These additional actions are not contained in this report, but will be noted in the live database moving forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Category 2 - Notices of Motion have become Council policy or absorbed in to a strategic programme of work. These Notices of Motion did not contain a specific task that could be complete. Instead, they were more strategic in nature and required changes in Council policy and/ or strategy for long term outcomes. Those listed within this category have all been agreed by Committee and are now either Council policy or are currently being implemented through a Council strategy that is managed by a Standing Committee through the corporate planning process.
3.5	<p>CG&R Committee are asked to note and agree that the following 5 Notices of Motion are now closed:</p> <p>Category 1 Recommended Closures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extension of the Belfast Bikes Scheme (Ref 180) – at the CGR Committee on 8 December it was agreed to proceed with the four undernoted stations (funded by the Department for Infrastructure): Antrim Road, Waterworks; Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre; Olympia Leisure Centre; and Kennedy Shopping Centre; and to proceed with the 15 stations outlined in the expansion proposals - Universal Basic Income (Ref 102) - SPR Committee on 22 October 2021 approved to allocate 15K towards a feasibility study to develop a Universal Basic Income trial in Northern Ireland.
3.6	<p>Category 2 Recommended Closures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprise Zones (Ref 14) – this will form part of the Emerging Economic Strategy (consultants have been appointed and there will be engagement with Members organised in due course) - Developing Clean Tech in the City (Ref 164) -- this will form part of the Emerging Economic Strategy (consultants have been appointed and there will be engagement with Members organised in due course) - City Wide Strategic Site Assessment Update (117) – As reported to Members and discussed in detail at the Housing Led Regeneration Workshop on 26 January 2022, this work is progressing and with a Housing Led Regeneration Group established under the Community Planning Partnership: City Development Board, with representatives from BCC, NIHE, DfC, LPS and SIB with a key focus on

3.7	<p>progressing the city wide strategic sites assessment programme. Regular update reports to be brought back to Committee and via further workshops as appropriate. Additional information in relation to these Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance are available in Appendix 1.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no additional financial implications attached to this report. Finance and resource implications are considered by Committee when taking decisions on the specific Notices of Motion and Issues Raised by Members.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report. Implications are considered when taking forward the specific Notices of Motion and Issues Raised by Members.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	Appendix 1: Notices of Motion Live Database – CG&R Committee

Ref	Type	Date of Council Meeting	Motion (including hyperlinks)	Proposed by	Referral route	Committee	Agreed actions (agreed decisions from committee/ Council)	Lead officer	Place & Economy	Status	Status Update
11	Notice of Motion	03/12/2018	Sexual Harassment	Cllr McReynolds	Referred to Licensing	Licensing Cttee		S. Hewitt	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Due to resource constraints in Licensing work on this did not commence until January 2020. Meetings have been held with Peter McReynolds, QUB and Hospitality Ulster to progress. All progress now on hold due to C19. Officers have contacted Cllr McReynolds and confirmed this remains on hold and will be revisited when hospitality returns to something closer to normality.
14	Notice of Motion	04/02/2019	Enterprise Zones	Cllr Attwood	Straight to Committee	CG&R	report to come back to CG&R Committee	John Greer	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Officers followed up with the Cllr and research briefing on Enterprise Zones completed. To be progressed in line with the current developments, such as the Economic Strategy, BRCD and Innovation programmes of work; and as resources become available. This will form part of the emerging Economic Strategy. Proposal to close this NOM.
35	Notice of Motion	02/12/2019	Pridestrian Animation	Cllr Garrett	Referred to SP&R	SP&R Cttee		John Greer	Place & Economy	Ongoing	To be taken forward through Cultural Strategy Implementation Plan. This has been delayed due to COVID19. Officers are currently assessing site options and a report to SP&R Committee is planned for December.
58	Issue Raised in Advance	12/02/2020	Air Passenger Duty	Cllr Graham	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	report to come back to CG&R Committee	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	This will be considered in the context of the new 10 year Tourism Strategy in terms of identifying barriers to growth and Council's advocacy position agreed by CGR committee in September 2021.

72	issue Raised in Advance	04/03/2020	Review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme	Cllr O'Hara	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	The Committee agreed that, as part of the current strategic review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme, consideration be given to granting free access to young people 25 years of age and under to the scheme.	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Update provided as part of Strategic review of Belfast Bikes (9/6/21). Decision under item 4b) Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review subsequently called in.. Further report considered on 08 December 2021 where a number of expansion stations have been agreed and equality considerations were considered. The issue of allowing free use of Belfast bikes for those 25 year old and less is still to be considered.
80	Notice of Motion	02/07/2020	Opening our Streets for Everyone	Cllr McKeown	Straight to Committee	SP&R Committee		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	To be progressed as resources become available.
97	Notice of Motion	01/09/2020	National Armed Forces Day	Cllr Pankhurst	Straight to Committee	SP&R Committee		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	To be progressed as resources become available.
99	Notice of Motion	01/09/2020	Summer Youth Employment Programme	Cllr McLaughlin	Straight to Committee	SP&R Committee		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Officers are engaging with the Boston model of summer internships with a view to design a model, resources dependent, for roll-out in summer 2022 (when it is expected that COVID19 labour market disruption will no longer operate as risk factor). This new model will blend with the Youth Support Programme which identifies those most at risk of disengaging from the education system and lower attainment expectations.

102	Notice of Motion	01/09/2020	Universal Basic Income for Northern Ireland	Cllr McReynolds	Debated at Council	SP&R Cttee		A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Link to Citizens Basic Income NOM (69). Social Policy Working Group have recommended to SP&R Committee that BCC should participate and financially contribute to a proposed feasibility study into the development of a Universal Basic Income (UBI) pilot in NI. This will consider how UBI could be planned, delivered and measured, providing a foundation on which a NI-wide UBI might be delivered and resourced by the Northern Ireland Executive. Subject to UBI Lab securing the necessary funding, this work will taken forward by the Social Policy Working group and further reports will be brought to the SP&R Committee on the progress.
117	Issue Raised in Advance	07/10/2020	City Wide Strategic Site Assessment Update	Cllr Murphy	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	report to come back to CG&R Committee	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	As reported to Members and discussed in detail at the Housing Led Regeneration Workshop on 26 January 2022, this work is progressing and with a Housing Led Regeneration Group established under the Community Planning Partnership: City Development Board, with representatives from BCC, NIHE, DfC, LPS and SIB with a key focus on progressing the city wide strategic sites assessment programme. Regular update reports to be brought back to Committee and via further workshops as appropriate.
120	Notice of Motion	02/11/2020	Belfast Bikes - Pilot Scheme to use Rolloe	Cllr Baker	Straight to Committee	CG&R	agreed that consideration of a Pilot Scheme to use Rolloe on Belfast bikes be included as part of the Belfast Bikes Strategic Review and a report on the matter would be submitted to a future meeting	A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Update included in Belfast Bikes Strategic Review Report on 9/6/21. Noted that Officers were working with company on the viability of pilot scheme and regular updates will be brought back to committee and this will be integrated into the Belfast Bikes programme of work.

124	Notice of Motion	02/11/2020	Belfast City Council Cycling Champion	Cllr McReynolds	Straight to Committee	Peoples and Communities Committee		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Officers are continuing to work on options for addressing the NoM and will bring back for agreement in the near future.
153	Issue Raised in Advance	13/01/2021	Disabled Parking Accreditation Scheme	Cllr McMullan	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R	report to come back to CG&R Committee	A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Officers are currently working with CNS in relation to the refresh of the CPS it is anticipated that this NOM will be progressed in line with this. A draft specification is currently under development and further progress will be made as resources become available.
164	Issue raised in Advance	03/03/2021	Developing Clean Tech in the City	Alderman Dorrian	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R		A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	To be progressed through the development of the Belfast Economic Strategy which will examine the health of the current sector and with partners including Invest NI make recommendations for sector development actions. This will form part of the emerging Economic Strategy. Consultants are commissioned and there will be further engagement with Members. Proposal to close this NOM.
180	Notice of Motion	04/05/2021	Extension of the Belfast Bikes Scheme	Cllr Baker	Straight to Committee	CG&R		A Reid	Place & Economy	Recommendation Close	Letter to the Infrastructure Minister referencing the need for consultation with communities before implementing infrastructure drafted (July 2021) and Strategic Review of Bikes report brought to CGR Committee in June. Decision under item 4b) Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review subsequently called in (9/6/21).. Further report considered on 8 December 2021. A number of expansion stations were agreed. Proposal to close this NOM.
181	Notice of Motion	04/05/2021	War Years Remembered	Cllr Pankhurst	Straight to Committee	SP&R		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Needs assessment being progressed.
208	Notice of Motion	04/10/2021	Belfast City Nightlife and Night-time Economy	Cllr de Faoite	Straight to Committee	CG&R		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Considered at October CG&R Committee. Report to be brought back on how to facilitate, resource and manage.
211	Notice of Motion	04/10/2021	Community Wealth Building	Cllr Murphy	Straight to Committee	CG&R		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Considered at October CG&R Committee. Report to be brought back on how to facilitate, resource and manage.

217	Notice of Motion - referred by S&B Committee	01/11/2021	Tourism Street Signage	Cllr Long	Straight to Committee	CG&R		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Considered at November CG&R Committee - Report to be brought back to the Committee on how Motion could be facilitated, resourced and managed.
225	Issue Raised in Advance	17/12/2021	City Centre Built Heritage	Cllr Murphy	Issue Raised in Advance	SP&R		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Report to come back to Committee
226	Issue Raised in Advance	08/12/2021	A Bolder Vision Consultation	Cllr McMullan	Issue Raised in Advance	CG&R		A Reid	Place & Economy	Ongoing	Due to a technical issue that may have limited access to the Virtual Room for older and disabled people or groups the survey remained open until 5pm on Friday 14 January 2022.

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Subject:	Consultation on The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022
Date:	9 February 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Cathy Keenan, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	Members will be aware that, as part of Local Government Reform in 2015, responsibility for business start-up and support for under-represented groups in the field of enterprise support transferred to councils.
1.2	The Department for Communities (DfC) has recently launched a consultation on The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022. This consultation outlines proposed changes to how business start-up activity is measured. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the consultation, identify the impact for Belfast City Council and set out a proposed

	<p>response to the consultation on behalf of the council.</p> <p>The response will be submitted, subject to full Council approval.</p>
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Members of the Committee are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the current consultation process and the implications for Belfast City Council • Approve the outline response to the consultation on The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022, as set out in section 3.8.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that, as part of the transfer of functions and Local Government Reform, responsibility for business start-up and support for under-represented groups in terms of enterprise support transferred to councils. With the transfer of responsibility came a nominal financial allocation deemed appropriate to support delivery of the relevant services and based on existing budget allocations.
3.2	At this time, DfE set the job targets based on the 2011-2015 Programme for Government (PfG) target for the existing start-up programme ("Go for It"). This was to create 6,500 local jobs, or 1,625 jobs per year. These jobs were then split across each council area, based on an economic appraisal carried out at that time. These job targets have remained in place since that date. For Belfast City Council, the annual performance target through the Go For It programme is 325 jobs created through the development of a client-led business plan.
3.3	The Department for Communities has now launched a consultation on The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022, to take account of proposed changes to these targets. The consultation period runs to 28 February 2022. The purpose of this consultation is to align targets with activity being delivered through the Regional Business Start-up Programme 2021-2023.
3.4	For Belfast City Council, there is no amendment to the annual job target figure, with the target remaining as 325. This is in line with the current annual programme targets in the Go for It Programme. As such, we have no specific objection to the current proposal, on the understanding that it is a short-term measure that will be reviewed in 2023. However we consider that there is an opportunity to use the existing consultation exercise to formally raise a number of concerns about the methodology associated with target setting, in order to

	ensure that there is alignment with the work underway across all councils to take a new approach to business start-up support when the current programme ends in March 2023.
3.5	Members will be aware that, as a council, we have acknowledged the shortcomings of the current start-up support programme. Among the issues that we have identified is the mechanism for measuring impact. Success is currently measured through a jobs outcome approach and the methodology for assessing the job outcome is to count the number of business plans generated through the Regional Business Start-Up Programme (“Go for It”) and apply a proxy to determine the likely number of jobs created as a result. In our view, this approach is significantly flawed.
3.6	In May 2021, we presented to this Committee our vision of a future model of support that had the potential to drive more people towards self-employment, increase business survival rates and help more businesses to grow and scale. Building on that model, we have been working with the other 10 councils to develop an options appraisal that can demonstrate how a revised approach can help us achieve a substantial shift in business start up activity aligned with our Enterprise Framework, the Belfast Agenda, the Belfast Region City Deal and the 10x Economic Vision. In November 2021, we secured funding from Invest NI to develop a business case based on this model and this will be used as a basis to engage with DfE, Invest NI and other funding bodies in order to support delivery post-March 2023.
3.7	In parallel with this work, we have also commenced our engagement with DfE on the findings of the research, given that they are working on an Entrepreneurship Strategy aligned to 10x.
3.8	<p>In light of this work and the commentary around the shortcomings of the current methodology for target setting, it is recommended that officers develop a brief response to the consultation that focuses on a number of key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the inappropriateness of using business plans as a proxy measurement for jobs created • Recommends a wider range of metrics alongside jobs created, (e.g. total early-stage entrepreneurial activity, levels of female engagement in entrepreneurship, number of registered start-ups, 1 and 2 year business survival rates and numbers of scaling businesses) • Identifies the need for the targets to reflect those identified in 10x – rather than being seen in isolation of wider government ambitions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for government to review the financial settlement around the statutory functions transferred to councils – ensuring that it is reflective of changed economic circumstances and an articulated ambition around a globally-competitive economy. The financial transfer needs to acknowledge that councils have statutory responsibility for this area of work • Consider how the targets are aligned to performance – with a degree of accountability built in to make the link between resources allocated and delivery • Acknowledges that, given the timings, a more radical review is not appropriate at this point but asks that early consideration is given to the above points in order to ensure a more appropriate approach to standards and performance targets from the financial year 2023.
3.9	At a recent meeting of the SOLACE Economic Recovery Group, council officers agreed that there was considerable consensus across all council areas on these issues and that it would be appropriate to produce a joint response to this consultation. The commentary broadly reflects the points identified above. The response recommends that a longer-term review is carried out on the targets, including removing the link to a business planning programme and having a consistent approach across councils for allocating the target, taking account of the work that is ongoing to develop an approach to future delivery as highlighted above.
3.10	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>No specific financial implications associated with this report.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The Enterprise and Business Growth team 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>
3.12	Equality and Good relations will be considered as part of the business case development and a rural needs assessment will also be factored into this work.
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	<p>Appendix 1 Consultee Letter for the Draft Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 and;</p> <p>Appendix 2 Consultant - the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.</p>



Consultee

Local Government and Housing Regulation Division
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT1 7EG
Phone: 07546 761883
Email: lgpdconsultations@communities-ni.gov.uk

21 December 2021

Dear Consultee,

Consultation - The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Department for Communities has commenced a consultation on proposals to amend the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 to include the Department for the Economy's (DfE) proposed revised performance indicator and standards in respect of economic development.

The proposed amendments cover revisions to the performance indicator and standards placed on councils in relation to DfE's policy area of job promotion through a business plan development programme.

This consultation closes on **28 February 2022**.

The consultation document is available at the following link.

[Link to the consultation on the Department for Communities website](#)

Yours sincerely,

signed

William Dobbin

Local Government and Housing Regulation Division

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www.communities-ni.gov.uk

The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022

SCOPE OF CONSULTATION	
SCOPE OF THIS CONSULTATION	This consultation seeks views on proposed amendments to the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (“the 2015 Order”) to take account of proposed changes to the current Department for the Economy DfE performance indicator and standards included in the 2015 Order.
GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE	These proposed amendments relate to Northern Ireland only.

BASIC INFORMATION

This consultation covers proposals by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to amend the current (DfE) performance indicator and standards included within the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The proposed amendments cover revisions to the Performance Indicator and Standards placed on councils in relation to DfE's policy area of job promotion through a business plan development programme.

BODY/BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSULTATION

This consultation is being undertaken by the Local Government & Housing Regulation Division in the Department for Communities (DfC) (which is the responsible department for specifying, under s89 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, local government performance indicators and standards). However the policy in respect of these proposed amendments is the responsibility of DfE.

DURATION

This consultation is open from 21 December 2021 to 28 February 2022.

ENQUIRIES

For any enquiries about the consultation please email the Department at:

lgpdconsultations@communities-ni.gov.uk

or write to:

Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Consultation,
Department for Communities,
Local Government & Housing Regulation Division,
Level 4,
Causeway Exchange,
1-7 Bedford Street,
Town Parks,
Belfast,
BT2 7EG

HOW TO RESPOND

Please email your consultation response to:

lgpdconsultations@communities-ni.gov.uk

or post to:

Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Consultation
Department for Communities,
Local Government & Housing Regulation Division,
Level 4,
Causeway Exchange,
1-7 Bedford Street,
Town Parks,
Belfast,
BT2 7EG

When you reply it would be very useful if you could confirm whether you are replying as an individual or submitting an official response on behalf of an organisation.

If you are replying on behalf of an organisation please include:

- your name,
- your position in the organisation (if applicable),
- the name of your organisation,
- an address (including postcode),
- an email address.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE	<p>We will consider the responses received and publish an outcome report on the Departmental website.</p> <p>In line with good practice and sustainable development, this document has been published electronically.</p>
ACCESSIBILITY	<p>A range of alternative formats are available upon request from this Department.</p> <p>Please email the Department at: lgpdconsultations@communities-ni.gov.uk</p> <p>Or write to:</p> <p>Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Consultation, Department for Communities, Local Government & Housing Regulation Division, Level 4, Causeway Exchange, 1-7 Bedford Street, Town Parks, Belfast, BT2 7EG.</p>

HOW WE CONSULT	
CONSULTATION PRINCIPLES	The consultation is being conducted in line with the Fresh Start Agreement (Appendix F6 – Eight Steps to Good Practice in Public Consultation - Engagement). These eight steps give clear guidance to Northern Ireland departments on conducting consultations.
FEEDBACK ON THE CONSULTATION PROCESS	<p>We value your feedback on how well we consult. If you have any comments about the consultation process (as opposed to comments about the issues which are the subject of the consultation), including if you consider that the consultation does not adhere to the values expressed in the Eight Steps to Good Practice in Public Consultation - Engagement or that the process could be improved, please address them to:</p> <p>Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Consultation, Department for Communities, Local Government & Housing Regulation Division, Level 4, Causeway Exchange, Town Parks1–7 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EG</p> <p>Email: lgpdconsultations@communities-ni.gov.uk</p> <p>Please title your correspondence as “Feedback on the Consultation Process”.</p>

**PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY
AND ACCESS TO
CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

For this consultation, we may publish all responses except for those where the respondent indicates that they are an individual acting in a private capacity (e.g. a member of the public). All responses from organisations and individuals responding in a professional capacity may be published. We will remove names, email addresses and telephone numbers from these responses; but apart from this we will publish them in full. For more information about what we do with personal data please see our consultation privacy notice.

Your response, and all other responses to this consultation, may be disclosed on request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR); however all disclosures will be in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (EU) 2016/679.

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential, so that this may be considered should the Department receive a request for the information under the FOIA or EIR.

DfC is the data controller in respect of any personal data that you provide and DfC's privacy notice, which gives details of your rights in respect of the handling of your personal data, can be found at: **<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/dfc-privacy-notice>**.

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1. Purpose of the Consultation - Scope and timeframe

- 1.1 This consultation covers proposals to amend the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the 2015 Order) to include the Department for the Economy's (DfE) proposed revised performance indicator and standards in respect of economic development.
- 1.2 The proposed amendments cover revisions to the performance indicator and standards placed on councils in relation to DfE's policy area of job promotion through a business plan development programme.
- 1.3 The closing date for submitting responses is 28 February 2022.
- 1.4 The Department will consider and respond to comments it receives during this consultation.
- 1.5 Responses are invited to this consultation about any aspect set out in this paper.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Part 12 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the 2014 Act) put in place a framework to support continuous improvement in the delivery of council services, in the context of strategic objectives and issues that are important to those who receive the services. Councils are required to gather information to assess improvements in their services and to report annually on their performance against indicators which they have either set themselves or that have been set by departments.
- 2.2 Section 89 of the 2014 Act allows the Department for Communities (DfC), by Order, to specify performance indicators and standards for councils in order to improve the exercise of their functions. This can include performance indicators and standards which other Departments deem relevant and have requested DfC to include within such an Order.

- 2.3 The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the 2015 Order), which is currently in operation, was made under section 89 of the 2014 Act. The 2015 Order acts as the legislative vehicle for 3 other departments to set performance indicators and standards for councils, being:

- the Department for the Economy (DfE) – in respect of business start-up activity
- the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) – in respect of planning
- the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) – in respect of waste management

- 2.4 DfE has requested that its performance indicator and related standards in the 2015 Order be amended.

3. Background

- 3.1 The current Economic Development Indicator included in the 2015 Order relates to the number of jobs promoted through business start-up support. This is a calculated figure based on the number of client-led business plans created through the Northern Ireland Business Start-Up Programme (NIBSUP), also known as the Go for It (GFI) programme.
- 3.2 The job promotion standards, in the 2015 Order, were developed from a five-area model by DfE in conjunction with Invest NI, informed by an economic appraisal on the Regional Start Initiative (RSI, forerunner to NIBSUP), which set rates for each area based on their potential to deliver. The key variable in this model is the number of business plans approved, to which a conversion rate is applied to determine job creation figures.
- 3.3 When the Transfer of Functions to local government took place in April 2015, DfE set the job targets based on the 2011-2015 Programme for Government (PfG) target, to create 6500 local jobs, or 1625 jobs per year, which was then split across each council area, approximately following the RSI programme split. These targets have remained in place since that date.
- 3.4 The new GFI programme, which began on 1 April 2021, recently received approval from Invest NI for funding under the European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) measure for Local Economic Development (LED). Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council will be the council lead for this GFI programme. As a consequence of this new programme being introduced, the 2015 Order needs amended.

4. Details of proposed amendments

- 4.1 This section contains details on the proposed amendments to the 2015 Order. A draft of the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 and related Statutory Guidance have been prepared (see Annex A and B respectively) and we would welcome comments on both these drafts.
- 4.2 This consultation proposes to retain the current Economic Development indicator at this time, and to amend the standards to reflect the outcome of research undertaken and agreed with councils in 2019. The Economic Development indicator of number of jobs created remains in line with the draft PfG and draft Industrial Strategy. Additionally, the primary focus of support under the European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) measure for Local Economic Development is job creation and interventions supported by the Measure will need to deliver against this.
- 4.3 The proposed revised standards are based on an independent review of the NIBSUP/ GFI job target figures commissioned by the councils in 2018. The review proposed a new rationale for allocating job creation targets by council area, using data such as recent business start programmes in Northern Ireland, NI Statistic and

Research Agency data for NI job creation by council Area, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor data for job creation by council area and DfE Data for job creation by council area.

- 4.4 The data compiled was then used to create a Proportionality Formula that could be applied to each Council area to produce a jobs target range for each area. The following three indices are used:
- the proportion of NI Small Businesses within Council Areas
 - the proportion of NI Micro Enterprises within Council Areas
 - the proportion of NI Business Births by Council Area
- 4.5 Each of the 11 councils considered the proposed figures for their respective area and the agreed standards were provided to DfE by the GFI administration team for the purpose of replacing the existing statutory targets.
- 4.6 Details of the proposed standards, by council area, can be found in the draft amendment Order (see Annex A).
- 4.7 DfE confirmed with the GFI team prior to this consultation that the targets remain appropriate and current for use as Statutory Standards. They will remain under review.

4.8 DfE acknowledges that in the future there may be developments in approach around indicators of local economic development and business start-up in line with wider developments in the policy ecosystem, and looks forward to working in partnership with local government as future policy direction is developed. In particular, while the current proposed standards relate directly to activity funded through the GFI programme, there will be a range of activity undertaken by Councils that support new businesses that is not necessarily reflected in the current figures. DfE would be keen to understand and reflect this wider activity through future standard-setting, based

on appropriate research and data. It is, however, important to update the current standards now, based on the available data, to align with the GFI programme which commenced in April 2021.

4.9 Finally, the use of business plans created through the programme as a proxy for jobs created is retained in the current proposal, as this also aligns to the approach in the GFI programme. Future research in the appropriate measure to be used to either approximate or verify jobs created is an area that DfE will be interested in exploring in any future review.

5. Impact Assessments

5.1 As DfE is responsible for the policy relating to the proposed amendments it has completed all the required impact assessments. Copies of these can be found at <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/impact-assessments-consultation-local-government-order-2015>.

5.2 DfE has confirmed that it considers that the draft Order does not contain proposals to change policy in a

substantive way, therefore, no adverse impact on the categories of person in section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 are identified.

5.3 DfE has confirmed that it has not conducted a regulatory impact assessment as the proposed changes will have no regulatory impact.

5.3 DfE has confirmed that it considers that the proposed amendments in the draft Order will not have any differential impact on people living in rural areas.

6. Human Rights

- 6.1 The Department believes that the proposals set out in the draft Order are compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

Annex A

STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2022 No.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022

Made - - - - - *XXst/nd/rd/th Month 2022*
Coming into operation - - - *X XXst/nd/rd/th Month 2022*

The Department for Communities⁽¹⁾ makes the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by section 89(1) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014⁽²⁾ and now vested in it⁽³⁾.

In accordance with section 89(2) of that Act, the Department has consulted councils and such associations or bodies representative of councils, such associations or bodies representative of officers of councils and such other persons or bodies as appear to the Department to be appropriate.

Citation and commencement

1. This Order shall be cited as The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 and shall come into operation on XXst/nd/rd/th Month 2022.

Amendment of The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

2. The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015⁽⁴⁾ shall be amended in accordance with Article 3.

3. For Schedules 1 (economic development indicators) and 2 (economic development standards) of the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 substitute Schedules 1 and 2 within the Schedule.

(1) Formerly known as the Department for Social Development; see the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 c.5 (NI).

(2) 2014 c. 8 (N.I.)

(3) See S.R. 2016 No. 76, Article 8 of and Schedule 5 to the Departments (Transfer of Functions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 transferred functions to the Department for Communities which were previously exercisable by the Department of the Environment

(4) S.R. 2015 No. 327

“SCHEDULE 1

Article 2

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Council	Indicator reference number	Indicator
All councils	ED 1	The number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity ⁽¹⁾

(1) Business start-up activity means the delivery of client led business plans under the Council-led Northern Ireland Business Start-up Programme (NIBSUP) or successor programmes.

SCHEDULE 2

Article 2

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

<i>Council</i>	<i>Standard reference number</i>	<i>Standard</i>
	EDS 1	To promote in each financial year the following number of jobs through business start-up activity ⁽¹⁾
Antrim and Newtownabbey		80
Ards and North Down		123
Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon		182
Belfast		325
Causeway Coast and Glens		128
Derry and Strabane		140
Fermanagh and Omagh		170
Lisburn and Castlereagh		116
Mid and East Antrim		111
Mid Ulster		153
Newry, Mourne and Down		173

(1) Business start-up activity means the delivery of client led business plans under the Council-led Northern Ireland Business Start-up Programme (NIBSUP) or successor programmes”

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

This Order amends The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 by updating Schedules 1 (economic development indicators) and 2 (economic development standards).

Annex B

DRAFT GUIDANCE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND STANDARDS

1. The statutory performance indicator and standards have been set by the Department for the Economy (DfE) as part of the governance and performance management arrangements for the economic development functions transferred to local government in 2015. It is critical to ensure that these functions are carried out, and are seen to be carried out, in a clear, fair and consistent manner and that best practice is applied across the district councils.

2. The Indicator and Standards have been prepared under the Northern Ireland Business Start-Up Programme (NIBSUP), also known as the Go for It (GFI) programme. In order to ensure consistency and reliability of performance data, reporting on the performance indicator and standards will be carried out centrally by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council as GFI coordinating team and reported to DfE. DfE will publish or arrange for this performance data to be published on an annual basis.

3. This will allow for accurate comparison between Councils across performance indicators and standards and will provide the DfE Minister and the public with assurance over the performance. Central reporting will also ensure that DfE continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics when reporting performance at the Regional level.

DATA COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS

Northern Ireland Go For It Programme 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2023

4. The GFI team will submit monthly data lists to DfE within 5 working days of the end of each month, in relation to

- the number of business plans completed for each Council area within Northern Ireland
- the number of equivalent jobs promoted within each Council area

REPORTING AND MONITORING

5. The reporting and monitoring arrangements are as follows:

- Invest NI will audit a random sample of all transactions associated with Business Start including initial meetings, workshops and business plans
- The GFI team has its own internal audit procedure which is undertaken on a 20% basis of all transactions and quality of business plans
- The GFI team produces a monthly report for Invest NI by way of ensuring compliance with data integrity, funding and quality of business plans
- Performance of individual council areas will be tracked and documented on a monthly basis forming the basis of monthly meetings between Invest NI and the GFI team.
- Validation of monthly quantity of Business plans will be completed by an external agency on an annual basis

VALIDATION OF DATA

6. The data validation arrangements are as follows:

- The GFI team will conduct quality validation on 20% of the plans produced each month
- The plans will be selected at random from the final agreed monthly file.
- The key areas of validation will be in keeping with the Terms of Reference agreed with Invest NI and the validation process will:
 - ensure that the plan includes a robust set of financial projections consistent with the project described in the plan
 - ensure that analysis of the plans (specifically financial information) identifies any significant issues and specific commentary should be made where issues exist
 - ensure the plan is evidenced-based, with a minimum of 10% of the first year's sales justified in the market section. This should be supported with customer names and contract values
- In addition, the validation process will be used to identify best practice
- A summary of the validation will be prepared by the GFI team each month and be made available to Invest NI and Councils.

Available in alternative formats.

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