

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 10th April, 2024

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nic Bhranair (Chairperson);
Alderman Lawlor;
Councillors Bunting, Duffy, Flynn, Garrett, Lyons,
Maskey, F. McAteer, McCabe, McCormick, McDowell,
McKay, McMullan, Murray and Walsh.

Also attended: Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan).

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Canavan, S. Douglas, McDonough-Brown and McLaughlin.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 13th and 27th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 8th April.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Nic Bhranair and Walsh declared an interest in item 5.a) Update on Neighbourhood Tourism, in that the organisation they worked for was in receipt of funding from the Programme and left the room whilst the item was under discussion.

Agenda Items and Late Reports

The Chairperson expressed her disappointment with the late reports submitted to the Committee and highlighted that every effort should be made to avoid such an occurrence in the future, to allow the Committee ample time to consider the items thoroughly.

Restricted Items

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

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

Members were also reminded that the content of ‘restricted’ reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as ‘confidential information’ and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

Vacant to Vibrant Programme

The Committee was provided with an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and the recommendations from the Vacant to Vibrant assessment panel following the recent receipt and assessment of applications.

The Committee:

- I. Noted the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant Programme; and
- II. Agreed to the recommended grant awards as outlined within Section 3.14 of the report.

Presentation

Translink - Belfast Grand Central Station

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. McAllister, Head of Belfast Grand Central Station Programme, Mr. D. Curry - General Manager Bus Services, and Ms. L. Shannon, Corporate Communications Manager, representing Translink to the meeting.

The representatives provided an update of the Belfast Grand Central Station/ Weavers Cross Transport Led Regeneration Project which included details of the Street Works Programme and Public Transport Interventions, together with Rail Engineering Works for 2024.

The Committee noted the contents of the Presentation and agreed that Translink could present further updates at future Special Committees, if required.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker

The Director of City Regeneration and Development presented a Review of the regeneration and development activity which had been undertaken in 2023 in relation to the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker, which included the Role of the city centre and the Benefits of investment, together with its aligned to the eight core policies of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS).

The Committee then considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To provide Members with an update on the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Tracker which captures regeneration and development activity which took place in the City Centre during 2023, as aligned to the eight core policies of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS). The detail of this report will be provided by way of a presentation at Committee.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to note that:

- i) An overview of regeneration and development activity which took place in Belfast City Centre and Titanic Quarter during 2023, as aligned to the eight core principles set out in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, will be provided by way of a presentation to be made to this Committee on 10th April 2023.**
- ii) This will include identifying challenges and proposed next steps to help unlock the next stage of the delivery of the Regeneration & Investment Strategy priorities for discussion with Members.**

4.0 Main Report

4.1 As members are aware the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) sets out our collective ambition for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding areas for the period 2015 to 2030. It contains a road map of policies to guide city centre decision-making and key projects that translate those policies into action, aligned to our overarching ambitions outlined within the Belfast Agenda. BCCRIS seeks to address

the universal elements of a thriving city centre as well as challenges and conditions that are unique to Belfast and is underpinned by the following eight core principles:

- Increase the Employment Population;
- Increase the Residential Population;
- Manage the Retail Offer;
- Maximise the Tourism Opportunity;
- Create Regional Learning and Innovation Centres;
- Create a Green, Walkable, Cyclable Centre;
- Connect to the City Around, and
- Shared space and social impact.

4.2 To facilitate the implementation of the eight policies for the city centre, BCCRIS identified a series of projects aimed at creating a liveable and economically thriving city, alongside, identifying the following five Special Action Areas:

- Inner North
- Inner West
- North East Quarter
- Transport Hub and South Centre
- Oxford Street and the Eastern Bank

4.3 The city centre provides an important role for Belfast, the Council and the wider region given Belfast's role as the regional driver and the critical role the city centre in particular plays in terms of employment, investment, tourism, education and a place to live and to visit. , The city centre makes up 2.6% of Belfast's spatial area but represents the largest employment base employing over 86,000 workers across the various sectors, representing c37% of Belfast's workforce. Approx 80% of the Councils income comes from the district rate, with the city centre accounting for 42% of Belfast's non-domestic rates income equating to 27% of the Councils total rates income. The sectors contributing greatest to city centre rates are the office sector (60% of city centre non-domestic rate or 16% of Councils total rate income) and retail (22.5% of city centre non-domestic rate or 6% of Councils total rate income). From 2020/21 to 2022/23 the city centre non-domestic rate has increased year on year going from £42.19m to £46.52m over this 3-year period.

4.4 The purpose of the Regeneration Tracker is to provide Members with an overview of regeneration and development activity which has taken place in Belfast City Centre and Titanic Quarter during 2023 (1st January – 31st December), aligned to the eight core policies outlined within the Belfast

City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. An overview of the Future City Centre Performance Dashboard will also be included, providing an overview of footfall, jobs, vacancy, and cleanliness and safety among other indicators to provide a health check overview of the performance of the city centre.

- 4.5 A number of the core principles and projects and developments identified within BCCRIS have progressed well since 2015 to date (and in particular during 2023 which will be the focus of the presentation to Committee). This has included significant office development, hotel and tourism, purpose-built student accommodation and major developments identified in BCCRIS such as the relocation of the University Ulster, progression of the new Transport Hub and Weavers Cross development, progression of City Deal projects including the Belfast Stories tourist attraction, waterfront development etc. Whilst retail across the UK has remained challenging previous reports to this Committee have shown that city centre ground floor vacancy levels have decreased 23% to 21% and there have been a number of new first to Belfast /first to market brands who have recently located in the city centre. It is however recognised that challenges remain around city centre living, place-shaping and public realm, dereliction, and infrastructure investment. As reported to CGR in February 2024 the lack of regeneration related funding for Belfast (and the wider region) as compared to other UK city regions has put Belfast at a distinct disadvantage in terms of city competitiveness and addressing issues of viability, place making and progressing development and regeneration including housing and increased city centre living. As highlighted to Committee there are a number of funding streams available in other UK cities that have helped accelerate development inc the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land Fund, Future High Streets Fund, Transforming Cities Fund etc. The experience from other cities has shown that these have been critical in order to realise the full regeneration potential of their city centres and to meet wider city region requirements.
- 4.6 Notwithstanding the lack of this external funding, the Regeneration Tracker presentation to be made to Committee will highlight positive development activity during the 2023 period across the private and public sectors. In order to deliver the growth ambitions as set out in the Belfast Agenda to 2035 it has been estimated that this will require c £5.5bn investment and clearly the role of the private sector is critical in this. The Regeneration Tracker details the extensive private sector development delivered in 2023 along with highlighting some of the projects where Belfast City Council are leading on the delivery of addressing some of our key sectors for growth. This includes the Housing Led

Regeneration Programme, the Bolder Vision, Strategic Property Acquisitions, Belfast Region City Deal Projects inc Belfast Stories, Cathedral Gardens redevelopment, 2 Royal Avenue, potential acquisition /vesting of the Tribeca site, the Vacant to Vibrant Programme, Belfast 2024 cultural activities etc.

- 4.7 An update on these various areas of work have been brought to both CGR and SP&R Committees. In terms of city centre living specifically it is worth highlighting the update brought to the March CGR Committee in relation to the housing led regeneration programme. This included an update on the Development Partner process where Members had been advised of the progress on the competitive dialogue process with 3 bidders for a significant multi-site, residential led mixed use regeneration development opportunity (c £630m GDV). This followed the development of a number of Concept Regeneration Plans for Council and wider public and private sector lands and PADS for each of the cluster sites. Members were also updated on the reframed Inner North West Development Brief which had been forwarded to Housing Associations, which had followed the previous pause at the request of Members and liaison with DfC as landowners and with NIHE. An update was also provided in relation to the city-wide Strategic Site Assessments where planning appraisals and feasibility studies are underway and updates to be brought initially to the Area Working Groups from May onwards.
- 4.8 It is worth highlighting that there are a significant number of consented residential units / schemes that have come through the planning system in the city centre particularly, and that many of these have not progressed for various reasons including issues around policy, viability, infrastructure etc, most of which are outside Council's responsibility. Notwithstanding this however it is worth noting that there are currently over 1,000 homes under construction across 6 city centre sites, and over 1,550 social homes under construction across the city. As agreed by Members it is also intended to hold an All-Party Roundtable on Housing Regeneration to consider the various housing regeneration issues in more detail.
- 4.9 The Regeneration Tracker will present an update on the progress of development and regeneration activity within the city centre in 2023 as well as identifying challenges and proposed next steps to unlocking the next stage of the delivery of the Regeneration & Investment Strategy for discussion with Members.

5.0 Financial and Resource Implications

None associated with this report.

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

None associated with this report.”

During discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development explained that a potential reiteration of the Vacant to Vibrant scheme to include upper floors in vacant building was being explored. She also highlighted that there were few vacancies of high-grade office space, however, there were challenges emerging with older office spaces in terms of potential new legislation relating to minimum EPC standards.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the presentation and the overview of the regeneration and development activity which had taken place in Belfast City Centre and Titanic Quarter during 2023, as aligned to the eight core principles set out in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, in particular, the challenges and proposed next steps to help unlock the next stage of the delivery of the Regeneration and Investment Strategy priorities.

(Councillor McDowell in the Chair)

Positioning Belfast to Compete

Update on Neighbourhood Tourism

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to further update Members on the research and engagement work undertaken to date which will inform the development of a new Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme in due course.

The report also provides an outline proposal for future funding of the existing City Connections programme.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Committee is asked to:

- i) Note the contents of this paper and subsequent next steps for final scoping and designing of an appropriate Neighbourhood Tourism funding model, which suits the needs of applicants and their stage of**

development whilst also meeting council ambitions.

- ii) Consider the recommendation to allow funding to be released under strand one of the programme to EastSide Partnership and Fáilte Feirste Thiar, in recognition of their current capacity to deliver on objectives relating to neighbourhood tourism.

3.0 Main Report

Programme Aims:

In June 2023, Members granted permission to proceed with the development of a new Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme. This pilot programme will provide mentoring and financial support over a two - year period, to promote the development and implementation of market-led tourism products and experiences in locales across the city, increasing footfall, dwell time and spend and sharing the benefits of tourism beyond the city centre. The programme also aims to prioritise collaborative working models and uplift sectoral capacity, skill and growth.

Research and Engagement 1: Open Workshops (x9):

Extensive research has already been undertaken with a range of internal and external sectoral stakeholders. This work has helped to identify needs, gaps and opportunities and will help inform programme criteria and ensure proposals are aligned with the ambitions of 'Belfast Stories'.

Neighbourhood Tourism workshops were a key part of the recent engagement work at which both groups and individuals could find out more about Neighbourhood Tourism and express their own views and prioritisations around thematic questions.

Nine workshops were held across inner and outer North, South, East and West Belfast and the city centre which attracted 98 participants from 58 organisations. These were held in the following venues: *Belfast Castle, Ulster Museum, City Hall, EastSide Visitors' Centre; St Comgall's, Malone House, Shorts Recreational Club, Roddy McCorley Centre and Crumlin Road Gaol.*

In order to accommodate input from people who were not able to attend the workshops, two further avenues of engagement were made available via:

- an offer to meet one - to - one with an independent facilitator and;
- (ii) an online survey.

The Neighbourhood Tourism workshops followed a set format, with participants addressing six specific questions:

- i) How would you describe your neighbourhood to a tourist?
- ii) Market segments : does this reflect the interests of visitors who visit your area?
- iii) Stories : what stories do local people want to share with tourists?
- iv) Neighbourhood products and experiences : what already exists? what could be done that is new?
- v) Itineraries : how ready is your neighbourhood to welcome visitors?
- vi) What could an investment fund look like?

An analysis is currently underway of the information gathered and a final report along with options and recommendations will be brought to Committee for consideration by May 2024 .

In the interim, the following is a summary of how the workshops were received and the main points which came through at a neighbourhood level which will inform the final programme design and support.

- There was a high level of interest from a range of community organisations. Participants were positive, engaged and clearly wanted to learn more about the concept of 'Neighbourhood Tourism' and the benefits it could bring to localities across the city.
- Most participants benefitted from the overview of market segments, narratives and trends provided as part of the workshops. For voluntary and community organisations in particular, this was an exercise in finding out what they did not know and recognising they had a long road ahead in developing viable products and experiences.
- There was an acknowledgement that people's current level of understanding tourism and visitor needs would benefit from an increased knowledge of the subject, this could include tourism products, delivery methods, infrastructure and the development of tourism clusters.
- There was also learning about the wealth of stories and assets that already exist within both the city and neighbourhoods. This helped further understanding

as to how lived experience matched with professional expertise can bring authenticity.

- Stakeholders talked over breaks, left together, exchanged contact details and talked of future collaborations. They also asked for more opportunities for learning, information sharing and networking.

The following points were raised by workshop participants for Council to consider in any future approach to Neighbourhood Tourism:

- A relatively small funding pot to cover projects from across the city.
- Funding welcomed as it will minimise financial risks associated with new product development and market testing.
- Tourism offerings should come from locally based residents and organisations,
- ie. fear of being marginalised by bigger, outside organisations with no real connection to local areas.
- Open to a collaborative approach but provision should also be included to allow smaller, individual applications.
- Match funding should not be a requirement as it could exclude potential applicants.
- A hybrid model of financial support combined with business mentoring would be beneficial.
- Support for marketing and sales came through strongly.
- Clustering opportunities could maximise impact, increase benefits and avoid duplication.
- Council to be cognisant of how parts of the city are currently not as developed as others in terms of tourism offerings and the ability to bring forward new concepts and products.
- Funding model to be user friendly and proportionate to level of funding requested.

Research and Engagement 2 : Sectoral Stakeholders:

The Neighbourhood Tourism based workshops were supplemented with interviews and engagement with representatives from key sectoral bodies, area partnerships and local and central government, including:

- Party Group Leaders and Elected Members who attended the workshops.
- Key BCC teams and departments, including:

- Property and Projects
- Neighbourhood Regeneration
- Neighbourhood Integration
- Community and Neighbourhood Assets
- Central Grants
- City Innovation
- Economic Development
- Culture
- Tourism
- Belfast 2024
- Belfast Stories

As well as external stakeholders including:

- Department for Communities
- Department for the Economy
- Tourism NI
- Visit Belfast
- Tourism Ireland
- The Greater Shankill Convention
- Maritime Belfast
- EastSide Partnership
- Fáilte Feirste Thiar

A brief synopsis of feedback from sectoral representatives currently includes:

- Concerns in terms of restricted capacity levels with a particular focus on quality, marketing and viability.
- It was also felt that more investment was needed in Neighbourhood Tourism. Successful destination development in areas such as West Belfast, East Belfast and Maritime Belfast indicated the scale of investment required.
- A number of other strategies are currently under review or in development and it appears that stories will be a common driver for all key partners and sectoral bodies going forward.
- It was suggested that people, stories or themes should be the focus of the programme rather than neighbourhoods or that there could be distinct strands for neighbourhoods and for storytelling. There was some concern that a focus on geographic communities excludes community of identity, for example, the LGBTQ plus community.
- Other stakeholders suggested that investment should support existing or emerging anchor attractions and

assets such as the city's cemeteries, Belfast Castle and Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund projects.

- There was discussion as to whether the investment programme is a fund, a strategy or a building block contributing to neighbourhood tourism development alongside, for example, a skills and training agenda.
- Consultees felt that a key benefit of the investment programme should be allowing providers to 'de-risk' the development of new and enhanced products and experiences. This should be matched by a risk appetite prepared to accept greater risk in pursuit of the greater potential benefits of innovation.
- Several consultees also reinforced that this is a pilot and in such a context, success and failure are different sides of the same point, provide that lessons are drawn and learning shared.

Opportunities available within Go Succeed Programme:

As part of the consultation and engagement process, Council's Tourism staff have met on a regular basis with colleagues in Economic Development to explore how a new Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme could benefit from the opportunities available within the existing Go Succeed programme. The aim is to provide wrap-around support in the form of concept development, tailored business assistance, guidance and mentoring. This integrated approach would provide the business acumen and support needs raised by attendees at the neighbourhood tourism workshops.

Funding Models:

Research and engagement work to date has provided learnings which will be taken into consideration when developing an appropriate funding model over the coming months.

It is clear that different destinations and neighbourhoods across the city are at varying stages of development. So, too, are potential providers which include businesses, social enterprises, charities, voluntary groups and sole entrepreneurs across the private, community, culture and heritage sectors.

Many providers are small and lack staff, time and financial resources to innovate or take a risk on something new or unproven. For others, tourism is not a core organisational

function or focus. Some have a model that they have not been able to grow or monetise, while Tourism NI has indicated a gap in support for established providers to internationalise their offer.

Consideration will also be given by the Tourism Development Team to the respective implications of employing either a commissioning model or a grant funding model within the CGU framework. Work will also continue to delineate operational roles and responsibilities and appropriate methods for monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

A detailed report on all engagement feedback and next steps, alignment to Go Succeed and funding model recommendations for member consideration will be presented at May 2024 Committee.

4.0 Eastside/Failte Feirste Thiar

In East Belfast, EastSide Tourism is a long-established community organisation that has many years' experience in servicing visitors' needs. In the west of the city, Fáilte Feirste Thiar is also firmly established and has a strong track record in supporting and delivering neighbourhood tourism services.

During the research and engagement work, several stakeholders, not just those with a destination management remit, emphasised the importance of destination management at a quarter or neighbourhood level.

Consultees pointed to gains made in the East, West and Waterfront areas in relation to strategy, co-ordination, networking, marketing, promotional material, digitisation, packaging, clustering, volunteer development, visitor servicing, accreditation and more.

In recent years, Council has provided funding to EastSide Tourism and Fáilte Feirste Thiar to enable the City Connections programme, a partnership between the two organisations which works to maximise the impact of tourism at a local level.

Given these organisations are long established with a strong remit of neighbourhood tourism and the current limited capacity for others to deliver offerings of a similar caliber, it is recommended to split the investment programme into two strands:

The total budget for the Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme is £500,000 over a two-year period from 2024 - 2026.

- i) Strand One will continue to support the work of EastSide Tourism and Fáilte Feirste Thiar for two years, this will be by way of an annual funding agreement which will be subject to the achievement of KPIs and agreed deliverables. The organisations would each receive £62,500 per annum. This funding will support an outcomes-based model that will integrate support and capacity building to other Neighbourhood Tourism projects through an agreed delivery programme. Officers will work with both organisations to outline associated KPIs and deliverables for this funding and will be monitored via funding agreements.
- ii) Strand Two will provide £250,000 across the programme 2 year lifespan to support other applicants beyond to develop, test and bring to market new or enhanced tourism products and experiences. (If funding for EastSide Tourism and Fáilte Feirste Thiar is approved under strand one, these organisations would be excluded from applying for funding under strand two). The funding model options will be brought back to committee in May 2024.

5.0 Financial and Resource Implications:

Funding for year 1 (2024 / 25) and year 2 (2025 / 26) will be provided from Belfast Region City Deal Reserve. This is a total of £500k over the 2 financial years - £250k per annum.

**6.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment:**

The Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme has been screened for:

- i) Equality of opportunity and good relations and
- ii) Disabilities duties

On the basis of the answers to the screening questions, it was recommended that the policy is 'screened out - mitigating actions' (minor impacts).

Therefore, the consultation and engagement on Neighbourhood Tourism and draft Equality Screening took simultaneously between January and March 2024.

This means that policy development was shaped by the findings of the consultation and screening, allowing any potential negative impacts to be designed out and opportunities to promote equality or good relations, built in.

Only minor positive impacts have been identified at this stage. The council will continue to monitor for further differential impacts.”

During discussion, Members raised the importance of building capacity of other community organisations and smaller groups which might wish to apply for Strand Two of the Neighbourhood Tourism programme.

The Director of Economic Development explained the equality screening element, in that inclusive tourism has been considered, together with products relevant to all market segments.

After discussion, the Committee:

- I. Noted the contents of the report and subsequent next steps for final scoping and designing of an appropriate Neighbourhood Tourism funding model, which suited the needs of applicants and their stage of development whilst also meeting the Council's ambitions;
- II. Agreed to the release of funding under strand one of the programme to EastSide Partnership and Fáilte Feirste Thiar, in recognition of their current capacity to deliver on objectives relating to neighbourhood tourism; and
- III. Agreed that capacity building be developed for other community organisation and smaller local groups which might wish to apply for Strand Two funding.

(Councillor Nic Bhranair in the Chair)

International Relations Activity – New York-New Belfast event

The Committee was reminded of the ongoing work to develop and deliver a range of activities to attract further foreign direct investment and capital investment in the city and support the growth and scaling of innovative Belfast companies in key growth sectors. This included support for trade development and export support; engagement in showcasing and promotional activities in key markets and development of promotional collateral and materials setting out the sectoral and infrastructure offer in the city.

The Director of Economic Development advised that one of the key international opportunities to promote the business and investment opportunities in Belfast was the annual New York-New Belfast (NYNB) showcase event which had been running for more than a decade. For the last three years, the event had been streamlined to focus on seeking economic opportunity within New York City and the wider east coast.

Over 150 business, civic and political leaders gather to hear the latest Belfast capital developments and trade and investment offer across our growth sectors. An added dimension to the showcase was an opportunity to promote the tourism and cultural offers within the city, including the 2024 Year of Culture programme.

He stated that, this year, presented an opportunity to update potential investors on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal key assets. An increasingly important area of engagement with the US market was the growing number of scaling companies seeking investment and mentorship to launch into the US market. Finally, the event and associated meetings provided an opportunity to meet face to face with companies which were considering establishing a base in Europe, to encourage them to explore Belfast as an investment location – particularly given the unique investment proposition that the region now benefited from. He reported that, as well as the business event, the Council delegation would undertake a series of targeted business meetings in partnership with Invest NI's USA office.

He confirmed that the 15th NYNB event would take place on 6th June, 2024. Among key attendees and speakers were Comptroller Tom Di Napoli, who continued to invest US Pension Funds into NI businesses, as well as committed supporter of Belfast, Michael Flannery, who worked with US-based tech businesses targeting global markets.

The Committee approved a financial contribution of £5,000 towards the 2024 New York New Belfast event and agreed to the attendance of the Lord Mayor and relevant senior officials, up to a maximum estimated cost of £8,000.

Update on Lord Mayors Day

The Director of Economic Development provided an overview of the Lord Mayor's Day Event, which would take place on Saturday, 18th May, encompassing a day of festivities in City Hall Grounds between 12pm-5pm. He highlighted that it would also align with welcoming Little Amal to the city and the Lord Mayor would host Little Amal as part of the event.

The Committee approved the proposal for the Lord Mayor's Day Event and allocated a budget of £42,000 for its implementation. The Committee noted that the event played a crucial role in promoting civic pride and cultural heritage.

Strategic and Operational Issues

City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan 2024-2025- Update

The Committee noted that the draft Committee Plan would be presented for consideration at its meeting in May and that, subsequently, it might require updating when the four year Corporate Plan for the Council had been agreed.

Notice of Motion Quarterly Update

The Committee was advised that there were 11 Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance for which it was responsible for.

It was reported that the Committee should consider the recommendation to close seven motions, as follows:

Category 1 Recommended Closures

- Review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme (ID = 72)
- Disabled Parking Accreditation Scheme (ID = 153)
- Translink – Night-time provision of services (ID = 289)
- Support the network of WW2-era Pillboxes (ID = 303)
- Cathedral Quarter (ID = 318)
- Late Night Public Transport (ID = 349)

Category 2 Recommended Closures

- Street Art Walls (ID = 329)

During discussion, in response to a Member's question in relation to the continued issue outlined in the Translink – Night-time provision of services Motion (ID = 289), the Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that the need had been identified by Translink as an action with the Community and Active Sustainable Travel Group. The Senior Manager also highlighted that during a presentation from the Purple Flag Initiative representatives to the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre in January, Members had been informed that 3 Belfast Improvement Districts were working with Translink to explore funding options to progress the issue.

One Member requested that the Disabled Parking Accreditation Scheme Motion (ID = 153) remained open, so that a report could be submitted on the costs and process of joining the Disability Motoring UK's Disabled Parking Accreditation scheme.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor McMullan,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

In relation to the update on the Motion 'Review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme' (ID = 72), from March 2020, to consider granting free access to young people to the Belfast Bikes Scheme, the Committee agrees that it would consider this as part of the rate setting process for 2025/26.

On a vote by show of hands, four Members voted for the proposal and ten against and it was accordingly declared lost.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion that the Committee was responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and

- Agreed to the closure of six Notices of Motion, as referenced in Appendix 1 and noted in paragraph 3.4 of the report (with the exception of ID = 153); and
- Agreed that the Disabled Parking Accreditation Scheme Motion (ID = 153) remained open, so that a report could be submitted on the associated costs and process of joining the Disability Motoring UK's Disabled Parking Accreditation scheme, for consideration at a future Committee.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Belfast 2024 Animation - Culture Night
(Councillor Groogan to raise)

In response to the Deputy Lord Mayor's suggestion to support cultural venues in the City to open on the evening of 'Culture Night' in September, within the Belfast 2024 Programme of events, the Committee agreed to refer the decision to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th April for consideration so that further detail of how this could be facilitated, resourced and managed could be provided.

Chairperson