

# Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

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

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall on Wednesday, 29th May, 2024 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

1. **Routine Matters**

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

2. **Presentation**

- (a) Translink - Belfast Grand Central Update (RESTRICTED)

3. **Strategic and Operational Issues**

- (a) 2024/25 Committee Plan and Associated Work Plans (Pages 1 - 74)





<b>Subject:</b>	City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan 2024-2025, associated Work Plans and End of Year Report 2023-2024
<b>Date:</b>	29 May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Damien Martin, Strategic Director, Place and Economy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jamie Uprichard, Business Research and Development Manager

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To provide an end of year report on the key actions contained in the 2023-24 City Growth and Regeneration (CG&R) Committee Plan, as agreed by this Committee in September 2023.
1.2	To present to Committee the draft City Growth & Regeneration Committee Plan for 2024-25 and associated programme workplans highlighting programme costs seeking committee approval.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the contents of the end of year report as set out in Appendix 1;</li> <li>• Approve the City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan for 2024-25 attached at Appendix 2;</li> <li>• Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Enterprise and Business Growth workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 3;</li> <li>• Note and agree a financial commitment of £25,000 to HIRANI to support the delivery of the 'Health and Life Sciences Launchpad' in Northern Ireland;</li> <li>• Note and endorse the proposal to invest in the Way to Scale programme and extended support to innovation-focused businesses up to a maximum of £50,000 (work to be coordinated through Catalyst);</li> <li>• Note and endorse the contribution to support the ongoing development of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (work to be coordinated through Newry, Mourne and Down District Council) up to a maximum of £35,000;</li> <li>• Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Employability and Skills workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 4;</li> <li>• Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the European and International Relations workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 5;</li> <li>• Note and agree a financial commitment of £15,000 to Eurocities as part of annual membership of the Network;</li> <li>• Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Culture workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 6; and</li> <li>• Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Tourism and Events workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 7.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	At its meeting on 8th May, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the Report and associated appendices until its meeting on 29th May, to allow Members time to review the Committee and Work Plans further.



3.2	<p><u>CG&amp;R Committee Plan 2023-24 End of Year Report</u></p> <p>While the Committee receives regular updates on progress for specific programmes and initiatives, Appendix 1 sets out an overview of progress against the main commitments in the CG&amp;R Committee Plan 2023-24 as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This builds on the report that members received at the November committee meeting which provided a six-monthly update. At the year end, officers undertook an assessment of individual projects and workstreams, allocating a traffic light rating as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green - actions have been delivered as expected, to budget and with no significant risks.</li> <li>• Amber - there have been some delays, impact on budget or risks that have emerged.</li> <li>• Red - work has been significantly delayed; the final outcome is not as expected; significant additional budget is required; or significant risks have emerged.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p>In summary, from a total of 43 workstreams, 27 were rated as green, 15 as amber and 1 red. Committee should also note that due to the reporting timelines, some of the figures provided are provisional and subject to final audit.</p>
3.4	<p>Summary highlights of the year include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 56 organisations supported through the council’s Cultural multi-annual funding including support for Arts/ Heritage organisations and Festivals/Events.</li> <li>➤ 21 community festivals support</li> <li>➤ 124,000 people attended our four signature City Events (check).</li> <li>➤ 260 people progressed onto a job or better job via an employment academy.</li> <li>➤ New NI Enterprise Support Service launched during Global Entrepreneurship Week.</li> <li>➤ 119,135 Belfast Bike journeys during the 2023 calendar year.</li> <li>➤ 18 applications approved for Vacant to Vibrant and assisted 33 businesses through our “Matchmaking” service, helping them to identify city centre rental units.</li> <li>➤ Launched the process which seeks procurement for a long-term partner for the delivery of £630m GDV housing led placemaking regeneration.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p><u>CG&amp;R Committee Plan 2024-25</u></p> <p>Each year the Committee is tasked with agreeing a Committee Plan for the year ahead. This year’s Committee Plan has been developed based on feedback received from the Committee Planning workshop held in October 2023 and decisions relevant to the Committee agreed through the rates setting process. It has also been structured to align to the recently approved Belfast Agenda and the council’s draft Corporate Delivery Plan.</p>

3.6	The Corporate Delivery Plan will be presented to the May meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee. Should any changes be required, an update of the committee plan will be brought to the attention of members at a future meeting.
3.7	In particular, this Plan contains actions that make a contribution to the “Our Economy” and “Our Place” themes of the refreshed community plan. At its planning workshop in October 2023, members requested that consideration be given to measuring progress and impact on agreed programmes. To that end, this year’s committee plan includes a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be reported on a six-monthly basis together with a more detailed progress report against all commitments.
3.8	<p><u>Workplans/ Programme Budgets</u></p> <p>Many of the activities outlined within the draft Committee Plan will be resourced through the respective departmental budgets for 2024-25 in line with the Scheme of Delegation and in accordance with section G of the Financial Regulations. On that note, priority work areas for the 2024-25 financial year and their allocation from their respective budgets are presented in Appendices 3-7.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The draft Committee Plan 2024-25 and the subsequent work plans are aligned with the budget agreed by the Special Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024, namely a cash limit for the CG&amp;R Committee of £21.55 million as set out in Appendix 2.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Strategies, programmes and actions within the Committee Plan are developed and delivered in consultation with the Council’s Equality &amp; Diversity Officers and subject to appropriate equality, good relations and rural needs assessment.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 - CG&amp;R Committee Plan 2023-24 End of Year Report</p> <p>Appendix 2 – CG&amp;R Committee Plan 2024-25</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Enterprise and Business Growth Workplan 2024-25</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Employability &amp; Skills Workplan 2024-25</p> <p>Appendix 5 – European and International Relations Workplan 2024-25</p> <p>Appendix 6 – Culture Work Plan 2024-25</p> <p>Appendix 7 – Tourism and Events Work Plan 2024-25</p>





# City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan 2023- 24

End of Year Report

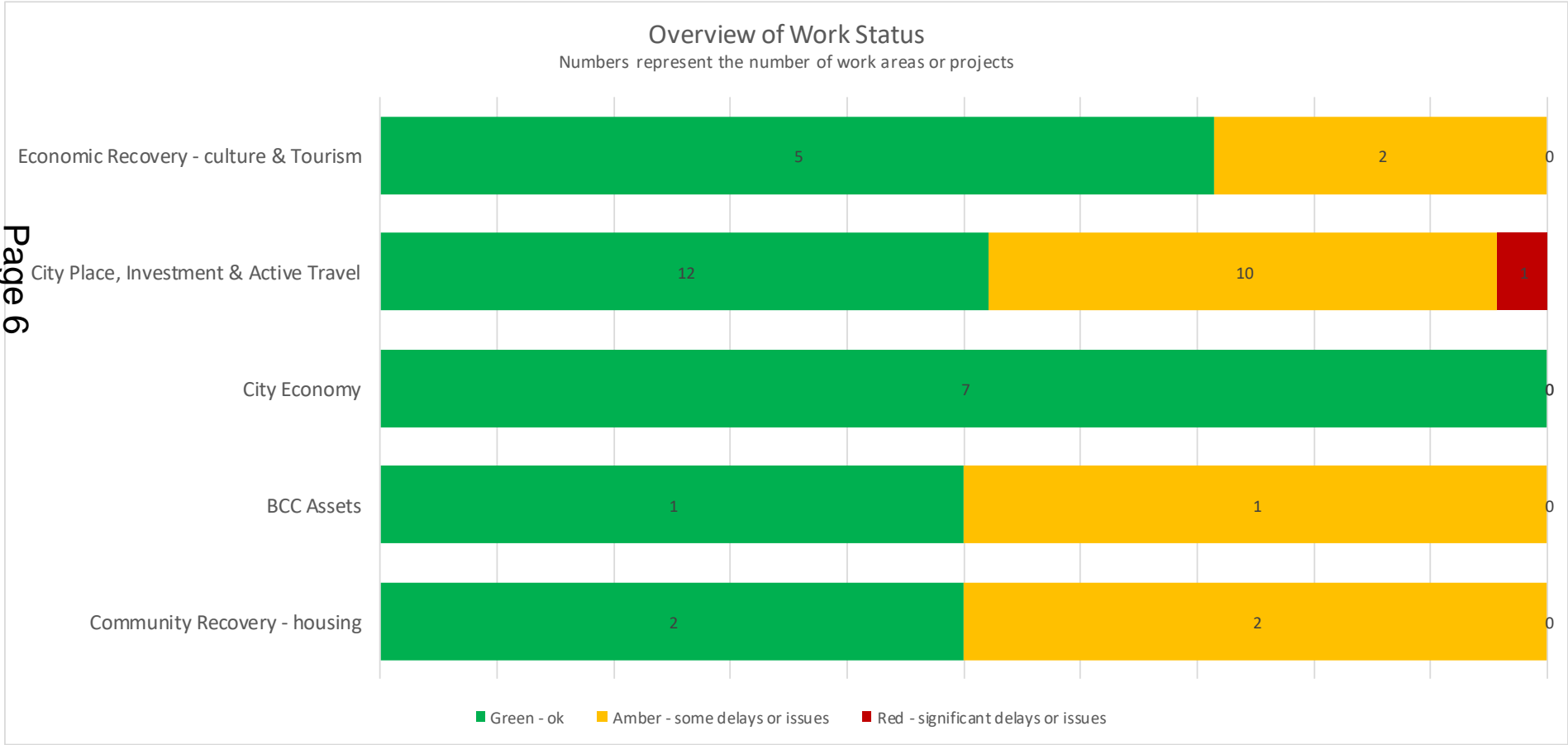


**Belfast**  
City Council

# Summary of performance

The following chart gives a high-level overview of progress at the end of the year. For each area of work, individual projects and workstreams have been allocated a traffic light rating based on the following assessment:

- Green – the actions have been delivered as expected, to budget and with no significant risks.
- Amber – there have been some delays, impact on budget or risks that have emerged.
- Red – the work has been significantly delayed; the final outcome is not as expected; significant additional budget is required; or significant risks have emerged.





# 2023-24 Summary of Key Achievements

Page 7



## Culture

- 119,135 Belfast Bike Journeys in 2023 (Calendar Year)



## Tourism

- 124,000 people attended our four signature City Events



## City Economy

- 260 people have progressed onto a job or better job via an Employment Academy.



## City Assets

- 119,135 Belfast Bike Journeys in 2023 (Calendar Year)



## City Place

- 18 applications approved for 'Vacant to Vibrant', to convert previously vacant city centre properties to become occupied.



## Community Recovery (housing)

- Launched the process which seeks procurement for a long-term partner for the delivery of £630m GDV housing led placemaking regeneration.

# 2023-24 Key Programmes of work – End of Year Report

## 1. Inclusive Economic Recovery

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<div>Page 8</div> <p><b>Cultural Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress the 'A City Imagining Plan' (GREEN)</li> <li>• Implement “Music Matters” Music Strategy (GREEN)</li> </ul> <p><b>Progress Belfast 2024 Year of Cultural Celebration for Belfast (AMBER)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural multi-annual funding including support for Arts/ Heritage organisations and Festivals/Events – 56 organisations supported.</li> <li>• Four Pathfinder awards for organisations not in receipt of core public sector support.</li> <li>• 21 Community Festivals supported in partnership with Department for Communities.</li> <li>• 22 organisations supported through Arts and Heritage small grants.</li> <li>• Access and Inclusion grants in partnership with the Department for Communities.</li> <li>• 10 organisations supported through Artist Studios and Maker Spaces Organisational Grants.</li> <li>• Creative Bursaries for 16 individuals.</li> <li>• Establishment of a Green Arts Forum to advance and promote sustainability in the sector.</li> <li>• 6 partnerships with key sectoral organisations.</li> <li>• A partnership with Theatre and Dance NI, including funding for 7 recipients, across various disciplines of the theatre and dance sector, as part of the INVEST programme.</li> <li>• Partnership with Craft NI to develop Craft NI Gallery including a programme of 8 craft exhibitions and 19 Belfast events for Craft Month.</li> <li>• A partnership with Thrive NI to continue the Audience Panel, representing 200 members, and provide tailored advice to embedding people-led approaches within cultural organisations.</li> <li>• A partnership with Ulster Architectural Heritage Society to deliver Open Heritage Belfast and other events, advocacy, advice &amp; support.</li> <li>• Delivery of the Belfast Canvass Project and city animation projects across 30 sites across the city.</li> <li>• Continue with support to increase participation and representation at cultural events by disabled people through initiatives such as the Gig Buddies programme and a new partnership with the University of Atypical.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and funding for the Music Heritage Programme supporting 4 organisations to work with local musicians, citizens and communities in a developmental process that will lead to a showcase of contemporary traditional music as part of Belfast 2024.</li> <li>• Recruitment and selection of the Belfast Region Music Board.</li> <li>• Micro-bursaries pilot programme supporting 17 musicians with costs incurred within their artform.</li> <li>• Expansion of the Output Conference, Ireland’s biggest one-day music conference and live music showcase.</li> <li>• Gradam Ceoil bursaries for young musicians.</li> <li>• Financial support for the delivery of the NI Music Prize.</li> <li>• The Pipeline Investment Fund for music venues through a partnership with Music Venue Trust.</li> <li>• Promotion of our UNESCO City of Music status via dedicated Belfast Music marketing channels.</li> <li>• The development of a digital music support service developed in collaboration with Music Connections.</li> <li>• Partnerships with other UNESCO Cities of Music, including international exchanges with London, Ontario in Canada and Hannover, Germany.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<div>Page 9</div>	<p>In addition, there are a range of initiatives due to launch in March and April 2024, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The launch of the Music Industry Mentoring Programme.</li> <li>• A strategic review of the NI Music Prize.</li> <li>• Programme to develop the production skills of women, female-identifying and non-binary music creators in a safe and trusted studio environment.</li> <li>• The implementation of Access Riders to improve disability access.</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing sessions for musicians and the industry.</li> </ul> <p>A “Go Green” toolkit with tangible recommendations and measures for implementation.</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work progressed to design and deliver “Belfast 2024” the large scale cultural and creative celebration, which will highlight and uplift the sector during the key visitor months of March to November 2024. Belfast 2024 has delivered so far; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 17 new pieces of work commissioned; 4 signature commissions.</li> <li>○ 200+ events and opportunities.</li> <li>○ 800+ opportunities for artists and production staff.</li> <li>○ Over 100 volunteering opportunities.</li> <li>○ 5 national and international collaborations and 10 international artist exchanges.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>City Recovery, reopening the city and support for businesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Revitalisation Fund: Physical interventions (AMBER)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacant to Vibrant. Almost 400 application packs have been issued, and officers are currently working with a number of applicants, providing support to develop their proposals. A total of 18 applications have been approved with another 4 currently undergoing the assessment process, and a further 8 applicants are actively engaging with offices to finalise their applications with an expectation that these will be submitted over the coming months. A further 24 applicants are progressing with support via the matchmaking service. With the approved applications to date this has resulted in over 67 employment opportunities, estimated rates value of c£950k over the course of the lease periods and the reactivation to support 12 historic / heritage / buildings of interest.</li> </ul>
<p><b>City Development and Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regeneration Framework (AMBER)</b></li> <li>• <b>Secure Belfast additional</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the <b>Regeneration Framework</b> serves to underpin the lobbying case, with the interdependency to have a coherent approach to fundable propositions aligned to corporate priorities. The Regeneration Framework is currently being finalised, with officers currently testing its application. It is proposed to have further engagement with Members on the Framework, its application in the near future, with an objective of seeking agreement on city and Council priorities aligned to the Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan.</li> <li>• The Advocacy and Lobby proposition is now being advanced supported by a detailed stakeholder engagement plan and lobbying strategy to have enhanced regeneration investment funding for Belfast in line with other cities as well as furthering the case for devolved powers. As agreed by Committee in Feb 2024 a letter has been sent to the Communities’ Minister welcoming him to his position and requesting that he would work with all stakeholders to achieve the conferring of regeneration powers to Councils with the appropriate budgets within this Assembly mandate.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<div> <div>investment (AMBER)</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City centre investment fund (AMBER)</li> <li>Institutional investor / development partner (GREEN)</li> <li>Strategic direction to major projects (AMBER)</li> <li>Progress citywide strategic opportunities (GREEN)</li> <li>2 Royal Avenue (AMBER)</li> </ul> <div>The Sixth (GREEN)</div> <div>Regeneration Assets (GREEN)</div> <div>Belfast Campus (GREEN)</div> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review of the <b>city centre investment fund</b> is ongoing. This is aligned with the Council's corporate priorities and cognisance of the city's development aspirations as set outlined the Belfast Agenda.</li> <li>Council launched the process which seeks procurement for a long-term partner for the delivery of £630m GDV housing led placemaking regeneration in October 2023. This includes the inclusion of significant identified Council lands in the city centre, as part of a multi-site residential-led mixed-use regeneration development opportunity, with the potential for further sites across the city to be identified over the course of the partnership. Through this process Council are seeking a long-term partner to fund, develop and where appropriate to own and manage assets delivered through the partnership as part of a comprehensive regeneration scheme. The process is in line with the scheduled procurement programme. The Selection Questionnaire and de-selection stages have recently concluded, with 3 bidders now progressing through to the imminent Competitive Dialogue stage. The process is continuing in line with the procurement programme and is currently on schedule, with recommendations to be brought back to Members later in the year and with prior updates as this work progresses.</li> <li>Officers continued to engage on major <b>private sector led regeneration schemes</b> through the established Project Reference Groups to ensure alignment with Council's strategic corporate priorities. Specifically, in relation to Tribeca, decision by SP&amp;R Committee in Jan 2024 agreeing that officers carry out further work in relation to the possibility of vesting and / or acquisition of the site by agreement including seeking a valuation of the site. Cross departmental work is ongoing in respect of this, noting that aligned to a NOM Castlebrooke met with Party Leaders and Party representatives in February 2024. Correspondence has been issued to the Ministers and Permanent Secretaries of the Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure and Department for Economy, as agreed by Council in respect to the decision of SP&amp;R around carrying out further work in relation to the possibility of vesting and / or acquisition on this site.</li> <li>As reported to CGR Committee in Mar 2024, feasibility assessment including planning appraisals are currently being undertaken, these will be brought to Area Working Groups, with updates to Area Working Groups from May onwards. As agreed by CGR Committee in Mar 2024 an All Party Housing Led Regeneration Round Table meeting is being arranged which will provide an opportunity for Members to have a focused informed discussion and to consider ongoing activity, potential opportunities and the work of the Community Planning, Housing Led Regeneration Group. This will build on the engagement of previous City Growth and Regeneration workshops on Housing Led Regeneration which took place in Jan 2022 and Jan 2023 and allow an opportunity for specific Committee Plan priority updates.</li> <li>An update in relation to ongoing work in relation to 2 Royal Avenue was reported to the SP&amp;R Committee in February 2024. This included the principles for acquisition; the current meanwhile use and the options and work undertaken to consider future uses including the need to consider the long term sustainability of the building and financial implications for Council; the LGBTQIA+ hub application to PEACEPLUS for space on the First Floor; and agreed to commence a without prejudice market wide Expressions of Interest (EOI) exercise for the ground floor of the building for both small occupiers to support and complement the current meanwhile use (until Dec 24) and a ground floor occupier(s) for longer term post 2024, cognisant of the proposed first floor PEACEPLUS Funding application. Work in respect of this EOI has commenced with an update to be reported to a future meeting of the Committee on the outcomes. DfC funded capital works to the rear of the buildings including opening up of the space at the rear with a new entrance and activation onto Bank Square improving connectivity from Royal Avenue to Bank Square were completed in March 2024.</li> <li>Work on the Sixth was also progressed via the BelTel LLP, which has included the recent submission of a renewed planning application that preserves the asset redevelopment potential.</li> <li>Ongoing management of the Regeneration Assets in line with the objectives of the CCIF.</li> <li>The Council are supporting the transition of CCRF in line with the opening of the Belfast Campus and transition to BAU. We continued to support the <b>UU Community Campus Regeneration Forum</b>, including its transition in line with the opening of the Belfast campus.</li> </ul>



Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<p><b>Increase tourism spend through sustainable tourism products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deliver year 2 of the 10-year Tourism recovery plan “Make Yourself at Home” (GREEN)</b></li> <li>• <b>Deliver the Annual Events programme (AMBER)</b></li> </ul> <p><i>The Amber rating is in the context of Fleadh and Euros and associated resource dependencies on multi agency partners, Casement etc)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52% of all visitors to NI came to Belfast. Overall, the city accounts for 32% of all overnight stays in NI and the city generates 40% of the region’s tourism spend. Belfast’s tourism and hospitality sectors directly support over 19,000 jobs in key tourism sectors such as Accommodation and Food Services, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation and Transportation.</li> <li>• The following activity has been delivered against the strategic theme of <b>Grow Belfast</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Officers have undertaken management of the Visit Belfast contract in respect of the delivery of business and leisure marketing and visitor servicing, to support the aim of increasing visitor numbers, dwell time and spend, thereby supporting tourism jobs, economic impact and social benefits across Belfast. Work has been ongoing to deliver the KPI’s set for marketing of Belfast as leisure and business tourism destination, with agreements reached on a five-year extension of the Lease Sharing Agreement with Visit Belfast and a three-year sharing agreement with Translink for the operation of a ticketing desk within the Belfast Welcome Centre.</li> <li>○ Visit Belfast has generated c. £117m for the local economy, securing £1.6m towards the marketing and visitor serving of the City Region.</li> <li>○ Visit Belfast has dealt with 612,701 enquiries (year to date) generating £14m to the local economy.</li> <li>○ Visit Belfast’s web and social media activity has generated circa 1.9m web visits, 40m social media impressions and 3.1m social media engagements inc. 11.5m video views. PR and comms have generated 157m WOTS, with an equivalent media profile worth £500k AVE.</li> <li>○ Visit Belfast has delivered 9 campaigns, generating a minimum of 92.3m impacts, generating 314,342 bed nights securing £47.5m to the local economy. Of particular note was the 2023 Christmas campaign. With a reduced budget of £120k, it was a digital led campaign in ROI and GB, achieving significant results contributing over £25m to the local economy and a ROI of £1:209.</li> <li>○ Visit Belfast has also won the Business Tourism Team securing the Best Conference Destination – International, 2023 (C&amp;IT Awards).</li> <li>○ The Visitor Servicing Team also secured the NI Travel and Tourism Award for Best Tourist Information Centre for the 19th time.</li> <li>○ The organisation is now ranked joint second for the best performing DMMO out of 100 destinations and Belfast is ranked 11th out of 100 city destinations, increasing the city’s overall score by 2% this year in the Global Destinations Sustainability Index.</li> <li>○ Officers have also continued to deliver the Conference Subvention Programme in partnership with TNI and VB. Our Subvention Scheme has contributed to supporting business tourism with an economic impact of £35.8m, equating to 76,172 bed nights and 29,261 delegates.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Under the strategic theme of <b>Position Belfast</b> officers have been working with Visit Belfast, Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland to strengthen the position of Belfast in national and international markets through marketing campaigns and PR activity. We have also worked to strengthen Belfast’s position as a Gateway city and a must-see urban destination on the island of Ireland by capturing GB and ROI city break market and attracting a greater share of out of state visitors to Ireland - primarily through contract management of Visit Belfast targeting leisure and business visitors.</li> <li>• Under the strategic theme of Experience Belfast, officer developed the Neighbourhood Tourism Programme, a new 2-year £500,000 investment programme (approved by Committee in June 2023), including £250,000 to develop and enhance market-led tourism products and experiences across the city, with a view to promoting enhanced visitor footfall, dwell time and spend across the city’s neighbourhoods and sharing tourism’s economic and social benefits to communities throughout the city. Throughout December 2023 to February 2024, officers have delivered sectoral engagement (internal and external) to identify needs, gaps and opportunities which has informed the investment criteria whilst aligning with ‘Belfast Stories’.</li> <li>• Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Programme - Belfast’s first Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Seminar was developed and delivered on 20th February 2024 at Titanic Belfast. Attended by over 100 delegates, the Seminar enabled experts and activists in access and inclusion to share their expertise and experience with an audience of businesses, decision makers, policy makers and influencers. A range of resources were developed and launched at the Seminar and have been added to the new Tourism NI eLearning Platform to ensure wide audience reach. The overall</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
Page 12	<p>programme is supported via a partner advisory group including Visit Belfast, Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland, BCC and the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance. It attracted an additional £15k sponsorship from TNI and financial support from Visit Belfast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food and Drink Tourism Programme - Delivery of Belfast Food and Drink Programme 2023-24 progressed in line with targets over the year, with over 100 businesses benefitting through participation in the programme throughout the period. The programme attracted 40% of total project cost funding support from DEARA via the NI Regional Food Programme as well as in kind support from the Network Committee. The focus on year two has been to support the industry through the Food and Drink Tourism Network, which is represented by 16 businesses, to support sectoral growth and strengthen Belfast's position as a food tourism destination. Funding was secured from the NI Regional Food Programme, administered by the DAERA, to support delivery costs of specific Programme elements.</li> <li>Audit of and Production of Development Plans to enhance the Visitor Experience at Council-owned Tourism Assets: Make Yourself at Home identified the need for Council to utilise existing assets across the city to drive the visitor experience.</li> <li>Enhancing the Visitor Experience - work has progressed with an experienced provider to develop and implement a phased, prioritised Visitor Experience Action Plan to enhance the visitor experience over the next decade and outline key tourism projects which may be suitable for development and introduction to market within 1, 2 and 5 years.</li> <li>Visitor Signage, Wayfinding, Street Dressing - officers have progressed work on initial assessment of existing tourism signage to identify essential repairs and update of interpretation, including for example Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle, Cathedral Quarter and city centre and this work will be completed in Q1 2024.</li> <li>Under the strategic theme of <b>Sustain Belfast</b>, officers have worked with Visit Belfast and a range of partners on the Global Destination Sustainability Index. Belfast has now completed its third year of benchmarking, and is now rated 11th out of 100 destinations, increasing its year-on-year score by 2% and maintaining our place within the top 20 cities. This assists in ensuring Belfast is globally competitive in securing conferences and business events for Belfast, resulting in associated economic benefit and sectoral support.</li> <li>Green Tourism Accreditation - Officers have supported and enabled the tourism industry to commence their sustainability journey to increase their sustainability credentials through the implementation of the Green Tourism Accreditation Programme. This has provided access to the GreenChecktool, enabling tourism businesses including accommodation, hospitality providers, events and attractions to complete assessments and take steps to achieve accreditation. Cultural organisations and festivals have also had access to the programme, resulting in 75% of hotel rooms in Belfast being accredited. 100 businesses are now members of Green Tourism and of these, 50 have completed accreditation. Within the previous 12-month period, officers have worked a range of tourism providers to encourage them to gain their bronze accreditation and Visit Belfast continues to work towards achieving its silver accreditation.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One Young World - this major event was successfully delivered by the Tourism and Events Team with summit partners during October 2023, with delegates and corporates in attendance from over 190 countries which profiled Belfast on an international stage through world media and was a memorable week for all involved. The event attracted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,952 international delegates (2,903 total visitors)</li> <li>282 speakers across all stages</li> <li>95 journalists</li> <li>187 partner organisations from corporate, government and NGO sectors</li> <li>137 delegates from NI who are now lifelong Ambassadors.</li> <li>155 volunteers over the course of the event, providing 2,198 volunteer hours.</li> <li>410 pieces of high-quality coverage across NI, ROI, and GB markets, including front page and full-page spreads across print and broadcast media and media attention from EWS, ITV, Monocle, Sky News, CNBC, PA Media, Channel News Asia.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<div>Page 13</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An evaluation of the event reported that 39% of non-NI delegates travelled within NI after the Summit. These delegates rated their travelling experience in NI 4.62 out of 5. Partner Executives reported an average rating of 4.25 out of 5 for Belfast event venues; 4.17 out of 5 for the city's accommodation; 3.67 out of 5 for its transport links; 4 out of 5 for its culture/entertainment and 3.54 out of 5 for its food/beverages.</li> <li>The team delivered 3 large-scale city events (Maritime Festival 2023, Christmas 2023 and St Patrick's Day 2024) attracting local audiences and out-of-state visitors.</li> <li>The Maritime Festival was successfully delivered in September 2023, including an audience of 80,000, securing TNI funding of £60,000. In lieu of a large-scale creative piece (Council decision), a Maritime village including craft, food and science fair was delivered as part of the wider programme. The out-of-state marcomms reach was 6,764,000 impacts with the overall Visit Belfast campaign being over 9.5 million impacts. Organic social media on Facebook also had 58,811 Impressions.</li> <li>Christmas Switch-On Event (November 2023) - The 'Let's Glow Belfast' Christmas Lights Switch-On successfully took place on Saturday 18th November 6.30pm-7.30pm, with a celebration of local music, theatre and dance, compered by the Cool FM Breakfast Team (media partnership) with Lord Mayor and special invited guest Dáithí Mac Gabhann officially switching on the lights. The free event (ticketed via Visit Belfast) attracted in excess of 10,000 citizens and visitors. Following on from 2022's model of uplifting the Christmas programme in 2 Royal Avenue, the Winters Den opened on Saturday 18th November and continued to Sunday 7th January 2024. The Winters Den season featured a selection of free entry festive activities. The Winter's Den attracted footfall of 30,255 between 18 Nov-13 Dec. The event evaluation found that 51% of attendees rating the overall event between 8 and 10 out of 10, including 19% who rated it as '10 - Extremely good'. At the other end of the scale, 14% gave it a rating between 1-3; 92% agreed that there should be more events like this in Belfast; and 83% of respondents stated the Let's Glow Belfast event improves the reputation of Belfast as a place to visit.</li> <li>St Patrick's Day 2024 - Council Officers have responsibility for direct delivery of the parade and have engaged widely to ensure community participation and co-design. Once finalised, a full event debrief will be presented to a future committee meeting.</li> <li>Belfast 2024 - the Events Team have worked in-year with the Belfast 2024 to support the operational roll out and delivery of the cultural programme. This is an ongoing workstream.</li> <li>The events team were successful in their bid to host the Oireachtas na Samhna Festival in 2025 and are establishing the appropriate working and governance groups to support its delivery.</li> <li>Euros 2028 – officers have continued to work towards the delivery of this event in 2028</li> <li>As part of the international events programme for 2025-2028, Officers continue to participate in the ongoing bidding process for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann for 2026 and 2027.</li> </ul>
<b>Encourage business start-ups and support indigenous business growth</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Provide 'Starting a Business' services (GREEN)</b></li> <li><b>Support social enterprises</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed the new Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS) with council as the lead partner for the region. Successfully launched the new multi-million pound scheme in November 2023.</li> <li>Enterprise awareness activity: 1759 individuals were engaged with a specific focus on underrepresented groups including people with disabilities, individuals who are economically inactive, females and young people. We also enabled test trading opportunities for 18 new businesses through our dedicated start up space at St George's Market and many of those are seeking to trade at the market on a more regular basis or are exploring alternative retail outlets for their products.</li> <li>Start a business activity: Since the launch of Go Succeed in November 2023, we have received 573 enquiries from individuals wishing to start a business in Belfast. This has progressed through to 278 completed diagnostics directly leading to business plan development and 1-1 mentoring.</li> <li>Support for Social Enterprises and Co-operatives: 57 organisations were supported with one-to-one mentoring, advice, and guidance. Four of these organisations were new co-operatives. The Social Enterprise and Co-operative Support programme has facilitated 28 events/workshops</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<p><b>and co-operatives (GREEN)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Provide 'Growing a Business' services (GREEN)</b></li> </ul>	<p>with over 350 attendees including a regional networking event, virtual global best practice visit and workshops. The Social Economy Incentive Fund launched again in September 2023, with an available pot of almost £50,000 to support social economy businesses to bring forward their business growth plans. 30 applications for support were received, 14 of which were shortlisted to pitch with 11 winners selected. In recognition of our work, Belfast City Council won 'Council of the Year' at the Social Enterprise Northern Ireland Awards in October 2023 for the second consecutive year. Most recently we applied to Social Enterprise Northern Ireland to become recognised as an official Social Enterprise Place, part of a SENI &amp; SEUK initiative and are awaiting the outcome of this. In March 2024 we launched the public 'Social Economy Directory' on the Belfast City Council website and have 40 organisations registered on this across the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing a Business: Since November 2023, we have supported 348 existing businesses with growth support. Under the service, we have also provided 20 masterclasses, engaging almost 420 Belfast based attendees. We have also successfully launched and administered grants to businesses to remove barriers to growth; to date 29 businesses have been supported to a value of almost £100,000.</li> <li>City vibrancy: in January 2022, we launched the Vibrant Business Destinations programme in partnership with DfC. This two-year pilot aimed to support local business associations to develop and deliver interventions to drive footfall and create vibrancy in areas outside of the city centre. Ten associations have now been supported to develop area-based action plans, with each organisation accessing funding to the value of £40,000 to deliver local marketing activity, events and small-scale environmental improvements. The programme is currently in the closing stages and a final report will be brought back to Committee for review and consideration. Officers are also engaging with DfC to explore the potential for future support.</li> <li>Innovation Factory: the centre averaged 62% occupancy over the course of the year. Whilst the occupancy rate has dropped back a little from the previous year, we have seen an increase in the price per square foot which is helping with financial performance. Over the past year, 261 businesses engaged in masterclasses and events at the centre. As part of their social and economic regeneration activity, 43 work placements have been facilitated by IF tenants, and a series of school engagement activities took place involving 586 young people.</li> <li>Scaling and growth: in partnership with Catalyst and Invest NI, the Way to Scale programme supported 10 SMEs to participate on a series of bootcamps to transform their businesses and support them to scale and grow to a turnover of more than £2million. 10 were supported to participate in a one week residential at MIT and access a peer-to-peer workshop series with Catalyst. We also put in place support for businesses in creative and digital industries and financial services sectors to build capacity and access opportunities for finance to support the growth and development of their businesses. In partnership with Digital Catapult, the Creative Digital Capacity programme supported 52 companies through a series of workshops, networking and mentoring activity. Through the BRCD supported Digital Transformation Flexible Fund, £135,000 has been allocated to 9 Belfast based SMEs, to support them implement new digital technologies and solutions into their business to support new product and service development and to ensure long term digital sustainability.</li> <li>Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor work: as previously reported to the committee at their December meeting the new staffing resources continue to progress the agreed action plan. The committee approved the Partnership and Collaboration agreement, and this was signed in January 2024. Staff from the Enterprise and Business Growth unit have worked closely with DBEC staff to progress several initiatives particularly feasibility studies funded by the Shared Island unit. This includes identification and consideration of appropriate external funding bids to progress this work, such as under Shared Island and Peace Plus.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support City Markets (GREEN)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>St George's Market attracted over 1 million visitors and was awarded the Best Large Indoor Market in the UK at the Great British Market Awards, beating 20 other UK markets.</li> <li>Twilight Market took place over two evenings at the end of October and attracted over 25,000 visitors.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<p><b>Promote and market the city inter-nationally</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Positioning the City to Compete (GREEN)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Christmas market took place from 18 November to 22 December 2023. It attracted in excess of 1 million visitors (actual figure: 1,026,267) over that period. This was slightly up on 2022 numbers (1,015,565) and similar to 2018 footfall estimates (1,083,692). Overall spend generated (not just spend on the market – survey respondents referred to the money that they spent/planned to spend in the city during their visit) was in the region of £60million.</li> <li>Officers supported the branding of the Renewed Ambition Partnership to the Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP), which aligns to our collective public and private sector commitment to creating spaces and places where people want to invest, live, study, work and visit, and delivery of the BCRPP associated programme of activity. The launch of the 2023/24 programme took place on 14 Nov which brought together representatives from the public, private and third sectors to discuss the importance of place in the context of city regeneration and development, including the role that city regeneration and investment can play in increasing city vibrancy and delivering inclusive economic growth.</li> <li>Officers supported the delivery of the BCRPP 2023 / 2024 structured Programme of Activity which included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Dublin Showcase Event which took place on the 6th March. This event was organised in association with the Urban Land Institute, Ireland Chapter, and showcased the city region, highlighting the positive aspects of the city and city region as well as the real estate investment opportunity. Over 120 investors, developers and partners were in attendance at the event, with follow up on-going.</li> <li>Leading a Belfast City Region delegation of over 30 representatives to MIPIM on the 12 – 15th March which included a concentrated programme of activity including investor engagement, participating on panel discussions and co-hosting a UK Cities Dinner with Liverpool, Cardiff and Department for Business &amp; Trade. Follow up is on-going.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Through our <b>investor support activity</b>, we continued to provide advice and connections to potential investors, including supporting the Northern Ireland Investment Summit which took place in the ICC Belfast on Wednesday 13 September 2023. This event was delivered by the Department for Business and Trade, in partnership with Invest NI and the Northern Ireland Office and attended by over 200 international investors from countries all around the world. Officers provided keynote presentations at industry conferences including Recharge 2024 -a hospitality and real estate focussed conference which took place in Belfast in January 2024, and attended the UK Cities &amp; Partners Reception, February 2023. This event was organised in conjunction with City of London Corporation and convened a senior delegation of city leaders and institutional investors at Guildhall London to explore ways in which the UK can unlock long-term large scale capital investment.</li> <li>The <b>Building Impact Report</b> was shared with Committee following the Committee meeting in August 2023. Work is on-going to support the implementation of the report recommendations.</li> <li>Monitoring and analysis of valid planning applications to inform the City Development Tracker continues on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>Ongoing maintenance and updating of the <b>Invest in Belfast website</b> with information on Belfast, the key growth sectors and specific investment and development opportunities.</li> <li>Continued roll out of the investment CRM system, ongoing maintenance and management.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Future City Centre Programme and Belfast City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Future City Centre (FCC) Programme was revised and a monitoring framework developed to measure the implementation of the programme. Work continues to develop a communications plan to support and amplify the positive messaging around the city centre linked to the FCC Monitoring Framework. Recent progress includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation from Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce to the City Centre All Party Working Group in March</li> <li>Supporting Queens University in consultation and engagement events in March 2024 with students on their lived experience of the city centre which will be fed back through Community Planning structures</li> <li>Completion of the Southwest Quarter scheme involving 4 business cluster &amp; community grant schemes alongside an environmental improvement/connectivity scheme on Gt Victoria St &amp; Shaftsbury Sq.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Continue to progress the Future City Centre Programme (GREEN)</b></li> <li>• <b>BCCRIS - Belfast City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy (AMBER)</b></li> <li>• <b>Developer Contributions (GREEN)</b></li> <li>• <b>Regeneration Projects (GREEN)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Completion of the 5 Cs Revitalisation scheme involving improving streetscape with imagery and lighting</li> <li>○ Final stages of completion on the final Entries project within this Phase, focusing on reopening Sugarhouse Entry.</li> <li>○ Completion of DfC funded capital works to the rear of 2 Royal Avenue involving opening the rear space and activating the building onto Bank Square, improving connections to and from Royal Avenue, Bank Square and the wider Castle Street area</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of priorities and projects identified within Belfast City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy continue to be progressed via BCC and other private /public sector partners.</li> <li>• Committee received an update in respect of <b>Developer Contributions</b> (historical contributions) in <a href="#">April 2023</a>. These continue to be monitored and scheme proposals utilising the contributions are being delivered in line with the Section 76 agreements.</li> <li>• The <b>Joint Regeneration Group</b> (BCC, DfC, DfI, NIHE) met on a monthly basis to co-ordinate the public sector approach to Housing-Led Regeneration, A Bolder Vision, public realm projects, refresh of the Belfast Agenda and the FCC programme. Updates were provided to Committee in February 2024 in relation externally funded active travel enabler, South West Quarter and Grey to Green.</li> <li>• The council continued to lead the <b>City Development Board</b> with a focus on the refresh of the Belfast Agenda and associated emerging draft action plans aligned to the newly identified priorities of the City Development Board, ie, Housing Led Regeneration; Future City Centre Programme and Citywide Regeneration; Connectivity, Active &amp; Sustainable Travel and supported the public consultation for this which closed on 2 October 2023, and engagement with the Board and sub groups around this.</li> </ul>
<p><b>City Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Champion the Council's preferred position for major infrastructure projects. (AMBER)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continued to provide civic leadership and strategic input to the major city infrastructure projects, representing Council on citywide boards, enabling, facilitating, and influencing major infrastructure development and investment. In Nov 2023 Committee agreed the Council's response to the consultation on the Eastern Transport Plan, and Officers have continued to engage with DfI in the development of the Eastern Transport Plan to ensure alignment with the LDP process and A Bolder Vision.</li> <li>• Committee received a presentation at the Special meeting of Committee in Nov 2023 from DfI Roads on their Autumn Report.</li> <li>• Committee received a further presentation at the Special meeting of Committee in Jan 2024 from Translink on the Belfast Grand Central Station/Weaver Cross developments including details of the street works program and public transport interventions as well as the communication plan and further stakeholder engagement. Committee subsequently agreed in Mar 2024 to receive a further presentation (and future presentations as appropriate) in relation to the development including an update on the Belfast Grand Central Station construction timelines including public realm works, Planned Traffic Management activities, Closure of Great Victoria Street Station and Planned Summer railway closures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Committee Assets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Belfast Zoo (GREEN)</b></li> <li>• <b>Belfast Bikes (AMBER)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance at the Zoo has been on a par with previous years. Footfall has remained steady, and income is likely to increase by year end. A range of events and initiatives took place to increase footfall in the off-peak season which had a positive impact on income i.e., Boo at the Zoo, Wildlife Wonderland and NI Science Festival and animal encounters. Work has been ongoing around the proposed Elephant transfer with a visit from Burgers Zoo taking place in December and a visit to Burgers from Belfast being scheduled for the spring.</li> <li>• There were 119,135 Belfast Bike Journeys 2023 (Calendar Year). Performance has been down during this period resulting in reduced income over the period. Poor weather and increased vandalism with the lack of a sponsor thought to have been responsible for the downturn in performance. A new sponsorship deal has been negotiated to go live in the new financial year. The current contract with NSL has been extended to allow for a transition period once a new operator has been procured. A new tender is scheduled to be published in the spring.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<b>Belfast Stories (GREEN)</b>	<p><i>Expert Teams</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The focus for 2023 was the procurement of the design teams to deliver Belfast Stories. In 2024 the design teams will develop the concept design for the Belfast Stories experience and build and prepare the Outline Business Case (OBC) for submission to TNI and DfE to secure the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) contract for funding.</li> <li>Gleeds was appointed in October 2023 to lead the Project Management and Design Assurance Team (MAT). This team includes project managers, cost consultants, business case consultant and design assurers.</li> <li>Following an International Design Competition, an architect led Integrated Design Team (IDT) was appointed in October 2023 consisting of Snøhetta and Todd architects and ARUP engineering and technical consultants to support the design development process.</li> </ul> <p><i>Belfast Stories Experience</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An Experience Design Team (EDT) has been assembled to develop an interpretive masterplan for the site and develop the concept design for the Belfast Stories experience in 2024.</li> <li>The collection of Belfast's stories underpins the concept and a stories gathering pilot was launched in October 23 to consider story collection.</li> </ul> <p><i>Inclusive Economic Growth</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Belfast Stories is piloting the BCC Inclusive growth Toolkit to see how we can support greater social mobility, more inclusive labour markets and more inclusive places and services. Social value delivery plans have been received from the professional services teams with opportunities for paid employment, apprenticeships and student placement/trainees.</li> <li>The Belfast Stories Members Working Group was established in October 2023 to support ongoing Member engagement. Two meetings have been held to date and the group continues to meet quarterly.</li> <li>The Stories Network was established in Mar 2024 to support wider stakeholder engagement, with the objective of creating a safe and open space for ongoing dialogue, debate and challenge that will help shape the programme as it develops.</li> <li>Sustainability expertise is being provided by Arup with input from BCC Climate Team ensuring the project maximises the opportunity for net zero carbon exemplar for the city.</li> </ul> <p>Note a report has been produced which summarises Belfast Stories progress - the Story So Far Report - which can access via <a href="https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/9582/widgets/27494/documents/55443">https://yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk/9582/widgets/27494/documents/55443</a></p>
<b>Access, Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Active Travel and Connectivity (AMBER)</b></li> <li><b>A Bolder Vision for Belfast</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel Members All Party Roundtable discussion took place on 25 January 2024. Discussion focussed on the Belfast Agenda priority area of CAST and the Waterfront Framework. This group will continue to meet to prioritise and position the delivery of Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel.</li> <li>Council continues to take a civic lead on <b>A Bolder Vision (ABV)</b>. With the re-establishment of the Executive the governance groups have been reconvened to finalise the Strategy in line with Council Priorities and the emerging Eastern Transport Plan, which reflects heavily the work of ABV. A number of early projects have been delivered under the banner of ABV including the Waterfront Promenade Framework, Sugarhouse Entry, the delivery of the Green to Grey programme and Active Travel Enablers, Little York Little Patrick Street, the 5C's and Blackstaff Sq. Work continues, including with private sector &amp; public sector partners to develop a pipeline of projects to deliver out the objectives of ABV.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<div>Page 18</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(AMBER)</li> <li>Car Parking Strategy (RED)</li> <li>Horizon Europe Urban Planning 2030 (GREEN)</li> <li>Waterfront Proposition – Belfast Waterfront Promenade (GREEN)</li> <li>Belfast – Cork Harbour Cities (GREEN)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As agreed by CG&amp;R Committee in June 2022 the refresh of the Car Parking Strategy is deferred pending the finalisation of the LDP &amp; ETP. The Car Parking Working Group has been reconvened in light of the adopted LDP and consultation on the Eastern Transport Plan (former BMTP). Officers continue to work with DfI to establish the implications of the emerging ETP work on the Car Parking Strategy.</li> <li>The Horizon Europe Urban Planning 2030 project is underway including regular attendance and reporting to the UP2030 consortium and liaison partner, Mapping for Change. An update was brought to the consortium conference in November 2023 in Lisbon. Further to the initial strategic and thematic workshops, engagement has taken place with strategic partners, partners and representatives from the geographical areas covered within the pilot, Falls, Sandy Row, Markets, Donegall Pass and Linen Quarter; a series of visioning workshops are scheduled for April to agree the thematic visions and objective setting for the project and begin work on the adaptive pathways to identify the short/long term sequence of actions that would be required to deliver the vision. In addition, further engagement is scheduled over spring/summer including workshops with BCC staff, young people and residents. Alongside this, work has taken place on the geospatial analysis of the pilot area, using interactive mapping software to overlay current information on the area such as CENSUS data, tree data, deprivation data etc. as well as projected climate impacts such as flooding and heat risk to help steer and inform the work of the project through the pillars of climate neutrality, resilience and a fair and just transition.</li> <li>Officers have continued to support the Waterfront Task Group on the Waterfront Proposition – Belfast Waterfront Promenade including the launch in December 2023 which involved the Chair of Committee. The Consultation on the Framework was launched also in December 2023 and closed on 31 January 2024. A working group is now in place to deliver on the Actions of the Framework doc including feasibility work complete on the ‘Under the Bridges’ &amp; ‘Sailortown to Queens Island’ footbridges.</li> <li>Work is ongoing with stakeholders in Cork following on from the Shared Island initiative to support the feasibility bid for the Cork Belfast Harbour Cities proposal with the agreed prioritised project for the Belfast Dockside Regeneration as the Sailortown to Titanic Quarter Active Travel Bridge. Work continues to identify funding opportunities to further develop and deliver these projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Educational underachievement</b> (GREEN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The GCSE Maths and English Support Programme was delivered with 238 GCSE Eng/Maths places allocated.</li> </ul>
<b>Access to employment</b> (GREEN) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver Employment academies.</li> <li>Improving demand side support:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There have been 816 Employment Academy participants who have started this year.</li> <li>There have been 331 Employment Academy participants who have completed training.</li> <li>There have been 251 participants have had a successful outcome – obtaining a job or a better job as a result of an Employment Academy.</li> <li>There have also been new delivery agents recruited and new programmes developed during the past year. These include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People 1st delivering new bespoke academies to help support migrants in to paid employment within the Health &amp; Social Care sector. Additional funding and resources have been allocated to this provision to help reduce barriers and maximise the impact of this largely untapped talent pool.</li> <li>Stranmillis delivering Level 4 training for 100 x classroom assistants which provides access to a ‘better job’ or a pathway to higher education.</li> <li>Gaelchursai delivering 6 x new employment and upskilling academies which help to support people leaving an Irish Medium education setting to move into employment or a ‘better job’.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Upskilling opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gateway to Choices Services – There have been 867 residents supported (120 with a disability); 88 progressed into employment and 170 moved into further education/training.</li> </ul>



Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<p><b>(GREEN)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Progress the Belfast Labour Market Partnership (LMP)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridges to Progression (Supporting Young People) – There have been 134 young people supported (target 120) – 51% of participants seeking help with their mental health.</li> <li>Scoping/Research completed – There have been three projects completed researching Employer Navigation Service, People-based Approaches and Place-based Approaches.</li> <li>Jobs Fair - 850 participants, 64 employers, 85% intended to apply for a job</li> </ul>

## 2. Community Recovery (housing)

Strategic Priority, Work Area (Year End RAG status)	2023-24 Progress
<p><b>Maximising housing development and regeneration opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>BCC Housing-Led Regeneration Programme (AMBER)</b></li> <li><b>Citywide strategic opportunities (AMBER)</b></li> <li><b>Strategic City Centre Cluster Sites (GREEN)</b></li> <li><b>City Centre Living Vision (GREEN)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There has been ongoing work with city partners to overcome obstacles to increasing residential development, including City Centre living. A joint People &amp; Communities and City Growth &amp; Regeneration Committee workshop took place on 20 February 2024 with the NIHE in relation to housing supply and demand.</li> <li>The CG&amp;R Committee in March 2024 agreed to convene an All-Party Round Table regarding Housing-Led Regeneration work strands across the city that will provide an opportunity for Members to have a focused and informed discussion around this strategic priority, with representation from Party Group Leaders or their nominees.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feasibility assessment including planning appraisals are currently being undertaken in respect of the Citywide Strategic Site Assessments. These will be brought to Area Working Groups, with updates from May onwards. It is worth noting that this forms part of wider work with the Housing Led Regeneration Group which is also assessing other public sector lands inc NIHE and DfC lands and this wider assessment work will also be brought to Members aligned to the governance mechanisms for the other public sector bodies.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reframed Inner North-West Development Brief was re issued in March 2024 with a deadline to return in June 2024.</li> <li>Council launched the process which seeks procurement for a long-term partner for the delivery of £630m GDV housing led placemaking regeneration in October 2023. This includes the inclusion of significant identified Council lands in the city centre (formed part of the initial Phase 1 Strategic Site Assessments), as part of a multi-site residential-led mixed-use regeneration development opportunity, with the potential for further sites across the city to be identified over the course of the partnership. Through this process Council are seeking a long-term partner to fund, develop and where appropriate to own and manage assets delivered through the partnership as part of a comprehensive regeneration scheme. The process is in line with the scheduled procurement programme. The Selection Questionnaire and de-selection stages have recently concluded, with 3 bidders now progressing through to the imminent Competitive Dialogue stage. The process is continuing in line with the procurement programme and is currently on schedule, with recommendations to be brought back to Members later in the year and with prior updates as this work progresses.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The City Centre Living Vision work has now completed. This is supporting an evidenced based approach to building a sustainable city centre residential vision; producing clear recommendations acknowledging the role of Council and its partners in delivering this vision; recognising the current and emerging social, demographic, economic and political landscape of the city and region; considering demand, supply, community and social infrastructure, urban design, viability and case studies from elsewhere. As agreed by CGR Committee in March 2024 the summary findings and recommendations on this City Centre Living Vision will be brought to HLR All Party Round Table.</li> </ul>





# City Growth and Regeneration

## Committee Plan 2024- 2025



**Belfast**  
City Council



# Contents

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Introduction .....	3
Committee Members .....	4
Belfast City Council Priorities.....	5
Key Programmes of work .....	7
Our Economy.....	7
Our Place.....	9
Our Planet.....	14
Progress reporting .....	15
Key Expenditure.....	16



# Introduction

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The City Growth and Regeneration Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects directed to the regeneration and growth of the city in the context of the outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategy.

Its specific functions, as outlined within the Belfast City Council Constitution Appendix 3 – Standing Orders, include:

- Influencing and contributing to regional regeneration and growth strategies and activities
- Developing and implementing city-wide economic strategies and policies
- Managing and maximising the impact of major physical developments in the city
- Coordinating and promoting major city-wide events
- Sourcing and providing support to attract and utilise European and other grants which contribute to the growth of the city
- Providing support for economic development initiatives
- Supporting the development of culture, heritage and the arts
- Working with other agencies to promote Belfast as a key investment and tourism opportunity
- Developing programmes and actions to support local businesses and attract inward investment
- Managing the Council's markets and maximising their benefit to the city
- Influencing and contributing to strategies and policies affecting skills, employability, transportation and energy in the City
- Overseeing the delivery of the following services:
  - Economic Development;
  - Tourism;
  - Culture and Arts;
  - European and International Relations;
  - City Markets;
  - City Events;
  - Belfast Castle;
  - Malone House;
  - Belfast Zoo;
  - City Centre Development; and
  - The transferring car parks.

# Committee Members



Councillor Clíodhna Nic Bhranair (Chair)  
**Party:** Sinn Fein  
**DEA:** Collin



Councillor Matt Garrett  
**Party:** Sinn Fein  
**DEA:** Collin



Councillor Andrew McCormick  
**Party:** DUP  
**DEA:** Ormiston



Alderman Ron McDowell (Deputy Chair)  
**Party:** TUV  
**DEA:** Court



Councillor Conor McKay  
**Party:** Sinn Fein  
**DEA:** Botanic



Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown Gormley  
**Party:** Alliance Party  
**Ward:** Botanic



Councillor Sarah Bunting  
**Party:** DUP  
**DEA:** Balmoral



Alderman James Lawlor  
**Party:** DUP  
**DEA:** Ormiston



Councillor Ian McLaughlin  
**Party:** DUP  
**DEA:** Court



Councillor Claire Canavan  
**Party:** Sinn Fein  
**DEA:** Court



Councillor Donal Lyons  
**Party:** SDLP  
**DEA:** Balmoral



Councillor Ross McMullan  
**Party:** Alliance Party  
**DEA:** Ormiston



Councillor Sammy Douglas  
**Party:** DUP  
**DEA:** Titanic



Councillor Conor Maskey  
**Party:** Sinn Fein  
**DEA:** Castle



Councillor Micky Murray  
**Party:** Alliance Party  
**DEA:** Balmoral



Councillor Joe Duffy  
**Party:** Sinn Fein  
**DEA:** Collin



Councillor Fiona McAteer  
**Party:** Alliance Party  
**DEA:** Titanic



Councillor Séanna Walsh  
**Party:** Sinn Fein  
**DEA:** Collin



Councillor Anthony Flynn  
**Party:** Green Party  
**DEA:** Ormiston



Councillor Áine McCabe  
**Party:** Sinn Fein  
**DEA:** Black Mountain



# Belfast City Council Priorities

Since it was launched in 2017, the [Belfast Agenda](#) has been a key city framework, coalescing partners beyond the core legislative requirements of community planning with a shared focus on addressing key city challenges. The approach adopted has enhanced the relationship between the public/statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors to drive forward real change, address inequalities and improve quality of life within and across the city

The refreshed Belfast Agenda 2024-28, maintains the same level of ambition and collective leadership commitment to deliver the long-term vision and outcomes previously agreed. It is delivery and outcome focused and is positioned as an overarching city strategy which identifies the major transformational programmes and investment opportunities for the city.

The strategy also sets out a number of specific 'calls to action' for local, regional and national partners to work together to bring forward important strategies, programmes and investment which will help deliver the ambitions of the Belfast Agenda.

The council's corporate plan is a reflection of what people in Belfast have told us they want and the type of leadership they feel the city needs. It takes the priorities of the Belfast Agenda and sets out the ways in which the council will support and deliver these to grow a sustainable, inclusive economy and equitable society and sets out the work we will do as an organisation to continually improve and develop to continue to deliver excellent services. The council's strategic themes are cascaded down from the Belfast Agenda and include:



- **Theme 1: Our people and communities** - Making life better for all our residents
- **Theme 2: Our economy** - Creating inclusive, innovative and sustainable growth, learning and opportunity
- **Theme 3: Our place** - Creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city
- **Theme 4: Our planet** - Creating a sustainable, nature-positive city
- **Theme 5: Compassionate city** - Making Belfast a welcoming, caring, fair and inclusive city – leaving no one behind

The City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan is aligned to both the recently refreshed Belfast Agenda 2024-28 and newly developed Corporate Plan 2024-2028. It identifies the priorities that this committee will be focussed on over the year ahead and primarily relate to the ‘**Our economy**’ and ‘**Our place**’ themes. The key areas of work have been identified and specific in-year deliverables are set out in section that follows.





# Key Programmes of work

## Our Economy

Strategic Priority	In Year Deliverables (In 2024-25 we will
<b>Support access to sustainable employment opportunities and improve skills levels for target groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver employment and upskilling academies in priority sectors in line with industry demand, focusing on inclusive growth target areas.</li> <li>▪ Extend the Digital Badging scheme to enhance employer engagement and provide opportunities for people to build their skills portfolio.</li> <li>▪ Support management of Labour Market Partnership including delivery of key projects (Gateways to Choices, Bridges to Progression, Multiply) and working with LMP partners to identify opportunities for new interventions that deliver city priorities.</li> <li>▪ Engage with relevant statutory and VCSE partners to create greater cohesiveness across the E&amp;S ecosystem and to shape future economic inactivity support (from April 2025).</li> <li>▪ Explore opportunities to use social value and developer contributions to support skills development and employment activities.</li> <li>▪ Support delivery of the benefits of first phase of BRCD delivery by integration and alignment with economic development and skills programmes.</li> <li>▪ Develop an updated economic proposition demonstrating the critical role of Belfast and the Belfast Region in creating good jobs, supporting innovation and driving productivity.</li> </ul>
<b>Support business start-up and growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NIESS) to increase the number of new business-starts and to support business growth.</li> <li>▪ Undertake the 'Lead Council' role on NIESS, in line with funder MoU obligations.</li> <li>▪ Secure financial support for NIESS extension beyond March 2025.</li> <li>▪ Support the operation of the Innovation Factory, in line with agreed Annual Service Plan obligations.</li> <li>▪ Support the delivery of the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) with at least 114 businesses accessing support over two financial years.</li> <li>▪ Support the development and integration of BRCD digital and challenge fund programmes with business support programmes.</li> <li>▪ Develop a targeted approach to social enterprise support in order to meet the target of 10% social enterprises engaging on NIESS.</li> <li>▪ Continue to work with Community Finance Ireland CFI to improve the financial management skills of new and growing social enterprises.</li> </ul>
<b>Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review the corridor strategy to agree priority areas of focus and support the delivery of targeted economic development interventions.</li> </ul>
<b>Support city markets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure delivery of the annual business plan for St George's Market.</li> <li>▪ Support the delivery of the Christmas Continental Market.</li> <li>▪ Review the markets rights policy in order to ensure that it supports the operation of independent markets across the city, to enhance animation and vibrancy.</li> <li>▪ Ensure effective management of Smithfield Market.</li> </ul>
<b>Belfast Business Promise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extend business engagement in Belfast Business Promise, supporting 50 companies to engage in the programme.</li> <li>▪ Undertake interim evaluation to identify optimal approach to future resourcing and delivery.</li> </ul>



# Our Place

Strategic Priority	In Year Deliverables (In 2024-25 we will:)
<b>Housing-Led Regeneration - Support and work with partners to address housing challenges</b>	<p><b>Competitive Dialogue Process to attract private sector partner / investor to take forward Housing Led Regeneration mixed use development opportunities:</b></p> <p>Appointment of Private Sector Development /Investor Partner (on completion of the current Competitive Dialogue Exercise) in respect of a number of BCC strategic sites that will act as a master developer to deliver residential-led, mixed-use developments in support of the city's growth targets, delivering on key regeneration objectives, social value and economic impact.</p> <p><b>Strategic Site Assessments Phase 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete planning, site appraisals and feasibility studies for BCC lands identified within the city-wide Strategic Site Assessments. Progress site development and/or disposal options as appropriate following Member engagement and approvals and embedding social value and maximising the economic impact of such development.</li> <li>Continue to work through the Community Planning Partnership Housing-Led Regeneration Group to complete collation of all public sector land data and analysis of housing led opportunities utilising the LDP Urban Capacity Study and Housing Monitor. Progress, as appropriate, with other public sector partners opportunities for placemaking pilots and housing-led regeneration on wider public sector lands.</li> <li>Continue working with relevant public and private sector bodies to identify wider potential housing development opportunities and bring forward proposals that may unblock challenges to delivery.</li> </ul> <p><b>Inner North-West Development Brief</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage the Development Brief, alongside DfC (as joint landowner) and development process for lands in the Inner North-West (INW) Northern Cluster to bring forward a Housing-Led Regeneration scheme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Funding models to deliver housing based placemaking:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advance the Place-Based Growth Proposition including the lobbying and advocacy work aimed at devolving and increasing regeneration funding and with a focus on Housing-Led Regeneration and placemaking purposes.</li> <li>Progress proposal for the reframing of the City Centre Investment Fund to support Housing Led Regeneration.</li> </ul>
<b>Connectivity and City Infrastructure</b>	<p><b>A Bolder Vision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and finalise A Bolder Vision (ABV) in line with the Eastern Transport Plan, including the SEA consultation.</li> <li>Secure Council and Ministerial approval.</li> <li>Align delivery with Corporate and PfG priorities including Belfast Agenda, LDP and corporate /city project prioritisation processes.</li> <li>Maintain public visibility and engagement with stakeholders through comms and engagement programme.</li> <li>Agree and commence city centre partnership projects with key stakeholders in line with ABV interventions.</li> <li>Work with DfC and DfI to ensure public realm projects are delivered in line with ABV, adopting an integrated placemaking and sustainable mobility approach.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	In Year Deliverables (In 2024-25 we will:)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under “Embracing the River” and through the Waterfront Taskforce progress implementation of the Waterfront Promenade Framework including progressing the agreed priority projects for delivery including the Under the Bridge and Sailortown Bridge projects as well as working with communities to realise the full potential of the Waterfront opportunities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Citywide Connectivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to create a more connected city by using existing and new greenways, urban greenways and existing and enhanced green spaces connecting the North, South, East and West of the city as well as the city centre.</li> <li>Agree and progress partnership projects with key stakeholders (QUB, UU, BIDs, BHC) in line with ABV interventions including Under the Bridges project and Active Travel Enablers as well as projects emerging from the Eastern Transport Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Belfast Bikes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee the development and delivery of the public bike hire scheme.</li> <li>Undertake a tender exercise to procure a new operator for scheme from Dec 2024 onwards.</li> </ul> <p><b>City Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to champion the Council's preferred position for major infrastructure projects.</li> <li>Continue to represent Council and play a key role on city-wide boards facilitating, enabling and influencing major infrastructure development and investment including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>York Street Interchange;</li> <li>BRT Phase 2;</li> <li>Belfast Cycle Network;</li> <li>Living With Water project;</li> <li>Belfast Streets Ahead; and</li> <li>Weaver’s Cross.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic regeneration and investment schemes</b></p>	<p><b>Tribeca</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress options for vesting and /or acquisition by agreement of the Tribeca site including valuation and funding options, subject to agreement on a commercial and resourcing strategy.</li> <li>Explore options to bring the Assembly Rooms into Council ownership and consideration of future development and use options.</li> </ul> <p><b>2 Royal Avenue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure the Long-term use of 2 Royal Avenue in line with council’s objectives.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Sixth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress options for the future use and development of the Sixth in partnership with the council’s LLP partner.</li> </ul> <p><b>Dunbar Regeneration Scheme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress comprehensive regeneration scheme at Dunbar bringing together council and private sector assets to deliver comprehensive placemaking redevelopment co-ordinated through a joint master-planning approach.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	In Year Deliverables (In 2024-25 we will:)
	<p><b>Arterial Routes Regeneration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop proposals to address the regeneration of arterial routes aligned to existing and proposed programmes of work (including Vibrant Business Destinations, Housing-Led Placemaking pilots, Neighbourhood Regeneration and Area-Based Community Plans) in the context of previous initiatives including Renewing the Routes, Business Cluster &amp; Community Grants and Dereliction, in line with the emerging ambitions of the Eastern Transport Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Regeneration Framework and Place Based Growth Proposition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress and embed the Regeneration Framework approach to prioritise city and council priorities.</li> <li>Progress the Advocacy and Lobbying programme of work aligned to the Place Based Growth Proposition for Belfast and ensure alignment with priorities identified by the Regeneration Framework process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Belfast City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy (BCCRIS).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to progress (with partners) projects and interventions identified within BCCRIS.</li> <li>Take forward a ten-year review of BCCRIS building on the work of the recent Regeneration Trackers, to inform city and council priorities going forward.</li> </ul> <p><b>Regeneration activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work collaboratively with colleagues in Planning and across Council to support regeneration plans and secure and deliver schemes aligned to Developer Contributions as appropriate.</li> <li>Delivery of the Vacant to Vibrant Pilot Capital Grant Scheme as a tool to address vacancy and dereliction while supporting SME's/ Independents to better utilise space aligned to council priorities.</li> <li>Engage with public and private sector in respect of major regeneration schemes including facilitating and leading project reference groups for specified major schemes, including Tribeca and Waterside (Sirocco).</li> <li>Lead the Joint Regeneration Group, Community Planning Partnership and City Development Boards with other partners to prioritise and drive key regeneration initiatives.</li> <li>Management of identified Regeneration Assets (including 2 Royal Avenue, Commission House, Site 10, Corporation Street) in line with the objectives of the City Centre Investment Fund and ongoing regeneration proposals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Promote and Position the City for Inclusive Investment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support a joint public private approach, including via the Belfast Place Partnership, aimed at ensuring Belfast is positioned to continue to attract inclusive investment to underpin regeneration, development and infrastructure activities in the city required to deliver our inclusive growth ambitions.</li> <li>Facilitating investment and development related visits aimed at positioning the city to compete and promote inclusive growth and development for the city.</li> <li>Maintaining and developing the Invest in Belfast website and associated promotion platforms (investment guide etc).</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	In Year Deliverables (In 2024-25 we will:)
<b>Future City Centre Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oversee the delivery of the Future City Centre (FCC) Programme five pillars, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regeneration and connectivity</li> <li>○ Business and investment proposition</li> <li>○ Animation and distinctive offering</li> <li>○ Clean, Green, Inclusive &amp; Safe Vulnerability</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Ongoing management and development of the Programme OBA performance measures (strategic and operational indicators) in the form of a FCC Performance Measures Dashboard.</li> <li>▪ Partnership working and engagement with city stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>Deliver year 3 of the Tourism Strategy 'Make Yourself at Home'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Launch and deliver the Neighbourhood Tourism Development Programme.</li> <li>▪ Development of visitor experience of Council Assets (visitor attractions).</li> <li>▪ Delivery of Accessible Tourism programme.</li> <li>▪ Delivery of Food Tourism programme.</li> <li>▪ Delivery of Business Tourism - Conference Subvention.</li> <li>▪ Position Belfast in national and international markets through Visit Belfast.</li> </ul>
<b>City Events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver the annual programme of events including Christmas 2024, St Patrick's Day 2025, Maritime 2025, Made in Belfast and Lord Mayors Day.</li> <li>▪ Development and delivery work towards the Fleadh</li> <li>▪ Development and delivery work towards the Oireachtas 2025</li> <li>▪ Development and delivery work towards the Euros 2028, including establishing and servicing governance structures for both.</li> <li>▪ Development of Event Management Plans, including mobility plans (pedestrian/ traffic management) for larger events.</li> <li>▪ Securing associated permissions and land rental.</li> <li>▪ Continue working with partners to plan &amp; develop future International Events bids.</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Strategy</b>	<p>'A City Imagining Plan'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing the cultural multi-annual funding programme (CMAG) and other grant streams.</li> <li>▪ Deliver a programme of sectoral development and strategic partnerships.</li> <li>▪ Implementation of heritage audit and roadmap for development.</li> <li>▪ Progress cultural animations activities including Belfast Canvass, City as a Gallery.</li> <li>▪ Design and deliver wraparound support programmes including leading sector forums for festivals, visual arts and sustainability.</li> <li>▪ Deliver a range of capacity building initiatives for the sector including initiatives designed to increase accessibility and cultural participation.</li> <li>▪ Complete the strategic review of artist studios and maker-spaces in Belfast and identify support to these organisations.</li> <li>▪ Develop and Deliver report on the impact of culture and cultural participation.</li> </ul> <p>Implementation of "Music Matters" Music Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver actions within the Music Strategy 4 strands:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Theme 1: Place artists at the heart</li> <li>○ Theme 2: Nurture the Sector</li> <li>○ Theme 3: Ignite the IRL experience</li> <li>○ Theme 4: Unlock the unifying power of UN</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Support 10 Artists through the creative bursary programme.</li> </ul>

Strategic Priority	In Year Deliverables (In 2024-25 we will:)
<b>Belfast 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver Belfast 2024, the city's biggest ever cultural and creative celebration, during the key visitor months of March to November. The celebration includes a combination of world-class activities and grassroots programmes, which will be shaped by community input.</li> <li>• Deliver a vibrant and diverse arts calendar. The Belfast 2024 programme includes three strands of work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Over 20+ unique commissions, including 'come and see' activities, world-class collaborations and partnerships and locally-led projects.</li> <li>○ Creative Citizens programme, forging new links with all communities to encourage them to get involved and develop our programme further.</li> <li>○ Participatory budgeting scheme where residents will be able to put forward ideas for local projects they want to see in their areas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Belfast Stories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appoint Interpretive Planner and Concept Design Team.</li> <li>▪ Commence recruitment of Contract Manager.</li> <li>▪ RIBA Stage 1 Report.</li> <li>▪ RIBA Stage 2 draft designs – experience and buildings</li> <li>▪ RIBA Stage 2 Report</li> <li>▪ RIBA Stage 3 commence.</li> <li>▪ Members Study Visit.</li> <li>▪ Ongoing Stories Network and Panels.</li> <li>▪ Public Consultation and report findings.</li> <li>▪ Submit Outline Business Case to TNI and DfE.</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial Assets</b>	<p>Manage the delivery of Commercial Assets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Belfast Zoo;</li> <li>▪ Malone House;</li> <li>▪ Belfast Castle; and</li> <li>▪ Council owned Car Parks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Contract management of enforcement contractor to recover the income from car parking in consideration with the emerging SSA work.</li> <li>○ Continue to work with the Department for Infrastructure on taking forward the Belfast off-street Parking Order for the city.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Our Planet

Strategic Priority	In Year Deliverables (In 2024-25 we will:)
<b>Net Zero Neighbourhoods Framework: UP2030 Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Progress the UP2030 Net Zero Neighbourhoods Framework project, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stakeholder engagement and community involvement in shaping and delivery of Net Zero Neighbourhoods Framework.</li> <li>○ Identification of phased Net Zero interventions in UP2030 areas for Framework.</li> <li>○ Finalise the Net Zero Framework and opportunities to scale in other areas of Belfast.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Capture learning and development to support integration of Net Zero considerations across key workstream to lead our transition to an inclusive low-carbon economy.</li> <li>▪ Ensure alignment with and implement other department responsibilities within the council's Climate Action Plan for 2024-25.</li> </ul>



# Progress reporting

The council's corporate plan includes a commitment to develop and implement a performance management framework which supports the implementation of the corporate, departmental and service plans through regular monitoring, reporting and review. While the framework is developed, the success of this plan will be measured and monitoring via a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) identified below.

## Our economy

- Number of individuals accessing employment and upskilling academies.
- % of those who move into a job/better job.
- Business start-up & growth – number of jobs promoted/business plans produced.
- Innovation Factory occupancy levels and jobs supported.
- Number of social enterprises and co-operatives supported.
- St George's Market Visitor Numbers.
- Number of organisations signed up to the Belfast Business Promise accreditation.

## Our Place

- Number of Belfast Bikes journeys
- The total number of previously vacant city centre properties that have been awarded the Vacant to Vibrant grant and will become occupied as a result of the intervention.
- The total amount of funding (£) awarded to city centre traders to address vacancy.
- The total number of people engaged (traders, developers, business owners, landlords etc) in assisting with the completion of applications to the Vacant 2 Vibrant intervention.
- Attendance levels at City events.
- Total value (£) of cultural funding facilitated.
- Number of new works commissioned (as part of Belfast 2024).
- Number of events and activities delivered (as part of Belfast 2024).
- Number of creative organisations engaged (as part of Belfast 2024).
- Visitor Numbers to the Zoo.

# Key Expenditure

The expenditure for the 2024-25 City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan is based on a total planned investment of £21.55 million, as agreed at the Strategic Policy & Resources committee meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024, as follows:

Service	Budget (£) 2024 - 25
Off-Street Car Parking	-973,719
City Regeneration	1,979,242
Place and Economy Directorate	2,389,527
Economic Development	18,155,877
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,550,927</b>



**Belfast**  
City Council

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# Enterprise & Business Growth Workplan 2024/25

page 39





Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Starting a business</b>	Through the Enterprise Support Service (“Go Succeed”), we will deliver a flexible menu of support to drive new more start-ups. The service aims to attract more people into the “pipeline” and to help more growth-focused start-ups to get the help they need to grow and scale. The ability to attract more people into the “pipeline” will require innovative approaches, particularly where there is a need for cultural change amongst under-represented groups.	<p>362 participants engaged</p> <p>119 new businesses created, supporting 143 new jobs</p> <p>50% engagement with female entrepreneurs</p> <p>10% engagement with participants in the social economy sector</p>	April 2024 – March 2025	To support delivery of the numbers highlighted above, Belfast City Council will make a payment of £314,415 in match funding to the PMO. The main funder of this work is DLUHC, using Shared Prosperity Funding
<b>Growing a Business</b>	The Enterprise Support Service also includes growth support for existing businesses. As with the start-up support, this will be more flexible and in keeping with business needs. We will also work to deliver a series of workshops and events on issues such as financial planning and forecasting, e-commerce essentials, sales and marketing, accessing finance, writing a winning bid, strategy and business planning. We will also establish a range of peer support networks to target under-represented groups including minority ethnic groups and female entrepreneurs. Go Succeed grants will continue to support this work.	<p>760 individuals engaged</p> <p>171 new jobs created</p> <p>114 grants awarded to support growing businesses</p> <p>50% engagement with female entrepreneurs</p> <p>10% engagement with participants in the social economy sector</p>		

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
Scaling Support and Innovation	<p>Research identifies the need to focus on key technologies and priority sectors. These include Fintech and Financial Services, Creative and Digital, Life and Health Sciences, and Advanced Manufacturing, as well as identifying opportunities as part of the green transition and a drive for more sustainable investment. Working with the City Innovation Team, we are delivering a new intervention to build capacity among local businesses, with a particular focus on helping them to access challenge funds and alternative funding sources, including those coming from the Belfast Region City Deal. We will also continue to work with key partners including Digital Catapult, Ulster University, Queen's University, Catalyst, and Invest NI to increase the number of innovation driven enterprises and scaling businesses. This will include support for investment in the Way to Scale Programme. This is an MIT-based intervention that has been successful in significantly enhancing the growth and innovation ambitions of local businesses. We are working with Catalyst and Invest NI to create a collective funding allocation to support delivery – with the expectation that participating businesses will also contribute towards programme costs. Catalyst will act as the contract lead for this intervention and all expenditure will be managed through them.</p>	<p>230 companies engaged through bespoke digital and creative programmes.</p> <p>Develop advanced media production capacity building programme to support local SMEs to avail of Studio Ulster facilities and opportunities.</p> <p>Increasing awareness and access to new collaboration, innovation and finance/funding opportunities for Belfast based SMEs.</p> <p>Support 30 SMEs access finance to support investment and growth through the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF).</p>	April 2024 – March 2025	£100,000

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Social Enterprise and Cooperative Development</b>	<p>In the next financial year, we will refine our social economy action plan based on research and engagement with sector partners such as SENI, Cooperative Alternatives and Trademark. A continued area of activity will be the administration of the financial incentive working alongside Community Finance Ireland (CFI). This is a hybrid funding model (part loan; part grant funding) to improve the financial management skills of new and growing social enterprises. Belfast City Council will make an allocation of up to £60,000 towards the grant element (likely to be up to 25% of overall financial awards to social enterprises) while the remaining element 75% will come from CFI in the form of a loan. In addition to the new financial mechanism, a budget of £120,000 has been set aside for dedicated social enterprise and co-operative support. This will cover a range of support interventions including mentoring, workshops, and events. Social Enterprise support will also underpin the Enterprise Support Service with a target of 10% engagement with participants from the social economy sector.</p>	<p>Increase participation rates by long term unemployed, economically inactive, and other underrepresented groups such as females, young people, and migrants.</p> <p>At least 240 individuals/organisations engaged</p> <p>Facilitate 3 best practice knowledge sharing events</p> <p>Deliver 6 outreach sessions</p> <p>Deliver 1 cooperative outreach session</p> <p>50 client referrals to “Go Succeed” intervention to complete business planning/generic business advice</p>	<p>April 2024 – March 2025</p>	<p>£180,000</p>

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Supporting events</b>	Sponsorship support for conferences and events that support the objectives and ambitions of the council's Enterprise and Business Growth activity. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis and officers will undertake an assessment process to measure and score these requests based on their alignment to the "Our Economy" pillar of the Belfast Agenda, the contribution to the work of the team as set out in this report and the potential to profile the Council activities and generate interest and demand for the services.	Objectives and outputs will be agreed through a funding agreement with the event organisers. This approach has been effective in the past and has helped ensure that our resources are focused on areas of maximum return. Any events that will have wider corporate impact will be brought back to the relevant Committee for consideration and endorsement.	April 2024 – March 2025	£62,000  (each application capped at a maximum of £10,000)
<b>Investing in Belfast</b>	<p>We will continue to build on our partnerships in London and Dublin to develop co-operation and investment promotion opportunities for mutual benefit.</p> <p>Following development of the strategy and action plan, the work on the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor will focus on delivery of key interventions within the plan, supported by the recruitment of dedicated support staff. Belfast City Council will contribute £35,000 towards the work, which is being led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council who are acting as the chair and secretariat to the partnership. The partnership will also work to complete the feasibility studies on innovation and circular economy that have been funded through the Shared Island Unit.</p>	<p>Two City to City visits aiming to facilitate knowledge exchange.</p> <p>Continuing to work on the analysis of the completed feasibility studies leading to the development of a new programme.</p>	April 2024 – March 2025	£35,000 contribution to annual workplan, payable to NMDDC as lead council

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Belfast Business Promise</b>	Continue to recruit new organisations to sign up to the Belfast Business Promise	50 new supporters signed up	By March 2025	
	Progression of supporter organisations through the accreditation process	Site visits carried out to verify evidence presented in reports and support improvement  Technical panel sittings	Ongoing  Quarterly meetings	
	Design and delivery of Promise Learning days addressing key issues and gaps identified by supporter organisations to support progression. Ensure Go Succeed supports are layered into BBP supporter offer and consider Learning Days in light of this	6 Promise Learning days delivered	Ongoing	
	BCC Internal Working Group meetings to identify and progress improvement actions to ensure that BCC reach Ambassador status by Autumn 2024	Bi-monthly meetings	October/ November 24	
	Undertake evaluation of progress to date and make recommendations around next steps in terms of approach and resourcing	Independent evaluation to be commissioned summer 2024; complete Autumn 2024	Evaluate complete Autumn 2024	Programme budget approved



## Financial & Resource Implications

The activities outlined within this report will be resourced through the existing Enterprise and Business Growth budget for 2024/25.

Work area	Amount
Starting a Business (Including Social Enterprise and Co-operatives)	£621,823
Growing a Business, Scaling and Innovation	£438,230
Investing in Belfast (including DBEC and City of London engagement)	£78,300
Contribution to events and conferences	£62,000
Belfast Business Promise	£50,000
Economic Development Research & Tender Ads	£61,000

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City for  
working and  
learning

Page 47

# Building an inclusive labour market:

Employability and Skills Workplan 2024/25

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget												
Employment Academies	<p>Delivery of Employment Academies (<i>into work</i>) within:</p> <table><tr><td>Tech</td><td>Logistics &amp; Transport</td></tr><tr><td>Fibre</td><td>Health &amp; Social Care</td></tr><tr><td>Construction</td><td>Classroom Assistants</td></tr><tr><td>Working at Sea</td><td>Childcare &amp; Childminding</td></tr><tr><td>Irish Medium</td><td>Business Services</td></tr><tr><td>Medical (for migrants)</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>Delivery of Upskilling Academies targeting those working in low paid sectors to achieve Level 2-5 qualifications and gain a better job (where no appropriate delivery exists): Health &amp; Social Care, Childcare and Classroom Assistants.</p> <p>Additionally, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep a watching brief on other sectors where demand is identified with good jobs - such as manufacturing, creative sector and green economy – and new academies delivered where inclusive pathways can be developed in conjunction with employers</li><li>• Ensure all Academies have digital badges within a bespoke and recognised digital pathway</li><li>• Design and embed a Quality Assurance Framework within all Employment Academies, undertake QA assessment, and produce a quality improvement plan to ensure a focus on continuous improvement</li><li>• Re-commission Employment Academy Framework whilst keeping in place the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for the flexibility this provides to respond to demand and provide bespoke solutions.</li></ul>	Tech	Logistics & Transport	Fibre	Health & Social Care	Construction	Classroom Assistants	Working at Sea	Childcare & Childminding	Irish Medium	Business Services	Medical (for migrants)		<p># participants dependent on jobs identified. Higher value jobs prioritised although these have higher training cost per person, which lowers participant numbers</p> <p>520 participants (plus LMP funding covering 210 participants subject to receiving LMP resources)</p> <p>Maximum attrition rate of 10% (based on experience)</p> <p>Minimum new job/better job rate of 75% (also based on experience)</p> <p>Level 2-5 qualifications achieved: 200 BCC resources plus 50 LMP resources (subject to receiving LMP resources)</p> <p>Industry-specific licences: BCC funding 80; LMP funding 40 (subject to receiving LMP resources)</p>	<p>Ongoing and triggered by employer demand</p> <p>Peak delivery periods occurring in September/October 2024 and January 2025</p>	<p>BCC Budget: £842,250 delivery costs across various academies</p> <p>£30,000 for Quality Assurance work</p>
Tech	Logistics & Transport															
Fibre	Health & Social Care															
Construction	Classroom Assistants															
Working at Sea	Childcare & Childminding															
Irish Medium	Business Services															
Medical (for migrants)																

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Labour Market Partnership – management and development</b>  <b>NB</b> All DfC funding is currently waiting for Minister to agree budget, with position expected to be clarified in June 24. Provisional allocation of 25% of admin overheads released for period to end June 2024.	Convene/chair LMP meetings to identify key LM challenges and co-design solutions, expanding to include additional members such as TEO and EPIC Futures as an observer	6 LMP meetings held	Ongoing	-
	Continue to deliver Gateway to Choices service, providing independent advice and guidance, encourage informed decision making to find the right provision for people	1200 participants with 25% into work, 25% progressing to education/training (subject to receiving LMP resources)	Ongoing	
	Work with DfE and DfC to secure funding for Bridges to Progression as a ‘test and learn’ for future Skills for Life & Work provision using same approach to selecting providers scoring quality criteria through an application form and as in previous delivery.	120 participants with 83% gaining confidence as a result of the project (subject to receiving LMP resources)	Oct 2024 onboarding with delivery continuing until June 2025	
	Engage with partners to explore the development of a sustainable and effective investment model to address economic inactivity challenges. Activities to include research and engagement; hosting events including follow up to January 2024 Inclusive labour market conference – working in collaboration with statutory, third sector and employer partners	100 conference attendees across conference/summits; development of research/insights pieces for engagement with partners	Ongoing	
	Host Belfast Jobsfair in partnership with DfC in St. George’s Market and explore other jobs and skills events	60 employers at jobsfair with vacancies for 750 attendees	Oct 2024	
	Design and delivery of Multiply, bolting on to existing delivery across a number of themes including community-based learning, upskilling those in work to L2, budgeting for work, maths for speakers of other languages, etc.	Working with delivery partners to enhance existing service – KPIs to be finalised once funding agreement is received from DfE	May 2024 – Mar 2025 IRO £200,000 available to LMPs from UKSPF via DfE	-



Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Social Value &amp; Supporting the Ecosystem</b>	Continue to expand and consolidate the Employability and Skills Provider Network. This currently has 358 members from 115 organisations in every part of the city covering key target groups (disability, women, young people, justice leavers, ethnic minorities, care leavers etc.).	Grow E&S Provider Network to 400 members	Ongoing	-
	Following our successful pilot with RSA Cities of Learning, commission Digital Badging platform as well as quality standards service for individual badge writing and publishing. Provide access to Digital Badging for organisations within the employability and skills ecosystem	Enable 20 organisations to access Digital Badging for their own services with participants/employees	Commissioning April 2024 with new organisations onboarded from June 2024	£45,000 (including own access to digital badging platform)
	Work with colleagues in Planning for E&S considerations within Developer Contributions by providing statistical data and analysis on labour market shortages as well as reviewing and recommending interventions regarding Skills Plans where applied	Provide skills assessments and act as a consultee within Developer Contributions	Ongoing	-
	Support contractors to meet their Social Value job requirements and work with Enterprise and Business Growth colleagues to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support inclusive recruitment practices for providers and employers on current labour market issues such as visa requirements, employing people with disabilities etc.</li> <li>Build provider capacity in tendering/procurement and facilitate Meet the Broker events for contractors</li> </ul>	Provide advice and guidance on Social Value within BCC contracts  Increase access to public procurement opportunities for local companies	Ongoing	-

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>GCSE Support Programme</b>	The expectation is that delivery can be 'lifted and shifted' within the context of Fair Start and Reducing Education Disadvantage (RED) policy initiatives led by the Department for Education. However, financial pressures caused by the lack of an NI Executive have had a knock-on impact to these new policy/funding streams. We will therefore continue to resource the GCSE Support Programme on an interim basis for a further year and – in partnership with Belfast Area Partnerships – work closely with DE to transfer this programme to the Department.	250 pupils supported with predicted grades below a C in English and/or Maths  162 achieving at least Grade C in English/Maths	New participants onboarded October 2024 for May/June 2025 exam period	£40,000 from 2024/25 budget

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# EU & International Relations Workplan 2024/25

pages 53



Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Maximise potential of economic opportunities with partner cities</b>	<b>Outward business missions</b> Work with city partners in Boston, Nashville and Shenyang to explore potential to for developing business-to-business linkages through coordinated visit programmes. The detail for each will be dependent on partner buy-in and alignment with wider Belfast priorities	Engagement with city partners to scope out opportunities that have the potential to provide good return on investment. This may include collaborating with other partners (e.g. Invest NI, TEO) on wider visit programmes, if appropriate	Dates subject to agreement with partners	Budget tbc subject to finalising scale and scope of potential business missions
	<b>Inward business visits</b> Host a delegation of up to 15 companies from Nashville/Tennessee – with a focus on both trade and investment opportunities. Visit programme to be developed in conjunction with partners including Invest NI, DBT and Catalyst. Delegation may be accompanied by civic leaders and partners from US-based colleges/universities that have existing linkages with Belfast-based organisations  Work with other partner cities to explore potential of inward business missions – subject to agreement on areas of mutual alignment.	Nashville partners to work with Invest NI to target potential FDI businesses	Indicative date – early October 2024          Dates to be agreed	£5,000          Resources to be agreed subject to programme finalisation
	<b>Supporting partner linkages</b> Provide guidance, advice and connections for Belfast-based organisations engaging with counterparts in our partner cities in order to strengthen and broaden the civic relationships.	Ongoing engagement with and support for organisations as required	Ongoing	N/A
<b>Support international investment proposition work</b>	<b>Support for key events</b> Senior political and officer level engagement in key events to promote the Belfast investment narrative. Key events in this coming year to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>New York New Belfast</b> (already approved by this Committee) Annual showcase and profiling event to</li> </ul>	Developing content for key presentations and meetings to	Event takes place early June 2024	£13,000 already approved by Committee



	<p>exploit the strong linkages between the cities and update on emerging FDI and capital investment opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Belfast Homecoming:</b> Two-day programme to showcase Belfast's economic trade strengths and international FDI proposition to an inward delegation of 40 targeted recruited attendees, largely from diaspora and key networks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Engagement in key international networks</b> Use existing networks such as Eurocities to share learning and build connections for joint project development activity across a range of corporate priorities. Note that the Eurocities Culture Forum will be held in Belfast this year as part of the 2024 Year of Cultural Celebration</p> <p><b>Support civic engagements with key international partners</b> Support our key civic partners (universities; large companies) by making connections including access to Lord Mayor/senior staff as required and appropriate – in line with agreed priorities and all relevant protocol</p>	<p>endorse critical investment messaging and develop new leads</p> <p>Developing content for key inputs and supporting development of side programmes for priority attendees</p> <p>Triage system developed to identify appropriate/relevant level of support available. Team to lead on logistics around organisation of event/presentation</p>	<p>Event takes place October 2024</p> <p>Culture Forum event – September 2024</p> <p>Ongoing programme of engagements</p>	<p>Event sponsorship of £5,000</p> <p>Annual membership fee c£15,000</p>

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# Cultural Development 2024/2025 Workplan

Place and Economy Department  
Economic Division



## Culture Update – 2024-25 Priorities

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Core multi-annual funding</b>	<p>Management of year 4 of cultural multi-annual funding programme (CMAG)</p> <p>Two year funding 2022-2024: £473,425 to 15 Festivals and Events organisations and £ 587,462 to 30 Arts and Heritage organisations</p> <p>Four year funding 2020-2024: £600,240 to four Festivals and Events organisations and £791,783 to ten Arts and Heritage organisations</p>	59 organisations supported to deliver annual programme of activities in Belfast.	Ongoing	£2,452,910
<b>Small Grants</b> Arts and Heritage  Community Festivals Funding	Programme of project grant support for cultural organisations as a new strand of investment programme to support cultural strategy outcomes.	Support a minimum 15 cultural projects and 15 community festivals.	April 2024 to March 2025	£132,344 (A&H)  £69,000 (CFF ) + DfC match funding £10,000 Grants admin linked to CFF
<b>Artist Studio and Creative Workspaces</b>	A continuation of scheme to support Belfast based artist studios and maker spaces to ensure a stable infrastructure for 2024/25.	Artist studios and maker spaces programme – at least 15 organisations, collectives and artists supported	April 2024 to March 2025 Launched in June 2025	£100,000
<b>Artist Studio and Creative Workspaces</b>	Development of targeted capacity building programme with Artist Studio and Creative workspace sector in partnership with Arts and Business NI.	At least 15 organisations, collectives and artists supported	April 2024 to March 2025	£30,000

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Sector Support Programme</b>	Design and deliver wraparound support programme aligned to investment model. Includes support for Festivals Forum, Visual Arts Forum and Green Arts Forum.	Support a minimum of 50 cultural organisations.  Development work to support late night art	April 2024 to March 2025	£65,000
<b>Research and development</b>	Commission further research and engagement, collect and analyse data to ensure strategic approach to investment and delivery.	Development of stage one research and stakeholder mapping on public art.	April 2024 to March 2025	£25,000
<b>Heritage Development</b>	Development of phase two of Heritage Audit and Roadmap for development, including development of capacity building programmes and designing action plans through a co-design process.	Heritage Audit and Roadmap for Development	April 2024 to March 2025	£45,000
<b>Cultural animation and Art in Public Realm</b>	Further develop a 'City as a Gallery' or 'Art in the Public Realm' initiatives including Belfast Canvas.  Development of a "legal walls" pilot programme and development of mentoring programme for Street Art Community.	At least 20 key sites across the city  Street Art mentoring programme reaching a minimum of 30 artists	April 2024 to March 2025	£15,000  £30,000

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Sectoral Development and Strategic Partnerships</b>	Delivery of Blueprint Programme (yr 3) in partnership with Arts and Business NI	Organisations supported through a pipeline to develop assets that has commercial potential	April 2024 to March 2025	£30,000
<b>Sectoral Development and Strategic Partnerships</b>	Continue partnership with University of Atypical to promote accessibility in cultural spaces and support training for disability champions within the cultural sector.	Support for a minimum of 20 organisations and artists to enhance accessibility provision. A minimum of 6 Venues supported with Social Narrative Videos	April 2024 to March 2025	£25,000
<b>Capacity Building</b>	Support capacity building programmes including co-design of programmes for underrepresented groups or where gaps are identified.  Support established organisations to adapt to change and to support new organisations and practitioners to take longer term risks in programming or creative development.  Development and delivery of catalyst projects and programmes with community partners.	A minimum of 50 cultural organisations or creative practitioners supported.  Development and delivery of action plans following R&D and co-design programme development.	April 2024 to March 2025	£50,000
<b>Sectoral Development and Strategic Partnerships</b>	Develop schemes to support higher participation and representation at cultural events by disabled people including Gig Buddies programme 2021 – 2024 in partnership with the Black Box.	Delivery of year three of the Gig Buddies programme.	April 2024 to March 2025	£45,000



Project Name	Project Description	Actions/Targets	Timeline and Milestones	Budget
<b>Sectoral Development and Strategic Partnerships</b>	Work in partnership with Theatre & Dance NI to deliver a professional 3 year development and capacity building programme 'Transform' for artists in theatre & dance sector at differing career stages, focusing on networking, mentoring and creation.	Delivery of Transform - theatre and dance sector development programme.	April 2024 to March 2025	£30,000
<b>Sectoral Development and Strategic Partnerships</b>	Work in partnership with Craft NI to deliver inclusive programme of showcase and professional development events for makers in Belfast including growth of August craft month	Delivery of support and development programme for craft makers in Belfast.	April 2024 to March 2025	£18,000
<b>Sectoral Development and Strategic Partnerships</b>	Partnership with Thrive audience development agency to support audience development across the sector.	A minimum of 20 organisations supported.	April 2024 to March 2025	£20,000
<b>Networking</b>	Support active participation in relevant local, regional and international cultural networks including but not limited to IETM, Eurocities Culture Forum, and other relevant international networks	Support for at least eight cultural exchanges, events and networking opportunities.	April 2024 to March 2025	£10,000

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**MAKE  
YOURSELF  
AT HOME**

**Belfast**

**Tourism & Events Workplan 2024-25**

## Make Yourself At Home Year 3 Action Plan 2024–2025 – Tourism and Events

Project Name	Project Description	Actions/ Targets	Timeline	Budget
<b>Experience Belfast</b>				
<b>Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Development Programme</b>	<p>Year two of the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Programme has brought to Belfast’s tourism industry a suite of assets to educate and motivate the industry to make their offer more accessible and inclusive. As well as the first Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Seminar which attracted over 100 delegates the session launched:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• six on-line training videos for the tourism industry (accessed via Visit Belfast)</li> <li>• an inspirational and motivational video that will showcase the best practice</li> <li>• three Living Library events where staff meet people with disabilities to learn about the challenges they face</li> <li>• three ‘day in the life’ video itineraries to inspire disabled visitors to explore our city</li> </ul> <p>The overall programme is supported via a partner advisory group including Visit Belfast, Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland, BCC and the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance. It attracted 33% funding from TNI as well as support from Visit Belfast and other partners.</p>	<p>Year 3 programme will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual seminar to bring the industry together and measure developments and growth. Seminar to attract up to 100 key decision makers in the industry as well as key stakeholders and policy makers.</li> <li>• Promotion of the free resources aiming to maximise completion of the courses by up to 200 businesses.</li> <li>• 20 new tourism venues featured on our partner site Access Able</li> <li>• Co-design with the industry further training and content for trade and consumers in partnership with TNI and Visit Belfast; number and content of workshops to be confirmed.</li> </ul>	April 2024 - March 2025	£45,000
<b>Food and Drink Tourism Development Programme</b>	<p>The draft ten-year tourism strategy identifies food and drink as a key part of the travel experience and contributes to some of the strongest memory triggers. Importantly, food &amp; drink expenditure accounts for around a third of total overnight visitor spend.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to facilitate the Belfast Food and Drink Tourism Network and programme with the appointment of Network facilitator.</li> <li>• Positioning Programme launched and rolled out to the industry</li> </ul>	April 2024 - March 2025	£45,000

	<p>MYAH identifies the need to support this important economic driver and market-led tourism experience for the city.</p> <p>Focus on year two supported the industry through the Food and Drink Tourism Network. The Belfast Food and Drink Programme 23-24 delivered a series of masterclasses including two learning journeys as well as a Food and Drink Tourism Connection Summit.</p> <p>The Summit attracted over 100 delegates from the industry and provided learning opportunities from experts in food tourism development. It facilitated business connections with restaurateurs and distributors to buy from local producers, supporting our journey to be recognised as a sustainable tourism destination.</p> <p>Over 200 businesses have benefited through participation in the programme, and the events delivered will support ambitions to achieve a quality mark.</p> <p>The programme attracted 40% funding support from DEARA via the NI Regional Food Programme as well as in kind support from the Network Committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a strategic action plan to explore opportunities for 5-year period ahead.</li> <li>• Access funding via DAERA Regional Food Programme and seek other sources of funding and support</li> <li>• Scope the potential of a food and drink international accredited quality mark for Belfast / NI</li> <li>• Ensure events and festivals food and drink provisions adhere to Council criteria around food tourism and sustainability best practice</li> </ul>		
<b>Visitor Signage, Wayfinding, Street Dressing</b>	<p>To date, there has been an investment of over £3m in visitor interpretative signage and wayfinding in Belfast. In Year 2, an initial assessment of existing tourism signage to identify essential repairs and update of interpretation, including Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle, Cathedral Quarter and city centre, with interventions to review, update interpretation, maps and design for 11 interpretative blade signs with overlays. In addition, the review of 233 signage assets – building blades,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a detailed report with recommendations for future investment in visitor signage, wayfinding and street dressing across the city that will enhance the visitor welcome to and experience of Belfast; which can be used to attract investment and access funding as it becomes available.</li> </ul>	April 2024 - March 2025	£26,000

	<p>finger posts, navigation blades, primary hubs, secondary hubs, viewpoints and welcome signs which will be detailed in a final report soon to be completed.</p> <p>There is a now a requirement to undertake a study of visitor signage to examine a range of solutions, including digital options, that will ensure that the visitor signage is fit for purpose to provide wayfinding, interpretation and enhance the visitor experience in Belfast and reflects the changing landscape of the city including 2 Royal Avenue, City Cemetery, Cathedral Gardens and as Belfast Stories is established and other relevant visitor attractions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This study will include detailed investment requirements to upgrade, update and future-proof our visitor signage, with particular consideration to be given to the use of appropriate digital mechanisms, as well as investment into city dressing; and will examine innovative case studies from other cities.</li> <li>• This will include future-proofing for Fleadh Cheoil and other large-scale international events.</li> </ul>		
<b>Signage upkeep</b>	Upkeep, cleaning and repair of tourism signage network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of contract and delivery of services</li> </ul>	April 2024 - March 2025	£50,000
<b>Christmas lights</b>	Christmas Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of current contractor to deliver final year of Christmas lights programme</li> <li>• Development of new tender for 2025 onwards</li> </ul> <p>Delivery, management and programme integration for switch on event</p>	April 2024 - March 2025	£300,000
<b>Enhancing the Visitor Experience Priority Actions</b>	A Visitor Experience Action Plan has been developed mapping out actions and priorities for enhancing the visitor experience across the city for the next 4 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of prioritised strands of work identified in the plan, as per approved recommendations based on report to be submitted to Council Officers in March / April 2024</li> </ul>	April 2024 - March 2025	£36,000
<b>Tourism General Management</b>	Sharing of content with key partners to embed cultural vibrancy messaging into tourism, investment and education positioning, to include the establishment of a Tourism Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree terms of reference, scope, governance and membership of the Tourism Panel to facilitate sectoral collaboration and identify opportunities</li> </ul>	April 2024- March 2025	£15,800

	with city-wide commitment, as identified in <i>Make Yourself At Home</i> .	<p>for development and delivery of Tourism projects, investment and <i>MYAH</i> ambitions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene Tourism Panel to facilitate discussion of sectoral-specific issues and challenges arising and enhance communications between Council and key external stakeholders.</li> <li>• Preparation for key tourism milestones – e.g. Fleadh, Euros, Belfast Stories</li> <li>• Host Belfast Tourism, Culture and arts networking event with the aim to make new connections, inspire new experiential development and packaging of new products as well as track progress</li> </ul>		
<b>POSITIONING OF BELFAST</b>				
<b>Business Tourism – Conference Subvention</b>	<p>Members will be aware that in January 2021 CGR agreed ongoing support for Conference Support in line with an updated criteria and support to ensure that Belfast can compete internationally to win conferences for Belfast in an everchanging marketplace.</p> <p>This fund is administered by Visit Belfast and match funded by our partner Tourism NI. The purpose of the fund is to ensure that Belfast, including ICC remains competitive as a business tourism destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Conference Support Scheme in partnership with TNI and Visit Belfast to ensure that Belfast can compete internationally in winning conferences for Belfast.</li> <li>• Through the level of conference support deliver a minimum of 4,000 out of state conference delegates for Belfast which will result in significant economic impact for Belfast</li> <li>• Continue to review the Scheme to ensure it is “fit for purpose” in an everchanging market and competitive environment.</li> </ul>	April 2024-March 2025	£200,000



<b>Neighbourhood Tourism Investment programme</b>	<p>The Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme aims to:</p> <p>Provide short term support (over a period of 2 years) to develop authentic and financially sustainable new cultural tourism products, or enhancements to existing offers, which will bring vitality to local neighbourhoods, local residents and visitors.</p> <p>Encourage the development of plans which build capacity for city neighbourhoods to connect to the broader tourism offer, enabling local communities to become part of the Belfast visitor experience.</p> <p>Promote enhanced visitor dwell time in the city and extend the economic benefits beyond the city centre.</p> <p>Extend the journey of visitors to <i>Belfast Stories</i>, encouraging further exploration of its narratives across wider city neighbourhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme will, in the long-term, support the delivery of the Visitor Experience Framework through the development of financially sustainable tourism products which draw visitors into local neighbourhoods, immersing them actively in the locale, promoting increased dwell time and spend in the area and uplifting skill, capacity and confidence in local communities.</li> <li>• Provide continued support to EastSide Partnership and Fáilte Feirste Thiar, in recognition of their current capacity to deliver on objectives relating to neighbourhood tourism. (Agreed at CGR April 2024)</li> <li>• Develop and deliver new Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme</li> <li>• Communicate and deliver alignment opportunities available within the existing Go Succeed programme.</li> </ul>	April 2024 - March 2025	
<b>RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT</b>				
<b>Tourism baselines and measurement of tourism in Belfast and contribution to the NI Economy</b>	<p>Belfast's <i>Make Yourself at Home</i>, Tourism Plan recognises both the challenges to increase tourism and to maximise the positive impact that it can have on the city; whilst the updated Belfast Agenda has set a target to double the value of tourism from £400m to £800m per year by 2030.</p> <p>The reporting of tourism statistics and meaningful visitor analysis at a local level continues to be impacted by the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Research baselines and examine digital opportunities for data capture.</li> <li>• Undertake an audit with detailed investment recommendation and action plan for a dashboard of measurement.</li> </ul>	April 2024 - March 2025	£70,000

	<p>delayed resumption of surveys and statistics by our national statistics agency NISRA. While tourism related surveys including passenger and household travel surveys have resumed, it remains unclear when we will see a full return of annual government tourism statistics particularly at a local level so it is important that Belfast can establish its own baselines and measure the social and economic impact of tourism to ensure that the contribution of Belfast to the NI economy is recognised and that ongoing investment in Belfast is secured.</p> <p>The most recent local government statistics available for Belfast are 2019 - 52% of all visitors to Northern Ireland came to Belfast. Overall, the city accounts for 32% of all overnight stays in NI and the city generates 40% of the region's tourism spend.</p> <p>Council is currently engaging with key agencies around the establishment of Tourism baselines for the City and new ways of measuring tourism around traditional economic indicators – dedicated financial resource is essential to enable this to be undertaken. Additional data and robust benchmarking must be developed and supported to gather trend data and inform planning and business case development. Data from benchmarking, in market consumer data and future trends is central to understand where investments should be made going forward. Robust more localised data would give confidence to tourism businesses regarding the 'risk' in the step towards starting, developing or growing a business.</p> <p>The use of quantitative measures also needs to be reflected to measure all aspects of tourism impact (social/economic/environmental) as we implement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with NISRA, NITA, Tourism NI and Visit Belfast to share insights and establish a dashboard of measurement of social, economic, environmental impact of tourism in Belfast – quantitative and qualitative. Explore opportunities to partner with TNI on a Belfast pilot</li> <li>• KPIs and next steps to be agreed for period Q1 and Q2 in year ahead.</li> <li>• Utilise data led insights to inform positioning of Belfast</li> </ul>		
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	regenerative and sustainable tourism plans and strategies. CSO in RoI provide monthly updates on inbound tourism – there are no plans for this in NI currently.			
<b>SUSTAINABLE TOURISM</b>				
<b>Sustainable Tourism: Global Destination Sustainability Index &amp; Actions for Sustainable Tourism work including Green Tourism certification</b>	<p>Belfast completed its index benchmarking and application in 2022 and an application was made for 2023 which placed Belfast 11<sup>th</sup> out of 100 cities as a sustainable tourism destination under the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS Index).</p> <p>In 2023 the continued implementation of the Green Tourism Accreditation Programme which provides access to the GreenChecktool, enabling tourism businesses including accommodation, hospitality, events and attractions to complete assessments and take steps to achieve accreditation. 100 businesses signed up to the Green Tourism programme supported by Council and 59 are accredited to date, including some of our own assets such as Belfast Castle and ICC Belfast.</p> <p>Currently 75% of hotel bedrooms in Belfast have achieved Green Tourism accreditation. Ongoing work with the supply chain to incentivise change programmes, raise awareness and pilot projects that ensure Belfast is a sustainable tourism destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forward Planning for Climate Change: Update to GDS Index and application for 2024 including Environmental Impact Audit and Action Plan with the aim to maintain at a minimum 11<sup>th</sup> place in the world as a sustainable tourism destination.</li> <li>• Provide support in partnership with Green Tourism UK and Visit Belfast, to the tourism sector to increase those achieving accreditation for the first time and to encourage others to move from bronze status to silver.</li> <li>• Further work with the industry to raise awareness and pilot initiatives that ensure Belfast strengthens its position as a sustainable tourism destination, including green meetings accreditation</li> <li>• Collaboratively deliver sustainable tourism initiatives including set up a Belfast Sustainable Giants group to share knowledge and continue to position Belfast at the forefront of green and sustainable practices.</li> </ul>	April 2024-March 2025	£30,000

VISIT BELFAST				
<b>Visit Belfast</b>	Visit Belfast leads on the tourism marketing activities and targets both the leisure and business tourism markets. It is a membership organisation with more than 460 partner businesses across the wider hospitality industry. Visit Belfast works on behalf of its funders and partners and with a range of public and private partners including Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland and Belfast Chamber to promote Belfast as a tourism destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage visit Belfast contract as per CGR committee approval March 2024</li> <li>• Visit Belfast's new three-year strategy (2024-2027) and one-year business plan (2024-2025) are aligned to the four themes of Belfast's Tourism Plan: <i>Make Yourself at Home</i>, focused on delivering for the city.</li> <li>• Delivery as per year one of Visit Belfast business plan</li> </ul>	April 2024- March 2025	£2,076,424

City Events				
	<p>On an annual/biannual basis, the Council's City Events Unit delivers a series of large - scale public events, which are free to access by both citizens and visitors to the city, on behalf of Belfast City Council.</p> <p>The Tourism, Culture &amp; Events also support a number of annual programmes and activities. Our cultural and tourism strategic priorities sets out long term recommendations for events in the city including better alignment across the Council in the design, delivery and funding of events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 large - scale city events attracting local audiences and out – of - state visitors (for St. Patrick's Day and Maritime) measuring socio economic impact.</li> <li>• Lord Mayors Day - Civic Event will now be aligned to a key event within the 2024 Programme.</li> </ul>	April 2024 – March 2025	As detailed below.
<b>Maritime / Made in Belfast</b>	Following a strategic review the rebranded 'Maritime' Festival is now delivered on a biennial basis in order to grow ambition, budget and impact of the Festival. Last delivered in 2023, the next edition is now due to take place in 2025.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and development for commissioning a large-scale creative piece for the Festival – ideally home grown.</li> <li>• Potential codesigns or programme pieces will be carried forward to the Programme Board for recommendations. Any large-</li> </ul>	April 2024 – March 2025	£217,000

	However, the planning of the 2025 event has now commenced. Recommendations from a recent review will be implemented. There is a new approach to governance. The festival will be delivered in partnership with Belfast Harbour Commissioners & Maritime Belfast Trust. The festival will be delivered with an additional creative piece.	<p>scale creative options should be reviewed in 2024. Updates will be provided to CG&amp;R</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing TNI funding</li> <li>• Planning session early 2024 with partners to establish the date, footprint and wider governance structure for the event going forward. Options to be put forward on different models.</li> </ul>		
<b>Christmas</b>	This will be a continuation of the agreed 'traditional' switch on format of the 2023 Christmas event - friendly activity on a focal stage at City Hall. This will be supplemented by further animation on subsequent weekends throughout November and December.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research &amp; Development initiatives with local creatives to enhance co-design of on-stage creative offering</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	April 2024 – December 2024	£152,864
<b>St Patricks Day</b>	The new model of commissioning the creative sector to deliver projects over this period continued in March 2024. Over the week of citywide celebrations, Belfast hosted a St Patrick's eve concert, a parade, traditional cross City music trail, music and traditional dance in St George's Market, Cathedral, 2 Royal Ave and many other venues. An evaluation of 2024 and the next steps detailing the proposed approach for 2025 will be presented at a future committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build on the development of the St Patrick's Day Celebrations by expanding the programme beyond the traditional elements e.g. parade, music</li> <li>• Work with Good Relations to enhance budget and provide an inclusive cross community programme</li> </ul>	April 2024 – March 2025	£300,000
<b>Lord Mayors Day</b>	This event will celebrate Belfast, and the groups that the Lord Mayor was engaged with throughout her year in office. This event focuses on a day of family - friendly activity and animation around City Hall. This will involve live music, dance, circus, street theatre, arts and craft, sports. In 2023, satellite activity took place at 2 Royal Ave and the two sites will be linked by animation in Donegall Place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop the offering by engaging the Lord Mayor's networks. Probable alignment to 2024 programme activity.</li> </ul>	April 2024 – June 2024	£42,000

<b>Events Development</b>				
<b>International Events</b>	<p>Working with city partners to plan ahead for &amp; developing/submitting bids for international events that best align to strategic priorities and maximise legacy.</p> <p>Ongoing review of Council delivered events and collaboration with extensive range of events and festival funded by Council across the city and across the year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per committee agreement, Belfast continues to participate in the Bid process to host the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil na Eireann. Working in partnership with Ards C.C.E, the bid is continually refined and Belfast is being profiled at a series of Comhaltas events. In addition to this bid development and liaison with the wider stakeholders, officers continue to scope the delivery requirements of the event.</li> <li>UEFA European Football Championships 2028 – The year 2024 sees a significant period of transition; from the successful bid phase to the delivery of the football championships and Host City obligations in Belfast. Officers are now engaging with wider NI stakeholders via interim governance arrangements. Furthermore, there is considerable engagement with the Central Transition Team / UK Sport in preparation of meeting UEFA set milestones, and scoping delivery requirements.</li> </ul>	April 2024 - March 2025	£40,000
<b>Small Grants</b>				
<b>Project Funding</b>	Support for Sport grants to ensure development and delivery of community-based sporting events.	Support for local organisations with up to 10-12 projects supported	April 2024 - March 2025	£80,000

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