

# Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

31st January, 2025

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

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet, both online via Microsoft Teams and in-person, in the Lavery Room, City Hall on Wednesday, 5th February, 2025 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) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

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

- (a) Housing Led Regeneration Update (report to follow)
- (b) Vacant to Vibrant (Pages 1 - 16)
- (c) Belfast Bikes Performance Update Q3 (Pages 17 - 24)
- (d) Belfast Zoo Performance Update Q3 (Pages 25 - 30)
- (e) Belfast Zoo Scale of Charges 2025/26 (Pages 31 - 34)
- (f) Neighbourhood Tourism Update (report to follow)
- (g) Sandy Row Revitalisation Update (Pages 35 - 38)

3. **Requests to Present**

- (a) Request to Present - Belfast Harbour Commissioners - Corporate Strategy 2025-2029 (Pages 39 - 40)
- (b) Request to Present - Department for Infrastructure - York Street Interchange: Placemaking and Active Travel Development (Pages 41 - 48)
- (c) Request to Present - Visit Belfast - Annual Business Plan 2025/26 (Pages 49 - 50)

4. **Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

- (a) Active Travel Delivery Plan (Pages 51 - 72)

5. **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

- (a) Major Events Update - Christmas Programme 2024 (Pages 73 - 80)
- (b) Bank of Ideas (Pages 81 - 88)

6. **Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

- (a) Bristol Music Fund (Councillor de Faoite to raise)

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Subject:</b>	Request to Present & Site Visit- Belfast Harbour Commissioners - Corporate Strategy 2025-2029
<b>Date:</b>	5th February, 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Eilish McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance Coordinator

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Information relating to any individual</li><li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li><li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li><li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>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</li><li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li></ol>	

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	To seek permission from the Committee to receive at a future meeting, a presentation from the Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) in relation to its Corporate Strategy 2025-2029 and a visit to a cruise vessel.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the request to receive at a future special meeting, a presentation from the Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) in relation to its Corporate Strategy 2025-2029; and</li> <li>Consider the invitation to visit a cruise vessel while it is in port.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	Correspondence has been received from the Chief Executive of BHC, Joe O'Neill, to request the opportunity to present its Corporate Strategy 2025-2029 at a future meeting and to invite the Committee on a visit to a cruise vessel while it is in port.
3.2	The correspondence notes that the visit would provide an update on Belfast's cruise business and showcase some of the exciting plans the BHC have for the industry.
3.3	If agreed, Democratic Services, in conjunction with the Chairperson, can confirm a date and itinerary in the coming months.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Resource Implications</b>
	There are no finance or resource implications associated with this report
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b>
	There are no Equality or Good Relation Implications/Rural Needs Assessment requirements associated with this report
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>DfI Request to Present on the York Street Interchange</b>
<b>Date:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager, City Regeneration & Development

## 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

x

## 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	The purpose of this report is to request that the Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee agree to receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure in relation to the York Street Interchange at a future meeting of the CG&R Committee.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Agree to receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure in relation to the York Street Interchange at a future meeting of the CG&amp;R Committee.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
	At the February meeting of the CG&R Committee Members agreed to receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure on the findings of the York Street Interchange Active Travel and Place Making Review. At Special Meeting of the CG&R Committee in February 2023 Members received the presentation from DfI and their consultant team. The minutes of that meeting, and the associated present are available via this <a href="#">link</a> .
3.1	The York Street Interchange (YSI) represents the last remaining at-grade junction on the Belfast Motorway Network and forms the junction of the M2, M3 and A12 Westlink strategic corridors. This signalised junction forms the busiest junction in Northern Ireland and caters for approx. 100,000 vehicles per day. The YSI project proposes to create a grade separated (free-flowing without signals) junction to free up the congestion experienced within the existing scenario and to improve air quality in the area.
3.2	<p>Following a legal challenge in 2018 the procurement competition to appoint a preferred Design and Build Contractor to develop the scheme designs and costs was set aside bringing uncertainty to the delivery timeframes for the project. The Minister for Infrastructure ordered a short-sharp external review of the YSI project in July 2020 focusing on the schemes ability to deliver on sustainable and active travel, creating thriving places for communities and creating liveable places and responding to the Climate Emergency. In March 2021 the Minister announced the outcomes of the review, accepting in full the six recommendations as outlined below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The YSI project brief should be reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with the concept of “place making” and new best practice in terms of urban transport design, and with the Minister’s agenda.</li> <li>2. The wider area impact and benefits of the Project should be evaluated using appropriate quantitative and qualitative assessment mechanisms.</li> <li>3. The current Project costs should be updated to act as a benchmark to inform any decision on future alternative development.</li> </ol>

	<p>4. There needs to be a system of ongoing communications with all interested parties. This should include updating the 2017 Communications Strategy and employing a robust Communications Structure now as well as during any construction phase. Communications should be ongoing and not just point in time.</p> <p>5. There needs be much closer co-ordination both within the DfI and between DfI and other relevant departments and interested parties at both policy and delivery levels with regard to YSI development and delivery.</p> <p>6. There needs to be a co-ordinated decision made in the context of emerging policies, which then needs to be applied to ensure that the YSI project aligns to this context.</p>
3.3	<p>In November 2021 the CG&amp;R Committee agreed that the Members of the Committee withdraw Belfast City Council's corporate support for the York Street Interchange scheme and will only reinstate corporate support for the scheme, if the review, and any new scheme arising from it, meets the Council's climate, air quality, place making and housing ambitions as a city and complements the aims of "A Bolder Vision". This decision was ratified at the December 2021 meeting of the Full Council.</p>
3.4	<p>Following discussion at the Special Meeting of the CG&amp;R Committee in February 2023 the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, DfI would provide further information on the issues raised;</li> <li>• Agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to request that it reviewed the Strategic Transport Objectives of the York Street Interchange. in light of the objectives being set in 2008 and prior to the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council and the NI Assembly, and the passage of the Climate Act; and</li> <li>• Requested that DfI share the Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange which was provided to the Minister in March 2021.</li> </ul> <p>The DfI response to the requests from the Committee was presented to the August 2023 meeting of the CG&amp;R Committee, with the associated letters attached as Appendix A of this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
4.1	<p>Following direction from the DfI Minister the Department has been considering options for improving placemaking and active travel as part of the development of the York Street Interchange project. Following the recommendations from the Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR) report, published by Minister O'Dowd in October 2022, the Minister asked officials to carry out further work on three scenarios recommended within it, to further refine them to maximise ambition</p>

	in terms of delivery for communities, connectivity, and the wider living places agenda, and to explore any implementation issues. This work, entitled Placemaking and Active Travel Development (PATD), was to consider how the scheme could deliver positive improvements for the local community. As part of this, along with their consultants AECOM, DfI met with stakeholders including Council, to discuss the work being carried out and seek any feedback on it.
4.2	DfI have confirmed that the PATD work is now complete, and a report and presentation have been given to the Minister.
4.3	The Minister has asked officials to meet again with elected representatives to share the presentation, including the preferred option, and seek feedback prior to his final consideration and publication of the report.
4.4	To that end Members are asked to agree to receive a presentation from DfI on the York Street Interchange Place Making & Active Travel Review at a future meeting of the CG&R Committee.
<b>5.0</b>	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b> There are no finance or resource implications associated with this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> There are no Equality or Good Relation Implications/Rural Needs Assessment requirements associated with this report.
<b>7.0</b>	<b><u>Appendices</u></b>
	Appendix A: Correspondence YSI Place Making & Active Travel Review



# Legal and Civic Services Department

## Democratic Services Section



Your reference

Being dealt with by Ms Eilish McGoldrick

Our reference EMcGCGR220323YSI

Email [democraticservices@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Date 22nd March, 2023

Julie Harrison  
Permanent Secretary  
Corporate Policy Unit  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast, BT2 8GB

Dear Permanent Secretary,

### **York Street Interchange (YSI) Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR)**

At its special meeting in February, Belfast City Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee received a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure and AECOM in relation to the York Street Interchange Placemaking and Active Travel Review.

The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure to request that it reviewed the Strategic Transport Objectives of the York Street Interchange. This was in light of the fact that the objectives were set in 2008, and prior to the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council and the NI Assembly, and the subsequent passage of the Climate Act. The Committee also request that DfI share the Assurance Review of the York Street Interchange which was provided to the Minister in March 2021.

Furthermore, at its meeting in March, the Council agreed that it would only reconsider corporately supporting the York Street Interchange project when confirmation was given by the Department for Infrastructure that they would proceed with the option that ensured safety of current residents, delivered the best place making and regeneration outcomes including

plans for the bridges across the Lagan and a commitment from the Department that they would co-ordinate efforts to work collaboratively with all relevant stake holders including Belfast City Council, Department for Communities, Housing Executive, Belfast Harbour, The Ashton Centre and Sailortown Regeneration as part of the overall scheme.

The Council also agreed that this should include Community Stakeholders, the Stella Maris Hostel and Ulster University as relevant stakeholders and that the project needed to address both the air quality needs and housing objectives in the city.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eilish McGoldrick', written in a cursive style.

**Eilish McGoldrick**  
Democratic Services Officer

**From the Permanent Secretary  
Dr Julie Harrison**

Ms Eilish McGoldrick  
Democratic Services Officer  
Belfast City Council  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
City Hall  
BELFAST  
BT1 5GS

Room 701  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8GB  
Telephone: (028) 9054 1175  
Email: [perm.sec@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:perm.sec@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)  
Your reference:  
Our reference: SCORR-0162-2023  
12 June 2023

Via email:  
[democraticservices@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Dear Eilish

## **YORK STREET INTERCHANGE – PLACEMAKING AND ACTIVE TRAVEL REVIEW**

Thank you for your letter of 22 March 2023. I am very sorry it has taken so long to reply. There are a number of matters that had to be considered before responding.

Responses to the points raised in your letter are included below.

### Review of the Strategic Transport Objectives for the YSI

The Council will be aware of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035, the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) 2002-2012 and the subsequent Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN-TP) 2015. These documents collectively form the extant transport policy for Northern Ireland until such time as their replacements are published. The Department is currently drafting a new Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) for consultation in late summer and publication by the end of the year. The aim of the RTS is to set out the future direction and the Department's climate goals and potential contribution to net zero. This will be followed by a review of the RSTN-TP.

Within these documents, the objective of removing bottlenecks on the strategic road network is identified and the strategic transport objectives for the YSI scheme are reflective of this principle. A deviation from the scheme objectives established at the onset of the project in 2008 would require Ministerial approval, given its potential implications on completed statutory procedures.

Notwithstanding this, the Council will be aware that a recommendation arising from the Project Assessment Review in 2020 was that "the YSI project brief should be reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with the concept of 'place making' and new best practice in terms of urban transport design, and with the Minister's agenda."

The completed Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR), which identified a series of potential variations to the scope/brief of the project to improve placemaking and active travel outcomes, addresses this recommendation. The published PATR report and supporting annexes can be viewed on the YSI project website <http://www.yorkstreetinterchange.com/>

#### Publication of the Project Assessment Review Report

In line with current guidance on best practice from the Department for Finance (DAO DoF 06/21) the Department plans, by the end of June 2023, to publish the Project Assessment Review report, subject to general data protection requirements, on its scheme website ([www.yorkstreetinterchange.com](http://www.yorkstreetinterchange.com)).

#### Belfast City Council Corporate Support for YSI

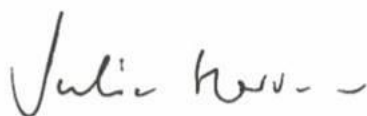
The Department welcomes the broad support for its PATR process thus far from the Council. We are grateful for the positive engagement with officers in the City Growth and Regeneration Department and also the Development and Planning Department. We are also grateful for the opportunity to present our work to both the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the North Area Working Group.

As outlined in the Department's recent presentation to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, the ongoing next steps in the PATR process involve the examination of the shortlisted scenarios in more detail to assess their road safety, cost, traffic, economic and environmental impacts and compatibility with stakeholder interests and objectives. This work is expected to be carried out by the end of summer 2023.

In respect of stakeholder engagement, the Department is committed to continue working collaboratively with its identified key stakeholders to the project, including those listed in the Council's letter of 22 March 2023 and others such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Belfast City Council's Planning Department, who are seeking to address housing need within the City.

The Department trusts that this response satisfies the Council and looks forward to continuing to work with its colleagues in progressing this key transport project for Belfast.

Yours sincerely



**JULIE HARRISON**



<b>Subject:</b>	Request for Visit Belfast to present to Committee
<b>Date:</b>	5 February 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Lesley-Ann O'Donnell, Senior Manager – Culture and Tourism
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kerry McMullan, Tourism and Events Development Manager Pièr Morrow, Tourism Development Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>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</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Visit Belfast to present their annual business plan to Committee on 12 March 2025.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree to receive a presentation on Visit Belfast's 2025-26 Business Plan at the Committee meeting in March 2025, including a request for Council support towards the work programme for the coming financial year.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Visit Belfast Business Plan</b></p> <p>Members will be aware that Visit Belfast is the city's Destination Marketing Organisation dedicated to marketing Belfast as a city break, conference, day-trip and cruise ship destination. It also, in its visitor servicing role, manages the operation of the gateway Visitor Information Centres (VICs) including Visit Belfast Welcome Centre and the Arrivals Desk at Belfast International Airport and a range of visitor servicing initiatives on behalf of Belfast City Council.</p>
3.2	Visit Belfast represents over 500 tourism businesses and services across the tourism industry and its core purpose is to attract, welcome and service visitors for Belfast and Northern Ireland in order to generate an economic benefit for the city, creating jobs and wealth. The role of Visit Belfast is to drive visitor numbers and increase visitor spend. As a public private partnership, it provides a singular delivery mechanism for co-ordinating marketing investment and market engagement for the city. The organisation has a portfolio of marketing, sales and visitor servicing activity across both leisure and business tourism.
3.3	Belfast City Council is the principal funder of Visit Belfast and as such receives an annual presentation of their business plan as part of the process to approve annual funding for the delivery of marketing, sales and visitor servicing activity.
	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
3.4	There are no financial implications attached to this report.
	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>
3.5	There are no Equality or Good Relation Implications attached to this report.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	Active Travel Delivery Plan and Island Street designs
<b>Date:</b>	5 February 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Callie Persic, Development Manager, Sean Dolan, Senior 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	The purpose of this report is to highlight that the Active Travel Delivery Plan for NI is open for consultation until 28 February and to seek approval for the attached Council response to be submitted to the Department for Infrastructure. This paper also provides an update on the designs of the Island Street Active Travel and Traffic Calming Scheme that is being delivered as part of the Belfast Cycling Network and to seek approval for Council's response.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Note that the Department for Infrastructure is undertaking a public consultation on the NI Active Travel Delivery Plan and approve the draft consultation response provided in Appendix A of this report. The draft response will be submitted subject to Council ratification on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025.</li> <li>II. Note the correspondence received from DfI as included within Appendix B1 of this report in relation to Island Street and the proposed designs for the scheme in Appendix B2.</li> <li>III. Agree the draft Council response to the designs for the Island Street Active Travel and Traffic Calming Scheme in Appendix B3 that is being delivered as part of the Belfast Cycling Network.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
	The Department for Infrastructure has prepared a draft Active Travel Delivery Plan for Northern Ireland that will guide the delivery of active travel infrastructure for the next 10 years. A Consultation Event was held on the 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 with provision for five BCC Members and Officers to attend, with the feedback incorporated within the draft response as attached in Appendix A of this report.
<b>3.1</b>	Since the Belfast Cycling Network (BCN) was already published in 2021, <a href="#">Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan 2022 – 31   Department for Infrastructure</a> , and is currently being rolled out as per the phasing within the BCN Delivery Plan, the draft Active Travel Delivery Plan that is out for consultation does not include the Belfast area, but rather the surrounding council areas. Officers feel that a response is warranted given the cross-council boundary area connectivity needs, along with the potential implications for the Belfast Cycle Network.
<b>3.2</b>	As the Consultation closing date is the 28 <sup>th</sup> February, a draft response has been prepared by officers for feedback and approval by this Committee. The draft response will be submitted subject to Council Ratification on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> March. Members can also submit an individual or Party responses via Citizen Space on the DfI website until 28 February: <a href="#">ACTIVE TRAVEL DELIVERY PLAN CONSULTATION - NI Direct - Citizen Space</a> .



3.3	In line with delivery of the Belfast Cycling Network, DfI has shared the designs of the Island Street Active Travel and Traffic Calming Scheme for comment as has been done previously with other schemes. This notice has been shared on the Members' portal on receipt. This paper sets out the proposed Council response for agreement by this Committee and is found in Appendix B3.
4.0	<b>Main Report</b>
4.1	The draft Active Travel Delivery Plan for Northern Ireland sets out the health, environmental, economic and social benefits of active travel and reinforces the potential for modal change since over one third of journeys in NI are less than two miles long and two thirds are less than five miles long. This reinforces the possibility for increased active travel as an option for many people and the opportunity to embrace healthier alternatives and create the conditions for more vibrant places where streets feel safer and there is improved air quality and reduced congestion.
4.2	The Belfast Cycling Network (BCN) and the Strategic Plan for Greenways are already in place and the Active Travel Delivery Plan aims to add to these existing strategies by providing a plan for active travel infrastructure for the rest of NI. Specifically, it sets out how DfI will prioritise and deliver high-quality active travel infrastructure in the urban and rural settlements over the next ten years. Similar to the BCN, it aims to ensure that infrastructure is designed to be safe, accessible and interconnected, thus encouraging people to build active travel into their travel choices. The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 is a key mechanism to support the delivery of the Active Travel Delivery Plan as well as the BCN and mandates the development of sectoral plans for transport which set a minimum spend of 10% on active travel from the overall transport budgets.
4.3	<p>Given the importance of the provision of an Active Travel Network for Belfast, and for the wider region, along with the potential implications for the BCN contained within the Active Travel Delivery Plan it is important that Belfast City Council inputs into this consultation process. The draft consultation response is focused on a number of key points under the following headings that are summarised below, and the full response is in Appendix A.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General comments</li> <li>• Prioritisation: Connections to local schools, public transport and town centres</li> <li>• Designing the Network</li> <li>• Road space allocation and traffic management</li> </ul>
4.4	<p><b>General comments</b></p> <p>In line with Belfast City Council's submission the Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan, we continue to advocate for connected active travel infrastructure which encourages active travel as a means for commuting and leisure opportunities. We have an ongoing collaboration with DfI regarding the delivery of both the BCN and Strategic Plan for Greenways (Council response submitted to then Department for Regional Development in June 2016) and, as appropriate, we would like to see</p>

	<p>further engagement as the regional plan is rolled out. We would also like to stress that the delivery of the Active Travel Delivery Plan, in terms of budget and timing, cannot be to the detriment of the implementation of the Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan (2022). Belfast City Council welcomes the progress to date on the short-term interventions of the BCN, however continue to stress the need to deliver high quality schemes quickly to address the level of underspend to date.</p>
4.5	<p>The Belfast Agenda (2024-2028) is the city's community plan and as part of the <i>Our Place</i> and <i>Our Planet</i> themes there is a priority focus on connectivity, active and sustainable travel and a strategic intent to support the production of sustainable forms of transport and low carbon innovation in transport solutions with collaborative action plans in place to help drive delivery. Central to this is the delivery of the Eastern Transport Plan, the Local Development Plan and projects that support people to use sustainable travel and behavioural change projects that replace car journeys with active travel.</p>
4.6	<p>We note that this plan is NI-wide but want to reinforce the importance of connections across council areas, particularly concerning design, materials, routes and maintenance. The maintenance of the network is vital to ensure its continual usage and safety and the removal of debris, blockages and treatment during winter to support the free flow of use, especially on cycle routes.</p>
4.7	<p><b>Prioritisation: Connections to local schools, public transport and town centres</b></p> <p>Council supports active travel connections to local schools, public transport and town centres and would highlight that the routes may need to vary in terms of potential users and the mix of travel modes. A mixed network of routes that offers choices for walking, wheeling, and cycling would cater to various abilities and provide options for commuting as well as leisure and recreation. We encourage consideration of interventions designed to prioritise the most vulnerable road users.</p>
4.8	<p>Regarding proposals for routes in our neighbouring councils (Antrim and Newtownabbey; Ards and North Down; and Lisburn and Castlereagh) the majority of routes connecting into Belfast are identified as <i>Future routes (10+ Years)</i>. Whilst we appreciate the need for prioritisation, connectivity across Council boundaries is vital to ensure seamless journeys and we would like to see the Department give more weight to those routes which would connect into the established Belfast active travel network, especially considering the significant potential user base that already exists in the populous Belfast Metropolitan Area.</p>
4.9	<p><b>Designing the Network</b></p> <p>We support a people-centred design approach that is welcoming, accessible, inclusive and safe. Active travel routes have a role in place making; they are not only transport corridors but also focal points for communities that can stimulate social interaction and encourage investment. We welcome the commitment to high quality infrastructure that is appropriate to the situation and encourage the</p>

	<p>Department to ensure that the design includes climate resilience, incorporating green and blue infrastructure as possible that can absorb carbon emissions and offer biodiversity and habitat creation.</p>
4.10	<p>We acknowledge that there is no one size fits all approach, but it would be helpful if the Department could issue guidance in terms of the design of cycle infrastructure and clarify the use of LTN 1/20 as best practice. We also request that design proposals be site-specific, carefully considering the unique needs of urban routes and proposing thoughtful interventions for recreational paths that protect and enhance the existing landscape character.</p>
	<p><b>Road space allocation and traffic management</b></p>
4.11	<p>We agree that the key principles, welcoming and accessible, people centred design and high-quality infrastructure are critical elements in delivering rebalanced road space and traffic management and this position is reflected in the Local Development Plan, the Belfast Agenda and A Bolder Vision for Belfast. These principles should enable flexibility while fundamentally placing people at the centre, supporting improved confidence in engaging in active travel through safe, connected, inclusive and well-designed infrastructure. We feel it would be helpful for the Department to produce a menu of potential options or guidance to rebalance the street, supporting future placemaking and mobility projects.</p>
	<p><b>Belfast Cycling Network: Island Street Active Travel and Traffic Calming Scheme</b></p>
4.12	<p>On 3 June 2021, the Minister for Infrastructure published '<i>Planning for the Future of Transport – Time for Change</i>'. This document articulates the Minister's vision that active travel becomes a pillar of change within towns and cities to cut emissions, to improve health and wellbeing, and to better connect families and communities. It commits to the adoption of the sustainable transport hierarchy where prioritisation is given to sustainable travel by providing for walking and wheeling, then cycling, then public transport ahead of private vehicle use.</p>
4.13	<p>In March 2017 Committee agreed the Council response to the draft Belfast Cycling Network consultation for submission of DfI. In June 2021 the DfI Minister published <i>Making Belfast an Active City – Belfast Cycling Network 2021</i> that set out her ambition to make Belfast a more cycle-friendly city and provides a blueprint for the development and operation of the cycling infrastructure in the city for the next ten years and is supported by the BCN Delivery Plan 2022-31. The CG&amp;R Committee received an update from DfI on the delivery of the BCN as a part of their Autumn Statement at the November 2024 Special Meeting of this Committee, with a follow up DfI responses to Members queries presented to the January 2025 meeting of the CG&amp;R Committee.</p>

4.14	<p>The Department is undertaking the legislative process for the installation of new cycling and traffic calming measures on Island Street, Belfast. This also includes sections of Ballymacarrett Road, Belfast and Dee Street, Belfast. The scheme is identified as Scheme No10 within the short-term Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan. This scheme will include the installation of the following measures as listed below and proposed layout is found in Appendix B2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Two-Way Cycle Lane on Ballymacarrett Road &amp; Island Street.</li> <li>• New Shared Footway on Dee Street &amp; Island Street.</li> <li>• New Disabled Parking Places on Ballymacarrett Road.</li> <li>• Relocation of Toucan Crossing on Dee Street.</li> <li>• Prohibition of Waiting - At Any Time – ‘Loading / Unloading Not Permitted’ on Ballymacarrett Road &amp; Island Street. (Northern Sides).</li> <li>• Prohibition of Waiting - At Any Time – ‘Loading / Unloading Permitted’ on Ballymacarrett Road &amp; Island Street. (Southern Sides).</li> <li>• 1 x flat top road hump, 12.5m long, kerb to kerb width, 80mm high.</li> <li>• 1 x flat top road hump, 31m long, kerb to kerb width, 80mm high.</li> <li>• 6 x flat top road humps tapered, 4.1m long, kerb to kerb width, 80mm high.</li> </ul>
4.15	<p>Officers have prepared a draft response to the scheme that is in Appendix B3 and highlighted a number of aspects:</p> <p>We note that the proposed cycling infrastructure and traffic calming improvements on Island Street, includes the segregation from vehicular traffic, which enhances safety and inclusivity and could encourage more people to cycle with confidence. This provides better connectivity along the National Cycle Route 99, linking the Connswater Greenway, Titanic Quarter and Belfast City Centre, while also strengthening connections to the Comber Greenway, aligning with the Belfast Agenda and its commitment to delivering enhanced cycle infrastructure across the city.</p>
4.16	<p>To ensure local support and future usage we would encourage the Department to ensure that there is communication and engagement about the scheme with local residents and users starting from this design stage. We also suggest that engagement should include information on the delivery timeframe and nature of the proposed works and outline how these are being delivered in line with best practice guidance.</p>
4.17	<p>The Council’s Tree Officer in Planning’s Trees &amp; Landscape team has provided detailed feedback including:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal should be designed in a manner will seeks to avoid creating future stress and strain upon existing trees which could impact on future health, condition, and structural integrity of existing trees.</li> <li>• Proposed landscaping should be included within the proposal to achieve a net gain in future tree cover within the context of the surrounding area.</li> <li>• It may be an option to redesign the proposed cycle path at certain pinch points away from mature tree cover to prevent long-term damage from arising.</li> </ul>
<b>5.0</b>	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b> There are no finance or resource implications associated with this report.
<b>6.0</b>	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> There are no Equality or Good Relation Implications/Rural Needs Assessment requirements associated with this report.
<b>7.0</b>	<b><u>Appendices</u></b>
	Appendix A: Draft response to the Active Travel Delivery Plan Appendix B1: Consultation letter from Ms N. Semple (Active Travel Eastern DfI Roads), Island Street Active Travel and Traffic Calming Scheme Appendix B2: Proposed Island Street Layout Appendix B3: Draft response the Island Street Active Travel and Traffic Calming Scheme

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Appendix A—Response to the Active Travel Delivery Plan Consultation**

### **General comments**

We welcome publication of the Active Travel Delivery Plan (ATDP) consultation and the focus on delivering bold transformation for our communities across Northern Ireland. Active travel brings many social, economic and environmental benefits including health and well-being, improved air quality, reduced traffic and improved streets and places as well as tackling climate change and fostering a fair and just transition.

In line with Belfast City Council's submission the Belfast Cycle Network Delivery Plan, we continue to advocate for connected active travel infrastructure which encourages active travel as a means for commuting and leisure opportunities and wish to expedited delivery of the Plan. We have an ongoing collaboration with DfI regarding the delivery of both the BCN and greenways and, as appropriate, we would like to see further engagement as the regional plan is rolled out. We would like to stress that the delivery of the Active Travel Plan, in terms of budget and timing, cannot be to the detriment of the implementation of the Belfast Cycle Network Delivery Plan (2022) but would like to see a committed and funded delivery plan for active travel across all of Northern Ireland.

We understand that this plan is NI-wide but want to reinforce the importance of connections across council areas, particularly concerning design, materials, routes and maintenance. The maintenance of the network is vital to ensure its continual usage and safety and the removal of debris, blockages and treatment during winter to support the free flow of use, especially on cycle routes.

The Belfast Agenda (2024-2028) is the city's community plan and identified the following outcomes to be achieved by 2035:

- Everyone in Belfast experiences good health and wellbeing
- Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally friendly.

As part of the Our Place theme there is a priority to create a liveable, connected, vibrant and competitive city. Focus on connectivity, active and sustainable travel (CAST) has been identified a key priority within the "Our Place" theme of the Belfast Agenda, with a collaborative action plan in place to help drive delivery towards those outcomes. It is proposed that the percentage of all journeys which are made by walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport and number of miles of cycle lanes, footways and footpaths will help measure progress towards the Belfast Agenda outcomes.

Central to this is the delivery of the Eastern Transport Plan, the Local Development Plan and projects that support people to use sustainable travel and behavioural change projects that replace car journeys with active travel. The Belfast Agenda's Our Planet theme also outlines our commitment to tackling climate change, with a strategic intent to support the production of sustainable forms of transport and low carbon innovation in transport solutions.

### **Prioritisation of Potential Active Travel Routes**

#### **Question: Do you agree that we have emphasised the right things?**

Council supports active travel connections to local schools, public transport and town centres and would highlight that the routes may need vary in terms of potential users and the mix of travel modes. A mixed network of routes that offers choices for walking, wheeling, and cycling would cater to various abilities and provide options for commuting as well as leisure and recreation.

In addition to the different types of infrastructure needed, it is suggested that the network should provide a range of options, ensuring the highest level of safety is used along these routes. We encourage consideration of interventions designed to prioritise the most vulnerable road users.

We encourage the Department to focus on delivering routes which offer the greatest potential to increase active travel, particularly in areas experiencing population growth, and to build the necessary infrastructure in advance. As one of the strategic aims of the LDP, 'Building a smart, connected and resilient place' seeks to encourage travel by more sustainable modes of transport and reduce reliance on the private car, particularly for commuting purposes.

Given this policy position, we particularly welcome the prioritisation of schemes identified in the ATDP which provide connections to the public transport network, be it rail stations, bus stations or Park & Ride sites. The schemes should facilitate greater public transport uptake, as a more sustainable means of travel to and from Belfast in preference to the private car whilst also assisting in reducing the negative impacts associated with congestion caused by high car use.

Regarding proposals for routes in our neighbouring councils (Antrim and Newtownabbey; Ards and North Down; and Lisburn and Castlereagh) the majority of routes connecting into Belfast are identified as 'Future routes (10+ Years)'. Whilst we appreciate the need for prioritisation, we would see benefit in giving more weight to those routes which would connect into the established Belfast active travel network especially considering the significant potential user base that already exists in the populous Belfast Metropolitan Area.

We also support the prioritisation of routes that provide connections to local schools, as they can bring about meaningful behavioural change. As noted in the consultation report, this can "empower young people to adopt sustainable habits that can last a lifetime" causing a modal shift that potentially influences their travel choices if they live, study and work in Belfast.

We also welcome that the ATDP recognises the importance of the role that greenways play in the provision of an active travel network. This aligns with another of the LDP's strategic aims 'Promoting a green and active place' which supports developing an integrated and multi-functional green infrastructure network.

## **Designing the Network**

### **Question: Do you agree with these principles?**

We support a people-centred design approach that is welcoming, accessible, inclusive and safe. Active travel routes have a role in place making; they are not only transport corridors but also focal points for communities that can stimulate social interaction and encourage investment. We welcome the commitment to high quality infrastructure that is appropriate to the situation. We would encourage the Department to ensure that the design includes climate resilience, incorporating green and blue infrastructure as possible. Not only does green infrastructure provide an attractive environment that encourages active travel, but it also can absorb carbon emissions and offer biodiversity and habitat creation.

Referring to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Volume 1, "The Climate Change Team within DAERA: Northern Ireland Environment Agency noted that implication/opportunities for the Active Travel Plan of more frequent hot weather is not discussed. High temperature will make active modes of transport more difficult/uncomfortable without adequate shade and hydration points along the routes."



Building on this point, the design principles should reflect the changing climate and ensure that it responds to future risks to address flooding, urban heat islands, and air quality challenges.

We acknowledge that there is no one size fits all approach, but it would be helpful if the Department could issue guidance in terms of the design of cycle infrastructure and clarify the use of LTN 1/20 as best practice. We recognise that each scheme's design should prioritise the provision of high-quality, context-appropriate infrastructure, with safety as a core focus.

We request that design proposals be site-specific, carefully considering the unique needs of urban routes and proposing thoughtful interventions for recreational paths that protect and enhance the existing landscape character. Design proposals must be climate-responsive, integrating future climate models to address flooding, urban heat islands and air quality challenges. The preservation of existing trees is essential and supplementary tree planting are crucial for mitigating these issues, enhancing long-term functionality and sustainability of the routes.

Selected tree species should be resilient to climate change impacts, such as extended droughts and flooding, and resistant to climate-related tree diseases. This approach supports environmental and community well-being. Designs should respect the existing landscape character and habitats, ensuring the protection and enhancement of wildlife, such as considering wildlife corridors.

The use of sustainable materials, a site-specific planting palette reflecting the existing native planting, incorporation of SuDS, and the selection of appropriate lighting are essential to avoid light pollution and minimise negative impacts on wildlife habitats. Additionally, we welcome visual examples that highlight nature-based solutions for flood management solutions, including the integration of SuDS, swales, and tree planting in both rural and urban settings.

### **Road space allocation and traffic management**

#### **Question: Do you agree with these principles?**

We agree that the key principles, of welcoming and accessible, people-centred design and high-quality infrastructure, are critical to delivering rebalanced road space and traffic management and this position is reflected in the Local Development Plan, the Belfast Agenda and A Bolder Vision for Belfast. These principles should enable flexibility while fundamentally placing people at the centre, supporting improved confidence in engaging in active travel through safe, connected, inclusive and well-designed infrastructure. We feel it would be helpful for the Department to produce a menu of potential options or guidance to rebalance the street, supporting future placemaking and mobility projects.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Active Travel  
Eastern Division**

Mr John Walsh  
Chief Executive  
Belfast City Council  
Belfast City Hall  
BELFAST  
BT1 5GS

Email : [walshjohn@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:walshjohn@belfastcity.gov.uk)



Hydebank House  
4a Hospital Road  
Belfast  
BT8 8JL

Tel: 0300 200 7899  
Fax: 028 9025 3220  
Textphone number 028 9054 0022  
Email: [activetravel.eastern@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:activetravel.eastern@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)  
[www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Being Dealt With By: Niamh Semple  
Direct Line: 028 90 5222331

Your reference:  
Our reference:

Date: 29/11/2024

Dear Mr Walsh,

**ISLAND STREET ACTIVE TRAVEL & TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME**

The Department is undertaking the legislative process for the installation of new cycling and traffic calming measures on Island Street, Belfast. This also includes sections of Ballymacarrett Road, Belfast and Dee Street, Belfast. The scheme is identified as Scheme No10 within the short-term Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan.

This scheme will include the installation of the following measures as listed below.

- New Two-Way Cycle Lane on Ballymacarrett Road & Island Street.
- New Shared Footway on Dee Street & Island Street.
- New Disabled Parking Places on Ballymacarrett Road.
- Relocation of Toucan Crossing on Dee Street.
- Prohibition of Waiting - At Any Time – 'Loading / Unloading Not Permitted' on Ballymacarrett Road & Island Street. (Northern Sides).
- Prohibition of Waiting - At Any Time – 'Loading / Unloading Permitted' on Ballymacarrett Road & Island Street. (Southern Sides).

- 1 x flat top road hump, 12.5m long, kerb to kerb width, 80mm high.
- 1 x flat top road hump, 31m long, kerb to kerb width, 80mm high.
- 6 x flat top road humps tapered, 4.1m long, kerb to kerb width, 80mm high.

All road humps will be constructed in accordance with 'The Road Humps Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999'. All road markings and signage will be in accordance with the 'Traffic Signs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997'.

All of the above as indicated in drawing number '401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-0101'. This has been included for your consideration.

If you, have any comments on our proposals please forward them to me at [niamhsemples@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:niamhsemples@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk).

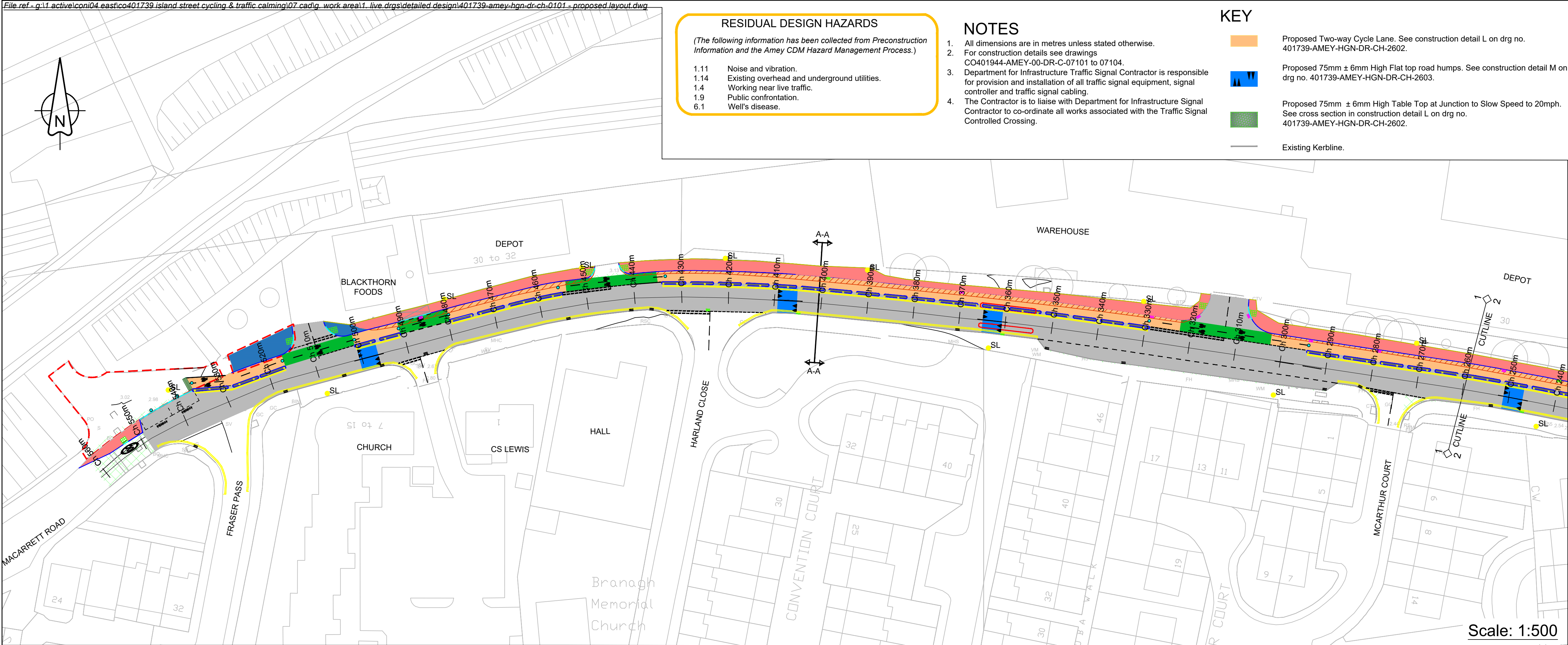
I trust that you will find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**Niamh Semple**

**Active Travel Eastern  
DfI Roads**





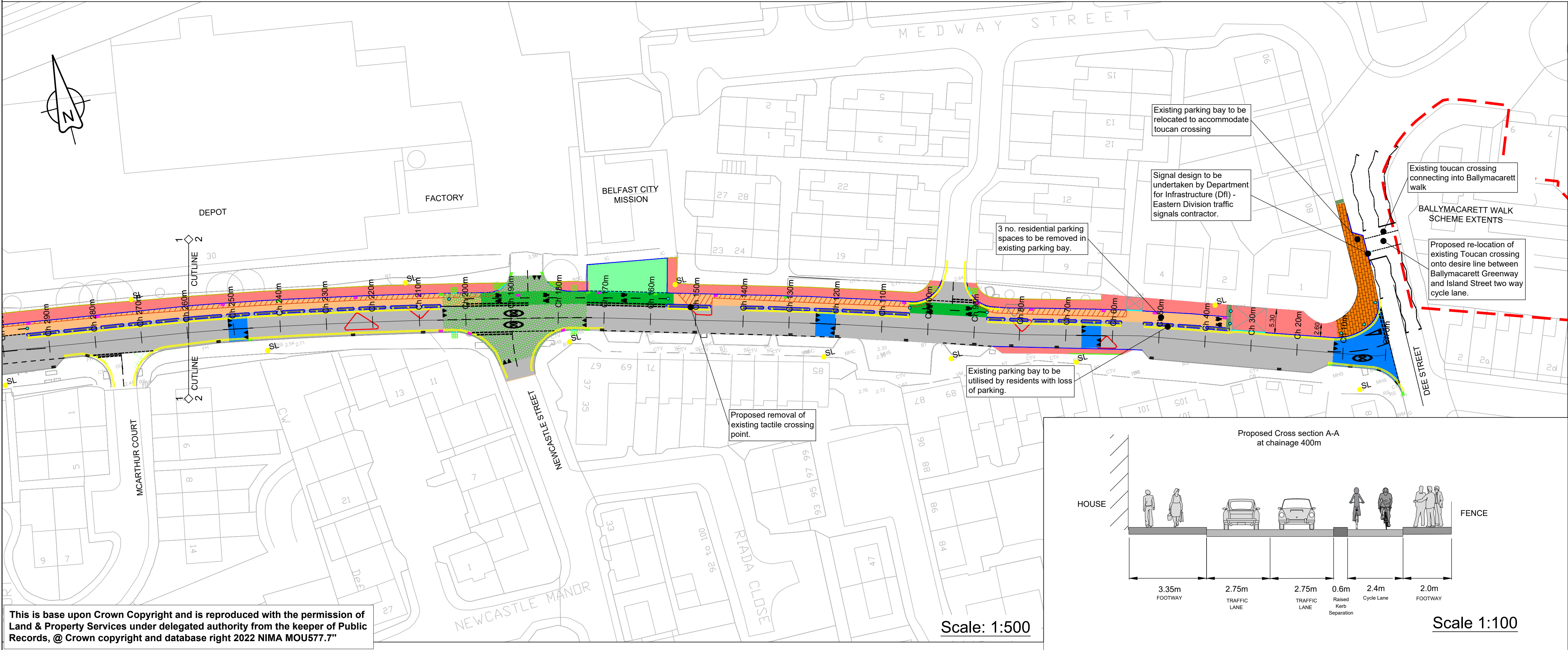
- RESIDUAL DESIGN HAZARDS**  
(The following information has been collected from Preconstruction Information and the Amey CDM Hazard Management Process.)
- 1.11 Noise and vibration.
  - 1.14 Existing overhead and underground utilities.
  - 1.4 Working near live traffic.
  - 1.9 Public confrontation.
  - 6.1 Well's disease.

- NOTES**
1. All dimensions are in metres unless stated otherwise.
  2. For construction details see drawings CO401944-AMEY-00-DR-C-07101 to 07104.
  3. Department for Infrastructure Traffic Signal Contractor is responsible for provision and installation of all traffic signal equipment, signal controller and traffic signal cabling.
  4. The Contractor is to liaise with Department for Infrastructure Signal Contractor to co-ordinate all works associated with the Traffic Signal Controlled Crossing.

- KEY**
- Proposed Two-way Cycle Lane. See construction detail L on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2602.
  - Proposed 75mm ± 6mm High Flat top road humps. See construction detail M on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2603.
  - Proposed 75mm ± 6mm High Table Top at Junction to Slow Speed to 20mph. See cross section in construction detail L on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2602.
  - Existing Kerbline.

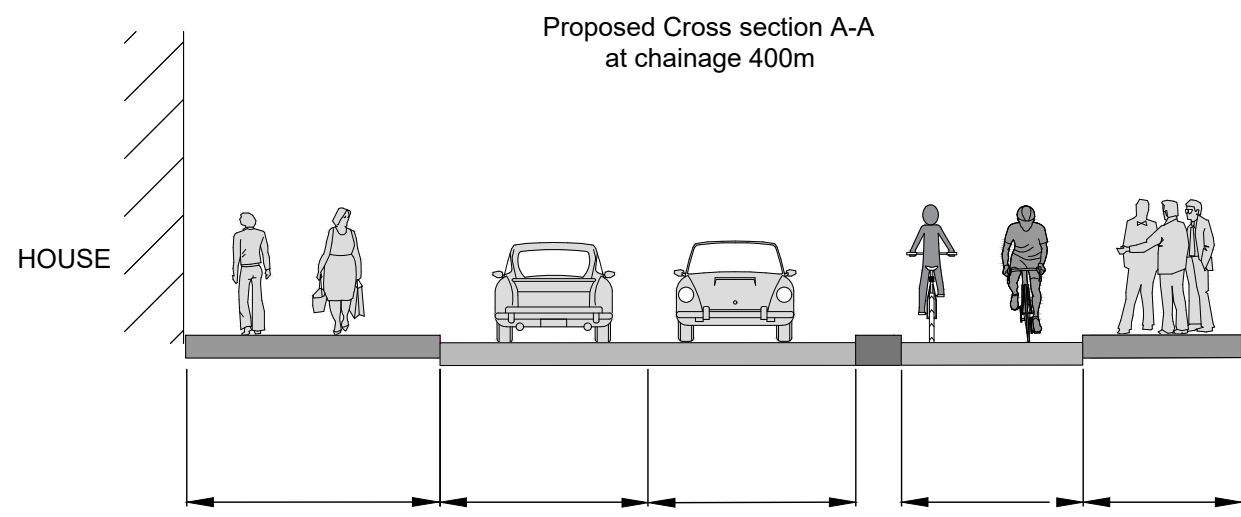
- Proposed Footway (Surface course and binder resurface). See construction detail L on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2602.
- Proposed footway construction - refer to drawing no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2602 detail L.
- Proposed Kerbline. See Construction detail A on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2601.
- Proposed Dropped Kerb. See Construction details B and I on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2601.
- Existing Traffic Calming Feature to be Removed
- Proposed Carriageway Resurfacing. See Construction detail L on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2602.
- Proposed Road Markings. See Road Marking Details on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HMK-DR-CH-1201.
- Proposed Coloured Surfacing on Cycle Lane. See Road Marking Details on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HMK-DR-CH-1201.
- Existing Parking Bay to Remain.
- Proposed Gully to be Relocated and Replaced with Cycle Friendly Mesh. See construction details D and J on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2601 and drainage drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-0501-02.
- PCC Kerbed 600mm Wide Segregation islands. Construction details G and H on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2601.
- Proposed Delineator Bollard (3m Spacing). See Construction detail P on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2603.
- Proposed Bollard. See Construction detail N on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2603.
- Granite paved every treatment (to match Ballymacarett walk scheme). See Construction Detail Q on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2603.
- Proposed Corduroy Paving. See Construction Detail F on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2601.
- Private Access to be Retained.
- Proposed Carriageway widening to facilitate cycle lane. See construction detail L on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2602.
- SL Existing Streetlighting Column
- Proposed Tactile Paving. Construction detail E on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2601.
- Existing Gully
- Proposed gully. See detail J on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2601 and drainage drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-0501
- Proposed Shallow Depth Channel Construction detail R on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2603. and drainage drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-0501.
- Proposed Edge Kerbing. Construction detail C on drg no. 401739-AMEY-HGN-DR-CH-2601.

Scale: 1:500



This is base upon Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of Land & Property Services under delegated authority from the keeper of Public Records, @ Crown copyright and database right 2022 NIMA MOU577.7"

Scale: 1:500



Scale 1:100

Rev	Revision details	Drwn	Chkd	Appd	Date
Designed:	NA				Date: 26.02.2022
Drawn:	DMCC				Date: 26.02.2022
Snr Tech Check:	AGC				Date: 30.03.2022
Checked:	CD				Date: 28.03.2022
Approved:	PW				Date: 01.04.2022

Copyright in this design © Amey

**ameyconsulting**

www.amey.co.uk

Client  
Department for Infrastructure  
Eastern Division, Annex 7,  
Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate  
Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SQ

Project Name  
**Island Street - Cycling and Traffic Calming**

Drawing Title  
**Proposed Layout**

Original Drawing Size : A1  
Scale : As Shown

Drawing Status  
**FOR CONSTRUCTION**

Drawing No  
401739-AMEY-00-XX-DR-C-0101

Suitability  
A1

Rev  
P01



This page is intentionally left blank

<b>To:</b>	Active Travel Eastern Division, DfI Roads
<b>From:</b>	City Regeneration & Development
<b>Date:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2025
<b>Re:</b>	Response to Island Street Active Travel and Traffic Calming Scheme consultation

**PROPOSAL:** The Department is undertaking the legislative process for the installation of new cycling and traffic calming measures on Island Street, Belfast. This also includes sections of Ballymacarrett Road, Belfast and Dee Street, Belfast. The scheme is identified as Scheme No10 within the short-term Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan.

This scheme will include the installation of the following measures as listed below.

- New Two-Way Cycle Lane on Ballymacarrett Road & Island Street.
- New Shared Footway on Dee Street & Island Street.
- New Disabled Parking Places on Ballymacarrett Road.
- Relocation of Toucan Crossing on Dee Street.
- Prohibition of Waiting - At Any Time – ‘Loading / Unloading Not Permitted’ on Ballymacarrett Road & Island Street. (Northern Sides).
- Prohibition of Waiting - At Any Time – ‘Loading / Unloading Permitted’ on Ballymacarrett Road & Island Street. (Southern Sides).
- 1 x flat top road hump, 12.5m long, kerb to kerb width, 80mm high.
- 1 x flat top road hump, 31m long, kerb to kerb width, 80mm high.
- 6 x flat top road humps tapered, 4.1m long, kerb to kerb width, 80mm high.

### **General comments**

Council welcomes the publication of the Island Street Active Travel and Traffic Calming Scheme consultation as part of the delivery of the Belfast Cycling Network. We note that the proposed cycling infrastructure and traffic calming improvements on Island Street, includes the segregation from vehicular traffic, which enhances safety and inclusivity and could encourage more people to cycle with confidence. This provides better connectivity along the National Cycle Route 99, linking the Connswater Greenway, Titanic Quarter and Belfast City Centre, while also strengthening connections to the Comber Greenway, aligning with the Belfast Agenda and its commitment to delivering enhanced cycle infrastructure across the city.

To ensure local support and future usage we would encourage the Department to ensure that there is communication and engagement about the scheme with local residents and users starting from this initial design stage. We also suggest that engagement should include information on the delivery timeframe and nature of the proposed works and outline how these are being delivered in line with best practice guidance.

## **Detailed feedback on the scheme from the Council's Tree Officer**

### **Site Details**

Along this stretch of public road and pedestrian footpaths there are a number of existing trees of various species (including London plane, Acer / Maples, Limes, Rowan), size and age. Some trees are used as existing vehicular traffic calming measures and linear boundary trees which offer public visual amenity offering upon the surrounding streetscape, promoting biodiversity, act as natural sound & screen buffers and also soften the hard urban street terrain along Island Street.

### **Comments:**

Regarding the proposal, from limited plans the team are able to assess, please see following points which should be taken on board to ensure the proposal will not directly or indirectly impact the existing trees during construction process:

- It would be advised to show all existing trees within the proposal site including locations, species, root protection area and radial canopy spreads. It would also be beneficial to show indicated age class, physiological condition, structural condition, and any preliminary management recommendations for each tree, such as treatment and tree surgery (noting the specific tree surgery details – in accordance with BS 3998). There are a number of trees which may require appropriate pre or/post canopy management prior to any works commencing site, the proposed works should be recommended by an arborist or professional and insured tree surgeon.
- Any existing trees to be removed should be clearly indicated and reason for removal. The desire would be for existing healthy trees to be retained and designed to accommodate and integrate the trees into the proposal. The council approach seeks to adopt and promote the precautionary principle when considering the impacts of a proposed development on trees of visual, biodiversity or amenity quality and significance.
- To ensure no damage to existing trees such as root / soil compaction or root severance), a tree protection plan would be advised. The protection plan shows the location of appropriate tree protective fencing, all construction works should be outside the fenced areas to avoid causing any stress or strain on the trees which may impact



their future health. Tree protective fencing is typically erected prior to any works commencing on site and installed in accordance with BS:5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction – Recommendations.



- During the construction phase in proximity to trees being retained it is advised there should be no damage to existing roots through manoeuvring of machinery, storage of materials, underground cables / pipeworks etc temporary access paths, soil mounds or construction operations - steel plates, ground protection mats, heavy-duty plywood set onto a compressible woodchip layer and pinned into position are approaches to help prevent root and soil compaction during the construction phase.



- Details within the plans indicate existing trees to be removed with no replacement trees indicated within the plan to help ensure a net gain in tree cover as part of the proposal which council seek to secure with proposed development within the council area (refer to TRE1 within Belfast LDP – *‘Where the loss of trees is unavoidable, proposals must include provision for replacement planting and other mitigation works on-site or, in exceptional circumstances, at an appropriate location in the immediate vicinity.’*)
- Any proposed landscaping should pay careful consideration and focus on appropriate species choice accounting for establish species size, canopy spread and future maintenance requirements.

*For example, species of trees suitable adjacent to cycle-lanes / streetscapes could be clear-stems with tight canopies to avoid from issues from arising. Suggested species: Tilia cordata 'greenspire', Pyrus calleryana chanticleer, Carpinus betulus fastigiata & Liquidambar styraciflua.*

- There should be no decrease in level changes within the root protection areas (RPAs) of existing trees within the proposal site as this can impact on a tree's future health and condition. For ground with a vegetation layer, excavations may be appropriate to remove the turf layer and surface vegetation, but this should be agreed by an appointed supervising arboriculturist (use of an air spade etc.) If a three-dimensional cellular confinement system such as geocell membrane is to be utilised, the advice is to install it according to the manufacturer's technical specification – the ground surface finish must be porous to allow water and nutrients to pass. Ideally, all new surfacing in RPAs will be no-dig approach, i.e., requiring no excavation.
- An Arboricultural Implications Assessment and Methods Statement is strongly recommended which shall identify, evaluate, and mitigate where appropriate the extent of direct and indirect impacts on existing trees that may arise as a result of the site layout proposal.
- There could be opportunities to upgrade some appropriate existing trees being retained with resin bound surfacing, which is extremely durable, fully porous and a contemporary surfacing system that is compliant with Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SUDS) requirements – it is often used in streetscapes across urban areas.

### **Summary:**

- The proposal should be designed in a manner will seeks to avoid creating future stress and strain upon existing trees which could impact on future health, condition, and structural integrity of existing trees.
- Proposed landscaping should be included within the proposal to achieve a net gain in future tree cover within the context of the surrounding area.

- It may be an option to redesign the proposed cycle path at certain pinch points away from mature tree cover to prevent long-term damage from arising.

Further assistance and information can be found below:

- *BS: 5837: 2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction – Recommendations.*
- *NJUG 10 – Guidelines for the planning, installation, and maintenance of utility services in proximity to trees.*
- *Belfast City Council – Trees & Development - Supplementary Planning Guidance May 2023  
Trees and Development*
- *BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations*

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Subject:</b>	Major Events Update - Christmas
<b>Date:</b>	5 February 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Lesley-Ann O'Donnell
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kerry Mc Mullan, Tourism and Events Development Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on activity delivered as part of a Christmas programme in November - December 2024.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Members are asked to note the contents of this report on recent Christmas activity.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<b>Christmas Programme 2024 Evaluation</b> Building on the success of the 2023 event, the Christmas Lights Switch-On in Donegall Square North, returned on Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2024.

This particular event remains a key driver in animating and activating the city. The Switch-On has always been a specific milestone for City centre stakeholders as the official opening to the Christmas period.

Located in a busy, 'live' city centre with high pedestrian footfall, the Switch-On is an operationally multi-faceted event to deliver. Planning began in July 2024, with engagement of primary stakeholders such as Translink, Visit Belfast and delivery agents. There is significant multi stakeholder input involved in the early planning process, and as plans develop other city centre stakeholders are further engaged.

In line with the Cultural Strategy's themes of community and sectoral co-design, an exciting programme was developed. This included cultural sector, community and school groups and further details are within this report. Tickets were fully allocated, and on the evening the site was at full capacity.

In 2024, the Christmas Lights Switch-On followed the same format at the front of City Hall, taking place on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November. Due to the nature of the t-shaped event site comprising Donegall Square North and Donegall Place (Fountain Lane and Castle Lane cross), it was necessary to close roads to facilitate event infrastructure installation and de-rig.

The City Events Team engaged extensively with stakeholders such as Translink, MarketPlace Europe, DfI, public hire taxi and the business sector, as well as with internal council units, to coordinate the build, event delivery and de-rig with as minimal impact as possible to normal business. Various road closures and suspensions were in place 2am Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> through to 4am on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November.

#### Attendance:

In excess of 10,500 citizens and visitors gathered to enjoy the event. The event was free and ticketed via Visit Belfast. There was an initial ticket release on the morning of 5<sup>th</sup> November, with a second release to accommodate those who couldn't secure tickets during the morning release. The City Hall Christmas Market opened at 12 noon the same day. During this years event, it was noticeable that there was a significant number of non-ticket holders attending the event. Officers are reviewing the current approach to ticketing and options aligned to potential reconfiguration of the site that are in line with health and safety requirements, need for access to retail and retaining a positive attendee experience.

#### Marketing and Communications Activity:

Council operated a digital campaign with online advertising to promote this year's Christmas Lights Switch-On event, as well as Winter's Den season in 2 Royal Avenue.

	<p>Council directed people to the Christmas Lights Switch-On event page on the BCC website as well as the /Christmas URL where it was displayed prominently on the page.</p> <p>Bauer NI were the official media partner and offered a strong package across Cool FM and Downtown from 2<sup>nd</sup> November 13<sup>th</sup> November, including promo trails, competition package, live reads, an interview with the Lord Mayor, and outdoor broadcast with Downtown's Neal McClelland. Pete, Paulo and Rebecca from Cool FM's Breakfast Team were comperes on stage at the event.</p> <p>Visit Belfast offered box office and visitor servicing, as well as related marketing activity such as digital screen display and social and digital campaign.</p> <p>The event was featured in City Matters, circulated to just under 160k homes w/c 6th November and full event details of the Switch-On and Winter's Den were highlighted on page 4 and in the What's On section.</p> <p>A press release was issued 30<sup>th</sup> October to promote the event. From 30 October, media coverage was secured on Belfast Live, Belfast Telegraph, Irish News, NewsLetter, BBC, Belfast Media Group, Yahoo UK and 4NI. In addition, the media partnership with Bauer NI included coverage across Cool FM and Downtown.</p> <p>Council took paid-for online advertising to raise general awareness, targeting Belfast and surrounding areas for a two week period in advance of the ticket release. This approach was light touch given the experience of tickets going quickly, and was across a small number of media – Facebook, Belfast Media Group, Belfast Telegraph online and Daily Mirror/Belfast Live.</p> <p>The Visit Belfast Christmas Campaign began on 16th November and ran until 22nd December. This was a 2-phase campaign with the first phase targeted to the ROI market (70%) and the NI market (30%). In Phase 2, utilising additional funding secured by BCC, we were able to deliver upweighted activity to both the ROI and NI market with a 50/50 split. The objective of the campaign was to capture the “festive energy” of the city and promote day trips and overnight stays using a targeted mix of Video on Demand, Outdoor, Radio and digital elements. Supporting this activity included both paid social media advertising and influencer activity.</p> <p>This campaign resulted in a total of 63.5 million impacts across the entirety of the campaign.</p>
3.2.	<p><u>Programming:</u></p> <p>The 'City Imagining Strategy' approved by Council has a focus on supporting developing local arts and cultural organisations, through funding, commissioning and capacity building.</p>

To this end, *Oh Yeah* were engaged to arrange a performance by *Sasha Samara*, who is a graduate of their creative talent development programme; the MAC were invited to show an extract of their upcoming Christmas production; *Tumble Circus* were engaged to choreograph a circus piece; and the *Rock Choir* were invited to produce a medley of singalong Christmas favourites. *The Belvoir Players* also performed, and by invitation of Lord Mayor, Finaghy Primary School choir sang. Meet and greet performers were also engaged from two local companies.

Every act participating in the 2024 switch on expressed very positive feedback on the experience, with the profile of taking part increasing publicity for those companies that had their own Christmas shows.

The Christmas Lights Switch on in 2023 and 2024 featured local acts. On both occasions, tickets sold out very quickly, and capacity was reached in 2024. In section 3.3.2, audience participating in the survey were asked if they supported council supporting local talent or if there was a preference for the 'big name'. 61% opted for the current position with 31% preferring a big name.

Officers will continue to work on all levels to ensure the Christmas Programme of animation and activation continues to develop, grow and leverage all available civic and visitor opportunities for Belfast for 2025 within the budget available, aligned to the principles of the cultural strategy on providing support for the cultural sector and showcasing homegrown talent. A number of benchmarking exercises are underway to review approaches to festive lights switch on and will be brought back to committee in due course.

#### 2 Royal Avenue:

Following on from 2023's model of uplifting the Christmas programme in 2 Royal Avenue, the Winter's Den opened on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024. The Winter's Den season features a selection of free entry festive activities. The venue was dressed by *MayWe*, and included a living 12ft tree that will be replanted in January, art installation by local artist *Carla Hodgson* and reused Christmas décor from previous years.

- Total building footfall across Winter's Den (from Sat 16<sup>th</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December) was **49,434**. This included the an opening weekend footfall of **5,022** (Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> November)
- 36 funded workshops / events, supported by 17 external events / markets / performances and a further 35 community groups and 10 schools engaged including 14 community / school musical performances



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 markets including approximately 140 makers / groups / artists (Potters Markets, Social Enterprise Market, Christmas Queer Art Fair and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Market)</li> <li>• Santa's Post Office (Belfast Bid One) opened 16<sup>th</sup> November – 24<sup>th</sup> December and remains very popular</li> <li>• Sensory area provided on 16<sup>th</sup> November to compliment the City Hall Switch - on including sensory workshops, a snow dome, sensory silent disco, walk about characters and a quiet light switch on</li> <li>• Most popular programmed events this year included festive film screenings, a <i>New Years Eve Ceili</i>, themed workshops and musical performances, family art workshops, <i>Jingle and Jazz</i> for seniors and storytelling. This was further enhanced by a popular community led programme including the Potters Market, Community carolling, Primary School traditional music concerts, Christmas Tea Dance and a concert by the <i>Ulster Sinfonia</i>.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p><u>Belfast Christmas Lights Switch-On 16th November - Socio-Economic Survey results</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of 115 face-to-face interviews were conducted with visitors to the Belfast Christmas Lights Switch-On event. A further 123 interviews were completed online by visitors who had booked tickets to the event. 238 interviews were completed in total</li> <li>• The overall estimated direct spend for the Belfast event was £195,585 (2023: £193,950)</li> <li>• The total average spend per group was £76.93. (2023: £86.20) 79% ate out during the event</li> <li>• 52% of survey respondents were from the Belfast City Council area, and a further 40% were from elsewhere in Northern Ireland. A slightly higher than last year but small number of visitors were from GB (2%), ROI (4%) and outside the UK and Ireland (2%). 8% of survey respondents were staying in accommodation away from home</li> <li>• 62% of respondents said they had attended a Christmas event hosted by Belfast City Council previously and 38% were new</li> <li>• 61% (2023:75%) of survey respondents attended the event with children</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 37% (2023:46%) said they had no preference on when tickets became available, with 30% preferring them to be released in the morning and 25% after work hours</li> <li>• Two-thirds, (63%) said they were supportive of Belfast City Council's preference to source local talent for stage acts. Under one third (31%) would prefer a big-name act</li> <li>• 45% (2023:51%) gave the event an overall rating of between 8 and 10, including 17% who rated it as '10 - Extremely good'. At the other end of the scale, 13% gave it a rating between 1-3</li> <li>• 88% thought that events like these encourage people to come to Belfast, while 81% of those living in Belfast said that events like these improve their sense of well-being and community</li> <li>• 77% of visitors said the Belfast Christmas Lights Switch On event improves Belfast's reputation as a host for events like these; and 75% stated it improves the reputation of Belfast as a place to visit</li> <li>• 42% (2023: 62%) of respondents living outside NI confirmed that the event makes them more likely to visit Belfast again, while 62% commented it makes them more likely to recommend friends and family to visit Belfast</li> <li>• 90% agreed that there should be more events like this in Belfast</li> <li>• 93% said that they felt safe during the event</li> </ul>
3.4	<p><b>Festive Lighting Scheme</b></p> <p>The Switch On event marked the turning on of the festive lighting scheme throughout the city centre, comprising a number of cross street features and pole mount features. In liaison with Facilities Management, the lighting of the City Hall façade also took place the same evening.</p> <p>2025 saw the final year of the existing Christmas lights contract. This year there were a number of new sites included. With projections on Church Lane, bank street and castle lane, lighting of Belfast Stories, repair and reinstalment of Anne Street icles and Dongeal Place trees.</p> <p>There was some damage incurred to features on Castle Street as a result of Storm Daragh. The provider was engaged in emergency planning protocol and was on site to deal with issues as they occurred, ensuring that the features were removed in a safe and timely mannor.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 78</p>

	<p>As part of the ongoing development aligned to the issue of the new festive lighting scheme tender officers are working closely with City Hall to ensure alignment in scheme designs and also with the BIDs on business engagement opportunities aligned to scheme development. The tender will run over a total 5 year period and will provide for ongoing development and agility within the scheme that is cognisant of the city lighting strategy and makes recommendations for additional infrastructure to support this.</p> <p>Officers are currently working in partnership with the estates team on the development of new wayleave agreements to come into ownership of BCC as these were previously managed by BCCM.</p> <p>Officers recognise the importance of a partnership approach with the successful appointee and look to developing a future festive lighting masterplan and associated infrastructure planning.</p>
3.5	<p><b>Christmas Market 2024</b></p> <p>The Christmas Market was a huge success this year again and ran from Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December. Markets Officers worked with BCC Events team on the opening of the market and the light switch-on which took place on the same day. Market Place Europe Limited (MPEL) has held the Continental Markets contract for the past 19 years and have been awarded the contract for in total 3+2 years.</p> <p>This year the market attracted over a million visitors and was a celebration of 20 years of the Belfast Christmas Market, to celebrate there were a number of Dickensian themed weekends when all the staff and traders dressed up as Characters from Dickens novels.</p> <p>This year there was a larger seating and food court area and an enhanced Christmas experience with themed and animated walkways. There were over 100 stalls, this included 40% local traders and 60% continental traders. As always there was a Santa's Grotto supporting the Lord Mayors Charity and a return of free school educational tours. MPEL also ran the Jolly Big Business Boost competition and offered a free chalet to a young business selling dog products. When the Continental Market trades at the front of the city hall the footfall increases into St Georges Market and throughout the city centre. The Christmas Market and the local Christmas offer in St George's trade side by side very successfully. MPEL gave a free pitch to St George's Market traders this year again.</p>
3.6	<p><b>Financial and Resource Implications</b></p> <p>All expenditure was within existing departmental budgets and approvals.</p>
3.7	<p><b>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>None.</p>

4.0	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None.



**Belfast**  
City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b><u>Cultural Strategy – Participatory Budgeting <i>Bank of Ideas</i></u></b>
<b>Date:</b>	05 February 2025
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Damien Martin, Strategic Director Place and Economy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Chris McCreery – Cultural Development Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>													
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>												
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>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</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>													
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 5%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 35%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>		After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>		Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>		Never	<input type="checkbox"/>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>												
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>												
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>												
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>												

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To provide an update to the Committee on the proposed opening of Cultural Participatory Budgeting scheme – Bank of Ideas – as a core part of the engagement delivery for the Cultural Strategy <i>A City Imagining</i> workplan 2025/26.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Note the contents of this report and agree to open the Cultural Participatory Budgeting scheme “<i>Bank of Ideas</i>” on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025 as part of the core delivery of the cultural strategy workplan for 2025/26.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b><u>Background and context</u></b></p> <p>As part of Belfast 2024 Creative Me Programme, a participatory budgeting scheme was created to fund creative ideas from individuals and groups across the city. This scheme, called The Bank of Ideas, awarded £50,000, divided equally between ideas for North, South, East, West, and the City Centre. Residents within a community could submit their creative ideas for funding. The projects were then voted on by residents to allow the allocation of funding.</p>
<b>3.2</b>	<p><b><u>The rationale for the project</u></b></p> <p>The pilot Bank of Ideas programme delivered on a range of priorities within the cultural strategy. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a more accessible way for individuals and un-constituted groups to access funding and participate in cultural activity by proposing and delivering creative ideas in their local area.</li> <li>• The funding provides a ‘stepping stones’ approach for those who do not have capacity yet to access grants, with a focus on capacity building to enable groups/individuals to build skills needed to develop creative work and access funding in the future. This grassroots approach allows for the avoidance of duplication whilst adding value to existing small grants ecosystem.</li> <li>• The participatory nature of allocating the funds through a decision-making public vote meant that residents of Belfast became co-curators of the Belfast 2024 programme. This increased ownership over the definition of ‘creativity’ and therefore enhanced sense of belonging, civic pride and agency.</li> </ul>
<b>3.3</b>	<p><b><u>Impact of the programme</u></b></p> <p>The 2024 Bank of Ideas project funded 28 projects, with over 4,842 people involved in the total project number. Additionally, 2,253 people cast votes in the process. The average award under the Bank of Ideas was £2,000.</p>

<p><b>3.4</b></p> <p><b>3.5</b></p> <p><b>3.6</b></p>	<p><u>Capacity building and City-wide reach</u></p> <p>The capacity building and idea generating phase of the fund involved 26 idea generating workshops and drop-in sessions across Belfast to help people come up with and develop their ideas. These sessions took place across the city in informal, approachable settings such as local cafes, community centres and arts centres. This led to an application process and then a voting date run in City Hall where citizens voted on the projects they wanted to see funded.</p> <p>Post award the capacity building elements continued with additional sessions aimed to bringing people together and supporting capacity building, sharing information on other funding sources, how to become constituted, audience development and collaboration. This was available for all applicants and not just those who were successful.</p> <p>The breakdown of voters across the city is detailed below:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="568 801 1121 1178"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area of the City</th><th>Votes Cast</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>North</td><td>475</td></tr> <tr> <td>South</td><td>390</td></tr> <tr> <td>East</td><td>505</td></tr> <tr> <td>West</td><td>296</td></tr> <tr> <td>City Centre</td><td>587</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>2,253</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Recognition</u></p> <p>There has been recognition for the success of the Bank of Ideas project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belfast 2024 lead on Bank of Idea's is participating in the Design Team for the next phase of Belfast Health Development Unit's Participatory Budgeting on the theme of wellbeing.</li> <li>• The Place and Tourism Manager in Fife Council, Scotland has approached Belfast 2024 team to share best practice and support the delivery of their own Participatory Budgeting fund based on the work we have developed.</li> <li>• Belfast City Council have been shortlisted for 18th International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) Best Practice in Citizen Participation Award and are speaking at the IOPD Conference in October 2024. From that conference, officers from Reykjavik who were also presenting on Participatory Budgeting are planning to visit Belfast in early Spring to explore participatory democracy practices and intercultural projects.</li> </ul>	Area of the City	Votes Cast	North	475	South	390	East	505	West	296	City Centre	587	Total	2,253
Area of the City	Votes Cast														
North	475														
South	390														
East	505														
West	296														
City Centre	587														
Total	2,253														

<p><b>3.7</b></p>	<p><b>Key learnings from the 2024 pilot</b></p> <p>There are a number of key learnings from the original pilot which will be taken forward into phase 2 delivery in 2025/26. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical realisation of the Cultural Strategy delivery – voting and engagement fosters a sense of belonging, the ideas generation supports creativity and innovation. The programme is created, delivered, and decided by the people of Belfast enabling active participation and promoting active citizenship.</li> <li>• Participatory budgeting as a method for decision making delivers increased transparency and supports active citizenship by giving residents the power to make decisions on the activity they want to see in the city.</li> <li>• Viable grant making process, significant numbers of projects came forward ranging from small community-based events to skills and storytelling projects.</li> <li>• The scheme has funded a range of groups across a number of diverse sectors; such as PUL (Spectrum Centre), disability-led groups (Black Moon), BAME groups (Belfast Massage Project)</li> <li>• Ideas generation workshops facilitated the production of new work, building of new collaborations between groups and individuals and led to wide impact throughout the city.</li> <li>• The Participatory Budgeting process builds trust in council while promoting the cultural strategy- this is an access point for communities and individuals who may not necessarily see themselves as being part of cultural activity in the city and to engage with culture and creativity - contributing to the realisation of the Cultural Strategy.</li> <li>• Proportionality of process must be balanced with managing risk and prudent project delivery including eligibility, reputation, and financial management. Following feedback, this phase of the project will now include an additional eligibility check and declaration process as part of the project initiation process.</li> <li>• To ensure the engagement and delivery is of the highest standard significant resource requirement in terms of staff time and capacity is needed and sufficient promotion including social media.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.8</b></p>	<p><b><u>Contributions to council objectives</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The projects during the first phase of Bank of Ideas contributed to a range of council objectives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wellbeing - Chill with Gill Yoga with Suicide Awareness, Wonder Bubble Magic, Dreamer's Space GROW Community Garden &amp; Cavehill Conservation</li> <li>○ Young people &amp; Older People - Lower Oldpark Community Association Children's Community Library &amp; Bookclub, The Meadow Heart Mosaic Project at Bog Meadows, Spectrum Centre Young People's Assume Rascal's Art Explosion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



- Good Relations – Cosmopolitan Cooking Club by Forward South, Cregagh and Woodstock Diversity Carnival, Ballynafest Community Fair
- Placemaking – Sailortown Regeneration: A Brush with History, East Belfast Late Night Art
- Climate outcomes - The Wee Swap event for children's clothes and toys, Bee Wildflowers seedbomb making
- Good Relations – Cosmopolitan Cooking Club by Forward South, Cregagh and Woodstock Diversity Carnival, Ballynafest Community Fair
- Accessibility – Black Moon Accessible Pop Up Picnic Party, Between Galaxies Theatre Show for Children with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

### 3.9 Recommendation for 2025-26 Financial year

The delivery of Bank of Idea's 2024 closed in November 2024. It is recommended that the Bank of Idea's as a participatory budgeting model continues in 2025-2026 as part of the core delivery of the cultural strategy workplan and commitments to engagement with citizens via strategic priorities.

After consultation with the sector there is an evident appetite for the project and to see it continue. This was a new pilot project for Belfast 2024 and much of the work done this year was an investment in developing the process which can be replicated.

In order to implement a second run of the Bank of Ideas in 2025 to a similar timeline, the planning process would need to begin Spring 2025 (detail on timeline below). This aligns with how other small grants run on an annual basis – the planning, guidance and application stage is open before the new financial year, under the caveat that it is subject to budget approval by committee for the new financial year.

### 3.10 Proposed budget

The proposed budget for the programme is similar to the pilot programme delivered in 2024. The budget is broken down as follows:

Financial Year	Budget Heading	Budget Description	Amount
2025-26	Initiation of 2025 Bank of Idea's – Design phase	Design team, application development and Support Workshops	£2,000

			for ideation in advance of process	
	2025-26	Capacity building	Venue hire across city for yearlong workshops, accessibility and facilitation support for applicants and projects, consultation with external community and arts organisations city wide, design work	£4,500
	2025-26	Voting Day	Voting Day Event Costs – potential to do 2 events next year as current year was at capacity for City Hall	£7,000
	2025-26	Final Evaluation and Celebration event	Exhibition creation and evaluation costs	£3,000
	Total Design and Implementation Budget			£16,500
	2025-26	Funding Pot	50,000 (10k per area, minimum 5 projects)	£50,000
	Total funding			£66,500

### 3.11

#### Timeline

To ensure that funds would be received by awardees for delivery of projects in Summer/Autumn 2025, the following timeline would be required:

Date	Details
Feb 2025	Committee sign off in February 2025 Development of process to reopen including changes to application, schedule of workshops created and voting day event developed
19th March 2025	Applications Open – series of workshops delivered over these weeks to support idea generation
6th May 2025	Applications Close (After the bank holiday)
10 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Criteria Check and feedback to applicants

	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2025	Voting Day – City Hall	
	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Secondary eligibility check carried out re Declaration Risk check, results sent out. This is an Additional element of the process following learnings from the pilot project.	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2025	Letters of offer issued.	
	4 <sup>th</sup> August 2025	1 <sup>st</sup> Payments	
	August – Oct	Projects delivered	
	November	Celebration Event in November after all projects delivered	
<b>4.0</b>	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>		
	Funding for this project will be met from the recurrent budget for Cultural Development subject to Committee approval and confirmation of departmental budgets for 2025-26. Payments and costs won't be incurred until the new financial year.		
<b>4.1</b>	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>		
	The Cultural Strategy - <i>A City Imagining</i> - carried out an extensive EQIA covering the duration of the strategy 2020-2030. The Council's Culture team have a dedicated, full time and permanent Engagement Officer focussed on accessing a wide range of marginalised groups to co-design an extensive Engagement Programme which has fed directly into the development and delivery of the Belfast 2024 programme.		
<b>5.0</b>	<b><u>Appendices - Documents Attached</u></b>		
	There are no appendices for this report.		

This page is intentionally left blank