

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



**Belfast
City Council**

21st August, 2026

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall, and remotely via MS Teams on Wednesday, 26th August, 2026 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) Vacant to Vibrant Programme (Pages 1 - 20)
- (b) Financial Reporting - Quarter 4 2025/26 (Pages 21 - 28)

3. Correspondence

- (a) Minister for Infrastructure Response - York Street Pedestrianisation (Pages 29 - 32)
- (b) Department for Communities Response - Basic Income for Artists Scheme (Pages 33 - 38)

4. **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

- (a) Visit Belfast - Renewal of the Sharing Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast (Pages 39 - 40)

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

- (a) Pedestrianisation in Belfast City Centre (Councillor McKeown to raise)

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



Subject:	Minister for Infrastructure Correspondence in relation to York Street
Date:	26 August 2026
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	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

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide the Committee with the response received from the Minister for Infrastructure in relation to York Street, Belfast
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to: - Note the response received from the Minister for Infrastructure in relation to pedestrianisation within the York Street area.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	At the April 2026 City Growth & Regeneration Committee meeting Members agreed to; • write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request that consideration be given to the pedestrianisation of spaces within the York Street area
3.2	A response was received from the Minister for Infrastructure on the 30th June, as attached Appendix A. The Minister outlines that during a consultation process which ran from 14 September 2022 to 6 October 2022 a number of objections were received to the proposed amendments to the street layout including restricting vehicular movements and enhancing pedestrian movements. The Minister outlines that following further on-site inspections the Department have determined that pedestrian movements were managed effectively on York Street by the existing infrastructure.
3.3	The Minister further highlights that the Eastern Transport Plan will consider the future of York Street, taking into account the Civic Spine and A Bolder Vision, with Officials happy to meet with Council to ensure that a holistic approach to the area is realised.
4.0	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> There are no financial or resource implications associated with this paper.
5.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no Equality, Good Relations Implications or Rural Needs Assessment for Council associated with this paper.
6.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix A – Minister for Infrastructure Correspondence – York Street

From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
LIZ KIMMINS MLA

Craig Mealey
Committee Services Officer

MealeyC@belfastcity.gov.uk

Private Office
3rd Floor, James House
Gasworks Site
2 - 4 Cromac Street
Belfast
BT7 2JA
Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference:
Our reference: COR-X-2026
30 June 2026

Craig, a chara,

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL'S CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE – YORK STREET, BELFAST

Thank you for the letter of 26 May 2026, in which you forward a question on York Street, Belfast, raised by a member of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee after receiving an update on the 'A Bolder Vision' for Belfast Strategy.

In response to concerns regarding pedestrian and vehicular movements around the expansion of the university campus in York Street the department had proposed introducing a number of measures that included:

- prohibiting all vehicles other than buses, cycles and disabled persons' vehicles from part of York Street;
- prohibiting vehicles waiting at any time (loading and unloading permitted) on lengths of Curtis Street, Belfast and suspend pay and display parking places at the same location; and
- provide parking places with unlimited waiting for disabled persons' vehicles on lengths of York Street and suspend the pay and display parking places at the same location

During the consultation process which ran from 14 September 2022 to 6 October 2022 the department received several objections / representations.

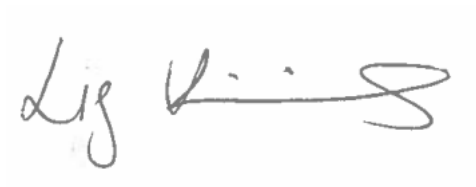
On reviewing these objections and after on-site inspections it was observed that the pedestrian movements across York Street were managed effectively by the existing infrastructure and that on-street parking levels did not significantly change post the university opening.

As you will be aware the Department is currently developing the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035. The city centre elements of the ETP are at the most advanced stage and will be issued for public consultation in the coming weeks.

The ETP will set the framework for transport investment decisions up to 2035 across the eastern region, including Belfast City. This plan will consider the future of the York Street area including taking account of the civic spine aspirations for the area contained within the 'A Bolder Vision' for Belfast.

I am also aware that Belfast City Council has plans in the area and feel that York Street would be better served by its inclusion within a more comprehensive strategy. Officials will be happy to meet as future delivery of the ETP is taken forward to ensure that a holistic approach to the area is realised.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Kimmins', written on a light blue background.

LIZ KIMMINS MLA
Minister for Infrastructure



Belfast
City Council

CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Subject:	Department for Communities Response - Motion Calling for the NI Executive to Introduce a Basic Income for Artists Scheme
Date:	21st August 2026
Reporting Officer:	Lesley-Ann O'Donnell - Senior Manager Culture, Tourism and Events Rachael Campbell-Palmer - Culture Development Manager
Contact Officer:	Craig Mealey – Committee Services Officer

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

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update the Committee on correspondence received from the Department for Communities in response to a motion passed by the Council in March, 2026, calling for the Northern Ireland Executive to introduce a basic income for artists scheme.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the response received from the Department for Communities.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	At its meeting on 2nd March, 2026, the Council passed the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor Doherty, seconded by Councillor de Faoite and amended by Councillor Groogan: “This Council notes that: The arts, culture and creative sectors are central to Belfast’s social fabric, wellbeing, identity, and local economy. Many artists, performers and creative workers in Belfast and across the North continue to experience insecure, low and irregular incomes, worsened by the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and the ongoing cost of living crisis. The Irish Government introduced a Basic Income for Artists pilot in 2022, providing an unconditional weekly payment to artists and creative workers, which has been independently evaluated as improving financial stability, wellbeing, and time spent on creative practice. The Irish Government has now committed to making this scheme permanent, recognising the structural precarity faced by those working in the creative industries. This Council believes that: • The arts and culture are for everyone and government policy should ensure the widest possible participation, inclusion and engagement with the sector; • Artists and creative workers should not be forced out of their professions due to financial insecurity or have to rely on other employment, detracting from their time and ability to create, in order to survive; • Belfast’s creative sector is a vital public good, contributing to community cohesion, regeneration, tourism, public health including mental health and wellbeing, youth engagement and cultural life; • A Basic Income for Artists scheme in the north would help protect creative livelihoods, retain local talent, and strengthen the city’s cultural

	ecosystem. Evidence from the Irish scheme has proven that a Basic Income for Artists is an investment that pays back to the economy and society more than it costs, through increased expenditure, increased productivity and less reliance on other welfare payments. This scheme will help to reduce barriers to people who are from working class, global majority and/or those who are working at a disadvantage, ensuring diversity and inclusion within the creative industries. This Council resolves to: • Call on the Executive to legislate for and fund a Basic Income for Artists scheme, providing regular, unconditional income support to eligible artists and creative workers. This scheme should be permanent, include all eligible artists and creative workers and be provided indefinitely while they remain eligible for the scheme. • Request that the Minister for Communities lead on the development of this scheme, in partnership with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Department for the Economy and the Department of Finance. The Minister should work directly with artists, arts organisations and those working in the creative industries to design and set the terms of the scheme and eligibility based on local needs and experience; and • Write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister urging that this proposal be treated as a priority within the Executive's Programme for Government and budget-setting process."
3.2	Accordingly, Democratic Services wrote to the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and the Minister for Communities.
3.3	A response has now been received from the Department for Communities and is set out within Appendix A of this report.
4.0	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> There are no financial or resource implications associated with this paper.
5.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> There are no Equality, Good Relations Implications or Rural Needs Assessment for Council associated with this paper.
6.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix A – Department for Communities Response – Motion Calling for the NI Executive to Introduce a Basic Income for Artists Scheme

This page is intentionally left blank

From: The Private Secretary

Louise McLornan
Committee Services Officer
Legal and Civic Services Department, Belfast City Council
City Hall,
Belfast

Via email: mclornanl@belfastcity.gov.uk

Dear Louise,

CALL FOR THE NI EXECUTIVE TO INTRODUCE A BASIC INCOME FOR ARTISTS SCHEME

Thank you for your correspondence of 11 March 2026 to Minister Lyons regarding Belfast City Council's motion to call for the Northern Ireland Executive to introduce a Basic Income for Artists scheme. He has asked that I reply on his behalf.

The Minister fully recognises, understands, and values the work of artists and the vital contribution they make to the quality of life of people across Northern Ireland. He recognises the need for additional support for the arts and has been very clear about his commitment to strengthening the level of public funding provided to the sector. He has also been clear in his commitment to widening participation in the arts and ensuring that opportunities are extended to those from traditionally underrepresented communities.

These priorities will be central to the new arts policy being developed through the Department's Heritage, Culture and Creativity Programme. This work will address the current policy gap, strengthen the evidence base, and support the case for increased

investment, including from beyond the Executive. While future funding will depend on the Executive's overall budget, as Minister, he will continue to press for greater support for the arts and wider cultural activity.

However, in terms of a basic income for the arts model, the position is that there is no provision within the Executive's budget to establish a comparable scheme here, and there are no plans at this time to replicate it.

The Department appreciates the Council's interest in this issue and your commitment to supporting artists, and I hope that this information has been helpful.

Yours sincerely



Louise Anderson
Private Secretary
Department for Communities



Subject:	Visit Belfast - Renewal of the Sharing Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast
Date:	26 August 2026
Reporting Officer:	Keith Forster, Director Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Lesley-Ann O'Donnell, Senior Manager Culture and Tourism Pièr Morrow, Tourism and Events Development Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes ☐ No ☒
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	☐
After Council Decision	☐
Some time in the future	☐
Never	☐

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes ☒ No ☐

1.0	Purpose of Report
	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee for the renewal of the Partnership Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area at Belfast Welcome Centre.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to: Approve the renewal of the Partnership Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre at 8-9 Donegall Square North, up to 31 March 2029.

3.0	Main report
3.1	Key Issue Approval of renewal of the Sharing Agreement with Translink and Visit Belfast for the operation of a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre at 8-9 Donegall Square North up to 31 March 2026.
3.2	There has been a partnership agreement in place since 2017 with Translink and Visit Belfast to operate a ticketing area within Belfast Welcome Centre. The agreement is due for renewal for a further three years, the extension of which will ensure that there is continued ticketing services being provided at this key location in Belfast and Translink has indicated it wishes to continue to provide that service.
3.3	Subject to Members approval, officers will work to make the relevant modifications to the lease agreement if required; and the Sharing Agreement with Translink will be renewed.
3.4	<u>Financial and Resources Implications</u> No financial implications – Visit Belfast funding is subject to an annual funding agreement from recurrent budget.
3.5	<u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None associated with this report.
4.0	Document Attached
4.1	None