

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 11th November, 2015

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Howard (Deputy Chairperson in the Chair);  
Aldermen Kingston and McGimpsey; and  
Councillors Attwood, Beattie, Craig,  
Dudgeon, Graham, Kyle, Lyons,  
McAteer, McDonough-Brown,  
Ó Donnghaile, O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. P. Williams, Director of Planning and Place;  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported from the Chairperson, Councillor Hargey, and Alderman Stalford.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 14th October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 2nd November.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Presentation**

#### **Titanic Foundation**

The Committee was advised that Mrs. K. Sweeney, CEO of Titanic Foundation Ltd., Mr. T. Husbands, CEO of Titanic Belfast Ltd., and Mr. J. Eyre, Commercial Director of Titanic Quarter Ltd. were in attendance and they were admitted to the meeting.

The Chief Executive of the Titanic Foundation provided the Committee with an overview of the success which Titanic Belfast had achieved since it opened in March 2012, at a cost of £76million. She outlined to the Committee that it had exceeded its target of selling 400,000 ticket sales per year and had sold, on average, over 700,000 each year. Members were also advised that it had exceeded its goal of receiving over 150,000 out of state visitors each year and that the ticket sales from the Republic of Ireland had exceeded this target each year alone. She highlighted that 71% of tickets sold had been to visitors from outside of Northern Ireland and that, as a result, there had

been a sustained uplift of 28% in the number of out of state visitors to Belfast since Titanic Belfast had opened. The Committee was also advised that, in addition to the main galleries within Titanic Belfast, the building had also hosted a number of exhibitions, banquets and conferences and that 2.7million visitors had been through the building since it had opened.

During discussion, a number of Members congratulated the deputation on exceeding almost all of their targets. A Member asked the representatives from Titanic Belfast whether they felt there would be adequate scope for another major tourist attraction in Belfast. The Chief Executive of Titanic Belfast stated that they would welcome at least one other major attraction in Belfast, particularly in the city centre, in order to encourage visitors to move around the city.

In response to a Members question regarding marking the First World War, Mrs. Sweeney explained that, as the Titanic Quarter had played a significant role in the war, they were engaging with the National Museum of the Royal Navy with regards to commemorating the battle of Jutland but that this was in the early stages. She also stated that they were working with the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) on a programme, potentially linking it with a maritime festival.

A Member sought clarification on whether the Council had a role in the Board of Directors for Titanic Belfast as one of the original funders. The Chief Executive of the Titanic Foundation explained that they reported back to funders through quarterly stakeholder meetings, and that the Council's former Director of Development had sat as a director on the board. The Committee was advised that there were vacancies on the board and agreed that the Council should be seeking to have Members appointed to the board.

In response to a further Member's question, the Chief Executive of the Titanic Foundation explained the operating model for Titanic Belfast to the Committee and indicated that, since the building had opened, it had received no public subsidy. She outlined that, in addition to being a profitable business, it also funded the charity which owned it, thereby preserving the city's wider maritime heritage.

During discussion, a Member questioned whether the iconic building could be illuminated at night, similar to the City Hall. Mr. T. Husbands explained that they had investigated night-time lighting a few years prior but that the costs quoted had been extremely high. The Chief Executive confirmed to the Members that the City Hall had received European funding for its LED floodlighting system through the ILLUMINATE pilot project, and that they might consider exploring a similar option.

A number of Members expressed their support that Titanic Belfast would continue to engage with schools throughout the city. In response to a Member's question, regarding the 3,000 children who attended Irish language schools in Belfast, the representatives from Titanic Belfast outlined that they had employed an Irish speaker as a guide and also had audio guides available in Irish. The Members also suggested that perhaps the Committee could hold a future Committee meeting in Titanic Belfast.

The deputation left the meeting and Members noted the information which had been provided.

## Regeneration

### City Centre Regeneration

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

(Mr. S. Bedford, Deloitte, attended in connection with this item)

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 12th August, it had considered the Belfast City Centre Retail Positioning Study which had been carried out by Javelin. The Study had outlined that there was significant room for retail growth in Belfast over the next number of years and that Belfast should focus on attracting more aspirational retailers into the City Centre, such as John Lewis Partnership or an equivalent.

The Chief Executive pointed out that the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (CCRIS) had been endorsed by the Council at its meeting on 1st September, 2015, and that a small City Centre Development Team was being established within her department to progress the recommendations and actions within the framework. She advised that, while the team was currently resourced in a temporary capacity, it was intended that this team would be populated with Council employees by early 2016. She advised that a great deal of work had taken place in the background and that, over the next few weeks and months, officers would bring updates on this work to the Committee for its approval.

The Members were advised that, over the last nine months, the Programme had evolved from a handful of projects to around forty separate projects which were now underway within the city centre. The Chief Executive advised that these projects could be broken down into a number of categories, namely, Flagship Projects, Early Wins Programme, Key Sites/Development Areas, Policy Development, Funding and Finance, Infrastructure and Go to Market. She advised that, while the CCRIS had only just come into force, much progress had been made in developing a coherent programme of work which was designed to deliver both in the near future and long term in line with the City's aspirations. She advised Members that the priorities in the coming months would be:

1. To commit some of the City Centre Investment Fund on an appropriate basis to support the strategy, with the first tranche of funding being committed before March 2016;
2. To put in place new more detailed plans and strategies for Linen Quarter, Western Quarter, North East Quarter etc. In regard to both Linen and Western also commit funds to delivery. It was expected that this would be achieved by Spring 2016;

3. Establish clear investment plans for a new cultural/creative centre including a new visitor attraction in Belfast City Centre, the plans for which were expected to be completed by Summer 2016;
4. Work with the Transport Hub Programme Board to deliver a full business case for the Hub project. This should be achieved by Spring 2016.
5. Secure a new scheme for the North East Quarter project and also secure a new anchor department store for Belfast. It was hoped to achieve this by the end of 2016.
6. Deliver a highly successful MIPIM for Belfast in March 2016.
7. Continue to work with the private sector to encourage more investment in Belfast. We already have a number of new 'entrants' to the Belfast market and we would like to encourage more.

After discussion, the Committee noted achievements to date which included:

1. 1,800 new hotel beds were in the planning pipeline, all of which have an operator attached. The hotels would support the Waterfront Hall and increased demand from both visitors and businesses. Hotel occupancy in Belfast was at 80% in 2015, the highest of any UK provincial city.
2. there were 7 planning applications submitted for new office space, two of which would deliver around 200,000 sq ft of new Grade A floor space. There was demand for new space across the market.
3. new retailers were coming to Belfast and, through the work undertaken on behalf of the City Council by Javelin, there was more unsatisfied demand to be accommodated. The Council was working with investors to bring forward schemes to meet this demand; and
4. Student Housing – the Council was working closely with developers and other stakeholders to manage the supply of student housing to try to ensure that the city would have enough to meet demand but not too much. The aim would be to deliver 3-3,500 new student beds in the City Centre by 2018.

#### **Linen Quarter and Inner West Public Realm Analysis and Vision**

(Mrs. L. Toland, Head of Economic and International Development, attended in connection with this item)

The Committee considered the undernoted report, in conjunction with associated maps:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to update Members on work commenced to create additional focus on, and a more integrated planning approach to, the Transport Hub and South Centre and Inner West Special Action Areas (SAA) identified in the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy approved by Council on 1st September.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** Members are asked to:

- 1.** Note the initial findings of the public realm analysis and visioning exercise undertaken for the Linen and Western Quarters within the Transport Hub and South Centre and Inner West SAA;
- 2.** Agree to recommend to Council that a public consultation exercise on the draft Linen Quarter document be undertaken;
- 3.** Agree to recommend to Council that a more detailed economic intervention is developed for Western Quarter prior to public consultation being undertaken for that area;
- 4.** Note that any potential public realm/environmental improvement projects which may emerge and which have potential implications for the City Centre Investment Fund will be reported to a future Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Background**

On 1st September 2015, the Council approved the Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy (BCCRIS). Whilst not a formal planning document, it is a clear direction of travel – setting out the Council’s intention to ensure that Belfast’s City Centre drives growth and social, economic, and environmental well-being for the people of the city and the region.

**3.2** The Strategy is based on the following core principles:

- Increase the employment population
- Increase the residential population
- Manage the retail offer
- Maximise the tourism opportunity
- Create a regional learning and innovation centre

- Create a green, walkable, cyclable centre
- Connect to the city around
- A shared space and social impact

3.3 The Strategy identified five Special Action Areas (SAAs) as being in need of a detailed and integrated planning approach. It was recognised that in these parts of the centre, a phased approach could be taken to preparing more intensive local plans to forward their regeneration in line with the larger ambitions of the Strategy.

3.4 The draft Public Realm Analysis and Vision for Linen Quarter and Western Quarter was commissioned by the Council in June 2015. It concentrates on two of the SAAs, the Transport Hub/South Centre and Inner West. Each area has its own characteristics and opportunities as well as different challenges and demands and, although part of the same commission, two separate documents have been produced in recognition of this. The work has been undertaken by Planit Intelligent Environments, a design practice comprising Landscape Architects, Urban Designers, Visualisers, Animators and Graphic Designers based in Manchester and London.

#### Linen Quarter

3.5 The Linen Quarter is a grid of streets that lies immediately to the south of Belfast City Hall, occupying a strategic position within Belfast City Centre. The boundary encompasses much of the Linen Conservation Area, though not its entirety. The strategic network of main roads as well as the architecture, street pattern and uses have been considered in denoting the boundary shown as a logical edge to the Quarter.

3.6 In recent years, it has become the destination for office development within the city centre and a significant number of local government departments, together with private businesses have chosen this part of the city as their Belfast address. The BBC also has its HQ in the southern part of Linen Quarter. Other complimentary uses have emerged alongside offices including hotels and residential flats and cafes, bars and restaurants which are helping to extend the hours of activity and life across the Quarter and provide a more attractive, convivial environment.

3.7 Change is set to continue with the proposals to introduce a new Transport Hub at Great Victoria Street Station, which will become the destination (and arrival point) for trains from

Dublin as well as a projected increase in public transport use. The position of the Hub, at the edge of the Linen Quarter, represents a significant opportunity to reinforce the role of this area within the city centre.

#### Western Quarter

- 3.8 The Western Quarter sits immediately to the north west of Belfast City Hall with a significant portion being within the City Centre Conservation Area. It is suggested that for the purposes of this analysis, its boundary should include Castle Court shopping centre. Millfield represents a logical boundary to the west, while Donegall Place and Royal Avenue create a natural boundary on the eastern edge.
- 3.9 The Quarter occupies an important position within the city centre and is dominated by retail uses. For the purposes of the study, it is described as a single entity but it contains a number of distinct sub areas: the area around Fountain Street and College Street to the south; the area around Castle Street and Bank Square; and Castle Court and the area to the north. The Linen Quarter lies immediately to the south and the new retail area around the Victoria Square shopping centre; the North East and Cathedral Quarters, are all to the east. The recent development of Victoria Square has shifted the focus for retail across to the east with an impact on the retail offer in Western Quarter.

#### Key Issues

- 3.10 The key objective of the analysis and visioning exercise is to make the Linen Quarter and Western Quarter better, more attractive places, stronger in their own right and recognising their respective characteristics. It is presented as two, draft documents which make proposals which can complement existing development activity to increase the commercial and financial viability of each area. This includes the means by which existing quality buildings can be re-used/re-furbished as well as well as providing a framework for how new development might be evaluated. The documents propose a blueprint that can bring about uplift in quality, in terms of public realm, streetscape and architecture which will realise the standards expected of a leading European city. This includes proposals which contribute to a greener, more walkable, cyclable centre which is a shared space, better connected to the city around.
- 3.11 The draft documents contain an analysis for each Quarter, examining their current form and operation, use and

character. This analysis has led to the development of a series of objectives, intended to set out future potential. It provides a framework to improve the public realm, streetscape and built heritage and overall quality of environment which in turn will influence investment in new business. The documents are defined within the parameters of existing policies and are intended to complement rather than replace them. Should any guidance conflict with statutory guidance then the latter will prevail. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening will be conducted in parallel with the proposed consultation process.

- 3.12 It is proposed that, when approved by the Council, these documents would compliment planning policy that applies to the city and together help to shape its future direction. These include the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP 2015) which is the statutory development plan for the city; Planning Policy Statement 6 Planning, Archaeology and Built Heritage which sets out planning policies for the protection and conservation of the built heritage and BCCRIS which builds upon some of the key objectives of existing policies and sets out a broad vision to regenerate and influence investment in the City Centre

*Issues specific to Western Quarter*

- 3.13 In considering Inner West, the draft Public Realm Analysis and Vision document recognises the role of Castle Street as an important gateway from the west and a direct route into the retail core of the city centre. Although well-used by the community, the retail offer in Castle Street is disappointing and characterised by high levels of vacancy. The document focuses on suggested physical improvements in the area. However BCCRIS recognised that a more comprehensive retail management intervention will be required to rejuvenate the area around Castle Street. An initial approach to how the council might develop such an intervention is suggested in paragraphs 4.5 – 4.8.
- 3.14 Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) is involved in a range of activities to make the city a safe, welcoming and vibrant space. The organisation enters into a funding agreement with Belfast City Council and DSD (and its private sector partners through Belfast Chamber) on an annual basis to carry out these activities. One of the key issues identified in the BCCM plan has been the growing challenge of dealing with vacant properties. BCCM currently undertakes a quarterly vacancy survey of the ground floor properties in

the city centre area. The organisation recently applied to take part in a national campaign called 'Healthy High Streets'. This campaign is coordinated by Business in the Community and is backed by a number of key corporate partners including M&S, Boots, Santander and EE. It aims to support 100 high streets to realise their potential over a three year period by increasing footfall, addressing vacancy issues and restoring pride in town and city centres.

- 3.15 One of the priority projects identified as part of the Belfast action plan is an initiative to address vacancy levels and to increase the volume of independent traders doing business in the city centre. An initial project concept is being developed, through which new craft and design businesses will undertake an intensive support programme that will include a 10 week workshop programme, one to one mentoring to help refine their product and a set time for test trading in a shared retail unit. This will build on a successful model that has already been operating for over a year and that has had some significant success.
- 3.16 While this initial support will help the businesses understand both their product and their customers, there will be a need for them to move on to their own business units and there could be an opportunity to encourage them to establish these businesses in the Castle Street area. Given the challenges in this part of the city, there would be a need for a range of incentives to encourage the businesses to move to those units, as well as investment in issues such as street animation and security issues. Wrap-around business support services could be provided through the council's economic development services and this would enhance business sustainability. This approach would address the vacancy issues in Castle Street, whilst also creating an affordable city centre location for new start up businesses whilst also creating diversity within the local retail offer.
- 3.17 The feasibility of this project will be dependent upon securing funding to purchase and refurbish retail units, as well as the provision of business development support to nurture new start ups and to support the businesses as they grow. In addition, interventions will be required to address anti-social behaviour, deliver public realm improvements and to animate the area. There may also be a need to make a contribution to the 'incubation' activity (which may not necessarily take place in Castle Street) which could provide a significant 'feeder' to the Castle Street/Western Quarter project. Details of this proposed intervention project will be

the subject of a future report to CMT. Accordingly, it is proposed that public consultation on the Western Quarter document be initiated when the intervention project has been developed further.

**Consultation and Engagement**

- 3.18 Subject to the Draft Public Realm Analysis and Vision for Linen Quarter being endorsed by Committee and ratified by Council, it is intended that we will undertake a public consultation exercise at the end 2015/early 2016 which will facilitate further opportunities to shape the document before it is finalised. We will also undertake additional Equality Impact and Strategic Environmental Assessment screenings in parallel with the consultation process. It is on this basis that Members are asked to endorse the draft proposals set out in the document and approve it for public consultation in parallel with any other impact assessments as necessary.
- 3.19 In addition to providing a framework to improve the public realm, streetscape and built heritage and overall quality of environment in Western Quarter, it is recognised that a more comprehensive economic/retail management intervention will be required to rejuvenate the area around Castle Street. It is therefore proposed that public consultation on the Western Quarter document be initiated when the intervention project has been developed further.

**Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 3.20 Equality and good relations screening will be conducted in parallel with the proposed consultation processes.

**Resource Implications**

- 3.21 The cost of potential public realm/environmental improvement projects or economic intervention projects which may emerge, and which have potential implications for the City Centre Investment Fund, will be reported to a future Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.”

During discussion, a Member expressed concern that there were many ‘quarters’ appearing within the city and the Chief Executive emphasised that this was merely for descriptive purposes and that the Western and Linen ‘quarters’ were two of a number of areas which the Council was seeking to regenerate and link to the city centre. It was agreed that the street names would be added to the maps for future presentations to the Committee. A number of other changes were suggested in respect of the Linen Quarter document which would be taken on board.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Belfast One Bid - Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the outcome of the ballot for the Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID) and identify the implications of the decision in the context of existing funding commitments and priority actions arising from the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy.**

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- Note the outcome of the Belfast One BID ballot, announced on 30 October 2015
- Note the potential implications of the BID decision on the Council's wider ambitions to support the development of the city centre
- Agree to receive a report on the potential implications for BCCM at the next meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, in the context of the issues raised in section 3.4 of this report.

#### **3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Members may be aware that the Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID) Ballot declared a yes vote on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015. The turnout for the vote was around 29% (a 25% turnout was required) and around 84% of those voting in the ballot voted in favour of the BID (at least 50% of voters required to vote yes).**

**3.2 The BID estimates that it will have around £1.1million available for spending on a range of city centre activities each year. At present, the draft business plan indicates that the expenditure breakdown will be as follows:**

- Marketing and promotion – 45% of budget (around £500,000 per annum)
- Enhancing service delivery – 35% of budget (just under £400,000 per annum)
- Business support activity – 20% of budget (over £200,000 per annum)

- 3.3 Legally, the BID team was not in a position to finalise its business plan until the yes vote was secured. Now that this has happened, the team will be working towards the development of an agreed business plan for the year. The BID will become operational from 1st April 2016.
- 3.4 This now presents the Council with a range of operational and strategic decisions that it needs to consider. These include:
- Dealing with existing funding arrangements with a number of organisations (particularly Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) and Visit Belfast) and the impact of the additional resources available through the BID on the activities previously undertaken by these organisations
  - Operational commitments of the council with regard to the BID, particularly around the issue of levy collection (which is the responsibility of the council, according to the legislation)
  - Potential for the Council to be represented on the BID Board
  - Engagement mechanisms with city centre businesses – given that the BID area represents a significant proportion of the city centre core
  - How the council can deal with businesses currently located outside of the BID's area but still within the city centre core
  - How the council should prepare for the possible introduction of another BID in the Cathedral Quarter area – with further BIDs likely to follow in coming years (e.g. in Linen Quarter and in Dublin Road/University Road area)
  - How the work of the BID can sit alongside the work on City Positioning, focusing on how to ensure consistency of message while avoiding duplication of activity.

#### Key Issues

- 3.5 Members should note that the BID exists to fund additional activity, i.e. those activities which are beyond the statutory services, and basic level of resourcing required to ensure that the city centre functions and that core services are delivered. While some work has been undertaken to look at the baselines for frontline services (e.g. cleansing, waste management), there is much more work required to look at

the current baseline for services such as city promotion, festival and events.

- 3.6 The Belfast One area covers many but not all of the businesses currently located within the Belfast City Centre Management boundary. The council currently provides core funding to that organisation for delivery of a range of services, as set out in its annual business plan. Consideration will need to be given to the implications for BCCM, given that the BID will now be responsible for many of the services that it currently provides to a significant proportion of city centre businesses. Currently, BCCM receives £190,000 from the council (and around £170,000 from DSD). The organisation has indicated that it will need funding from the council, DSD and other partners in order to secure its future. The funding will be used to maintain BCCM and to undertake additional work such as BID development activity outside the Belfast One boundary and support for business liaison services outside the Belfast One area. A report on the implications for BCCM – along with details of the funding request and an outline of proposed services – will be presented to the next meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee for decision.
- 3.7 Likewise, the council supports Visit Belfast to attract visitors to the city. A significant amount of the annual budget provided by the council to Visit Belfast is used on marketing and promotional activity. Given the potential for overlap with the work of the BID – as well as the significant opportunity for collaboration – it will be important to look at roles and resources, identify areas of synergy and avoid duplication. This work will also need to take account of the emerging City Positioning work. It will be critical to get buy-in from the BID to the work that is underway and to support its implementation – particularly given the focus on the investment and tourism markets, where there should be significant alignment between the City Positioning work and the activity of the BID.
- 3.8 Although the BID is led by the private sector, it is likely that the council will be asked to have representation – at both officer and elected member level. Consideration will need to be given to whether this is appropriate and, if so, who the relevant representatives should be from the council, taking account of the wide range of council activities impacting on the work of the BID.
- 3.9 Members will also be aware that, following the success of this BID, there is another BID application that is at an

advanced stage, namely the BID for Cathedral Quarter ('Destination CQ'). The planned date for the CQ ballot is April 2015 and, if successful, the BID will become operational from late 2016. Although the business plan development work is under way at present, it is anticipated that there will be a number of similar themes to those identified in the Belfast One area. The Destination CQ BID is expected to raise around £300,000 annually. In addition, BCCM have identified that they plan to progress a number of new BIDs in the coming year, namely in Linen Quarter and in Dublin Road/University Road area. At present, indications suggest that BCCM is likely to undertake the back office support services for the Belfast One BID and it considers that it could provide a similar support service to future BIDs.

#### Resource Implications

- 3.10 It is estimated that the Belfast One BID may raise £1.1 million per year while the Destination CQ BID is likely to raise £300,000 each year.

#### Equality and Good Relations Implications

- 3.11 No specific equality or good relations implications."

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Economic Impact of City Centre Projects

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **"1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The Committee has highlighted the importance of ensuring that the city centre connects to surrounding communities and that the entire city benefits from investment in the city centre.
- 1.2 Council officers have been working with officials from the Department for Employment and Learning, Department for Social Development and Ulster University to articulate the benefits arising from the expansion of the Ulster University campus in the city and to help establish a credible baseline from which action plans can be developed.
- 1.3 To assist with this process, the UU Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) has mapped the opportunities arising from the University's campus development in the city centre. The mapping exercise considers not only the campus itself

but also the 'catalyst' role that it plays in attracting in other investment from the public and private sectors. It articulates the scale and scope of the opportunity and sets the starting point for the development of an action plan to look at how local communities can benefit from the developments.

**1.4 The purpose of this report is to:**

- Outline the methodology used and look at some of the key findings arising
- Consider whether it may be appropriate to replicate this methodology to other parts of the city centre, in order to identify the regeneration potential and identify the actions required to help communities capitalise on this growth.

**Recommendations**

**2.1 Members are asked to:**

- Note the draft report, including the key findings around the implications of the investment
- Consider whether the methodology used in the report development should be extended to identify the economic opportunities arising from key physical projects across the wider city centre area, with a view to developing a coherent action plan as to how communities can benefit from the opportunities arising.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Members will be aware of the significant level of development planned for the city centre and the north of the city. As a key project in the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, the Ulster University city centre campus represents a capital £250 million investment. The development is due to open in 2018 with 15,000 students and staff attending. As well as the physical development of the campus, this will bring social, economic and cultural benefits to this part of the city and beyond.**

**3.2 The university is not the only development that will take place in this part of the city. Other developments are also planned for the surrounding area, including Queen's Quay, Northside, North Foreshore, Girdwood etc. Collectively, these developments represent a significant opportunity for the city in terms of employment creation, city animation and opportunities to grow the residential population in the city**

centre. For those communities that live closest to the development, while the scale of the opportunity may be apparent to some, for others, there is a view that they will never be able to access any of the opportunities arising or that the development will have a detrimental impact on their neighbourhood. In the area of north Belfast adjacent to the university, 60% of residents live in the 30% most deprived areas of Northern Ireland.

- 3.3 The Ulster University Economic Policy Centre have worked with representatives from DEL, DSD, Belfast City Council, Ulster University and the North Belfast Economic Forum (representatives from the Neighbourhood Renewal Forums in north Belfast) to map the direct and indirect opportunities arising from the University and other developments including City Quays, Northside, Streets Ahead Phase 3, North Foreshore, Crumlin Road Gaol and Courthouse and Girdwood.
- 3.4 It is important to note that, already, around 15% of jobs in Belfast are located within half a mile radius of the University campus and 4 out of 10 existing jobs in Belfast are within a mile of the campus. The vast majority of these jobs are professional services, retail and finance and this is also the case in the surrounding north Belfast area.
- 3.5 While the physical capital build is expected to have a total GVA impact of £160 million there will also be a more sustainable economic and employment impact through the university's purchase of goods and services. This expenditure will be recurring annually. The challenge identified is how to ensure that the impact of this expenditure is maximised in the local area – while ensuring that there is a focus on social cohesion, given the significant influx of the student population and other employees. Details of key economic impacts are set out below:

**Construction Impact**

<b>Total capital expenditure</b>	<b>£254m</b>
<b>GVA impact</b>	
<b>Direct</b>	<b>£80m</b>
<b>Indirect</b>	<b>£80m</b>
<b>Total GVA impact</b>	<b>£160m</b>
<b>Employment Impact (job years)</b>	
<b>Direct</b>	<b>1,892</b>
<b>Indirect</b>	<b>1,892</b>
<b>Total employment impact</b>	<b>3,784</b>

Source: EPC

**Annual Purchase of goods and services**

	£'000
<b>Purchases</b>	<b>54,352</b>
<b>GVA impact</b>	<b>16,920</b>
<b>Jobs impact</b>	<b>497</b>

Source: UU Financial statements EPC

- 3.6 Opportunities will also be created through student purchasing power. UUEPC economists estimate that student expenditure based at the campus could total £94m per annum which in turn could support over 500 jobs in local businesses – particularly in groceries, leisure and clothing. The report also identifies the cluster of planning applications around the campus which could result in an estimated 5,002 jobs principally jobs in the hotel, office, retail, hospitality sectors. The key will be to ensure that the local community is skilled up and in a position to avail of the opportunities emerging in the area. This information will therefore be important in shaping future support for the area.**
- 3.7 These developments will significantly transform the city and the opportunities available to local communities. This report demonstrates the scale of opportunity, not just in terms of the direct opportunities through the physical development but the importance of the indirect and perhaps more sustainable opportunities that such physical projects can catalyse.**
- 3.8 This mapping exercise is currently being considered by the North Belfast Economic Forum and the Ulster University Greater Belfast Development Strategic Advisory Forum (SAF). Actions will be developed to maximise the benefits of the developments for the local community. However, there is potential for this methodology to be rolled out for other key city centre projects to ensure that the benefits are captured and used to plan future programmes and support for communities, given the synergies that will apply.**
- 3.9 Financial and Resource Implications**

**Members will be aware that the Council is represented on the Board of the UU Economic Policy Centre and agreed to contribute £25,000 per annum for a 2 year period which would enable Council to access support for pieces of work such as this. There is the opportunity for Council to take forward this work as part of this relationship.**

### **3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**Equality and good relations issues will be considered as part of any action planning process to take forward this research.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

#### **DSD Funding Offer - Streetscape works to Rosemary/Lombard Street area**

(Mr. T. Martin, Head of Building Control, attended in connection with this item.)

The Head of Building Control reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 22nd April, it had given permission for the Service to engage with the Department of Social Development (DSD) to investigate working together, as it had done previously, in two areas within the city centre, namely Castle Street and the Rosemary Street/Lombard Street area.

The Head of Building Control advised members that the DSD had now offered the Council £320,000 to resurface and clean the general area in Rosemary Street/Lombard Street. The Committee was advised that the contract was planned to commence at the end of January 2016 with a contract period of 4-5, months with the intention that the money would be spent by the end of March 2016 but that the DSD had confirmed that an overrun of 3 months would be acceptable due to delays in commencing the work. The Head of Building Control also advised that the DSD had allocated an additional £15,000 to cover the costs for Council officers involved in the project and, as such, there would be no cost to the Council.

The Members were advised that initial discussions had taken place with Planning Officers regarding the design and finishes of the project and that these had been positive. He also advised that the Council's Cleansing Service, Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) and local traders had also been consulted and they had also been positive about the scheme.

The Committee was also advised that officers would take the opportunity to engage with the DSD and DoE in relation to potentially moving the Air Quality Monitoring Station in the area.

The Committee agreed that the Building Control Service should engage in the contract as outlined in the report, subject to the issues of liability and management fees and any other amendments arising from the discussion being successfully addressed.

### **Belfast Agenda**

#### **Committee Plan**

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that, at its workshop on 26th August, Members had identified a number of priorities and proposals in the context

of the Belfast Conversation and the development of the Belfast Agenda. The key priorities raised at the workshop included:

- The City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (CCRIS);
- Job creation and the employability and skills framework;
- Place positioning and an agreed city brand to maximise the opportunities for investment, tourism, study and regeneration;
- Delivering the integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020;
- Investigating the feasibility of a City Deal for Belfast;
- Development of a car parking strategy; and
- Ensuring that strategies give consideration to connecting neighbourhoods to the city centre and that the whole city can enjoy the benefits.

Following the workshop, officers had been requested to develop a work plan based on these discussions, focusing on the central aim of the Committee which was to build and influence external partnerships with key city stakeholders and transform the city to secure future success.

The Members considered the draft plan and were advised that it had been based on the emerging 'plan on a page' representation of the Belfast Agenda and that it should be viewed as an evolving document to take account of developing and new opportunities for the city as they emerged.

The Committee agreed the draft City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan for 2015/16, which was available to view on modern.gov, and that it would hold regular strategic meetings of the Committee.

### **Tourism, Events & International Relations**

#### **Sports Personality of The Year**

The City Events Manager provided the Committee with an update on the BBC Sports Personality of the Year event, which would take place on 20th December at the SSE Arena (formerly known as the Odyssey). He advised the Members that 6,000 tickets had been issued to members of the public within 35 minutes and that this had been the fastest take up of tickets since the event had been taken on the road to regions across the UK. He pointed out that, in total, the iconic awards ceremony would attract an audience of around 7,000 people and would be broadcast to an estimated audience of over ten million viewers, via the BBC's various broadcasting channels.

He advised the Members that the Council's Sports Development Unit and the BBC's 'Get Inspired Active Academy' team had developed an extensive outreach programme to coincide with the event and that, to date, this initiative had attracted 1,227 participants, with the schedule culminating in 'Get Inspired Active Academy' events which would take place on 17th and 18th December at the Andersonstown and Shankill Leisure Centres. In total, it was anticipated that the entire programme would involve over 5,000 participants, with individuals attending from schools, community groups and clubs across the city.

The outreach initiative would also include the Council's Sports Conference at the Clayton Hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn on Ormeau Ave) on 14th December. He explained that the conference, branded 'Get Inspired Sports Development Conference', would have a key note speaker from the BBC and would focus on coaching and volunteering, mental health and nutrition for sport, funding and club development plans.

The City Events Manager highlighted that the Council had agreed to commit £140,000 towards the Sports Personality of the Year production at the SSE Arena and that an economic and media analysis had estimated that the event would be worth around £5million to Belfast.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided.

### **Finance, Procurement & Performance**

#### **Quarter 2 Finance Report**

The Chief Executive advised Members that the Quarter 2 position showed an overspend of £8,000, while the year end position was forecasting an overspend of £144,000.

She highlighted to the Committee that the overspend was largely due to a loss of income at the Zoo, a loss of income at the Waterfront Hall, due to the ongoing build programme, and a small overspend at some of the Parks Estate, including Malone House and the Belfast Castle. She reminded the Committee that they had received reports on how the overspends were to be reduced.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the associated financial reporting pack; and noted that no re-allocations had been considered as the overall corporate position would be discussed at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20th November.

#### **NI Science Festival 2016**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **"1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on a request for sponsorship received by the Northern Ireland Science Festival and to outline the proposed programme for the event in early 2016, as well as some of the potential benefits to the city in supporting this festival.**

## **2.0 Recommendations**

### **2.1 Members are asked to**

- Note the contents of this report and
- Agree to sponsorship of £35,000 from existing budgets for the Northern Ireland Science Festival 2016.

## **3.0 Main report**

**3.1 The Northern Ireland Science Festival delivered its inaugural event in February to March 2015. The Festival took place over 11 days offering more than 100 events in 27 venues presenting local and international work that focused on a wide range of themes including science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The daytime programme targeted children and young people with workshops, talks and interactive activities while in the evening the Festival presented an eclectic mix of scientific debates, talks, theatre, comedy, music and film.**

**3.2 The event was organised by Science Festivals NI, a unique collaboration of major STEM outreach organisations in Northern Ireland. Funding for the event was provided by a number of organisations including the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Belfast City Council, Queen's University, Ulster University, Invest NI and the British Council.**

**3.3 Science Festivals are a relatively new type of event that is growing in popularity worldwide, with cities such as New York, Edinburgh, San Francisco and Dubai hosting large scale events as part of their wider cultural framework. In 2015, the NI Science Festival joined this international group by becoming the largest festival of its kind on the island of Ireland and one of the largest in Western Europe.**

**3.4 The 2015 festival was considered to be a major success, exceeding agreed targets and competing with other established science festivals. This included:**

- Audience numbers significantly exceeding the initial target of 10,000 set out in funding agreement with a total of 28,708 for ticketed events and workshops and a further 22,606 visits to interactive exhibitions
- Given the level of interest from venues, performers, academics and partners, the festival greatly exceeded its target of 50 events with over 100 events taking place across 27 venues

- Satisfaction rates from attendees was very positive with 85% of attendees stating that they would come to similar events in the future whilst 74% stated that the festival had increased their interest in STEM
- Schools and young people formed the majority of the audience (68%). However the festival's programme for adults, teachers and parents also proved popular, with the majority of shows sold out.

3.5 In addition to this engagement with local audiences, the Festival also exceeded targets in respect to international profile. This included:

- The Festival's media impact included 60 articles appearing in local and national newspapers; 14 broadcast pieces and 107 articles were published online
- The Festival also gained international online coverage from sources such as Huffington Post, Yahoo News, Sky News, UK Wired Magazine and BBC Focus Magazine
- According to the media monitoring metrics employed by Nimms, the Festival's broadcast and print coverage had a value of £354,863
- The Festival also teamed up with the Department for Employment and Learning to publish a STEM careers supplement for both the Newsletter and Irish News which reached a circulation of 80,332 and 39,935 respectively
- The Festival also attracted out of state visitors making a significant contribution to Belfast's economy with postcodes from the audiences indicating that 8% of audiences stayed overnight in the city (around 4000 bed nights).

#### Proposed Programme 2016

3.6 The 2016 event will take place at the end of February/early March 2016. The core objective of the Festival continues to be a commitment to reaching a broad and diverse audience to increase the accessibility of science and to promote learning. This is in line with the ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda to improve skills and employability, make the city an attractive location for investors and improve vibrancy and city animation. This will once again be achieved through a series of events and partnerships that link science into

different areas of interest. The Programme themes are currently emerging and will include:

- Food Science - attracting a new audience through events in venues such as St George's Market
- Sports Science – the festival will work with Sport NI, W5, Ulster University and Queen's University on a series of activities
- A number of events will focus on the crossover between art and science. This theme is centred around an exhibition and workshops by the festival's 'artist in residence' as well as a photography exhibition in Titanic Belfast
- The Festival will also host events on photography, invention, history and wildlife in addition to the core themes of science, sport, food, engineering, technology, art and mathematics.

3.7 There are opportunities for a number of the Council's services to engage with the Science Festival to promote their work in innovative ways, particularly to young audiences, and to engage more residents around key issues for the city. These may include managing waste and food waste in particular; supporting active communities and promoting mobility and encouraging access to arts and culture for all residents. In addition, the innovative nature of many of the events – alongside the flagship events already lined up – will act as an attraction for people coming from outside of the city into Belfast, for the purpose of attending some of these specific events or associated activities.

3.8 The success of the 2015 event has helped to secure international events with a high calibre of speakers. This includes:

- Talks by international experts including Robert Winston, the psychologist Richard Wiseman and New York-based, world renowned physicist Brian Greene
- A partnership with the BBC to develop a three day digital technology event in Belfast city centre
- Given the success of hosting the largest ever Turing Lecture in Belfast City Hall in 2015, the festival will host this internationally renowned lecture series for Belfast for an unprecedented second year. Belfast secured the event again this year, overcoming competition from many other cities
- In partnership with the British Council, the Festival has developed a new 'artist in residence' programme and will also host the international science communication competition Famelab

- The Festival will partner with the World Science Festival in New York to host an ambitious theatre show on Albert Einstein in the Grand Opera House
- Working with local schools, the Festival is building on its Guinness World Record in 2015 by developing the 'Big Global Experiment' with the Royal Society of Chemistry. Schools and community groups from across Belfast will be invited to take part in a collaborative experiment with schools across Europe.

3.9 In addition to these public events, the Festival is also helping to secure other investment in Belfast as a conference destination with a number of organisations using it as a platform for their own events. This includes:

- The Institute of Physics hosting its spring UK wide conference in Belfast to coincide with the festival
- The British Science Association hosting a meeting of the network of the UK Science Festivals during the event.

3.10 The Festival has strong alignment with the city's investment, education and tourism priorities as outlined in the Belfast Agenda; the Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020 and the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy. In particular this is achieved through an emphasis on skills and educational attainment, international profiling, city events and programming. The message is consistent with the emerging city positioning work which is attempting to create a new narrative for Belfast that is based on the quality of its talent, reflecting its rich industrial heritage and its emerging specialisms in new technologies.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

3.11 The total budget for the festival is estimated at £142,500. Funding of £50,000 has been secured from the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) for the next four years. For the 2016 festival, funding of £7,500 has also been secured from the Department of Social Development. A further £40,000 is being sought from the universities and the Festival expects to generate £10,000 from ticket sales. The amount of sponsorship requested from Belfast City Council is £35,000, in line with the award made in 2015. This funding is available within existing Departmental budget estimates.

### Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.12 There are no specific equality or good relations considerations attached to this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### Operational Issues

#### Family Friendly City Centre

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the ‘Family Friendly’ approach in the city. The paper provides the wider external context in which Council is working with its partners to further the family friendly agenda and includes an update on the Council’s current programmes for families in the 2015/16 financial year and (budget dependent) further plans for the 2016/17 financial year.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the content of the paper which sets out the programmed activity by Council and our partners primarily through the ‘Family Friendly Initiative’ to promote the needs of families in a world class city.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 The initial notice of motion on supporting a ‘Family Friendly’ city centre agenda was discussed at Shadow Council (March 2015) followed by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (August 2015) where the following actions were agreed:

- Send a recognition letter to Belfast Healthy Cities (BHC);
- Prepare a list of current council programmes and investments with key partners such as the Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) which will support the benefits outlined in the motion and;
- For Council to incorporate the benefits from specific initiatives like child, family and age friendly into Council’s future approach for city regeneration and investment and the associated policies, projects and places.

- Members also sought 'proposals for immediate improvements of family friendly spaces and programmes'.

#### Wider external Context

- 3.2 As part of the Belfast Strategic Partnership, the Belfast Health Development Unit (BHDU) has developed a Family Friendly Initiative and established a sub-group to agree a supporting programme of activities sponsored through the Public Health Agency. The sub-group includes Council officers and other appropriate agencies. The Family Friendly Initiative traditionally had a programme of activity including 'Kids' space'; 'Acoustic picnics' and 'Movie Mornings' etc. The programmes will need reviewed to align to the new Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, to focus on outcomes for families and their needs to be a connected part of the city.
- 3.3 In preparation for future programme design, the sub-group has agreed a pilot to evidence the needs of families across the city. This will consider what factors would influence a family in our neighbourhoods to connect to the city to ensure future programmes and spaces are aligned to identified family needs. It will focus firstly on Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and an update will be brought to Members in due course.
- 3.4 In preparation for future programme design, the sub-groups have also scheduled a 'PLACE & SPACE' outcomes based workshop to support this ongoing area of partnership work. This is to ensure any vision for family and child friendly city sits comfortably within our developing action plan in support of Council's ambitious City Centre Regeneration and Investment vision to be recognised as a world-class city centre.

#### Current programme of activity

- 3.5 The Council has a range of family focused projects, programmes, funding, events and activities year round within agreed revenue estimates and these are outlined on Modern.gov, alongside some activity sponsored by our partners. Activity which is planned for next year is also included. However this is budget dependent. This programme includes events for families at civic and community level.

- 3.6 The Civic events programme includes the Christmas Lights switch on at City Hall, the BBC Sports Personality of the Year and Outreach Programme, St Patrick Celebrations and Spring into Easter programme in March 2016. It is hoped the annual programme of civic events will include the Circuit of Ireland Rally along with favourites like the Belfast City Marathon; Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival and the Proms. Rounding off with the All Ireland Irish Dancing Championships.
- 3.7 At a community level our Tourism, Culture and Arts grant funding supports a range of family initiatives ranging from the Beat Initiative family friendly carnival, Belfast Community Circus school programme of family circus workshops, Cahoots NI for the children's theatre company and Cinemagic's screenings festival to engage young people. Wheelworks engages marginalised young people through a mobile creative hub and Young at Art provide the popular Belfast Children's Festival at the Waterfront and other city venues which are supported by the Council's Play team.
- 3.8 A range of family friendly activities are supported via our Council grant schemes. The small grant programme focus on sports, parks and general activities for children, young people and families throughout the city while our larger grant aid streams support the community and voluntary sector to deliver services, programmes and activities for families. Council's *Ur city 2* youth funding provides direct support to Neighbourhood Renewal areas to develop an outcomes based children and young people programme which supports a range of Halloween and other seasonal events. These activities are developed by young people for their families to enjoy.
- 3.9 Two key partners in providing a family friendly focus are BHDU through its Family Friendly Initiative and Belfast Healthy Cities. As already noted, activities in the pipeline for them include upcoming movie mornings, acoustic picnics and Kid's Space events some of which are supported financially through BHDU and Council.
- 3.10 The Council also runs year-round programmes for the community either in our community centres or through outreach programmes. For example the Play Service operates a play session from Donegall Pass for the residential population in the city centre. Some of our community centres are placed right on the periphery of the city centre and provide an annual programme of activity open to everyone.

- 3.11 The Family Friendly City vision is supported by the strategic development work underway in partnership through the Family Friendly Initiative of BHDU and Belfast Healthy Cities. It includes our own ambitions whether through the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy and the People and Communities committee Action Plan. We hope this will be supplemented by a range of individual proposals, for example, the 'Play, Space and Shared Space' which has been included in the draft PEACE IV Local Action Plan proposal. The vision is further supported through our various physical and public realm initiatives e.g. Investment Programme, Playground Improvement programme, Renewing the Routes, etc.

Outcomes focused programmes and services

- 3.12 Since the Children and Young People (CYP) outcomes framework was agreed by Members last year, officers have developed bespoke training workshops in order to increase awareness and support service delivery across Council. This is to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people and their families are planned for and delivered as daily business. Community Services, Corporate HR and the Good Relations team have already completed the training and a workshop is planned for Property and Projects. The aim is to support council services to better understand how to design-in CYP (also family) outcomes into everyday business.
- 3.13 The new City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy sets out a road map of policies to guide city centre decision making. This provides an immediate opportunity to integrate the needs of families as related to the eight key policy areas and the identified projects and places. As the strategy develops and the social investment fund comes to fruition, there may be scope to look at some physical projects. The ongoing work of the Family Friendly Initiative can support and influence how best to engage families, identify and prioritise their needs. This might be particularly relevant for the priorities: *increasing the residential population, creating a green, walkable and cyclable centre, shared space and social impact and connecting 'to the city around'.*

### **Finance and Resource Implications**

#### **Financial**

- 3.12 **Costs associated with outcomes workshop will be resourced from within existing revenue budgets. Members should note that Council currently support both the BSP and the Belfast Health Development Unit and the Chief Executive co-chairs the BSP as the key strategic partnership on health and life inequalities in the city. Council also supports BHC as part of the WHO Phase 6 action plan to align with key priority areas within BCC corporate plan.**

#### **Human Resources**

- 3.13 **None**

#### **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

- 3.14 **There are no equality or good relations implications.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Special City Growth Committee**

The Chief Executive reminded the Committee that, at its meeting in September, it had acceded to a request from Transport NI to present its Autumn report and that all Members of the Council would be invited to attend this meeting. It had also been agreed that the presentation would be widened to include other transport issues. She outlined that additional requests to address the Committee had since been received from Translink, regarding the Belfast Hub, and the System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) Ltd., regarding grid planning and investment decisions across the City. She therefore suggested that a special meeting of the Committee be held, with a theme of City Infrastructure, and that both Translink and SONI would also be invited.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to invite Transport NI, Translink and SONI Ltd to attend a special meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, to which all Members of the Council would be invited, on Thursday 3rd December, 2015 at 5.00p.m.

### **Licence between BCC and Transport NI to permit Transport NI to carry out works at Corporation Square off street car park**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 **Transport NI (TNI) are requesting permission from BCC to enter into a licence agreement to carry out works at Corporation Square car park owned by BCC as part of its Advanced Works for the proposed York Street Interchange**

Road Scheme. Approval is sought from Members to enter into a licence agreement to commence on 1 December 2015.

- 1.2 During the period of the Advanced Works a total of 48 car parking spaces will not be capable of being used by the public at this car park. TNI will be responsible for compensating BCC for loss of revenue during the period of the Advanced Works, and also for all other costs associated with any damages and losses which may be incurred by BCC as a result of the temporary closure of the 48 car parking spaces.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree to entering into a temporary licence between BCC and TNI to facilitate the construction of a reception shaft as part of the Advanced Works for the proposed York Street Interchange Scheme. The licence agreement will be subject to detailed terms to be agreed between the Estates Manager, BCC Legal Services and TNI. Members are also asked to note that there will be a temporary loss of 48 car parking spaces.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key Issues

The off street car park that is located at Corporation Square was transferred to BCC from DRD as part of the Transfer Scheme of Off Street car parking on 1 April 2015. It currently provides a total of 193 car parking spaces.

- 3.2 The Westlink, M2 and M3 Motorways are currently connected through a complex arrangement of traffic signals at York Street. This bottleneck causes significant congestion and delays for traffic travelling at peak times. TNI has developed proposals to provide a grade separated junction at York Street that will greatly improve access between these roads and these proposals are known as the York Street Interchange Road Scheme.

- 3.3 The York Street Interchange Scheme is highlighted in BCC's City Centre Regeneration Strategy & Investment Plan as a significant project for the city. It was agreed at BCC's Shadow Strategic Policy & Resources Committee Meeting on 20 March 2015 that BCC would continue to work with DRD and other partners through the Strategic Advisory Forum to assess the regeneration opportunities of surplus land parcels resulting from the proposed development at an early stage to maximise the potential benefit for the city.

As part of the proposed York Street Interchange Road Scheme TNI has identified the need to construct a reception shaft underneath BCC lands at Corporation Square. TNI engineers have undertaken extensive feasibility and site option assessment works in respect of the proposed shaft location and have confirmed that this is the only suitable location for the reception shaft.

- 3.4 In order to complete the construction works it will be necessary to close off 48 car parking spaces at this off street car park for a period of 12 weeks. TNI has sought BCC's co operation around a licence start date of 01 December 2015, and members will note that this is during the peak Christmas shopping period. However, the timeframe for TNI's proposed construction works is being driven by the proposed development of a multi storey car park by Belfast Harbour Commissioners on an adjacent site next to its newly constructed City Quays office development. The multi storey car park site if developed before the reception shaft is in place will make it impossible to locate the shaft at this location. If the Belfast Harbour Commissioners' development was not occurring these Advanced Works would not be commencing at this stage but would form part of TNI's main works contract.

TNI engineers have advised that this is the only 12 week period during which the construction works can be carried out without significantly delaying the commencement of the multi storey car park by Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

- 3.5 Under the terms of the licence agreement TNI will be responsible for compensating BCC for the loss of revenue during the 12 week period and also for all other costs associated with any damages and losses which may be incurred by BCC as a result of the temporary closure of the 48 car parking spaces. TNI will also be responsible for ensuring that all relevant insurances are in place prior to the commencement of the construction works and these insurances will be provided subject to the satisfaction of BCC's Insurance Officer. The cover to the reception shaft will be designed to accept traffic loadings which will ensure continued use of the car park spaces after completion of the works. TNI have accepted responsibility for the future integrity, management and maintenance of the reception shaft.

**3.6** Members are asked to note that the Vesting Schedule for the York Street Interchange Scheme identifies that four off street car parks currently operated by BCC and located at Corporation Street , Corporation Square, York Street and Whitla Street are to be vested by TNI, which may result in the loss of 420 spaces. A further report will be brought back to members in due course when further details around this are known, including any compensation payments that will be payable to BCC.

**3.7** Financial and Resource Implications

TNI will be responsible for the payment of compensation for the loss of revenue during the 12 week construction period, and also for all other costs associated with any damages and losses which may be incurred by BCC as a result of the temporary closure of the 48 car parking spaces.

**3.8** Human Resources

Resources in BCC Estates Management Unit, Legal Services and Environmental Health Services will be involved with the completion of this licence agreement.

**3.9** Asset & Other Implications

There will be a temporary loss of 48 car parking spaces for a 12 week period.

**3.10** Equality or Good Relations Implications

There are no equality or good relations issues associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Chairperson