

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 13th April, 2016

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Hargey (Chairperson);  
the Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Spence);  
Alderman Kingston; and  
Councillors Attwood, Beattie, Craig, Dudgeon,  
Graham, Howard, Lyons, Magee,  
McDonough-Brown, Ó Donnghaile,  
O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. D. Durkan, Director of Development; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Stalford and Councillors Kyle and McAteer.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9th March were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th April.

### Declarations of Interest

In respect of Item 6a on the agenda, viz., Ciclovía Support 2016, Councillor McDonough Brown declared an interest in that he was a member of the Ciclovía project delivery group but confirmed that it was a non-pecuniary role.

### Restricted Items

**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.**

### City Centre Regeneration Update

The Chief Executive provided the Committee with an overview of the progress which had been made on the City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (CCRIS). She highlighted the success of the Council-led delegation to the MIPIM international property exhibition and advised the Committee that one to one meetings had since been set up with a number of potential investors from the event.

The Committee was reminded that the Council had set an ambitious target of attracting £1billion of investment into Belfast over a five year period and the Chief Executive advised the Members that the city centre team had delivered on a number of objectives already.

In response to a Member's question on city centre regeneration, the Chief Executive confirmed that supplementary planning guidance for Belfast city centre would be issued in advance of the Local Development Plan for the whole city, in recognition of the fact that the city centre was the economic core.

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report and noted that detailed reports on the recent visits to MIPIM, Boston, Nashville and SxSW would be brought to a future meeting.

### **Business & Economy**

#### **Belfast One Bid - Council Representation on Board**

The Director of Development outlined the progress which had been made to date with the Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID), which the Committee had agreed to establish at its meeting in October 2015. He advised the Members that the BID area consisted of 1,200 properties within the main retail core of the city and, through the levy, it would raise around £1.1million of additional expenditure every year. He pointed out that the Council would be required to pay an annual levy of around £12,000 for the three properties it owned in the BID area, namely, the City Hall, the Digital Services building and Seymour House.

The Members were advised that the BID had become operational from 6th April, 2016, and that it would focus on three key themes, namely, promoting, enhancing and supporting the businesses within it.

The Director advised the Committee that the Belfast One BID Board consisted of business representatives from the area and that the Chairman had now written to the Council seeking a senior official from the Council to join. The Chairman of the BID had requested a senior official who would have oversight of a range of issues and activities in which the Council was involved.

After discussion, the Committee noted the update in relation to the Belfast One BID and agreed that the Director of Development or the Head of Economic Initiatives and International Development would represent the Council on its Board.

### Small Business Strategy Development

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview, for information purposes, of the support provided by the Council to new and existing businesses.**
- 1.2 Members will be aware that, on 1 April 2015, Councils assumed statutory responsibility for a range of enterprise functions. This meant that the budget attached to a number of programmes and activities previously run by Invest NI was allocated to the 11 Councils. Belfast City Council attracted around £411,000 of that funding to support activity to encourage enterprise and these resources are being used – along with Council funding and possibly EU funds – to develop a range of new initiatives to help address the current deficit in business start up rates. At regional level, these are below both UK and Ireland and, within Northern Ireland, business start-up rates in Belfast rank 9 out of the 11 Council areas.**
- 1.3 The majority of the direct support is provided through the Development Department but the Council also interacts with and supports businesses across a range of operational areas including food health, licensing, building control and planning.**
- 1.4 There is a range of business support available through the Council from pre-enterprise (thinking about starting a business) through to support for start up and then support for the business once operational, depending on its growth needs (export development, marketing support etc.) in order to enhance business competitiveness and sustainability.**
- 1.5 The Council is only one player in this field and Officers work very closely with a range of organisations such as Local Enterprise Agencies (LEAs), Invest NI, Northern Ireland Science Park, Universities and Colleges and specialist/sectoral business support organisations in order to maximise the impact of the collective effort to support business start-up and growth. This is particularly important in the context of constrained public finances. It is also important in terms of signposting businesses to relevant support to meet their development needs and also in making the service more customer-focused.**

- 1.6 Given the scale of the challenge to increase business start-up rates and to make local businesses more competitive, Officers have been working to put in place a number of support programmes, in conjunction with these other organisations. It is important to acknowledge that changing the business start-up figures and improving growth rates is a long-term ambition which will require a range of interventions. These will include promoting the enterprise culture from an early age through school-based interventions, creating and profiling more positive role models working in small business and making the business support system easy to access. The range of proposals in this paper is a starting point: in order to make incremental improvements in start-up and business competitiveness rankings, it will be important to work closely with partners to elevate the levels of support available for these initiatives and to focus on activities that will have the best opportunity of creating positive outcomes.
- 1.7 By way of context, there are more than 10,000 businesses in Belfast (9,000 of which are VAT registered). More than 80% of these are micro businesses (less than 10 employees) and around 95% have 50 employees or less. Current business start-up rates in Belfast are estimated at around 900 each year.

## 2.0 Recommendations

### 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the suite of support currently available from the Council to support entrepreneurs and small businesses across the city and;
- Note the plans to develop this activity further in order to address the start-up deficits and business competitiveness challenges for local companies
- Note that the targets, outcomes and timescales for some of the programmes outlined below are still subject to change following the outcome of ERDF and Invest NI funding applications
- Note that the Belfast Enterprise Academy is short-listed as one of the 7 finalists at the MJ Awards 2016 for the Innovation in Education, Employment and Training for young people category and consider attendance by the Chair of Committee or their nominee and officer representation at the awards event on 16 June in London
- Agree to provide total sponsorship of £10,000 to the Digital DNA events in June and December 2016 as part of the Council support for the digital sector, subject to

agreement with the organisers around opportunities to maximise the value for return on the Council's investment.

### 3.0 Main report

3.1 A summary of the current support available to businesses from the Council is detailed below. A presentational overview of this information is available on modern.gov.

### 3.2 Pre-enterprise support

***Start by Doing Initiative:*** This programme will help 400 potential entrepreneurs annually to identify and define a business idea and will refer 200 of these onto the business start programme (below). Support is available to all residents in the Belfast City Council area; however there will be specific support allocated to under-represented groups. Officers from the Economic Development Unit are working with groups across the city to develop workshops and practical sessions. Three sessions are planned in the coming two months: 12 April at FabLab; 26 April at Work West and 17 May at East Belfast Enterprise.

***The Belfast Enterprise Academy:*** This programme is open to degree students from Queen's, Ulster University and Belfast Metropolitan College. During this enterprise support programme, participants work in cross-disciplinary teams to develop viable business ideas and business plans. It supports 25 participants annually and has a target to refer a minimum of 10 participants to the business start activity noted below. Each year, a high percentage of Enterprise Academy participants go on to start their own business when they complete their education. The Belfast Enterprise Academy has already won a number of awards and is short-listed as one of the 7 finalists at the MJ Awards 2016 for the Innovation in Education, Employment and Training for young people category.

### 3.3 Business start-up support

***Go For It Programme:*** As noted above, Councils now have statutory responsibility for business start-up support. The Regional Start Initiative, or 'Go for It' programme, is being delivered in its current form to October 2016. In Belfast, the programme is delivered through the Enterprise Agency network and there are agencies based across the city. The 11 Councils have submitted a joint application secure Invest NI and ERDF funding towards a replacement 'Go for It'-type programme. This is currently undergoing economic appraisal

and is still subject to funding award and public procurement. The programme will roll out as quickly as possible after October 2016. The annual target for Belfast will be around 400 new business starts.

It is proposed that the new programme will provide a range of workshop-based learning, business plan development and 1-2-1 mentoring support for participating individuals (the current programme focuses on business plan development only).

#### 3.4 Business Growth support: generic

***Business Growth Programme:*** This programme is aimed at all business sectors but will be specifically targeted towards micro and small businesses currently trading for 1-2 years+, predominately within the local market and not in receipt of Invest NI assistance. Within this programme an average of 135 businesses per year will be supported, creating around 70 jobs per year. Participants can avail of up to 2 days 1-2-1 mentoring support. Participating businesses are allocated a specific mentor to meet their business growth needs. This support is also open to social enterprises. Participants may also be referred on to other sources of support such as Invest NI, Northern Ireland Science Park or the Universities and Colleges.

***Procurement Support Initiative:*** This programme is aimed at micro and small businesses (including social enterprises) that have little or no experience of selling to the public sector. An average of 30 businesses per year will participate on this programme. At present, most of the public sector bodies are working with the Council on this initiative and, as it progresses, we will work to look at how we can bring on other partners to create additional supply opportunities e.g. the key anchor institutions in the city.

***Innovation Factory:*** the Innovation Factory is a new business centre based on the Springfield Road and funded through Council, Invest NI and ERDF resources. Once operational (from September 2016), the centre will provide business accommodation, business growth and business innovation services to support more than 100 small businesses. Innovation Factory tenants will work with an expert business support organisation to constantly review their business' growth prospects and they will be able to access expertise and business support to help grow their business in terms of employment numbers, productivity and new markets.

***Links to employability activity:*** Members will be aware that the Council supports a range of employability programmes, currently focusing on those furthest from the labour market. The principal objective of these programmes is to help participants to find employment. There are opportunities to look at how small businesses in particular might benefit from work placements by some of these employability participants, subject to training organisations being able to make the right fit between the candidate and the job needs.

***Belfast Entrepreneurs Network (BEN)*** is a successful network of like minded entrepreneurs. The network is administered by Council officers with events attended by upwards of 30 individuals and businesses.

### **3.5 Business growth support: sector specific support**

***High Growth sectors:*** A targeted programme for new-start businesses (0-1 year trading) demonstrating high growth potential or requiring specific, specialist business start-up and early stage growth support will be delivered (funding still subject to EU approval). The programme is aligned to the needs of key growth sectors in Belfast such as professional services, health and life sciences, green technology, advanced engineering, creative, digital and ICT. Once operational, the programme will support 40 businesses or participants per year and has a target of creating 84 jobs. It is important to note that a range of other providers can also potentially provide support to these businesses so there will be a focus on signposting to other relevant provision, as appropriate, post programme completion

***Social Enterprise:*** Support is available to new and emerging social enterprises/social entrepreneurs and cooperatives through a programme tailored specifically to their needs. The programme will engage a minimum of 50 individuals/groups per annum and recruit a minimum of 30 participants to receive intensive support through workshops and 1-2-1 mentoring. This programme will be operational from May 2016.

***Creative and Digital Industries:*** There are currently two programmes in operation to support 50 companies from the Creative and Digital Industries sector to increase their competitiveness through product development and expand their geographical markets. The first of these ('The 140 Second Club') involves 30 pre-start and early stage businesses. Run by Ulster University, the programme provides participants with 10 workshops, helping them hone their business idea, with the aim of creating at least 10 new

business starts. The second programme ('10x20') helps 20 high-growth CDI businesses to access new markets. All businesses receive a range of business interventions and, following a Dragon's Den event, 10 companies are selected to receive more intensive mentoring.

In addition 15 CDI businesses have also participated in the South by South West Trade Mission aimed at developing business linkages with the American market. The majority of these businesses have already been active in international markets so the challenge is to look at how the Council can help move more businesses into export markets, through business missions and international events, in conjunction with Invest NI.

The Council has recently received a request to support the Digital DNA conference which will take place in Belfast (at St. George's Market) on 7-8 June 2016. There will also be a schools event in Belfast City Hall on 5 December 2016. It is proposed that the Council agrees to financially support the event to a value of £10,000. In return, we will secure significant promotional opportunities for Belfast City Council (this aligns well with the 'Energy Unlimited' message of the city positioning work) as well as opportunities for 30 local businesses to attend the event, a ring-fenced number of places on a business pitching competition and opportunities for collaboration on a business mission to San Francisco in February 2017 as well as opportunities to prioritise Belfast schools' engagement in the 5 December 2016 'Digital Futures' event at Belfast City Hall.

**Retail:** The Council supports retail businesses through a number of mechanisms. Retail businesses can participate on the mainstream business support programmes. Independent retailers outside of the city centre are supported under the umbrella of the local business associations. These groups generally develop a range of activities to support additional spend and footfall in local areas. In addition, the Council supports a number of organisations in the city centre who are working to support retail and other businesses. These include Belfast City Centre Management, Belfast One, Visit Belfast and the emerging Destination CQ Business Improvement District in the Cathedral Quarter.

### **3.6 Financial Implications**

The approximate cost for providing this combined range of activities outlined is around £1.1 million annually. This is funded through the transferring budget from Invest NI



(£411,000) along with Council resources and EU funds (decisions are still outstanding on a number of funding applications).

The sponsorship request for the Digital DNA event is for an allocation of £10,000. Subject to Members' agreement, we will work with the organisers to maximise the return for the Council's investment in the event, including the activities outlined above.

Funding for all activities will be met within existing budgets.

### **3.7 Equality and good relations implications**

Programmes have been designed to help remove barriers to participation and promote equality of opportunity."

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

## **City Regions**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

### **"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

1.1 This report is to provide an update on work in relation to developing a Belfast city-region 'deal'.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the progress towards developing a Belfast city-region proposal.

### **3.0 Main report**

#### **Background**

3.1 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed in November 2015 that the Council should seek to influence the development of the next NI Executive Programme of Government and Investment Plans. This included commissioning expert assistance to articulate the case for a Belfast city-region 'deal' or devolution package. This was consequent to a Notice of Motion entitled 'City Growth' agreed by Council earlier in 2015.

- 3.2 This is directly connected to work ongoing in relation to City Centre regeneration, and it is argued that, given the appropriate freedoms and flexibilities, city-region devolution could enable greater and more widely distributed economic growth, as well as the dramatic improvement of public services.
- 3.3 Subsequently, officers have completed an initial review of the various approaches to greater devolution for cities in England, and more recently, in Scotland and Wales (available on [modern.gov](http://modern.gov)). This largely focuses on three main areas of support from central government:
- funding;
  - transfer of powers and;
  - increased cooperation.
- 3.4 Given the links to Westminster, the Chief Executive has also had discussions with the Belfast MPs and the Secretary of State to outline the Council's ambitions in this regard and seek their input. In addition, as part of the agenda for the Belfast Strategic Issues Group, all the Permanent Secretaries have also been briefed. The paper shared with the stakeholders is available on [modern.gov](http://modern.gov). Broadly speaking, all meetings have been positive and generated support for the Council's direction and initiative on the matter.
- 3.5 As part of the process, the Council is developing a robust evidence-based business case to argue for greater devolution for the Belfast city-region. To this end, ResPublica has been commissioned to develop a preliminary report on what a Belfast-region devolution deal might look like. They have a strong track record in working with cities, including Glasgow and Liverpool, in securing additional freedoms and flexibilities in a devolution package. ResPublica has produced a preliminary paper, available on [modern.gov](http://modern.gov).
- 3.6 In addition, given the importance of strong city-regional linkages, Centre for Cities has been commissioned as 'honest broker' in facilitating dialogue with neighbouring Councils and the business community, as well as other interested parties including Derry and Strabane Council.
- 3.7 The draft report on the Belfast-region 'asks' for devolution will be presented to SP&R Committee in April. Following this, and subsequent to the Assembly elections, there will be a series of political briefings and community engagement to advocate and build support for a Belfast city-region deal and develop the detail required for a phased implementation.

**It is anticipated detailed discussions with the NI Executive will take place later in 2016, to identify opportunities to integrate the Council's ambitions into the Programme for Government.**

**3.8 Financial & Resource Implications**

**None at present**

**3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**Any emerging 'deal' will be subject to equality and good relations screening."**

In response to a Member's question regarding City Deals in Great Britain, the Director of Development clarified to the Committee that Glasgow's City Deal included eight surrounding areas in addition to the city centre.

A further Member suggested that perhaps the Council could organise an event for the local MLAs, MPs and Council representatives from those areas which surrounded Belfast, that is, the Metropolitan area, in order to explain how a City Deal for Belfast would help to create positive outcomes for their areas in addition to the benefits for Belfast.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

**BREXIT - Summary of the Research to Inform Debate**

The Director of Development presented a report and accompanying research documents from the Northern Ireland Assembly's Research and Information Service, Oxford Economics and PricewaterhouseCoopers in relation to the forthcoming referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union.

Noted.

**Belfast Regional Briefing (Invest NI)**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 In January 2016, Committee emphasised the importance of enhancing the Council's ongoing analysis of the city economy to support the underpinning evidence base for the Belfast Agenda and propositions around investments in the city as the economic driver for the region.**

- 1.2 With Local Government Reform, Invest NI has prepared 11 sub-regional briefings, based on the new Council boundaries, to align with its Regional Office areas. These annual briefings have been designed to inform and support the development of emerging Community Plans and future economic development strategies that Council's develop.
- 1.3 The Belfast Regional Briefing and Summary is available on modern.gov for the Committee's information. It provides a range of statistical data, Invest NI data as well as an overview of regional economic assets for Belfast. This briefing has informed the development of the Belfast Agenda and as Invest NI intends to update the profiles annually it can act as a baseline from which progress can be assessed over time.

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 As the Committee is responsible for 'the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects directed towards regeneration and growth of the city' the Committee is asked to:
- note the Invest NI Belfast Regional Briefing which will form part of the evidence base when developing future strategies and programmes of work in its efforts to grow the Belfast economy.

## 3.0 Main report

### Key Issues

- 3.1 Invest NI has produced an annual profile for each of the 11 Council areas to help inform the evidence base for the development of the emerging community plans and future sub-regional economic development strategies.
- 3.2 The Belfast Regional Briefing and Summary provides an overview of the key metrics from a range of data sources, including Invest NI corporate intelligence. Within the annexes (pages 15-27), comparative information is provided for each Council area and a summary of UK regional comparisons is also available for a number of key measures. In addition, Invest NI intends to make available an interactive database to allow easy access to the data and enable trend and comparative analysis.
- 3.3 The Belfast Regional Briefing contains information related to the following areas:

- Demographic and labour market structure;
- Business base, productivity, jobs, skills and earnings;
- Commuting patterns, tourism impact and property availability;
- Support and investment data;
- Performance indicators and sectoral trends for Invest NI supported businesses; and
- An overview of regional assets, economic development partners and local supported businesses.

**3.4 The following provides a brief snapshot of the type of information contained in the briefing:**

- The population in Belfast stands at 336,830 (18% of NI population).
- The level of economic inactivity is higher in Belfast than for NI as a whole (31% compared to 28%).
- Belfast has 210,424 employee jobs; 34% of which are in the public sector.
- There are 9,005 businesses in Belfast representing 13% of the total business population. The vast majority of these are micro-businesses (7,265 employing less than 9 people).
- Productivity, based on Gross Value Added approximate (GVAa) per head is higher in Belfast (£41,535) than for Northern Ireland as a whole (£36,618).
- 44% of people in NI travel to work outside the area they live in; 58% of people working in Belfast travel to it from other areas.
- Invest NI has secured total inward investment of £984.67m over the last 5 years (2010/11-2014/15). During that period, the highest levels of investment have been from GB (£407m), US (£394m) and Canada (£143m).

**3.5 The Belfast Regional Briefing is being used to inform the Belfast Agenda which sets out the city's vision for 2030 and the outcomes for citizens. It will also inform the development of future strategies and a range of programmes of work that aim to grow the economy, build on the city's competitiveness and ensure that all citizens can benefit from city growth and regeneration e.g. international relations, employability & skills, tourism, inclusive economic growth proposals etc.**

**3.6 Working with city partners by sharing information and intelligence helps to create a shared understanding of the**

strengths and challenges of growing the Belfast economy. It therefore provides the basis to collaboratively prioritise programmes of work that will address some of the key challenges associated with supporting inclusive economic growth.

### **3.7 Financial & Resource Implications**

There are no resource implications attached to this report.

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

There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report.”

The Director of Development pointed out to the Committee that a pocketsize list of key facts and figures on why investors should consider Belfast was being compiled for all Members.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations.

## **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

### **Festival Development Budget**

The Director of Development reminded the Members that a strategic review of events and festivals was ongoing and that proposals would be submitted to the Committee for consideration at a future date.

He explained to the Members that festivals and events played a key role in developing the city's economy, particularly through the tourism and hospitality sectors and that officers had initially identified a number of events which had the potential to be developed further in order to maximise the impact and economic return to the city.

The Committee was advised that the success of many festivals could be attributed to a clear alignment with a city's 'brand' and the delivery of a coordinated visitor offering. He provided the Members with the example of the Edinburgh Festival which, in 2010, had generated £245million for the city, with the Fringe alone contributing £142million towards that figure.

The Director therefore advised the Committee that, in order to develop and promote a number of events and to encourage visitors to stay in the city for longer periods, £150,000 (non-recurrent) was recommended to be allocated in 2016/2017 towards the following:

- £50,000 for St.Patrick's Day in March 2017;
- £50,000 for Orangefest in July 2016;
- £40,000 to develop a coherent city offering based around a number of high profile events happening in September 2016; and

- £10,000 for the Friendship Four college ice hockey tournament in November 2016.

During discussion it was agreed that officers would bring regular updates on these events.

The Committee agreed to allocate the funding for 2016/17 as recommended.

### **Strategic Issues**

#### **City Workshop on addressing Poverty through inclusive growth**

(Mrs. J. Minne, Director of Organisational Development, attended in connection with this Item)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 To provide elected members with information on the work that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has been doing on connecting growth and poverty reduction and to present JRF’s manifesto briefing for a shared prosperity and reduced poverty in Northern Ireland.**
- 1.2 In addition, this report seeks approval for a Member workshop that will determine the initial approach that the Council and its partners need to adopt in order to better maximise the potential of citywide economic growth to enable people to lift themselves and their communities out of poverty.**
- 1.3 The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) is currently supporting Leeds City Council and its stakeholders in its work to realise a similar ambition. This paper therefore recommends that Belfast City Council seeks to engage with JRF to determine what steps Belfast needs within our particular city context and as an integral part of the Belfast Agenda.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the information provided at the appendices to this report and agree that the Council engages JRF and others to facilitate a workshop in spring 2016 at City Hall to support the development of an integrated approach to addressing poverty and inequality.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1 At the January meeting of Strategic Policy & Resources Committee Members acknowledged the growing issue of poverty and inequality in the city. Committee also noted that the Council and its partners already made significant contributions towards mitigating the impact of poverty (particularly in relation to issues of food, fuel and housing).**

**3.2 In relation to tackling the root causes of poverty in Belfast, there was also agreement that the over-riding need was to maximise household income by addressing unemployment, low pay, and ensuring full access to benefits.**

**3.3 Members acknowledged that, while it is very important to mitigate the negative impact of poverty here and now, it is also critical to understand and address the root causes of why people are in poverty in the first place and work towards reducing that risk.**

**3.4 In Leeds JRF has been working successfully with the Local Authority and with local business in the Leeds Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to find out how economic growth can be promoted in a way that makes addressing poverty an integral part of that city's local growth strategies. The city has established a 'More jobs, Better Jobs' partnership to achieve this see. It has four aims:**

- To better understand the relationship between poverty and the economy at the city and city region level;**
- To identify what can be done and by whom at city/city region level to create more and better jobs;**
- To make a compelling practical case for why cities should link growth and poverty reduction; and**

**To make addressing poverty a more integral part of local growth strategies in cities and city regions.**

**3.5 A number of major projects are now underway in Leeds including:**

- A citywide programme to ensure job quality, skills utilisation and clear labour market progression**
- Maximising the contribution of the city's anchor institutions as employers, contractors and providers of services**



- Maximising the social value of large infrastructure and development opportunities
- Building understanding about the business case for poverty reduction, the costs and benefits that accrue to the city

3.6 Members may also be aware that JRF also produces an annual independent assessment of progress in tackling poverty and other types of disadvantage across great Britain and Northern Ireland. Its latest report for Northern Ireland was published on 15 March 2016 and covers trends relating to Money, Work and Worklessness, Welfare and Benefits, Services and Housing.

3.7 JRF is also working towards a major strategy for tackling poverty in Northern Ireland which they expect to publish in September 2016. Prior to the release of the full strategy they have published a manifesto for tackling poverty in Northern Ireland with which they are seeking to influence the next NI Programme for Government.

3.8 On the basis of its work in Leeds, and ongoing analysis of poverty in Northern Ireland it is proposed that Belfast City Council engages with JRF and others to facilitate a city workshop in City Hall in late Spring. All Members would be invited to attend with invitations issued to relevant stakeholder organisations. It is proposed that the initial aims of this work would be to :

- Learn from the Leeds approach and to consider how aspects of it could be adapted for a Belfast programme as part of the Belfast Agenda
- Consider how we might develop a model of inclusive growth for Belfast
- Seek to determine an integrated package of interventions and indicators that cover growth and poverty reduction as part of the Belfast Agenda and that seeks to ensure we lead by doing.

#### Financial & Resource Implications

3.9 The development of an approach to tackling poverty/employability and skills is included within current Council estimates.

#### 3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications

Equality and good relations implications will be taken into consideration in relation to tackling elements of poverty;

**however it is anticipated that any collaborative efforts should have a positive effect on section 75 groups.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Tourism, Events and International Relations**

#### **Ciclovía Support 2016**

(Councillor McDonough Brown declared an interest in this Item, in that he was a member of the Ciclovía project delivery group, but confirmed that it was a non-pecuniary role and did not participate in the vote.)

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that Belfast's first Ciclovía event, where a section of the city was closed to traffic for a specified period of time, had taken place in October 2015. He outlined that the first event had been a success for the city, with 1,500 cyclists taking part, and that a second Ciclovía event had now been proposed to take place during the summer months of 2016.

The Members were advised that the Council's contribution for the 2015 event had been £15,000 and that a request had now been received from the organisers for Council sponsorship towards this year's event. The Director explained to the Members that the overall cost of the event was an estimated £30,000 but that the organisers were seeking to secure funding from other statutory and non-statutory bodies, including DSD's Belfast City Centre Event Grant Scheme 16/17 where they were bidding for up to £10,000. The Director therefore advised that £10,000 from the Development Department's budget could be allocated towards the Belfast Ciclovía event 2016.

During discussion, a Member suggested that whilst the event last year was enjoyable, it was felt that more activities could be put on along the closed route and around the City Hall.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to allocate £10,000 from the existing Development Department budget to support the Belfast Ciclovía 2016 Event.

#### **Cultural Framework Action Plan 2016-20**

(Ms. E. Henry, Assistant Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager, attended in connection with this Item)

The Assistant Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager reminded the Committee that it had approved a draft Cultural Framework for Belfast Action Plan 2016-2020 at its meeting on 13th January, 2016, and that the public consultation had closed on 23rd March, 2016.

She outlined to the Committee that twenty-five formal responses to the consultation had been received which had been used to modify the final draft of the Cultural Framework, with the majority of respondents having been supportive of the draft Action Plan. She highlighted that, in particular, a number of comments were made

about the Council's commitment to supporting culture, arts and heritage within the city and that the feedback was largely supportive of the Plan.

The Members were advised that there were four themes under the Action Plan, namely, Distinctly Belfast, Inspiring Communities, Attracting Audiences and Strengthening the Sector and that at least 84% of respondents fully or mostly agreed to the proposed plans and actions within each theme.

In response to a Member's question, the Assistant Manager clarified to the Committee that those groups which were unsuccessful in attaining funding had been offered meetings with Council officers to discuss other funding avenues and future applications.

After discussion, the Committee agreed the Cultural Framework Action Plan 2016-2020 and the associated Year 1 Delivery Plan.

### **Sister Cities International Summit Dublin 2016**

The Director of Development provided the Committee with an update on the arrangements for the Sister Cities International Summit, which was taking place in Dublin on 21st and 22nd April, 2016, to celebrate and build upon the relationships which sought to support sustainable economic growth in each region. In addition, the Director reminded the Members of the events which were planned for the delegations from Boston and Nashville, Belfast's partner cities, which had confirmed their attendance in Belfast from 19th-21st April for a range of meetings and events. The Members were advised that there would be a drinks reception and welcome dinner in the City Hall on 20th April to welcome both the delegations to Belfast and he encouraged the Members to attend.

Noted.

### **Friendship Four Ice Hockey Tournament**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1 To seek Members' support for a request to financially support the second National Collegiate Athletic Association of the USA (NCAA) Festival of Ice Tournament.**

**The City Growth and Regeneration Committee is asked to consider the request for a £50,000 financial contribution to host the festival over the 2016 Thanksgiving weekend (25-27 November) and for agreement in principle to support the tournament for a further two years subject to budget approval. This is the same amount that the Council contributed in 2015.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- Agree to commit £50,000 towards sponsorship of the above event.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

Members will be aware of the successful NCAA Friendship Four Festival of Ice Hockey Tournament held in Belfast at the SSE Arena from 25-28 November 2015. This was complemented by a month long STEM Conference in the W5 complex in Belfast which attracted 2,776 participants.

**3.2 BCC contributed £40,000 towards the cost of the tournament, as well as a civic welcome dinner costing £10,000.**

**3.3 The four universities which came to Belfast in 2015 were the University of Massachusetts (UMass Lowell), Northeastern University, Brown and Colgate. This was the first time that a collegiate hockey competitive tournament was played outside of the USA, and attracted 600 Bostonians who travelled to Belfast for a 4 night stay. The tournament was the first tangible output of the Belfast Boston Sister City Agreement, and significantly strengthened the 2014 agreement. The intention is to host the tournament annually in Belfast, and on 08 February 2016 four universities were confirmed and announced to compete in this year's tournament. These are the University of Massachusetts, St Lawrence University, Quinnipiac and the University of Vermont. Proposed universities for subsequent years include Boston College, Boston University, Dartmouth and Union.**

**3.4 There is also potential to build on the momentum and develop Friendship Four beyond ice hockey. This may result in a wider Festival of Sport through the inclusion of a sequential basketball competition also under the umbrella of the Sister City partnership.**

**3.5 2015 Outputs**

Members will be aware that the 2015 Friendship Four was successfully telecast in North America. TSN, which is the

biggest sports channel in Canada with 158,000 subscribed viewers in Western Canada and airs coast-to-coast, Time Warner Sports (broadcasting in NYC) and NESN (New England Sports Network) broadcast the tournament, reaching 4.2 million homes, and have all expressed their intent to broadcast further in 2016.

3.6 The 2015 Friendship Four featured in both of Boston's major newspapers The Herald and The Globe, with daily readership of 96,500 and 232,432 respectively.

3.7 Direct outputs for the city of Belfast with respect to the 2015 festival are outlined as Appendix 1 of this report.

3.8 Since the first Friendship Four tournament BCC has undertaken a further visit to Boston to develop academic, business and tourism links, and will host an incoming business and political delegation during the sister Cities summit from 19-21 April 2016.

3.9 Friendship Four 2016

BCC has now received a 3 year business plan to host the Friendship Four annually to 2018, along with a city STEM Conference. Should Council support the event, a detailed legal agreement with agreed outputs will be put in place. The Odyssey Trust has approached all previous sponsors (including public and private both in NI and the USA) and is confident of success in securing funding. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has already pledged its support until 2018.

3.10 Members are asked to consider a financial contribution for £50,000 towards the Friendship Four Festival in 2016 and to agree support in principle for successive years, up to and including 2018, subject to funding availability and subject to ongoing alignment with Council objectives.

3.11 Financial & Resource Implications

The total cost of running the Tournament is £280,000. In 2015 BCC contributed £40,000 along with providing a welcome civic dinner in City Hall. Other funding partners included Department of Culture, Arts and Learning (£40,000), Department for Education and Learning (£40,000) and Tourism NI (£40,000), with the remainder raised through US fundraising, including the State Department and the Mayor of Boston's office, along with local ticket sales and private sector sponsors.

**3.12 Members are asked to agree support of £50,000 towards the Friendship Four Tournament in 2016, as well as commitment in principle to support the tournament for a further two years at reduced amounts, subject to committee approval and budget availability. Other funders for 2016 have been approached as follows –**

- Sport NI - £40,000
- Department for Education and Learning - £40,000
- Tourism NI - £40,000
- Sponsorship - £75,000
- Merchandise - £3,000
- Ticket Sales - £55,000

**3.13 BCC's contribution of £50,000 will cover the cost of a civic welcome dinner (£10,000) as well as covering the cost of provision of game attendance, including transport, for 12,000 young people over the weekend.**

**3.14 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Operational**

#### **Extended opening hours for St George's Market**

(Mrs. C. Cassin, Markets Development Manager, attended in connection with this Item)

The Director of Development advised the Members that St George's Market had grown significantly over the last few years and that it regularly attracted up to 20,000 visitors over its three day opening period, namely, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The Committee was reminded that St. George's Market had attracted almost one million visitors last year alone. He advised the Committee that, while the Saturday and Sunday markets had been performing well, business at the more traditional Friday market had been less positive.

The Markets Development Manager advised the Members that the more traditional markets, such as the Friday market, had been struggling right across the country. She explained that, in order to look at how business could be improved at the Friday market, officers had met with the Friday traders. She explained that a proposal had been made to extend the opening hours of the market on Fridays, allowing traders to remain open between 6am and 3pm, in order to allow more lunch time business from

the adjacent offices. She explained that a plan had also been put in place to boost Friday trade which included a re-launch of the market, a celebration of 120 years of the Friday Market, an advertising, marketing and social media campaign and an activities calendar of events.

During discussion, the Markets Development Manager confirmed to the Members that discussions were ongoing regarding the possibility of using Verner Street, adjacent to St. George's Market, as additional space for the traders on occasion.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to extend the Friday opening hours at St. George's Market by one hour, from 2pm to 3pm.

### **DoE Consultation, Dangerous and Dilapidated Buildings**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of a policy consultation document launched by the Department of the Environment (DOE) on 10 March 2016, relating to Dilapidated/Dangerous Structures and Neglected Sites.**

**1.2 The Minister of the Environment, Mark H Durkan MLA has initiated a review of the legislation available to district councils to deal with the impact on local environmental quality of dilapidated/dangerous buildings and neglected sites. Much of the legislation relating to this area of environmental policy dates back to the 19th century and in many cases applies only to specific geographical areas.**

**1.3 The policy consultation considers a range of options to enhance protection of the environment by ensuring that district councils have the appropriate powers to effectively tackle this problem. However, Members should note the DOE has indicated its preference at this stage is for a comprehensive revision of primary legislation in this area.**

**1.4 This consultation will run for 16 weeks and will close on 30 June 2016. The consultation document can be accessed using the following link:  
<https://www.doeni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/doe/environment-consultation-dilapidation-policy.pdf>**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the contents of this report; and
- Note that officers develop a draft response to this consultation document to be brought back to this Committee and the People and Communities Committee in May for detailed consideration.

### **3.0 Main report**

- 3.1** Members should be aware that this review of legislation is to a large part as a result of concerted lobbying by the Building Control Service on behalf of the Council over many years. In dealing with issues under the current legislative framework the Service identified significant deficiencies and loopholes which adversely impacted its ability to take effective action in certain circumstances.
- 3.2** Council officers met with the then Minister of the Environment, Alex Attwood MLA, to seek a review of the legislation in this area and, further to subsequent meetings with DoE officials, a discussion document was issued by the DoE in March 2014, 'Environmental Legislation: Dilapidated/Dangerous Buildings and Neglected Sites'.
- 3.3** In response to this discussion paper the Health and Environmental Services Committee, at its meeting of 4 June 2014, agreed that the position of Belfast City Council is that the current legislation for dealing with dangerous, dilapidated, ruinous buildings and abandoned sites is not fit for purpose in certain circumstances. Copies of the Committee report and Council response from this time are attached at Appendix 1 & 2 to this report.
- 3.4** Council officers from Building Control, Environmental Health, Legal Services, Economic Initiatives and the Planning Service will discuss the various aspects of this consultation document and produce a draft response for consideration by Members.
- 3.5** It is intended that the draft response will be brought to both this Committee and the People and Communities Committee, given the cross cutting nature of the policy consultation, in May for detailed consideration. Subject to consideration by the Committees a response will be taken to Council in June and subject to ratification, the response shall then be forwarded to the DoE.
- 3.6** The problems associated with dilapidated and dangerous buildings are many and varied, however in respect of this Committee some of the main issues include:



- loss of amenity (including visual amenity)
- effects on property value
- impact on tourism and investment
- ability to attract global events

### **3.7 Financial & Resource Implications**

As part of the detailed consideration of this policy consultation, consideration will be given to the resource implications attached to any new legislation. This will be in the context of strengthening the ability of the Council to recover costs in respect of works carried out in default, which the Council undertakes to remedy and alleviate the issues caused by buildings which are dilapidated and/or dangerous.

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

The DoE has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment of the proposals contained in this policy consultation. It concluded that there is no evidence to indicate that any of the proposals contained in this consultation will have any differential impact on the equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Taxi Issues - DRD proposal for taxi rank**

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that the Department for Regional Development (DRD) had made proposals in relation to the issues which were raised by elected members and the Belfast Public Hire Taxi Association representatives at the Special City Growth and Regeneration meeting on the 3rd February, 2016.

The Director advised the Members that a response had been drafted by officers regarding the DRD Transport NI consultation in relation to providing a public hire taxi feeder rank in Donegall Square West by reducing the existing coach bay and the proposal to convert part of the existing taxi rank on Chichester Street to a coach bay.

During discussion, it was pointed out to the Members that correspondence had since been received from the Federation of Passenger Transport NI Ltd., who represented the coach and bus trade in Northern Ireland. The correspondence asked that the Council did not take a preferential view in regard to the Public Hire Taxi drivers.

After discussion, the Committee agreed the following submission to DRD, as the Council's position:

- (a) that the Council would support the proposed reduction of the existing coach bay in Donegall Square West and the introduction

- of a public hire taxi feeder rank of 20 metres on the basis that alternative provision was provided for coach parking as proposed in (b);
- (b) that the Council supported the proposed reduction of the existing taxi rank on Chichester Street to accommodate a 23 metre coach bay (outside Victoria Square Shopping Centre, opposite Seymour Street), on the basis that it was introduced by DRD on a trial basis and subject to planned management and monitoring to ensure the conditions of use of the new rank and coach bay areas are adhered to by the operators; and
  - (c) noted that the Council was in contact with DRD to consider proposals to improve directional signage information to the public hire taxi ranks in the city centre.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**European Union Working Group - Cllr Lyons to raise**

(Miss. L. Leonard, European Manager, attended in connection with this Item)

The Committee agreed that a paper on the potential to establish an EU working group would be brought to a future meeting within the context of the International Relations Framework.

Chairperson