

# Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section  
Chief Executive's Department  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast  
City Council**

8th September, 2016

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

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room - City Hall on Wednesday, 14th September, 2016 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

1. **Routine Matters**
  - (a) Apologies
  - (b) Minutes
  - (c) Declarations of Interest
2. **Presentation**
  - (a) PA Consulting - draft International Relations Framework
3. **Restricted Reports**
  - (a) RESTRICTED - VuCity Update and Presentation (Pages 1 - 4)
4. **Belfast Story Attraction (Pages 5 - 10)**
5. **Requests to present to Committee**
  - (a) Tesco NI (Pages 11 - 14)

(b) UJJ - Economic Briefing (Pages 15 - 22)

6. **Strategic Issues**

(a) Committee Plan Workshop Update (Pages 23 - 32)

7. **Regeneration**

(a) Chamber of Trade and Commerce Belfast Manifesto (Pages 33 - 42)

8. **Business and Economy**

(a) Details of BCC submission to "Refocus of the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy: Call for Evidence" (Pages 43 - 66)

9. **Operational**

(a) Exploratory Drilling in Woodburn Forest - Update (Pages 67 - 102)

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

Document is Restricted

**This page is intentionally left blank**



<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Story Visitor Attraction Update
<b>Date:</b>	14 September 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nuala Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Eimear Henry, Assistant Tourism, Culture & Arts Manager

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update Members on the ongoing development of proposals for a new visitor attraction for Belfast City Centre</li> <li>- Outline next steps and programme of work</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note the contents of this report, the work undertaken to date and next steps</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<b>Background</b>
3.1	Members will recall that in January 2016 approval was granted to undertake feasibility work on a major city centre cultural and visitor attraction with a further update provided to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in June 2016 outlining progress to date.
3.2	The Belfast City Regeneration and Investment Strategy identifies the need for a major city centre development recommending that serious consideration should be given to the opportunity to create a significant attraction or destination of national or international stature that is distinctive and unique to the city. Such a proposition is further supported by the Belfast Integrated Tourism Strategy 2015-2020 and the Cultural Framework for Belfast 2016-2020. Both of these strategies identify the role of culture and heritage in engaging with local people

	and connecting the city globally.
3.3	A number of other cities have also been examined with examples such as Southbank in London or Guggenheim in Bilbao illustrating the regeneration potential of culture through the creation of world class visitor destinations.
3.4	In parallel to the development of a strategy for the city centre a number of proposals were emerging for further investment in cultural infrastructure.
3.5	Despite the merits of these proposed developments, each as an individual stand alone project was not considered to fully meet the challenge of regeneration and the need to be transformational for the city centre and visitor economy. Nor may they be able to create a sustainable venture in their own right. However across the proposals there were strong synergies with the cultural heritage and contemporary appeal of the city.
3.6	Facilitated by Council a number of key stakeholders from across the city came together representing tourism (Tourism NI), the arts (Arts Council), museums (National Museums), film (NI Screen) and education (Ulster University) to explore whether there was in fact an opportunity to reconsider these proposals to create a stronger single proposition with a focus on telling the Belfast Story.
	<b>Belfast Story</b>
3.7	The Belfast Story Attraction (previously referred to as a Creative / Cultural Hub) would be the cornerstone or anchor of a new destination that would create an experience that is authentic and distinctive to Belfast that supports local people to connect to the rest of the world and is a visible and confident expression of the city's cultural heritage and future aspirations.
3.8	The emerging concept has a number of key component parts including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Belfast Stories visitor attraction – telling the story through music art, literature, our great people and achievements etc.</li> <li>– Discovery and experiences of the story that make people want to explore more throughout the city and beyond</li> <li>– A Northern Ireland film centre including a cultural cinema</li> <li>– Permanent and temporary exhibition space that can accommodate and support collaborations with major international artists and cultural brands</li> </ul>

3.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A shared space for cultural / digital / media skills development</li> <li>- Commercial space for retail, food and beverage</li> </ul> <p>As well as seeking to represent a chronology of the city in a very interactive way the attraction would be focussed on the stories of the people and the place with particular emphasis on themes such as Music, Literature, Art and Film.</p>
3.10	<p>Critical to this emerging proposition is the preferred location. The City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy identified a number of special action areas requiring tailored responses and interventions. Also highlighted was the need for increased connectivity to ensure that the overall impact of investment is greater than the sum of its parts.</p>
3.11	<p>The Royal Avenue North area has been identified as a potential location for a number of important reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inner North is a Special Action Area identified in the City Centre Regeneration Plan and requires direct intervention</li> <li>- There is a need to drive footfall down and across Royal Avenue</li> <li>- The Belfast Story can be a major anchor that will support future investment in the city centre including retail and other sectors</li> <li>- There is an opportunity to support the development of a wider 'Cultural Corridor'</li> </ul>
3.12	<p>There has been significant investment in this area already with the Ulster University development as well as plans for a major refurbishment of Central Library. The Belfast Story Attraction could also help further realise the impact of these other investments by acting as one of the anchors for this emerging cluster as well as driving footfall and increasing spend in the city centre.</p>
3.13	<p><b>Work to date</b></p> <p>Feasibility work to date has largely considered the proposal under three priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The need for regeneration</li> <li>- The need to enhance the tourism offer of the city</li> <li>- The need for innovation and skills development to help grow the economy</li> </ul> <p>This work has recommended a destination approach incorporating a number of experiences rather than a single building approach. This 'mall' style development can</p>

3.14	<p>support a number of the key components as outlined above at 3.8</p>
3.15	<p>Additional research conducted to assess at this early stage the potential economic impact concluded that in a medium growth scenario there could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 24.7 % growth in overnight stays</li> <li>– 29.8% growth in number of nights stayed</li> <li>– 10.5% growth in spend per night</li> </ul>
3.16	<p>Further catalytic impacts include the potential for the hub to signpost to and support the existing cultural and tourism infrastructure in the city and beyond resulting in an overall step change.</p>
3.17	<p><b>Next steps</b></p> <p>There is a requirement to further continue to develop the concept of the Belfast Story and continue to test and refine the proposition. A number of key work streams have been identified to support this ongoing development including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Development of Belfast stories concept including a detailed design exercise</li> <li>– Agreement on governance, organisational design and structure including identifying an appropriate governance and operating model for the project which clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of the various key stakeholders</li> <li>– Masterplanning and delivery options</li> <li>– Wider stakeholder engagement</li> <li>– A viable funding model</li> </ul> <p>This work programme will then culminate in the development of an Outline Business Case.</p>
3.18	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Staff from the City Centre Regeneration Team will continue to take forward the work programme working with partner organisations. A further update report will be taken to City</p>
3.19	<p>Growth and Regeneration Committee in due course with costings for the development of an outline business case.</p> <p><u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no Equality or Good Relations implications at this stage. Equality and Good</p>



3.20	Relations implications will be examined as the project develops.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
4.1	None.

**This page is intentionally left blank**



<b>Subject:</b>	Tesco NI – Request to present to Committee
<b>Date:</b>	14th September, 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Louise McLornan, Democratic Services Officer

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	A letter has been received from Tesco NI requesting the opportunity to make a presentation to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether it wishes to accede to a request from Tesco NI to present to a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	A letter has been received from Serious PR, representing Tesco NI, requesting that local senior executives from Tesco NI be given an opportunity to present to a relevant committee to share the role that Tesco NI plays within the local community in terms of employment, supporting local businesses and assisting locally based charities.  The letter, attached as <b>Appendix 1</b> , states that, since Tesco’s entry into the local market

3.2	<p>20 years ago, along with its acquisition of Stewarts and Crazy Prices, Tesco NI has grown to become one of the region’s largest employers with more than 9,000 locally-based staff throughout its 55 stores and it’s NI Headquarters at Newtownabbey.</p> <p>The letter also states that, as Northern Ireland’s largest purchaser of locally produced food and drink goods, Tesco NI spends more than £580million with local food and drink companies, underlining its commitment to locally produced food and investing heavily in the NI Year of Food and Drink.</p> <p>The Committee is reminded that, at its meeting on 10th August, it agreed to grant the licence to permit the Tesco Taste NI free food festival to take place at Custom House Square, which, this year, will take place from 16th – 18th September, 2016. This would be the sixth year that the event had taken place in Belfast and, particularly with the NI Year of Food and Drink 2016, it was designed to showcase the range of food and drinks produced in Northern Ireland.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no resource implications attached to this report.</p> <p><u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
4.1	<b>Appendix 1</b> - Letter from Serious PR, representing Tesco NI

Chief Executive's Office	
Date:	2/8/16
Noted by CX:	Y/N
Ref:	SW 10/8
Referred to:	
Copy sent	Original sent
MB updated	Invite req



Dear Ms Wylie,

I am writing on behalf of Tesco NI in the hope you might be able to facilitate a briefing by some of their local senior executives as part of Tesco NI's 20th anniversary in the province.

Since its entry into the local market 20 years ago and its subsequent acquisition of Stewarts and Crazy Prices Tesco NI has grown to become one of the region's largest employers with more than 9,000 locally-based staff throughout its 55 stores and in its NI HQ at Newtownabbey.

As Northern Ireland's largest purchaser of locally produced food and drink goods, Tesco NI spends more than £580m with local food and drink companies. It is in this capacity that Tesco NI has sought to underline its commitment to locally produced food and investing heavily in the Northern Ireland year of Food and Drink.

Tesco NI leads and facilitates dozens of events and initiatives each year under the banner of Tesco Taste NI and its showpiece event is the Tesco Taste NI free food festival at Custom House Square which this year will take place from 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September. The event attracts in excess of 20,000 people over the course of the weekend and it truly is a major opportunity for the dozens of local food and drink producers, many of whom are from your council area to exhibit their goods and offer free food sampling to the public.

The reason for the letter to formally request an opportunity to meet with the council, or a relevant committee, to share something of the role Tesco plays within your local community in terms of employment, supporting local businesses and assisting locally based charities.

We would be most grateful if you could advise if this is something in which the council might be interested and, if so, how we might go about agreeing a mutually suitable date and time.

I can be contacted on 02890 918336 / 07739 631540 or [david@seriouspr.com](mailto:david@seriouspr.com).

Yours Sincerely,

David McCavery

**This page is intentionally left blank**



<b>Subject:</b>	Request to present to Committee – Ulster University Economic Policy Centre
<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Claire Patterson, Business Research & Development Manager

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	As part of the ongoing commitment to hold regular strategic sessions and following Committee request in January 2016 to receive regular briefings from the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC), it is proposed that Committee receive an economic briefing and presentation from Professor Neil Gibson at its October meeting.
1.2	Members will be aware that in March 2015, the Council agreed to contribute to the work of the UUEPC which will enhance the Council’s ongoing analysis and monitoring of the city economy and support the underpinning evidence base for the Belfast Agenda and the emerging economic outcomes for the city.
1.3	Growing the Belfast economy, creating more and better jobs and improving skills and employability in the city have been identified as key priorities by stakeholders and residents in the development of the Belfast Agenda. The ‘Business and Economy’ priority theme

<p>1.4</p> <p>1.5</p>	<p>provides the focus for programmes of work that include the City's role as the regional magnet for inward investment; the need to secure long term economic growth; the importance of our city centre not only for the city but for the entire region; the issue of skills and employability; the need to continue to build on the potential of tourism. This approach aims to support inclusive economic growth and social regeneration in the city.</p> <p>As the Committee is responsible for setting the direction for the Council in terms of cultural and economic regeneration and growth, this briefing provides the opportunity to contextualise and consider the city and regional economic conditions and forecasts to inform future direction and priority setting around key inter-related programmes of work for the Council - growing the economy, employability &amp; skills and city development.</p> <p>Committee has previously supported the Council's work to position the city internationally, in terms of events, tourism and its international relations framework, as well as its ongoing work with city partners in terms of promoting the city as a place to invest, visit, study and work in. In August 2016, an overview of the current business support programmes for business start-up and growth, including social enterprise was noted and detailed proposals to take this support forward will be brought back to Committee next month. Members are asked to consider the economic briefing in the context of the decision for the UK to leave the EU and the pressing need to develop new approaches to address the city's persistent challenges as a result of high levels of economic inactivity, low skills levels and the need to grow the private sector.</p>
<p><b>2.0</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agree to receive a presentation from Professor Neil Gibson, Ulster University Economic Policy Centre at the next Committee meeting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Main report</b></p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>The Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) is an independent economic research centre focused on producing evidence based research to inform policy development and implementation. It engages with all organisations that have an interest in enhancing the Northern Ireland economy and its work is relevant to Government, business and the wider general public. The Centre's Advisory Board includes Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Department for the Economy, First Trust Bank, Ulster University, and Department of Finance. Belfast City Council is the first local government member. Derry</p>



	<p>City and Strabane District Council are now also members.</p>
3.2	<p>The Centre has developed a macroeconomic model for Northern Ireland providing a comprehensive set of economic data and forecasts which will help assess the impact of potential policy initiatives on the Northern Ireland economy and contribute effectively to the policy debate. The Centre has also developed a Skills Barometer for Northern Ireland which assesses the current and emerging skill needs by sector, as well as forecasting future skill needs in Northern Ireland. This work will directly inform how the Council approaches its keys priorities to address the city challenges of supporting business start-up and growth and addressing the skills and employability issues in the city, as outlined in the Skills &amp; Employability Framework, agreed by Council in July 2016.</p>
3.3	<p>In July 2016, the Economic Advisory Group published an assessment of Northern Ireland’s competitiveness<sup>1</sup>. As more competitive economies enjoy higher levels of growth, it concludes that action is required to boost relative competitiveness in order for the NI economy to grow which will deliver higher standards of living for the whole population. Core to this assessment is the UUEPCs work on the Competitiveness Scorecard. The aim of this work is to identify strengths, weaknesses and changes in direction of travel across a range of policy areas, including the Programme for Government. A summary of the scorecard performance is attached as Appendix 1.</p>
3.4	<p>The scorecard highlights very good performance in terms of broadband coverage, FDI jobs created, cost to rent prime office space, value of bank loans approved and number of SME bank loans approved. It concludes that the positives for the Northern Ireland economy are: ‘business performance has improved driven by a strong FDI proposition, with environmental sustainability and quality of life also moving in the right direction’. However, overall Northern Ireland’s competitive ranking is low ‘reflecting its weak performance on productivity, employment &amp; labour supply and micro &amp; fiscal sustainability’. It states that the region must focus on longer term issues around competitiveness and that the scorecard should continue to be developed and updated every two years to measure the effects of policy.</p>
3.5	<p>While this report is focused on the region as a whole, there are examples of assessments of city performance. For example, Centre for Cities carry out an annual comparison of the performance of 63 UK cities and Oxford Economics updated the Belfast competitiveness study in 2015. While not directly comparable, the research provides a Belfast focus and</p>

<sup>1</sup> <http://eagni.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/EAG-Competitiveness-Summary-Report.pdf>

reinforces the key messages and issues raised in the Northern Ireland competitiveness summary, as outlined below:

- Based on a range of indicators, Oxford Economics ranked Belfast as 33<sup>rd</sup> out of 40 European cities in 2015, an improvement on the 2010 performance of second from last. While Belfast's competitiveness has improved, growth has not been fast enough to catch up with comparator cities.
- The encouraging signs for the Belfast economy were noted as labour costs, house prices, some improving infrastructure and a strong stock of graduate labour.
- The key challenges that need to be tackled for Belfast to be truly competitive are associated with chronically high levels of economic inactivity, low private sector activity relative to the public sector, some major skills gaps and some infrastructure gaps.
- The report notes that as over half (58%) of those working in Belfast live outside the city, the workplace and resident environments differ reinforcing the need for a balanced and inclusive approach to economic growth.
- The Centre for Cities City Outlook report highlights the proportion of those with no formal qualifications, the low level of business starts and innovation as Belfast's key challenges for economic growth.

3.6 In June 2016, Committee received a report summarising some of the research on the potential implications of Brexit. While a robust assessment of the impact of leaving the EU will only be possible once the future relationship between the UK and EU has been determined, this will be a key factor in determining future policies and programmes at a regional and city level as well as the Council's plans for the City's future links and relationships with the EU and internationally.

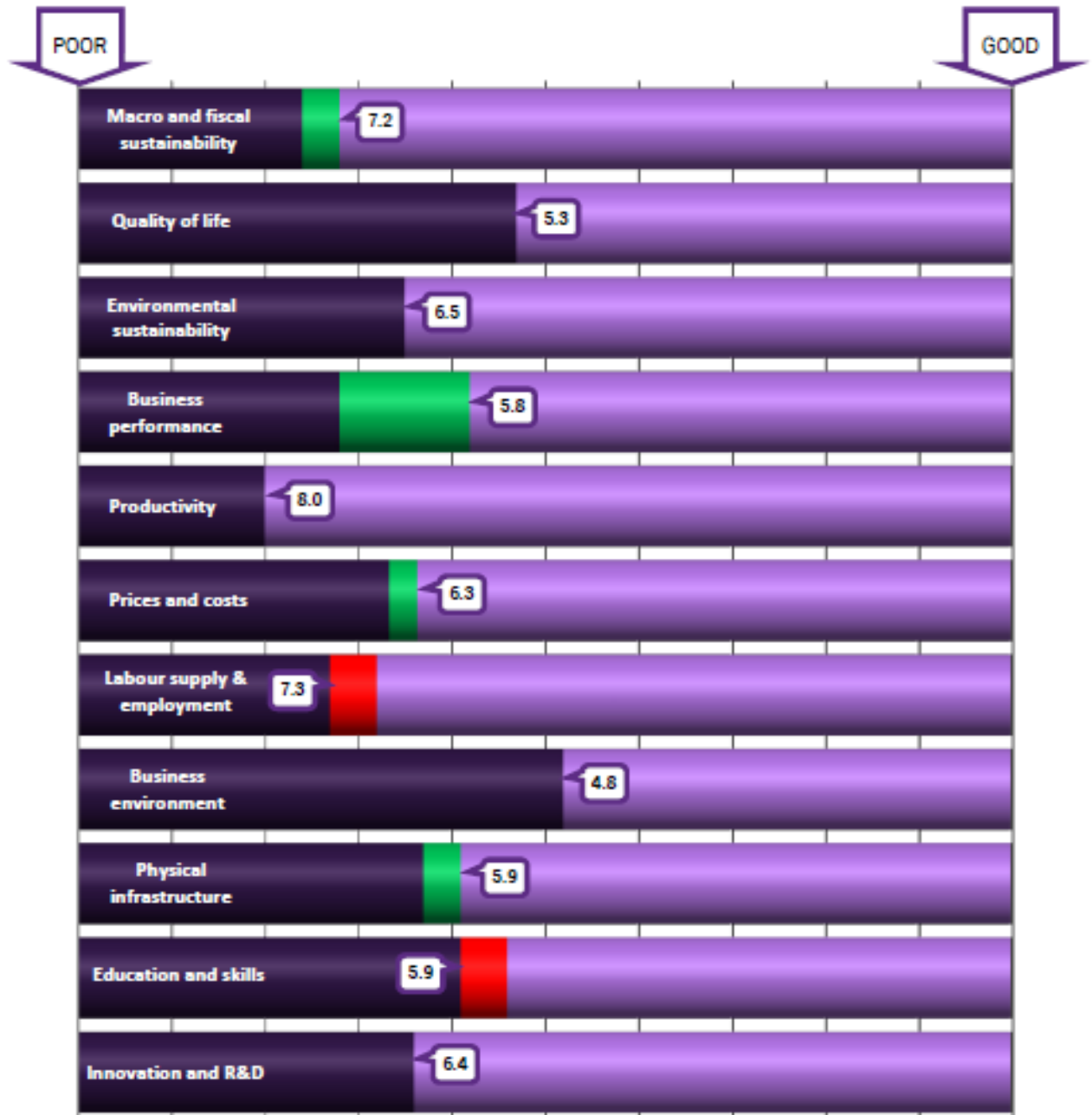
3.7 The factors that influence economic growth do not solely lie within the local government's control, therefore strengthening business relationships and local-central government relationships is a central tenant of the Belfast Agenda as well as being critical to build the city's role as the regional driver.

3.8 The UUEPC acts as a 'critical friend' for the Council which will be central to the development of the Belfast Agenda and the key priority of growing the economy. This will be critical to ensure that the priorities, programmes and plans are firmly evidence based and targeting the areas that will have maximum impact; for example targeting business support and employability & skills programmes. The UUEPC is involved in a number of specific pieces of

<p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p>	<p>work for Council, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– assessing the economic impact of the development of the Ulster University campus in the city centre (November 2015), which identified the sectors of business growth likely to develop around the university campus. Committee have agreed that this work should extend to focus on wider city centre developments. This work is currently being scoped to take account of the timescales and status of the planned projects.</li> <li>– producing economic forecasts to inform the Local Development Plan (underway) that will shape the city’s future development; and</li> <li>– preparing a position paper outlining the potential implications and re-adjustments in policy and focus that will need to be made as a result of the referendum and the UK leaving the EU (underway).</li> </ul> <p>It is proposed that the presentation and briefing will draw on these key research pieces to outline the work of the UUEPC, the key issues for the Northern Ireland economy and economic forecast, as well as what this means for Belfast as the regional economic driver.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that in March 2015, Council agreed to be represented on the Board of the UU Economic Policy Centre and to contribute £25,000 per annum for a two year period.</p> <p><u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no equality and good relations implications.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Appendix 1: Economic Advisory Group – Report Overview of Northern Ireland’s Competitiveness</p>

**This page is intentionally left blank**

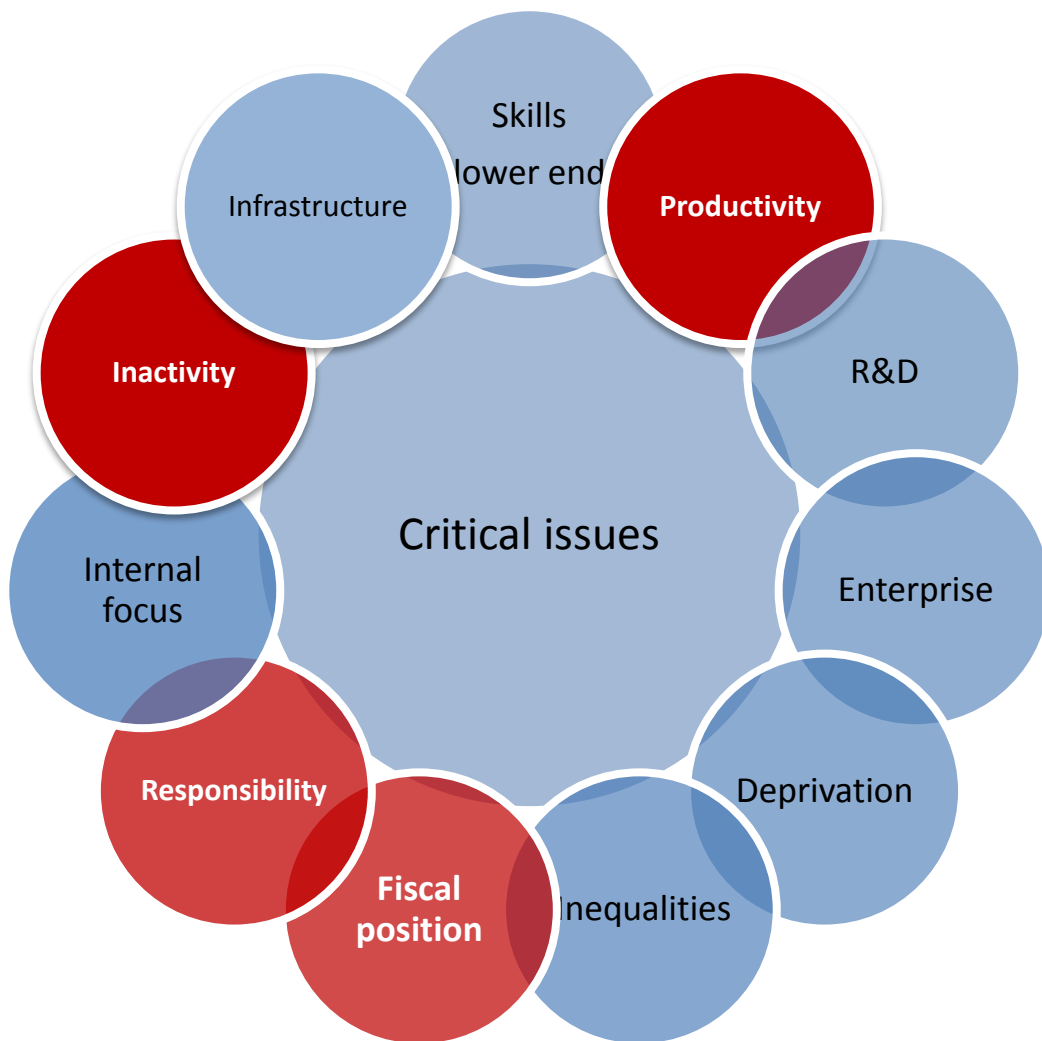
## NI performance at a glance



The number shown is NI's current decile position – the lower the number, the more competitive we are. Green shows NI's relative improvement over the last five years - red indicates where we have become less competitive over the last five years.

<sup>1</sup> Report available at: <http://eagni.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/EAG-Competitiveness-Summary-report.pdf>

## Overview of NI Economic Challenges





<b>Subject:</b>	Growing the Belfast Economy – Committee Planning Workshop Proposal
<b>Date:</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of the report is to propose a Committee Planning Workshop to allow Members to shape the upcoming work and agenda of the Committee, the new corporate plan and the budget setting process for 2017/18.
1.2	The workshop will reflect on how the Committee can lead and shape implementation of the priorities within the Belfast Agenda, consider how the Committee can build on the work that it has undertaken to date to grow the local economy and how the regenerative impact of the work of the Council and its partners can be maximised.
1.3	The report also contains an update on projects and programmes that have emerged from the work of the Committee to date. The proposed workshop will provide an opportunity for the Committee to test and shape emerging thinking on these issues.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree that a Committee Planning Workshop is held in October/November to consolidate the strategic direction of the Committee and shape the new Corporate Plan and budgets for 2017/18.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the update on emerging work-streams related to “Growing the Belfast Economy” which will be discussed at the proposed workshop.</li> </ul>
3.0	<b>Key issues</b>
3.1	<p>The City Growth and Regeneration Committee is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes and projects directed towards regeneration and growth of the city in the context of outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategy decisions.</li> <li>Oversight of the exercise of Council functions in relation to economic development, urban development, tourism, culture &amp; arts, European and international relations, car parks, city markets, city events, Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoo.</li> </ul>
3.2	<p>The Committee is currently working to an ambitious Committee Plan, aligned to the Council’s Corporate Plan and Belfast Agenda. The current plan was created after discussion with Members about the role of the Committee and its priorities for the City. The following priorities were agreed by Members in November 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy;</li> <li>The Employability &amp; Skills Framework (&amp; Year 1 Action Plan);</li> <li>Place positioning and maximising the opportunities for investment, tourism and regeneration;</li> <li>Integrated Tourism Strategy;</li> <li>Investigate the feasibility of a City Deal for Belfast;</li> <li>Develop a car parking strategy;</li> <li>Ensure the above strategies give consideration to connecting neighbourhoods to the city centre, ensuring that the whole city enjoys the benefits.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p>The Council is now entering a key phase of the strategic planning calendar when plans are reviewed and refreshed in order to inform priorities and decisions about resource allocation in the year ahead. It is therefore proposed that the Committee dedicates a workshop to take stock, review the progress to date and consider the priorities for the next year.</p>
	<b><i>Growing the Belfast Economy</i></b>
3.4	<p>Members have played a leading role in shaping the Belfast Agenda, the community plan for Belfast. The Belfast Agenda has at its core a commitment to inclusive growth. The</p>



Committee has played a key role in ensuring that the narrative of the agenda balances the need for economic growth with the purpose of this growth – to connect people to opportunity and reduce inequality.

3.5 The “plan on a page” summary of the Belfast Agenda (Appendix 1) – to which the Committee Plan is aligned - demonstrates the centrality of growing the local economy to improving quality of life in Belfast. The pillars summarising the city priorities (below), demonstrate the importance of the role that the Committee will play in ensuring that the Council’s contribution to implementing the agenda is maximised.



3.6 An update on emerging proposals to develop projects and programmes to support this implementation is set out below. These projects and proposals will be considered further at the Committee workshop.

***Attracting Investment and Positioning the City to be Competitive***

3.7 In an increasingly competitive global environment, Belfast must develop its distinct competitive advantage if it is to compete and successfully attract FDI, tourists, and business to the city as well as grow its own indigenous businesses.

3.8 Members have emphasised the importance of continuing to attract and support FDI to Belfast and the Council has been delivering on the Tourism Strategy Action Plan, developing a ‘Go to Market’ plan to attract investment and working with city stakeholders in the development of the International Relations Framework to ensure that this is focused on attracting investment and positive profile for Belfast. An update on the International Relations Framework is included as a specific item on the Committee agenda. To support some of this work, plans are in place to prepare for Belfast to attend MIPIM in 2017 and

proposals are being developed to create a city investor “landing service”. This is at an early stage and is based on discussions with city stakeholders and following a review of similar service provision in other UK and ROI cities. This service will provide a welcome and network of professional and other services for those businesses, investors and developers new to the city but also those indigenous businesses who are already committed and willing to grow and develop their business/investment in the city. An important element of the landing service will be a city ‘Concierge Service’ which would be welcomed by FDI clients given their lack of knowledge of the city and its quality of life - geographically, educationally, culturally and socially. This would be additional to support provided by Invest NI which focuses on attracting them to invest in Northern Ireland and would focus on helping them get to know the city. Closely linked to this service is a strong city message and proposition to attract businesses, investors and developers to select Belfast as their preferred location to locate, and grow, their business in.

- 3.9 Several cities including, Edinburgh, Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool and Dublin have set up and successfully operate such services. Taking forward such a proposal will build on the city’s distinctive qualities and requires a strong collaborative approach, on a city and city-region basis, with key stakeholders such as Invest NI, to maximise the added value and impact.

***Fostering Business Growth and Strengthening Business Relationships***

- 3.10 Equally important is growing our own small business sectoral and clusters economy. Members will be aware that, on 1 April 2015, Councils assumed statutory responsibility for a range of business start-up and growth functions. 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 support once operational, depending on growth needs (export development, marketing support etc.) The majority of the direct support to businesses is provided through the Development Department but the Council also interacts with and supports businesses across a range of operational areas including waste, food health, licensing, building control and planning.

- 3.11 Committee received a detailed report on the Council’s support for businesses at their meeting in August 2016 and work is underway to further consider the four proposals raised through the recent Notice of Motion to support businesses as considered by Committee. Progress on this work will be brought back through the Party Briefing process in the next month for further consideration. There are challenges for enterprise across the city linked to

	Employability and Skills in regard to promoting a culture of innovation and enterprise via early interventions within schools and colleges.
3.12	<p><b><i>Employability and Skills</i></b></p> <p>This will be a key focus for the Committee and Members have agreed to the development of a Belfast Employability Programme (Belfast Works) within a wider Employability and Skills framework. The SP&amp;R Committee in May 2016 approved the development of a Council-led employability model for the city. Work has started, putting in place resources to design a pathway, focusing on one or two employment partners to test the approach in the first instance. This is core to realising Members ambition to inclusive growth.</p>
3.13	<p>There are a number of significant policy changes which will have an impact on skills and employment demands in the next few years. The changes to Welfare Reform from 2020 will mean that many of those who were previously economically inactive (around 70,000 in Belfast at present) will have to seek employment. At the other end of the employment and skills spectrum, the potential reduction of Corporation Tax from 2018 had been predicted to create an additional 30,000 new jobs across Northern Ireland – with many likely to be located in Belfast. These jobs are likely to be in higher-end professional and financial services roles and will require higher level skills. At this point, there are significant funding pressures within universities and colleges and there are concerns that these budgetary pressures could impact negatively on the supply chain of talent to meet the demands of any new investment.</p>
3.14	<p>The Employability and Skills Framework highlights that this is a complex and multi-faceted issue. It is not just about education, training and employment. Rather it is impacted by a wide range of issues such as family cultures, health problems, mobility, access to childcare and welfare benefits. Equally, the deep-rooted nature of the economic inactivity challenge – and the fact that figures have improved only slightly even during periods of growth – suggest that making an impact will require a long-term strategic approach across a range of organisations. The Belfast Agenda and commitment of partners to work towards the vision for the city in 2030 provides a real opportunity to redesign how we do things in this area.</p>
	<p><b><i>Potential Neighbourhood Opportunities for Growth and Regeneration</i></b></p>
3.15	<p>Members have instigated the delivery of a major programme of capital investment and physical improvement across our neighbourhoods. In total this represents some £300 million of investment, including unprecedented investment in leisure estate, some of which is in the</p>

heart of our most challenged communities. Council officers have been working with partners to secure synergies with other major capital schemes, e.g. the stadia. People and Communities Committee have been looking at how these assets can improve the achievement of outcomes for local people in terms of reduced health inequalities and improvements to quality of life. Equally the opportunity exists to optimise the achievement of economic opportunities, including employability opportunities and the creation of better local tourism product.

3.16 There is room for the Council to build on the effective work undertaken as a result of the Investment programme which saw 503 permanent and 365 publicly advertised jobs; approx 200 work placements provided; pre-recruitment programmes and Social Investment Fund placements (SIF).

3.17 In addition to owning around 12% of the City's land, the Council also delivers its own capital investment programme which includes Leisure and the Belfast Investment Fund etc and also levers additional investment into the city. It is therefore in a strong position to place shape and maximise the use of assets to deliver outcomes. In particular the council's position as the planning authority gives much greater opportunity for the forward planning of effective and integrated interventions around employability.

3.18 At the proposed workshop Members will have a chance to consider how these opportunities can be maximised, building on work that has already been done. By way of example opportunities include:

- Andersonstown area approximately £150m is targeted for investment in a new leisure centre, Casement Park stadium and in the Belfast Rapid Transport schemes between 2017 and 2019, all of course subject to planning;
- The North Foreshore will be creating additional business over the coming years;
- Boucher Road which already is an economic driver will be enhanced with the Olympia and new Stadium Sports Village complex.
- The Gasworks has some further development to go and will have a future churn in terms of lettings as the NI Civil Service consolidates its office estate.
- The new Innovation Factory once operational and linked to other similar ventures such as Argyle, Ortus, Science Park etc. is another driver.
- There are a number of job opportunities being created at Maysfield via Allstate and

Concentrix.

- The Connswater Community Greenway is coming to completion and the East Belfast Partnership have already built a new tourism facility (with the assistance of Local Investment Fund monies) to attract and keep footfall in the area.
- Due to various Council investments there are quite a few new or due tourism type products being developed across the city to add to the existing attractions.

(Note this list is far from exhaustive)

3.19

As we move towards finalising plans and budgets for 2017/18, it is important that we consider what further actions we need to take to catalyse the economic potential of these projects and others across the city and their regenerative impact.

### ***City Centre Regeneration***

3.20

A core part of the Committee's work will continue to be maximising the impact of the City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy. The Committee is regularly updated on the key city centre projects which Members will continue to be engaged with as they develop. However similar opportunities will arise for employability programmes as these projects come to fruition.

### ***Maximising the Impact of the City Region***

3.21

Members will continue to lead work to ensure that benefits of city-region growth are maximised. Many of the city's economic challenges such as economic inactivity, skills and employability levels and low levels of business start up persist beyond the Council's geographic boundaries and will require a whole systems approach if they are to be addressed. Additionally, as the capital city and gateway to the region many of the key growth issues, such as the need for the effective infrastructure that supports growth also need to be considered and feature strongly in the Committee's agenda.

3.22

The Committee has also been at the forefront of influencing economic strategy at regional level through its discussion of the role of the city in regional growth and should note the intention of the NI Executive to consult on the draft Northern Ireland Economic Strategy in the autumn. The support provided by the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) in terms of regular economic briefings and as a 'critical friend' in the development of the Belfast Agenda and other strategies enhances the evidence base to enable Committee to fulfil its role. This support is in place for a two year period and renewal will be

	<p>subject to review and Committee decision by February 2017.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.23 The Committee Planning Workshop is being arranged to help shape the budget setting process for 2017/18 and the effective alignment of resources to priorities.</p> <p><u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>3.24 There are no direct implications at this stage; however, programmes and actions will be developed in conjunction with the Equality &amp; Diversity Officer.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
4.1	Appendix 1: Belfast Agenda ‘plan on a page’

**1.0 Create a city in which people love to live, invest, work and visit**

- Outcomes**
- 1.1 All people in Belfast benefit from a thriving and prosperous economy.
  - 1.2 Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all
  - 1.3 All people in Belfast experience good health and wellbeing
  - 1.4 All people in Belfast fulfil their potential.
  - 1.5 Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally friendly city.



- Fundamental enablers of success**
- 6.1 Strong city leadership
  - 6.2 Work closer together
  - 6.3 Join up resources and investments
  - 6.4 Citizenship

What we need to focus on  
Page 31

**This page is intentionally left blank**





<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Chamber of Trade & Commerce – Belfast Manifesto
<b>Date:</b>	14 September 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nuala Gallagher – Director of City Centre Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Michael McKenna – Urban Development Officer

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to bring to Members’ attention the Belfast Manifesto recently published by the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce. The Belfast Manifesto sets out the aspirations of the business community on how to improve the economy of Belfast and outlines the Chamber’s views for the forthcoming Programme for Government. The key points from the manifesto executive summary are outlined in the main body of this report. The executive summary is included in Appendix 1. The full manifesto document, which provides further detail on various city interventions, can be viewed using this link: <a href="http://www.belfastchamber.com/news-story/757/belfast-chamber-launches---belfast-first---manifesto">http://www.belfastchamber.com/news-story/757/belfast-chamber-launches---belfast-first---manifesto</a>
1.2	Council will be seeking to work together with the Chamber and the city’s businesses community to deliver a successful business and retail sector in Belfast. We will also support the Chamber in developing further key city and economic messages and programmes. As part of Council’s ongoing approach to supporting businesses in the city, particularly retail, we have commissioned Javelin group, retail experts owned by Accenture to update the retail study undertaken in 2015. This work considers the ongoing challenges faced by retail in the city centre and looks at the potential impacts of future city centre retail development, job creation and economic uplift as well as the potential risks in job losses and growth of large scale retail development taking place elsewhere. Committee will be updated on this work in

	due course.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The contents of the Belfast Chamber of Trade &amp; Commerce Belfast Manifesto and note the ongoing retail analysis undertaken by Javelin.</li> <li>- In terms of the rates issues which they have raised, this will be incorporated in our discussions on the rates review.</li> <li>- More detailed conversations are also required with the chamber on rating issues.</li> <li>- In terms of service delivery, the council will establish levels taking into consideration the new BID and its priorities.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p>The Chamber's Belfast Manifesto is strongly supportive of Belfast's regional role as the capital city and highlights that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 28% of all jobs in Northern Ireland are located in the city.</li> <li>• The city is the main centre of business in Northern Ireland with a primary catchment population of 1.8 million. This includes all of Northern Ireland as well as extending into parts of the Republic of Ireland.</li> <li>• 7.1 million high-spending visitors to the city each year, demonstrating the Lonely Planet's description of Belfast being a 'city on the rise'.</li> </ul>
3.2	<p>In line with Council's City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy the Manifesto makes the important point that promotion of Belfast is not in conflict with the economic prosperity and vitality of the rest of Northern Ireland.</p>
3.3	<p>The Manifesto has a number of requests which it breaks down into a number of categories, some of the key points are outlined below:</p> <p><i>Working Together</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An overarching Belfast Strategy to be located within the Office of the First Minister &amp; Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).</li> <li>- b. An overarching strategic framework for town centre regeneration with improved cross-departmental co-operation or alternative governance arrangements.</li> </ul>
3.4	<i>Planning for a Sustainable Future</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The urgent adoption of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5), which are critical to the protection of town and city centres.</li> <li>- In line with draft PPS5, consideration of a test to proposed out-of-town shopping centres, based primarily on the economic impact on existing retailers.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p><i>Fairer Business rates and Taxes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More consultation on rates with businesses, non-domestic rate payers who in Belfast pay some two thirds of the rates bill.</li> <li>- Consideration of business turnover as part of the rates evaluation process.</li> <li>- Welcome a reduction in Corporation Tax with caveats.</li> </ul>
3.6	<p><i>A Cleaner city for all;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognise that the Belfast ‘Streets Ahead’ project has improved the quality and appearance of our city centre but it is now important these high standards are maintained.</li> <li>- Calling on the Council to increase the level of its cleaning operation in the city.</li> </ul>
3.7	<p><i>Accessibility for all</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BCTC call on DRD to prioritise investment which will assist in enhancing Metro bus services through the provision of additional Quality Bus Corridors on arterial routes and bus priority measures within the city centre</li> <li>- Car parking tariffs to encourage short-term parking and where possible the movement of all-day parkers to Public Transport.</li> <li>- Strategic Park and Ride sites on the outskirts of the city similar to Cairnshill would help to deter car users from coming into the city.</li> </ul>
3.8	<p><i>Building a better city centre for all</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belfast Chamber would advocate that Regional Development, Planning and future Local Council Policy be directed to encourage people to live in our city centre.</li> <li>- Standards of excellence in urban design for the city</li> </ul>
3.9	<p>The Manifesto is broadly supportive of Council’s position regarding the status and regional role of the city and our desire to grow and enhance the city is shared by the Chamber. In many places the Manifesto supports council’s recent strategies including the draft parking strategy, the city centre regeneration and investment strategy and the high level aims of the Belfast</p>

	Agenda and city growth deal.
3.10	The Manifesto raises some important points regarding the how businesses and both local and central government work in partnership. The Council looks forward to working on these issues with the chamber with the shared aim of improving Belfast for all. The Full Manifesto document includes recommendations for various wide-ranging changes to city governance and accessibility which the Council will seek to engage with the Chamber on in order support our city business sector.
3.11	The Council is aware of growing concerns regarding the risks associated with any failure to strengthen the retail market in Belfast. On this basis Council have commissioned Javelin to undertake a retail analysis for the city which Members will be updated on in due course.
	<u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u>
3.12	None
	<u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u>
3.13	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
4.1	Appendix 1: The Belfast Manifesto – Executive Summary

# The Belfast Manifesto



## NIIRTA

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) strongly supports 'The Belfast Manifesto'. This should be required reading for election candidates to both Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Assembly if they are serious in a policy plan for the future development of our capital city.

NIIRTA's 1300 members have a collective turnover of £3 Billion and employ over 30,000 staff. We have members in every village, town and city in Northern Ireland.

Belfast makes a huge contribution to the Northern Ireland Economy, with 28% of all Northern Ireland's jobs based in the city. Belfast is rated within the top five fastest growing regional economies in the UK. The city has the largest and most diverse retail centre in Northern Ireland with a combined retail spend of more than £2.5 billion per year.

We commend our colleagues in Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce in publishing this document which complements our own manifesto, 'Programme for Prosperity'.

[www.niirta.com](http://www.niirta.com)



## Introduction

**Belfast is a modern, vibrant, self confident city. It is well recognized as a centre for business, industry, higher education, arts, a legal centre as well as being the economic engine for Northern Ireland.**

The **Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commence** is the leading provider of business support and networking on behalf of the entire city centre business community. We are the region's largest membership organisation for Belfast businesses owned by our members, managed by a council elected by our members and are completely independent of government. Some of our successful initiatives have included the 'City Centre Beat' scheme & 'Feel the Beat of the City' project which have tangibly delivered for our members and also helped to enhance Belfast City Centre.

The **Chamber's mission** is to ensure that our member's interests are considered in all decisions affecting the business and commercial life of the city and to promote Belfast as a leading UK retail, trade and leisure destination. Our priorities are to:

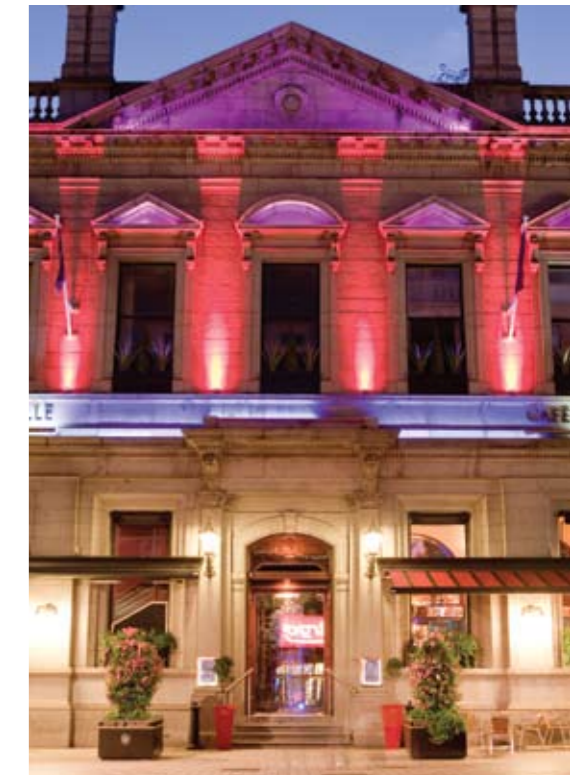
- Provide a rational and articulate voice for our members
- Represent members needs and views at local, regional and national levels
- Provide opportunities for contact and trade between members
- Work in partnership with other organisations to improve the prosperity of the city
- Consolidate Belfast's position as a leading UK retail, trade and leisure destination

## Belfast - A Shared Approach

The Belfast population elects just under a quarter of the Northern Ireland Assembly members. However, **Belfast businesses pay some 67% of the Belfast rates bill, and yet have no opportunity to vote in Council or Assembly elections.**

Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce has therefore produced **The Belfast Manifesto** to set out our views for the forthcoming Programme of Government.

This manifesto sets out the united views of the Belfast City Centre business community on how we can take Belfast forward. We strongly believe we all have a role to play and need to work closely with our elected representatives in order to build on the successes already achieved. We recognise we are in challenging times; however, this document presents key proactive opportunities which will not only help to improve Belfast city centre economy but will ultimately help to contribute towards delivering a sustainable and successful economy for everyone in Northern Ireland.



## Belfast - the key economic driver of Northern Ireland

As the capital city, it is important to recognise that the development of Belfast has a significant impact on the rest of the region as demonstrated by the following key facts:

- Over 28% of all jobs in Northern Ireland are located in the city.
- The city is the main centre of business in Northern Ireland with a primary catchment population of 1.8 million. This includes all of Northern Ireland as well as extending into parts of the Republic of Ireland.
- 1.1 million high-spending visitors to the city each year, demonstrating the Lonely Planet's description of Belfast being a 'city on the rise'.

### Key statistics

- Belfast is rated within the top five fastest growing regional economies in the UK.
- There has been £5bn of investment in Belfast and 35,000 new jobs created in Belfast in the last decade
- It is ranked fifth in the UK for retail trading conditions and fourth for retailer confidence (Gerald Eve: 'Prime Retail Report').
- In 2009, 52.9% of the working age population was in employment.
- In 2009, 5.9% of the working age population were unemployed.
- In 2007, there were 7,600 VAT registered businesses.
- It has a combined retail spend of more than £2.5 billion per year.
- Zone A rents were £195 in 2009, a change of -26.4% from 2008.
- There is 1 million square feet of vacant office space in Belfast.
- The average annual wage in Belfast is £27,000, compared to £19,000 elsewhere in NI

Sources:

DTZ report, Belfast City Centre Healthcheck 2007  
ATCM Milestone Report January 2011

## Government - working together

Working with the Northern Ireland Assembly there are opportunities to explore and deliver better ways for joined-up government with overarching strategies and an efficient public administration.

- Mindful that its promotion of Belfast is not in conflict with the overall economic prosperity and vitality of Northern Ireland the Chamber calls for:
  - a. **An overarching Belfast Strategy to be located within the Office of the First Minister & Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).**
  - b. An overarching strategic framework for town centre regeneration with improved cross-departmental co-operation or alternative governance arrangements.
  - c. An All Party Working Group on town centres should be formed at the NI Assembly
  - d. Implementation of the Review of Public Administration (RPA), providing local solutions to local issues, which is critical to the future of town centres.
- The failure to implement the Review of Public Administration in 2011 is a missed opportunity and the costs associated with delay are a cause for concern.
- The Chamber looks forward to working with:
  - a. The Northern Ireland Assembly and government departments in the development of regional policies and strategies that contribute to the success of Belfast city centre as a regional driver for the Northern Ireland economy.
  - b. An empowered Belfast City Council in the development of a Belfast Strategy, with clearly defined policies for the city centre, and in the daily operation and delivery of services in the city.

The Chamber welcomes the opportunity to engage with the Northern Ireland Assembly, its government departments and Belfast City Council to adopt the same innovative and 'can do' attitude as the private sector when faced with financial constraints.

## Planning for a sustainable future

The Chamber calls for improvements to be made to the planning policy in order to deliver the following benefits:

- **The land use planning hierarchy, from the Regional Development Strategy down to individual planning decisions, to be rationalised into one government department to ensure a coherent strategy with joined-up delivery.**
- The urgent adoption of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5), which have been left for considerable time in draft form are critical to the protection of town and city centres.
- In line with draft PPS5, a simple and transparent test should be applied to proposed out-of-town shopping centres, based primarily on the economic impact on existing retailers.
- The introduction of a 'Motive Test' in planning legislation should be applied to all applications for Judicial Review, to avoid unnecessary legal delays motivated by commercial interest.
- The requirement for active businesses frontages in city/town centre streets in order to add ambience and make areas attractive to visit/shop and work.

## Fairer Business Rates & Taxes

While businesses pay the greater share of taxes and rates, they have no voice in the electoral democratic system. The present lack of residential voters in Belfast city centre leaves those paying 67% of the Belfast rates bill without electoral influence

- **BCTC calls for legislation to require Local Government to consult with businesses, non-domestic rate payers who in Belfast pay some two thirds of the rates bill, before striking a rate.**
- **We call for non-domestic rates to be based, at least in part, on business turnover and not solely location and use.**
- BCTC would welcome a reduction in Corporation Tax to the level of 12.5% but only on the caveat that any associated reduction of the Northern Ireland Block Grant is phased in. The challenge and opportunity to the private sector to replace the unbalanced and unsustainable reliance on the public sector is to be welcomed.
- BCTC supports the Business Coalitions Jobs Plan document
- Vacant Non-Domestic Rates, which were launched in an entirely different economy, are now discouraging development and leading to inappropriate lettings in the zone A area city centre.
- Additional rates should be placed on car parks at out-of-town shopping centres to create a level playing field with town and city centres. These extra rates should be reinvested into Town Centre regeneration.

## A cleaner City for all

One of the most basic and essential functions of Local Government is to deliver a clean city. The Belfast 'Streets Ahead' project has improved the quality and appearance of our city centre and it is now important that we maintain these high standards and not lose the benefit of these works due to poor cleanliness.

- **Cleansing is a priority in terms of Council services. Belfast City Council should:**
  - Make a strategic change in priorities to double the present allocation of resources given to cleansing operations.
  - Carry the first round of city centre cleansing operations before 7am, when delivery vehicles then park in significant numbers.
- We call for a city centre free from litter, fly posting and graffiti and look forward to making a contribution to improving city centre cleanliness in future through Business Improvement Districts.

## Accessibility for all

- **BCTC call on DRD to prioritise investment which will assist in enhancing Metro bus services through the provision of additional Quality Bus Corridors on arterial routes and bus priority measures within the city centre.'**
- Significant numbers of city centre users still need to access the city by car. Car parking tariffs should be structured to encourage short-term parking, a high turnover in car parking spaces, and where possible the movement of all-day parkers to Public Transport.
- Strategic Park and Ride sites on the outskirts of the city similar to Cairnshill would help to deter car users from coming into the city.
- On-street parking should be removed from key commuter routes such as the Lisburn Road and Ormeau Avenue, with additional lanes restored where possible.





## Building a better City Centre for all

### Live in our city and town centres:

- Belfast Chamber would advocate that Regional Development, Planning and future Local Council Policy be directed to encourage people to live in our city centre.

### A managed & active city centre

BCTC supports Town Centre Management in the form of a public private partnership, to deliver a co-ordinated pro-active initiative designed to ensure that our city centre is desirable and attractive place.

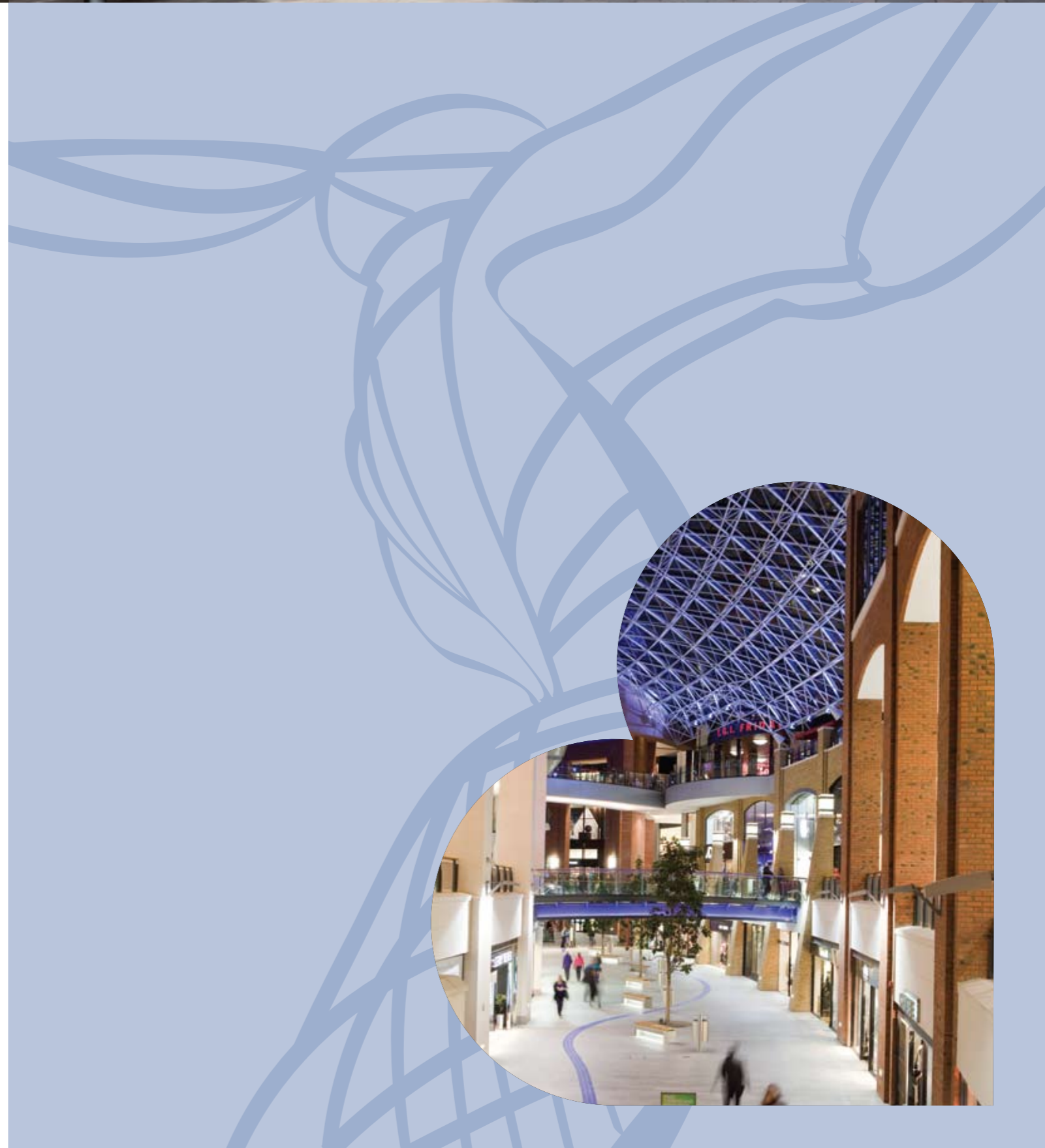
The economic vibrancy of Belfast city centre is dependent on successful town centre management that measurably contributes to:

- an environment that is clean and safe, by investing in maintenance and security
- added vitality through professional marketing and events programmes
- stimulating growth by inward investment and development and through work with existing businesses develop branding that stresses distinctiveness and changes perceptions
- celebrating local heritage through tourism and destination management
- increasing choice and diversity by promoting and integrating new amenities, residential development and the night-time economy
- ensuring that the town or city centre is welcoming to all and an experience worth having
- Regional and Local Planning Policy should focus on the protection of our active street frontages. PPS5 needs to be reviewed to include reference to active frontages and to the management of change. The new local development plans should also include place specific analysis that leads to place specific proactive change.

### Standards of excellence in urban design for the city

BCTC calls for the establishment of:

- Office of 'City Architect'
- A Belfast urban design centre
- Forum of city developers to ensure quality design.







Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce  
Sinclair House  
Second Floor  
95-101 Royal Avenue  
Belfast BT1 1FE  
T: 028 9024 2111  
F: 028 9023 0809  
E: [membership@belfastctc.com](mailto:membership@belfastctc.com)  
[www.belfastctc.com](http://www.belfastctc.com)



**This page is intentionally left blank**



<b>Subject:</b>	Refocus of the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy: Call for Evidence - Response
<b>Date:</b>	14 September 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Donal Durkan, Director of Development,
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Lisa Toland, Head of Economic Initiatives & International Development

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	Following the Assembly elections of May 2016 and the development of a draft outcomes focused Programme for Government Framework, the NI Executive has issued a 'Call for Evidence' to consider how the Economic Strategy should be refocused to reflect current economic conditions and developments in key policy areas such as the 'Fresh Start' political agreement to lowering Corporation Tax.
1.2	The call for evidence is a pre-consultation exercise received by Council on 4 August with a return date of 19 August. While an extension was secured until 31 August, this did not permit time for Committee to consider the response therefore, given the tight timeframe, an officer response was prepared and is attached as Appendix 1. This response was drafted taking account of the Council's position in relation to key strategies; primarily the response to the draft Programme for Government Outcomes Framework ratified by Council in July 2016, the draft Northern Ireland Economic Strategy in 2010 as well as the ongoing work on the Belfast Agenda and the Employability & Skills Framework (which was ratified by Council in July 2016).
1.3	Committee is asked to note that this is a pre-consultation exercise designed to enable stakeholders to submit views to inform the thinking of the Department for Economy prior to

	<p>the development of a draft Economic Strategy. The <b>draft of the refocused Economic Strategy will be subject to a full consultation process during the autumn</b> and members will have the opportunity to fully input to the consultation process. It is the NI Executive's intention to finalise the Economic Strategy along with the Programme for Government, Investment strategy, Social Strategy and budget later in the year.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Note the officer response to the pre-consultation Call for Evidence on the Refocus of the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy</li> <li>– Note that the draft strategy will be subject to consultation during the autumn 2016.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p>
3.1	<p>The Northern Ireland Executive's Economic Strategy, published in 2012, sets out the plans to grow a prosperous local economy in the short, medium and long term (to 2030). The ultimate aim is to improve the economic competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy by focusing on export-led economic growth. The vision for 2030 is: <b>'An economy characterised by a sustainable and growing private sector, where a greater number of firms compete in global markets and there is growing employment and prosperity for all'</b>.</p>
3.2	<p>The five key themes identified in the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stimulate <b>innovation, R&amp;D and creativity</b> so that we widen and deepen our export base;</li> <li>- improve the <b>skills and employability</b> of the entire workforce so that people can progress up the skills ladder, thereby delivering higher productivity and increased social inclusion;</li> <li>- <b>compete effectively within the global economy</b> and be internationally regarded as a good place to live and do business;</li> <li>- encourage <b>business growth</b> and increase the potential of our local companies, including within the social and rural economies;</li> <li>- develop a <b>modern and sustainable economic infrastructure</b> that supports economic growth.</li> </ul>
3.3	<p>The nine pre-consultation questions are structured around the vision, key objectives and themes contained in the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy and the key challenges moving forward.</p>

3.4	<p>The Council welcomes the call for evidence as a pre-consultation exercise to inform the development of the draft strategy. Consultation and engagement with stakeholders will be critical in shaping and delivering the Economic Strategy. It is important to recognise the significant role that local government has in delivering all the PfG outcomes and those pertaining to economic growth, particularly given its role in investing in the city, supporting economic development and regeneration.</p>
3.5	<p>The Economic Strategy, along with the Investment Strategy and Social Strategy, will be key to take forward the ambitions contained in the draft PfG outcomes framework.</p> <p>The response attached as Appendix 1 reinforces the Council's position in relation to the draft Programme for Government commitments, as ratified by Council in July 2016. In summary, the response highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The outcomes and critical indicators in the draft Programme for Government (PfG) that will shape the economic strategy refocus and the need for a whole systems approach to delivering these.</li> <li>- The Council's approach to inclusive economic growth which focuses not only on stimulating economic growth and creating jobs through investment in infrastructure and service provision, but also in ensuring that as many people as possible have access to those jobs through employability and skills initiatives.</li> <li>- Acknowledgement of the Economic Advisory Group's recent summary of Northern Ireland's competitiveness which reports an improvement in performance in terms of FDI job creation and the NI businesses are becoming more externally focused. While manufacturing is the largest export sector, there are also encouraging signs in the service sector.</li> <li>- The Council's support for business start-up and growth as well as developing a pipeline of measures to foster business growth, development and exporting potential. It also highlights the potential opportunity to 'piggy back' on existing export led initiatives and activities such as Belfast's International Relations Framework and collaborative initiatives such as Tech Mission and South-by-South West (SXSU).</li> <li>- The value of the service sector as an economic generator and as a source of employment. Tourism and hospitality is a major source of revenue and employment and critical in supporting the city and region in competing internationally. It also features strongly in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration &amp; Investment Strategy which includes a proposal to bring forward another world class visitor attraction to</li> </ul>

	<p>further enhance the city and regions tourism offering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A key challenge for Belfast and Northern Ireland is high levels of economic inactivity. The Council believes that social innovation provides a real opportunity to develop new innovative approaches to addresses this.</li> <li>- Business start-up activity needs to be encouraged and accelerated and therefore should be an integral aspect to rebalance the economy. Developing a culture of innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship at an early stage in the school setting will be important in supporting this.</li> <li>- The need for a whole systems approach; working across government, with the ‘education family’ and private sector to better align education and skills development with employer needs.</li> <li>- Creating the conditions for economic growth requires a co-ordinated approach to the delivery and resourcing of infrastructure and investment in the region.</li> <li>- Recognition of the role of cities in driving economic growth and highlighting that a successful Belfast city-region is vital to the well-being of the wider regional economy.</li> </ul>
3.6	<p>As outlined in the Council’s response to the draft ‘Programme for Government Outcomes Framework’, there is a huge opportunity to redesign how we work and to create a new collaborative partnership between central and local government to stimulating and securing inclusive economic growth. The Council’s role as a delivery agent for capital projects funded under a number of external initiatives including Building Successful Communities, Urban Villages and Social Investment Fund demonstrates the track record and ability of Council to successfully work in partnership with central government. The response also indicates that the local impact and role of Council in supporting economic growth could be further enhanced by the transfer of regeneration powers from the Department for Communities as previously planned for under local government reform.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no resource implications attached to this report.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no equality or good relations implications attached to this report.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
4.1	<p>Appendix 1: Draft Response to the Refocus of the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy: Call for Evidence</p>

**Appendix 1**

**Refocus of the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy:  
Call for Evidence**

## RESPONDENT INFORMATION

### Please complete the following information

Name:

Donal Durkan

Organisation (If Applicable):

Belfast City Council

Postcode:

BT2 8BP

Email address:

pattersonc@belfastcity.gov.uk

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Department for the Economy (DfE) will publish a summary of responses following completion of the call for evidence process. Your response and all other responses may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. Any automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by our IT system will be taken to apply only to information in your response for which confidentiality has been specifically requested. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraph below on the confidentiality of consultations and it will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this call for evidence .

The Department will handle any personal data you provide appropriately in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information about your identity should be made public or treated as confidential.

## CONSULTATION

The comments received in response to this call for evidence document will inform the development of the refocus of the Executive's Economic Strategy. It is the Executive's intention to undertake a further, formal consultation on the draft refocused Economic Strategy once this has been prepared.

**Responses should be sent to:**

**Department for the Economy**  
Economic Strategy Team



Room 124  
Netherleigh  
Massey Avenue  
Belfast  
BT4 2JP

Or to:  
[ni-economic-strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:ni-economic-strategy@economy-ni.gov.uk)

By 5.00pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August

For further information:

Tel: (028) 905 29478

The Department cannot accept responses by telephone. General enquiry calls may be made to the above number.

**Which of the following best describes you?**

Private Sector:

Public Sector:

Voluntary/Community Sector:

Individual:

Other (please specify):

**Please tick this box if you do not wish your response to be published.**

## REFOCUS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The Northern Ireland Executive's [Economic Strategy](#), published in 2012, sets out how the Executive plans to grow a prosperous local economy over the short, medium and long term to 2030. The ultimate aim of the Strategy is to improve the economic competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy through a focus on export-led economic growth.

It sets out a vision to 2030 of

**“An economy characterised by a sustainable and growing private sector, where a greater number of firms compete in global markets and there is growing employment and prosperity for all”.**

The five key themes identified in the Economic Strategy to rebalance the economy in order to improve wealth, employment and living standards in Northern Ireland are to:

- stimulate **innovation, R&D and creativity** so that we widen and deepen our export base;
- improve the **skills and employability** of the entire workforce so that people can progress up the skills ladder, thereby delivering higher productivity and increased social inclusion;
- **compete effectively within the global economy** and be internationally regarded as a good place to live and do business;
- encourage **business growth** and increase the potential of our local companies, including within the social and rural economies;
- develop a **modern and sustainable economic infrastructure** that supports economic growth.

The Economic Strategy was designed as a living document, to be kept under review. Following the Assembly elections of May 2016 and the development by the new Executive of a draft outcomes focused Programme for Government, the Executive wishes to consider how the Economic Strategy should be refocused to reflect current economic conditions and developments in key policy areas, including the commitment contained in the “Fresh Start” political agreement to lowering the rate of Corporation Tax and how we can ensure we maximise the economic benefits from a lower rate. The refocus of the Economic Strategy will also reflect the outcomes and indicators proposed in the Executive's draft [Programme for Government Framework 2016-2021](#)

The intention is that a draft of the refocused Economic Strategy will be the subject of formal consultation during the autumn before it is finalised along with the overall Programme for Government, Investment Strategy, Social Strategy and Budget later in the year. The Department for the Economy wishes to offer stakeholders and interested parties an opportunity to submit views to help inform thinking on the draft

Economic Strategy in advance of the formal consultation, hence this call for evidence.

The questions below are designed to help provide a structure for the submission of views on the development of the refocused draft Economic Strategy, however, you should not feel constrained by this format and the Department will welcome views submitted on any aspect of the Economic Strategy in any format.

## Vision, key objectives and themes

### Questions 1-4

#### 1. How can the Economic Strategy best take forward the direction set in the draft Programme for Government framework and in particular the proposed outcomes, indicators and measures in relation to aspects of economic policy?

The Council believes that adopting a whole system approach to developing the Programme for Government and associated strategies, presents a real opportunity for central and local government to coalesce to create strong connections and a common thread flowing through the creation of regional priorities and outcomes to local delivery plans. Ensuring such connections will be important in creating place-based solutions to delivering on the outcomes identified.

In adopting this whole system approach, it is therefore critical that the Economic Strategy directly addresses the outcome commitments contained within the Programme for Government.

<b>PfG Outcome No</b>	<b>Outcome statement</b>
1	We prosper through a strong, competitive regionally balanced economy
5	We are an innovative, creative society, where people can fulfil their potential
6	We have more people working in better jobs
10	We are a confident, welcoming, outward-looking society
12	We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest
13	We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure

The Council's response to the Programme for Government framework 2016-21 highlighted a number of critical success factors which also apply to the Economic Strategy:

- removing obstacles and barriers to joint delivery – e.g. need for greater fiscal flexibility, accountability and proper resource alignment by partners to shared outcome, priorities and actions.
- enabling and encouraging co-producing, joint delivery and shared accountability
- maximising the strengths and resources available to both central and local government to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of citizens.
- greater localism and empowerment to cities and city-regions.
- optimising the linkages between the Economic Strategy and the 11 new outcomes based community plans to ensure effective place-based delivery.

We acknowledge and support the commitment to a number of indicators which will underpin the action plan linked to the economic strategy re-focus. Critical indicators in this regard include:

PfG Indicator No	Indicator
14	Improve the skills profile of the population
16	Increase the proportion of people in work
18	Increase the proportion of people working in good jobs
21	Increase the competitiveness of the economy
22	Increase innovation in our economy
41	Increase the proportion of graduates moving into employment or on to further study

The Council welcomes the outcomes based approach and the clear commitment by the Executive to work with local government to tackle the biggest issues facing society. The Council and its partners have also taken an outcomes based approach to the development of the Belfast Agenda – the community plan for Belfast. This common approach means there can be complete alignment to the Executive’s vision. We would strongly commend that **local government has a significant role in delivering across all the PfG outcomes and including those pertaining to economic growth** particularly given its invaluable role in areas such as investing in the city, supporting economic development and regeneration.

At this point the Belfast Agenda is proposing five long term ‘outcomes’ for Belfast.

1. **All people in Belfast benefit from a thriving and prosperous economy**
2. Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all
3. All people in Belfast fulfil their potential
4. All people in Belfast experience good health and wellbeing
5. Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally friendly city

The Council is encouraging everyone with a stake in the city to determine how we can best achieve these outcomes by identifying our medium term priorities; common measures of success; and the necessary programmes and commitments we have to work together on to make them happen. Where possible the Council is seeking to **work across government to align planning processes and resources to co-design and deliver localised interventions and programmes which make a meaningful and lasting difference.**

The Council is seeking to work alongside the city partners and local communities to develop new integrated and **whole system approaches** to addressing many of the persistent and inter-generational challenges which exist across the city including seeking to address educational inequalities and economic inactivity.

To effectively take this approach we would suggest the following:

- Mechanisms need to be developed between regional and local partners to create effective linkages between regional and local government. This will require:
  - Sharing data and intelligence:** Consistency is required across Departments and Local Government concerning reporting and monitoring requirements against key economic indicators.
  - Flexible funding and delivery structures:** aligning Central Government and Local Government Funding to underpin local economic development (e.g. funding to colleges for business

growth)

- Outcomes, indicators and measures need to be better defined regarding types of business, types of jobs and types of skills to ensure longer-term sustainability aligned to growth sectors rather than volume based targets;
- Identification of clearer, more specific priorities (e.g. export markets and areas for R&D investment);
- Cultural and inter-generational challenges need prioritised e.g. worklessness, enterprise and entrepreneurship through early engagement initiatives and multi-layered approaches.

**2. Do you agree that the 2030 vision set out in the Economic Strategy remains valid? If not, have you any suggestions as to how that vision should be adjusted?**

The Council accepts that the key themes referenced in the Economic Strategy remain relevant; however, it is essential that there is a strong alignment to the delivery of the outcomes within the Programme for Government. The adoption of an outcomes based approach across central and local government means there can be complete alignment to the Executive's vision.

The Council's agenda and approach to economic growth focuses not only on stimulating economic growth and creating jobs through investment in infrastructure and service provision, but also in ensuring **inclusive growth** and as many people as possible have access to those jobs. Creating a strong, competitive economy requires growing the business base and sustainable jobs, increasing skill levels and improving infrastructure and connectivity in its widest sense, from connecting communities to opportunities as well as the region's external and internal connectivity.

While there has to be a focus on improving high value skills and job creation to boost productivity it is also essential to increase lower-level skills and jobs to address economic inactivity levels. Sectors such as healthcare and retail are the largest urban employers. Together with leisure and tourism these are important growth sectors for the region and Belfast, which will also have an important contribution to reducing the existing high levels of inactivity and unemployment. These sectors often provide employment opportunities at the lower end of the labour market and offer a potential entry route into employment.

**3. Do you agree that promoting export-led economic growth should remain the overarching priority for the Executive in its Economic Strategy? Please comment.**

Increased exporting is critically important to the recovery and ongoing sustainability of the Northern Ireland economy. The Economic Advisory Group's recently published Competitiveness Summary reports that Northern Ireland's performance has improved in the previous 5 years in terms of FDI job creation and that Northern Ireland businesses are becoming more externally focused. Manufacturing is the largest export sector, particularly in the food and drink, transport equipment and machinery sectors. It also reports encouraging signs in terms of the service sector.

Consideration will need to be given to a more radical approach to delivering on this objective and to putting in place the appropriate support structures to encourage small businesses to grow and develop to engage in export activity. A pipeline approach is required to engage companies in early stage pre export activity in order to support them as they begin and continue to operate in export markets. Alignment to research and innovation support is also key to ensure that local companies develop products and/or services which are able to compete on a global scale. The economic infrastructure must also enable such growth through the provision of key air routes, road infrastructure as well as the availability of skilled labour specifically aligned to export needs etc

This will include both first-time exporters and more experienced exporters seeking to explore new markets for their products. This may become increasingly important in light of the recent EU referendum result. Particular attention needs to be given to micro and small businesses – which dominate the economy (97% of NI businesses are registered as small and micro<sup>1</sup>). Councils have worked with this target group and have achieved much success in this regard. In Belfast, we worked with over 2,200 companies across a range of sectors in the last year. Specific sectoral initiatives in identified growth sectors are also in place to support the creative industries, advanced manufacturing, sustainable technologies and independent retail sectors. These companies require particular support to consider exporting their products and services.

In supporting business start-up and growth, the Council is keen to continue to develop a tailored **pipeline of support** for businesses to foster growth, development and exporting potential. **Opportunities to 'piggy-back' on existing export led activities and initiatives** e.g. Belfast's International Relations Framework **and collaborative initiatives** such as Tech Mission and SXSW should also be encouraged. **The recent Export Matters Forum has been successful to date in terms of communicating messages and initiatives for export and we would support its continuation.**

In addition to exporting, there is also considerable value in the service sector, both as an economic generator and as a source of employment – often for those with low skills levels. The tourism and hospitality sector is a major source of revenue and employment in the Belfast City Council area and in the wider region. Northern Ireland and Belfast are growing in relevance on the international stage with Belfast experiencing 1.4m overnights stays in 2015, and has now built a reputation for attracting major events to the city and region; such as the Giro d'Italia in 2014, and Tall Ships in 2015. With the recent development of the Belfast Waterfront as an international conference centre the number of business visitors to the city is expected to increase. The boost to the local economy is already in effect with 6 new hotels announced and at various stages of planning and development within the first 9 months of the Council taking responsibility for Belfast Planning Service. The Council is also working alongside central government and other partners to bring forward another **world-class visitor attraction** in the North East Quarter of the city centre which will further enhance the

<sup>1</sup> Invest NI Regional Briefing 2016



region's tourism offer, attract new tourism, investment and create jobs. The emerging tourism strategy for Northern Ireland is likely to focus on tourism as a key growth sector. **Given the significance of this sector and its potential for additional growth, it is proposed that this approach also finds direct expression in the Economic Strategy.**

**4. Do you consider the current rebalancing themes to be the appropriate drivers of growth to meet the longer-term challenges faced by the Northern Ireland economy? Please comment.**

Rebalancing Northern Ireland's economy to create significantly higher levels of productivity, reduce over-reliance on the public sector, grow innovation and exports, reduce levels of economic inactivity and grasp the potential that may be created through a lower rate of Corporation Tax; will take a multifaceted approach. This will need regional strategies, governance and support mechanisms to deliver many aspects of this goal. However differentiation of approach will also be needed on a geographic basis, as well as on a rural/urban level, if impact is to be maximised. The challenges and levers of change across Northern Ireland are not homogeneous, and therefore different interventions and approaches will be required at a local level. **It is therefore essential that mechanisms are put in place to enable placed-based solutions.**

Whilst Northern Ireland has a population of only 1.8million and is governed by a regional assembly and 9 newly formed government departments, there has to be a specific **economic focus on cities** and in particular Belfast to drive certain aspects of this growth agenda in a way that will benefit the wider region and realise the above outcomes. Belfast's relative competitiveness and ability to compete against other cities will impact on regional prosperity.

Belfast is top global destination for financial technology investments and Europe's leading destination for software development & technology support investment (fDi Markets 2015). Its key sector clusters are retail, legal, business and investment banking, capital markets and insurance. Good economic growth must be sustainable. It is essential that the whole region continues to benefit from the impetus provided by a competitive and successful city that can attract talent and investment, generate regional employment and opportunity and drive forward further growth in key sectors such as financial services/technology, legal services, cyber security, life sciences, advanced engineering, film/creative industries etc.

Belfast still needs to grow to compete. It needs to restructure the economy by diversifying its economic base, reducing its dependence on the public sector and increasing the size and efficiency of its private sector.

One of the key economic challenges experienced in Belfast is economic inactivity and the social exclusion this creates for residents within the city. This has and continues to be a long term economic challenge for the city which requires a radical approach to effectively address this position. Therefore, whilst the themes of rebalancing the economy are appropriate **consideration needs to be given to what will be done differentially to deliver a change resulting in "inclusive growth". Opportunities exist to look at innovative approaches to tackle this challenge through social innovation and co-production models.**

Low levels of business start ups is a specific challenge for Belfast, with historical underperformance

below the regional average and the city is currently ranked 63 out of 63 cities for business start up. **An opportunity exists to look at how supporting business start activity, specifically high growth business starts can be encouraged and accelerated, this should be integrated as a key theme of rebalancing the economy.** The current ERDF allocation of £1,000 per job is not a means through which the necessary longer-term support can be provided and measured. Business start-up levels are a key barometer of a city's competitiveness levels.

An additional forward looking priority for consideration is **creating entrepreneurs and economic leaders for the future** incorporating an enhanced curriculum of culture of innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship in the class-room, including increased exposure to positive role-models.

## **Key Challenges/ Way Forward**

### **Questions 5-9**

#### **5. How can the Economic Strategy ensure progress on improving the balance of growth and employment across the region?**

In July 2016, the Economic Advisory Group published an assessment of Northern Ireland's competitiveness<sup>2</sup>. As more competitive economies enjoy higher levels of growth action is required to boost relative competitiveness in order for the NI economy to grow which will deliver higher standards of living for the whole population. It states that the region must focus on longer term issues around competitiveness and that **the scorecard should continue to be developed and updated every two years to measure the effects of policy.** This will be critical to ensure progress is being made and to identify the opportunities and issues where policy interventions may be required to lever economic change in future. This needs to be considered by councils working in partnership with central government to maximise areas of competitive advantage for the region.

To drive prosperity across the region requires a differentiation of approach on a geographic basis, as well as on a rural-urban level, if impact is to be maximised. The challenges and levers of change across Northern Ireland are not homogeneous, and therefore different interventions and approaches will be required at a local level. It is therefore essential that **mechanisms are put in place to enable place-based solutions and to encourage greater collaboration at a sub-regional level to maximise the strengths of different 'place'.** For example, regionally Belfast is a major employment hub, for people living in and outside the city, almost one third of NI jobs are based in Belfast and this increases to 46% for the Belfast Metropolitan Area. 58% of people working in Belfast live outside the Belfast area<sup>3</sup>. Combined with its offer of retail, cultural, entertainment, educational and visitor opportunities, Belfast is likely to have a greater proportion of regionally significant opportunities – the benefits of such will extend well beyond the city boundaries. Within GB, and England in particular, cities have attempted to tackle low growth by joining together with neighbouring councils to form a city region or combined authorities, based on the functions of their local economic geography; securing complementary and mutually beneficial working relationships while avoiding unproductive rivalry. Northern Ireland economic growth success is significantly dependent on Belfast being a success. Any policy instruments that work against this will have a negative impact on regional growth.

Given the significant changes Northern Ireland is facing during the period of this Programme for  
<http://eagni.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/EAG-Competitiveness-Summary-Report.pdf>  
Government and Economic Strategy; such as the introduction of Corporation Tax, Welfare Reform and  
Invest NI Regional Briefing 2016

the impact of the UK leaving the EU, **it is essential to keep the Economic Strategy and the themes under review to ensure continued relevance and progress.**

**6. What are the key challenges for businesses and key sectors and how can the refocused Economic Strategy address these?**

One of the enduring challenges of the Northern Ireland and Belfast economy is the dependence on the public sector. It is three times as dependent as London and twice as much as many others. Stimulating and supporting private sector growth requires a strong impetus.

Whilst the Belfast economy has been resilient there are a number of persistent challenges around economic growth which also need to be addressed including, for example, an underdeveloped business start up environment with low entrepreneurship; a workforce which is strongly divided between the highly educated and the unskilled; an aging city urban infrastructure that needs to be renewed if it is to meet the demands of a twenty-first century economy (transport, sewage, business accommodation).

**Local Development Plans will be intrinsic to shaping the future economy across Council areas and on a regional level more informed future 'use of space' determinations could be made to help shape future economic growth potential.**

Economic inactivity is one of the most significant impediments to Belfast and the region maximising its economic growth potential, reinforcing the **need to revisit and implement the Economic Inactivity Strategy**. Within Belfast, it also contributes to the social cohesion challenge as sections of the Belfast population are unable to access the opportunities generated by new investment in the city. Despite significant levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Belfast – particularly in recent years – the new opportunities created in sectors such as financial and professional services and software development have had minimal impact on many of the city's more challenged neighbourhoods.

In 2013 a third of employers reported difficulty recruiting, half of those had difficulties due to lack of skills<sup>4</sup>. According to the 2011 Census, almost a third of the adult population in Belfast has no qualifications, (30.4% compared to 23.2% in the UK). Recent work undertaken by the Centre for Cities reports that cities are home to around 55% of the UK working age population; however, the high proportion of residents with no and low skills levels has significant implications for the economic success of the city and the region. Skill levels in Belfast have a significant impact on regional competitiveness. **Employer led skills approach is required to ensure education and training provision is aligned to employer requirements.**

In July 2016, the Council adopted an **Employability & Skills Framework** which acknowledges that the issue is not just about education, training and employment. Rather it is impacted by a wide range of issues such as family cultures, health problems, mobility, access to childcare and welfare benefits. Equally, the deep-rooted nature of the economic inactivity challenge – and the fact that figures have improved only slightly even during periods of growth – suggest that making an impact will require a long-term strategic approach across a range of organisations. The extensive engagement and research on the NI Economic Inactivity Strategy also reflects this position.

The Council would commend that there is a need to **work across government, with the education family and private sector to better align education and skills development with employer's needs**. There is also a need to link education, skills and careers advice with entrepreneurship and build a stronger local support package for business start-ups. Entrepreneurship is currently low within Belfast and Northern Ireland; creating an entrepreneurial culture is a goal within the Council's Employability & Skills Framework and needs to be built into career choices and embedded at an early stage in education.

The Council is working with partners to develop a **Employability Pathway Model (i.e. Belfast Works**

<sup>4</sup> BCC Employability & Skills Framework (2016)

**Scheme)** for the city which develop a whole system approach to **addressing economic inactivity challenges** by supporting those furthest from the labour market through to employment. We will work with employers to **identify, plan and prepare for emerging job opportunities**, alongside creating early intervention and skills development programmes, to enable access to and progression through employment. The Council believes that this approach is both scalable and transferable.

Key challenges for Belfast also include:

- Dominance of micro businesses: combined and renewed efforts are required to support the growth of the indigenous business community to enable them to grow, specifically in export markets;
- Need to scale businesses beyond micro- and small business size; limited role models of this type of business mean that companies can lack ambition somewhat and reduce their potential for growth and employment generation
- Complexity of the employment and business support environment creates barriers for provision and makes it difficult to clearly identify gaps in provision. To resolve this position a pathway model is required which includes the offer and provision from the range of providers, crucial in achieving this will be the ability of key partners to share data and intelligence.
- Key growth sectors for the city include financial and business services, tourism and hospitality, creative and digital industries etc. Whilst it is important that high growth sectors are supported it is also important that sectors such as hospitality, retail, care and social services are recognised for their importance to service and employment provision within the city. Therefore whilst investment has and should be directed towards high growth sectors, consideration should also be given as to how localised service type businesses can be supported particularly to encourage new employment and career progression paths.
- The availability of an economic infrastructure which supports growth is crucial therefore to support ambitions around export led growth the conditions to enable this growth must exist. Factors such as the availability of air routes, broadband, provision of Grade A office accommodation, supporting planning systems etc. will effectively enable or dis-able growth opportunities.

**7. What new activities should the Executive consider to help create the conditions for economic growth?**

The EAG's Competitiveness report for Northern Ireland (July 2016) highlights private sector GDP, government fiscal deficit/surplus, household disposable income, electricity generated from renewable resources and early school leavers. It concludes that the scale of the competitiveness challenge should not be underestimated and that levels of economic inactivity and benefit dependency remain persistently high.

There is a similar picture in Belfast, where Oxford Economics carried out a report on the city's competitiveness in 2016 and summarises that:

- the encouraging signs for the Belfast economy were noted as labour costs, house prices, improving infrastructure and a strong stock of graduate labour;
- the key challenges that need to be tackled for Belfast to be truly competitive are associated with chronically high levels of economic inactivity, low private sector activity relative to the public sector, and some major skills gaps.

While there have been improvements in terms of Belfast and the Northern Ireland economy, when compared to other OECD economies at a city and country level, there has been no real improvement. The EAG report goes as far as stating that the comparative position has worsened. It is therefore critical that attention and **resource focuses on tackling the persistent economic challenges.**

To create the conditions for growth requires a **co-ordinated approach to the delivery and resourcing of infrastructure and investment in the region** to ensure that the region can deliver on its ambitions for growth. This is particularly important for Belfast as the capital city and gateway to the region. As previously stated there has to be recognition of the strengths and distinctiveness of areas across the region to deliver effective place-making to benefit the region as a whole; for example through the 'clustering' of specific types of economic activity. It is important to recognise that Belfast is a regional asset and its continued development is to the benefit of all.

Consideration should be given to **co-commissioning of interventions** with the Council in order to maximise their effectiveness. Our unique ability to understand local communities and create solutions that will meet their complex needs should be harnessed by central government in order to tackle the highly complex social and economic challenges that many areas of the region currently face. More flexible ways of working need to be considered in order to ensure that interventions are timely, effective and responsive to both need and opportunity.

## 8. What should the Executive do to create a more effective partnership working approach to wider economic development?

Within an increasingly globalised economy, regional economic distinctiveness is a major source of comparative advantage and place matters. Belfast (Northern Ireland's capital city) has its own functional metropolitan economic area extending to the adjacent councils of Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid and East Antrim, Antrim and Newtownabbey, and Ards & North Down, accounting for over 51.6% of the total population of Northern Ireland, 57% of all jobs and 57% of the region's GVA. Belfast also has key relationships with Derry/Londonderry, Newry and Dublin. Engagement is currently taking place with Belfast and surrounding councils to assess the potential areas for collaborative working opportunities.

Combined with its offer of retail, cultural, entertainment, educational and visitor opportunities, Belfast is a key attractor and anchor for Foreign Direct Investment – the benefits of which extend across the NI Region. It is recognised that whilst people and certain parts of the FDI market will focus on cities as a place to locate there is a distinct role for regional and local government to work together to deliver a sustainable and inclusive model of growth for those key urban areas as well as ensuring that the wider region benefits and competes for specific sectors.

To grow the regional economy requires a focus on the functional economic areas at a sub-regional level to enable the appropriate strategic decisions and investments to be made. The OECD have identified that the quality of a city's governance structure is directly reflected in its economic strength. Metropolitan areas with fragmented governance structures can have up to 6% lower levels of productivity.

New governance structures could operate at a city-region level to support the delivery of the Economic Strategy and secure complementarity of purpose and delivery. These would have to be specific to Northern Ireland's local circumstances rather than simply a transferred model from GB and would require further exploration. However, **Community Planning offers the opportunity for neighbouring councils to work collaboratively to tackle shared economic challenges.** For example, councils in the Belfast-City region could develop shared responses to economic challenges through a joint economic forum, with regional employers and public sector partners to tackle priority areas for regional economic growth such as **skills, infrastructure and growth.**

### Cities Matter for All

Successful cities have become the main source of both national and global economic productivity. **A successful Belfast city-region is vital to the future wellbeing of everyone living in Northern Ireland.**

In particular, Belfast provides key networking and connectivity functions for the region as a whole and as a key attractor for inward investment creates jobs and significantly contributes to the wider economic growth and prosperity across Northern Ireland. The 'clustering' of specific types of economic activity in and around Belfast provides beneficial agglomeration effects which are vital to increased productivity in the city-region and NI as a whole. It is important to recognise that Belfast is a regional asset and its continued development is to the benefit of all.

**Belfast is not currently competitive as a city** and if current levels of performance are maintained, Belfast and, in turn, Northern Ireland will fall further behind its global competitors. Other city-regions are growing at pace and recent studies showing the impact of **city-region approaches in**

**effectively attracting foreign investment, small business clustering, matching skills to employers needs connecting people to opportunity**, and putting in place vital **infrastructure** necessary to compete.

**A “city region” focus can enable many of the economic and social outcomes listed in the PfG to be achieved.** This is evidenced by the UK Government’s promotion of the Northern Powerhouse and the investment in high speed rail projects (HS2 and HS3), and on the island of Ireland with the significance of Dublin as the engine for growth for the rest of the country. Relationships between cities in their own right are also crucial as they can jointly market their brands and unique selling points.

Belfast has its own functional metropolitan economic area extending to the adjacent councils of Lisburn & Castlereagh, Mid and East Antrim, Antrim and Newtownabbey, and Ards & North Down, **accounting for over 51.6 per cent of the total population of Northern Ireland, 57 per cent of all jobs and 57 per cent of the region’s GVA.** Creating a city-region focus at this scale will better enable many of the economic and social outcomes defined in the draft PfG to be achieved.

If Belfast is to realise its potential as a competitive and successful regional driver then the aim must be to grow the City population, the Greater Belfast city-region population, and, the population along the economic corridors significantly over the next twenty years or so.

The Council seeks the **early transfer of regeneration powers**, as previously intended with local government reform, and believes that this would provide important tools (levers) to support the physical, economic and social regeneration of the city and its neighbourhoods. It would also be a key enabler in helping to secure investment, deliver major development schemes and revitalise the city centre

## **9. What role can your organisation play in contributing to the Executive’s economic ambitions?**

As outlined in the Council’s response to the Programme for Government the Council believes that the Programme for Government, Economic Strategy, Investment Strategy and Social Strategy present a huge opportunity to redesign how we work and to integrate collective energies and resources to create a new **collaborative partnership between central and local government** which supports co-production and shared delivery.

Cities are increasingly reliant on the gathering and analysis of real-time data to support effective decision-making, citizen-focused services and the optimisation of resources. A ‘smart city’ approach seeks to ensure that the necessary integrated physical and digital technologies are in place. Belfast City Council has committed to investing in a **‘Smart Belfast’**. We aim to work with government, our local universities and commercial digital partners to put in place the necessary building blocks that will allow the city to adopt innovative technologies and big data analytics to better understand complex challenges and to help us design citizen-centric services and solutions.

Over the next twelve months we will create a ‘smart city’ framework that will put in place a roadmap to enhance and exploit Belfast’s digital infrastructure and ‘Internet of Things’ technologies. We also



want to foster a city culture where managers can work with businesses, residents and stakeholders to gather, manage, interpret and exploit city data for social outcomes while delivering an economic return. During the development of the framework we aim to deliver a number of pathfinder projects. We believe that this area of work demonstrates the **importance of collaborative opportunities across sectors and builds on the ICT/FinTech growth sectors** for the future. Again the **Council would commend that this approach is encouraged and supported through the Economic Strategy.**

### **INVESTING IN THE CITY**

The Council has a significant role in helping to develop and deliver the new **Investment Strategy** and revised **Economic Strategy** for Northern Ireland and in maximising the impact of future investment at both a local and regional level.

The Council and elected Members have set out ambitious targets for supporting the continued investment in the city and stimulating economic growth and prosperity of Belfast and wider city-region and is currently delivering £400million+ physical investment programme including, for example:

- £185m capital programme currently being delivered across the city
- £105m Leisure Transformation Programme—enhance leisure services & facilities across city
- £27m Belfast Investment Fund – to support landmark capital schemes
- £18.8m City Centre Investment Fund – to support projects that will revitalise city centre
- £9m Local Investment Fund – to support community based capital projects
- £4m Social Outcomes Fund – to support Social Enterprise Growth

It will be important that we seek to align and maximise the synergies with the investment priorities for the city and seek to integrate, where possible, with established Council funding streams.

The council is already working in partnership with central government to deliver a number of NI Executive priorities including its recent designation as the delivery agent for a range of capital projects funded under a number of external initiatives including Building Successful Communities (BSC), Urban Villages (UV) and the Social Investment Fund (SIF). These requests recognise both the **successful track record of the Council as a delivery agent for capital projects** and also the uniquely placed role of the Council as a civic leader in the city.

The Council has a demonstrable track record in delivering and supporting major projects over the last 5 years – Belfast Waterfront; Girdwood Community Hub; Innovation Factory; Connswater Community Greenway; and many others – all of which impact across all of the outcomes listed in the PfG.

The role of council in this regard and the local impact could be even further reinforced through the **transfer of regeneration powers from the Department for Communities** as previously planned for under local government reform.

### **CITY CENTRE REGNERATION – NORTHERN IRELAND’S ‘FRONT DOOR’**

The importance of the city centre as a regional gateway, an investment location and key driver for economic growth cannot be overlooked. It is the face we present to the world and provides the impetus to those thinking of investing, living and starting businesses here. **Its success drives the prosperity of the whole city and region.**

The **Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS)** sets out our collective

ambitions for the continued growth and regeneration of the city core and its surrounding areas up until 2030 and sets the key drivers of change and **key investment priorities including:**

- The **Transport Hub** and surrounding regeneration scheme - €193 million redevelopment of the existing rail and bus station, and 100,000 sq metres of mixed use development
- The **North East Quarter** (including Royal Exchange) – partnership with the private sector to ensure delivery
- **York Street Interchange** – the current plans for the £160million York Street Interchange be carried through and prioritised within the emerging NI Investment Strategy
- Creation of a new **World-Class Visitor Attraction ‘Telling the Belfast Story’** – which will significantly enhance the regions tourism offering, attract more visitors and increase the tourism spend in the regional economy.
- **Delivery of Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 3** – £32million regeneration scheme which will revitalise the city centre, creating new streetscape, open space and connect with other key developments including the University of Ulster scheme. The **Council has already committed £5m** contribution towards this redevelopment of Cathedral Gardens
- **East Bank** – working with partners, including the private sector to maximise the investment potential of this key development area (including Queens Quay and Sirocco). Opportunity to attract significant investment and jobs and to reconnect the location with the city centre, Titanic Quarter, the Harbour as well as to the adjoining neighbourhoods



<b>Subject:</b>	Exploratory Drilling in Woodburn Forest – Update
<b>Date:</b>	14th September, 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Siobhan Toland, Lead Operations Officer/ Head of Environmental Health
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Louise McLornan, Democratic Services Officer Alastair Curran, Scientific Unit Manger Stephen Leonard, Environmental Health Manager (Env. protection)

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	This report is to provide Members with an update on the outcomes from the Special meeting, which took place on Monday, 27th June, in relation to the exploratory drilling in Woodburn Forest.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the report and to take such action thereon as may be determined.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	Members will recall that the Committee, at a Special meeting on 27th June, had agreed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. to formally invite InfraStrata to a future meeting;</li> <li>2. that RPS, as the agents for InfraStrata, also be invited to that meeting;</li> <li>3. that clarification be sought from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency</li> </ol>

(NIEA) on the reference to alleged oil spillages;

4. that Stop the Drill provides the evidence as referred to by them as outlined previously; and
5. that officers continue to engage with the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in relation to this issue, insofar as is possible with the ongoing judicial review.

### **1 – InfraStrata**

3.2 The Committee had agreed to invite, once again, InfraStrata to attend a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, in relation to the drilling at Woodburn Forest.

3.3 A response has now been received from InfraStrata, which sets out the reasons why it is unable to attend. The response is attached at **Appendix 1**.

### **2 – RPS Group**

3.4 The Committee had agreed to write and invite the RPS Group, as agents to InfraStrata, to attend a future City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

3.5 A letter was sent to the RPS Group on 6th July, but, to date, no response has been received.

### **3 – NIEA clarification on the reference made to oil spills**

3.6 The Committee agreed that officers should seek clarification from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in relation to the oil spills which were discussed with NI Water at the Special meeting.

3.7 A copy of the relevant results are attached at **Appendix 2**.

### **4 – Evidence from Stop the Drill**

3.8 The Committee agreed that the Stop the Drill campaigners should submit the following evidence for their consideration:

- details on the oil spillage from March, 2016;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Project documentation which stated that Biocide T was hazardous; and</li> <li>• the document on the policing of the site, from February to June 2016.</li> </ul>
3.9	<p>Their response and the associated documents are attached at <b>Appendix 3</b>.</p>
	<p><b>5 – Continued engagement with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council</b></p>
3.10	<p>The Committee agreed that officers should continue to engage with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council on this issue; however, it was also mindful that there was a judicial review ongoing.</p>
3.11	<p>The judicial review proceedings remain ongoing. Mid &amp; East Antrim Council have agreed to hold a member information workshop with the company responsible for this project and the proposed Islandmagee gas storage project.</p>
3.12	<p>Infrastrata were due to reinstate and exit the borehole site by 8<sup>th</sup> August but was granted an extension to August 22<sup>nd</sup> by Mid &amp; East Antrim due to the July holidays. A further extension has been granted until the 16<sup>th</sup> September on the grounds of wet weather.</p>
	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.13	<p>There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.</p>
	<p><b><u>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications</u></b></p>
3.14	<p>None.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
4.1	<p>Appendix 1 - Response from Infrastrata  Appendix 2 – NIEA results  Appendix 3 – Stop the Drill response</p>

**This page is intentionally left blank**



InfraStrata plc  
80 Hill Rise  
Richmond  
Surrey  
TW10 6UB. UK

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 8332 1200  
Facsimile: +44 (0) 20 8332 1963  
Email: [info@infrastrata.co.uk](mailto:info@infrastrata.co.uk)  
Website: [www.infrastrata.co.uk](http://www.infrastrata.co.uk)

Louise McLornan  
Democratic Services Officer  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall, Belfast  
BT1 5GS

11th July 2016

Dear Ms McLornan,

**SUBJECT: EXPLORATORY DRILLING AT WOODBURN FOREST**

Thank you for your letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to attend a meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of Belfast City Council in relation to Woodburn Forest however we can confirm that we will be unable to attend.

The drilling activities at Woodburn Forest have now been completed.

The process of oil and gas exploration is a highly regulated business and a number of different approvals are required from several statutory agencies before any exploratory oil and gas drilling can be undertaken in NI to ensure there are no real let alone significant risks to the environment if the various conditions governing the exploratory process are complied with.

All the required statutory approvals from the relevant statutory agencies, which included the (as then) Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Department for Environment (DOE) Strategic Planning, DoE Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland and Mid and East Antrim Council, were in place for the drilling of the Woodburn Forest well.

It is important to note that oil and gas exploration and exploitation is nothing new. It has been carried on in Great Britain safely for over 70 years. In Great Britain today, there are 120 onshore sites in production which 250 operating wells producing between 20,000- 25,000 barrels of oil equivalent a day.

Figures released in 2014 suggest there have been over 2,000 oil and gas exploration and production wells drilled onshore in Great Britain (many of which in much more highly sensitive areas than Woodburn Forest), excluding further deep wells for water, salt, coal and geothermal exploration. In addition there have been more than 8,000 exploration and production wells drilled offshore in Great Britain for oil and gas.

Thus the business of conventional exploration is tried and tested. Indeed in Northern Ireland there have been approximately 18 petroleum exploration deep wells drilled

Continued...2

safely over a number of years and many more if exploration wells for coal, geothermal and salt are included.

While the drilling at Woodburn Forest did not ultimately prove successful it was carried out as planned, with no harm to the environment and we sincerely hope that at some point in the future Northern Ireland will be able to take advantage of the economic benefits that could flow from any future discovery of oil or gas.



Andrew Hindle

Chief Executive Officer



# Pollution Incident Report

WR 4/16/0706

Oil Pollution at Woodburn Carrickfergus

**Call Received:** 27/03/2016 20:42:00

**Pollution Observed:** 27/03/2016 19:10:00

**Investigation Date && Time** 28/03/2016 11:15:00

**Pollution Confirmed?** True

	<b>Initial Severity</b>	<b>Confirmed Severity</b>
<b>X Cor:</b>	Low	Low
<b>Y Cor:</b>		

**Polluter Confirmed?** False

**Farm Bus ID :**

**Pollutant Category** Oil  
Oil Hydraulic fluid (mineral)

**Source :** Other

**Pollutant Cause :** Unknown

**Fish Kill Severity :** **Kill Count**

# Pollution Incident Report

WR 4/16/0706

Oil Pollution at Woodburn Carrickfergus

## Investigation Report

found only a very small quantity of mineral oil in a small waterway adjacent to where works had been ongoing. We notified staff on site but did not feel any other action was required.

# Pollution Incident Report

WR 4/16/0780

Oil pollution from drilling site at Woodburn

**Call Received:** 10/04/2016 20:00:00

**Pollution Observed:**

**Investigation Date && Time** 11/04/2016 09:00:00

**Pollution Confirmed?** True

	<b>Initial Severity</b>	<b>Confirmed Severity</b>
<b>X Cor:</b>	Low	Low
<b>Y Cor:</b>	337801 391067	

**Polluter Confirmed?** True

**Farm Bus ID :**

**Pollutant Category** Oil  
OIL Other

**Source :** Industry

**Pollutant Cause :** Unknown

**Fish Kill Severity :** **Kill Count**

# Pollution Incident Report

WR 4/16/0780

Oil pollution from drilling site at Woodburn

## Investigation Report

3 complainants reported on Sunday night having seen oil on Sunday afternoon (dry and sunny). Investigation on Monday morning (wet day) found a small light film of oil running off the site from an area just inside the access gate and down the road along with some suspended solids being washed off the access lane (see photographs). The runoff was entering a waterway approximately 350m down the road. At this point there was no visible oil but there was still a cloudiness caused by the suspended solids.

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

**Document is Restricted**

**This page is intentionally left blank**