

# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 8th February, 2017

## MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Graham (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Haire, McGimpsey and Spence; and  
Councillors Beattie, Boyle, Dorrian, Dudgeon,  
Hargey, Howard, Johnston, Magee,  
Mullan, O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;  
Mr. D. Durkan, Director of Development;  
Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Development;  
Mr. G. Copeland, City Events Manager; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Alderman L. Patterson and Councillors McAteer and McDonough-Brown.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 11th and 24th January were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st February.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### Restricted Items

**The information contained in the following 3 reports is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

### Capital of Culture

The Chief Executive advised the Committee of the possibility of the Council submitting a joint bid with Derry City and Strabane District Council to become the UK host for the 2023 European Capital of Culture.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor Howard,

That the Committee agrees to refer the issue to the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 17th February, to allow party briefings to be offered on the issue in the interim.

On a vote by show of hands twelve Members voted for the proposal and one against and it was declared carried.

The Committee also agreed that a further report would be submitted to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 8th March.

### **Blackstaff Square**

(Mr. P. Williams, Director of Planning and Place, attended in connection with this item)

The Director of City Centre Development outlined to the Members the plans for the Blackstaff Square area. She highlighted that no additional money was required as the work had been accounted for in the recent budget process.

In response to a Member's point regarding the need for a joined up approach between the developer and the utility companies, in order to avoid newly developed areas being dug up soon after their completion, the Director confirmed that this would be included in the terms of the contract.

The Director, in response to a further Member's question, advised the Committee that, with the planned pedestrianisation of Amelia Street, the Black Taxi pick-up point would remain where it was until a new location had been identified by the developers of the Transport Hub.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the proposed approach to the Phase 1 implementation of the Linen Quarter Vision and Guidance;
2. noted that developer contributions had been obtained for public realm work in the Linen Quarter area and noted the importance in making progress in utilisation of these contributions;
3. agreed to allocate £100,000 from the City Centre Development Team budget; and
4. agreed that a request to tender the contract would be included in the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee report on contracts.

### **City Investment Fund**

The Director of City Centre Development provided the Members with an overview of the intention to use the City Centre Investment Fund to further invest in the city centre in order to address market failure in the current financial climate. She explained to the Committee that the Council would receive an agreed financial return from any investment in addition to the amount which the Council had loaned.

The Committee noted the report, pending approval by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, for the use of the City Centre Investment Fund to support the new build developments as outlined.

### **Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure**

#### **Regeneration Best Practice Visit**

The Director of City Centre Development reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 7th December, 2016, it had agreed to undertake a regeneration best practice study visit in April 2016. The Members noted that the aim of the visit was to develop insight from relevant regeneration projects, to consider key lessons for Belfast, and how they could best be applied.

She outlined to the Members that the study visit would incorporate meetings with Executive Members and Directors from both Leeds and Manchester Councils. The Committee was advised that the visit would include an informal evening function with Manchester City Council, subject to their availability, offering the opportunity to network with counterparts and generate further insights from the Manchester experience.

The Committee was advised of a range of examples of best practice which would be included on the study visit, including:

#### Manchester, Tuesday, 25th April, 2017

- “Manchester Piccadilly” as an example of a Transport Hub;
- “Spinningfields, New Bailey and Chapel Street” as an example of Grade A office/City centre Living and Phased Regeneration;
- “Home” which was relevant to the Belfast Story/Creative District;
- “The Lowry/BBC Salford” which was relevant to the Belfast Story and the relocation of the BBC; and

#### Leeds – Wednesday, 26 April, 2017

- “Victoria Gate” which was relevant to Royal Exchange;
- “Leeds BID” which was relevant to City Animation/Interim uses; and
- “Southbank” in terms of masterplans and city centre regeneration.

The Director reminded the Committee that, to gain maximum benefit, it was proposed that a half day workshop for delegates be held prior to the Committee meeting on Wednesday, 12th April. She advised the Committee that this would allow delegates to discuss projects and would give the Members an opportunity to consider key questions and issues in advance.

The Committee was advised that the approximate cost of the Best Practice visit would be £5,000 and this would be met from within existing City Centre Budgets.

The Committee approved the draft agenda and dates for the Best Practice visit and agreed that one Member from each party would form the delegation.

**Belfast Partners Event - London**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of an event taking place in London at the end of February 2017 to promote engagement between business contacts in Belfast and London and to recommend attendance at the event by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the upcoming Belfast Partners event in London on 28 February 2017**
- Approve attendance at the event by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, or their nominees, along with appropriate senior officer representation.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Members will be aware that, at the December meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, an update was provided on a range of lobbying and business development activities that had taken place in London in the previous month. These included the work to secure a City Deal for the City, with a presentation to political representatives in Westminster and other relevant influencers. Members were also alerted to the work of the Belfast-Partners Network in London. This is a newly-established, independently-run business networking initiative that seeks to make business linkages between companies and leaders in both Belfast and London.**

**3.2 The formal launch of this network is planned to take place in London on 28 February 2017. This event will be hosted at the headquarters of the global communications business Thomson Reuters in Canary Wharf. It will be attended by more than 150 interested individuals from both cities and there will be an opportunity for the Council to make a positive pitch about the real estate investment opportunities available in Belfast as well as promoting the opportunities for foreign direct investment, particularly the emerging and**

growing specialisms such as cyber security, legal services and business and professional services.

- 3.3 The programme for the launch event is currently being finalised. At present, it is proposed that there will be input from Belfast City Council, profiling positive investment messages about the City as a business destination. There will also be input from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, James Brokenshire MP and there will be a contribution from an existing investor in the City. This is likely to be a company working in the financial and professional services sector. They will focus on the business benefits of a Belfast base and will look at how the City can offer a positive solution for a range of support services for a business working in a global operating environment. Belfast provides a very attractive alternative or complementary location to London and Dublin. This could be a particularly important 'sell' for Belfast in the post-Brexit time as it is being reported that a number of financial institutions are considering moving operations out of London and Belfast can provide an alternative proposition.
- 3.4 Following the formal input, there will be an opportunity for networking with those in attendance. The current RSVP list has more than 200 representatives from companies across a range of sectors including financial services, legal services, investment services, education and training, construction and asset management. The organisers expect that more than 150 will attend on the evening.
- 3.5 The event will be used as a platform to promote the range of investment opportunities in the City as well as emphasising the importance of Belfast as a cost-competitive destination with a well-educated workforce and a commitment to working together to deliver results. It will act as a launch pad for the MIPIM event which will take place in Cannes, France in mid-March 2017 and will also provide an opportunity to re-engage with some of the City influencers to help progress the City Deals proposition for Belfast.
- 3.6 Following the event, a report will be brought back to a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee to update on the outcomes of the event and to set out opportunities for the way forward for our future engagement with the Belfast Partners network and our wider connections in London.

**3.7 Financial and resource implications**

Travel and subsistence costs for the Chair and Deputy Chair to cover attendance at this event will not exceed £1,000. These costs will be met from existing Departmental budgets.

**3.8 Equality and good relations implications**

No specific equality or good relations implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Belfast Visitor Attraction**

The Committee considered undernoted report:

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

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

- Update Members on the ongoing development of proposals for a new visitor attraction for Belfast City Centre.
- Outline next steps and proposed programme of work.

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the contents of this report and proposed next steps.
- Agree expenditure of up to £120,000 to be taken to SP&R to approve procurement process.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Background**

Members will recall that in January 2016 approval was granted to undertake feasibility work on a major city centre cultural and visitor attraction with further updates provided to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in June 2016 and September 2016.

**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 In addition to these strategic drivers there is also an opportunity to align with emerging international opportunities. This project will be critical in making the case for Belfast by communicating the level of ambition, commitment and investment in delivering world class and authentic cultural experiences.
- 3.4 Feasibility work is ongoing and to date this work has largely considered the proposal under three priority areas:
- The need for regeneration and community cohesion
  - The need to enhance the tourism offer of the city
  - The need for innovation and skills development to help grow the economy
- 3.5 An initial concept study and economic impact report have been completed and early indications are that such an attraction could result in a step change in the visitor economy resulting in significant increase in overnight stays, dwell time and spend in the city including:
- 24.7 % growth in overnight stays
  - 29.8% growth in number of nights stayed
  - 10.5% growth in spend per night
- 3.6 Further catalytic impacts include the potential for the hub to signpost to and support the existing cultural and tourism infrastructure in the city and the region.
- 3.7 This work culminated in the completion of a Strategic Outline Case recommending that options were taken forward into Outline Business Case.
- 3.8 The Strategic Outline Case has taken into consideration existing or emerging plans for other infrastructure projects within the cultural and tourism sectors and assessed these against six key objectives:
- Regeneration: to develop a landmark city centre destination, increase footfall to area and increase footfall/visitors to neighbourhood attractions.
  - Positioning: to promote Belfast's inter-national reputation as a world class visitor destination.

- **Economy:** to become a catalyst for investment helping to stimulate sustainable economic activity and increase victory economy related employment offer.
- **Community:** to engage in Northern Ireland's culture and heritage through the medium of art, cinema and storytelling.
- **Learning:** to promote learning and skills by establishing strong community and educational linkages.
- **Innovation:** to support clustering, shared working and showcasing of digital and creative talent.

**3.9** The recommendation is that further detailed work should be undertaken to examine the viability of taking forward a single project incorporating a number of key component parts including:

- **Belfast Stories** visitor attraction
- **A film centre** including a cultural cinema
- **Permanent and temporary exhibition space** that can accommodate and support collaborations with major international artists and cultural brands
- **A shared space for cultural / digital / media skills development**
- **Commercial space for retail, food and beverage**

**3.10** Alongside this consideration has also been given for a dedicated gallery in the city and this will be brought forward into any future options appraisal. Belfast City Council continues to work closely with National Museums of Northern Ireland and the Arts Council for Northern Ireland on this proposal.

**3.11** The work to date on developing a new visitor attraction has engaged with a number of key organisations through a steering group including representatives from:

- **Belfast City Council**
- **Department for Communities**
- **National Museums of Northern Ireland**
- **Arts Council of Northern Ireland**
- **Northern Ireland Screen**
- **BBC NI**
- **Libraries NI**

**3.12** **Key Issues**

**In line with the strategic outline case it is recommended that a work programme is taken forward over the next 18-24**



months to assess the viability of a new visitor attraction and assess a series of options. This approach is considered standard and has been adopted by other cities when developing a multi-stakeholder proposition including local examples such as Titanic Belfast.

**3.13 This work programme will include:**

- Development of the visitor attraction concept including a detailed design exercise.
- 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.
- Masterplanning and delivery options.
- Wider stakeholder engagement.
- A viable funding model.
- An outline business case to be presented to Council and government departments.
- Identification of a suitable site and acquisition may be required. However this will be subject to a further report.

**3.14 At this stage it is envisaged that this work would be supported by Belfast City Council in partnership with Tourism NI and the Department of Communities. A bid of £250,000 has been made by Tourism NI for 2017/18 subject to approval.**

**3.15 Financial & Resource Implications**

**Up to £120,000 to be allocated from City Centre Development budgets for 2017/18 to contribute to financing of work programme.**

**3.16 Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**There are no Equality or Good Relations implications at this stage. Equality and Good Relations considerations will be examined as the project develops including community engagement.”**

In response to a Member’s question regarding the location of the attraction, the Chief Executive advised the Committee that, while there was a preferred part of the city centre, a specific site had not yet been identified.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the contents of the report and the proposed next steps;

2. agreed expenditure of up to £120,000; and
3. agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to approve the initiation of the procurement process.

### **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

#### **2017 Belfast Delegation to MIPIM**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

##### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 **MIPIM is a key opportunity to promote the City to an international audience of investors and developers. This report updates Members on sponsorship, the final draft programme, and the preparations for the Go To Market Launch event on 21st February.**

##### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to:**
  - **Note the contents of the report.**

##### **3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1 **Members will be pleased to note that, following the successful Launch event on 1 December 2016, sponsorship for the Belfast delegation has been strong. At the time of writing £210,500 of private sector finance has been pledged. This is in addition to the £60,000 already allocated by Council, and well in excess of the £163,000 pledged last year. This level of support creates the platform for a strong and cohesive Belfast delegation, with a diverse range of companies being represented.**

- 3.2 **MIPIM itself encompasses three full days of activity, each of which will be themed with a different aspect of investment:**

- **Day 1: Ambition & Opportunity – the opening slot will incorporate a keynote presentation from an elected member, and includes an overview of talent, quality of life, and Belfast’s creative industries / film industry/potential film centre. Projects to be showcased include the new Harbour Studios and Titanic Quarter. Day 1 will also include a specific slot highlighting talent and opportunity around young people, including city centre living / residential.**

- **Day 2: Connected City** – this will include an expert panel discussion in relation to high growth sectors, the investment in digital infrastructure, and grade A Offices, projects to be showcased include Transport Hub.
- **Day 3:** this will lead on tourism and hospitality, with presentations from Tourism NI, Visit Belfast, and Titanic Building. Projects to be showcased include the proposed visitor attraction, Giant's Park leisure prospectus, and hotel investment.

**3.3** Belfast has also been invited to participate in an exhibition-wide event discussing the city's unique location and to be a panel member on a discussion on the role of cities in the Estate Gazette's UK Cities Investor Guide launch. Both provide an additional platform to get our message out to a wider audience and further similar opportunities are being pursued.

**3.4** A number of high profile marketing events will take place to attract people to the Belfast stand and promote our message. This includes showcasing our creative industries principally through Game of Thrones; a presentation on the IRFU all-Ireland bid for the Rugby World Cup in 2023, and a St Patrick's Eve reception. There will also be two investor focused lunches sponsored by Savills and Arup respectively.

**3.5** A press and social media strategy has been developed to project our message before, during and after the event. A key component of this is the Go To Market launch event, to be held at the Belfast Waterfront on 21 February. This will highlight the wider marketing efforts underway internationally and all members will be invited to attend.

The launch will incorporate presentations from the chair of City Growth and Regeneration committee, chief executive, and private sector chair of the Steering Group; and will showcase a refreshed video highlighting the Belfast proposition.

**3.6** A key objective in the Belfast Agenda is to attract £1 billion of investment into the city by 2021, and impact from MIPIM should be viewed within this context and time frame. Last year feedback from the sector indicated MIPIM helped put Belfast back on the development map, and recent investment visits to the city have been promising. The 2017 delegation will provide a platform to deepen these contracts, and start to match specific investors with tangible projects and regeneration opportunities across the city.

**3.7 Finance & Resource Implications**

**We are profiling a balanced budget for MIPIM, and no additional costs beyond the £60,000 allocated by Committee last May are anticipated.**

**3.8 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

**None.”**

In response to a Member's question, the Chief Executive confirmed that specific literature was being produced for MIPIM, which would be focussed on the figures which developers needed when considering investing in a city and that a draft would be submitted to the next Committee meeting for Members' information.

During discussion, the Committee agreed to the attendance of a support officer to accompany the delegation to MIPIM 2017.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Draft City Events - Programme of Events**

The Director of Development provided the Committee with the draft City Events Unit's Programme of Events for 2017/2018.

During discussion, the Chief Executive clarified to the Members that the programme was not a list of all the events which received funding from the Council, but that it was the events which were funded through the City Events Unit.

A Member requested that further information be brought back on the economic impact that each event brought to Belfast. The Director of Development advised the Members that the overall review of the city events and festivals structure was in progress and that it would be discussed at the City Growth and Regeneration Workshop on 6th March, 2017.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Beattie,  
Seconded by Councillor Magee,

That a detailed report be submitted, as soon as possible, on the potential new structure for city events and festivals and on the economic impact that each current event brings, including how much money the Council allocates towards it, the number of bed nights that they bring and the revenue which they add to the city, if possible.

On a vote by show of hands seven Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

### Operational Issues

#### Committee Workshop - Proposed Agenda

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report**

**1.1 The purpose of the report is to confirm the arrangements for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee’s 2017/18 Planning Workshop. As agreed by Committee this workshop will allow Members to shape the upcoming work and agenda of the Committee, the new Corporate Plan, informed by the Council’s budget setting process for 2017/18.**

**1.2 The workshop will reflect on how the Committee can lead and shape implementation of the emerging 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 Committee has previously received reports on the progress with the current Committee Plan and the emerging programmes of work in relation to taking forward the Belfast Agenda ambitions. Therefore the focus of the workshop will be to:**

- Review the progress and achievements of the Committee Plan in 2016/17; and**
- Translate the priorities of the Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan into a work plan for the Committee to deliver in 2017/18.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the date for the Committee Planning Workshop which will be held on Monday 6th March at 12.00pm; and**
- Note the draft agenda for the workshop, available on modern.gov.**

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 The City Growth and Regeneration Committee is responsible for:**

- 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.
- Oversight of the exercise of Council functions in relation to economic development, urban development, tourism, culture & arts, European and international relations, car parks, city markets, city events, Belfast Castle, Malone House and Belfast Zoo.

**3.2 The Committee is currently working to an ambitious Committee Plan, aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan and emerging Belfast Agenda. The following priorities were agreed in November 2015 and progress in delivering the plan was noted by Committee at their meeting in November 2016:**

- City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy, which aims to increase the employment and residential population in the city, maximise the tourism opportunity, create learning and innovation centres; a green, cyclable, walkable city; a shared space and social impact. This includes the development of major projects such a new visitor attraction (Belfast Story), support for hotel and Grade A office developments as well as more focused place-making opportunities in the city centre.
- Employability & Skills Framework (& Year 1 Action Plan);
- International Relations Framework;
- Place positioning and maximising the opportunities for investment, tourism and regeneration;
- Integrated Tourism Strategy;
- Investigate the feasibility of a City Deal for Belfast;
- Develop a car parking strategy;
- Ensure the above strategies give consideration to connecting neighbourhoods to the city centre, ensuring that the whole city enjoys the benefits.

**3.3 Belfast Agenda**

The Belfast Agenda has at its core a commitment to inclusive growth. The 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.

3.4 The Committee is familiar with the four main priorities in the Belfast Agenda which demonstrate the centrality of growing the local economy to improving quality of life in Belfast and the importance of the role that the Committee will play in ensuring that the Council's contribution to implementing the agenda is maximised. By 2021, the draft Belfast Agenda commits the Council to lead on:

- The creation of 15,000 new jobs;
- Support for 4,000 small business start-ups; and
- Attracting £1 billion of private sector Foreign Direct Investment.

3.5 As the Committee will be aware, the Belfast Agenda, is currently out for public consultation with four public events scheduled as follows:

- 30 January 2017, Girdwood Community Hub
- 02 February 2017, Olympia
- 09 February 2017, Skainos Centre
- 13 February 2017, Innovation Factory

3.6 With the Local Development Plan also launched for public consultation on 26 January 2017, this is a new phase of strategic planning for the Council. The workshop provides an opportunity to take account of the initial feedback from these events and the decisions made during the budget setting process to enable the Committee to effectively prioritise and allocate its agreed resources.

3.7 **Format and Agenda for the Workshop**

Given the strategic role of the Committee and the need to prioritise programmes and activity across a number of the priorities in the Belfast Agenda (i.e. Growing the Economy, City Development and Working & Learning) it is proposed that the workshop will follow a similar format to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee Workshop, with the expertise of an independent facilitator.

3.8 The Committee has previously agreed to the ongoing economic expertise provided through the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) and given the significant changes to the economic environment, the workshop provides an opportunity to set the Council's ambitions and the Committee's priorities within the current economic context. It is proposed that the UUEPC provides an overview of their current economic outlook, with specific reference to Belfast in order to place the discussion in context.

3.9 Members have an important role in leading the work to ensure that benefits of city-region growth are maximised.

As Members are aware, 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.

- 3.10 With this in mind, the Committee previously agreed to regular Committee sessions to consider key strategic issues for the city and have received an increasing number of presentations and briefings in relation to transport, city infrastructure, car parking, specific industry input from economic growth sectors such as Cyber Security, retail etc. The workshop will enable the Committee to consider how to maximise their strategic role in relation to these key issues for the city.
- 3.11 Last month the Committee agreed that to deliver the targets outlined in the Belfast Agenda will require a significant uplift in the investment and resource commitment from the Council to ensure that, along with partner organisations, we develop a menu of the right support services and programmes to grow the economy and support city development. The Committee therefore agreed to additional investment in 2017/18 to enable preparatory and developmental work to be undertaken in order to significantly enhance the small business and investment services and align this with the planned employability and skills programmes. The workshop will therefore provide a key opportunity to consider how the Council can effectively use these resources to develop a comprehensive and coordinated 'small business service' and an 'investor advice service' along with the Belfast Works Programme which focuses on developing skills and employment opportunities for those furthest from the labour market and the Smart Cities Framework.
- 3.12 A draft agenda for the workshop is available on modern.gov which highlights some key questions for the Committee to help prioritise their ongoing and emerging commitments and priorities for 2017/18 which will form the basis of the City



Growth & Regeneration Committee work-plan and the Corporate Plan.

**3.13 Financial Implications**

The Committee agreed the budget limit of £15.8m for 2017/18 in January 2017.

- 3.14** The Committee has agreed that the direction of travel to grow the economy and support city development is a significant step-up from the current provision and requires additional investment from the Council as well as the ability to lever partnership funding from other public and private sector organisations. The workshop will therefore enable the Committee to consider how best to effectively prioritise and allocate its resources in line with the Belfast Agenda to ensure maximum impact.

**3.15 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

There are no direct implications at this stage; however, programmes and actions will be developed in conjunction with the Equality & Diversity Officer.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Infographic Facts & Figures and Programme Performance**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

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

- 1.1** The Belfast Agenda sets a challenging ambition for the city to be home to an additional 70,000 new residents and an economy that supports 50,000 more jobs by 2035. Growing the economy and driving inclusive growth to ensure that all people benefit from economic success is at the core of this ambition.
- 1.2** To deliver on this, the Council is increasing its ambition around positioning the city to attract international investment from developers, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and institutional investment. Last month the Committee agreed the direction of travel for Council’s support to accelerate new businesses to start, support existing businesses to grow and export as well as encouraging increased investment into Belfast. It is also supportive of work being undertaken by partner organisations to increase the number of international

students in the city, grow tourism investment and support more FDI as well as helping local businesses to become more active in international export markets

- 1.3 Central to delivery on these plans is the provision of a sound, accessible and consistent evidence base that positions Belfast as a city to do business in, to invest in and to visit or study. Based on the presentations and economic briefings the Committee has received, requests have also been made by Members for more accessible information on Belfast's economy, its growth sectors, accolades and the opportunities the city presents globally to raise awareness of the key messages, strengths and opportunities to grow the economy. This will help ensure that Members and Officers have succinct, up-to-date and compelling information when engaging with potential stakeholders about the city to enhance Belfast's image and reputation as a successful and dynamic city in the international environment.
- 1.4 Documents such as 'Belfast: A Fantastic Time to Invest' (available on modern.gov) have been produced to support recent city-to-city engagements with Boston and London highlighting the key reasons to invest in Belfast as well as the major development opportunities that the city offers. This information has been well received by external audiences and is a useful example of the type of information currently being produced to support efforts to pitch Belfast as a place to do business and invest in. This is critical to realise the plans for city centre development and recognition for Belfast's role as the regional economic driver.
- 1.5 Council officers are currently compiling concise infographic-style materials on key statistics and information to support the ambitions to grow the economy and city development, in line with the Belfast Agenda. This includes:
- Key statistics on the Belfast economy and its growth sectors and accolades;
  - Options for the development of a 'Belfast Economic Monitor', as discussed by Committee in January 2017
- 2.0 Recommendations
- 2.1 The Committee is asked to
- consider and note the proposed content for the documents
  - provide suggestions and requests for content that they would like to see

- note that infographic materials will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee for its input and consideration.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Key Issues**

Elected Members currently receive a range of statistical information on Belfast, such as the Profile of Belfast in the Elected Members Handbook, Area Working Group Profiles etc. The Committee has also received a series of economic briefings as well as updates and presentations on key strategic developments such as the recent presentation on the growth of the cyber sector in Belfast, the retail sector, updates on the Council's international relations commitments, city centre developments and progress in taking forward a City-Region Growth Deal.

**3.2** Some examples of the information the Committee has already received that is informing the production of the facts & figures document is available on modern.gov. This includes

- A Belfast Profile produced by the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (December 2016);
- Competitiveness scorecard performance from the assessment of the Competitiveness of the Northern Ireland Economy, produced by the NI Economic Advisory Group (July 2016).

**3.3** To support the international relations activity and city-to-city engagements raising Belfast's profile and reputation as a place to do business and invest in, concise publications such as 'Belfast: A fantastic time to invest' have been produced. This highlights the reasons to invest in Belfast, outlines the key economic growth sectors and provides a snapshot of major development opportunities in the city. This document has been used to support the recent engagements with Boston and London and has been positively received by external audiences.

**3.4** As the demand for this information grows and the volume of information provided also increases, along with the commitment to monitor and deliver on the commitments contained in the Belfast Agenda it is accepted that a more concise and visual representation of this information is required. This will provide a more user-friendly and accessible addition to the resources produced to support Members, in line with the Belfast Agenda ambition to grow the economy and develop the city by positioning Belfast as a place to invest, study and visit.

**3.5** Based on the current economic performance which indicates the strengths of the economy as labour costs, improving infrastructure and a strong stock of graduate labour (Oxford

Economic, 2016; UUEPC 2016) it is suggested a 'Facts and Figures Guide to Belfast' is built around the following key data and information.

**3.6 Belfast's Population and Workforce**

- Belfast population stands at 338,907; with over 670,000 in the wider metropolitan area. The city has one of the youngest populations in Europe and two thirds of the population are working age (NISRA 2016).
- Belfast is the employment hub of the region, with around one third of the region's jobs based in the city (over 220,000 jobs), the majority of which are in the services sector (NISRA 2016). 58% of people working in Belfast live outside the Belfast City Council area.
- Belfast contributes to 29% of the region's productivity (GVA) (UUEPC 2016).
- Almost a third of Belfast's population aged 16-24 is qualified to NVQ level 4 (degree level) or above (32.5%, NISRA 2015).

**Accolades:**

- Belfast has ranked eighth in a list of the top 19 cities to live and work in the UK, according to a survey by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (Good Growth for Cities 2015).

**3.7 Business in Belfast**

- Belfast is a compact and connected city and has a strong business support eco-system.
- Belfast is home to over 9,000 businesses, with the vast majority (96%) being micro and small businesses (IDBR).
- Key Growth Sectors – NI's Knowledge Economy employs over 37,500 people (2015). Much of this growing sector centres around Belfast given its role as a skills and infrastructure hub (UUEPC/Oxford Economics 2015). Growing specialisms are emerging in the fields of Cyber Security, Financial Technology, Financial & Legal Services, Creative & Digital Industries, Green Tech and Life & Health Sciences.

**Accolades:**

- Small European City of the Future – Business Friendliness (fDi magazine 2015 and 2016)
- Belfast is in the top 20 cities in the world for FDI Strategy (fDi 2016).
- Second fastest growing Knowledge Economy in the UK.
- Belfast is number one in the world for US FDI in cyber security (FT FDI Index 2016).

**3.8 Attracting investment**

- Belfast has developed a successful track-record in attracting FDI to the city in recent years, securing over 20,000 inward investment jobs in the past decade.
- Over 70% of university research is world leading or internationally excellent (Research Excellence Framework, 2014). Belfast is home to several globally recognised research centres across a range of fields such as secure information technologies, cognitive robotics, renewable technologies and cancer research.
- Tourism is an important sector in terms of employment (particularly in terms of the hotels and hospitality sector) as well as attracting visitors and increasing spend in the local economy – with around 1.4m overnight trips in Belfast in 2015 and three of the region’s top five tourist attractions are in Belfast (2015).

**Accolades:**

- Belfast is Europe’s top destination for software development projects (fDi).
- Number one destination in the world for financial technology investment (fDi 2015).
- NI is the leading region in the UK for inward investment (Invest NI).
- Titanic Belfast was the ‘World’s Leading Tourist Attraction’ (World Travel Awards 2016).

**3.9** In addition, there is scope to include reference to key facts and assets relating to city development such as the pipeline of development planned for the city and its high speed telecoms activity that will support such developments.

**3.10** 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 tenet of the Belfast Agenda as well as being critical to build the city’s role as the regional driver. Therefore, these materials will evolve over time in line with the ongoing work on Place Positioning and will support existing material used by our city partners when promoting Belfast as a place to do business, visit, study or invest in.

- 3.11 The Committee should note these materials will be made available on the Members Portal, and that regular updates will be brought back to Committee.
- 3.12 **Financial & Resource Implications**  
The publications will be produced internally and within existing departmental budgets.
- 3.13 **Equality & Good Relations Implications**  
There are no equality or good relations implications.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **South by Southwest - SXSW**

The Director of Development advised the Committee that, considering a number of businesses were joining the Council delegation to the South by Southwest conference, he felt an additional Council officer should accompany the group.

The Committee agreed that a second officer would accompany the delegation to the SXSW conference.

### **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

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

### **Outstanding Accounts**

The Director of Development advised the Committee that, on occasion, a number of debtors who had received services from the Council failed to pay. He advised the Members that this was despite the Central Transactions Unit (CTU) having implemented the Council's procedures for recovering outstanding debt.

The Committee was informed that Legal Services had advised that there was no legal avenue left for the Council to successfully pursue a number of debts totalling £13,270.50 which did not expose the Council to unacceptable risk of incurring yet more unrecoverable costs and had recommended that the debts be written off.

The Committee agreed to authorise that the outstanding accounts, totalling £13,270.50, be written off in accordance with Section M12 of the Council's Financial Regulations.

**Request to Present**

**Belfast Power Limited**

The Committee acceded to a request from Belfast Power Limited to receive a presentation at its meeting on 12th April, 2017, in relation to its plans for a gas fired power station at Airport Road West in the Belfast Harbour Estate.

Chairperson