



<b>Subject:</b>	City Region Growth Deal – update
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Damien Martin, Programme Director

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<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 an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The progress being made on the Contracts for Funding which are required for each of the capital projects delivered through the Deal and the update on project development and delivery across the pillars of investment.</li><li>• The update in relation to the BRCD Annual Report.</li><li>• The update in respect of the BRCD Council Panel.</li></ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<b>Contracts for Funding</b> As previously noted by the Committee, a number of contracts for funding have now been approved and signed which will allow for funding to begin to flow to projects. Since the last update to Members in January the first funding drawdown requests for the City Deal to the

Department for Economy and Department for Communities have now been submitted marking another significant milestone for deal delivery.

3.2 It was also noted by the Committee that Members would be advised of progress to agree the funding agreements for each project. Since the last update to the Committee progress has continued to prepare and agree a number of contracts as outlined below.

- The contract for The **Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC)** has now been approved and signed.
- The Contract for **Mourne Mountain Gateway** is at a very advanced stage and it is anticipated this will be submitted this month to Newry, Mourne & Down District Council for their agreement.
- Contracts for the **Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare (iREACH)**, and the **Global Innovation Institute** have been finalised and are expected to be signed during this month.

#### **Progress across BRCD Pillars**

##### **Innovation**

3.3 **AMIC** has been advanced by Queen's University through to the detailed design stage and has now concluded the end of RIBA Stage 3, with the final report being considered by the Department of Finance and Invest NI. The invitation to tender for the prime contractor for the project has now been published since the last update to Members.

3.4 The Outline Business Case for the **Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology** is currently being revised to reflect proposed changes to the scope since Department of Finance approval in May 2022, including the consideration of early procurement of equipment for the Royal Victoria Hospital Living Lab. The updated Outline Business Case (OBC) is expected to be submitted in April.

3.5 As previously reported to Members construction work on **Studio Ulster** commenced on site in October 2022. Following the publication of the Prior Information Notice in November, and the successful completion of the Pre-Qualification phase, the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue is now under development in advance of the commencement of the competitive dialogue process.

## Digital

3.6 Since the last update to Members, OBC for the **Investment Fund** element of the Innovation Challenge Fund has progressed well, with a Strategic case review completed with key Government and partner stakeholders in December and a detailed workshop focusing on delivery held in early March. The first draft of the business case is expected to have been prepared by April after which a detailed review involving key stakeholders, including economists will take place. Members also previously approved the commencement of a separate business case for the **Augment the City** pilot project in October 2022. Since then and following consideration by the Digital Advisory Board a draft business case has been shared with the Department for the Economy and the Belfast City Innovation team are currently finalising the OBC following feedback from the Department. The OBC is expected to be submitted to the BRCD Digital Advisory Board on 29<sup>th</sup> March and a further update will be brought to committee in April.

## Tourism and Regeneration

3.7 As previously reported a number of the Tourism and Regeneration projects now have a signed contract for funding or are progressing towards finalising contract for funding signing. The development of procurement documentation is ongoing, with a number of key project procurements now live.

3.8 The prequalification stage for the procurement of Integrated Consultancy Teams (ICT) for **Carrickfergus Regeneration** and the **Gobbins Phase 2** has now been commenced with documentation now published by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council.

3.9 Development of the prequalification stage for the procurement of ICT for **Bangor Waterfront** and the **Mourne Mountain Gateway** is ongoing with publication of documentation expected in the coming months.

3.10 **Newry Regeneration** are preparing their PQQ documentation for the Integrated Supply Team, with appointment of Contractor expected later this year.

3.11 **Belfast Stories**, the Council's flagship project continues to progress against the agreed programme. The procurement of professional services continues with tender reports for the pre-qualification stage completed and approved and Invitation to Tender documents expected to be published later this month.

3.12	<p>The OBC for <b>Destination Royal Hillsborough</b> approved by the Department for the Economy Minister in late October has now received Department of Finance supply approval allowing the Contract for Funding to be actively progressed.</p>
3.13	<p><b>Employability and Skills (E&amp;S)</b></p> <p>Members were updated in January on the skills assessment process developed through the E&amp;S pillar to understand the labour and skills implications of the city deal investment projects. The first assessment was focused upon the construction opportunities arising through the city deal investment and the assessment informed a series of recommendations which relate to BRCD partners, as well as to wider stakeholders. An early action as a result of this assessment is the delivery of two events taking place on the 21<sup>st</sup> March (jointly hosted with the Construction Employers Federation) and 23<sup>rd</sup> March. These events will help to ensure that local businesses are aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the construction pipeline arising from the Belfast Region City Deal capital investment programme with a specific focus on opportunities that will be brought to market in the coming 12 months</li> <li>- communicate the inclusive growth ambitions of the Deal, including expected social value commitments;</li> <li>- the employability and skills support available through the Belfast Region City Deal, council, college, and university partners to help the sector respond to labour and skills challenges, including those relating to social value commitments.</li> </ul>
3.14	<p>Both events were widely communicated to key stakeholders and on the BRCD website and both events were fully booked.</p>
3.15	<p>Following discussions with partners, the relevant Government Departments and key stakeholders plans to establish a <b>Cross Deal Skills Group</b> to oversee and manage skills assessments relating to City and Growth Deals at the Northern Ireland level are well advanced. These Assessments will consider the projects emerging across all 4 Deals and focus on the sectors where city deal investment is aligned. A preliminary meeting of this group took place in late January in order to consider the draft Terms of Reference and to inform the schedule of skills assessments. The BRCD will play a key role in supporting this group – finalising terms of reference, agreeing the initial work programme and fulfilling the role of secretariat. The draft Terms of Reference for the Group was presented to the Executive Board for consideration at its March Meeting. Aligned to the establishment of this group two further skills assessments are currently underway for Advanced Manufacturing and Creative Industries (Virtual Production) and Members will be kept updated as both assessments progress</p>

3.16	<p>It is anticipated that the OBC for <b>Digital Transformation Flexible Fund</b> will progress to casework in early April through Invest NI. Concurrently Newry, Mourne and Down District Council who will lead the delivery of the project continue to progress with pre-development work to establish the application and funding process and developing marketing materials in preparation for the launch of the fund.</p>
3.17	<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <p>Following the announcement by the then Minister on the preferred route for <b>Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2</b>, feasibility studies are being completed and the OBC is being updated and reviewed by Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The procurement of the design and build contract for <b>Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge</b> will commence in the early summer with appointment expected early in 2024. DfI has now confirmed that its preferred option for the bridge on the <b>Newry Southern Relief Road</b> is a non-opening 50m fixed bridge, allowing work on the statutory orders, public consultation and Environmental Impact Assessment to progress.</p>
3.18	<p><b>Annual Report</b></p> <p>The agreed reporting arrangements for all City and Growth Deals requires the production of an Annual Report and the requirement to meet with the Northern Ireland Delivery Board in order to discuss deal progress as part of an 'Annual Conversation' which is envisaged to take place in June. The Programme management team have been actively engaging with the Department of Finance in order to agree the timeframes and content of the annual reporting process and required documentation now that the BRCD is in delivery phase.</p>
3.19	<p>Members are asked to note that a high level, outward focused Annual Report will be produced following the end of the 2023 reporting year. The programme management office will lead on the development of the report and will engage with individual partners on project specifics where required in advance of consideration of the Executive Board and by partners through their own governance structures.</p>
3.20	<p><b>BRCD Council Panel</b></p> <p>A hybrid meeting of the BRCD Council Panel was held on 25 January hosted by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. Panel Members considered a detailed programme update and received presentations on the BRCD investments in Newry, Mourne and Down and also on Communications &amp; Engagement which included a live demonstration of the newly dedicated BRCD website. A link to the new website was circulated to all BCC Members following the January panel meeting. The minutes of the previous Panel meeting hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council were also approved and are attached at Appendix 1.</p>

3.21	The next Council panel meeting was due to be held in April and hosted by Ards and North Down Borough Council, however due to the upcoming Local Government Elections and the timeframes involved it has been agreed to postpone this meeting and reschedule for later in the year. Members will be kept informed when the date and host council has been confirmed.
3.22	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.</p>
3.23	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that;</p> <p><i>'BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.'</i></p>
4.0	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 - Minutes of the BRCD Council Panel 28 September 2022