

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 29th May, 2024

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nic Bhranair (Chairperson);
Councillors Abernethy, Canavan, Garrett,
Maskey, F. McAteer, McCabe, McDowell,
McKay, and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Ms. L. Toland; Senior Manager, Economy;
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Duffy, McDonough-Brown, Murray and Smyth.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Nic Bhranair declared an interest in items 3.a) 2024/25 Committee Plan and Associated Work Plans in that she had recently been employed as a Special Advisor to a Minister in the Executive, however, on advice from the Democratic Services Manager it was not deemed necessary that she should leave the room as the report provided the Members with overarching Workplans.

Restricted Item

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

Presentation

Translink - Belfast Grand Central Update

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. McAllister, Head of Belfast Grand Central Station Programme, Mr. D. Curry - General Manager Bus Services, and Ms. L. Shannon, Corporate Communications Manager, representing Translink to the meeting.

The representatives provided an update of the Belfast Grand Central Station/ Weavers Cross Transport Led Regeneration Project which included details of the Construction Work timeline, Rail engineering works, Public Transport Interventions, Bus and Rail timetable changes, event management and customer information and accessibility.

The representatives thanked the Committee for its support and continued engagement.

During discussion, the representative's answered a range of questions in relation to project spend and engagement with schools on the impact of service changes. In response to a Member's question in relation to further communication and the potential to animate park and ride sites during quiet periods to engage with the impacted communities, Ms. Shannon advised this would be explored.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the contents of the Presentation and that further updates would be received at future Special Committees, if required.

Strategic and Operational Issues

2024/25 Committee Plan and Associated Work Plans

The Committee considered the undernoted report and associated appendices:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To provide an end of year report on the key actions contained in the 2023-24 City Growth and Regeneration (CG&R) Committee Plan, as agreed by this Committee in September 2023.**
- 1.2 To present to Committee the draft City Growth & Regeneration Committee Plan for 2024-25 and associated programme workplans highlighting programme costs seeking committee approval.**

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of the end of year report as set out in Appendix 1;
- Approve the City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan for 2024-25 attached at Appendix 2;
- Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Enterprise and Business Growth workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 3;
- Note and agree a financial commitment of £25,000 to HIRANI to support the delivery of the 'Health and Life Sciences Launchpad' in Northern Ireland;
- Note and endorse the proposal to invest in the Way to Scale programme and extended support to innovation-focused businesses up to a maximum of £50,000 (work to be coordinated through Catalyst);
- Note and endorse the contribution to support the ongoing development of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (work to be coordinated through Newry, Mourne and Down District Council) up to a maximum of £35,000;
- Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Employability and Skills workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 4;
- Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the European and International Relations workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 5;
- Note and agree a financial commitment of £15,000 to Eurocities as part of annual membership of the Network;
- Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Culture workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 6; and
- Approve the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Tourism and Events workplan for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 7.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 At its meeting on 8th May, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the Report and associated appendices until its meeting on 29th May, to allow Members time to review the Committee and Work Plans further.**

3.2 CG&R Committee Plan 2023-24 End of Year Report

While the Committee receives regular updates on progress for specific programmes and initiatives, Appendix 1 sets out an overview of progress against the main commitments in the CG&R Committee Plan 2023-24 as of the 31st March 2024. This builds on the report that members received at the November committee meeting which provided a six-monthly update. At the year end, officers undertook an assessment of individual projects and workstreams, allocating a traffic light rating as follows:

- **Green - actions have been delivered as expected, to budget and with no significant risks.**
- **Amber - there have been some delays, impact on budget or risks that have emerged.**
- **Red - work has been significantly delayed; the final outcome is not as expected; significant additional budget is required; or significant risks have emerged.**

3.3 In summary, from a total of 43 workstreams, 27 were rated as green, 15 as amber and 1 red. Committee should also note that due to the reporting timelines, some of the figures provided are provisional and subject to final audit.

3.4 Summary highlights of the year include:

- **56 organisations supported through the council's Cultural multi-annual funding including support for Arts/ Heritage organisations and Festivals/Events.**
- **21 community festivals support**
- **124,000 people attended our four signature City Events (check).**
- **260 people progressed onto a job or better job via an employment academy.**
- **New NI Enterprise Support Service launched during Global Entrepreneurship Week.**
- **119,135 Belfast Bike journeys during the 2023 calendar year.**
- **18 applications approved for Vacant to Vibrant and assisted 33 businesses through our 'Matchmaking' service, helping them to identify city centre rental units.**
- **Launched the process which seeks procurement for a long-term partner for the delivery of £630m GDV housing led placemaking regeneration.**

3.5 CG&R Committee Plan 2024-25

Each year the Committee is tasked with agreeing a Committee Plan for the year ahead. This year's Committee Plan has been developed based on feedback received from the Committee Planning workshop held in October 2023 and decisions relevant to the Committee agreed through the rates setting process. It has also been structured to align to the recently approved Belfast Agenda and the council's draft Corporate Delivery Plan.

3.6 The Corporate Delivery Plan will be presented to the May meeting of the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee. Should any changes be required, an update of the committee plan will be brought to the attention of members at a future meeting.

3.7 In particular, this Plan contains actions that make a contribution to the 'Our Economy' and 'Our Place' themes of the refreshed community plan. At its planning workshop in October 2023, members requested that consideration be given to measuring progress and impact on agreed programmes. To that end, this year's committee plan includes a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be reported on a six-monthly basis together with a more detailed progress report against all commitments.

3.8 Workplans/ Programme Budgets

Many of the activities outlined within the draft Committee Plan will be resourced through the respective departmental budgets for 2024-25 in line with the Scheme of Delegation and in accordance with section G of the Financial Regulations. On that note, priority work areas for the 2024-25 financial year and their allocation from their respective budgets are presented in Appendices 3-7.

3.9 Financial and Resource Implications

The draft Committee Plan 2024-25 and the subsequent work plans are aligned with the budget agreed by the Special Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 9th February 2024, namely a cash limit for the CG&R Committee of £21.55 million as set out in Appendix 2.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Strategies, programmes and actions within the Committee Plan are developed and delivered in consultation with the Council’s Equality & Diversity Officers and subject to appropriate equality, good relations and rural needs assessment.”

During discussion, a Member raised the importance of further and continued engagement with communities in relation to realising the full potential of the Waterfront opportunities, under the Connectivity and City Infrastructure Strategic Priority - Bolder Vision (Appendix 2). The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that this had been raised within the Waterfront Neighbourhood Network, and how this group feeds in and is represented on the Waterfront Task Force, however, she would continue to progress.

In relation to a Member’s question on the Employment Academies Project and the allocation of Classroom Assistant Academy providers, the Senior Manager, Economy advised that there would be a new Framework for the delivery of academies and she would confirm the current status of the Classroom Assistant Academy process.

In response to Members suggestions to provide a timeline of key project stages to monitor the progress of critical items such as the Housing Led Regeneration deliverables within the Committee Plan, the Strategic Director advised that targets and updates in this regard would be provided to the Committee at regular intervals.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the end of year report as set out in [Appendix 1](#);
- Approved the City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan for 2024-25 ([Appendix 2](#));
- Noted continued engagement with communities in relation to realising the full potential of the Waterfront opportunities, under the Connectivity and City Infrastructure Strategic Priority - Bolder Vision;
- Noted that a timeline of key project stages to monitor the progress of critical items within the Committee Plan would be provided and updates submitted to the Committee for consideration;
- Approved the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Enterprise and Business Growth workplan for 2024-25 ([Appendix 3](#));
- Noted and agreed a financial commitment of £25,000 to HIRANI to support the delivery of the ‘Health and Life Sciences Launchpad’ in Northern Ireland;
- Noted and endorsed the proposal to invest in the Way to Scale programme and extended support to innovation-focused

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businesses up to a maximum of £50,000 (work to be coordinated through Catalyst);

- Noted and endorsed the contribution to support the ongoing development of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (work to be coordinated through Newry, Mourne and Down District Council) up to a maximum of £35,000;
- Approved the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Employability and Skills workplan for 2024-25 ([Appendix 4](#));
- Approved the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the European and International Relations workplan for 2024-25 ([Appendix 5](#));
- Noted and agreed a financial commitment of £15,000 to Eurocities as part of annual membership of the Network;
- Approved the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Culture workplan for 2024-25 ([Appendix 6](#)); and
- Approved the priority work areas and budget allocations presented in the Tourism and Events workplan for 2024-25 ([Appendix 7](#)).

Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 3rd June for ratification.

Chairperson