



Subject:	Horizon Europe Urban Planning 2030 (UP2030) update
Date:	13 June 2024
Reporting Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the ongoing activities as part of the UP2030 Net Zero Neighbourhoods Project including stakeholder engagement, workshops, partnership working and highlight upcoming milestones.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Members of the Committee are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note that Belfast, represented by Belfast City Council, is a pilot city within the Horizon Europe UP2030 project which is focused on the development of a net zero

	<p>neighbourhood framework using technical tools and support that are provided through the UP2030 consortium including analysis, mapping and engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support a partnership with the RSUA to deliver the design competition in the UP2030 area in alignment with the project ambitions. • To support Groundwork NI's Heritage Lottery bid, 'Climate Resilient Heritage' that is proposed to roll out within communities in the UP2030 pilot area. • To note that an update report on UP2030 was also brought to the City Growth & Regeneration Committee yesterday, 12 June 2024.
3.0	Main report
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p>In March 2022 Council was invited to participate in a three-year Horizon Europe consortium funding application from the Urban Planning 2030 (UP2030) fund to guide cities through the transitions required to meet their climate neutrality ambitions. As reported in November 2022 and March 2023, the City Regeneration and Development and Climate teams were successful in joint bid of €204,250/£176,024 to further an integrated approach between urban planning, achieving net zero and aspects of resilience.</p> <p>Cities account for 70% of the global CO2 emissions and consume 78% of the world's energy. The UP2030 project is about recognising the role cities play in achieving net zero by 2050, and the sequence of actions and transitions that would be required by 2030 to ensure this target ambition is met. The 5UP approach guides the work of the project and the considerations required for the development of a framework for creating a net zero neighbourhood:</p> <p>UP-Dating: Identifying the needs and barriers, and reviewing the processes, planning codes and policies that should be urgently updated to create future proofed NZ neighbourhoods.</p> <p>UP-Skilling: Building capacities to upskill the entire stakeholder ecosystem, from city departments to urban practitioners to the construction industry, through to citizens.</p> <p>UP-Grading: Considering the transformation at the suitable physical scale.</p> <p>UP-Scaling: Scaling solutions and integrating them across sectors by shaping governance arrangements and matching financial resources.</p> <p>UP-Taking: Sharing knowledge and learning through the project to create long-lasting communities of practice.</p> <p>The project kicked off in February 2023 and will run until December 2025 and is driven by robust project milestones and constant engagement across the consortium that is made up of 46 partners, with Belfast one of 11 pilot cities and only UK city. As agreed at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in March 2023, the geographic area of the UP2030</p>

	<p>pilot covers the Linen Quarter and the surrounding communities of Barrack Street, Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and the Market. The primary focus of UP2030 is on the development of a Net Zero (NZ) Neighbourhood Framework that is shaped around three thematic areas: active travel, greening and retrofit. These themes link across to the UP2030 pillars of a fair and just transition, carbon neutrality and resilience.</p>
3.4	<p>Council's UP2030 team is comprised of City Regeneration & Development and Climate team staff who collaborate on project development, engaging stakeholders and achieving the milestones set out within the wider UP2030 project. This includes regular consortium and work package meetings, project and financial reporting and ongoing contact with our liaison partner, Mapping for Change, as well as ongoing discussions with tool providers through the programme who can provide free technical support to enable the transition to NZ.</p>
3.5	<p>Progress to date: Stakeholder engagement and workshop delivery</p> <p>Since the beginning of the project, stakeholder engagement has included mapping across sectors and areas of work, attending relevant events or meetings and building partnerships and sharing information. This has included one-to-one meetings with community representatives and site walks to understand local priorities and the challenges facing the surrounding city centre communities. It quickly became clear that there is a need to have 'climate conversations' with stakeholders to help everyone begin to understand the wider issues in relation to the impact of climate change, what the transition to net zero means for them and their work and the ways people can begin to participate in the transition. Therefore, a component part of UP2030 is to also support awareness raising regarding net zero in general and we continue to work through these multi-stakeholder channels throughout the programme to secure input into the development of the NZ Neighbourhood Framework.</p>
3.6	<p>A key feature in our approach has been linking into existing thematic stakeholder groups that have broad membership and expertise. In particular, this includes the City Greening Group that is convened by Belfast Healthy Cities; the Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel (CAST) subgroup within the Belfast Agenda; and engagement with Retrofit Hub that is coordinated by the Climate Team. There has also been engagement across government, academic, community, thematic city partners and Council teams to elicit input and included a presentation to the Resilience and Sustainability Board. This approach has ensured that we have developed a sound understanding of the challenges, opportunities and barriers across the thematic areas of work and are linked into relevant projects among city partners.</p>

	<p>An example of this is through an existing partnership with the Graduate School of Queen's University School of Built Environment and NIHE, where partners came together to deliver a QUB social innovation challenge with residents of John Street and Hamill Street.</p>
3.7	<p>This initiative was run by QUB and focused on NIHE land within the UP2030 area in the Barrack Street vicinity and focused on improving the quality of life of residents through the development of climate friendly place shaping proposals. Students from a variety of disciplines came together to deliver the challenge through the challenge title: 'Making Belfast a Green and Playful City'. Further to this work, a number of proposed interventions were identified through the consultation and NIHE are leading on exploring how these can be implemented and have already taken an initial step to begin reshaping the space based on needs identified in the engagement and supporting NZ interventions. This a strong example of multi-partner approach to deliver NZ and this along with the ongoing learnings from QUB and the NIHE will shape the UP2030 framework.</p>
3.8	<p>Additionally, Officers work in partnership with the Master's of Architecture StreetSpace initiative in QUB that has focused on the Market, Donegall Pass, Sandy Row and the Village communities over the past two years. In mid-June StreetSpace will hold a workshop based on the research and engagement with communities in these areas over the past year. The workshop is called "Women in the Neighbourhood" and will investigate how issues of mobility and housing affect the everyday lives of women and explore solutions to foster safe, more inclusive cities and the feedback from this will further enhance our understanding of the community issues and inform the UP2030 NZ Framework.</p>
3.9	<p>As a result of our engagement sessions, we received a request from Groundwork NI to support their bid 'Climate Resilient Heritage' to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which would focus on two areas within the UP2030 area, i.e. Sandy Row and the Market. The project would aim to ensure that the natural and cultural heritage of Northern Ireland is conserved for future generations and involves developing a network of young climate champions, supporting them to gain an understanding of the drivers of climate change, how this is/will affect the heritage of Northern Ireland, and what practical steps can be undertaken to mitigate against these effects in their local community. The programme will include training and practical action, e.g. carbon literacy training, data collection and greening projects. Members are asked to support Groundwork's bid in principal and, if successful, Officer attendance at future steering group meetings, which will ensure alignment of the thematic ambitions of the UP2030 project and can build on the momentum of engagement and data developed in the area to date,</p>

	<p>supporting development and delivery of the net zero neighbourhood framework within the pilot area.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Delivering project milestones</p> <p>Key milestones achieved to date include the delivery of five workshops held between April to October 2023 with cross sector stakeholders, including a specific neighbourhood engagement session for community representatives from the pilot area. These events provided an introduction and background to the UP2030 project, exploration of the importance of climate neutrality for cities, and outlined the intention to develop a net zero framework neighbourhood approach within the pilot area but that can be replicated across the city. The workshops were interactive and facilitated input from participants with thematic and community interests as well as engaged strategic partners who operate across the city and region. This initial phase of engagement gathered quality input from diverse stakeholders that helped shape the thematic outline of the framework and refined the areas of focus.</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Data collection and analysis has provided another layer of understanding of the UP2030 area and helped identify further needs, challenges and opportunities for net zero led regeneration to future proof the area and communities. A geospatial analysis of the UP2030 pilot area was undertaken, using interactive mapping software to overlay current information on the district such as demographics, tree data, deprivation indices, economic activity, travel to work/school behaviours, housing tenure, as well as projected climate impacts such as flooding and heat risk.</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<p>Building on this the initial engagement activities and data collection, a key project milestone was the delivery of five Visioning workshops with cross sector stakeholders that took place in Spring/Summer 2024. The purpose of this most recent engagement programme was to establish a common vision for the UP2030 area and test the emerging Framework ideas. The sessions also provided a chance to identify future opportunities for improving greening and active travel, as well as exploring the potential to progress a retrofit pilot that builds on the recent learnings of the Retrofit Hub.</p>
<p>4.3</p>	<p>The workshops included internal Council staff, the Belfast Agenda CAST group, the City Greening Group and a session for young people organised with Alternatives. The purpose of these was to gain agreement on the vision for the project across the three themes (greening, active travel and retrofit) and underpinned by the three project pillars (carbon neutrality, resilience and a fair and just transition) by asking participants to imagine what a</p>

	<p>net zero Belfast could look like in 2050 and considering the actions required to support or deliver that transition. Participants were presented with mapped geospatial analysis data and the insights gathered on the project to date.</p>
4.4	<p>The final Visioning workshop with the Retrofit Hub will address three areas: commercial, public buildings and residential (divided into area, tenure and typology). This approach aligns to the identified areas of work within the Retrofit Hub, emerging data from the Local Area Energy Plan and will explore issues in relation to funding opportunities and financial models, capacity issues (e.g. skills/training, supply chain), policy and legislation and potential pipeline opportunities.</p>
4.5	<p>Following analysis of the feedback and findings from the Visioning sessions, coupled with analysis of the previous learning and research produced by the Retrofit Hub, we re-engaged the workshop stakeholders in a final follow up session. Through this we were able to sense check the emerging framework ideas, build a shared understanding of NZ options and agreed the adaptive pathways for the short/long term sequence of actions that would be required to support the transition and explore opportunities for pilot projects to help test concepts for the NZ Framework alongside continued stakeholder engagement.</p>
4.6	<p>An opportunity has been flagged through the Retrofit Hub Steering group to align the ambitions of the retrofit strand of the UP2030 work with a proposal to run a Net-Zero Neighbourhood Ideas Competition as a partnership between the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) and JP Corry with support from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the Northern Ireland Construction Group (NICG). It will challenge design teams led by Early Career Architects to generate ideas for the best way to deliver a net-zero neighbourhood in Northern Ireland. The competition seeks to explore how a holistic neighbourhood approach to lowering carbon emissions compares to a more focused property-by-property approach. This will be an opportunity to build on the visioning outcomes of the retrofit work and engage with communities in the pilot area to codesign approaches for net zero delivery and contribute to the development of the framework. Members are requested to support UP2030 partnering with the RSUA to deliver the design competition in the UP2030 area in alignment with the project ambitions.</p>
4.7	<p>Maximising cross council alignment to NZ goals</p> <p>Ensuring alignment of this project with the ongoing work and priorities of Climate team is a critical aspect of UP2030 and will shape future milestones and opportunities. This is</p>

	<p>particularly relevant to the work underway in relation to the Solar PV Study and possible follow up studies that could provide analysis of rooftops that may have potential for solar PV, greening interventions/retrofit or both. A Retrofit Hub Report on the UP2030 area, and an active travel scoping study would also to help us understand the potential of meeting net zero ambitions through active travel and the cost benefit analysis of these measures by using tools such as University of Cambridge innovative Scope 4 analysis. Furthermore, opportunities exist across Council to align resources and ambitions towards NZ outcomes and ensure that all investment in the regeneration of the city considers carbon neutrality, resilience and a fair and just transition to net zero.</p>
4.0	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
4.1	<p>Members will be aware that given that the UK is no longer within the EU, the status of Council was changed from to being a Partner to that of an Associate which means that funding will be underwritten by the UK government (UK Research & Innovation, UKRI) fund rather than the EU. The Horizon Europe UP2030 Project is 100% funded for revenue only. No additional funding is required from Council however a small team drawn from the Climate Unit and City Regeneration and Development work together to oversee development and support implementation. Officers continue to work with partners to identify potential capital or revenue funding in the future and align current and emerging workstreams that could support the transition to net zero.</p>
5.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
5.1	<p>Officers are currently developing the Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Screening and will incorporate within the emerging proposals.</p>
6.0	Appendix 1