



<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Region City Deal – update
<b>Date:</b>	23 August 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl, Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Information relating to any individual</li><li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li><li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li><li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li><li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li></ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<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) and seek approval for the BRCD Annual Report 2023/24.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the BRCD Annual Report for 2023/24</li> <li>• Note the update in relation the Implementation and Financial Plan</li> <li>• Note the update in respect of programme communication and the BRCD Council Panel</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<b>Annual Report 2023/24</b>
3.1	<p>As previously reported to Members, 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’.</p>
3.2	<p>The annual report has been produced for 2023/24 and outlines the significant progress made now that the deal is fully into delivery. The report provides an update on the progress of all the BRCD projects across its pillars of investment, and key highlights as of 31 March 2024 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of fifteen projects with Outline Business Cases (OBC) now approved.</li> <li>• The first Full Business Case (FBC) was approved for the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) project in March 2024 marking a significant milestone for deal delivery. This was followed shortly thereafter with approval for the FBC for Studio Ulster.</li> <li>• Nine Contracts for Funding (CfF) and Funding Agreements (FA) have been signed with an approximate value of £500m. These signed contracts for funding which include, Studio Ulster, Carrickfergus Regeneration, Bangor Waterfront, Newry City Centre Regeneration, AMIC, Momentum One Zero, iReach Health, Augment the City and Digital Twin, will enable project delivery.</li> <li>• As the Accountable Body for the Deal, BCC has paid out £5.2m of claims to individual projects up to March 2024, with the most advanced projects now recruiting and upskilling staff, constructing new premises, co-designing projects with industry, procuring next generation technology and equipment and moving fully into operation.</li> <li>• This year has seen key recommendations brought forward through the advanced manufacturing skills assessment for the projects associated with Advanced Manufacturing. Skills assessments for the Creative Industries (Virtual Production) and Digital sectors are also now in progress.</li> <li>• The Infrastructure projects, which have so far received £350k from BRCD funding are also progressing well towards the delivery phase.</li> <li>• Launched in December 2022, the Belfast Region City Deal website <a href="http://www.belfastregioncitydeal.co.uk">www.belfastregioncitydeal.co.uk</a> continues to be regularly updated with programme</li> </ul>

and project information, as well as the latest news and events. 27 key news and events announcements were uploaded to the BRCD website during the year.

3.3 The Annual Report, which was approved by the BRCD Executive Board on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024, is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration. The individual BRCD partners will also be seeking approval for the Annual Report through their own governance structures. The report will be formally published after all approvals have been secured (and is therefore restricted until then).

3.4 The report will be shared with the Department of Finance in advance of the Annual Conversation which is scheduled to take place on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

3.5 Moving into Year 3 (2024/25) we will see significant pace across the programme with:

- The opening of Studio Ulster anticipated later this year
- The innovation centres of excellence continuing to build capacity through ongoing recruitment of key positions and development of operating models
- Five additional CfFs currently in process for approval – committing an additional £150m
- Three FBCs at advanced stages of the approval process
- Eight major design and delivery contracts in place
- Two more skills assessments completed
- A Benefits Realisation Framework developed for the Programme
- Implementation of our Strategic Engagement Framework
- Participation of the BRCD Partnership at showcase investment events
- Partners continuing to seek to ensure that inclusive growth opportunities are maximised for those priority groups defined in the Deal's ambitions

3.6 **Delivering Social Value and Inclusive, Sustainable Growth**

As members will be aware, ensuring that the growth generated through the BRCD is inclusive and sustainable and that it balances societal and economic needs with those of the economy, remains a central tenet of the BRCD. To this end we continue to monitor the efforts of partners to incorporate social value considerations into their contracts through the development of Social Value Delivery Plans. These Plans are reported through the SIB's social value portal and allow us to see the extent to which contracts are delivering against the social value points to which they have committed. This also gives the PMO an opportunity to identify any challenges to achieving these targets and to connect contractors relevant employability and skills services. All partners are aware of their obligations in this regard and training on this aspect of integrating social value is offered on an ongoing basis.

3.7	<p>More broadly we will deliver for inclusive and sustainable growth through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our Employability and Skills programme of activities which includes, skills for growth in high growth sectors within the deal as well as skills for inclusion providing opportunities and pathways to employment for economically inactive and marginalised groups – aligning with DfCs Labour Market Partnership ambitions</li> <li>- Integrating inclusion and sustainability commitments in project design and development and holding projects to account for these commitments</li> <li>- Adopting additional policy levers as appropriate</li> </ul>
3.8	<p>The BRCD PMO will shortly be recruiting an Employability and Skills Manager, funded by Belfast Met, to support the delivery of the Employability and Skills programme across the BRCD projects.</p>
3.9	<p><b>Financial and Implementation Plan</b></p> <p>The overarching deal document is supported by a Financial and Implementation Plan. This year's Financial and Implementation Plan has been combined into one document which includes the expenditure profile of all the projects broken down annually and the high level project milestones. The Programme Management Office has engaged closely with partners and updated the plan alongside the production of the Annual Report. This has now been considered by the Finance Directors' Group and approved by the Executive Board and was submitted to the Department of Finance in June as required by the Contract for Funding.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Programme Communication</b></p> <p>With the investment programme now in delivery phase, communication and engagement at programme, pillar and individual project level is becoming ever more important.</p>
3.11	<p>External support, which includes implementation of a strategic engagement plan, is now in place for the Belfast Region City Deal Programme. With an initial focus on local businesses, the plan will be further developed to engage with elected members and MLAs across the region to update on progress and identify further priorities and areas of collaboration, as well as future investment.</p>
3.12	<p>The Belfast City &amp; Region Place Partnership has also been engaged to share relevant messaging with investors across the UK, Ireland and internationally, at showcase investment events such as UKREiIF - The UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum, MIPIM, the world's leading real estate market event and New York New Belfast. The partnership will continue to participate in wider investment events to maximise the benefits of the investment.</p>

3.13	<p><b>BRCD Council Panel</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Council Panel will be held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024, hosted by Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council. At the meeting members will be provided with a programme update and presentations on the highlights outlined in this report in relation to the 2023/24 Annual Report and a Destination Royal Hillsborough update.</p>
3.14	<p>The minutes from the meeting hosted by Belfast City Council on 31 January are attached at Appendix 2 for information.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.</p>
3.16	<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	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – BRCD Annual Report – <b>RESTRICTED</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 2 - Minutes of the BRCD Council Panel – 31 January 2024</p>