

City Regeneration Members' Working Group

Thursday, 3rd October, 2024

MEETING OF THE CITY REGENERATION MEMBERS' WORKING GROUP

Members present: Aldermen Copeland and McCullough; and
Councillors de Faoite, R. McLaughlin (for Councillor Beattie)
and Smyth.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director
of Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. D Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager.

Election of Chairperson

The Group agreed that Alderman McCullough be elected Chairperson until the date of the Annual Meeting of the Council in June.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Standing Business Orders

Terms of Reference

The Working Group affirmed the Terms of Reference which had been considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 28th June:

City Regeneration Members' Working Group

"1. Purpose

The City Regeneration Members' Working Group will be responsible for providing cross-party strategic advice to identify and prioritise issues and opportunities relating to major

development sites, aimed at regenerating the city and with a specific focus initially on improving the function and vibrancy of the city centre and key regeneration schemes eg Tribeca to ensure the delivery of the aspirations of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy and the Belfast Agenda are embedded to ensure optimum physical, social and economic outcomes are derived.

2. Terms of Reference

Specifically, the Working Group will:

- Act as a reference panel for major regeneration schemes and its influence and impact on the wider development and regeneration of the city.
- Collectively identify opportunities and challenges and prioritise actions, partnership working and investment opportunities which may be subsequently brought forward via the Councils Committee processes.
- Consider regeneration scheme proposals in the context of the Place Based Growth Proposition (as reported to SPR) and the emerging aligned Regeneration Framework as a tool to assist in the assessment and prioritisation of regeneration projects.
- Consider the city-centre dimension of key strategic plans and projects such as the Belfast Agenda, A Bolder Vision, cultural strategy, tourism plan etc – including developing a sustainable and inclusive city centre which will attract a residential population, retain and attract talent and inclusive investment.
- Consider how development proposals relating to specific regeneration schemes can be optimally developed in order to deliver on outcomes and maximise the opportunities for city centre investment and regeneration.
- Identify where the Council or other public sector bodies could assist in order to facilitate the timely and optimal development of specific regeneration schemes for the benefit of the city and within the policy context of the Belfast Agenda, BCCRIS and the LDP.

3. Membership

The Working Group will comprise of Party Leaders or their nominees.

4. Chairperson

The Chair shall be appointed by the Members at the first meeting. A Chairperson be appointed on an annual basis. This item of business will be placed on the agenda for the first meeting of each Working Group following the Annual Council meeting each year.

5. **Reporting Mechanism**

In keeping with its advisory role, the Working Group will provide recommendations to committees on relevant items. Unless specifically sought from a specific committee, recommendations made by the Working Group will be subject to ratification by the SP&R Committee.

6. **Frequency of meetings**

The Group will normally meet on a quarterly basis unless otherwise required.”

Regeneration Framework
(presentation by Avison Young)

The Working Group was advised that Ms. Nicola Rigby, Avison Young, was in attendance to provide a presentation on the Regeneration Framework and she was welcomed by the Chairperson.

Ms. Rigby outlined the rationale of the Framework and its use to help prioritise catalytic projects and programmes that maximise outcomes for the city, and the steps in the Framework, including how it can be applied to assess strategic acquisition , which included:

- Step 1: Gateway Assessment – to define whether projects should proceed to a more detailed consideration.
- Step 2: Detailed Project Review – for projects which passed the initial gateway assessment. To test the alignment and readiness of projects.
- Step3: Project Categorisation - the outcome of steps 1 and 2, identifying actions/next steps associated with projects.

The Group noted the presentation and the details of the Regeneration Framework, and in answer to a query from a Member on its use in relation to asset disposals, Ms Rigby confirmed that it could be used for this and highlighting that it was about using it to assess the outcomes from any disposal, as aligned to city priorities.

Update on City Regeneration

Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy Stocktake (Verbal Update)

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised the Members that the City Growth and Regeneration Committee had agreed that, as part of its Committee Plan, that a 10-year stocktake of the Belfast City Centre and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) be undertaken which would build on the work of the annual Regeneration Trackers which update on development activity.

The Director reported that the stocktake involved looking back at what had been envisaged through the BCCRIS, taking stock in order to assist in a focus to looking forward. The stocktake was not seeking to rewrite the strategy, which had been subject to extensive consultation at the time of its development, including cross party-political support from the

Council Party Group Leaders and adopted by DSD (DfC) at the time as their regeneration policy for the city centre.

The stocktake had provided an opportunity to look at the progress and the future opportunities through the lens of an evolving city centre, building on existing agreed principles as set in our inclusive growth strategy and the Belfast Agenda and A Bolder Vision, all key aspects which have come forward since the launch of the strategy back in 2015.

Importantly, when BCCRIS had been published in 2015, it was recognised that, to deliver on the collective ambition, it would require collective and collaborative working across the public sector, third sector and private sector, this was still very much the case today. Given the comprehensive nature of BCCRIS, and recognition that the ambition was collective and would require significant partnership working, it had been important that the stocktake be shaped not only by the annual regeneration trackers but by engagement.

The Director then provided an overview of key regeneration and development activity that had taken place over the past 10 years across the various policy areas and priorities within BCCRIS. She highlighted the engagement which had taken place, the role of the city centre, the future city centre programme performance dashboard, and the emerging key areas of focus for the next 5-10 years, based on the existing strategy and the views of the various stakeholders

She concluded by advising the Group that a stocktake event, which would bring together representatives from the public, private and third sectors to celebrate key BCCRIS developments delivered over the past decade and highlight key areas of focus and priorities going forward to support the continued growth and regeneration of the city core, the surrounding areas to 2030, would be held in the City Hall, proposed for 25th November.

The Director then answered a number of questions from the Members, following which the Working Group noted the information which had been provided, including agreement that there was value in the stocktake and the proposed BCCRIS summit event led by the Council in terms of commitment to the future growth of the city, and Members noted the need to ensure that this also includes key asks of partners. A Member also highlighted the potential to look at enhanced engagement between the City Regeneration and Growth and Planning Committees

Tribeca and Assembly Rooms (Verbal Update)

The Working noted an update on Tribeca and the Assembly Rooms.

Housing Led Regeneration (Verbal Update)

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided an update on the Housing Led Regeneration Programme, which included a brief update on the Council's Procurement Process to appoint a Public Sector Partner to deliver on housing led regeneration at scale; the Inner North West Development Brief and the city wide Strategic Site Assessments.

Noted

Chairperson