

## BRCD Council Panel

<b>Subject:</b>	Minutes of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Council Panel
<b>Date:</b>	12.30 pm, 25 September 2024
<b>Councillors in attendance:</b>	<p>Councillor Kurtis Dickson, Mayor of Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council – Chair</p> <p>Alderman Alan McDowell, Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Alderman Allan Ewart MBE, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Alderman Amanda Grehan, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Councillor John Lavery, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Councillor Tim Mitchell, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Alderman Mark Cosgrove, Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Matthew Magill, Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Sarah Bunting, Belfast City Council</p> <p>Councillor Pete Byrne, Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p> <p>Councillor Henry Reilly, Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p>
<b>Officers:</b>	<p>Sharon McNicholl – Deputy Chief Executive, BRCD SRO, Belfast City Council</p> <p>David Burns – Chief Executive, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Marie Ward – Chief Executive, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council</p> <p>Susie McCullough – Chief Executive, Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Majella McAlister – Director of Economic Development and Planning, Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Jonathan McGrandle – Programme Director, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Brian Dorrian - Acting Director of the Place Directorate, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Conor Mallon – Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism, Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p> <p>Donal Rogan – Director of Regeneration and Growth, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Laura McCorry, Head of Hillsborough Castle and Gardens, Historic Royal Palaces</p> <p>Colin McKenna, Caroline Magee, Shelley Baldrick, Katrina Dornan, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Stephen Wallace, Theresa Slevin, Clare Walls, Lorraine Beggs – BRCD Programme Office</p>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
<b>1.1</b>	<p>Mayor of Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council, Councillor Kurtis Dickson, acting as Chair, welcomed the members of the BRCD Council Panel to the meeting which was hosted in Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn and outlined the key areas of focus for the meeting.</p> <p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson also addressed the pause to City and Growth Deal Funding, announced on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September and the uncertainty that was created and welcomed the clarification in relation to the continued commitment to the Belfast Region City Deal signed in December 2021, recognising the wide range of benefits this investment will bring to our region. The Belfast Region City Deal partners welcomed the positive news on the signing of the Derry City and Strabane District Council City Deal and stated their very clear support for our colleagues in the Mid-South West Growth Deal and the Causeway Coast &amp; Glens Growth Deal – and urge the UK Government to lift the pause on commitments relating to those Deals as they together offer significant synergies and growth potential for Northern Ireland as a whole.</p>

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
2.1	<p>Apologies were received from: Alderman Robert Logan, Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Apologies were received from the following Officers: John Walsh – Chief Executive, Belfast City Council Richard Baker – Chief Executive, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Emer Husbands – Head of Regional Programmes, BRCD Programme Office</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
3.1	Mayor Kurtis Dickson asked Councillors if they had any interests to declare in relation to the agenda. No interests were declared.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
4.1	<p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson asked if the Panel agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>Alderman Allan Ewart proposed that the minutes from the last meeting were agreed. Seconded by Councillor John Lavery <b>Members agreed the minutes.</b></p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Annual Report 2023-24</b>
	<p>Sharon McNicholl (SMcN), Deputy Chief Executive of Belfast City Council and SRO for Belfast Region City Deal, delivered an overview of the Belfast Region City Deal 2023/24 Annual Report, which formed the basis of the successful 'Annual Conversation' with Government Departments in August. The report captures the significant progress that has been made across all the pillars of investment and is a testament to all our partners who continue to invest resources and upskill teams to take the various projects to delivery.</p> <p>Key highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 Outline Business Cases approved and two Final Business Cases approved</li> <li>• 9 Contracts for Funding and Funding Agreements signed</li> <li>• £5.5 m in claims paid to Partners</li> <li>• Projects in delivery with design teams appointed, planning applications submitted &amp; approved and projects in construction and operation</li> </ul> <p>Alderman Allan Ewart queried if the annual report targets had been met. SMcN confirmed that targets had been met and good progress has been made aided by the return of The Executive and Ministers.</p> <p>Alderman Ewart noted that despite the return of the Executive and Ministers, Destination Royal Hillsborough has not progressed as well as planned due to issues with DfI and queried if BRCD can support further progress.</p> <p>David Burns (DB), Chief Executive LCCC, confirmed that he shared this frustration with DfI and the issues preventing progress on Destination Royal Hillsborough project and noted that a number of meetings with DfI officials to discuss the issues had been cancelled. DB had written to the DfI Permanent Secretary and a meeting with the DfI Deputy Permanent Secretary has been arranged for 16<sup>th</sup> October and if issues remain unresolved after this meeting, DB will escalate to the DfI Permanent Secretary.</p> <p>DB noted that lessons in relation to engagement with Statutory Bodies during the planning process, will be shared with BRCD Partners and escalated to BRCD Executive Board if necessary.</p> <p>Alderman Cosgrove welcomed the very positive report following some of the recent negative and inaccurate reports in the media and requested that a Press Release is considered to reaffirm commitment and continuation of the projects within BRCD and include the support for other Deals.</p>

	<p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson confirmed that a Press Release will be issued following the meeting and will be considered later in the Agenda.</p> <p>Alderman Amanda Grehan requested an update on BRT Southern route.</p> <p>Theresa Slevin (TS) confirmed that following the request by the Minister, DfI were undertaking feasibility studies on the BRT routes and we await a decision from the Minister in relation to the preferred routes. A timeframe for this decision is unknown, but it is hoped that it should be imminent.</p> <p><b>Members noted the Annual Report 2023-24</b></p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>BRCD Programme Update</b>
6.1	<p>David Burns (DB), Chief Executive, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC), presented an overview of the programme update which was circulated with the papers, which details the progress that is being made across the programme. DB also explained the process from Outline Business Case (OBC) and Contract for Funding (CfF) when BRCD Funding can be accessed by projects, to Full Business Case (FBC) approval which enables construction to commence on site. Highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 OBCs and 2 FBCs approved to date and positive progress has also been made in relation to a number of other business cases, with Full Business Case approval anticipated in the coming weeks for the iREACH Health project and Outline Business Case approval anticipated before the end of the calendar year for the Ards and North Down Innovation Hub</li> <li>• The signing of the CfF for Destination Royal Hillsborough in June, has brought the total number of CfFs signed across the programme to 12. The drafting of the CfF for I4C and CDHT is ongoing.</li> <li>• Construction has commenced on the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) at Global Point in Newtownabbey led by Queen's University Belfast.</li> <li>• Construction has been completed on the Studio Ulster Project and specialist virtual production equipment is being installed at the site as the project works towards the operational phase.</li> <li>• Momentum One Zero and Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge have reached a significant milestone and have commenced procurement of the Integrated Supply Team, to deliver these projects.</li> <li>• Five professional services teams have been appointed across a range of projects and a number of further procurements are out to market.</li> <li>• Four planning applications are in the planning system and projects are engaging directly with the relevant statutory bodies to resolve outstanding issues, to enable projects to progress to the next stage of project delivery.</li> <li>• The Augment the City Challenge Fund project has completed its first phase which has been successful in attracting significant interest from local innovators and entrepreneurs in the digital tourism sector. Phase two will now commence in the coming weeks.</li> <li>• Social Value delivery and reporting through the SIB portal has commenced across many projects</li> <li>• Community engagement is underway in Carrickfergus, Belfast Stories will commence a 12 week public consultation at the end of this month and other projects are working on the engagement plans.</li> <li>• A number of project Gateway Reviews have been completed to provide assurance on project deliverability and Gateway Action Plans have been developed to ensure recommendations are implemented.</li> </ul> <p>Councillor John Laverty queried if the UK Government announcement would impact the £100m Complementary Fund and in particular the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF).</p> <p>Stephen Wallace (SW) confirmed that the Complementary Fund is funded through the Department of Finance (DoF) within the NI Executive and therefore not subject to the UK Spending Review and is a matter for the local Ministers. The DTFF project is progressing well and is preparing for Call 4 to launch in early 2025.</p>

	<p>Councillor Tim Mitchell queried how we will maximise the employment opportunities given there is no funding for the Employability and Skills pillar and if skills assessments will come after the implementation of projects.</p> <p>SMcN confirmed that Employability and Skills is a key element of the programme and Partners have committed to realign their resources to support the BRCD ambitions, for example Belfast Met are funding the Employability and Skills Programme Manager post which is to be recruited. All projects include Employability and Skills within their contracts through the Social Value requirements and cross deal skills assessments are being completed.</p> <p>TS further noted that the programme of skills assessments is aligned to programme development to ensure these are completed in advance of project implementation to ensure maximum impact and create a pipeline of appropriately skilled people to avail of the opportunities created. For example the Construction and Advanced Manufacturing skills assessments have been completed as these are the initial areas impacted by BRCD.</p> <p>Councillor Henry Reilly requested an update on the NMDDC Gateway to the Mourne project, clarification on the source of Complementary Funds and whether there is potential for further roads projects.</p> <p>Conor Mallon confirmed that the design team has been appointed for the Mourne Mountain Gateway Project and the design is progressing through RIBA Stage 2 and design development workshops are ongoing.</p> <p>SW confirmed that DoF are the source of the Complementary Fund.</p> <p>SW also confirmed that as the BRCD projects and funding is already allocated, there are no further infrastructure projects affordable within the current BRCD funding allocation.</p> <p>DB noted that the Executive Bd are reviewing priorities and infrastructure requirements in preparation for potential future funding opportunities.</p> <p><b>Members noted the progress of the programme.</b></p>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Destination Royal Hillsborough Update</b>
7.1	<p>David Burns, Chief Executive, LCCC presented an update on Destination Royal Hillsborough, the flagship project for the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area and introduced Laura McCrory from Historic Royal Palaces, a key Partner in delivery of this project. The project aims to enhance this regionally significant tourist attraction by creating a world class heritage village experience which appeals to both domestic and out of state visitors, delivering significant economic benefit. LCCC have also invested £2m in Hillsborough Forest Park, which has increased visitor numbers to the town and will complement the BRCD investment.</p> <p>Since signing of the Contract for Funding in June both LCCC and HRP have progressed the procurement of professional support services including cost consultants, design teams and FBC consultants. Engagement is ongoing with DfI regarding the planning application for the public realm, which is currently programmed to commence on site in early 2026.</p> <p>DB outlined the key challenges which will continue to be managed throughout delivery of Destination Royal Hillsborough which include programme delivery, inflationary pressures, planning approval for public realm, monitoring outcomes and ensuring disruption to village life is minimised.</p> <p><b>Members noted the project update.</b></p>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Press Release</b>
8.1	<p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson asked members if they were content to agree the draft press release which was circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor John Laverty Seconded by Alderman Allan Ewart</p> <p><b>Members agreed the press release.</b></p>

9.0	<b>Date of next meetings</b>
9.1	<p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson highlighted that a schedule of meetings has been circulated with the next meeting to be hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.</p> <p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson thanked the panel for their attendance.</p>