



Belfast
City Council

CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Subject:	Belfast City & Region Place Partnership
Date:	4 June 2025
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Marie Miller, Marketing Manager, City Regeneration & Development

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
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
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision
After Council Decision
Sometime in the future
Never

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

1.0	Purpose of Report / Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update members on the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) 2024 / 2025 Programme. Seek approval to extend Council's involvement in the BCRPP to 2025 / 2026.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note a presentation will be made at Committee from representatives from the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP). Note alignment of the BCRPP programme with the draft International Relations Framework which is also being brought to this Committee for approval. Approve that officers continue to support the delivery of the BCRPP 2025 / 2026 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the Taskforce, and in line with Council's procurement processes. Approve Council investment (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as part of the wider public private sector partnership contribution towards the delivery of the BCRPP 2025 / 2026 programme. Approve attendance by senior officers at MIPIM 2026 as part of the BCRPP 2025 / 2026 programme (which includes attendance by other partners), noting that the BCRPP presence at MIPIM will be funded from the wider public-private sector BCRPP programme budget.
3.0	Background
3.1	<p>The Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) is a joint public-private initiative that is delivering a structured programme of work aimed at attracting inclusive investment for the delivery of regeneration, infrastructure, and a modern built environment for Belfast and the wider City Region. It is supported by public, private and key anchor institution partners, including Belfast City Council, all Belfast City Region Deal partner Councils, Belfast Harbour, Translink, Queens University Belfast, and representatives from the local development and regeneration community.</p>
3.2	<p>Members will recall that this Committee agreed in May 2025 to receive a presentation from representatives of the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) to this June Committee. The purpose of the presentation is to update Members on the 2024 / 2025 programme of work and proposed approach to the 2025 / 2026 programme, including priority issues and objectives for the Partnership moving forward.</p>

3.3	Members may also recall that representatives of the BCRPP previously presented to this Committee in June 2024 and approval was given to Council participation in the 2024 / 2025 Programme of work as part of a wider public-private sector approach.
3.4	In terms of context setting, Belfast City Council has been working with public and private sector organisations for the past ten years to proactively promote Belfast to local, national and international audiences to attract capital investment to support realising the growth ambitions as set out in the Belfast Agenda. Over this same period there has been significant development and regeneration in the city, as reported to Committee via the annual Regeneration Tracker update reports and the recent Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy 10 year Stocktake Review, as noted below.
3.5	This approach aligns to Council's agreed strategic priority to promote and position the city to compete globally to attract inclusive and sustainable investment. Members will be aware that Positioning the City to Compete is a key deliverable within the 2025 / 2026 City Growth & Regeneration Committee Plan, as agreed at CGR Committee Meeting in May 2025. A separate report is also being brought to this Committee on the Draft International Relations Framework 2025-2028 and the work of the BCRPP aligns with the Framework, which recognises the role Council plays as a civic leader and a convening role to exploit existing relationships and connections to generate investment; enhance Belfast's global visibility in key markets and communicate its unique assets and offer; coordinate and amplify messaging to maximise return on investment and support our partner organisations to deliver their organisational targets with a focus on inclusive economic growth.
3.6	Council has an important role as a civic leader to act as convener and facilitator, bringing together public and private sector partners to collectively promote and position the city to compete globally to attract inclusive and sustainable investment, notably in the context of attracting national and international capital investment to support regeneration and development activity across the city and recognising that delivering our collective growth ambitions requires both public and private sector funding.
3.7	Members will recall that in 2024, Council undertook a 10-year review stocktake of progress on the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS), which had been published in 2015, with a number of priority policies and proposed projects. The stocktake found that Belfast has exceeded expectations across many BCCRIS regeneration policy areas and delivery by both private and public sectors of significant development across a range of asset classes. It did however also highlight that many challenges remain, including the need for investment, innovative ways of funding and joined up working to unlock regeneration priorities and ensure continued growth. It identified catalytic areas of focus including city centre living; green and climate resilient public realm, sustainable travel and infrastructure related projects; unlocking stalled major regeneration schemes, addressing dereliction and vacancy and taking a multi-agency approach to place keeping and city management.
3.8	The Stocktake highlighted that continued partnership working across public, private and third sectors is required to leverage the ambition and further potential of the city. This collaborative and joined up approach is particularly critical given the disparate governance landscape in the city and constrained public finances. It noted that delivering on the Belfast

	<p>Agenda ambitions, with the city centre identified as a priority, will require investment of c£7.5bn, which will require significant private sector funding alongside public / third sector. It also recognised that innovative approaches to funding and unlocking investment are required to address the institutional, physical and market issues that act as barriers to inclusive growth and development.</p>
4.0	Main Report
4.1	<p>The 2024 / 2025 BCRPP programme commenced in September 2024 and is delivering a structured programme of work aimed at attracting inclusive investment for the delivery of regeneration, infrastructure and a modern built environment for Belfast and the wider City Region. The presentation being made to this Committee by representatives from the BCRPP will provide an overview of the 2024 / 2025 programme and highlights from the annual programme of activity which is delivering a structured programme of activity to help ensure that Belfast and the wider region are positioned to continue attracting investment and delivering sustainable, inclusive growth.</p>
4.2	<p>Key areas of focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communications</i> -proactive media engagement throughout the year to reinforce positive messaging around the Belfast region's investment proposition, targeted at the local, national and international real estate and development media. • <i>Investment focused events</i> - The 2024 / 2025 programme included engagement at a local, national and international level and a presence at national and international investment conferences, UKREiiF 2025 and MIPIM 2025 which showcased Belfast and the wider city region proposition to a global investment and development audience. Previous activity also included engagement and attendance at events at a local, national and international level, with specific events including a Dublin Showcase and London based events. • <i>Engagement and advocacy</i> – an increasingly important strand of work of the BCRPP is advocacy and engagement activity to facilitate two-way conversations with policymakers, funders and the public sector and real estate community with a key aim to positively position the Belfast region as a place that is open for business and investment and to support development and regeneration activity. This has included, supporting BCC in relation to the ongoing work on a Regeneration Place Based Growth Proposition for Belfast (with an update report also being brought to this Committee) by supporting engagement with the NI Executive, Irish and Westminster government, and collaborative initiatives including the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor, the Core Cities Group and Shared Island.
4.3	<p>From a Council perspective, participation in the BCRPP programme has delivered a number of benefits aligned to achieving corporate and city level strategic priorities. It is recognised that the joint, collaborative public private partnership working approach used by the BCRPP is an important mechanism to support our agreed priority to “Position the City to Compete” under the Belfast Agenda. In addition, it complements other city region partnerships including Belfast Region City Deal and Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor; and is an important mechanism to deliver on key regeneration and development priorities, notably accelerating city centre living; and aligned to wider council priorities around innovation, net zero and economic development.</p>

4.4	<p>Members will be aware of the strategic focus on housing-led regeneration, including on-going work with our appointed Private Sector Partner, GRAHAM to bring forward a housing-led regeneration programme to support our ambition to substantially grow the number of new homes in the city by 2035. Members are aware of the challenges faced in delivery of housing-led regeneration and Council's participation in the BCRPP, including attendance at UKREiiF and MIPIIM, has facilitated introductions and joint meetings, involving GRAHAM, to engage with a number of institutional investment and pension funds who have the relevant experience in partnering with local authorities.</p>
4.5	<p>Members will note the separate agenda item for this Committee on the Regeneration Place Based Growth Proposition for Belfast and on-going work with city, regional and national government partners to seek to secure place based and regeneration investment funding for Belfast. Council's participation in the BCRPP has assisted in the strategic engagement with the UK Government in Westminster, the Northern Ireland Executive and Irish Government to seek to advance this proposition. This has included a meeting of the BCRPP representatives, including Council, with the Minister for the Department of Finance in April 2025 and at his request, a follow up joint Ministerial meeting with the Ministers for Finance, Infrastructure, Economy and Communities is being convened.</p>
4.6	<p>Furthermore, attendance at UKREiiF conference provided a valuable opportunity for Officers to lobby and engage with UK Government representatives, including the NI Secretary for State and senior officials from Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and Homes England who have been instrumental in unlocking housing schemes across the UK. Follow up meetings have been arranged with Homes England and MHCLG. In addition, attendance at MIPIIM facilitated positive engagement with the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) who were in attendance alongside wide representation from the Irish investment community and government officials. Discussions with ISIF included the potential for a joint funding approach with Belfast and a focus also on the opportunities arising from the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor. A further follow up meeting is planned with ISIF, and there has also been recent meetings with Department of the Taoiseach on joint opportunities. ISIF facilitated the first ever Irish presence at MIPIIM through the inaugural Irish Real Estate Investment Pavilion Ireland, which sought to attract foreign investment in Irish property and development market, recognising the important role that international investment must play in delivering the €18 billion annually in investment capital from the private sector to meet the existing and future housing needs of its population and to achieve the ambitious housing targets set out in the Irish Government's Programme for Government. Following the success of this inaugural presence, discussions are on-going with event organisers for a formal Irish Pavilion at MIPIIM which seeks to replicate the perceived success of Belfast's presence and other UK cities at MIPIIM since 2016.</p>
4.7	<p>BCRPP attendance at UKREiiF and MIPIIM has generated strong interest in Belfast and the wider region from both national and global investors and developers. Following positive engagement at these showcase events previously including in 2024 and more recently in 2025, there has been continued engagement by Council and BCRPP partners with a range of institutional investors, developers and end occupiers. This has included pension funds, housing developers, end users from life sciences, logistics, green technology sectors, and leisure, retail and hotel operators. Regeneration and development schemes at scale can take</p>

	<p>a considerable period of time to come to fruition and this is particularly so in Belfast where there are specific challenges that other UK cities may not have, including the lack of specific regeneration-based funding pots and the disparate nature of powers and decision making. Notwithstanding this, development and regeneration in the city has continued over the past few years and the BCRPP are strongly of the view that a continued partnership approach to marketing and promotion of the city including attendance at international real estate showcase events and focused follow ups with interested parties does result in positive outcomes in terms of the positioning the city to attract external capital investment, and in development and regeneration coming forward.</p>
4.8	<p>In recent years there have been a number of new funds, including institutional funds, occupiers, developers and first to market brands which have entered the Belfast market, many of which followed engagement at events such as UKREiiF and MIPIM. Whilst it is not always straightforward to make a direct link from attendance at a particular event to new developments or market entrants given that relationships /engagement often take place over a period of time, there is a strong consensus amongst the BCRPP that the consistent joined up approach, marketing and a visible Belfast City Region presence at such events all contribute to success. Partners in BCRPP from the professional and services sector have also highlighted that attendance at UKREiiF and MIPIM has resulted in additional supply chain work for their local companies, supporting local employment and economic growth.</p>
4.9	<p>Following recent UKREiiF and MIPIM events there has been on-going follow up by officers (and other BCRPP partners) to include meetings and facilitation of inward visits to Belfast from investors, developers, occupiers and government departments and policymakers including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major housing / residential developers who have not to date delivered projects in Belfast / NI. • Institutional investors with a strong interest in housing-led, mixed use and infrastructure projects. • End-use occupiers including FDI companies, commercial / leisure operators, innovation hub operators and global hotel operators. • Homes England; Westminster Government Departments including Office for Investment, Department for Business and Trade, and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; Ireland Strategic Investment Fund.
4.10	<p>Many UK cities successes in recent years has been through collaborative private and public sector working, with local government taking a lead role in facilitating a collaborative approach to seeking this external investment required to deliver their growth ambitions. They recognise the important role that national and international showcase events such as MIPIM and UKREiiF play in raising awareness of their city / region's investment proposition and attract global sources of capital. Other UK cities and regions that attend MIPIM and UKREiiF include the Liverpool City Region, Cardiff Capital Region; London; Greater Manchester; Newcastle; and Scottish City Alliance, with delegations comprising of political leaders and private sector partners. Steve Rotherham, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region; Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester; Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London alongside senior officers from the Office for Investment and Department for Business and Trade attended MIPIM 2025. In addition, senior officers from Irish Government's Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage;</p>

	<p>elected representatives and officers from Dublin City Council also attended MIPIM 2025 as part of the inaugural Irish delegation.</p>
4.11	<p>Proposed approach to 2025 / 2026</p> <p>The Partnership is governed via a Taskforce comprised of representatives of the public and private sector. The Taskforce has endorsed continuing the Partnership into 2025 / 2026 and continuing to deliver the pillared programme of activity. The presentation to be made at Committee from representatives of the BCRPP will set out the core objectives and proposed programme of activity for 2025 / 2026.</p>
4.12	<p>From a Council perspective, the key aims and objectives of continued participation in the BCRPP Partnership and contributing to the programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the Draft International Relations Framework 2025-28. • Securing investment required to assist with delivery of our shared city ambitions and growth ambitions as outlined in the Belfast Agenda, the Local Development Plan and BCCRIS and noting the wider economic benefits this investment delivers to the city, as well as increased rates generation and delivery on corporate priorities. • Strengthening additional support and advocacy for the Place Based Growth Proposition for Belfast. • Maximising the benefits of the Belfast Region City Deal investments and Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor initiative. • Securing investment in the built environment on a city-wide basis to maximise opportunities to create jobs, support inclusive economic growth alongside enhancing physical and social infrastructure across the city. • Securing investment in key city infrastructure schemes including waterfront regeneration, connectivity, net-zero and innovation related projects.
4.13	<p>Council plays a key role in both the strategic and operational management of BCRPP including the development, management and delivery of the Programme of Activity. Members are asked to approve Council continuing to take on this role, with officers supporting the 2025 / 2026 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the Taskforce, and in line with Council's procurement processes.</p>
4.14	<p>The BCRPP Partnership is supported and funded by public, private and key anchor institution partners, with external funding forming the majority of the overall programme delivery budget. Members are asked to note the proposed approach to the 2025 / 2026 Programme and approve the Council investment (from existing and approved City Regeneration & Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership contribution towards the delivery of the 2025 / 2026 Programme.</p>
4.15	<p>Council has facilitated and supported a 'Team Belfast' attendance at MIPIM since 2016. Following positive feedback from MIPIM 2025 the Taskforce has endorsed a Belfast City Region presence at MIPIM 2026 in line with the approach taken by other UK Cities, and its inclusion within the wider BCRPP Programme of activity for 2025 / 2026. The Taskforce feel that in order to successfully showcase Belfast and the wider City Region, it requires the civic leadership and attendance by Belfast City Council. Members are asked to approve</p>

	attendance by senior officers at MIPIM 2026, noting that the BCRPP presence at MIPIM will be funded from the wider public private BCRPP Partnership budget.
5.0	Financial and Resource Implications
5.1	The BCRPP Partnership is delivered as a public private sector sponsorship fund and is supported by a range of public, private and key anchor institutions who contribute financially towards the 2024 / 2025 programme, with external and private sector funding forming the majority of the overall programme budget. It is anticipated that the majority of the 2025 / 2026 programme budget will again be funded through external funding.
5.2	Council has previously agreed to contribute of £80,000 towards the 2024 / 2025 Programme, and subject to Members agreement it is proposed that Council contribute £80,000 (from existing and approved City Regeneration and Development Budget) as part of the wider public private partnership investment towards the delivery of the 2025 / 2026 programme. To note that this sum is a contribution to the entire 2025 / 2026 programme and not directed towards a particular event.
5.3	Approval is sought for attendance of senior officers at MIPIM 2026. Travel costs for Council attendance at MIPIM 2026 to be met from within existing and approved departmental budgets. All other costs related to the Belfast City Region presence at MIPIM would be met from the 2025 / 2026 BCRPP Partnership programme budget.
6.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
	None associated with this report.
7.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None