

FRONT COVER

Image from Alex H. Commis (taken from City Matters)

City Growth & Regeneration

2025/26 Mid-Year Performance Report

Belfast

Looking Back – Some of what we have achieved so far this year

239 Belfast
businesses
supported to grow
through Go
Succeed

24 Vacant
Properties
brought back into
use by the Vacant
to Vibrant
programme

547 Belfast
entrepreneurs
supported through
Go Succeed start-
up activity

Culture Night
delivered on 19th
September –
evaluation
underway

Strategic
Partnership
Agreement signed
with Private
Sector Partner

allocated to
Belfast
businesses
through the
Digital
Transformation

282 places in
employment
academies
allocated

41 funding awards
made through the
£250k Sandy Row
Revitalisation
Scheme

255 attendees at
seven local jobs
fairs

Belfast Titanic
Maritime Festival
delivered with an
audience of 57k

Oversaw the
successful
implementation of
the new Belfast
Bikes operating
model

Almost 400k
visitor servicing
enquiries by
Visit Belfast

571,000 visitors
to St George's
Market

248 conferences,
weddings or
events at Belfast
Castle and Malone
House

Gateway to
Choices service
delivered to 606
participants
(offering
independent
advice and
guidance)

Belfast ranked
9th as a globally
sustainable
destination for
tourism

Performance Summary

76

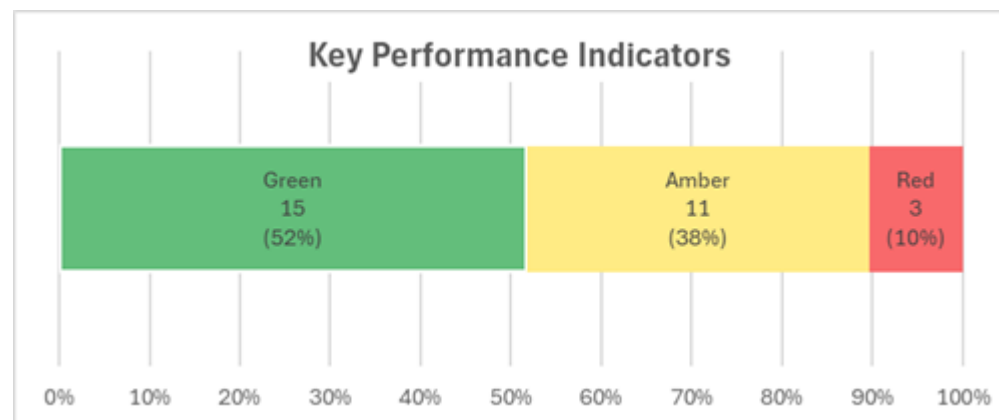
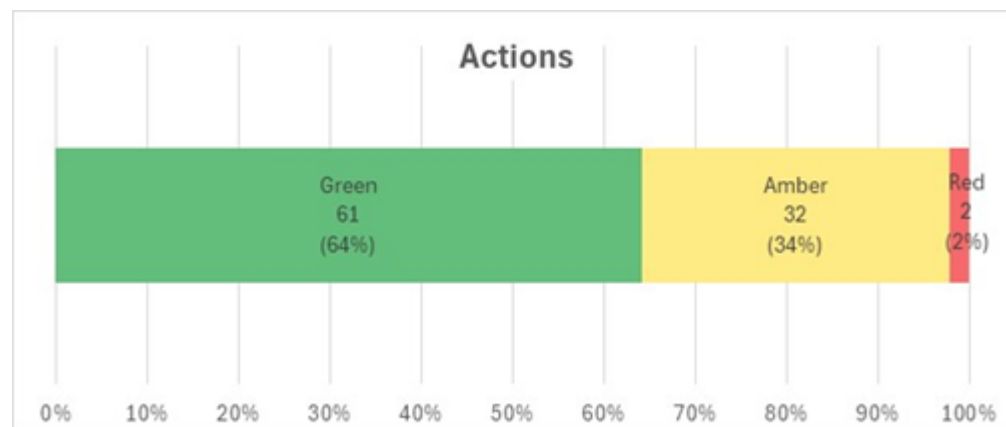
76 Measures - Action progressing as planned; or KPI target on track to be achieved.

43

43 Measures - Action partially achieved or at risk of not being delivered; or KPI target on track to be achieved.

5

5 Measures - Action not progressing as planned or at risk of not being delivered; or KPI target on track to be achieved.



Our Economy Priorities

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
Support business start-up and growth by managing and overseeing the delivery of the Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service (NISS) and deliver targeted support in Belfast to meet funder and statutory targets.	Undertake the 'Lead Council' role on NISS, managing the delivery of £9.2 million to foster enterprise across the region, in line with funder obligations and work to secure a more permanent funding source.	£9.2 million secured to ensure the delivery of NISS to the end of March 2026. On track to deliver as per profile. Ongoing engagement with UKSPF and DfE on future funding position expect further information on next steps in October.	Green
	Deliver a flexible menu of support through the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) for Belfast entrepreneurs wishing to start a business; tailored support for existing businesses wishing to grow or scale including grant assistance to support their growth.	We have seen a significant uplift in business start-up activity during Q2. Planned activity including workshops and events have been confirmed to recruit more participants. There are 239 businesses supported through Go Succeed support for growth-focused companies.	Green
	Support 30 SMEs to access finance to support investment and growth through the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF).	Call 6 opened - this was the 2nd call of the DTFF in 2025 which was launched in September with a closing date of 24th October. Over £300k allocated to Belfast businesses to date.	Green
Support the development of the social enterprise sector	Develop the social economy sector, encouraging more social enterprise/ cooperative start-ups, through (Go Social) the provision of mentoring, workshops and upskilling; facilitate three best practice knowledge sharing events and deliver six outreach sessions.	On target to deliver against KPIs: 8 outreach sessions have been completed to date. Review under way (October) to identify future approach for this support	Green
	Deliver the Social Economy Incentive Fund, with a renewed focus on establishing new social enterprises addressing barriers in areas of deprivation across Belfast.	Social Economy Investment Fund will open for applications during Q3 (15th October). Criteria have been changed from previous years to pivot additional support towards early-stage businesses.	Green
Maximise the benefits emerging from Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD and Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC))	Support delivery of the benefits of first phase of BRCD delivery by integration and alignment with economic development and skills programmes.	Working with City Deal to support delivery of benefits realisation activity, with a focus on SME access and skills development (particularly creating inclusive pathways)	Green
	Establish the Local Economic Partnership (LEP), building on the Labour Market Partnership in the first instance.	Currently scoping out projects for Belfast with go live December 2025	Green

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
	Agree priority projects for (LEP) financial support and draw down year one funding to mobilise activity	Proposal made to LMP about the scope of work to be completed as part of Belfast's LEP focus. The aim is to focus on developing skills capabilities around certain sectors such as film and production i.e. Studio Ulster	Green
Establish Local Economic Partnership to support delivery of sub-regional economic development fund priority actions.	Establish the Local Economic Partnership (LEP), building on the Labour Market Partnership in the first instance.	Currently scoping out projects for Belfast with go live December 2025	Green
	Agree priority projects for (LEP) financial support and draw down year one funding to mobilise activity	Proposal made to LMP about the scope of work to be completed as part of Belfast's LEP focus. The aim is to focus on developing skills capabilities around certain sectors such as film and production i.e. Studio Ulster	Green
Develop and maximise international linkages to support inclusive economic growth	Engage and collaborate with city partners on outward business missions explore the potential for developing business-to-business opportunities, investment in capital and innovation programmes, and facilitating cultural/ tourism and educational linkages with partner organisations in host cities.	Ongoing work in relation to outward business missions and promoting investment opportunities and facilitating linkages with partner organisations and to finalise detail of International Relations Framework and year 1 action plan - subject to CG&R approval	Amber
	Complete a review of the council's international engagement activity and develop a new approach to international engagement activity to ensure that Belfast is optimally positioned on the world stage and that collaborative opportunities for promoting economic development are maximised.	Review completed and outline framework and action plan presented to Committee in August - revisions requested - to be submitted to a future Committee meeting.	Amber
Support the development and delivery of the Belfast Business Promise scheme	Undertake a review of the pilot phase of the Belfast Business Promise (BBP) programme to inform the future approach of the scheme.	Review meetings and consultations completed end September with final recommendations to be confirmed October. Working on transition plan October 2025-March 2026	Green
	Deliver six Belfast Business Promise Learning Days for existing member organisations.	There has been 4 Peer Support Networks with 2 more planned by the end of December 2025. There were 2 Promise Learning Days since April with 2 more planned by end of the financial year.	Green
Oversee the management of the Innovation Factory to maximise occupancy levels and optimise	Support the operation of the Innovation Factory, in line with the agreed Annual Service Plan obligations.	Currently confirming Annual Service Plan (ASP) for year-end delivery and terms for ASP 2025/26. Review of agreement / reprioritisation plan undertaken and revised KPIs and financial profile to be finalised	Amber

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
inclusive growth opportunities for existing tenants.			
Support access to sustainable employment opportunities and improve skills levels for target groups	Delivery of Employment Academies (into work) within sectors with high job demand such as caring professions, customer service sectors and professional services, in line with business demand.	<p>Note: Programme delivery typically accelerates starting in September each year. However, 282 places have been allocated by sector, based on a critical analysis of the Labour Market (growth sectors, impending technological changes, skills, requirements etc.) as well as identifying opportunities for self-employment, which is blended with Go Succeed. The team have also been developing Inclusive Pathways to Apprenticeships in partnership with DfE and Belfast Met within Tech/Business Services. Other specialist highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A blended employment/ upskilling academy for ten people with hearing loss who will be qualified to work as a classroom assistant supporting deaf children. - Bespoke Health & Social Care Employment Academy for Looked After Children which includes Level 2 NISCC qualification and trauma-informed practice for ten people. - Support for migrants via our Health & Social Care academies incorporating sector-specific English where we have seen an increase in the % of migrants moving into employment as a result. 	Green
	Work with partners to deliver Upskilling Academies targeting those working in low paid sectors to achieve higher level qualifications and gain a better job, in line with business demand.	A total of 13 Upskilling Academies are being delivered in low-paid (female-dominated) sectors where Level 3-Level 5 can assure a better job, such as Childcare, Classroom Assistants, Health & Social Care. We have allocated fewer than a quarter of the places compared to last year as we are actively transitioning this intervention to partner stakeholders (especially Belfast Met) who are executing mainstream provision (i.e., Skills Focus, Skills Up etc.).	Green
Support the management and development of the Belfast Labour Market Partnership.	Convene and chair up to six Labour Market Partnership meetings, to identify key labour market challenges and co-design solutions and co-ordinate delivery of agreed programmes of work.	Strategic Assessment identifying key Labour Market intelligence, challenges, etc., completed. LMP Action Plan developed for 2025-2027; 3 LMP meetings held to date.	Green
	Deliver the Gateway to Choices service, providing independent advice and guidance and encouraging informed decision making to find the right provision for people.	The Gateway to Choices service has been delivered to 606 participants. A review is underway to critically examine strategic fit in light of a changing ecosystem and developments within other interventions (e.g. Career Service)	Green

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
	Deliver the Bridges to Progression service and work in partnership to scope the need for additional supports for young people under 24 years old to manage positive transitions.	Procurement completed in Sept 2025 following scoping exercise. Extern appointed to support up to 120 young people with significant barriers (e.g. care experienced, justice leavers, homelessness etc.)	Amber
	Host localised jobs fairs in partnership with Jobs and Benefits Offices and explore other jobs and skills events.	255 attendees at 7 localized jobs fairs (held by JBOs with BCC support) and 11 Employment Academy roadshows.	Green
	Expand the Labour Market Partnership to encompass the work of the Local Economic Partnership, developing priority projects aligned to funder criteria and overseeing delivery	New Terms of Reference and guidance developed with 2 LMP/LEP meetings held (1 with full LEP/LMP membership and 1 pre-LEP formal incorporation)	Green
Deliver social value while supporting the wider employability and skills ecosystem	Expand and consolidate the Employability and Skills Provider Network including organisations representing target groups for people with a disability, women, young people, justice leavers, ethnic minorities and care leavers.	431 members across 148 organizations including JBOs, community organizations, SPF projects, women's groups, disability support organizations, ethnic minority/migrant groups, youth projects etc.	Green
	Ensure Employability and Skills considerations are included within Developer Contributions by providing statistical data and analysis on labour market shortages. Review and recommend interventions regarding Skills Plans where applicable.	Two skills assessments undertaken for Dublin Road PBMSA and Norwich Union House. Six E&S Plans from developers reviewed, including Knockbreda PS, The Oval, Lanyon Place, Apollo and UU Digital Hub.	Green
	Support contractors to meet their Social Value job requirements and support inclusive recruitment practices on current labour market issues such as visa requirements, employing people with disabilities.	270 SV points incurred through E&S contracts.	Green
Improve the visitor experience at St George's Market to drive footfall and enhance customer satisfaction and	Develop a programme of customer insights based on new footfall tracking technology, regular customer surveys and introduction of additional customer feedback loops.	Footfall cameras are now installed and operational - Six monthly visitor insights being conducted.	Green
	Benchmark St George's Market with other comparable visitor attractions in terms of customer experience and visitor feedback.	Tourism NI have paused the Visitor Attraction rating scheme.	Amber

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provide support for city markets.	Manage and promote the delivery of the annual Christmas Continental Market and additional market events such as Twilight Markets.	The Spring Twilight Market went well, attracting 18,000 visitors on 20 and 21 May; there are plans for an additional Twilight Market on 24 and 25 November. Finalising detail on Christmas market, from 15 December	Green
	Review the markets rights policy to ensure that it supports the operation of independent markets across the city, to enhance animation and vibrancy.	Markets Rights policy reviewed and approved by September City Growth and Regeneration Committee.	Green
	Review existing storage policy at the market to increase opportunities for additional rental income/ income generation on non-market days.	Draft storage policy produced - decision deferred at September Committee to enable additional engagement. Planned date for re-submission in Q3.	Green

Our Place Priorities

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
Support and work with partners to address housing challenges and delivery high quality housing-led regeneration and place-making	Establish and oversee governance arrangements across the Private Sector Partner indicative work streams ensuring alignment and linkages to the established council governance structures.	Governance arrangements across the Private Sector Partnership were agreed through the Competitive Dialogue procurement process. An update in respect of this was provided to the CG&R Committee in June 2025. This update included that the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) was signed at the start of April 2025 and that this Agreement contractualises the initial Overarching Business Plan (OBP) and the Joint Venture (JV) project governance structures negotiated and agreed through the Competitive Dialogue procurement process. These establish the structure to bring forward housing led regeneration, initially for the four seed sites identified in the procurement (Corporation St/Exchange St, Ormeau Ave, Gloucester St and INW Smithfield), but also further Additional Opportunity Sites introduced over the duration of this 15yr (potential to extend to 25yr) partnership. Cognisant of the requirement for Council to interface effectively with GRAHAM through the project governance arrangements and utilising existing Council structures, an appropriate internal governance structure has been established that seeks to expedite the information sharing, requisite processes and decisions required to meet contractual commitments of the SPA. This included agreement around the use of the City Regeneration Members Working Group as the basis for Member engagement on the PSP housing led regeneration programme prior to matters being forward for approval by Committee. GRAHAM also attended PLCF in August by way of an introductory meeting with a follow up site visit scheduled for December 2025.	Green
	Work in partnership with the Private Sector Partner to take forward development of the initial four strategic sites (Corporation Street / Exchange Street, Gloucester Street, INW Smithfield, Ormeau Avenue) in line with the contractual timelines and development programmes (to be agreed by Council).	In line with the Strategic Partnership Agreement, GRAHAM submitted the proposed Development Programme for these sites on 7th July 2025, meeting the required three-month submission deadline. An update on the PSP governance process for approval of the Seed Site Development Programme was presented to CG&R Committee in September 2025, and the Committee agreed the Prioritisation of the Seed Sites as set out in the report to Members.	Green
	Agree and progress the delivery route for delivery of housing-led regeneration in respect of Tranche 1 sites from the Strategic Site Assessments Phase 2 (as agreed via CGR/SPR)	As reported to the CGR Committee in June 2025, the detail of SSA Phase2 Tranche 1 sites (incl planning assessments) are currently under consideration by the PSP who are also engaging with Housing Associations. These discussions are ongoing and at an early juncture; however political engagement on this via the City Regeneration Members Working Group will take place with	Amber

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
		further updates to be brought back to Committee as appropriate to progress delivery.	
	Progress Tranche 2 sites (from the Strategic Site Assessments Phase 2) through feasibility and development options for subsequent consideration by CGR/SP&R.	Feasibility options completed for Tranche 2 SSA Phase 2 Sites, including planning appraisals, investigative surveys and concept topo plans. Full review of all assets undertaken, and additional sites now currently under consideration. Whilst there is progress on work to understand how to overcome barriers to development, this is complex involving additional investigative surveys which could potentially identify solutions for delivery.	Amber
	Working in partnership with the Department for Communities, and Clanmil Housing Association, oversee delivery of a housing led regeneration scheme on the Inner North West lands (following award of the Inner North West Development Brief).	The award of the Development Brief was subject to terms to be agreed with the Director of City Regeneration and Development and the City Solicitor and subject also to the approval of the Department for Communities (as joint landowner) through their own governance processes. Legal colleagues are currently progressing the suite of legal documents through engagement with the Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO), in line with DfC's governance structures. Appropriate governance between BCC, DfC and Clanmil has also been established to support effective oversight and delivery. An update on the INW Development Brief was provided to the CGR Committee in September 2025.	Amber
	Develop Placemaking Action Plan for lands at Joy Street/ Cromac Street/ Stewart Street.	Progressing work with partners in respect of developing a Placemaking Action Plan for lands at Joy St / Cromac St / Stewart St, including stakeholder engagement. This includes land assembly subject to necessary approvals. Note: SP&R approval in September 2024 on the targeted acquisition of property in the area work in Q1 and Q2 has been on the completion of this acquisition which is awaited; June 2025 SP&R agreed a further acquisition to support the land assembly, work is focussed on completing this acquisition which is ongoing.	Amber
	Work with partners in relation to developing Placemaking Action Plans for Cregagh Green, Shankill / Glencairn and Tullycarnet.	Officers are continuing to work in partnership with the NIHE around the Cregagh Green placemaking opportunity. Given the interdependency in this area to the NIHE Tower Block Strategy a lot of the focus has been on influencing the NIHE in terms of a potential delivery route. Note: title issues within the area being progressed via Legal Services. In respect of the Shankill Placemaking opportunity, officers have continued to engage via the DfC led Oversight Group and Local Advisory Group, which has developed an action plan "Greater Shankill: A Plan to Grow". Officers continue to support and engage around the implementation of the Tullycarnet Place Shaping Plan 2035. The plan was	Amber

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		recently recognised at the Irish Planning Institute Awards under the Plan Making category.	
Support the delivery of strategic regeneration and investment programmes	Progress options for vesting and/or acquisition by agreement of the Tribeca site in whole or in part, including the Assembly Rooms, including potential development / funding options, and development of Strategic Regeneration Framework to underpin future development.	Council in September 2025 agreed to purchase the Assembly Rooms and associated adjoining lands and buildings from Castlebrooke Investments, as part of its continued focus to drive forward the regeneration of the city centre. In addition to the Assembly Rooms, adjoining lands and buildings to be purchased by the council include part of the Donegall Street car park, 5-9 North Street (former Laffin Travel building) and Braddell's Building, a Grade B1 listed building at 11 North Street - progressing via due process, noting legal and commercially sensitive nature. Future and development uses engagement planned in the first instance with elected members.	Amber
	Develop future use /development proposals for Regeneration Assets including 2 Royal Avenue and 35-39 Royal Avenue.	The EOI process has concluded and reported to CG&R Committee. A further report will be presented to the SP&R committee on finance and asset related implications. Immediate health and safety building works have completed at 35-39 Royal Avenue, and the property is currently being actively marketed to let.	Amber
	Deliver the Vacant to Vibrant City Wide capital grant scheme to support the reduction of vacancy and promote the revitalisation of the city.	The City Wide Vacant to Vibrant capital grant scheme is fully expended as reported to the CG&R Committee in September 2025. This has resulted in £500k (funded by DfC and UKSPF) capital investment of grant awards to 24 applicants; creating 83 direct employment opportunities; est rates return of £911,777.69 over the course of the lease & subject to LPS valuation; and a return of £1.79 on every £1 invested. An application for further funding has been to DfC, subject to funding availability and Ministerial approval	Green
	Progress outputs from the Homes On Upper Spaces for Everyone (H.O.U.S.E) Expression of Interest process and scope funding opportunities aimed at bringing vacant upper floors into residential use.	Development phased work is ongoing which includes research into the level of vacant upper floor spaces; models / model for delivery of the H.O.U.S.E programme; engagement with a range of stakeholders to try to unlock some of the challenges to bringing vacant spaces forward for residential development; exploratory work to understand and scope funding opportunities, will require further work to unlock funding.	Amber
	Undertake a scoping study on vacant offices, to include financial, economic and regeneration implications and future use and funding options.	Work has commenced on a scoping study on vacant offices which has involved desktop research and engagement with the office market. Further work is required to develop a future paper.	Amber
	Deliver the Sandy Row Revitalisation Scheme, administering Department for Communities funding in the Sandy Row area to support	The Sandy Row Revitalisation Scheme (£250k DfC funding) was launched on 18 March 2025 and closed to applications on the 31 August 2025 (extension on grant period agreed by CG&R Committee). As of end of September 2025 41 applications have been awarded funding and the marcomms branding	Green

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	eligible businesses and the wider revitalisation of the area.	workstream has commenced with engagement ongoing in the local area to design the outputs. A contract for funding was also secured in August 2025 for £200k for a Grosvenor Road Revitalisation Scheme. The application period opened on 1st September and will close on 31st December 2025. An open engagement evening was held on 3rd September 2025 at Grosvenor Road Community Centre, with further sessions organised in mid - end September. Note: September CG&R Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Communities to request that consideration be given to the provision of support for independent businesses on Great Victoria Street impacted by the works associated with Belfast Grand Central Station, at the time of preparing updates call in period was awaited to allow the issue of this correspondence.	
	Progress the Dunbar Regeneration Scheme (including BCC lands and private sector assets) and bring forward an action plan and route map to deliver a comprehensive regeneration scheme for the combined lands assets.	An update on the Dunbar Regeneration Scheme was presented to the CG&R Committee in September 2025 this included that a comprehensive regeneration approach was being taken through joint master planning of the overall strategic land holdings, with private landowners in the area. This master-planning work is currently ongoing, and it is proposed that potential comprehensive regeneration options, comprising mixed use development options, are tested via Pre-Application Discussions. This would inform an overall Concept Regeneration Plan and proposed delivery roadmap.	Amber
	Ensure City Regeneration and Development considerations are included within Developer Contributions to maximise the regeneration benefits.	Ongoing engagement with Planning Service to ensure city regeneration and development consideration are included within developer contributions to maximise regeneration benefits, this includes ensuring an internal way of working that enables opportunities for developer contributions, progress has been made, however there is further work required.	Amber
Connectivity, Active & Sustainable Travel & Net-Zero	Refresh A Bolder Vision strategy in line with the Eastern Transport Plan. Undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment and publish final documents with a Delivery Prospectus.	Work is ongoing to complete ABV as a Council - led strategy alongside a delivery prospectus setting out the Council's corporate position distinct but complementary to the ETP.	Amber
	Progress the Under the Bridges project to design development RIBA Stage 3 (Spatial Coordination).	Designs have progressed for the Under The Bridges project with a Pre-Application Discussion public consultation event scheduled to be held in the AC Hotel by Marriott on 9th October, followed by an online event to follow on Tuesday 14 October 2025, to inform the emerging designs.	Amber

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	Progress the Sailortown/Titanic Quarter (TQ) bridge project to design development RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design).	Funding has now been secured from DfI, BCC and BHC. Procurement has progressed and a design appointed in September 2025 (ARUP with Knight Architects) to develop the bridge design up to RIBA Stage 2. Community and stakeholder engagement is planned throughout the process to ensure optimum design and route for the area.	Green
	Progress public realm improvements through design development and statutory approval at Little York Street, Little Patrick Street, 5Cs and Blackstaff Square & Environs.	Little York Street - Little Patrick Street: Officers have been working closely with DfI to navigate the Traffic Road Order process, to support the delivery of the scheme. 5Cs and Blackstaff: ongoing work through DfC governance on public realm schemes at various stage of design and planning.	Amber
	Deliver the UP2030 Net Zero Neighbourhoods Framework (NZNF).	"There has been engagement with communities and wider city partners across qtrs 1 and 2. This included final sense checking workshops with communities and with Members in May and June 2025 in order to ensure the Framework captured the issues identified, prior to the final drafting. During August and September 2025 focus has been on finalising the framework for submission to Horizon Europe. Work is at an advanced stage on the draft final text of the UP2030 Net Zero Neighbourhoods Framework. A presentation on the final framework is scheduled for the Special meeting of the CG&R Committee in November with elected Members from Climate and Resilience Committee to be invited for this item, followed by completion of the Framework in December.	Green
	Support the delivery of relevant priorities in the Climate Action Plan for 2025/26	Officers have been engaging with the council's Climate Team to support relevant actions within the Climate Action Plan for 2025/26	Green
Positioning the City to Compete	Support the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership, taking a joint public-private approach to promote and position the city and city region as a priority location for investment, underpinning the regeneration, development and infrastructure required to deliver our inclusive growth ambitions.	The 2024/25 BCRPP programme was concluded in May 2025, which included: Ministerial advocacy and engagement with BCCRIS stocktake findings and the place-based growth proposition in April 2025; and attendance at UKREiIF in Leeds. CG&R Committee in June 2025 approved that officers continue to support the delivery of the BCRPP 2025/26 programme including governance processes, administering programme funded expenditure and entering into associated contracts on behalf of and with oversight from the BCRPP Taskforce, and in line with Council procurement processes. progress around the continued support has included a tender process for the BCRPP Framework which concluded in August 2025. an initiation meeting has taken place with the contractor from the framework and plans are in place to move forward on the 25/26 programme including the establishment of a Community Forum / Reference Group with representation from the VCSE panel.	Amber

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	Undertake a strategic engagement programme aligned to the Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition, working with city, regional and national government partners to seek to secure place based and regeneration investment funding.	Work is advancing on the full five-part business case to underpinning the ask in the Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition, which is aligned to both corporate and Belfast Agenda priorities, and the BCCRIS stocktake findings. It is expected the business case will be finalised in October 2025. engagement to advance the asks and lobby for the case for Belfast is ongoing, and where appropriate has involved engagement in conjunction with the BCRPP. a Joint Ministerial meeting with Minister for Finance, Economy, Infrastructure and Communities was held in September 2025, this followed engagement with the Minister for Infrastructure in April 25. engagement has progressed across Q1 and Q2 at a UK government level which has included the MHCLG, Treasury and institutional investment houses in London as well as attendance at the Labour Party Conference at the end of September 25.	Amber
	Facilitate investment and development related follow ups aimed at positioning the city to compete and promote inclusive development for the city.	Ongoing reactive and proactive engagement.	Green
	Manage and maintain the Invest in Belfast website and complimentary digital platforms and collateral.	Ongoing management and maintenance of the invest in Belfast website, including updating digital platforms and collateral.	Green
Future City Centre Programme	Working with internal and external partners, deliver agreed priorities in the Future City Centre Programme to reimagine the city centre by addressing the five priority pillars (Regeneration and connectivity; business and investment proposition; animation and distinctive offering; creating a clean, green, inclusive & safe place; and supporting those who are vulnerable).	SP&R approved refreshed governance for the city centre in June 2025. following this officers have worked internally and externally through community planning structures on the establishment of the City Centre Leadership Coordination Group. An initial meeting the CCLCG took place in June, with a follow up workshop in September. the focus externally is identifying the opportunity areas for partnership working which can contribute towards the future success of the city centre.	Amber
Deliver Year 5 of A City Imagining, Belfast's 10-year cultural strategy.	Deliver Core Multi-Annual Grant (CMAG) funding to sustain accessible cultural activity (Festivals and events grants) and infrastructure (arts and heritage grants) within Belfast.	All 25/26 contracts issued and first payments made with mid-year monitoring due to be returned in November 2025. The application process for the next round of CMAG covering 26-28 was launched and closed on 10th October, with officers due to score, moderate and bring final recommendations to committee in February 2026.	Green
	Provision of Community Festivals Fund small grants (in partnership with the Department for Communities) to assist 15 Community and	All 25/26 contracts issued and first payments made with mid-year monitoring due to be returned in November 2025. The application process for the next round of CFF covering 26-27 opening in October and closing in January 2026.	Green

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	Voluntary organisations to celebrate their identity, enhance community relations by delivering community festivals.		
	Provision of arts and heritage small grants to a minimum of 15 cultural projects to support the outcomes identified within City Imagining.	All 25/26 contracts issued and first payments made with mid-year monitoring due to be returned in November 2025. The application process for the next round of A&H covering 26-27 opening in October and closing in January 2026.	Green
	Support Belfast based artist studios and creative spaces through targeted investment and work in partnership with Arts and Business NI to deliver a capacity building programme.	Artist Workspace grant of 150k awarded to 11 artist studios complete. Letters of offer issued in October. Capacity Building programme with Arts and Business completed from May to September, supporting 15 organisations with 8 events covering financial and governance advice. Stage 2 to launch in January 26 focusing on more tailored mentoring rather than events.	Green
	Strategic Partnerships to enhance skills and development across specific art forms, support audience development and enhance accessibility provision including delivery of the Gig Buddies programme.	All contracts awarded to 6 out of 7 strategic partners and final contract with Arts and Business NI currently being progressed.	Amber
	Deliver 'Bank of Ideas', a participatory budgeting programme enabling the people of Belfast to propose and collectively decide on creative projects.	The Bank of Ideas project was delivered in June 2025 with contracts awarded and final monitoring due during Q3. There were 97 applications received with support of up to £2k each, provided to 34 projects across the city. Delivery of Participatory Budgeting (PB) voting day on 29th June, with over 1,200 votes cast as part of process.	Green
	Support capacity building programmes including co-design of programmes for underrepresented groups or where gaps are identified.	Pilot projects launched and delivery of new Belfast Culture social channels.	Amber
	Sectoral development initiatives, including research, support for sectoral forums and establishment of a cultural compact.	Support for Forums including Festivals Forum, Visual Arts Forum and Green Arts Forum under way. Cultural compact under review against resources.	Amber
	Deliver the 2025 Culture Night programme, a city wide, venue based open call event including supporting marketing activity.	Culture Night delivered on 19th September. Full evaluation report due on 6th December.	Green
	Deliver phase two of the Heritage Audit and Roadmap, including the development of targeting skills, and capacity building programmes. Work in partnership with Belfast	Quotations for organisational support, heritage forum and community programmes issued to the market. An appointment is anticipated in November for completion in January 2026.	Amber

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
	Stories, the Climate Team and Brink to deliver a pilot programme entitled “Growing a Museum” which will deliver heritage skills-sharing, training and participative public activities across Belfast.		
Deliver Year 2 of the music strategy, Music Matters – a roadmap for Belfast	Delivery of UNESCO City of Music activity including programmes to support artists, the music sector and venues, including working internationally with the UNESCO Cities Network to deliver shared music, skills and learning opportunities.	<p>Delivery on music plan on track with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided for Crescendo project with Ulster Orchestra, supporting 70 pupils who would not have the means to own an instrument or have tuition beyond primary education from July 25 to March 26 • Delivery of Output, Irelands largest Music Conference welcoming over 350 delegates • Delivery of two City of Music Industry sessions • Continuation of the Music Connections website and online directory and support service for musicians • Continuation of the “OurBelfastMusic” social channels • a partnership with BLAKMEX, that develop and promote diverse and under-represented genres • Strategic Partnership with the Music Venue Trust to support the survival of grassroots music venues in Belfast • Phase one complete for Music Sustainability Toolkit for music sector • UNESCO exchanges with South Korea and Germany plus Belfast representation at UNESCO AGM in June. <p>Other work on track to be delivered includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for NI Music Prize and Sound of Belfast taking place in November 2025 • Teenage Kicks Grant programme to launch in Jan 26 • Gradam Ceoil bursary scheme to launch in Jan 26 • CQAF bursary scheme to launch in Dec 25 • Music Business Accelerator Programme to launch in Dec 25 	Green
	Deliver the NI Music Prize & Sound of Belfast, an event celebrating the very best of new, established and emerging Northern Irish music.	Contract and first payment issued. Event due to take place in Nov 2025	Amber
	Output Belfast – Work in partnership with Score Draw Music to deliver Output Belfast, Ireland’s	Event delivered on 24 th September.	Green

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
	biggest one-day music conference and live music showcase.		
Deliver Year 4 of Make Yourself at Home, the 10-year tourism plan for Belfast.	Position and promote Belfast in national and international markets through investment in Visit Belfast, the city's destination marketing and visitor servicing organisation to increase the value of tourism to the local economy.	We have worked extensively with Visit Belfast for the Maritime Festival including a significant out of state campaign.	Green
	Deliver the Belfast and Northern Ireland Conference Support Scheme in partnership with Tourism NI and Visit Belfast, to enable Belfast to compete and win national and international conferences.	Completed Service Level agreement now in place, with £200k from BCC and £200k from TNI. Visit Belfast are working on bids for conferences and a full update on conferences won will be provided as these are fully secured.	Green
	Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme including management of awards to support new or enhanced neighbourhood tourism visitor experiences.	Development of 5 tourism experiences being supported - Arts Across Belfast Tour, Linen & Queen's Quarter Trail, Clifton House self-guided audio tour, walking tour of Donegal Pass and enhancement of George Best Trail	Green
	Deliver the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Development Programme.	Working with the industry and delivering workshops and information sessions to the tourism industry to encourage them to be more accessible and inclusive as they welcome visitors	Green
	Deliver the Food and Drink Tourism Development Programme.	Belfast Flavours Food Network action plan being finalised and Food and Drink Conference in planning for delivery in Feb 2026	Green
	Visitor Signage, Wayfinding and Street Dressing and Signage Upkeep.	There has been additional investment in signage & wayfinding at the Maritime Festival	Green
	Enhance the visitor experience within Belfast, including enhancement of visitor experiences at Council owned assets.	Assets Report developed by CHL – final report received and considered internally by officers. Next steps and implementation to be agreed during Q3.	Green
	Develop an electronic dashboard for Belfast based tourism data to measure the impact of tourism in Belfast and its contribution to the Northern Irish economy.	Belfast Visitor Attitude Survey currently being undertaken by Cognisense, an independent research company, to establish baseline data for Belfast from tourists.	Green
	Deliver the Environmental Impact Audit, in partnership with Visit Belfast and the Climate team to improve Belfast's performance in the Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index	The carbon baseline has been completed and recommendations from that work has been shared with industry - GDS Index application was submitted and announcement that Belfast is 9th position in the index for 2025 out of over 80 cities	Green

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
	and maintain its place as a sustainable tourism destination within the GDS Index of 100 cities.		
Delivery of the annual City Events programme of large-scale public city events and activities attracting local audiences and out-of-state visitors	Lord Mayors Day - Delivery of a day of family - friendly activity and animation focusing on City Hall, but with satellite activity at three other venues – 2 Royal Ave, the Oh Yeah Music centre and the Green House.	Family friendly activity and animation focusing on City Hall and other venues – 2 Royal Ave, the Oh Yeah Music centre and the Green House. Delivered in partnership with LM charities and key Council venues. Focus on musical performance and workshops, aimed at youth / families. Estimated audience across all venues 6-7,000. Positive feedback with no complaints received.	Green
	St Patrick's Day 2026 - build on the development of the St Patrick's Day Celebrations.	Planning underway. The 2026 event will involve an house delivered parade, using external contractors to support parade and community content. Additionally support for other projects under this umbrella, procured previously, including Trad Trail, City Centre Music Festival, Seachtain na Gaelige and other smaller programme elements. Within the specific timeframe, all contractors have been engaged to discuss 2025 feedback and future planning issues. (Should be green)	Green
	Christmas - delivery of the Christmas event, with local community and creative sector content on a focal stage at City Hall and supplemented by city centre animation.	Planning well advanced. Traditional delivery as per last few years focused on central stage at City Hall showcasing a variety of local talent. Accessible arrangements include accessible platform and audio description. The programme is supplemented by a 6-week programme at 2 Royal Ave 'Winters Den' and new for 2025, there will also be a 5-week programme of both music and street theatre throughout the city centre during the busy Christmas period.	Green
	Deliver the Festive Lighting programme.	Planning well advanced. Working with a new supplier.	Green
	Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival - Deliver the 2025 Maritime festival in partnership with Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Maritime Belfast Trust and Department for Communities.	Festival successfully delivered, audience of circa 57,000. Poor weather affected day 2 of the event. Delivered in-house with support from Maritime Belfast Trust and Belfast Harbour, and other partners. Many new elements for 2025 included an Accessible and Inclusive Zone and incorporating the Festival of Fools into the festival. An evening concert was held on the Slipways. Council was successful in securing £30k of Tourism NI support. Feedback was positive and given the audience figures, remarkably no complaints were received.	Green
Support delivery and maximise benefits from international and major events	Host Oireachtas na Samhna, Ireland's oldest Irish language and arts festival, from October 29 to November 2, 2025	Planning well advanced). Event will take place at the ICC, with other venues including the City Hall (hosting media awards) Ulster Hall and Europa. Council, as a key funder, will have particular profile at this event, with the Deputy Lord Mayor speaking at the opening ceremony,	Green

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
	Work with city partners to plan for and develop /submit bids for international events that best align to strategic priorities and maximise legacy.	Outworking of events action plan.	Green
	Develop an Events Action Plan for the city, incorporating an ongoing approach to bid for events.	FEI appointed to develop a 5-Year Events Action Plan for City Events underpinning both A City Imagining (10-year Cultural Strategy) and Make Yourself at Home (10-year Tourism Strategy) enabling Council to consider options and make recommendations for the identification, securing, funding and delivering of events and festivals in Belfast.	Green
	Develop options for enhanced city animation during the summer.	Options developed but didn't proceed in 2025- linked to decision on Sunday Trading pilot.	Red
	Engage with NI partners on maximising Belfast's position in Euro 2028.	Tourism NI leading on this and further updates to be provided	Red
Delivery of Fleadh Cheoil	Planning and preparation to host the Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann 2026 in Belfast, including establishment of Fleadh team, development of agreements with partners, commencement of volunteer recruitment and delivery of engagement programme.	Core Fleadh Team recruited, budget and financial plan approved and final governance arrangements being put in place. Venue mapping complete, traffic management plan under development, footprint developed and workstreams on accommodation and licensing being progressed. Agreements are in place with key partners such as Volunteer Now and under development with other such as Visit Belfast. Programme approach being presented to committee in October and volunteer recruitment campaign will be launched at the beginning of Q3 with a PR drive and 'call to action'. Website launched and engagement programme developed - 4 Engagement dates being held in November.	Amber
	Development of Outline Business Case and implementation of governance structures and arrangements including establishment of a Fleadh Executive Committee.	Core governance structures in place and Outline Business Case currently with Tourism NI / Department for Economy for consideration.	Amber
	Develop and deliver the event Programme Plan and Operational Project Plan and initiate event procurement exercise.	Weekly meetings are ongoing, with procurement pathways mapped across the majority of workstreams now with phasing included. CPS are in attendance at these weekly meetings and have a dedicated resource now assigned to Fleadh. There is some concern around the volume of procurement required at the current time, which may require further support in coming weeks and months to ensure all is in place for Fleadh 2026.	Amber
Commercial Assets (Belfast Castle,	Effective management and operation of Belfast Castle and Malone House providing a safe,	Belfast Castle in particular has been seeing positive volumes in relation to events and usage of cafe/restaurant. Malone House is quieter, with an ongoing	Amber

Strategic Priority	In-Year Deliverables	Mid-Year Progress Update	Status
Malone House, Belfast Zoo and Belfast Bikes)	welcoming and attractive venue for all visitors; Promoting both venues as premier conference, event and wedding venues and progressing options to ensure long-term value for money.	trend of welcoming 'short lead' event bookings. High operational costs for security and cleaning continue to be analysed with cost savings measures to be introduced later this year. Both venues are operating on profit-share models with the catering partner, however, these are likely to require review for the next financial year.	
	Efficient and effective management and operation of Belfast Zoo with a focus on enhancing the visitor experience, safety, conservation, education and animal welfare; and develop proposals to deliver long-term financial sustainability of Belfast Zoo.	Various events and promotions took place during Q1 and Q2 to encourage footfall, and further planning has taken place for promotions in the following quarters. Health and Safety improvements have continued to be a major focus for improvement during the first part of the year. A range of improved measures and documentation are now in place and being followed by zoo staff.	Amber
	Oversee the implementation and mobilisation plan for changing to the new Belfast Bikes operator/ operating model in September 2025.	New operator commenced in September 2025.	Green
	Oversee the delivery of the Belfast Bikes public bike hire scheme, maximising revenue and reducing vandalism costs.	The former operation was in place until mid-September. As the scheme was winding down, bike availability was reduced. Vandalism remained on a similar level as before. The new operation commenced in mid-September and showed positive signs of usage in the initial period. The new scheme has a highly reduced vandalism fee for the Council. A launch event and PR activity took place in September, and planning continues for future marketing activity to promote the scheme, particularly ahead of Spring seasons.	Green

Performance Monitoring

The following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets are used to monitor performance.

Theme	Key Performance Indicator	2025/26 Target	Q2 Actual	Status	Notes (if applicable)
Our Economy	Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity. (Statutory indicator)	325	124	Amber	
	Number of Regional individuals/ entrepreneurs supported through start-up activity.	4,300	3,363	Green	
	Number of Belfast individuals/ entrepreneurs supported through start-up activity.	839	547	Green	
	Number of Regional businesses supported through business growth activity.	2,000	1,190	Green	
	Number of Belfast businesses supported through business growth activity.	380	239	Green	
	Percentage of Regional Go Succeed participants engaged who are female	50%	52.5%	Green	
	Percentage of Belfast Go Succeed participants engaged who are female	50%	34%	Red	
	Percentage of participants who move into a positive outcome from an Employment or Upskilling Academy.	75%	No Data	Green	First academy completions expected at end of Q3
	Number of participants on Employment and Upskilling Academies	675	295	Green	
	Number of organisations accredited as Belfast Business Promise Supporters	100	70	Green	
	Occupancy levels at Innovation Factory	70%	69%	Amber	
	Number of social enterprises and co-operatives supported	110	51	Amber	
	Total number of previously vacant city-wide properties that are occupied as a result of the Vacant to Vibrant intervention.	20	24	Green	
Our Place	Number of visitor servicing enquiries (Visit Belfast)	805,000	399,014	Green	As of 19/09/2025
	GDS-Index ranking	Top 10	9th	Green	
	Number of people attending the annual programme of large-scale public city events	111,000	63,500	Green	Maritime Festival attendance = 57,000 Lord Mayor's Day attendance = 6,500

	Number of attendees at major Cultural Festivals	410,000	No data yet available	Amber	Data available upon receipt of year-end CMAG reports
	Number of people engaged at engaged at arts and heritage organisations	Establish baseline	No data yet available	Amber	
	Number of citizens engaged through participatory budgeting and cultural interventions.	Establish baseline	No data yet available	Amber	
	Number of visitors to St. George's Market	1,000,000	571,000	Green	
	Number of external events at St. George's Market	16	6	Amber	
	Number of Belfast Bike journeys	142,000	39,315	Amber	As of 31/07/2025
	Number of bookings for conferences, wedding and events at Belfast Castle	342	154	Green	
	Number of bookings for conferences, wedding and events at Malone House	202	94	Green	
	Number of visitors to Belfast Zoo	208,984	121,435	Amber	As of 31/08/2025
	Total revenue generated from Belfast Bikes scheme	£126,000	£65,117	Red	
	Total income generated by Belfast Castle	£282,675	£137,451	Amber	
	Total income generated by Malone House	£130,848	£53,036	Red	
	Total income generated at Belfast Zoo	£1,894,716	£1,456,408	Amber	