

## Appendix 5

### Investment Programme communications – evaluation report

A communications plan for the Investment Programme was considered and approved by committee in February 2013. At this meeting, it was agreed that members would receive regular progress reports on all aspects of communication. This update covers **June to October 2013**, and also outlines other potential activity scheduled for the next three months.

#### Summary of activity (all based on June to October 2013 period)

Media relations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 38 press releases issued for Investment Programme projects</li> <li>* 219 articles placed in local and regional media - 76% of these were generated by our activity</li> <li>* 94% of coverage received was rated as positive, factual or neutral</li> <li>* 13% of media enquiries received (631) were related to Investment Programme projects - 87% of enquiries were responded to within 24 hours</li> </ul>	<p>Coverage secured for key milestones within physical projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Belfast Welcome Centre</li> <li>- Girdwood Community Hub</li> <li>- Connswater Community Greenway</li> <li>- John Luke Bridge</li> <li>- Hammer Complex</li> <li>- Local Investment Fund</li> <li>- Olympia Leisure Centre proposals</li> <li>- Renewing the Routes</li> </ul>	<p>Coverage also gained for the economy, communities and value for money strands, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apprentice appointments</li> <li>- Launch of Tribunal Representation Service</li> <li>- New culture and arts funding scheme</li> <li>- IBM Smarter Cities Challenge</li> <li>- World Police and Fire Games</li> <li>- Global India business meeting</li> </ul>
<p>Each release or event offered publicity opportunities for relevant elected members and partner organisations, with representatives selected according to protocols in the communications plan. Some events were open to the media, with specific filming or interview opportunities provided.</p>		
<p>A 24/7 media on-call service is also provided, as well as daily monitoring of social media sites.</p>		
<p>A breakdown of press releases issued from June to October 2013 is included in <b>Appendix A</b>.</p>		

## Website - belfastcity.gov.uk

\* Investment Programme and Regeneration sections are viewed an average of 1477 times per month – an increase of 120% on traffic to the old website

\* New website is visited by an average of 142,850 unique visitors per month

\* Items of interest to residents are also promoted via the homepage, with users directed to the relevant web page for more information

\* Projects advertised on the homepage have included Connswater Community Greenway, Local Investment Fund and John Luke Bridge

A new council website was launched in July 2013 and optimised for mobile platforms.

Content was revised and rewritten to make it easier to understand and find.

The site now includes a dedicated area for investors and a section for the Investment Programme, as well as profiles for the main physical projects.

This material is updated each week, with details of projects as they are delivered or completed.

The Investment Programme has been placed in the context of other regeneration and investment projects taking place in Belfast, as well as the reform of local government, with content focusing on how the schemes we're delivering will benefit local residents and communities.

Key achievements are outlined in easy to understand terms, in keeping with our commitment to plain English, and material is time stamped so users can be confident that it is up to date, and encouraged to return for more updates.

As part of a wider effort to promote the new website and ensure content can be found, the Investment Programme is promoted via A-Z listings, search engine 'recommended results' and through search engine optimisation for external search engines like Google.

We are continuing to look for opportunities to create more online video content, for example, by commissioning or producing more videos which show the extent of work taking place on the ground. A recruitment process is underway to provide a resource within BCC who can assist with this work, so we build up a bank of material showing the 'before' and 'after' of projects.

All press releases are accompanied by a relevant web address. Where a dedicated web page is not available for a project or scheme, users are directed to [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/investment](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/investment)

## Social media

\* 9% of posts on BCC Facebook page were related to Investment Programme projects, reaching 15,913 fans with each post

\* 12% of posts on BCC Twitter page were related to Investment Programme projects, reaching 23,663 followers with each post

\* We have the highest number of social media fans/followers of any NI public sector organisation, and are ranked within the top five UK local government authorities for social media activity

\* YouTube page is home to 125 videos, viewed more than 200,000 times, including 6 related to Investment Programme

\* Flickr hosts 3,726 photos, including many dedicated to Investment Programme projects, and showing 'before' and 'after' pictures of some schemes

Media and online activity is complemented by regular posts to social media websites, particularly Facebook and Twitter.

Material is tailored for these channels, focusing on projects and schemes which are likely to be of interest to users.

Users are encouraged to share the material and 'spread the word' about projects related to the Investment Programme, for example, a recent post about the new Visit Belfast Welcome Centre was liked by 60 people and shared by 20 others on their own networks.

We also use social media to respond to questions and comments received in relation to Investment Programme projects, after sourcing appropriate answers from officers.

Other social media accounts are monitored for specific keywords related to projects and any misinformation or lack of clarity corrected, where necessary.

Where possible, we proactively post information on other Facebook pages and local sites, so we are going to our audience, rather than expecting them to come to us.

Increased use of video and photo content plays a significant role in social media, providing us with relevant material which is appropriate to our audience and likely to be shared by our users.

All posts are accompanied by a relevant web address. Where a dedicated web page is not available for a project or scheme, users are directed to [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/investment](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/investment) so we can increase traffic to the new website.

## Internal communications

\* Regular two-page spread provided in each edition of bi-monthly intercom staff magazine – this is divided into three areas – short project update, focus on a particular theme and a staff profile, looking at an employee who is delivering a project or helping with an area of work connected to the Investment Programme. The coverage is complemented by regular updates, via the Chief Executive’s column.

\* Intercom is sent to 2,152 email addresses and 1,500 printed copies are distributed every two months

\* Regular updates are also provided via the Team Brief, issued to 208 briefers and seen by 2,600 staff every two months

\* Dedicated and regularly updated section on Interlink staff website accessed by 1,600 PC users each day – attracting more than 2,000 visits since launch and regularly promoted on the site homepage to signpost staff to the information

\* Information and updates are provided to around 1,000 frontline staff via Getting People Connected TV screens, now available in 58 locations

We will continue to work with departments to ensure all our employees are kept updated on the delivery of the Investment Programme and to develop material which highlights the relevance to their daily work.

Several mechanisms have been made available to teams to facilitate this, including a departmental-specific element of the Team Brief, which has been used to good effect by some, but not all, departments.

We will continue to support departmental communications staff in running smaller information events for their own employees, and will continue to look at demand for future briefing sessions for the wider staff body, similar to that held in May 2013.

Plans are in progress to develop a series of staff briefings relating to the reform of local government, so there may be some opportunity to link these together and provide an update on Investment Programme achievements within the same sessions.

## Publications, advertising, branding and graphic design

<p>* Regular column about the Investment Programme included in each edition of City Matters residents' magazine, along with detailed articles about relevant initiatives, and distributed to 130,000 people per edition (five editions per year)</p> <p>* 87% of readers say that City Matters improves their understanding of the council</p> <p>* An average of 850 people respond to each edition – 98% of these comments are positive</p> <p>* XX publication jobs handled between June and October 2013 – from this, XXX (XX%) were related to the Investment Programme and contained appropriate branding</p> <p>* Branded signage installed at another two physical projects, including a full building hoarding wrap at Visit Belfast Welcome Centre. A number of other signage requests are currently in progress.</p>	<p>The column in City Matters is themed around areas of interest to readers, including jobs, communities, support for businesses, etc, and acts as a quick signpost for other related content within the magazine.</p> <p>In-depth articles about Investment Programme projects are written to highlight the specific benefits initiatives will have on residents, for example, improvements to local sports facilities or the funding provided to community organisations.</p> <p>When relevant, articles refer people back to the BCC website for more information.</p> <p>A breakdown of stories covered in City Matters from June to October 2013 is included in <b>Appendix B.</b></p>	<p>We continue to implement a clear look and feel for the Investment Programme which complements and reflects our existing corporate identity. This branding is used on publications, advertising material and other design work to identify projects as 'belonging' to the programme.</p> <p>The web address <a href="http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/investment">www.belfastcity.gov.uk/investment</a> is featured on all publications and correspondence related to Investment Programme projects.</p> <p>Branded backdrops and pull-up stands are used at all events where the press and public are invited. We have also provided alternative materials for 'hire' to groups and partner organisations who want to highlight the council's involvement in their project.</p> <p>Branded signage has been erected at appropriate access points to physical build projects. This clearly identifies schemes as being part of the Investment Programme and acknowledges the contribution of partners and contractors to the work being undertaken.</p>
---	---	--

## Appendix A - Press releases issued – June to October 2013

This table shows all Investment Programme press releases issued to news desks from June to October 2013.

It does not include business and leisure events/programme releases which, although included in the Investment Programme, are termed 'business as usual' within this report. Releases for the World Police and Fire Games are also not included here, as this was handled by an external PR company, with the council reissuing material as needed.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Release</b>
<b>October 2013</b>	Public bike hire scheme – bidders' day for potential sponsors and operators Girdwood Community Hub – announcement of EU funding Local Investment Fund – Short Strand Community Centre funding Connswater Community Greenway – Sam Thompson bridge naming Connswater Community Greenway – CS Lewis public art commission IBM Smarter Cities Challenge – overview of event findings Local Investment Fund – Frank Gillen Centre funding Local Investment Fund – West Belfast Orange Hall funding Apprentices – overview of new starts and jobs achievements so far Regeneration conference – including UUJ extension
<b>September 2013</b>	Community gardens – opening of new garden at Finlay Park Local Investment Fund – Templemore Avenue School Trust funding IBM Smarter Cities Challenge – preview of event Culture and arts funding – launch of Creative and Cultural Belfast Fund Belfast Masterplan – public consultation exercise Olympia Leisure Centre – public meetings to discuss refurbishment plans Help for businesses – free procurement workshop Belfast Waterfront conference extension – Lord Mayor visit to London Economic links with Dublin and London – Lord Mayor meeting with Dublin Mayor
<b>August 2013</b>	Public bike hire scheme – expressions of interest announcement John Luke Bridge – opening to public Hammer Complex – completion of work and work begins on Springmartin pitches Renewing the Routes – extension of scheme Tribunal Representation Service – launch of citywide scheme

Month	Release
<b>July 2013</b>	Connswater Community Greenway – work begins on Phase 1 Ballysillan play park – condemnation of vandalism on refurbishment works
<b>June 2013</b>	Visit Belfast Welcome Centre – appointment of contractor/work begins on site Connswater Community Greenway – appointment of design team for Phase 2 India Week – activities for children India Week – activities at City Hall Global India business meeting – delegates arrive in Belfast Global India business meeting – initial overview Renewing the Routes – work begins on latest stage Gilpins site – Lord Mayor visit Mary Peters Athletics Track – sculpture of Mary Peters/overview of event success Mary Peters Athletics Track – preview of athletes who have signed up Mary Peters Athletics Track – ticketing information Mary Peters Athletics Track – announcement of first athletics event

**Appendix B -  
City Matters articles – June to October 2013**

<b>Edition</b>	<b>Article</b>
<b>September to November 2013</b>	<p>Investment Programme column – with updates entitled ‘community projects’, ‘local facilities’ and ‘people and neighbourhoods’</p> <p>John Luke Bridge – open for use            Mary Peters Athletics Track – unveiling of sculpture            Belfast Community Investment Programme            Tribunal Representation Service – how to access it            Lower Falls/Divis pilot project – focusing on job and training opportunities            Youth Engagement Programme pilot scheme – update            Community garden at Avoniel – how to get involved            Connswater Community Greenway – bridge naming competition            Hammer Complex and Springmartin pitches – helping local sports            Older Volunteer of the Year – call for entries</p>
<b>July to August 2013</b>	<p>Investment Programme column - with updates entitled ‘physical investment’, ‘communities and ‘jobs and businesses’</p> <p>Connswater Community Greenway – work starting            Renewing the Routes – latest phase gets underway            John Luke Bridge – work starting            Dilapidated buildings – look back at work completed            Job opportunities – ring-fenced Business Support Clerks (case study)            Support for local businesses – free programmes and events            Community gardens – how to get involved            Sports pitches – schedule of work            Local Investment Fund – round-up of projects funded            PEACE III Programme – update on activities funded</p>



## **Appendix C - Upcoming opportunities (November 2013 to January 2014)**

We are awaiting funding announcements for several major physical projects by Christmas 2013, including many of the 'flagship' schemes outlined in the Investment Programme.

These are likely to be of high interest to the media, so we anticipate providing proactive material, once in a position to do so.

Some potential opportunities for media coverage are outlined in the tables below.

In addition to highlighting the individual project or initiative, these milestones also provide an opportunity to reinforce the key messages related to the Investment Programme, backed up with factual updates on where we are to date, versus the commitments we have made.

For example:

- £XX million of £150 million of physical projects are now underway
- £XX million of £5 million Local Investment Fund has been allocated, between XX projects
- Now paying XX% of our creditors within 28 days to improve business cash flow
- Supplying XX work placement, internship and apprenticeship opportunities
- Securing £XX million of external funding to deliver key projects

This information is regularly collated, so it can be relayed in communications material and provided to elected representatives for speeches, interviews, etc and provided to the media within releases and in response to enquiries received. The potential best opportunities for highlighting these messages in the near future are highlighted in red in the table below.

It is important to note that **we cannot aim for coverage of every project being delivered as part of the Investment Programme.** Instead, we need to prioritise which stories are of most relevance to our audiences, will achieve positive coverage and will realistically attract media interest, given their own limited resources.

Investment Programme activity continues to be delivered alongside 'business as usual' work, and we rely upon departmental resources to help deliver the kind of events which can attract press coverage.

In some instances, especially those projects being delivered together with partners, we may not always take the lead on communications. In these cases, we need to 'tie in' with whatever activity is planned by others, and be realistic in our expectations around what is achievable.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Potential media activity</b>	<b>Other potential activity</b>	<b>Potential representative</b>
<b>November 2013</b>	Public bike hire scheme – bidders’ day (12 November)	Two releases issued in advance of event	Social media	Councillor Hargey
	Opening of City Business Hub (14 November)	Release Photo call	Social media and website City Matters Intercom	Councillor Hargey
	Information sessions for Connswater Community Greenway (Phase 2)	Organised by East Belfast Partnership	Social media and website	N/A
	John Luke Bridge – official opening event	Release Photo call and speeches Media opportunities	Social media	Lord Mayor Councillor McKee
	Belfast Masterplan – closing date for public consultation responses	Release – reminder of closing date	Social media and website	Councillor Hargey
	Renewing the Routes – work begins on Oldpark/Andersonstown Roads	Release Photo call	Social media and website City Matters Intercom	Councillor Hargey
	Marrowbone Millennium Park – 3G pitch work gets underway	Release – once work is visible on site Photo call – TBC	Signage City Matters Website updates	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson - TBC
	Super-connected Belfast programme – full rollout of voucher scheme for businesses	Release Case studies Photo call	Social media and website City Matters Team Brief – TBC	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson - TBC
	Funding for Belfast Waterfront, Innovation Centre and Tropical Ravine – all TBC, but would be ideal to cluster them together	Release Photo call	Social media and website City Matters Intercom or Team Brief	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson - TBC

<b>Month</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Potential media activity</b>	<b>Other potential activity</b>	<b>Potential representative</b>
<b>December 2013</b>	Local Investment Fund – ‘cluster’ announcement of a further £XX million	Release	Social media	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson – TBC Chairs, AWGs – TBC
	Small Business Saturday	TBC	City Matters – dedicated spread	TBC
	Visit Belfast Welcome Centre – official opening event	Release Photo call and speeches Media opportunities	Social media and website City Matters Team Brief and Intercom	Lord Mayor Alderman Robinson
	Feasibility study visits to BIF projects at Gilpins and Markets tunnels	TBC	TBC	TBC
	Girdwood Hub – planning permission	TBC	Website updated	Lord Mayor Alderman Robinson
	North Foreshore – appointment of a developer for solar energy/EU funding	Release Photo call	Website City Matters Intercom or Team Brief	Lord Mayor Alderman Robinson
	Pitches programme – work due on site at several venues	Release Photo call	Signage City Matters Social media and website	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson - TBC
	Andersonstown Leisure Centre plans	TBC – part of wider Leisure Transformation Programme so a separate release may be needed, possibly around the rate being struck	Social media and website City Matters Intercom Dept staff materials	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson - TBC

<b>Month</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Potential media activity</b>	<b>Other potential activity</b>	<b>Potential representative</b>
<b>January 2014</b>	Innovation Centre – public and stakeholder engagement sessions	Release	Social media and website City Matters Publications Public notices – TBC Interlink staff website	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson – TBC
	Alleygates – installation of gates in east and west Belfast	Release – TBC Photo call	Social media and website Team Brief Signage – TBC	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson – TBC
	Girdwood Community Hub – appointment of contractor and work begins on site	Release Photo call and speeches Media opportunities	Website Social media Ezine Signage Tender ads Intercom or Team Brief	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson – TBC
	Cliftonville Playing Fields – work begins on sport pitch section	TBC	TBC	TBC
	Sam Thompson Bridge – official opening event (date TBC)	Organised by East Belfast Partnership	Social media and website City Matters Intercom or Team Brief	Lord Mayor – TBC Alderman Robinson – TBC