

APPENDIX 1: Summary of key outcomes emerging from Executive Ministerial Meetings

Education Minister, Peter Weir (9/8/16)

- **Employability & Skills** – Departmental participation on Economic Forum and willingness to work alongside Council and other partners to co-design new local interventions and programmes which seek to address the educational inequalities including Belfast Works Employability Pathway.
- **Careers Advice Service and Guidance** – commitment to work with council, the Education Authority and educational providers in delivering the new Careers Advice & Guidance Strategy NI. Potential role for council to liaise with employers and schools to increase access to work experience/internships, developing employability advice and mentoring support.
- **Education Curriculum** – Department intends to undertake a review of the current educational curriculum and is keen to better match education and skills development to employer demands.
- **Special needs** – Members highlighted the need to take an integrated (whole system) approach to addressing the current length of time it takes for diagnosis of autism and the associated delay in provision of necessary support. Engagement to take place with the Dept of Health.
- **Local Development Plan** – Belfast CC to engage with the Education Authority to inform the work they are taking forward to develop local area plans. Need to take account of emerging population growth projections and impact on future demand for education/schools – including City Centre.
- **Capital Build** – Dept commitment to engage with council around its future build programme and explore alignment with our own capital investment plans and wider city developments, including opportunities around shared facilities.
- **Nursery Provision** - Members highlighted the desire to work with DoE and Education Authority and private providers to ensure adequate provision in city.
- **Smart Cities and Data Sharing** – willingness to explore opportunities to better co-ordinate and share information/data to inform future planning and decision-making processes at a city level.

Justice Minister, Claire Sugden MLA (22/8/16)

- **Alignment and Strategic Planning** – recognition of the need to seek to rationalise/integrate the raft of plans and strategies in place around community safety.
- **Policing and Community Safety Partnerships** – whilst recognising the need for a more sustainable and longer-term funding model to be put in place for PCSPs (e.g 3-4 years), Minister highlighted the inability to do this with the current NI Executive annual budget allocation process linked to TBUC.
- **Re-generation** – recognition of council role in supporting physical, economic and social regeneration of the city and its neighbourhoods and the potential impact that such activity could have in addressing crime and anti-social behaviour – e.g. designing out crime.

- **Local Interventions** – commitment for Dept officials to work with council to identify & develop proposals for localised interventions – particular linked to interface areas. Specific reference made by Minister to success of the Alley-gating Scheme and the potential to expand this.
- **Funding Opportunities (Fresh Start)** – acknowledgement of the joint Bid being submitted by council and Probation Board NI to consider the social issues behind why many young people get involved with paramilitaries, criminality and organised crime.
- **Interfaces** – Minister highlighted the political desire within the NI Executive to remove interface barriers by 2023. Whilst aware that there are clearly local challenges/ concerns/ fears around this, not familiar with the detail. Desire to get a fuller understanding of this and would be keen to undertake site visit(s).
- Again, reference made to the short-term nature (annual) of Executive funding around TBUC and the impact on the sustainability of interventions and funding to councils.
- **Alcohol Controls & Legislation** – Members highlighted need to undertake a review of existing in place to tackle on-street and anti-social consumption of alcohol. Group established (including Dept of Justice, Dept for Communities and council officials) to under review and bring forward recommendations. An area of concern raised by Members was the gap in legislation around carrying and consumption of alcohol on buses for all events. Ministerial support sought in bringing forward any proposed legislative changes which may emerge.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour** – Minister highlighted current legislative constrains ‘anti-social behaviour’ and the inability to prosecute on its own – leads to repetitive behaviour. Special Advisor currently looking at this.
- **Off-Road Vehicles** – Members highlighted the need to bring forward legislation for a registration scheme for off-road vehicles. Responsibility for this would be DfI but sought support of Minister.
- **Ministerial priorities** – Minister outlined her priorities as being: Domestic Violence; Mental Health; Restorative Justice; Children and Young People.

Finance Minister, Minister Máirtín Ó Mulleoir MLA (26/8/16)

- **Infrastructure Investment** – proposal to consider the establishment of a Joint Group (with reps from DfC and DfI) to develop proposals on how prioritised infrastructure and regeneration schemes can be progressed within the city.
- **Infrastructure Plan and Finance** - co-commission with central government two specific pieces of work (i) creation of a Strategic infrastructure Plan for the City-Region and Eastern Corridor and (ii) identifying viable alternative funding mechanisms to deliver infrastructure and regeneration schemes including potential funding from European Investment Bank. Minister support and commitment to be involved in such work.
- **Office Accommodation** – £300m investment planned. Work with officials to explore potential investment opportunities for Belfast including joint developments.
- **Employability and Skills** – commitment that senior officials will participate in Economic Forum

- **Rating Policy & Incentivising Growth** – work underway to examine how the rating system can better incentivise investment and growth and to develop specific proposals on how this may be brought forward (e.g. rate relief/holidays linked to new investment and jobs creation; derelict land tax)
- **Smart Cities** – commitment to explore opportunities to better co-ordinate and share information and data to inform future planning and decision-making processes at a city level. We also welcome the commitment to engage in any emerging innovative initiatives which are of mutual benefit.
- **Fuel Poverty** – commitment that officials will explore with DfC how a more sustainable funding model can be put in place to support fuel poverty – including Affordable Warmth scheme.

Communities Minister, Paul Givan MLA (13/9/16)

- **Transfer of Regeneration Powers** – Discussions ongoing within Executive with no definitive decision. Minister keen to reach a conclusion ASAP.
- **MOU** – Minister confirmed MOU in place between DfC and council which supports a collaborative approach to regeneration activity. Keen to continue to work alongside council to progress key flagship schemes.
- **Community Development** – Council sought assurances from the Minister that Community Development Grant funding received from DfC be protected as part of any review undertaken of the support provided by the Dept to the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- **Asset Utilisation** – Minister supports the concept of community assets transfer and recognises the need for a more holistic approach to be taken to maximising the potential of community based assets. Willing to work with council to identify specific asset related proposals and linked to regeneration schemes.
- **Stadia Funding** – Members highlighted the Council's desire to bring forward proposals around centres for excellence (e.g. Boxing, Athletics, rowing, potential national training centre for soccer) and the desire to work with DfC to identify potential synergies and bring forward joint schemes. Minister indicated that whilst he intends to roll-out the £36m soccer stadia funding application programme later this year, Minister is keen to bring forward proposals for a major capital scheme. Willing to explore the potential opportunity to partner with council and other stakeholders to bring this forward (non-committal).
- **Local Development Plan** – Members highlighted the ambitions plans emerging for the city including potential higher population growth targets. Seek early engagement with DfC and NIHE regarding future demand for housing and associated planning.
- **Physical Transformation of city** - Members highlighted the importance of key schemes such as Streets Ahead Phase III; Royal Exchange (2); Transport Hub; New Visitor Attraction) and need to work with DfC and central government to maximise the wider regeneration and social impact of these. Ministerial

commitment to work (partner) with council to seek to bring forward key schemes which will help regenerate the city – albeit this will be with the caveat around affordability.

- **Streets Ahead Phase III** – DfC are working with utility providers to ensure that this scheme is future proofed from a utility planning perspective.
- **Infrastructure Plan** – informed Minister of intention to develop infrastructure plan for wider city-region and seek involvement of DfC. Wish to connect physical investment with social side and employability and skills agenda.
- **Social Inclusion** – Minister stated that draft Social Strategy to be issued shortly for consultation. At its heart will be addressing poverty and social inclusion. During discussions with officials (Minister had to leave meeting for Executive business), it was pointed out that the council seeks to deliver the same outcomes as the Dept and would seek opportunity to co-design with DfC the approach to achieving this. Also important to recognise the scale/concentration of social issues within the city and the potential scale which we may affect change. Council should not be seen as just another consultation stakeholder.
- **Employability and Skills** - DfC officials confirmed that the approach and proposals being prepared by Belfast CC are likely to find expression in the draft Social Strategy including the development of local employability/work schemes and delivery forums (e.g. Belfast Works Employability Pathway model being considered for Belfast).
- **Welfare Reform** – DfC officials confirmed that mitigation programme will be rolled-out in-line with the welfare reforms coming on stream. Confirmed that elected Members will be part of any training/awareness programme delivered. Also confirmed that negotiations are nearly completed and contracts being entered into for provision of regional support services such as telephony service, additional face-to-face support services and an information sign-posting network. Recognises the important role of advice services.
- **Legislative Reform** – draft Liquor Licencing Bill to be introduced to the Assembly and Executive by w/c 26 September. Will seek evidence as part of the committee stage consideration process. Key proposal will be to align Entertainment licencing and Liquor licensing which would allow licenced premises to sell alcohol up until 2am, with drinking up by 3pm.

Off-Sales Licencing Laws – whilst DfC officials has been considering and developing viable proposals for a controlled approach to be taken to enable key events to sell promotional alcohol for off-site consumption, this is not currently included in the draft Bill and will likely be brought forward as proposed amendments as part of consideration of Bill. Noted that this legislation is unlikely to be in place to mid-2017 if passes through process.

Sunday Trading Laws – DfC officials indicated that review undertaken in 2011 and no political appetite at that stage to change these. Officials noted that at this stage there had been no strong economic case put forward to support change.

Gambling & Betting Legislation (Casino) – potential need to review existing legislation to bring forward enabling legislation permitting the issuing of a casino licence to secure investment in a new ‘destination attraction’ – unlocking major investment, enhancing tourism, economic growth, employment creation etc.

DfC officials indicated that this would require significant legislation change and the need to put in place a new regulation regime (commissioner), to ensure fairness. Officials also indicated that there has been no previous Ministerial appetite to bring this forward within Northern Ireland.

Belfast CC to undertake a specific piece of work to develop a proposal, for political and Ministerial consideration, on how such a scheme could be brought forward in a very restricted way and the business case around this.

Executive Office, First Minister Arlene Foster MLA & Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MLA (28/9/16)

- **Transfer of Regeneration** – Support for the early transfer of regeneration powers to Council and explore the potential of Council acting under the authority of the Communities Minister to use delegated regeneration powers to deliver specific prioritised schemes within the city.
- **Infrastructure Investment** – commitment to work alongside the Council and other partners to explore how prioritised infrastructure and regeneration schemes (e.g. Transport Hub, York Street Interchange, Belfast Rapid Transit) can be brought forward and funding.

Willingness to work alongside the Council and Department of Infrastructure to consider options around specific schemes and to bring forward the development of an Infrastructure Plan for Belfast City-Region and Eastern Corridor – exploring alternative forms of financing such infrastructure including private sector involvement.

Belfast CC to undertake a specific piece of work to develop a proposal, for political and Ministerial consideration, on how such a scheme could be brought forward in a very restricted way and the business case around this.

- **Incentivising Growth and Rating Policy** – willingness to work alongside Department for Finance and Council to explore how the rating system can better incentivise investment and growth and to develop specific proposals on how this may be brought forward (e.g. rate relief linked to new investment and job creation; derelict land taxation etc).

Council also wishes to explore the potential to retain greater proportion of growth in rates income as a result of commercial development – which could be ring-fenced by Council to borrow against to deliver important and necessary city infrastructure schemes.

- **Employability and Skills** – willingness for senior departmental officials to work with Council and other partners to establish an Economic Forum for the City.
- **Legislative Reform** – Council outlined its desire to work with Dept for Communities and NI Executive in regards to an exploratory review of both the existing Sunday trading laws and the gambling and betting laws in Northern Ireland in order to make them more responsive to the current social and economic environment, particularly focused on tourism.

Infrastructure Minister, Chris Hassard MLA (20/11/16)

- **Local Development Plan** – willingness to work alongside Council to ensure better alignment between the emerging Belfast Agenda and Local Development Plan – which will set out growth targets for the city – and regional land-use and transportation planning including the new Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan.

Planning – desire of Council to work closely with Department for Infrastructure to ensure all planning applications (including regional significant schemes) are progressed in an appropriate and timely way. Also to work in partnership in developing future planning policy and guidance which will have a direct impact on the local planning process e.g. Guidance on Section 76 Planning Agreements.

- **Infrastructure Investment** – commitment to work alongside the Council and other partners to explore how prioritised infrastructure and regeneration schemes (e.g. Transport Hub, York Street Interchange, Belfast Rapid Transit) can be brought forward and funded. Commitment to work with Council to develop an Infrastructure Plan for Belfast City-Region and Eastern Corridor – exploring alternative forms of financing such infrastructure including private sector involvement.

Council raised specific concerns regarding the delay in the York Street Interchange Scheme and the need to look at alternative financial models to fund this and other infrastructure schemes within the city.

Council also sought the involvement of the DfI in undertaking a feasibility study on high-speed rail connection between Belfast and Dublin which had been proposed in a recent Notion of Motion to Council.

- **Urban Resilience** – commitment that Departmental officials will attend the City Resilience Workshop to be held on Tuesday 15 Nov by Council and Rockefeller Foundation 100 Resilient Cities.
- **Routine Maintenance** – willingness to work with Council to explore how a more sustainable approach can be developed for grass cutting within the city and how problem areas can be addressed to avoid safety concerns for road users and adverse impact on the aesthetic appeal of parts of the city.