Subject:	Launch of the Smart Belfast framework and Innovation programme
Date:	22 September 2017
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Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?	**Yes**		**No**	X

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	
After Council Decision	
Some time in the future	
Never	

Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	**Yes**	X	**No**	

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To provide further details about the launch of the Smart Belfast framework in City Hall on Tuesday, 26 September 2017 to which all Members have been invited. This paper also provides details of the new Smart Belfast Collaborative Challenge Fund (with the potential value for local SMEs of over £860,000) which will be launched jointly with Invest NI at the same event.
1.2	This report also seeks Members' approval for the next major work strands which the Smart Belfast team are proposing to undertake over the coming months in support of the objectives of the Smart Belfast framework. A common theme across all these work strands is creating

	opportunities for greater collaborative innovation between the public and private sector in order to better address city challenges and to support the transformation of public services.
2.0	**Recommendation**
2.1	The Committee is asked to: • Note the agenda for the launch of the Smart Belfast framework and the invitation to all Members to attend. • Note the launch of the Smart Belfast Collaborative Challenge fund and the five city challenges. • Note Belfast's submission of an expression of interest in a £30 million bid to the national Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Programme. • Agree that in the event of a successful agreed bid to Digital Catapult's LPWAN competition, the Council will commit £30,000 to support activities that exploit Internet of Things technology to address Belfast and regional challenges. • Allocate £127,000 of non-recurring capital finance for the capital works required to support the establishment of the Immersive Technology hub, subject to agreement on the licensing terms between DfE and Bel Tel LLP. • Note that the process to recruit the Belfast Commissioner for Resilience will commence within the next month. • Agree to provide a letter of support to accompany 100 Resilient Cities' application to the 'International Urban Cooperation (IUC) city-to-city cooperation' programme in support of an exchange programme between Belfast and the Columbian Resilient Cities of Cali and Medellín.
3.0	**Main report**
3.1	**Key Issues** <u>Smart Belfast framework</u> The Smart Belfast framework, previously agreed by Committee in May 2017, aims to marry the city's ambition to support its high-growth digital technology SME sector with a desire to bring the innovation of this sector to bear on urban challenges and public service transformation. The framework will be publicly launched in City Hall at 10am on Tuesday, 26 September to which all Members have been invited. (A printed copy of the framework document will be shared with Members at the meeting).

3.2	The agenda for the launch event includes:
	- A breakfast briefing hosted by the Lord Mayor for representatives of large digital corporations. The briefing is an opportunity to share Belfast's smart city ambitions with those larger companies already investing in similar work across the world.
	- The main launch event (10am to 12 noon in the Great Hall): Introduced by the Lord Mayor and attended by over 300 representatives from SMEs, public bodies and communities, the will set out the aims of a Smart Belfast, and the necessary foundations that are required for its success.
	- Special guest Carl Piva, Vice-President of Global Strategic Programmes at TM Forum will then make the economic development case for smart cities – which create attractive propositions for FDI. Mr Piva works closely with cities across the world, including the US and China, on building successful smart city strategies. (Belfast recently become a member of TM Forum – a global non-profit association of over 850 digital partners set up to encourage collaborative problem-solving.)
3.3	Smart Belfast Collaborative Challenge Fund
	Generously supported by Invest NI, this new fund will be launched at the same City Hall event. The fund is aimed at local digital SMEs working together to scope out innovative solutions to urban challenges. Over 300 individuals and companies have already registered their interest in the fund.
3.4	Five 'urban challenges', linked to the Belfast Agenda, have been identified that will provide real-life opportunities for local companies to engage with the public sector to develop innovative solutions. Initially, £25,000 will be available for up to eight SME-led networks seeking to explore innovation in:
	1. Encouraging greater numbers of commuter to adopt public transport and increasing active travel throughout the city centre.
	2. Finding better ways to understand and measure visitor activity in the city
	3. Getting deeper insights into the flow of 'waste' resources to enable their re-use in the city's economy.
	4. Understanding the impact of active living programmes on the city's population.
	5. Finding opportunities to make new or more efficient use of the Council's and partners buildings and infrastructure.
3.5	Following this seven-month scoping phase more substantial funding (up to £170,000 each) may then be available for particular proposals that can demonstrate business growth

	potential. Copies of the Challenge briefs and details of the Fund will be available on the Council website from 26 September.
	Expression of Interest in Full Fibre programme
3.6	The recently launched Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Programme (part of the National Productivity Investment Fund), which currently has £200 million allocated to it, aims to accelerate the market delivery of new full fibre networks. Pilots have been announced aimed at testing four complimentary approaches: I. Aggregating public sector demand II. Incentivising new fibre with upgrades to public sector buildings III. Reusing public sector assets such as ducts IV. A new Gigabit voucher scheme which businesses can access
3.7	Belfast City Council has submitted an Expression of Interest to the programme seeking a £30 million full fibre investment for four potential project areas:
3.8	• Belfast City Council Anchor Tenancy procurement which would provide Dark Fibre Upgrades for all Belfast City Council's networked sites with the potential to future-proof and provide resilient connectivity to our key sites for the next 50 years. (£6 million) • Northern Ireland Regional Gigabit Voucher Scheme – A Gigabit Voucher Scheme could resolve those areas across Belfast which currently suffer from poor broadband connectivity (£20 million) • Reuse of 'Streets Ahead' Public Realm scheme ducting • Other – Belfast Independent Internet Exchange - A neutral place where network operators and digital providers can meet and exchange data traffic, to improve the customer internet experience cost effectively (£4 million)
3.9	The full application process will follow a number of workshops which are currently being organised by the Department of Culture Media and Sport. Representatives from Digital Services will attend these workshops to discuss the challenge fund and application process. Further updates will be provided for Members when the application process gets underway.
	Regional 'Internet of Things' competition
3.10	Digital Catapult UK is running a £540,000 national competition to set up five regional free-to-use LPWAN networks. These are state-of-the-art radio networks that can be used to control

	a vast range of low-cost sensors and smart devices. Such networks are important building blocks for Internet of Things technologies (a recognised future growth area for the digital and manufacturing sector) and as such represent an important component of the Smart Belfast framework.
3.11	Invest NI and Ulster University are developing a Northern Ireland consortium bid and are seeking to agree a joint proposal with a range of partners prior the submission deadline of 29 September. Successful bids need to demonstrate three main things: how the network will be deployed; how the SME innovator community will be supported to utilise the network; and how the network will be used to address challenges in each area.
3.12	Partners, including all NI local councils and Tourism NI, are being asked to contribute, in principle, to a challenge programme which would provide funding to local SMEs to exploit this new technology to order to tackle local and regional challenges and to improve public sector services. It is proposed that, in the event of a successful bid, Belfast City Council would, in principle, commit £30,000 to the challenge programme to support activities that address Belfast and regional challenges.
3.13	Immersive Technology Hub The UK Government's Digital Catapult (DCUK) was set up by UK Government to support the acceleration of digital innovations to make the UK economy stronger. The Catapult has identified 'immersive technology' as a significant growth area for the national economy and are providing a range of programmes and investments to support its development. ('Immersive technology' includes Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality technology – and is being developed not only for use in gaming but for exploitation in medicine, tourism, advanced manufacturing, urban planning, etc.)
3.14	DCUK wish to establish three regional immersive technology hubs (in Belfast, Gateshead and Brighton) which will both showcase the potential of the technology and foster opportunities for SMEs and others to collaborate and to grow their capabilities in this technology.
3.15	DCUK have offered £70,000 of Immersive Tech equipment to each hub and will support activities through a series of national competitions and other initiatives (including a major competition launch on 10 October 2017).

	The NI Department for the Economy (DfE) and Digital Catapult NI have explored several options for a suitable city centre location and have identified space within the Bel Tel building as an ideal venue for the hub. Officials from DfE are now engaging with the Bel Tel LLP to agree licensing terms and fees for this space for an initial 18 month period.
3.16	DfE have indicated that they will further support the hub by providing up to five members of staff, including a Hub Manager who would co-ordinate programming from the venue. The Hub space would also be used as a venue for joint projects between Council, other public agencies and the digital SME sector.
3.17	Work is required to bring the identified space up to a suitable standard and Council are being asked to contribute to this capital cost. Subject to agreement on the licensing terms between DfE and Bel Tel LLP, Members are therefore asked to allocate £127,000 of non-recurring capital finance for the capital works required to support the establishment of the Immersive Technology hub.
3.18	Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilience Cities programme Members will be aware that, as part of the city's membership of the 100 Resilience Cities (100RC) network, the Foundation would provide grant funding to recruit a Belfast Commissioner for Resilience for two years. This person will also be able to access significant additional resources and international consultancy expertise on behalf of the city to develop a Belfast Resilience Strategy.
3.19	100RC have now commissioned an executive search agency to work with Belfast City Council to recruit the Commissioner post. This process is due to commence within the next few weeks and will include national publicity about the vacancy.
3.20	In addition, as part of their 100RC programme, Rockefeller Foundation have a substantial relationship with the Columbian cities of Cali and Medellin where they have been supporting urban and economic development work and post conflict resilience building. Working with the office of the President of Columbia, 100RC are proposing a learning exchange programme between Belfast and these two 100RC cities that would be supported by the Council's new Commissioner for Resilience, Invest NI, and other city partners.
3.21	100RC have identified funding for the programme via the EU's 'International Urban Cooperation (IUC) city-to-city cooperation' programme. 100RC have offered to submit an

	application to the IUC on Belfast's behalf and have requested that both Invest NI and Belfast City Council provide a letter of support.
3.22	Members are asked to agree to the Council providing a letter of support to accompany the 100RC application.
3.23	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> The £127,000 of non-recurring capital spend for the necessary capital works required to support the establishment of the Immersive Technology hub in the Bel Tel building have been identified within the non-recurrent capital budget.
3.24	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u> Equality and good relations implications will be taken into consideration and it is proposed that we will take this through equality screening; however it is anticipated that any collaborative efforts should have a positive effect on section 75 groups.
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	None. (Copies of the framework will be tabled at Committee.)