



<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) review update and support for independent retailers and businesses
<b>Date:</b>	11 October 2017
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Colin McCabrey, Economic Development Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the ongoing review of Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM) which is being undertaken by consultancy firm Baker Tilly Mooney Moore. The review is being supported by Belfast City Centre Management, the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCTC) and Department for Communities (DfC). It is being funded by Belfast City Council. The purpose of the review is to assess BCCM's added value in a changing city centre landscape and to consider how the organisation can complement and support its funders and partners going forward.
1.2	The report also seeks approval for activity to assist local Business Associations to increase footfall and encourage additional investment and spend in local areas and proposes a targeted support intervention for retail businesses in those areas that are likely to be

	<p>adversely impacted by the construction works around regeneration schemes in the short term. Finally, it proposes the establishment of a pop-up test trading retail unit, potentially working in collaboration with Social Enterprise NI (SENI), to encourage new retailers to test their products in a collaborative retail space.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the work undertaken to date in conducting the review of BCCM;</li> <li>• Note that a further update on the review will be tabled at the November Committee meeting. This will detail a shortlist of options to be evaluated further and a rationale for each of the options being advanced;</li> <li>• Note that Officers and the consultancy team are scheduled to provide an update on the work to date and emerging recommendations at the October Party Briefings;</li> <li>• Approve the proposed way forward to support Business Association activity, with a maximum budget allocation of £30,000;</li> <li>• Approve a one-year pilot aimed at supporting retailers and other businesses located in areas that are undergoing regeneration projects. A budget of up to £40,000 has been set aside for this work;</li> <li>• Agree the proposal to develop a test-trading retail space, in association with Social Enterprise NI, at a budget of up to £20,000 for a one-year period.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Belfast City Centre Management review:</u></p> <p>Members will recall from the March 2017 Committee meeting that BCCM has undergone some changes to its business model. Two BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) have now been developed, with work on a third BID underway and (if approved) likely to be operational from early 2018. In addition to the BIDs, the Council has also increased its focus on the City Centre, with the establishment of the City Centre Development Team and the allocation of additional resources to help bring forward key development schemes.</p>
3.2	<p>The scope of the review includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consulting with key stakeholders on the performance and future remit of BCCM;</li> <li>• Comparing other city case studies for effective approaches to city centre management;</li> </ul>

- Conducting an organisation review and evaluation including value for money analysis and definition of remit, role and City Centre Management Services across organisations so to avoid duplication, ensure efficiency and strategic alignment;
- Identifying a long list of options with estimates and costs;
- Shortlisting options for further appraisal and make recommendations (*a summary of the work to this point will be tabled to November Committee*);
- Producing a comprehensive business case to support a preferred option.

3.3 As part of the review, a total of 85 people contributed to face-to-face stakeholder consultations. A consultation questionnaire has also been issued to businesses within the City Centre (via Citizen Space) to pick up outstanding issues and elicit views on what is required for modern city centre management.

3.4 A long list of options is being considered by a Steering Group consisting of Belfast City Centre Management, the Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Department for Communities and Council Officers. A proposed short list of options will be carried forward for further appraisal and tabled to Committee in November for consideration. The lead consultant from Baker Tilly Mooney Moore will be available to attend Party Group Briefings at the end of October to seek Member views and share the detail and rationale behind each of the options.

3.5 Members should note that any recommended changes arising from the review will most likely come into effect 2018/19 financial year. Core funding for the organisation will be considered in this context but the full funding commitment to City Centre Management of £190,000 will be drawn from Council for 2017/18 financial year in accordance with the Committee approval obtained in March 2017.

3.6 Support for local retail groups:  
Members will be aware that the Council provides support to new and existing businesses and focuses on activities to increase sales and footfall in local neighbourhood shopping areas. Last year, five Business Associations benefited from this support and they ran a number of marketing and promotional initiatives aimed at generating sales and enhancing the profile of the area with a view to stimulating economic activity.

3.7 A total of £20,464 was drawn across the following associations: Antrim Road Business Association (£3,150), Ballyhackamore Business Association (£5,000), Strandtown Business

3.8	<p>Association (£4,977), Hollywood Arches Business Association (£4,937) and West Belfast Traders' Association (£2,400), benefiting a total of 176 Business Association members. It is important to note that Shankill Traders' Association did not avail of support last year but officers are re-engaging with representatives with a view to supporting local businesses in that area.</p>
3.9	<p>The Business Associations identified above have been engaging with the Council to seek support for additional business development and promotional support in the current financial year. As with previous years' funding, it is proposed that up to £3,000 per Association will be available from the Council, with a further £2,000 available if the group can provide evidence of £ for £ match funding (total potential Council funding of £5,000 per association).</p>
3.10	<p>There continues to be a number of challenges facing Business Associations. Their work plans are delivered by volunteers and capacity and longevity of roles within Associations vary significantly across groups. Business Associations continue to require ongoing expert assistance with capacity building, communications, marketing and PR support to help them plan events, monitor and evaluate activities. While these events are useful in building local capacity and generating a "feel good" factor in local areas, it is difficult to be precise about the economic benefit against the outputs of the Belfast Agenda. It is considered that it may be more appropriate to look at support for these groups in the context of a wider programme of local area working. Given that this activity is still in its infancy, it is recommended that the current system of support remains in place but that officers engage with colleagues across the organisation to consider whether there is a more effective engagement mechanism for future years.</p>
3.11	<p>Resources of up to £30,000 are in the budget year on year to support the Business Associations. This includes costs associated with providing professional PR and marketing support to facilitate the sustainability of the groups and provide advice on individual area campaigns and activities. The availability of this support has been welcomed by the groups.</p> <p>The overall budget is provided for within the existing 2017/18 estimates.</p> <p><u>Helping businesses address short-term challenges associated with redevelopment work</u></p> <p>Members will be aware of the significant programme of physical investment that is currently underway across the City. While this will create very positive improvements in the medium to long term, it may create some short-term disturbance that risks impacting negatively on</p>

3.12	traders and companies located in the vicinity of the works.
3.13	<p>Some of the most significant works currently impacting or likely to impact on local businesses include the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme (due for completion in June 2018) as well as the current phase of the Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP), particularly in the built-up area of Andersonstown. If the Casement Park planning application is approved, this could have a disruptive impact on local businesses in the short-term, while the work progresses. Members should note that support will be widespread depending on need across the city.</p>
3.14	<p>In order to support these businesses, it is proposed that an additional budget allocation of up to £40,000 is set aside for a period of up to one year. This would be a flexible resource to be allocated following engagement with relevant businesses. Officers have tested these proposals with some businesses to date and they have indicated that they would benefit from additional promotional and advertising support, social media profiling and voucher schemes to encourage shoppers to use these businesses and mitigate against the negative impact of the works.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Support for test-trading for new retail businesses</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Belfast Agenda makes a commitment to creating 46,000 new jobs up to 2035. An important element of the job creation growth will be the number of new business start-ups. This figure currently sits at around 1,000 new start-ups each year. However, this is significantly below UK and Irish averages and one of the major challenges for the City is to explore new and innovative mechanisms to increase the volume of new business starts.</p> <p>Many of the businesses starting up through the Northern Ireland Business Start-Up Programme (Go for It) are retail-focused businesses. They often struggle to find appropriate retail premises for their business as they are tied into expensive rents and long-term leases. Potentially working with Social Enterprise NI (or other suitable organisations) to explore the potential for social business start-ups, it is proposed that the Council works to secure a one-year lease on a property which will be a shared retail unit for a number of new business starts. The businesses will be provided with support including marketing and merchandising and will be encouraged to move towards taking on their own retail units at the end of their time in the shared space. A unit has not yet been identified for this activity, but it is proposed that this should align with ongoing investment in some of the redevelopment and</p>

<p>3.16</p> <p>3.17</p> <p>3.18</p>	<p>regeneration areas. It is expected that the budget for this project will not exceed £20,000.</p> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>Business Association and retailer support will be directed on a needs-led basis and will be available to businesses all across the City.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The costs associated with the BCCM Review are being met from existing Economic Development budgets in the current financial year. A funding allocation of £190,000 for BCCM in 2017/18 financial year was approved by this Committee in March 2017.</p> <p>The additional £40,000 to support businesses that may be negatively impacted by the regeneration works across the City as well as the £20,000 to support the pop-up retail space for new business starts have been set aside within Economic Development budgets for the current year and were approved by this Committee as part of the estimates process.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None</p>