Subject:	Smart Belfast programme update
Date:	23rd March 2018
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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	Following its successful twelve-month development phase, Members agreed in November 2017 to embed the Smart Belfast programme within the mainstream work of the Council. The programme is designed to support the outcomes of the Belfast Agenda by fostering collaborative innovation amongst city partners and by encouraging greater innovation within the Council itself. Members have already approved a budget for this programme and this paper now identifies the Innovation team resource required to deliver the programme going forward.
1.2	During its first year Smart Belfast ran a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition to develop new tools to help better identify sources of Business Rates income. Following the

	successful completion of this competition. Members are now asked to approve a procurement exercise to purchase an innovative Business Rates tool.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Committee is asked to: 1. To note progress on a number of key projects in the Smart Belfast programme 2. To agree to the procurement of a Business Rates maximisation tool.
3.0	**Main report**
3.1	Smart Belfast aims to bring collaborative innovation to bear on urban challenges and public service transformation. The emerging programme will operate at three levels: (1) City and regional: Working with partners to inform the City Deal and the Belfast Agenda; supporting foreign direct investment, local entrepreneurs and high growth sectors, etc. (2) Organisational transformation: informing Council service transformation by supporting the adoption of agile, user-centric design; innovative procurement; and the application of data science and technologies. (3) Building the core foundations: working with partners to build capability by setting in place the long term foundations (including a city data platform, skills programmes, delivery mechanisms, etc).
3.2	As Members will be aware, delivery of the framework is driven by a 'pipeline' of projects specifically chosen because they are able to demonstrate their contribution to the Belfast Agenda and the Smart City foundations. Given the collaborative nature of such work, a number of these projects are identified in-year and, as such, a successful Smart Belfast programme will be dependent on the agility and responsiveness of the team to such opportunities. Members are asked to note a number of current and planned pipeline projects:
3.3	**Business Rates Maximisation project** The Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition to find innovative methods to identify sources of Business Rates income supported two SMEs to develop proto-types which together during an initial pilot phase were successful in identifying year-on-year Business Rates revenue of **£589,000** for the city. In addition to this increased Rates income, the project allowed both companies to develop

3.4	new products, hire new staff, and promote their work both nationally and internationally. The project was also highlighted as a best practice example in the UK Industrial Growth strategy and both companies have been invited on UK international trade missions.
3.5	The project has also provided substantial learning beyond the scope of the initial competition. The data techniques that were used could potentially be deployed across a range of other scenarios including economic modelling, skills forecasting; identifying vacant properties, etc. Based on the learning from this successful SBRI competition, Members are now asked to agree to the procurement of an innovative Business Rates identification tool for an initial twelve-month period. (This twelve-month period would ensure that any solution will align with the outcomes of a twelve-month review currently under way at Land and Property Services to develop new data management systems and processes.)
3.6	**Last mile freight challenge** Working with the Smart Dublin programme, Belfast City Council have been successful in a joint bid to Enterprise Ireland for **€200,000** which will be used to fund an SBRI challenge that seeks to address the issues associated with last mile freight deliveries. 'Last mile freight' refers to deliveries to homes and businesses by small vans and couriers. Such deliveries have increased substantially in Dublin, Belfast and other European cities and can contribute to congestion and air pollution, and may have an impact on the effective management of public transport.
3.7	Working with Smart Dublin, the NI Department for Infrastructure, UPS, local retailers, the NI Freight Transport Association and others, this SBRI competition will encourage SMEs to better understand the issues and to develop proto-types that address the last mile challenge in both cities. The competition will be launched on 26th April 2018. The Smart Belfast team will work with Invest NI and others to ensure that Belfast SMEs are supported to bid for this challenge fund.
3.8	**SBRI challenge for managing open space** Working with the NI Department for Justice, the Community Safety Partnership and other agencies, the Council successfully applied to the Northern Ireland SBRI challenge programme to support a **£40,000** project to work with SMEs to develop innovative ways to manage public space in the city (including parks and other managed open space). The project will bring together a range of partners and communities to explore how data science and technologies can support better understanding of the issues associated with safe

	open space, and to proto-type tools for managing such space. It is expected that, subject to final approval on the NI Government budget, the competition will be announced publicly in late April 2018.
3.9	**Things Connected NI** Following the successful **£100,000** consortium bid to the Digital Catapult's Things Connected competition, the Council is working with Ulster University and a number of other NI councils to develop a 'Things Connected Northern Ireland' programme.
3.10	The programme will provide local SMEs with free access to a state-of-the-art wireless network that can control a vast range of low-cost sensors and Internet of Things devices. Smart Belfast is working with the University, Invest NI, and an international cloud computing company, to offer additional wraparound support for SMEs in terms of training, cloud storage and tools and business development support.
3.11	Belfast City Council is providing £30,000 to support a Belfast-based competition that will encourage SMEs to utilise these next generation IoT technologies to support the creative management of open space in the city. The Things Connected competition, including challenges set by other Northern Ireland councils, will be launched publicly in April 2018.
3.12	**Smart Belfast Collaborative Challenge Fund** Sixty-eight SMEs submitted seventeen scoping proposals to the Smart Belfast Collaborative Challenge Fund which has provided **£25,000** funding to networks of SMEs to come together to address issues identified in the Belfast Agenda.
3.13	The Smart Belfast team are now working with the five successful SME networks which are preparing business cases that include: exploring movement of people to inform transport planning; citizen reporting on environmental issues; and rewards system to promote healthy life styles. Three networks will focus on the tourist sector to better understand visitor behaviour to plan and manage tourism in the city. If successful networks will be able to apply in Phase 2 for up to **£170,000 (per network)** to develop a commercial proposition.
	Financial & Resource Implications The 2018/2019 programme budget for Smart Belfast was agreed by SP&R Committee in

3.14	November 2017.
3.15	Equality or Good Relations Implications 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