

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

MEETING OF CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor O'Donnell (Chairperson);
Aldermen Haire, Kingston and McGimpsey; and
Councillors Beattie, Boyle, Dorrian, Dudgeon,
Graham, Hargey, Hussey, Johnston, Kyle,
Magee, McAteer, McDonough-Brown,
Mullan, O'Hara and Walsh.

In attendance: Mrs. S. Wylie, Chief Executive;
Mr. D. Durkan, Director of Development;
Ms. N. Gallagher, Director of City Centre Regeneration
and Development; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from The High Sheriff, Councillor Howard.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 7th and 21st February were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 5th March.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor O'Hara declared an interest in Item 8a, Addressing Educational Inequality – "Right to Succeed", in that she worked for an early intervention service. It was not deemed necessary that she should leave the room as the report provided the Members with an update on a successful lottery funding application.

Mr. D. Durkan

The Chairperson informed the Committee that this would be the last meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee which would be attended by Mr. D. Durkan in his capacity as the Director of Development.

On behalf of the Members, she thanked Mr. Durkan for his services to the Committee and for the work which he had undertaken on behalf of the Council and wished him well.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure
re: Taxis using bus lanes

The Chief Executive tabled a letter from the Department for Infrastructure, in relation to the Committee's response to the Department's consultation on the Bus Lanes Orders NI 2018.

The Department stated that it was important that the definition of 'permitted taxis', in relation to bus lane legislation be the same across all bus lanes in Belfast, in order not to create confusion with different classes of taxis being able to use the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) bus lanes.

The correspondence stated that a large number of people had made representation on the issue, calling for all taxis to be permitted to use all bus lanes in the city. While any permanent change required ministerial approval, the Department stated that it had since decided to carry out a further, more extensive trial whereby Class A taxis would be permitted to access all bus lanes which were available to permitted taxis for 12 months.

The Committee noted that the trial would be introduced under Article 5 of the Road Traffic Regulation Order as an Experimental Scheme and would come into operation prior to the commencement of BRT services in September 2018.

Presentation

Visit Belfast - 2018/19 Business Plan and 2018/22 Strategy

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Mr. G. Lennon, Chief Executive of Visit Belfast, and Mr. H. Hastings OBE, Chair of Visit Belfast, were in attendance and they were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr. Hastings advised the Committee that tourism was key to the city and to the Belfast Agenda, with Belfast having created more new hotel rooms than Dublin in the past year. He highlighted to the Members that tourism would become a £1billion industry for Belfast for the first time in 2018.

He outlined that Visit Belfast aimed to increase the overnight visits and visitor spend, increase visitors' lengths of stay, continue to build a positive profile as a place to visit and improve visitor satisfaction and encourage repeat business.

The Committee was advised that the role of Visit Belfast was to act on the Council's vision for the City and the more that the Council invested, the more Visit Belfast could return. He outlined that, for every £1 which the Council invested, Visit Belfast was able to make a return of £34.

Mr. Hastings reminded the Members that Belfast had won the Lonely Planet's Number 1 Region award 2018, in conjunction with the Causeway Coast, and that the City had also won the National Geographic Traveller Readers' Award for Rising Star of 2017 and he presented the National Geographic award to the Chairperson for its display in the City Hall.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

Mr. Lennon pointed out that Northern Ireland's reputation as a tourist destination was going from strength to strength but that there was still significant potential for growth, particularly when compared with the Republic of Ireland and Scotland. He advised the Members that September 2019 would see the first Disney Cruise arrive into Belfast.

The Members were provided with an overview of Visit Belfast's draft Business Plan 2018/2019 and the Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

He reported that, through two of the key priorities of the Belfast Agenda, namely, City Development and Growing the Economy, Visit Belfast was seeking to strike a balance between targeting business and social tourists and highlighted that sports tourism had become an important sector. He emphasised that the development of the proposed Belfast Story/Hub was crucial in adding a significant second attraction to the City.

In response to a number of Members' questions regarding the potential of golf tourism, Mr. Hastings advised the Members that the majority of hotels in Belfast were fully booked for The Open which would be held in July 2019 at the Royal Portrush Golf Club.

A number of Members congratulated Visit Belfast on being "China Ready", with a number of staff in the information centre having learned key phrases in Mandarin.

A further Member stated that the recent employment academies which the Council had run in conjunction with the hospitality sector had been a great success and that numerous people were gaining employment as a result.

In response to a Member's concern regarding the local universities having recently cut language courses, Mr. Lennon stated that languages would be extremely important for the upcoming generations and that he felt they should be higher up the agenda in terms of the curriculum.

A Member stated that he hoped that other Councils would consider contributing more towards Visit Belfast, as the city was the economic driver for the region.

After further discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee:

1. noted the draft Visit Belfast Business Plan 2018/19, the Strategic Plan 2018/22 and the areas where Council funds would be applied. (The overall funding agreement with Visit Belfast was built into the revenue estimates);
2. agreed the funding allocation of £1,902,465 for 2018/19 expenditure, subject to the development of a funding agreement establishing priority areas of activity and agreed targets; and
3. agreed the additional areas of investment for the next financial year in line with the 2018-2022 strategic plan, and noted that the collective budget allocation would not exceed £95,000; and

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

4. noted that the investment would be measured as part of the ongoing activity monitoring work undertaken with Visit Belfast and would be reviewed at the end of the financial year.

Matters Referred Back from Council/Motions

All-Ireland Boxing Championships

The Committee was reminded that the Council, at its meeting on 5th March, had considered the following motion which had been proposed by Councillor Murphy and seconded by Councillor Garrett:

“Belfast has produced world class athletes through the sport of amateur boxing who have consistently succeeded through every level of the sport and brought recognition to the city of Belfast through their successes.

We, as a City, are very proud of the achievements of boxers from this City and should seek to build on these successes by showcasing the talent this vibrant sport has to offer across Ireland.

This Council agrees to engage with the Irish Athletic Boxing Association to explore the possibility of bringing the All-Ireland Boxing Championships to the City of Belfast.”

In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the motion had been referred to the Committee for consideration.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that a report, including proposed costings, would be submitted to a future meeting on the Council’s engagement with the Irish Athletic Boxing Association to explore the possibility of bringing the All Ireland Boxing Championships to Belfast.

Request to Present to a Future Meeting

Shopmobility

The Committee considered a request to present from Shopmobility, which wanted to raise awareness of its service and to request Council backing and financial support.

A Member requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting detailing the history of the Council’s contract with Shopmobility.

After discussion, the Committee acceded to the request and agreed that Shopmobility would be invited to present at a future meeting.

Restricted Item

The Information contained in the following report is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the Committee meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

of exempt information as described in Section 42 (4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

City Centre Investment Fund – Update

The Director of City Centre Regeneration and Development provided the Committee with an update on the City Centre Investment Fund (CCIF). She reminded the Committee that, as part of the CCIF, the Council had requested applications from developers with planning permission for the development of develop significant office developments within the Belfast City BMAP boundary.

She explained that a number of applications had been received and that a two stage High Level Due Diligence process had been completed, involving an assessment, scoring and ranking of applications by the Council's Evaluation Partner, GVA Real Estate Finance (GVA).

The Committee was advised of the number of applications which had been successful in proceeding to the next stage but was reminded that this did not represent a commitment to invest as there was a further stage to consider.

The Committee noted the update which had been provided.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

City Centre Engagement Plan

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the City Centre Engagement Plan report to allow the Members to consider the detailed proposals.

The Committee subsequently agreed:

1. that information be provided on the UK Government's plans to overhaul the national planning policy framework to tackle NIMBYism, which would make it more difficult for residents to object to housing developments in their area, and specifically whether the proposed change would have implications for Northern Ireland; and
2. that consideration be given towards how the Council could support those communities living outside of the city centre, in relation to the provision of technical advice.

Positioning Belfast to Compete

City Events and Festivals Strategy

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the key findings and recommendations from the recent review of Council-funded**

Events and Festivals undertaken by Festivals and Events International (FEI) and to secure Committee agreement on a development plan for moving forward, taking account of FEI's recommendations.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the key findings of the review of Events and Festivals undertaken by FEI**
- **Endorse the findings and consider the recommendations set out in sections 3.13-3.14 as the broad direction of travel**
- **Agree to proceed to engagement with key partner organisations on the basis of the current findings and recommendations and to consider a draft Events and Festivals Strategy – taking account of external partner input as well as an ongoing engagement across Council departments – in June 2018**
- **Commission further analysis work on the potential to attract sponsorship funding to support additional investment in Events and Festivals.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 In July 2017, Festivals and Events International Limited (FEI) were commissioned to develop a new Events and Festivals Strategy (2018-2023) for the Council, its partners and other stakeholders across the City. The brief included:

- **A review of current portfolio**
- **Consultation with stakeholders, Events and Festivals (via Festivals Forum)**
- **Benchmarking how Events and Festivals are funded and delivered in other cities**
- **Consideration of pre and post event impact modelling**
- **Consideration of future structures for delivery**
- **Making recommendations for the identification, securing, funding and delivery of Events and Festivals in Belfast.**

3.2 FEI undertook an extensive round of consultations with stakeholders. These included face to face meetings; telephone interviews and workshops with Events and Festivals organisers and cultural organisations. They also drew up a survey for completion by festival organisers. In total there were 36 face-to-face interviews; 11 telephone interviews; 2 workshops covering 45 groups; and 14 survey returns.

3.3 FEI also undertook engagement with Members of the Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Council's Corporate Management Team. In addition, they attended meetings of the Council-supported Festivals Forum Steering Group as well as a meeting of the Festivals Forum. Following completion of the draft report, Officers undertook Party Group Briefings with all parties to update on the key findings and recommendations.

3.4 **Funding and Delivery of Current Festivals and Events in Belfast: Current Portfolio**

As part of their review of the existing provision, FEI looked at the current portfolio of Events and Festivals in Belfast. Overall, FEI indicated that while Belfast has a strong reputation in organising, managing and delivering very successful Events and Festivals, is not currently recognised, nationally or internationally, as an Events and Festivals destination. If the Council has ambitions to sell the City in this way, FEI suggested that there will be a need to work with partners to re-focus investment in Events and Festivals, particularly those that have the potential to drive visitor numbers and spend. FEI did acknowledge that there was a broad programme of activity undertaken. However, they noted that the objectives for many of the activities focused on supporting community cohesion and social development. They recognised the value of these events to local communities but considered that the Council and partners should take a differentiated approach to investment in events that aimed principally at supporting community cohesion and those aimed at generating economic value and profile for the City. In that way, FEI advised that funders could be clear about what outcomes they expected from their investment and project promoters could be clear about what deliverables were expected of them, in turn.

3.5 FEI identified around 200 Events and Festivals and categorised these according to an industry standard segmentation process (see Appendix 1 on modern.gov). These categories are:

- **Mega events**
- **Major events**
- **Signature events**
- **Growth events**
- **Local events**
- **Neighbourhood events** (an additional category to capture some of the Council's Neighbourhood-level funding streams).

3.6 Using this categorisation, FEI concluded that, if the Council wants to maximise the economic return on investment from its events, it may need to look again at the balance of investment across the various event ‘categories’. FEI identified the following breakdown of Events and Festivals in Belfast by number:

- 5 Signature Events/Festivals
- 17 Growth Events/Festivals
- 88 Local Events/Festivals
- 90 Neighbourhood Events/Festivals.

3.7 It should be noted that there are currently no Mega or Major Events identified within Belfast’s Events and Festivals portfolio. Belfast is not likely to ever host a Mega Event (such as the Olympics), given the scale of the infrastructure required. The City has hosted Major events in the past, such as Giro d’Italia and MTV EMAs and is currently bidding to host the UEFA Super Cup in 2020. Given the significant investment and resources associated with hosting these events, they don’t tend to happen every year. If the City was to secure Major Events on a more regular basis, consideration would need to be given to investing appropriate levels of resources on an ongoing basis in order to meet the significant financial commitments associated with these events.

3.8 Funding and Delivery of Current Festivals and Events in Belfast: Current Funding Mix

FEI noted that the funding of Events and Festivals in Belfast is exceptionally complex. The Council is one of a number of funders – other major funders include Tourism NI, Sport NI and Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI). In the financial year 2016/17, the Council invested around £3.42million in Events and Festivals, supporting 200 events.

3.9 The analysis suggests that the return on investment (ROI) for Events and Festivals in Belfast ranges from £9 to £25 across the different funding streams. In other benchmark cities – such as Edinburgh – public investment can lever up to £43 for every £1 invested. Although Edinburgh is widely acknowledged as a Festival City, other comparator cities also appear to drive a significant return on investment – at the higher end of the Belfast figure and above. FEI point out that the impacts of many of the Local and Neighbourhood Events are qualitative as well as quantitative – and it is important that the Council is clear about its metrics in supporting the range of Events and Festivals. FEI recommends that the smaller Neighbourhood Events should be separated out from other Events and Festivals funding and managed through the City

and Neighbourhood Services Department, in order to ensure alignment with wider investment in Community Safety and Community Services. All Events and Festivals – as with all Council activity – needs to align to agreed metrics within the Belfast Agenda.

3.10 Benchmarking

FEI undertook benchmarking against five European cities: Aarhus (one of the 2018 European Capitals of Culture); Edinburgh; Galway; Liverpool and Rotterdam. From this analysis, they concluded that Belfast could achieve a higher return from its Events and Festivals investment if a more strategic approach was taken to investment in some of these activities. The benchmarks provided a number of useful lessons for Belfast to consider, namely:

- There is an opportunity to generate significant commercial income if the right structures are put in place and if a more commercial approach to event delivery is taken (lesson learned from Liverpool)
- Independent Events and Festivals can make a huge contribution to the City's cultural and tourism offer, with the right approach to investment (lesson learned from Galway)
- There are a range of operating models across the benchmark cities for delivery of Events and Festivals. These range from in-house (current Belfast approach) to fully independent delivery, with City support (the approach in Rotterdam).

3.11 Key Findings

FEI found that the Events and Festivals portfolio showed a great deal of creativity, innovation and passion. However, they noted some weaknesses in the current approach to funding, principally the fragmented approach across a range of funders. Given that the various funding streams have evolved over time and have not been reviewed in recent years, there is no process to ensure strategic alignment to the key documents driving Council investment, particularly the Belfast Agenda. In addition, there is limited co-ordination across funders on mechanisms for supporting Events and Festivals. This can make the application process complicated and reduces opportunities to invest at the appropriate levels in those events that have the potential to grow and contribute to the cultural and economic life of the City in a meaningful way.

3.12 FEI also concluded that securing funding for Signature and Growth Events is particularly challenging and that, because of this fact, the ability of these events to reach their growth potential can be inhibited. FEI have proposed a longer-term investment in a number of targeted events to support their development and give them the time to focus on building the event without having the concern of applying for annual funding. In addition to the funding support, FEI note the important developmental role that Council Officers can play in supporting events, helping them to consider their artistic development, supporting them with their sales and marketing and considering their organisational development needs. This, in turn, will support the longer-term sustainability of the sector. It also means that, with the right support, Growth Events may become Signature Events in time. Likewise, Local Events may grow into Growth Events.

3.13 Key Recommendations from the FEI report

Given the issues identified, the consultancy team's key recommendations focused on a number of areas including Funding Streams, Capacity Building Support, Evaluation and Measurement and Governance and Delivery. A summary of their recommendations is set out below. A note has been added where Officers consider there would be a potential practical difficulty with implementation in the short-term, or where Members have already expressed alternative views through the Party Briefings.

Funding Streams

- Need to adopt the standard classification of Events and Festivals as Major,
- Signature, Growth, Local and Neighbourhood (see Appendix 1 on modern.gov). This is used by most other locations and by many other funders. Adopting this will make it easier to develop a joined-up approach to events funding with other partners;
- Need to re-position investment to maximise return by supporting a smaller number of Signature, Growth and Local Festivals to a greater value, aligned to the Belfast Agenda. Note: it is recognised that Belfast City Council also invests for social as well as economic return and that this is an important aspect of the Belfast Agenda. It is acknowledged that the circumstances in Belfast at the time that a lot of the Events and Festivals were developed (particularly in Neighbourhood and Local Events and Festivals) were very different to those being experienced in other benchmark cities used in this study. FEI do make the point, however, that if Belfast

wants to be recognised as an Events and Festivals City, and if it does want to generate a higher level of economic return from Events, there will need to be a higher level of investment and more focused support for Major, Signature and Growth Events and Festivals;

- Need to consider the implications of the ongoing Grants Review for the funding of Events and Festivals;
- Need to separate the funding and reporting of Neighbourhood Events from Major, Signature, Growth and Local Events and consider relevant metrics for measuring impact of these events (which should be different from the other events);
- Need for greater engagement with partners from government e.g. Tourism NI, Sport NI to bid for major events that offer a proven investment, using agreed investment/evaluation criteria, and Visit Belfast in terms of Event marketing.

Capacity building support

- Need to develop a 'portfolio' approach with all Signature and Growth events. This will involve Council Officers developing a 'client management' relationship with these Events and considering how they can bring together packages of support, training and capacity building appropriate to the scale and ambition of the respective Events and Festivals, in order to help them achieve their growth potential and ambitions;
- Need to consider multi-annual funding arrangements for Signature and Growth Events and Festivals (four year agreements for Signature Events; two year agreements for Growth events, with five year and three year business plans respectfully)
- Need to consider bidding for at least one Major event every third year;
- Need to support at least six Signature Events each year (those events with budgets of £800k+);
- Need to support at least twelve Growth Events each year (those events with budgets of £50k+);
- Need to develop a programme of support and development for Local Events and Festivals at an appropriate level. This support should include opportunities to consider how some of the Local Events and Festivals can become Growth Events and Festivals.

Evaluation and Measurement

- Adopt the proposed investment/evaluation criteria for all Events and Festivals funding and simplify annual

evaluation based on demonstrating value against the Belfast Agenda, ensuring that the level of evaluation is commensurate with the scale of the event;

- Introduce standardised reporting in line with relevant indicators set out in the Belfast Agenda.

Governance and Delivery

- Need to improve internal co-ordination across Council for those working on events. FEI proposed simplification of the internal structures and sub-sections who deal with Events and Festivals in the City, particularly to ensure integration between the City Events Team, Parks Events Team and the Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Arts team. This may include merging elements of existing activity at the appropriate time;
- Need to consider moving towards commissioning for certain events – this will support the development of the cultural sector by providing long-term sustainability and improved partnership working;
- Establish an internal Events and Festivals Coordination Group to consider how events can be better planned and how Council can engage with external organisations to support the delivery of Events and Festivals;
- Consider the establishment of a Members Working Group to monitor the work of the internal group (above). Note: Members have expressed a view that the practicalities of this need to be considered and reports may need to be brought back directly to Committee;
- Given the need for greater partnership with other major funders of Events and Festivals, need to establish a ‘Strategic Events Partnership’ to coordinate Events and Festivals strategy and funding across Belfast City Council, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland and other relevant funders;
- Consider the potential of moving towards joint agreement by the key funding partners (as set out above) on the City approach to Events and Festivals with a view to possibly establishing an independent organisation to deliver the annual events programme and support collaboration across Events and Festivals at a future date. Note: It is recognised that there is unlikely to be a political appetite to take such a radical step at this stage.

3.14 Feedback from Member briefings

Following completion of the draft report, the Director of Development undertook a series of Party Briefings to provide insight into the key findings and the recommendations within the report. A summary of the key issues identified by Members included:

- Wide-ranging support for the current investment in Events and Festivals and recognition of the value of this support within local communities;
- Need to secure alignment with other major funders (Tourism NI, Sport NI, ACNI) in taking long-term approach to investment in events – otherwise the Council approach will be undermined;
- Support for simplification and streamlining of existing processes, commensurate with the level of investment;
- Support for additional openness and transparency in the process for supporting Events and Festivals;
- Need to give consideration to opportunities for generating revenue through Events where appropriate. At the September 2017 meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, Members agreed that the Council should take a commercial approach to more activities, including sponsorship/events, to generate additional income. Approval has been given to create a new post of Commercial Manager, funded from Invest to Save, to support this approach;
- Need to consider how Events and Festivals can support delivery of Belfast Agenda ambitions, including inclusive growth;
- Support for making the distinction between Signature/Growth/Local events and Neighbourhood Events – agreement with proposal to transfer Neighbourhood Events to City and Neighbourhood Services Department to ensure alignment with core service delivery and wider investment;
- Recognition of the impact and role that Neighbourhood and Local Events and Festivals can play in local communities;
- Acceptance that further/additional investment is required in Signature and Growth Events if these Events and Festivals are to generate the return on investment that other cities are experiencing
- Lack of agreement around the establishment of a Members Working Group on this issue – consideration that there are too many meetings and structures and that it may be better to update through the regular Committee process.

- 3.15** During the course of the Party Briefings, Members were also updated on the key findings of the report from Féile an Phobail regarding future opportunities for the development of the St Patrick's Day celebrations in the City. It is recommended that the report recommendations are considered as part of the implementation plan for the Events and Festivals Review recommendations.
- 3.16** Alignment with European Capital of Culture Activity
- Members will be aware that, since the European Commission's decision in November 2017 that the participation of the UK in the European Capital of Culture in 2023 is still under dispute, Officers have been in discussions with the other four bidding cities and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Work is ongoing to resolve this issue and agree on a clear way forward for the cities involved.
- 3.17** Officers are also considering how, regardless of the outcome of these discussions, an effort is made to ensure that the energy, enthusiasm and work undertaken by the cities and partners is harnessed and mobilised. Any future developments in this activity will be considered in light of the recommendations set out in this report to ensure a joined up approach across Council.
- 3.18** Regardless of the outcome, plans are being made to deliver some of the ambitious cultural projects considered during the first phase of the bidding process with a view that these would be linked to the desire to grow the number of Signature Events and Major Events. It would still be the ambition to build up this strategic programme from now to 2023, which could culminate in a significant year-long programme.
- 3.19** It is recommended that the financial planning process initiated to deliver the European Capital of Culture is aligned to this framework which would then allow a series of Major Events and programmes to be delivered between now and 2023 and provide more sustainability beyond 2023 as well. However, a more detailed report will be brought back on this following Member meetings with DCMS and the European Commission
- 3.20** The proposals in the report on a City of Music (see separate report) are also part of this more strategic approach to Events and Festivals, focusing on our unique strengths and building our reputation internationally, using local talent.

3.21 Proposed Implementation Plan

Subject to Member feedback on the key recommendations, it is proposed that the implementation plan for the revised approach to Council support for Events and Festivals will involve a number of key steps in order to ensure that this renewed approach is in place for the 2019/20 financial year. In line with any policy change, the draft strategy will also need to go to public consultation, in keeping with guidance from the Council's Equality and Diversity Team. Feedback from this consultation exercise will also be critical in the development of the final approach. Consideration will need to be given to the establishment of a specific improvement should be given to the establishment of a dedicated Project team to oversee and manage the implementation of this important area of work.

3.22 A draft implementation plan, focusing on activities in the coming year, is set out in Appendix 2 (on modern.gov). The key actions will include:

- Engagement with other key funders (Tourism NI, Department for Communities, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Sport NI) to secure agreement around re-alignment of existing funding streams in line with the report recommendations and engagement with Visit Belfast to consider opportunities for enhanced marketing of Events and Festivals
- Securing appropriate levels of financial support to ensure delivery of the relevant funding programmes across the Council departments and exploring opportunities to lever additional resources through other public or private partners
- Development of and agreement on assessment criteria for each of the funding streams
- Development of an engagement programme with the cultural sector to advise of proposed changes, update on consultation outcomes and advise on changes to funding streams, in order to enable them to plan for future investment proposals
- Consideration of staff resource implications of the proposed approach, including any skills development support issues
- Establishment of the Internal Officer Events and Festivals Co-ordination Group in order to improve co-ordination and planning across the various teams involved in Events and Festivals delivery and support and consideration of any potential Member Engagement mechanisms.

- **Creation of a Strategic Events Partnership Group with key City stakeholders in order to improve co-ordination and forward planning in attracting Major Events.**

3.23 Following the public consultation process, a report will be brought back to the Committee highlighting progress made to date; updating on feedback from the public consultation exercise and the engagement with key partner organisations and making final recommendations on the way forward for the Council in supporting Events and Festivals from the financial year 2019/20. This emerging framework for investment will align to the Belfast Agenda and, given that the aspiration is that the final approach will lead to agreement on a City Strategy for Events and Festivals as opposed to a Council approach, it will be essential that the other funding partners are in agreement with the proposals put forward.

3.24 **Financial & Resource Implications**

The Council's current investment in Events and Festivals is around £3.4 million annually with £295,000 of that amount met through a variety of external funders. A significant proportion of this budget is allocated via grants at a local and neighbourhood level and some of the funding is from external partners. The consultants' recommendations are based on maintaining the current budget, but re-focusing resources to maximise return on investment. However, when the implementation plan is brought forward, it is likely to recommend that further allocation is made to ensure the delivery of more Signature and Major Events, and that this aspiration is met through additional sponsorship and other forms of revenue raising from the private sector, as well as aligning the financial allocations for European Capital of Culture.

The budget is subject to annual agreement, as part of the rates setting process.

3.25 **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

The development of a strategically-directed programme of Events and Festivals will assist in creating a City that is open to all and as such has the potential to promote good relations and equality by bringing together people from a wide range of backgrounds.

3.26 The consultation process will allow further consideration of any equality and good relations implications and these will be addressed in the final report to Committee."

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

The Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

Tourism Workplan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide Members with an update on the key issues emerging from the mid-term review of the Integrated Tourism Strategy (2015-2020)
- Seek Members’ approval to progress a number of priority actions in the 2018/19 financial year.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the report, in particular the role of tourism as a key priority for City Development and Growing the Economy themes of the Belfast Agenda
- Note the key findings of the mid-term review of the Tourism Strategy and the priority areas of focus for the coming years
- Consider and agree the priority actions for 2018-19, as set out in sections 3.17-3.27
- Agree a budget allocation of £170,000 towards local tourism development support activities. A further report on this matter will be brought back to this Committee for information and approval
- Agree to proceed with the data challenge in order to improve data capture and enhance the level of intelligence on visitors to the City, in order to support future marketing investment within the budget allocation of £50,000.
- Agree to continue the budget allocation of £200,000 towards the Tourism Conference Subvention Scheme as in previous years, in order to support the growth of the business tourism sector in the City. This was built into the budget during the rate setting process.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Integrated Tourism Strategy was approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in May 2015. The Strategy was developed in tandem with the City Centre**

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

Regeneration Strategy and Investment Plan and the proposals are aligned to support the future development, economic growth and profile of the city.

- 3.2 The vision is to develop Belfast as a City that wants to welcome the world and share its history by creating a destination that the world wants to experience first-hand. The strategic goal is to double the value of tourism by 2020 with the focus on achieving this by generating discretionary tourist overnight stays, especially higher value leisure and business tourism.**
- 3.3 Since the publication of the Strategy, the tourism economy has continued to grow in the City and in Northern Ireland as a whole. Statistics published by NISRA on 1 February 2018 show that, in the 12 months to September 2017, tourism trips in Northern Ireland generated circa £951m to the local economy with 72% coming from external visitors, making tourism worth £679m as an export business. This is an increase of 18% in overall visitor spend and a 17% increase in external visitor spend when compared with the 12 months to September 2016. Overall visitor numbers increased by 11% to 5million compared with the 12 months to September 2016. Increases in bed nights and spend have been driven by a continued growth in external visitors, particularly from ROI, GB and overseas.**
- 3.4 In terms of Belfast's performance in 2017, the rise of tourism was clearly evident through:**
- 81.6% room occupancy in our hotels throughout the year, with occupancy levels exceeding 90% at some points**
 - 94 cruise ships docked in Belfast, bringing 158,000 cruise visitors to the City (+10%)**
 - The City hosted 71 conferences in 2017 - these conferences generated 79,300 bed nights for our hotels – up 7% on the previous year – and generated more than £45million for the local economy**
 - More than 837,000 visitor enquiries were handled at the Visit Belfast Welcome Centre, visitor information points at the two airports, and self-service kiosks at key locations, showing an increase of 16% on 2016.**
- 3.5 The Belfast Agenda has at its core a commitment to inclusive economic growth. 'Growing the Economy' and 'City Development' are the two pillars that set out our ambitions for growing tourism in the City. Under these pillars, the priority is to increase tourism spend as well as the number of bed nights.**

3.6 Additionally, the importance of tourism as a priority business sector is evident in a number of key documents including the draft Programme for Government. One of the indicators in the PfG is ‘to improve Northern Ireland’s attractiveness as a destination’. This relates to improving the profile of the region as a business and tourism location, as well as improving the quality of life for those that live here. While the draft Industrial Strategy was limited in its reference to tourism and hospitality as a key growth sector, this oversight was identified by many commentators and by the tourism sector itself. The UK Industrial Strategy does identify tourism as a key growth sector and – along with other key growth sectors – commitments are made around a ‘Sector Deal’ which will underpin investment in the infrastructure, skills, product development and marketing to realise the potential growth prospects.

3.7 Mid Term Review of the Integrated Tourism Strategy

Members will be aware that one of the activities agreed as part of the Tourism Action Plan last year was a commitment to undertake a mid-term review of the Integrated Tourism Strategy to ensure that it provided a relevant framework for co-operation between the key partners responsible for tourism development and promotion in the City. The review also took account of factors such as:

- The potential impact of Brexit on the tourism economy, including currency fluctuations
- The recent growth in hotel developments in the city and the continued push to grow the tourism accommodation provision in Belfast
- The ongoing investment in the City Centre and the buoyant private sector investment profile, illustrated by the recent public-private partnership approach of MIPIM.
- Council proposals for a new City Centre visitor attraction to complement the existing infrastructure.

3.8 The review was completed in February 2018. It provides a series of independent, evidence-based recommendations against the backdrop of Council’s target of doubling the value of tourism by 2020.

3.9 Integrated Tourism Strategy Review: Summary Findings and Key Recommendations

The report reinforces the growth of tourism globally. The UN World Travel Organisation (WTO) highlights that tourism

accounts for 7% of global exports, that there has been a 50% growth in tourism over the last 10 years and tourism accounts for 1 in 10 jobs globally. Global trends highlight the importance of unique and authentic experiences, the growth of city-based tourism, business travel and emerging markets e.g. China, as well as the increasing role of technology (analytics and data, augmented and virtual reality, etc.) in the tourism industry and visitor experience. On a local/UK level, issues such as Brexit have changed tourism demand as a result of currency fluctuations (positive for the NI market at this stage) and wider concerns about future travel and accessibility.

- 3.10** At a local level, the review notes the absence of strong political and industry leadership for the tourism industry. Members will be aware of the commitment to support the newly-formed Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance – an industry body that will take responsibility for improving the profile of the sector. It is interesting to note that, despite the recent growth of the sector, it still account for only around 6% of jobs in the City – as opposed to the 10% global average.
- 3.11** Capital development is significant in the City. The surge in hotel investment (over 1,000 additional hotel rooms during 2018), the extension to the Belfast Waterfront to provide additional conference and exhibition space and the ongoing investment by Visit Belfast, Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland in getting the product to market means that the City’s global presence across a number of key target markets has improved. However, there are deficits: there is a need, in particular, for additional high quality visitors experiences and products to encourage spend and dwell-time in the City. The positive plans for Destination Hub (Belfast Story) as well as commitments to new product developments across the City and within the neighbourhoods can help redress the deficit. The opportunity presented by the recent City Deal announcement to help bring forward new visitor experiences is very positive.
- 3.12** The review suggests that tourism development is essentially made up of two elements: supply side and demand side interventions. The supply side covers issues such as:
- Research/data/insights
 - People and skills
 - Product development
 - Experience development
 - Destination development
 - Enabling infrastructure
 - Public realm improvements.

- 3.13** The demand side covers issues such as marketing, sales and visitor messaging. This is, in essence, the role that Visit Belfast plays on behalf of the City – working with partners in Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland as well as the private sector and industry partners.
- 3.14** The supply side is much less cohesive and there is no one organisation in the lead for the City. Tourism Northern Ireland does play much of that role at a regional level but the review notes that there is a need for committed leadership to join up the various elements of the supply side of the tourism industry in Belfast in order to derive maximum benefit and to ensure that Visit Belfast, Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland have a clear, fully-aligned, high quality proposition to take to market. While there has been some recent progress on issues such as skills development and product development, the ability to make inroads in some of the other areas has been more limited. The review recommends a strategic partnership involving – in the first instance at least – Belfast City Council, Visit Belfast, Tourism Ireland and Tourism NI – in order to get a handle on the relevant ‘supply side’ elements and consider how each can be brought forward to enhance the Belfast tourism offer. This is likely to require a much more ‘involved’ role by Belfast City Council – moving from coordination of activities towards stimulating interesting and building new partnerships to make things happen.
- 3.15** A review of approaches to tourism support in other cities echoes the need to move from a tourism marketing approach towards a more holistic approach that takes account of both supply-side and demand-side measures. One interesting evolution in global tourism has been the recognition that it is necessary to ensure that tourism is a positive experience for locals as well as tourists. The UNWTO (UN World Tourism Organisations) notes that ‘only a city that is good for its people can be good for visitors’. Belfast still generates significant interest from the ‘culturally curious’ who come to visit the City’s unique cultural offer. That offer exists not only in the City Centre but also in the City’s communities. The Council has undertaken some early engagement work around the opportunities for local tourism development and it is clear that there is significant interest in developing this further in the coming years. This is one of the key areas of investment that is proposed for 2018/19.
- 3.16** The review concludes that, if Belfast is performing strongly on promotion and marketing (the demand side), the City needs to strengthen activity on product and experience development as well as the development of people and skills to bring this

up to a comparable level. It identifies a number of areas in need of targeted investment and partner engagement, namely:

- People and Skills
- Product Development/ Quality and Standards
- Data, Insights and Innovation
- Infrastructure Development.

3.17 People and Skills

Members will be aware of the scale of investment in the sector in recent years (particularly in the hotel sector) and the ongoing industry concerns about potential skills shortages at all levels across the industry. The Council has already engaged in a range of Hotel and Hospitality Academies but it is recognised that there is a need to take a much wider approach to addressing this issue. It will involve considering the attractiveness of the sector to potential new entrants (including those just thinking about their future careers at this point). This needs to be a collaborative approach – leveraging resources and support from other public and private sector partners.

- 3.18** It is proposed that the Council will continue to work with key strategic partners such as Tourism NI, Department for Economy, Hospitality Ulster and the Hotels Federation and local schools and colleges to develop a joint plan which will tackle the skills shortage within the industry and improve its profile and reputation. The funding for these activities will come from the Employability and Skills and Economic Development budgets – these will be brought to the April meeting of this Committee for endorsement.

3.19 Product Development/Quality and Standards

If Belfast is to be internationally competitive, it needs to invest in the visitor experiences that attract more people and gives them reason to stay longer and spend more. The Destination Hub including the Belfast Story can be a real ‘anchor’ and there are also opportunities for new developments in a number of areas including maritime heritage, screen tourism and the ‘Beyond Peace’ narrative.

- 3.20** As tourism is becoming increasingly accessible, and the global industry becomes more competitive, it is critical that the City endeavours to differentiate itself on a number of levels. Ensuring high quality standards must be a key driver for investment in the local tourism industry. This will require investment to ensure that individual products and the overall

city offer remains ahead of the curve in meeting and exceeding visitor expectations.

3.21 In order to respond to these challenges, it is recognised that there is a need to focus investment on the key tourism assets and the development of new assets (including the planned City Centre visitor attraction). This will also include support for the development of local tourism products across the City in order to ensure that the benefits of tourism growth are felt across Belfast. Members will be aware that the SP&R Committee has recently approved up to £4million of Council resources from the Social Outcomes Fund to support a series of local tourism investments, subject to them meeting a series of feasibility tests. In addition, at the February meeting of this Committee, it was agreed that the Council would commit resources to test the viability and feasibility of new and emerging tourism products across the City with a view to improving the volume and quality of local tourism products and exploring new mechanisms for investment. This piece of work – alongside learning from some earlier investment in local tourism product in the east and west of the City – will help inform the opportunities for development for the coming year. A budget of £25,000 has already been approved for this work.

3.22 In terms of support for new product development opportunities that emerge, these may include the development of tourism trails, support for marketing, improvements in Quality Standards and management of online presence. A budget of £170,000 has been set aside with Departmental budgets for this work and Officers will also engage with partners including Tourism NI to lever additional budgets to increase the investment. Further work will be undertaken to consider how this funding is distributed and managed and a report will be taken back to Committee in due course. The development work on the City Deal will also consider opportunities for leveraging resources for additional investment in local tourism product.

3.23 **Data, Insight and Innovation**

Like most cities, Belfast struggles to get valuable visitor insights which can inform future investment and track the impact of previous investment. As the tourism and hospitality sector in the City grows, the need for improved research and analysis, including real-time data becomes more critical. The Council has been working with partners including Tourism NI, Visit Belfast and the Smart Cities team to develop new technology-based solutions to improve data collection in order to provide the tourism industry with improved insights

into visitor numbers as well as qualitative feedback on their experiences of the City. Following engagement with the private sector through a range of technology-based challenges in 2017/18, additional investment will be made to bring forward some solutions to improve insights in the coming financial year. A budget of £50,000 has been set aside for this work. Resources will also be levered from other public sector and research partners to support delivery of this activity. Officers will take this project forward with strategic input from the Smart Cities Team, together with Visit Belfast (to ensure statistics are available at a city level), Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland (to have corresponding but related statistics at a regional level). This initiative will also ensure that tourism statistics will be available at a City Region level to support investment decisions related to the City Deal. Officers will engage with colleagues in the other five Councils that are party to the ongoing City Deal negotiations to ascertain if they are willing to provide some additional funding to support this important area.

3.24 Infrastructure development

The original Strategy identified that access was one of the key challenges for the City. While we have access to two airports (with easy access to Dublin airport for international visitors), there is a concern that it may be viewed that Belfast is difficult to get to. The City Deal offers an opportunity to look at new investment opportunities in infrastructure. It will be important to maintain a focus on air route access to the City's airports, given that the majority of the GB and European visitors (who make up the most of our overnight stays) will access the City by air. This is likely to be one of the key areas of engagement for the proposed Belfast Tourism Co-ordination Group (see below). There are no specific financial requirements for the Council on this matter at this point.

3.25 Governance

The review considers that current governance and management around tourism and proposes the establishment of the Belfast Tourism Co-ordination Group (BTCG) with the Council as Chair. The group should oversee, co-ordinate, facilitate, and integrate all action programmes being undertaken by public and private agencies in support of tourism development in Belfast. Given the importance of the issue to the City's future growth, it proposes senior level representation on this group.

3.26 Maintaining a focus on City Marketing

Members will be aware from the presentation by Visit Belfast (at this Committee), that the organisation receives an annual financial contribution from the Council of £1.9million. This funding levers resources from the private sector as well as other public sector partners. It is recommended that the Council continues to support the organisation (see separate report) and that it uses its influence to ensure that there is ongoing engagement between Visit Belfast, Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland in order to maximise the impact of the collective investment. Tourism marketing is likely to be another priority area for engagement by the Belfast Tourism Co-ordination Group.

3.27 Supporting Business Tourism Investment

Members will be aware that the Council and Tourism NI have, for a number of years, co-invested in a Conference Support Scheme for the City. This has been a key element of the business tourism support activity over recent years and will be critical if the growth ambitions are to be achieved in the coming years. It is proposed that the Council makes an investment of £200,000 in this scheme for 2018/19. This allocation will be matched by investment from Tourism NI. In addition to the Conference Support Scheme, the Council will continue to provide access to City Hall for key functions such as conference receptions as this is a critical element of added value and a unique selling point for the City.

3.28 Financial & Resource Implications

Activities identified will be resourced from the agreed Departmental budget allocations for the current financial year. These have already been approved by the Committee as part of the estimates process.

3.29 Equality or Good Relations Implications

The Tourism Strategy was screened out and any major projects will be taken forward in consultation with the Council's Equality and Diversity Officer."

During discussion it was agreed that the Managing Director of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. would be invited to attend a future meeting to provide the Committee with an overview of the value of the Tourism Convention Subvention Scheme to the City.

The Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

Cultural Framework and Action Plan: Delivery Plan 2018/2019

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that the Cultural Framework had been launched in October 2012 and that it had been created in consultation with the culture, arts and heritage sectors across Belfast.

The Committee was advised that the four main priorities within the framework were Distinctly Belfast, Attracting Audiences, Inspiring Communities and Strengthening the Sector. He provided the Members with an overview of the proposed actions across each of the four themes for 2018/2019.

The Director highlighted that the successful delivery of the framework relied on working with city stakeholders including government agencies and the cultural sector itself. He explained that the sector was under considerable financial pressure and that the Arts Council for Northern Ireland (ACNI) had recently advised that it was likely to face funding cuts from the Department for Communities (DfC), which would mean that it would have to cut the funding to the organisations that it supported.

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th April 2017, it had agreed to make a strategic investment in a small number of the larger cultural organisations in order to improve their resilience and make them more sustainable. He advised the Members that delivery of the three-year programme would commence shortly.

The Members were advised that one of the key areas for consideration in the 2018/2019 delivery plan was how the sector could be mobilised and brought on board as part of the legacy plans arising from the development work which had been undertaken for the European Capital of Culture bid for 2023.

The Director reported that a Creative Europe funded study visit to Belfast had been carried out in June 2017 by four international cultural and city development experts. As a result, Belfast had been given a series of recommendations in terms of how to maximise its potential by using culture as a key city driver. He added that the Belfast Agenda had also identified the contribution that culture and arts could make to the City, helping to improve quality of life, drive economic regeneration and make Belfast a shared, and welcoming City.

He advised the Committee that the Core Cities Group had developed a proposal for a joint research project, an "Inquiry into the Cultural Resources of the UK's Cities", to examine how to make the most effective use of cultural resources and explore innovative approaches to enable smarter investment in culture in UK cities. The Members were advised that the inquiry would work with leading cities across the UK to address the issue of investment and to enable the cities to realise the full the benefits that culture could provide as part of effective local growth strategies.

The Members were advised that the inquiry would be developed and delivered by a Board comprising representation from a range of sectors including local government, Arts Councils and major cultural institutions, and would be chaired by Jayne-Anne Gadhia, CEO of Virgin Money.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

The Director explained that Belfast had been invited to be a partner in the Inquiry and, if the Committee agreed, Belfast would be expected to share information with the Inquiry Team and host an event during the course of the programme, between February and September 2018. He pointed out that the work would be completed by September 2018, and would help to inform investment plans for the 2019/2010 financial year and beyond.

The Committee:

1. noted the contents of the report;
2. agreed the year 3 delivery plan (2018/19) of the 2016/2020 Cultural Action Plan, including the associated budget requirements, noting that required funding had been set aside in the departmental budget for 2018/19; and
3. noted the planned inquiry into the cultural resilience of UK cities and agreed to participate, at a cost of £10,000 towards the research work, noting that all required funding had been set aside within existing departmental budgets.

International Relations Update and Workplan

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- **Update Members on the delivery of the International Relations Framework, focusing on activity over the last six months since September 2017**
- **Seek approval for the delivery of the 2018/2019 Action Plan.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the range of activities and associated outputs of International Relations actions over the course of the second half of this financial year**
- **Approve the International Relations Action Plan outlining activity and budgetary commitments for 2018/2019, as set out in sections 3.7-3.12.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will recall the November 2016 approval of a new International Relations Framework for the period 2016 - 2021.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

- 3.2 The aim of this Framework is to continue to promote Belfast on the international stage with other stakeholders as a place to invest, work, visit and study. The Framework will deliver primarily on the formal relationships already in existence through our Sister City Agreements with Shenyang, Boston and Nashville, and developing relationships with Dublin, and with the City of London. New areas of opportunity will be considered on their merits and relevance to Belfast.**
- 3.3 Members will be aware that, at the 13 September 2017 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, an update report on International Relations activity for the previous six months was presented and the outline plans for the coming period were set out for endorsement. This report provides an update on the activities and associated outcomes over the six-month period from October 2017 to March 2018, and outlines an Action Plan for international activity and associated costs for 2018/2019. These activities have, for the most part, been led by Belfast City Council working in partnership with stakeholders in government, education, tourism, business, culture, legal sector and sport.**
- 3.4 Members will be aware that the International Relations activity set out in this report focuses principally on our focused relationships with our Sister Cities and partner cities. The Council is also involved in a range of additional engagement activity in international markets. These include:**
- Support for Visit Belfast to promote the city as a vibrant tourism destination – for both leisure and business tourists. The Council investment in additional conference and exhibition space at Belfast Waterfront has meant that the venue is now able to attract additional national and international conferences and events – thereby increasing visitor numbers from new markets.**
 - Promoting the City for international real estate investment: a Council-led delegation will take part in the annual European property investment showcase in Cannes in March 2018 – MIPIM. The public-private partnership will promote the City as an investment location, focusing on attracting both investors and end-users in the key FDI sectors as well as hospitality and international education and training opportunities**
 - Supporting local companies to export and develop an international presence: Members will be aware of the City’s presence at the annual music, digital and convergence event in Austin, Texas – SXSW. The Lord Mayor will lead a delegation of local businesses and musicians and will host a number of promotional**

events to showcase the best of 'Creative Belfast'. Through our business support, we are also helping local companies to access new export markets and to develop new products and services in order to enhance their competitiveness.

- 3.5** This range of activity is delivered in collaboration with Council's Private and Public Stakeholders represented on the various stakeholder groups set up to support international framework delivery. This includes key agencies such as Invest NI. Appendix 1 (available on modern.gov) outlines some of the key activities and outputs for the last six months. By their nature, these activities often take some time to deliver on outcomes so it can be difficult to track the impact of the Council's investment over a short period. However, through our partnerships and stakeholder arrangements, we have taken a collective approach to developing linkages and activities in our priority areas of focus and have a shared investment in activities. In the coming year we will improve how we demonstrate outcomes on business tourism and education.
- 3.6** With regard to the key activities for 2018/2019, it is proposed that these will be driven by a number of the priority outcomes set out in the Belfast Agenda. Activities will be assessed in order to consider how they can deliver on these outcomes before making investment decisions. The key outcomes will contribute to the 'Growing the Economy' theme of the Belfast Agenda. The Council's national and international relationships are also an important foundation for the developing City Deal, harvesting investment and collaboration for skills, innovation and infrastructure. Outcomes will focus on:
- Building the City's position as a magnet for FDI
 - Maximising the City's connections worldwide to drive growth
 - Positioning the City internationally as a key tourism, education and business destination
 - Helping local companies to internationalise their business and increase business connections and exports
- 3.7** While many of the activities are still under development, it is proposed that the 2018/2019 Action Plan will focus on the following priority areas in order to maximise the return on investment, given the limited resources available:

3.8 China/Shenyang

- **Development work to support the delivery of a Belfast/Shenyang tourism showcase in Shenyang. The opportunity for this event was identified during the China-UK Summit held in Belfast in December 2017. An indicative date of September 2018 has been set for this event, subject to agreement with relevant partner organisations, including Tourism Ireland and Visit Belfast. The costs associated with this event will not exceed £25,000**
- **Ongoing support to the Chinese Consulate Team to support relevant civic or political visits**
- **Supporting additional engagement by the local tourism industry in the ‘China Ready’ programme – helping them to benefit from the growing visitor numbers from China. Tourism Ireland estimates that there were around 65,000 Chinese visitors to Ireland in 2016 and this number has the potential to grow significantly**
- **Supporting the work of the local universities and FE college in developing their teaching and research links with partner institutions in China**
- **Development work to explore the potential for a Fintech mission to Shenyang, subject to agreement and support of Invest NI. This work is at an early stage. As it develops, further information will be brought back to the Committee for information and approval if required**
- **Work will continue to develop partnership projects on Smart Cities, involving research and industry partners from Belfast and Shenyang**
- **Support for the 2019 Chinese New Year event in Belfast, at a cost not to exceed £5,000.**

3.9 Boston

- **Belfast City Council will undertake a civic mission led by the Lord Mayor in April 2018. The purpose of this visit will be to:**
 - **Launch the 2018 Friendship Four tournament with Mayor Walsh**
 - **Support the Belfast Bridge to Mass Challenge entrepreneurs pilot programme – this will involve 8 local tech businesses attending a Boston-based bootcamp helping them secure investment and new business partnerships**
 - **Finalise details for a Belfast philanthropy fund with Boston investment**

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

- **Seek agreement for a Boston led business mission late in 2018 and define sectors**
 - **Discuss further engagement with Harvard around arts and theatre**
 - **Continue discussion to develop a joint pilot city Economic Resilience project (Boston is also a member of the 100 RC Resilient Cities network).**
 - **The visit will incur a maximum cost of £5,000 for Belfast City Council.**
-
- **Belfast who will host an inward mission led by the Mayor of Boston’s international team, comprising businesses, business support organisations and representatives from the education sector. The delegates will undertake a programme developed by Belfast City Council in partnership with key stakeholders, including the universities, Belfast Metropolitan College, the US Consulate, the Venture Capital sector and the NI Chamber. The visit will take place in early May 2018. The above will incur a maximum cost of £5,000 for Belfast City Council.**
 - **Belfast City Council will support the 2018 4th Annual Friendship Four Ice Hockey tournament in partnership with the SSE Arena. This event will build on the success of the previous events and will attract new teams, thereby increasing its profile in the US Market**
 - **Belfast City Council will also support the 2018 2nd Annual Basketball Hall of Fame tournament. This event will build on the success of the inaugural event and will involve eight teams from across key US locations. This represents an opportunity to profile Belfast in each of the locations. The development work this year will focus on increasing the involvement of colleges, schools and the community sector in these tournaments to promote study abroad and scholarship opportunities. Both the Friendship Four event and the Basketball Hall of Fame event will require a financial contribution from Belfast City Council of up to £50,000 maximum each. Planning work for both events is currently well underway. Future updates will be brought to the Committee to provide more detail on teams involved, funding levered and promotional opportunities**
 - **Belfast City Council will continue to work with the tourism sector to co-host familiarisation visits to promote the City as a business and leisure destination, and will explore opportunities for future tourism showcases, in partnership with Tourism Ireland.**

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

3.10 Nashville

- **Belfast City Council will deliver the ‘Nashville in Belfast’ week in April/May 2018 (budget already secured). This will involve a series of cultural performances as well as a range of partner activities to support business linkages, promote tourism and encourage student exchanges**
- **Belfast City Council will work with Invest NI and the US State Department along with the Nashville Economic Development Team, to host a business mission to Belfast in 2018/2019 linking Nashville businesses to potential Belfast partners and companies seeking to do international trade. A budget of £20,000 towards the cost of hosting this event was approved by the Committee in December 2017.**
- **Belfast City Council will continue to support the FE college and both universities as they develop their education linkages in Nashville with Belmont and Vanderbilt Universities**
- **Belfast City Council will support educational exchanges between schools in both cities, including hosting work placement opportunities as required (as we have done recently).**

In addition to involvement with our Sister Cities, Belfast also works in a number of additional locations that have relevant business, educational or tourism links. These include:

3.11 Dublin

- **Work has been ongoing with Dublin City Council and other over the last number of years to develop joint activities and programmes for initial interest both on a City to City basis and along the economic corridor.**
- **The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mícheál Mac Donncha, will visit Belfast in March 2018. The purpose of the visit is to consider areas for future engagement between Belfast and Dublin in the coming year. A report on any proposed actions will be brought back to this Committee for information and approval, if required**
- **Given that one of the priority strands within the emerging City Deals work is on infrastructure, there has been recent engagement between Dublin City Council and its neighbouring Councils along with the six Local Authorities in the Belfast Region City Deal area, to consider whether Belfast-Dublin infrastructure links might be considered as part of this investment package. Arising from the issues identified during**

presentation and discussion at the Members Brexit workshop held on 21 November 2017 and reported on 6 December 2017, Officers are exploring the potential for a Belfast–Dublin Economic Conference with support from public stakeholders including Invest NI and Intertradelreland, private partners and potentially impacted neighbouring Councils. It is anticipated that the Conference will be hosted in May 2018 (tbc). The programme is currently under development but likely discussion topics include Infrastructure (e.g. Rail Connections and Fibre), Trading Relationships, Migration, education and Innovation. Innovation will include place shaping and how we can influence the creation of an Innovation hub across Belfast and Dublin. The Conference will be high profile presenting two cities open for business and investment. It is anticipated that it will be held over two days, one in Belfast and the other in Dublin. It is proposed that a series of business seminars are developed alongside the Conference. Topics may include: City Leadership Skills for SMEs, Workforce Scenario Planning, impact of Brexit on Future Sector Growth, International Trade and Export Post-Brexit and the Changing Funding Landscape

- To encourage trade between Belfast and Dublin, it is proposed that consideration is given to working with local companies to develop business leads that may generate new partnerships, joint ventures, sourcing relationships or market development opportunities. The maximum Council contribution to the Conference (above) and the business support is £40,000.**
- To encourage joint inward and outward business investment activities between Belfast and Dublin for example in the coming months a Lead Development Agency is managing an inward Trade Mission from Luxemburg to Dublin relating to Professional Services such as Asset Management. Officers are exploring opportunities for Belfast to also feature in the Trade Mission. The timescale for the Trade Mission is still to be scheduled.**

3.12 City of London

- Members will be aware that there has been ongoing engagement between Belfast and the City of London. At present, a member of Council staff is seconded to the City of London Cooperation in order to explore opportunities for further collaborative engagement.**
- One of the areas of particular joint interest that has emerged is support for the financial services sector**

post-Brexit. There is both a sectoral ecosystem which should be promoted between London and Belfast as well as Belfast and Dublin.

- Members will be aware that the City of London now has a regional strategy for financial and professional services which features Belfast and that the Lord Mayor of London is promoting this internationally.
- Members will also be aware that Belfast City Council has been supporting the Belfast Partners network in London for the last two years. Belfast Partners is a network of London-based companies with an interest in Belfast – focusing on the city as a business and investment location. As part of our engagement with the network, we have now hosted two major receptions in the City of London (the last one took place in the Mansion House on 23 November 2017) and organised a business mission for six local tech companies to engage with London based partners on 22 and 23 November 2017. As a result of this mission, the businesses were each able to meet four high profile prospective customers in Central London. Post-programme evaluation will be undertaken in April 2018 but initial feedback suggests that the businesses all made valuable connections with significant potential for new business. An inward investment visit for 10 Venture Capital companies based in London is scheduled in Belfast for 6 and 7 March 2018, in collaboration with Belfast Partners and the British Business Bank as well as local partners including Invest NI, CSIT, Novosco and KPMG. The delegates will participate in an organised visit programme, designed to showcase Belfast’s technology sector. Local companies will have an opportunity to engage directly with Venture Capitalists to explore opportunities for leveraging Venture Capital finance to grow their business.

The Council and partners also engage in a number of international profiling events and support Belfast-based activities aimed at attracting international audiences to the City. Planned activities for 2018/2019 include:

3.13 New York - New Belfast: 6-9 June 2018

- Members will be aware that, for the last number of years, the Council has supported the New York – New Belfast Conference. This annual event takes place in New York in June. It attracts Belfast-based business and tourism leads and provides an opportunity to profile developments and investment opportunities in

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

the City and to encourage greater levels of US investment and visitor numbers

- In previous years, the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee has attended along with one Officer. The Chair is given significant profile as part of the Conference programme. It is proposed that the Chair and one Officer attend the June 2018 event. This will provide the Chair with an opportunity to profile the City's new investment opportunities, using the new City narrative and brand. The costs associated with attendance at this event will not exceed £7,500 – comprised of sponsorship (£5,000) and travel/accommodation (up to £2,500 in total).

3.14 Belfast International Homecoming: 3 – 5 October 2018

- Members will also be aware that the Council has supported the Homecoming Conference which takes place each year in Belfast in October. The Conference attracts the diaspora who have significant business networks and connections in the USA and looks at how they can lever this social capital to support economic growth in Belfast and among Belfast-based businesses.
- The event will present a significant opportunity for the Council to set out its vision and leadership ambitions in promoting inclusive economic growth in Belfast. There will be a number of speaking opportunities for both Elected Members and senior Officers. It is proposed that the Council agrees to sponsor the event at a cost of £5,000. As part of the sponsorship, there will be opportunities for attendance by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (or nominees).

3.15 Support for Eurocities network

Members will be aware that Belfast has been a member of the Eurocities network for some time. Eurocities is a network of more than 140 major European cities, made up of the elected local and municipal governments of major European cities. Eurocities is structured through a range of working groups on issues such as Culture, Social Affairs, Knowledge Society and Environment. Belfast has participated in a number of the working groups and has developed collaborative projects with other cities facing similar urban challenges. The City has also shared learning on a range of topics and has availed of the network to engage with the key EU institutions in order to influence policy.

In order to maintain access to these networks and to ensure that Belfast retains the insight and high-level contacts in Brussels and other cities, it is proposed that Belfast City Council renews its annual subscription to Eurocities at a cost of €16,000.

3.16 Financial and Resource Implications

It is proposed that Members approve and agree to provide financial support to the range of activities and events set out in sections 3.7-3.15 above. These allocations have been included in the budget estimates which were approved by the Council in February 2018. They include:

Shenyang/China

- Development work to support the delivery of a Belfast/Shenyang tourism showcase in Shenyang. The costs associated with this event will not exceed £25,000
- Support for the 2019 Chinese New Year event in Belfast at a cost not to exceed £5,000.

Boston

- Support the development and delivery of a civic and business mission to Boston in April 2018. The costs associated with this visit will not exceed £5,000
- Support the delivery of an inward business mission from Boston in early May 2018. Costs will not exceed £5,000.
- Agree to support the fourth annual Friendship Four Ice Hockey event in November 2018 at a cost not to exceed £50,000.
- Agree to support the second annual Basketball Hall of Fame Tournament to take place towards the end of 2018 at a cost not to exceed £50,000.

Dublin

- Support the Belfast-Dublin Economic Corridor Conference and the cross-border business development activity (subject to further engagement and partner support) at a cost not to exceed £40,000.

London

- Agree to set aside a budget of up to £40,000 to undertake a series of Belfast-based visits and events to attract London-based investors and Venture

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

Capitalists to the City as well as developing a business mission programme for Belfast companies to explore new business opportunities in London.

New York-New Belfast Event

- **Agree to sponsor the June 2018 New York-New Belfast conference to a value of £5,000. Travel and accommodation costs not to exceed £2,500.**

International Homecoming Event

- **Agree to support the October 2018 Homecoming Conference at a maximum cost of £5,000.**

Eurocities

- **Agree to renew the Council's annual membership of the Eurocities network at a cost of €16,000.**

3.17 Equality and Good Relations Implications

The International Relations Framework was equality screened."

A number of Members placed on record their gratitude to the staff in the International Development team for the great deal of work which had been undertaken over the past six months towards the aims of the International Relations Framework.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. adopted the recommendations within the report; and
2. agreed that, in recognising the amount of work which was being carried out, a report be submitted to a future meeting to consider additional finance or staff resource for the International Development section.

City of Music

(Ms. E. Henry, Cultural Regeneration Manager, attended in connection with this item)

The Cultural Regeneration Manager advised the Committee that, while the bid for Belfast to become European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2023 was still under dispute, one aspiration under the ECoC proposals was to apply for a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) City of Music designation. She highlighted that this remained an aspiration for the City, regardless as to whether or not the ECoC application went ahead.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

She reminded the Members that significant music related activity was due to take place throughout 2018 and 2019, including numerous BBC Music Events, Gradam Ceoil, Other Voices, Féile an Phobail, EastSide Arts Festival, the UK Pipe Band Championships and the Belfast Tattoo.

She highlighted that music was recognised as a distinctive element of Belfast's cultural profile, with audience research having indicated high levels of engagement locally as well as strong links with the City's international profile.

The Members were advised that the current planned activity amounted to a series of standalone events but that there was a significant opportunity to increase the impact by branding the events 'City of Music', building on Belfast's cultural reputation.

In relation to the support for local infrastructure and artists, she stated that an open call would be facilitated to allow local organisations to outline how their proposals would fit with agreed criteria to include audience development and profile.

The Members noted that a specially curated programme of pop-up music events would take place over the summer season to animate public space by showcasing local talent.

The Cultural Regeneration Manager explained that it was proposed that an award winning interactive musical experience called "Mix the City", which had been delivered in a number of cities such as Moscow, Istanbul, Mumbai and Hamburg, would be delivered in Belfast. She outlined that participants became DJs by mixing the music of local musicians with locally generated video content of the city.

The Committee was advised that, to become a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, required a long-standing commitment which involved a participative process and a forward-looking approach. The Cultural Regeneration Manager highlighted that, as with Liverpool, which had already achieved UNESCO City of Music designation, work in the lead up to and after the designation would focus on cultural policy and activity in relation to music across the City.

The Committee was advised that the total budget for the programme was £200,000, and could come from the budget which had been set aside for the ECoC, as it was anticipated that the programme would be built from 2018 on.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the contents of the report and approved the proposed 'City of Music' programme of activity and budget allocation; and
2. agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting to provide an update on the three-pronged approach which the Council had agreed upon, in relation to the European Capital of Culture 2023 bid, to engage with the U.K. Government, the Irish Government and the European Commission.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

Ciclovia

The Director of Development reminded the Committee that Ciclovia was a health and community based initiative whereby a part of the City was closed to traffic on a given day, for a specified period of time, allowing cyclists to cycle in a completely traffic-free zone. He explained that it also created a mini festival environment which attracted and encouraged people to come into the City centre, on their bikes, to enjoy the freedom of the City and a sense of community.

He reminded the Members that Belfast's first Ciclovia had taken place in October, 2015, where the Council had contributed £15,000 towards the event. He outlined that it had subsequently taken place in the Autumn of 2016 and 2017, with a Council contribution of £10,000 each year.

He reported that the first Ciclovia, held in 2015, had attracted over 1,500 participants, while the 2016 and 2017 events had doubled the participant numbers to more than 3,000. The Members were advised that Ciclovia Belfast had quickly become established as an important event on the local calendar as well as being recognised around the world as a ground breaking initiative which reflected positively on Belfast as a City.

The Committee was advised that the event had a direct economic impact on the businesses which were located on or near the route, with feedback illustrating significant increases in trade on the day of the event.

The Members were also advised that the event attracted significant media attention in the run up to the events and on the day, which showcased the city, and were advised of the event's various funding and delivery partners.

The Director also advised the Members that the event was now centrally linked to the wider cycling activity programme across the City and that it also linked to the Council's Local Development Plan in terms of cycling provision. He outlined that it was proposed that officers would work with the event organisers to link the event to the Belfast Bikes Scheme as part of the ongoing drive to increase the number of subscribers.

He advised the Committee that a Council contribution of £10,000 was recommended for the 2018 Ciclovia event, which would take place in the Autumn.

The Committee:

1. noted the update on the Ciclovia 2018 event; and
2. agreed the allocation of £10,000 from the existing Development Department budget to support the Belfast Ciclovia 2018 event.

Belfast - City for Investment

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed direction of travel for a Council-led City for Investment support service for indigenous businesses and new investors, focusing on actions to be delivered in the 2018/2019 financial year. An accessible user-friendly business service titled ‘Belfast: City for Business’ will consolidate the Councils business support offer. This report concentrates on one strand of this support titled ‘investment’ (refer to Appendix 1 on modern.gov). This report was originally tabled to Committee on 7 February 2018 and deferred to Party Group Briefings for discussion.

1.2 This report sets out the thematic work under ‘Belfast: City for Investment’ which aligns to the NI Programme for Government, the draft Industrial Strategy for NI, the Belfast Agenda and the developing City Deal. The work programme significantly contributes to the Council’s priorities of Growing the Economy, Working and Learning, City Development and Living Here. This report seeks Committee’s approval for a phased approach to developing an Investment Service over time. An initial service will be developed to co-ordinate investor enquiries in April 2018 in partnership with Invest Northern Ireland and other key business partners and stakeholders across the city.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the proposed strategic direction for the development of a Belfast City Council Investment Service.
- Note that the phased approach may require additional finance or staff resource in future which will be tabled back to relevant Committee’s for consideration.
- Note that any requests for subvention from the Investment Service will be dealt with under existing Council Standing Orders. Any exception to this will be tabled to SP&R Committee.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Key Issues

Officers have been prioritising programmes and activity for the 2018/2019 financial year to deliver against key performance indicators identified in the Programme for

Government (PfG), the draft Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland and the Belfast Agenda. Primarily these indicators relate to business Start-Up, Jobs, Business Productivity and Foreign Direct Investment. Members will be aware that the Belfast Agenda four-year stretch goals to 2021 aim to;

- **Create 15,000 new jobs**
- **Attract £1 billion private sector Foreign Direct Investment**
- **Support 4,000 small business start-ups;**
- **Double the economic value of out of state tourism; and**

- **Welcome 1.5 million overnight tourist stays per year.**

3.2 The Council currently delivers a range of business support activities focused on Investing in Belfast, Starting a Business and Growing a Business. These initiatives are supported by Employability and Skills programmes and initiatives targeted towards businesses and individuals. The approach detailed in this report aims to consolidate the Council's business services and make it easy to do business in Belfast. This is one of the key principles listed within 'Growing the Economy' theme of the Belfast Agenda. Over the last two years, Belfast has been ranked as the number one business friendly city of its size. In an increasingly competitive global environment, it is important to retain focus on improving service delivery and ensure that we are aligning our services to meet business needs.

3.3 Developmental Stage – Investment Service

In order to shape a future Council led Investment Service, the Council commissioned a research piece to identify the optimal approach and structure. OCO/ Webb Advisory completed their report and officers have been working cross-departmentally to scope out an implementation plan to consider the viability and phased timing of their recommendations.

3.4 The OCO/Webb Advisory commission included analysis and benchmarking of other UK and ROI cities and consultations with stakeholders across the city including business and public sector organisations. Key learning points were identified from the benchmarking exercise which fed into the development of options and one clear recommendation specific for Belfast City Council.

3.5 The recommended option was to develop a dedicated single point of contact for indigenous and inward investors in relation to all business strands such as enterprise, investment, employability and skills, start-ups, growth, and

innovation. Located on the Belfast City Council website it is suggested the landing platform be called; '*Belfast: City for Business*'. Appendix 1 (on modern.gov) summarises the categories of support available from Council under this promotional banner, the key messages under each and a summary of the support available to businesses and individuals. '*Belfast: City for Investment*' is just one service area under the suite of support promoted as '*Belfast: City for Business*'.

3.6 The recommended option is for a 'flexible responsive service' – responding to various types of enquiries relating to start-up, growth and investment in Belfast. It is envisaged that this service will evolve depending on the level of demand and the type of support service requested by businesses. For specific investment opportunities, the Council will retain the ability to commission support to secure investment. This may include international prospecting, commissioning research to meet investor needs or considering sub-letting incentives for the provision of test trading and/or soft landing space across the city. Officers will obviously work closely with Invest NI and other business support organisations as part of this work.

3.7 There are three elements of the proposed Investment Service in development: These are;

- Relocation / Soft landing support – helping new businesses and their employees make professional and personal connections to quickly embed and grow in the city.
- Investment Attraction – City Centre Development investment portal and international positioning.
- Belfast Proposition for FDI and indigenous investors – Key initiatives acting as attractors being developed for future consideration.

3.8 External Stakeholder engagement

The OCO/Webb Advisory report recognised the significant value that the Council provides to Investors, in particular the Civic Leadership, and the importance of the Council in terms of Strategy Development, aligned to its new statutory functions (Economic Development, Planning & Community Planning).

3.9 It is important that the Council's Investment Service complements the Invest Northern Ireland proposition, adds value and minimises duplication of effort. Council Officers presented our draft ambition to the Director of International Investment and Regional Director at Invest Northern Ireland

on 6 December 2017. The feedback received was positive and included some of the following points;

- Recognised the value in a Relocation and Soft Landing Service that Belfast City Council could bring to a pre-investment and investment enquiry.
- Offered the opportunity to collaborate and pilot this approach with a number of pre-investment clients.
- Sought confidence that confidentiality requirements would be met in line with GDPR regulations which will be in force from May 2018.
- Offered the opportunity to agree a protocol for inward collaborative visits or how we could engage with their pre-investment clients and ensure client expectations are understood and met.
- Opportunity to ensure harmony of data and presentation of statistics and sectoral intelligence across both organisations consistently.

Further meetings with Invest NI have led to the development of a draft protocol being prepared. Invest NI has given a commitment to provide a sample of pre-investment clients for the first phase of the Investment Service Relocation and Soft Landing Service.

3.10 Implementation Stage

It is anticipated that a Phased approach will be adopted to ensure the successful implementation of Belfast: City for Investment in order to minimise reputational risk, and gather an evidence base of enquiries and client types which will inform the future direction of the service.

3.11 Phase I – Relocation and Soft Landing Service

The '*Relocation & Soft landing Service*' will include a Welcome Service, Access to networks, PR, relocation support, advice with housing and education, market intelligence, access to local customers, and ongoing one to one client support from the start-up to the aftercare stage. This service will be resourced via the existing Economic Development Unit and resource requirements kept under continuous review. The initial service will also include:

- Personal client-managed approach by Economic Development Officers.
- Help to build the business case for expansion or relocation, providing up to date statistics and market information in relation to customers, suppliers, labour, recruitment, infrastructure, and property.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

- **Property and site prospecting – with access to a comprehensive database of available property and sites helping to find the right place to do business, including hot- desking and accommodation offers at a choice of locations to assist with the set up and transition to a permanent accommodation.**
- **Help with planning and pre-application discussions and information and practical advice and guidance to support the client through any relevant planning and regulatory processes.**
- **Tailored skills academies or recruitment support services for significant investments.**
- **Support to families and dependants who move with the company, arrangement of pre-move visits to the area to show the quality of life on offer and provide help with the first steps of relocation.**
- **PR and support for a launch of the business in the local area including introductions to the key networking and business membership organisations in the city.**

3.13 Enquires will be logged and followed up with a client managed diagnostic approach to tailor our support to the client needs. Client interventions will be evaluated and client feedback shall be sought to inform the future direction of the service. We are working with colleagues in City Centre Development to ensure the Council’s investment attraction website (www.investinbelfast.com) promotes the relocation and soft landing support available. We are populating the website with consistent sectoral data and tailored support and initiatives by sector. The outward investment promotion by the EU & International Relations Teams and the City Centre Development Team as well as Invest NI will be key elements of Council’s relocation and soft landing service. Performance of this service will be reported to the cross departmental operational governance structure noted below. Marketing to promote the availability of the service will be measured throughout 18/19 to ensure existing resources can meet demand during this pilot phase.

3.14 Phase II – Defining and Promoting Belfast’s specific proposition

In parallel to Phase I, Officers are scaling an enhanced Belfast proposition, which will be a defined menu of tailored support to investors. This is being developed cross-departmentally and an internal implementation plan and governance structure is being put in place for the future delivery. Key services across the Council contributing to this including;

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

- **Smart Cities**
- **City Centre Development**
- **EU and International Relations**
- **Planning & Policy**
- **Property & Projects**
- **Employability & Skills**
- **City Deal & Resilient Cities**

- 3.15** Initially, a Project Board will be put in place to oversee the Project and regular operational team meetings will take place in order to develop or broaden Belfast City Council offering and proposition to investors. For example, an enhanced proposition may include Fast Track Planning, Simplified Planning Zones (subject to Committee approval), access to Vu City and Growth Mapper systems, Energy Support, alternative Clean Tech solutions for sites, benefits of locating in UK, R&D tax credits, access to networks and contacts in Universities and Centres of Excellence dependant on the sector. Each of these need considered further internally and will be reviewed by the Council operational team before being tabled to Committee.
- 3.16** It is envisaged this developmental work will continue to October 2019 and will be reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis internally in relation to work processes, financial and human resources and impact of the service. Evaluation will take the form of follow up one to one's and evaluation surveys with businesses who have availed of the service. This will inform the future roll-out.
- 3.17** Members will also be aware of a wider programme of work across the Council to improve customer service standards and to enhance our customer focus. The Council's 'Blueprint for Customer Focus' themes of service quality, customer contact, focus on the customer, accountability and consistency across Council and Business Areas will be adopted for the Belfast; City for Investment Service.
- 3.18** Input from Party Group Briefings regarding the Service was very beneficial and informative. There is support for the proposed approach as a learning pilot with Members keen to be kept informed on progress and on the outcome of any initial evaluation planned for Sept / Oct 18. There was the suggestion at Briefings about forming a Belfast Investment Development Agency. It is anticipated that the proposed immediate approach will further test the level of demand and type of service required moving forward before such a resource investment is made. Members also echoed the need for:

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

- Inclusive growth across the City;
- Party Group Leaders to actively support delegations to communicate political stability at Local Government and support for ongoing investment;
- Maintaining a balance between Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and indigenous investment;
- Ensuring a separation of decision making between the Investment Service and Council's Planning Function;
- Consideration to be given to retail investment subventions so to avoid displacement but actively encourage a strong and diverse retail offer;
- Working positively with partners;
- Independent evaluation of the service to gauge customer opinion and value.

3.19 Equality and Good Relations Implications

The service shall be open to both indigenous and new investors to the city. We have undertaken research to inform levels of under-represented groups in entrepreneurship and business start activity across Belfast. Marketing activity and support will be targeted to encourage participation from under-represented groups. Tailored support will be adopted where possible including interpretive services, translation services and specific support for persons with disability as necessary.

3.20 Financial and Resource Implications

- The initial Relocation & Soft Landing Service launching in Spring 18 will be resourced from Economic Development and Employability and Skills existing staff portfolio and 2018/19 budgets. This element of the service will be reviewed September 2018 to initially consider strategic direction, financial and resource implications for 2019/20.
- Investment Attraction will continue to be financed and resourced via the City Centre Development Team and EU & International Relations budgets and resources.
- As the specific Belfast Proposition is developed further, reports concerning work process, staff and financial resources will be tabled back to the relevant Council Committee for consideration.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

Charity Abseiling Events at Belfast Castle

The Committee was advised that a number of requests had been received from charities which wanted to use the Belfast Castle for fundraising abseiling events to take place on various dates between April and October 2018.

The Chief Executive advised the Members that the abseiling events would be organised and carried out by Bryson Lagansports which had been running charity-abseil events for over ten years. The Committee was advised that they would provide all the necessary risk assessments, documentation and had the relevant insurance policy applicable to such events.

She outlined that consideration had and would be given to the health and safety implications and environmental issues involved with the event.

The Committee agreed to grant authority for a number of charity abseiling events to take place at Belfast Castle, subject to the satisfactory terms being agreed with the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services, and on the condition that:

1. the event organisers would meet the operational and health and safety issues to the Council's satisfaction; and
2. the event organisers would ensure that all health and safety requirements were met to the Council's satisfaction including risk assessments, safe systems of work, equipment, appropriate insurance and site inspection information.

Growing Businesses and the Economy

Addressing Educational Inequality 'Right to Succeed'

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- **Advise Members of a successful funding application made by Right to Succeed – a UK-based charity set up to address educational inequality – for delivery of a three- year pilot initiative that supports young people at risk of exclusion from school in North Belfast schools. An allocation of up to £500,000 will be made available towards delivery of the work in North Belfast, over a three-year period.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **Note the success of the recent Lottery funding application by Right to Succeed. This will include a three-year support package for up to 100 young people from North Belfast who are at risk of becoming excluded from school. Delivery will commence from September 2018, and Council Officers will work with Right To Succeed to support the project.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Key Issues

The Belfast Agenda, along with the supporting Employability and Skills Framework for the City, sets ambitious targets around improvements in employment rates and skills levels for Belfast residents. There are significant correlations between deprivation, educational attainment and economic inactivity. Currently, around 30% of school leavers do not attain 5 GCSEs, A* - C (including Maths and English). For those in receipt of free school meals, the figure is 53%. Given that these are generally the basic building blocks for any future employment or to support people moving into further education and training, it is essential to consider how this figure can be reduced. As part of the commitment to inclusive growth set out in the Belfast Agenda, one of the key population indicators is the proportion of school leavers entering employment, education or training. This is part of the commitment to ensure that everyone in Belfast fulfils their potential.

3.2 As part of our intelligence gathering into providers of support to address educational attainment issues and educational inequality, the Council became aware of the Big Lottery funding application being made by the charity Right to Succeed. Right to Succeed is a charity that works across a number of UK cities to develop, pilot and scale solutions to address educational inequality. The Council asked the organisation to consider Belfast as one of the three locations for programme delivery. The funding request was made by the organisation to the Big Lottery under its Preventing Exclusions Programme and was successful.

3.3 Right to Succeed have secured £1.4million to work with 30 primary and post-primary schools across three locations: Blackpool, Doncaster and North Belfast. The funding will be split evenly across the three locations, meaning that there will be an allocation of up to £500,000 for the project in north Belfast. The Project will be delivered on a pilot and scale basis, focusing on North Belfast as the area of greatest need in terms of educational attainment. It is hoped that the learning

from this pilot can then be applied to other schools across the City.

- 3.4 PEP aims to protect young people from being excluded from schools. It will focus on supporting schools that have high rates of exclusions to forensically identify the needs of the pupils most at risk of exclusion. It will work with the schools and relevant local partners to embed targeted interventions and strategies that have been demonstrated to be effective in supporting this group.**
- 3.5 A smaller pilot in Blackpool was extremely successful with 97% of young people staying on in education, as opposed to 50% without the intervention. Outcomes from this programme will include:**
- Reduction in the number of pupils at risk of exclusion across target schools**
 - Improvements in literacy and numeracy**
 - Improvement in well-being and social emotional development**
 - Increase in decision making, self-regulation and resilience**
 - Better supported transitions, signposting and referrals experience**
 - Better overall school quality of experience.**
- 3.6 Right to Succeed identified the opportunity to focus on North Belfast for a number of reasons. The area is among those with the most significant educational and socioeconomic challenges. These include:**
- Educational attainment (for numbers achieving at least 5 GCSEs or equivalent) within North Belfast is the lowest for school leavers in Northern Ireland (out of all 18 constituencies in Northern Ireland)**
 - Almost half of the 22 most deprived wards in Northern Ireland are in North Belfast. Deprivation in this part of the city is extremely high with over 36% of children living in low income households, compared with an NI average of 23%**
 - Free School Meals – there are 10 post-primary mainstream schools (7 of these are non-selective) and all have Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) of at least 50%. Within the Primary sector there are over 22 Primary Schools and a substantial majority have Free School Meals Entitlement of over 50%.**
- 3.7 The area has an engaged and proactive Area Learning Community – the partnership of schools in the area working**

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

together on key challenges with the aim of improving educational outcomes for young people. These close linkages will support effective programme delivery and maximise impacts. The project takes an evidence-led approach, and all interventions and approaches will also provide intelligence that will support scalability and expansion of interventions citywide and beyond. This intervention will also provide the opportunity to work with statutory agencies demonstrating value for money and providing details on savings to the public purse from interventions. This is an approach that has worked effectively to date on other Council-led Employability and Skills initiatives. Given the Council's engagement with the schools and the charity, there is an opportunity to consider how this learning and the targeted approach might be expanded beyond the original pilot area in North Belfast.

- 3.8 To date, 13 primary and post-primary schools (plus one Alternative Education Provider) have signed up to take part in the programme. They are:**

Name of School	Primary / Post-Primary
Currie Primary School	Primary
Seaview Primary School	Primary
St Vincent de Paul Primary School	Primary
Sacred Heart Boys' Primary School	Primary
Carr's Glen Primary School	Primary
Holy Family Primary School	Primary
Blessed Trinity College	Post-Primary
Belfast Royal Academy	Post-Primary
Hazelwood Integrated College	Post-Primary
Belfast Boys' Model School	Post-Primary
Belfast Model School for Girls	Post-Primary
Mercy College	Post-Primary
Loughshore Resource Centre	Alternative Education Provider

- 3.9 Right to Succeed will engage with schools before the Easter break to confirm whether they all still wish to participate in the programme. If they do, delivery will commence in September 2018. For all participating schools, the support will include:**

- Needs assessment to help staff to assess and analyse the needs of their pupils in terms of learning, social and emotional wellbeing
- Professional development support for teachers and teaching assistants in a range of approaches to social

and emotional development, communications, and literacy

- Intervention design/delivery – teachers will work with children and families to design an appropriate pathway for each child. This will involve close engagement with parents. Progress will be monitored using a digital tracker developed by Right To Succeed. As part of this approach, there will be a focus on peer learning across all participating schools in the three locations (and the potential to extend the learning to other locations)
- Monitoring progress – there will be reporting against a series of agreed metrics on a six-weekly basis. Impact will be measured annually against baseline data
- Embedding learning – the project will establish local learning groups to share knowledge and ensure ongoing review to improve delivery and outcomes. There will be opportunities for the Council to engage in order to inform future interventions and support knowledge dissemination, in line with the emerging approaches to area working across the Council.

3.10 Given the Council’s commitment to exploring area-based planning and delivery, there is an opportunity to work with colleagues from other parts of the Council including Community Services, Community Safety and Regeneration in order to explore how public services can be better aligned around this key challenge.

3.11 Equality and Good Relations Implications

No specific Equality or Good Relations considerations.

3.12 Financial and Resource Implications

No specific Financial or Resource Implications at this point. The project is being funded by The Big Lottery Fund at a total cost of £1.4million. Schools will be expected to commit staff resources to support programme implementation.”

A Member stated that, while she was pleased to see that funding had been secured for this type of project, a number of the organisations which were mentioned within the report were already involved in intervention projects and that, in general, she would like to see a more strategic approach taken.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the success of the recent Lottery funding application by “Right to Succeed”, which would include a three-year support package for up to 100 young people from North Belfast who were at risk of becoming excluded from school; and

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

2. noted that delivery would commence from September 2018, whereby Council Officers would work with “Right To Succeed” to support the project and with other partners and agencies working in the area of education to ensure that all support measures were fully integrated and aligned.

Belfast Facts and Figures 2018

The Director of Development reminded the Members that the “Belfast Facts and Figures” publication was designed to be a user-friendly resource for Members.

He advised the Members that the 2018 publication included updated and refreshed statistics and accolades reflecting the key areas of strength for the city, in line with the Belfast Agenda and key publications such as the Belfast Crane Survey, and that the design had been refreshed to reflect the new city brand.

A Member requested that, in the future, officers would look to include data comparisons with the Republic of Ireland.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. noted the updated Belfast Facts & Figures 2018 publication; and
2. agreed that, going forward, officers would look to include other data comparisons where relevant.

Growing the Economy – Working and Learning

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to identify the priority activities to be delivered in the coming financial year as part of the Committee’s ambitions to support delivery of the targets under two of the pillars of the Belfast Agenda: Growing the Economy and Working and Learning.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the priority issues raised at the Committee workshop on 21 February 2018**
- **Agree to the Forward Work plan to support delivery of the Growing the Economy and Working and Learning strands of the Belfast Agenda**
- **Agree to receive a further report in April 2018 outlining the specific detail of activities.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members will be aware that the Committee Workshop which took place on 21 February 2018 aimed to agree the broad programme of work for the Committee in the coming financial year. Officers made a number of presentations to seek feedback on proposed activities and Members indicated their support for the general approach.

3.2 The key discussion points included the following:

- Supporting inclusive growth through economic and city development should be a key driver for the Committee and the Council – it is essential that consideration is given to clearly articulating what inclusive growth means, how it aligns to the vision and priorities contained in the Belfast Agenda, how it is measured and how it can apply across all areas of business
- Creating jobs and improving skills were the key drivers articulated during the public consultation exercise for the Belfast Agenda. They should remain the top priority for the Committee in the coming year, working towards the agreed stretch targets set out in the Belfast Agenda
- City Deal offers an opportunity for additional investment in a number of the Committee's priorities including Employability and Skills, Tourism Infrastructure, City Investment and Regeneration.

3.3 Members will be aware that the key targets and ambitions relate to job creation, improving competitiveness, increasing business start-ups, addressing economic inactivity, increasing the overall job numbers in the City, improving skills – particularly for those with no or low skills – and increasing levels of investment into the City.

3.4 Growing the Economy: achievements in April 2017-February 2018

Since April 2017, Council has developed and delivered a range of activities to address the challenges around low levels of start-up, innovation, competitiveness and productivity. These include:

- 301 entrepreneurs supported through the Go for It programme supporting the creation of 213 jobs;

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

- **Support for 34 Social Enterprises and 10 Co-operatives contributing to 9 new business starts already creating 32 jobs;**
- **Support for 32 university/FE college student entrepreneurs to develop their own new businesses while still in education. We are working with the colleges and universities to look at how this support can be enhanced – and how entrepreneurship can become more embedded in the curriculum for all students;**
- **Ongoing investment in the Innovation Factory – the tenant occupancy rate at the Innovation Factory is 27% representing 103 jobs and 37 business tenants. A more detailed report on progress will be presented to the April 2018 Committee. The Innovation Factory is performing on target, Council’s initial investment is now offering the opportunity for more engagement through the recent PEACE IV approval and the decision by Invest NI to further develop the infrastructure around the site. Other investment opportunities are now being considered across the wider site.**
- **Provision of business mentoring support for 110 small businesses in Belfast (programme launched in September 2017). Businesses have received support on a range of topics including marketing, digital strategy, sales development and cash flow management. A further 19 businesses have been supported through the retail and hospitality programme which provides small businesses with advice and support to enhance their customer experience.**
- **Business Accelerator and Investment support: as previously agreed by this Committee, the Council is to support 10 small Belfast businesses to go through the MassChallenge Bootcamp programme in Boston. Companies will receive intensive support around pitching, targeting investment and partnership development and they will be able to network with other Boston-based companies to develop new partnership arrangements and collaborations. The Boston Bootcamp will take place w/c 21 May. The Council is working closely with Catalyst Inc and Invest NI on this programme;**
- **Launch of a new high-growth start-up programme supported by ERDF (European Regional Development Funds). The first intake is currently being recruited. 20 new businesses will access support through this initiative by April 2018;**
- **We have supported the creative and digital sector by supporting The Great Escape, Output Belfast, AVA**

Music Festivals and SXSW representing 1,150 visitors and 455 Belfast businesses. We have also worked with the Smart Cities Team in the development of the Immersive Tech Lab and are supporting the development of a number of new tech challenges focusing on tourism growth and new product development.

**3.5 Emerging Opportunities and direction of travel 2018/19:
Growing the Economy (business start-up and growth)**

Taking account of recent Member comments and of the existing Belfast Agenda Vision targets and ambitions, it is proposed that the programme of work for the coming year will include the following broad areas of activity under the banner 'Belfast: City for Business':

Enterprise Awareness/Business Start-up:

- A programme will be designed to encourage enterprise within education and the youth sector to help young people considering setting up their own business as a career choice. This support aims to engage approximately 600 young people across the city in 2018/19.**
- Graduate entrepreneurship: Officers have been working closely with partners in UU, QUB, Belfast Met and Invest NI to develop a new intervention, following on from the current Belfast Enterprise Academy programme. Invest NI have now agreed to provide a time-bound salary payment for student entrepreneurs who commit to starting their business when they graduate.**
- Female Entrepreneurship: we are developing an initiative with the 10 other Councils in partnership with Invest NI and Women in Business designed to encourage females to start a business.**
- Start-up incentives: Officers are working with Legal Services and Audit, Governance and Risk to consider an approach to financial incentives aimed at removing barriers to entrepreneurship**
- Ongoing investment in the Go for It programme, with partners across the 11 Council areas.**

Business Growth

- Officers are applying for funding (ERDF and Invest NI) to provide specialist support and advice to businesses focusing on integrating digital technology into their business models. The programme aligns directly to**

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

the proposed DCMS Full Fibre Project (2018-2020) to be delivered through Digital Services. The funding application for this is currently with DCMS for consideration;

- **Cyber Security and Business Resilience Programme –** development activity is underway to bring forward a programme to test the cyber resilience of Belfast businesses. This arises from the Northern Ireland Cyber Security Strategy which Council funding helped develop;
- **International & Export Development:** we have put in place a support programme to increase the number of Belfast businesses involved in export activity. In the course of the year, 15 businesses who are not currently exporting will develop export plans to enter new markets;
- **Advanced Engineering Sector:** We are developing a support programme for the advanced engineering and manufacturing sector. It will deliver accreditations and standards to enable businesses within this sector to meet quality standards and industry performance requirements. It is anticipated that the programme will support up to 15 business participants towards skills development, increased competitiveness and securing contracts. There may be an opportunity to showcase some of this collaboration in future at the North Foreshore site as a meanwhile use;
- **Music Development Programme:** Building on the success of Output and SXSW Officers are developing this further to create a Belfast specific Music Development Programme supporting local artists and indirectly supporting the music infrastructure of the City;
- **Circular Economy –** We plan to pilot interventions to influence and create circular economy models across businesses operating in Food, Fashion, Electrical Goods and Furniture. An initial pilot in 18/19 will work with up to 10 restaurants across the city to assess their existing supply chain model and efficiency. The programme will implement improvements towards more profit and less waste;

- 3.6 In addition to the development of these new initiatives, the team will continue to work with Digital Catapult to encourage and support access to the Immersive Lab facilities by a wider section of businesses and interested organisations. Businesses across the City will benefit from We will continue to offer our Trade Association support and range of programmes to support retailers. An outline of the 18/19 annual service Plan for Innovation Factory will be presented

to April Committee and our plans regarding 'Belfast: City for Business' were discussed recently at Party Group Briefings.

3.7 The business start-up and growth environment is a particularly complex and confused marketplace. In order to avoid duplication, we have convened a partnership of more than 30 stakeholders involved in the delivery of enterprise support. The partnership has recently agreed the terms of reference for an Enterprise Framework which will be developed by August 2018 and which will help shape investment decisions from 2019 onwards.

3.8 Working and Learning: achievements in April 2017-February 2018

Over the past year the Council has worked with partners to develop a number of collaborative initiatives to address some of the challenges identified above. Some of the headline outcomes include:

- 4,070 residents have accessed Employability and Skills interventions of whom 1,247 have entered into employment/self-employment (876 through ESF, 40 through early engagement initiatives, 15 through Employment Academies, 213 Business Start-Up and 103 through Innovation Factory)
- Over 1,219 training accreditations have been supported and 714 people have progressed to education and training
- 290 jobs are in the pipeline through Employment Academies across a range of employers, including hotels, construction, health and social care and transport.

3.9 Emerging Opportunities 2018/19: Working and Learning

Following engagement with Members of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at the 21 February workshop, as well as Stakeholder engagement with the relevant partners working in this field, a number of strategic opportunities for investment have emerged. These include:

- Significant support for additional investment in Employment Academies, expanding on existing sectors and developing Academies in new growth sectors
- Ensure direct alignment between the investment in City regeneration and opportunities for upskilling or job creation – working with some of the City's major

investments such as the Transport Hub and Ulster University

- Support for increasing engagement and early intervention with schools and young people, particularly those with low skills levels or those that risk leaving skills without basic skills
- Pilot new approaches to increase engagement and opportunities for reskilling, retraining and Apprenticeships for all ages – including Apprenticeships for new vocational areas
- Deliver and further develop the phased approach to the Belfast Employability Pathway (Belfast Workplace) – ensuring that participants and employers are clear about the Employability and Skills offer available to them – and ensuring that the offer is designed to meet their needs
- Develop new governance and management arrangements to support joint planning and investment on Employability and Skills
- Support enhanced alignment of service delivery across the Council to maximise the job and employment opportunities from planning and major redevelopment in the City
- Explore opportunities for co-commissioning of new Employability Programmes, in line with the contract duration for some of the major programmes (e.g. Steps to Success, Training for Success etc.)
- Need to ensure that interventions is targeting those groups and localities most in need of investment – drilling down to very localised engagement approaches
- Explore how the City Deal investment can attract additional resources to secure long-term investment in this area of work – including investment from private sector and government partners.

3.10 The Council's investment in Employability and Skills continues to be driven by the principle of inclusive economic growth. Therefore, support interventions are based on ensuring that structural inequalities are addressed with regard to educational attainment, skills, employability, working poor, under-employment etc. To underpin this work, it is proposed that the Council adopt the following guiding principles to inform all future programme planning in this area:

- Approach must be principally employment-led focusing upon identified employment opportunities and gaps in provision;

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

- Needs-led approach must be applied in order to deliver against the principles of ‘inclusive growth’ targeting interventions towards geographical areas and/or client groups while being accessible and open to all;
- Our approach must be ambitious, we need to increase visibility and awareness of Council’s role within this environment and strategically build our position in this area;
- Our approach should be both intelligence-led and evidence-based;
- Council’s intervention must add value, not duplicate existing provision and have an in-built partnership approach;
- Flexibility of approach is one of the main strengths of the Council allowing for interventions to be developed around emerging market needs/opportunities;
- The interventions delivered will be scalable and delivered seamlessly across the City, in line with need and opportunity.

3.11 In addition to direct interventions, we will continue to work to drive maximum social and economic benefit of investment decisions by the Council and other Anchor Institutions by exploring opportunities for ‘social return’ from our spend and considering the potential for Employability and Skills support to be levered through Developer Contributions as part of relevant planning decisions. Officers are currently working with colleagues in the Planning and Building Control Service with a view to establishing the viability of these mechanisms and looking and good practice from other cities to see what might be transferable.

3.12 **Financial & Resource Implications**

The recommended budget allocations for the Growing the Economy programme activity based on contractual commitments, pending funding applications and priority areas identified above is summarised below:

Starting a Business	£522,000
Business Growth and Sector Development	£500,000
Investment Support	£80,000
City Centre Development (Includes City Centre Management and initiatives such as Festive Lighting)	£210,000

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018**

- 3.13 The recommended budget allocations for Employability and Skills programme activity based on contractual commitments and priority areas identified above is summarised below:**

ESF Match Funding – match funding of ESF employability projects	£240,000
Employment Academies and Skills Development Support for Job Opportunities	£500,000
Career Development, Early Intervention and other Research Activities	£175,000

- 3.14 The total investment of £915,000 within Employability & Skills is an increase of £250,000 compared with the previous financial year where £665,000 was invested in Employability & Skills. We would envisage that, in order to increase the impact that Members have supported through the Belfast Agenda, this investment in Employability & Skills is further increased in subsequent years. This will be subject to discussion as part of the future rates setting process for the coming financial years.**

3.15 Equality or Good Relations Implications

Each of the proposed projects referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. New projects or service areas are equality screened and considerations given to equality and good relation impacts at the initial stages of project development. Officers will work closely with the Equality and Good Relations Team on this activity.”

In response to a Member’s question regarding the occupancy rate within the Innovation Factory, the Director of Development advised the Committee that it was currently 27% occupied, which was ahead of target.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Quarter 3 Finance Update

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the 2017/18 Quarter 3 position for the City Growth and Regeneration Committee was an underspend of £244,000 (2%) which included additional income. He outlined to the Members that the forecast year-end position was an underspend of £109,000 (0.7%) which was well within the acceptable tolerance of 3%.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee
Wednesday, 7th March, 2018

He reported that the main reasons for the Committee underspend related to a reduced spend on supplies and services and vacant posts across a number of services which were offset by less income received than budgeted.

The Committee was advised that the Departmental year-end forecast was a net year-end underspend of £557,000, which represented a variance of 0.4% of the annual net expenditure budget. The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed, at its meeting on 15th December, 2017, that non-recurrent funding of £147,000 for Community Grants and £70,000 for Twilight Markets would be made available for 2018/2019 which meant that the forecast surplus at the year-end was £340,000.

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

Chairperson