



Subject:	Working and Learning and Growing the Economy: Programme of Work Update 2018/19
Date:	10 October 2018
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Colin McCabrey, Economic Development Manager Ruth Rea, Economic Development Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress against a programme of work to deliver against a series of targets under two of the pillars of the Belfast Agenda: Working and Learning and Growing the Economy. The update is aligned to the work programme that was approved at this Committee on 11 April 2018.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the Council's performance and contribution to delivering against Belfast Agenda ambitions to grow the Belfast economy, focusing on the current support for Business Start-up and Growth as well as Employability and Skills

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note that, over the six-month period, the Council has directly and indirectly supported the creation of 1868 jobs, 1905 individuals have been supported through employability interventions, 1554 young people engaged through career support activities and 1243 businesses have been supported to either start up, grow or develop their international profile.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Members will recall that the work plan for 2018/19 for delivery against the Working and Learning and the Growing the Economy work strands of the Belfast Agenda was approved at the April 2018 meeting of this committee. This report provides an overview of activity and performance for the period 1 April to 30 September 2018.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Working and Learning Strand</u></p> <p>Employment Academies: building on the Employment Academies delivered in 2017/18, officers have been undertaking intensive employer engagement to extend academies into new sectors. Activities to date have focused on sectors with identified labour market gaps, namely hotels/hospitality, transport, childcare, health and social care and construction. Since April 2018, 139 participants have been engaged in Academy programmes; to date, 72 have secured employment. A range of new academies including hospitality, tourism, health and social care will commence over the September and October months.</p>
3.3	<p>Members will be aware that, at the September 2018 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, an update was provided on the research into a City Youth Pledge. One of the key points of learning from other locations was the importance of early intervention. Taking this learning on board, work is currently under way to pilot schools-based Employment Academies that aim to improve outcomes for young people at risk of not completing their education or underachieving. The pilot will test two approaches, one with a single alternative education provider and one across all schools to be able to compare the outcomes from alternative approaches. It is expected that, as a result of these pilots, 22 young people identified at risk of not completing their education and with no clear training/employment path will go into positive destinations (jobs, apprenticeships etc.).</p>
3.4	<p>Access to Opportunity is a new initiative providing financial support to address practical barriers for those out of work who wish to access Council-supported Employability and Skills interventions and/or enter employment. Support provided will be aligned to participants'</p>

individual needs but is expected to include the provision of interpretation, sign language and childcare. Applications for support will be received directly from employability providers on behalf of their participants, and a screening process will be undertaken to ensure that the support cannot be provided through other mechanisms. This approach has been developed in recognition of the need for flexible support in dealing with those furthest from the labour market – and taking account of the inflexibility of some of the current provision.

3.5 As part of the Council's efforts to support the long-term unemployed and economically inactive to enter the labour market, match funding has been awarded to five **European Social Fund (ESF) projects**. Total funding of £315,518 (£240,000 Belfast City Council and £75,518 Urban Villages) has been awarded in the 2018/19 financial year across five projects (Springboard, Workforce Learning, USEL, Specialisterne and LEMIS + consortium). It is expected these programmes will support 616 jobs by April 2019. Since 1 April 2018, 1,766 participants have been engaged with 577 achieving accredited qualifications and 375 entering employment.

3.6 Officers are also engaged in a range of partnership and development activity, including:

- **City Youth Pledge:** as reported at the September CG&R committee, research on this pledge has concluded. Key findings have identified a number of challenges and gaps which are limiting the progression of some young people across the city such as lack of meaningful work experience, inconsistent quality of careers advice and guidance etc. Members also identified that interventions need to take account of the Council's commitment to inclusive growth – recognising that young people face multiple and significant challenges and that there is a need to build their resilience skills to help them participate fully in society as a whole
- **Belfast Region City Deal:** Work is ongoing to develop the Employability & Skills strand of the City Deal. The initial major projects coming out of the Employability and Skills Model are closely aligned to the Council's work plan in this area and will offer an opportunity to lever additional resources to address economic inactivity and to enhance skills levels – particularly those in key growth areas. All of the relevant government departments have been engaged as part of this process
- **Developer Contributions:** Officers continue to work with the Council's Planning and Building Control Team to ensure that employability and skills provisions are integrated as part of the Draft Developers' Framework and to engage with developers to provide employability solutions that meet their needs and help them to deliver on their commitments.

3.7	<p><u>Growing the Economy Strand</u></p> <p>During the first six months of 2018/19, Officers have been working with Invest NI towards full draw-down of Belfast City's allocation of European Regional Development Fund for Northern Ireland to support our activities to encourage more business start-ups and to help existing businesses to grow.</p>
3.8	<p>At a number of recent meetings, Members have been updated on the progress of the Innovation Factory. A key date for Innovation Factory (IF) is the target set out in the ERDF Letter of Offer requiring the facility to achieve a 55% occupancy rate, supporting 145 jobs by December 2018. The target of 145 jobs has already been exceeded (there are currently 208 people employed at the centre) and officers are continuing to work with IF to ensure that the occupancy target is achieved (current occupancy rate is 41%).</p>
3.9	<p>An Enterprise Framework for the city is also being facilitated by the Council in partnership with the Business Growth and Enterprise Working Group which represents 30 local economic development stakeholders. It is intended that the Framework will be presented to Party Group Briefings and tabled to Committee later this year for information and endorsement. This framework will shape future collaborations and initiatives, in line with the Belfast Agenda commitments in this area.</p>
3.10	<p>Key points to note arising from activity delivered to date are noted below:</p> <p>Starting a Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim of the Council's enterprise activity is to encourage people to be entrepreneurial and consider business start-up as a means of employment. To date, we have been working with Council's Community Services Team and local community representatives to develop a series of initiatives to promote enterprise in local communities. A series of community centre-based events commenced in September. Each event features a local entrepreneurial role model. Aligned to this, migrant and equality forums have been engaged to inform specific support to address barriers to starting a business for the individuals they represent • The Council will once again work with our public and private partners to deliver a programme of activity during Global Entrepreneurship Week (12-18 November). This will also profile a Female Enterprise Challenge which is being delivered in partnership with Women in Business, Invest NI and the 10 other councils (commencing November 2018).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to this work, the Council has also been supporting the regional Go for It programme, targeted support for students to start a business and specific interventions to encourage the development of new social enterprises and cooperatives and businesses with high growth potential. These initiatives have collectively engaged 446 individuals/businesses resulting in the creation of 174 jobs to date.
3.11	<p>Growing a Business</p> <p>These initiatives are designed to increase the productivity of our local indigenous business base. Support available includes generic business growth support (such as marketing advice, business planning etc.), bespoke support for specific industries (retail, advanced engineering and creative and digital) and international trade and development support. To date these initiatives are on schedule, collectively supporting 533 businesses and creating 246 new jobs.</p>
3.12	<p>Investing in Belfast</p> <p>The two year pilot City for Investment service proactively works with investors, both indigenous and FDI, providing professional and personal connections to help businesses be successful in Belfast. To date the service has supported 50 businesses, creating 1000 new jobs, sustaining 10 existing positions and attracting £1.25 million investment to the city. The pilot service is progressing on schedule and the learning is informing potential future options and approaches for delivery.</p>
3.13	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The activities outlined in this report will be resourced from the set 2018/19 financial budget for the Economic Development and Employability & Skills sections of Economic Development Department budget.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Each of the proposed projects referenced in this report is informed by statistical research, stakeholder engagement and complementary policies and strategies. The unit is currently undertaking a process of equality screening on the overall work programme, this will ensure consideration is given to equality and good relation impacts throughout the delivery of each project.</p>
4.0	Appendices
	None

