



Subject:	Update on City Centre Revitalisation Programme
Date:	7th August, 2019
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development John Greer, Director of Economic Development
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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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the ongoing delivery of the City Centre Revitalisation Programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. note the update on the building cordon and the anticipated timescale for the Council to receive a planning application for the next phase of rebuild;ii. note the work underway to develop concept proposals for additional pop-up parks at locations in the city centre;iii. note the work underway with DfI and DfC to commission a study to explore options and create a vision for the future development of the city centre enabling both pedestrian enjoyment and public transport access;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. note the emerging concept designs for lighting pilots to be brought forward for Castle Street and Castle Arcade; v. consider and approve funding up to £45,000 towards an enhanced 'Cultural Night/Day Programme'; vi. consider and approve funding up to £5,000 to support enhanced Taste the Island activity as part of a programme of activity by the Linen Quarter BID; vii. consider and approve funding up to £4,500 to support a second Belfast Restaurant Week and weekend food market; viii. consider and approve funding up to £3,000 to support the inaugural Belfast Oyster Festival to take place in the city in October 2019; and ix. consider and grant a market licence for the Tesco 'Taste of Northern Ireland' event to be scheduled for 20th – 22nd September in Custom House Square.
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main Report</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Since the detailed update provided to the Committee on 5th June, officers continue to engage with key stakeholders to further develop the specific proposals being brought forward as part of the City Revitalisation Programme to enhance the vitality and sustainability of the city centre, in the context of the budget envelopes previously agreed by the SP and R Committee on 22nd February 2019. The work being progressed as part of the City Revitalisation Programme is closely aligned with the existing strategies to enhance and develop the city centre including the Belfast Agenda and Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy.</p> <p><u>Update on the Cordon</u></p> <p>As Members will be aware, the building façade retention schemes on Bank Buildings are now in place and the cordon has been reduced which has increased access, albeit that the road width is still significantly reduced at this location Traders continue to raise concerns about the impact this cordon is having on their businesses, particularly those on Royal Avenue. Dfl has recently introduced additional railings at Castle Junction and Royal Avenue to improve pedestrian flow and safety. A number of retailers in Royal Avenue have expressed concern over the size of the cordon, the duration of the cordon and its effect on vehicular and pedestrian access to Royal Avenue. Belfast City Council officers continue to echo these concerns from retailers to the Dfl, Translink and Primark's contractor. City Council officers have received assurances from Primark that the cordon in place is as small as it can be given the nature of the work taking place, and</p>

that the current cordon is necessary to ensure the safety of those working on the site. Work is continuing to remove debris from site and it is anticipated that the planning application for the next phase of rebuild will be submitted to Council in late August / early September 2019.

Footfall figures

3.3 There continues to be ongoing challenges around footfall in the City centre. In June, footfall continued to decline in the city centre as a whole, down by 11.6% on the previous year to date. Royal Avenue continues to be impacted greatest by reduced footfall compared to the same month in the previous year (-31.0% on June 2018), with Corn Market (-11.3% on June 2019), Donegall Place (-7.3% on June 2018), Fountain Street (-3.4% on June 2019) and Anne Street (-1.8% on June 2019). Across NI, footfall is down by 1.8% on the year to date, and down across the UK as a whole by 1.4%. The wayleave permission is now in place with Gordons Chemist (55 Castle Street) to place the footfall counter on 3rd party premises for the new Castle St footfall counter. The counter is expected to in position in the coming weeks.

3.4 An update on the activity within the strands of work for the City Revitalisation Programme as previously agreed by Members is set out below.

Physical and Environmental Improvements

i. Pop- Up Park and Pedestrianisation

3.5 Following the removal of the temporary 'Pop-Up' Park from Castle Place on 10th May, work has been ongoing to explore a number of options for the possible provision of further temporary pop-up parks. Members should note that Buoy's Park has been identified as one potential location and proposals are currently being drafted up and will be brought back to Committee in the near future for consideration. A National Day of Play event will be held at Buoy's Park on 7th August to introduce the concepts of the Pop Up Park and to engage with the public to establish the preferred uses for the space on a temporary basis. Work is also underway to address the operational and safety issues associated with the space and how a temporary intervention could mitigate against these issues. A second potential location in the vicinity of the Lagan Lookout are also being investigated and further information will be provided as the concept develops. The funding to create a 'Pop-Up' Park in a new location is contained within the existing City Revitalisation Programme budget.

3.6 As discussed with Members at 5th June Committee meeting, following the removal of the Pop-Up Park on Castle Place and the reopening of Castle Junction enabling traffic flow, there was a significant public lobby and petition calling for greater pedestrianisation of the city centre. As agreed by Committee on 5th June, Council officers are working with DfI and DfC to examine

the models of pedestrianisation and other initiatives which facilitates the development of the city centre enabling both pedestrian enjoyment and public transport access. This recommendation was ratified at full council on 1st July, with an amendment proposed by Cllr Lyons and ratified by council to also “*consider fully pedestrianised streets, where access is not shared between vehicles and pedestrians on a 24-hour basis but where vehicular access to businesses for deliveries etc. was allowed for short designated periods*”. Additional details on the recommendations are included within the committee report ‘City Centre Regeneration Taskforce Update’ for this committee meeting.

ii. Belfast in Bloom

3.7 The enhanced Belfast in Bloom project is currently being rolled-out with additional greenery and colour being introduced across the city centre including the installation of enhanced planters, hanging baskets and flower towers across the city centre. A procurement competition was undertaken and a supplier selected to create a new and creative display garden feature in City Hall. Unfortunately, the supplier did not fulfil the requirements of the contract and officers are currently working towards re-commissioning the work with a feature to be brought forward in early Autumn.

iii. Deep Clean and Graffiti Removal

3.8 Whilst initial work commenced on underfoot deep clean (pavements/ granite/ gable walls) and the removal of graffiti from hard services in priority city centre areas affected by the fire, progress has been stalled as a result of technical staffing and HR issues. A new dedicated cleansing squad have now been recruited and are currently undergoing training with an expected commencement date of the 4th of August. Officers are continuing to explore options to address the graffiti on shutters, although there are some issues around liability which need to be considered prior to commencement. Options being explored include the potential for anti-graffiti artistic shutter wrapping in specific streets/ areas as a trial (subject to agreement with property owners).

iv. Bank Square Canopy

3.9 Members may be aware that a key project for the City Revitalisation Programme was the exploring of the creation of an outdoor covered space for retailer-led themed events and other animation activity in Bank Square. In order to test the viability of a permanent covered space, two one-month long pilots are being implemented over the Summer (July/August 19) and Autumn (September/October 19) using a temporary canopy to encourage visitors and shoppers to spend time in the area. **Appendix 1** includes images of the temporary structure in place for the first of the two pilots.

3.10	<p>Officers are working with local retailers to develop a comprehensive programme of events during the pilot periods with an initial concentration of activity in July/August showcasing a mixture of musical events and family activities. Appendix 2 provides further details on programme of events scheduled for Bank Square during this period, with engagement ongoing with local traders and artists to further develop and enhance the programme. BCC cleansing team and Safer Neighbourhood Officers (SNOs) as well as the PSNI are present in the area and aware of installation to address any potential issues that may arise.</p>
3.11	<p>A market research company (CARD) has been appointed to carry out a comprehensive consultation and evaluation of the two pilots, engaging the general public and local traders on experience and recommendations for the longer-term potential of a covered canopy in Bank Square. If the temporary pilot programme is successful, it is intended to bring formalised proposals for a longer term more permanent solution that involves the Council, DfC and traders.</p>
<p>v. <u>City Dressing and Lighting Strategy</u></p>	
3.12	<p>Members will be aware that work is underway to develop a City Dressing and Lighting Strategy which will inform how new city dressing and lighting schemes may be brought forward in a coherent way. It is envisaged that the draft Strategy will be complete in early Autumn and will be brought into Committee in September for consideration of Members.</p>
3.13	<p>As previously discussed with Members, a number of initial pilot lighting projects are being developed for Castle Street and Castle Arcade with initial illustrative concepts attached at Appendix 3. The Castle Street proposals involve a series of streamlined projectors being positioned in specific locations enabling lighting schemes to be transferred onto buildings and shutters addressing anti-graffiti and safety issues. Initial engagement with local traders has been positive and it is proposed that a pilot display will be erected on 83-87 Castle Street with a further roll out of additional displays pending wayleave agreement with landowners. The lighting schemes will be commissioned and themed by council in conjunction with local traders and arts organisations, and will also have the capacity to be programmed to promote local events and activities. The Castle Arcade proposal will involve the positioning of a large lighting rig which will facilitate the rigging of lighting equipment for programmable lighting displays, and enable the area to be themed and dressed to promote local events and activities. Due to the permanent nature of the structure in Castle Arcade this piece will be designed and installed as a part of the Entries project which also forms an element of this programme.</p>
3.14	<p>Discussions are also underway with city partners in relation to potential enhanced Christmas lighting including proposals for the Council to fund creative lighting feature(s) at specific locations</p>

as part of the City Revitalisation Programme. Bid One have committed additional funding to address cross street lighting features within their boundary, and Council currently have a procurement competition ongoing to engage a large feature lighting display within the Royal Avenue/Castle Place area of the city. A further report will be brought back to Committee in September for consideration of Members on completion of the procurement competition.

vi. Entries and Lanes Strategy

3.15 One of the key issues identified in the pre-Christmas Recovery Programme was the connectivity and permeability of the city centre and its impact on wayfinding around the city centre following the fire. To address this, and following research in other cities, there is an opportunity to support and enhance permeability via an Entries and Lanes Strategy to improve the connectivity, resilience, tourism, city character, marketing and alternative uses for the existing entries.

3.16 Stage one procurement competition (PQQ) for design consultants has completed and the second stage (ITT) is underway. It is anticipated that a consultant will be appointed during August 2019 to carry out design works on Phase 1 of the Entries Project which will include Castle Arcade, Crown Entry, Joys Entry, Pottinger's Entry, Coles Alley, Wellington St and Winecellar Street. Following a period of engagement, it is intended that some capital work could commence before Christmas 2019 with completion of all Phase 1 works by March 2020. Preparatory work for Phase 2 will be progressed during Autumn 2019 and capital works will be subject to funding becoming available. Phase 2 of the Entries Project also incorporates design works at Church Lane and Callendar Street which will be carried out in conjunction with DfC. Capital works will be subject to available budget and additional information will be brought to committee in subsequent reports.

Animation/ Events and Programming

3.17 Members will be aware that as part of the Recovery Programme, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on the 22 February, agreed a budget of £200,000 to support animation activity as part of the City Revitalisation Programme.

3.18 A key principle for Council investment was to augment and amplify planned activity, as opposed to developing new activities. As a result, officers have been working with event organisers to consider how these can deliver on the objectives above, with a focus on the areas of the city most negatively impacted by the fire.

3.19 Examples of activities supported to date include:

- **Festival of Fools:** this event takes place on the first May Bank Holiday weekend each year. This year, the organisers programmed a range of activities in Castle Place,

focusing on the pop-up park (before it was moved). This attracted a large family audience to this part of the city.

- **City of Music programme:** this programme will run from July to September. It will deliver a series of musical performances and activities across the city centre, with a focus on the stage at Bank Square which is to be installed for two periods over the summer break. **Appendix 4** provides details of the planned programme of activities.
- **Big Belfast Tee Off:** this programme of family-friendly activities was focused on the City Hall grounds and involved a NI-themed pitch and putt, a golf simulator and other golf-related activities to appeal to young audiences. The event marked the 148th Open at Royal Portrush, in recognition of the large number of visitors and golf spectators who based themselves in Belfast over the period of the tournament
- **Belfast Music Summer Season:** Over 50 Music events running across 20 different venues and locations in the city centre from 18 July to 28 September. Highlights for the Bank Square activity include the Golf Open Weekend in partnership with Belfast One showcasing some of Belfast's best bands, family friendly global music workshops including Dhol drumming, a showcase of the winners of The Great Belfast Busk Off and a 20-piece brass band covering contemporary pop music over Pride weekend.

3.20 A number of additional events are planned over the coming months including:

i. **Enhanced Culture Night/Day programme**

3.21 For the first time this year, the traditional Friday-night Culture Night will also feature a Culture Day on Saturday. The dates for this year's event are 20th-21st September. In order to maximise the value and impact of the Culture Day programme, and draw footfall and spend into the city centre area, officers have been working with the Cathedral Quarter Trust to put together a programme to facilitate ease of attendance, benefit retailers and encourage movement across the city centre from City Hall to the Cathedral Quarter.

3.22 Culture Day will include a wide range of family-friendly activity across the city including a global music and dance programme at Writer's Square, a family 'playground' at Buoy's Park and a Bazaar and Street Food Market at St Anne's Cathedral. Key elements of the programme – for which additional support is being sought from Belfast City Council – include:

- City Hall: a music stage will be located there. Performances and activities will include "Baby Rave" events; world music stage; dance and street theatre workshops
- At other locations (principally Castle Place, Bank Square, Lombard Street and Rosemary Street) additional activities will include Belfast Busk Off event; pop-up musical performances and family cinema activities.

3.23	<p>The Cathedral Quarter Trust estimates that the impact of these Culture Day activities will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiences/ Footfall: 40,000+ • Estimated economic impact: £500,000+ • Estimated additional bednights: 4,000 (as programming on Friday evening & Saturday) • Estimated print and broadcast AVE value of £1,000,000
3.24	<p>The Trust has been successful in leveraging financial support from the Department for Communities (DfC), Destination CQ BID and BID One. The financial request from the Council will be £45,000 towards this additional programme of activity on Saturday 21 September.</p>
<p>ii. <u>Taste the Island Activity</u></p>	
3.25	<p>Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) is leading a new initiative called “Taste the Island”. The initiative is an eight-week showcase of the fabulous food and drink offer all across the island of Ireland. It will run from mid-September to mid-November 2019.</p>
3.26	<p>2019 will be the first of a three-year commitment, delivered in conjunction with Tourism Ireland and Fáilte Ireland. The timing of the 8 week programme will build on the success of the 2016 Year of Food and Drink and coincides with the celebration of Northern Ireland as the “Best Food Destination” at the International Travel and Tourism Awards 2018/19.</p>
3.27	<p>Tourism Northern Ireland has put in place a small budget to support and profile local events and a number of local organisations have made applications for support from the fund. Other organisations are leveraging financial support from alternative sources and are linking in with Tourism NI in order to profile and showcase their event as part of a marketing initiative associated with the programme.</p>
3.28	<p>There are a number of events taking place in Belfast over that period and the Council has been working with partners to consider how these can be developed to support some of the ambitions and objectives of the Revitalisation Programme. Council officers have also encouraged these partners to programme their events over a number of weekends in September and October in order to encourage economies of scale and improve the experience for visitors to the city.</p>
3.29	<p>Key activities which the Council has been asked to support include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To coincide with Culture Night and Culture Day, partners are planning a series of food-related activities. These include the “Linen Table”. This event is being delivered by the Linen Quarter BID. It will involve organising an evening dining event delivered by a range of hospitality providers in the Linen Quarter area. The event will take place in the City Hall/Bedford Street area. The Linen Table will be a paid-for event, focusing on food

excellence and local produce. In advance of the evening event, the marquee that is to be used for the event will be used by the Culture Day organisers for some of the activities outlined above. In order to support the engagement activities, it is proposed that the Council makes a financial contribution towards this event of £5,000. The remainder of the costs will be met from ticket income as well as a financial contribution from the Linen Quarter BID

- Following on from the weekend activities, BID One and Destination CQ are proposing to organise the second Belfast Restaurant Week as well as a weekend food market. The restaurant week event will run from Monday to Thursday (23-26 September) and will involve £10 lunch and £15 evening meal offers by a range of hospitality venues. The weekend event (27-28 September) will include food demos and a producers' market as well as a Big Belfast Brunch event on the Sunday (28 September). The event organisers are seeking funding from Tourism NI and DfC and both BIDs will also be making a financial contribution. It is proposed that the Council makes a financial contribution of £4,500 towards the costs associated with hosting the event
- Also taking place on the same weekend as Culture Night/Day, Tesco will be organising their seventh annual Taste of Northern Ireland event in Custom House Square. Members will be aware that anyone wishing to operate a market or car boot sale within Belfast must apply to Belfast City Council for permission to do so – and applications for markets with more than 20 stalls need to be approved by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. Tesco are seeking a licence to operate this event on 20-22 September 2019. This event is designed to showcase the range of food and drinks available from Tesco produced in Northern Ireland. Some stallholders do have products for sale on the day; however, most will offer free samples and use the event as an opportunity to demonstrate their product range. Numbers are currently being finalised but it is expected that there will be up to 65 stalls at the event. There will be no financial contribution required from the Council for this event – Tesco cover all of the costs. As with all markets, the Council will receive a fee for the licence application (£50) as well as a stallage fee of £5 for each stall at the event. It is proposed that the Committee agrees to grant the markets licence for the organisation of this event, given that it will complement the wider programme of activity
- Belfast's inaugural Oyster Festival will take place in Bank Square on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th October. The event will feature a series of cookery demonstrations and a food market with a variety of seafood stalls alongside family friendly daytime entertainment with workshops and aquarium touch tanks for children. In the evenings, there will be a music showcase featuring local bands and musicians. The organisers will be working closely with the Council to ensure that the animation supports the wider City

Revitalisation objectives. It is proposed that the Council provides a financial allocation up to £3,000 towards the costs associated with event logistics.

Marketing and Communications

3.30 Members may be aware that the '**Make it Belfast**' advertising and marketing campaign went live on Monday 13 May and will run through until the end of August 2019 to support the City Revitalisation Programme. It targets the local day trip market and seeks to uplift the image and attractiveness of Belfast city centre as a premier retail and day trip destination, promoting its unique experiences, great value and access.

3.31 Visit Belfast are commissioned to oversee implementation of campaign in liaison with city stakeholders and Council; with a range of mediums being used including radio advertising, digital, video, social media, national and local press as well as highly visible outdoor promotion on bus T-sides, adshels and 48 sheets. In addition, a 'Make it Belfast' campaign toolkit has been developed and shared with city stakeholders and businesses to further strengthen and add value to the campaign. The Council is also supporting the uplift of the campaign, as appropriate, via existing external communications channels. Visit Belfast have provided initial feedback on implementation and successes of the campaign to date as set out below:

- **Press & PR coverage** – reach 210,000 people & 629,000 opportunity to see (OTS)
- 180,000 **leaflets distributed** to targeted households, key transport hubs and bus stations
- **Digital channels** – over 1.5m impacts (social media, email marketing, search and campaign website views)
- **Radio Advertising** – over 5.5m impacts (relates to number of opportunities to hear ad by any one person)
- **Outdoor advertising** – 7,970K impacts

Appendix 5 provides further details on the 'Make it Belfast' City Recovery Marketing Campaign

Financial and Resource Implications

3.32 At the SP and R Committee meeting in October 2018, members were updated on the £5.637m allocated, from a number of sources, to the recovery programme, and the £4.887m allocated directly to council for the City Centre Revitalisation Programme. A breakdown of this funding is provided in Appendix 6 of this report.

3.33 The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 22 February 2019, followed by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee at its meeting on 6 March 2019, were updated on the £1.882m spent on Phase 1 of the Revitalisation Programme, and the £500k of funding

allocated by council for direct trader support. The respective committees approved a report setting out an overview of the broad proposals for Phase 2 of the City Revitalisation Programme and associated budget allocations across the identified strands of activity totalling £2.505m. The key strands detailed, and for which updates are provided and approvals requested, in this report are funded from within this Phase 2 budget.

Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

None associated with this report.

4.0

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Bank Square temporary canopy images

Appendix 2 - Bank Square programme of events (July/August 2019)

Appendix 3 - Lighting Pilots (Castle Street and Castle Arcade) illustrative concepts

Appendix 4 - Belfast Music summer season programme

Appendix 5 – Update on ‘Make it Belfast’ City Recovery marketing campaign

Appendix 6 – Programme Funding