



Subject:	Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission
Date:	20 September 2019
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Grainia Long, Commissioner for Resilience John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy

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
	This paper provides an update to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the work of the newly-established Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission. Regular updates will be provided to this Committee throughout the Commission's lifetime.
2.0	Recommendations
	The Committee is asked: To note the update and in particular the proposed approach to ensuring good governance and oversight of the Commission's work.
3.0	Main report
	The Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission was set up to support the Council and city partners in the further development and implementation of the priorities as set out in the Belfast Agenda. A particular focus has been given to the priorities of (1) growing the

economy and (2) city development. The Commission will seek to deliver the core objective of inclusive growth. Core membership of the Commission is as follows:

- Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive, Belfast City Council
- Michael Lyons, Chair- English Cities Fund
- Matthew Taylor, RSA (previously led RSA Inclusive Growth Commission)
- Owen Reidy, or nominee, ICTU (tbc)
- Emma Cariaga, British Land
- Alice Charles, World Economic Forum
- Joe O'Neill, Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- Paddy Nixon, Vice Chancellor and President, Ulster University
- Ian Greer, Vice Chancellor and President, Queen's University Belfast
- Rotha Johnston
- Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive, Belfast City Council
- Anne McGregor, NI Chamber of Commerce
- Judith Totten, INI Non-Exec Board Member
- Ed Vernon
- Angela Magowan, Director, CBI Northern Ireland
- Neil Gibson, EY

However, the Commission will also take advice from a wide range of organisations including the Nevin Institute and JRF etc.

Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

At the previous meeting of SP&R, it was agreed that the Commission's membership would be broadened to include a wider range of economic expertise and viewpoints. Since the meeting, and following invitation to join the Commission, ICTU has confirmed it will nominate a member. The Nevin Institute has also been contacted to provide advice and insight to the Commission. As the Commission's work proceeds, it will also seek advice from Trademark and other similar organisations to ensure that insights and practice on co-operative development inform the Commission's work. We are also seeking insight from social enterprise organisations to provide advice throughout. As agreed, inclusive growth has been re-emphasised in the Commission's terms of reference and its title brief, and Commission members were also briefed on the importance attached to inclusive growth at its first meeting. Specific reference has been made to cities that have developed economic strategies with inclusive growth or 'good growth' as core goals, and officers have been tasked with seeking input and insights from cities that can demonstrate success in this area. As the Commission develops it will align with ongoing work on climate change and sustainable development and seek advice from Leeds Climate Commission, Place based Climate Action Network (PCAN), Friends of the Earth etc

Governance and member engagement

At its previous meeting, SP&R discussed governance and oversight of the Commission's work, and discussed how elected members would engage with the Commission.

The Commission is a collaboration between four city institutions- Belfast City Council, Belfast Harbour, Queen's University and Ulster University. Each organisation will take part in the Commission as per its own system of governance.

The following approach is being proposed for Belfast City Council:

1. That SP&R remains the primary committee through which the Chief Executive will report on the Commission's work. SP&R will ultimately approve early and final drafts of outputs produced by the Commission, for formal ratification by Council. City Growth and Regeneration Committee will also be consulted.
2. Three events, attended jointly by BCC members and Commission members, will be held throughout the Commission's work. The first will take place in the autumn to

inform the Commission's early thinking; the second in early 2020 when some initial themes have begun to emerge and the third to inform draft conclusions.

3. Party briefings will take place in the normal way to ensure parties are informed continuously throughout.
4. A summary note of each Commission meeting will be produced for SP&R.

Summary note of the Commission's first meeting

- The first meeting was a general introduction and context setting meeting- held on the evening of the 9th and all day on the 10th September.
 - The meeting included presentations from local SME sector and large local and global businesses based in Belfast. It also included an overview of the UK Industrial Strategy – to ensure alignment with wider policy goals. Data was presented on Belfast's existing economic and 'good growth' performance and how it compares with other cities across Europe and globally, as well as presentations and discussion on cities as drivers of inclusive economic growth.
 - Some critical issues emerged in the discussion:
1. Belfast has an immense opportunity to align its economic ambitions with its social and environmental goals. For example, the transition to a low-carbon economy must be an equitable one, and this therefore presents an opportunity to significantly reduce and perhaps eradicate fuel poverty over time. Recent successes by industry (e.g. exceeding our targets on renewables) must be learned from and scaled up.
 2. The Commission's eventual conclusions/outputs must ensure that Belfast builds on its strengths- where it has already proven to succeed. However, its work will be impacted by national (UK) policy and we must be cognisant of that—an example is UK government policy on visa restrictions for international students.
 3. The Commission does not intend to work 'behind closed doors' for a year, and then produce a report. It wants to focus on practical solutions to drive city growth in the interests of communities, and will be looking for ways that the four anchor institutions (BCC, Belfast Harbour, QUB and UU) can work collaboratively to deliver 'good growth'.
 4. Belfast has significant advantages given its proximity to Dublin and London. Both cities will continue to be successful in a post-Brexit environment, and therefore we must find ways to better leverage this connectivity and proximity, given the scale and nature of growth in both cities.
 5. The major issues remain those we've been debating for years- how to build skills among those furthest from the labour market and those economically inactive, so that they feel there are opportunities for them, as well as ensuring that we do not lose talent from the city. Skills already emerging as a major challenge.
 6. The city has many strengths but we are one of many cities that is promoting our distinctive 'offer'. Belfast has yet to really 'hone' what makes us unique. For example, the fact that the city is a leader in cyber security and food security is little known outside of these niche sectors. Generally speaking, there's a perceived lack of strategy on our economic future- other successful cities are clearer about their assets (economic, social and environmental) and focused on what they are going to do with them. A grand vision is needed- e.g. the Oxford/Cambridge corridor has a vision to be the R&D Centre for the UK.
 7. A focus on inclusive growth and/or 'good growth' (term used by Edinburgh) is an example of how we can be competitive and distinctive... Glasgow has done this by stressing its quality of life and really pursuing a strong environmental agenda- which is increasingly being sought by people visiting the city and those investing in the city- both companies and workers.

	<p>8. Several presenters/contributors emphasised the importance of focusing on the current drivers of growth – investing more in them rather than trying to do too many things.</p> <p>Future meetings/themes/areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transition to a low-carbon/carbon neutral economy, and how we do this in an equitable way - Learning from economic shocks and how the poorest and most economically vulnerable have been impacted- including across the generations - Opportunities from energy transition- retro-fitting our existing stock and possible job opportunities for this/next generation <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	N/A