



Subject:	A Bolder Vision Update
Date:	9 June 2021
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development
Contact Officer:	Callie Persic, Connectivity Programme Lead

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To update Members on the progress of the next Phases of A Bolder Vision, City Centre Connectivity Study, including programme timeline, key milestones and activities.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Members of the Committee are asked to recommend that, in accordance with the Council decision of 4th May, the Chief Executive exercise her delegated authority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the appointment of a multi-disciplinary team and the timeline for the development of Phases 2 and 3 of the Bolder Vision Connectivity Study for Belfast. This work will include co-design workshops, the development of scenarios and

	<p>interventions to bring forward the principles of the Bolder Vision, and the completion of the draft Strategy for public consultation in the autumn of 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that Members will be invited to engage in the Stakeholder and Planning Workshops as outlined within this report.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	<p>The CG&R Committee have received regular updates and provided approvals relating to the progression of the next phases of A Bolder Vision City Centre Connectivity Study. At the CG&R Committee in April 2021 Members received an update on the completion of a tender completion process that resulted in the appointment of a multidisciplinary team, led by the Jacobs Belfast office.</p>
3.2	<p>Members will recall that the Phase 1 work, A Bolder Vision for Belfast, was ratified by Council in March 2020 and subsequently approved by the DfC and DfI Ministers. The Vision is ambitious and transformational and involves a fundamental rethink of how streets and places are used to make them attractive, inclusive, accessible, healthy, and vibrant places. There were four agreed Visioning Principles to inform future city centre development and infrastructure delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment that promotes well-being for all, inclusive growth and innovation • Fundamentally changing the centre of Belfast to prioritise integrated walking, cycling and public transport and end the dominance of the car • Providing lively, safe, and green streets linking inclusive shared spaces to promote resilience and enhance our built heritage • Removing severance and barriers to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities to improve access for all
3.3	<p>The increased emphasis on public health and well-being, access to quality open space, sustainable transport and connections to services and access to amenities are key issues that came to the fore throughout COVID. There is an urgency therefore to respond to this changing landscape and it is intended that the next Phases of the Study will seek to seize these new opportunities and changes in public policy and citizen behaviours that will help drive change and enable the diversification of the city centre.</p>

3.4	<p>Phases 2 and 3 of the Study will roll out over the next 12 months. Initial work is underway for Phase 2 which will take place between May-September 2021 and will create the documentation for the public consultation in Phase 3. Key outputs in Phase 2 consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline and Vision Review; Benchmarking • Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness Communications Plan • Scenario planning and development of interventions, including the development of a multi-criteria assessment framework to assess the scenarios and the initial identification of short, medium and long term interventions for our streets and places • Draft Monitoring Strategy, Business Case and Strategic Environmental Assessment • Draft Strategy for public consultation
3.5	<p>The scenario planning will help prioritise and align major infrastructure projects and identify packages of potential initiatives that will continue the re-imagination streets and spaces in the short term and support longer term changes. The scenario planning will look at our current infrastructure networks, and test methods for better use of these spaces in line with the emerging diversification of the City Centre and the Future City Centre Programme. This will include provision for access and service requirements, for public transportation, improved connections to communities, and developing a more sustainable streetscape for pedestrians, cycles, residents and visitors while addressing issues related to the dominance of road space.</p>
3.6	<p>In advance of the public consultation, there will be focused co-design sessions consisting of a Visioning workshop and thematic workshops with cross-sector stakeholders including Council Members between mid-June to mid-July to shape the scenarios and interventions. Members will be notified as dates for these are confirmed. The purpose of these initial sessions is to shape the draft Strategy document prior to the public consultation in the autumn. This early engagement may take a hybrid approach and take place online via an interactive platform, such as Mural or via webinars and Virtual Rooms. Subject to COVID guidelines, there may also be the opportunity to hold face-to-face sessions that are pre-booked and will consist of a blend of virtual information and in-person interaction.</p>
3.7	<p>A Stakeholder Engagement and Public Awareness Communication Plan is being developed and will be supported by both the Jacobs team and BCC, DfC and DfI Corporate Communications. Plans are underway for a shared launch of the Study that will take place in the coming weeks and will highlight the cooperative approach among BCC, DfI and DfC</p>

	in setting out the need and the ambition for change, as well as setting out a timeline, including when the public consultation period will begin.
3.8	This work will link in with key Council strategies including the Resilience Strategy, the Cultural Strategy and the Clean, Green, Inclusive and Safe Programme as well as major capital programmes including the Belfast Streets Ahead, Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2, and the Junctions Improvements work strands to ensure an holistic approach to addressing our issues through adequate infrastructure planning and provision. It will also consider major development planned for the city centre, as well as the criticality of connections with communities.
3.9	Phase 3 is scheduled to take place between September 2021-May 2022 and the key activity is the 12-week public consultation programme which is envisaged to take place between September-December 2021. An update report will be presented to Committee in advance of the public consultation that will set out key dates and activities. Following the consultation programme the final Strategy and Delivery Plan, Monitoring Strategy and Business Case will be completed and presented to Committee and to the DfC and DfI Ministers for approval.
3.10	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> None directly associated with this report.
3.11	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None associated with the report, however, an EQIA Screening will be carried out on the Strategy.
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	N/A