



<b>Subject:</b>	A Bolder Vision Update
<b>Date:</b>	10 November 2021
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
<b>1.1</b>	To outline for Members the key aspects of A Bolder Vision (ABV), including the proposed four Key Moves, the engagement programme, feedback from the consultation to date and the indicative timelines.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>2.1</b>	Members are asked to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Bolder Vision consultation material and the proposed Key Moves and potential short and longer term interventions.</li><li>• The consultation activity; feedback to date and associated issues in relation to further engagement, timeframes and delivery.</li><li>• A key objective of the Bolder Vision is to enable key design decisions to be made on the city's emerging strategic capital and infrastructure projects as well as informing major</li></ul>

	<p>private and public sector regeneration schemes and sustainable and active travel networks. It aims to strengthen and support the diversification of the city centre and enable improved connectivity with surrounding communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the Bolder Vision process progresses and interventions are refined and developed, consideration will need to be given as to how the Council and other partners can prioritise funding opportunities and align corporate priorities and programmes against the Bolder Vision Strategy and subsequent action plan.</li> <li>• The Bolder Vision provides the foundation for the emerging wider city connectivity programme that seeks to address the need to improve connectivity and active travel right across the city. To note also that Connectivity and Active Travel have been identified in the Community Planning Partnership: City Development Board as a key priority.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<b>A Bolder Vision Consultation document</b>
	<p>As Members will be aware A Bolder Vision – Connectivity Study has been developed jointly between Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure. At the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, Members received an update on the Bolder Vision pre-engagement activity, overview of the emerging issues and details on the public consultation. In the interim period before the finalisation of the current Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan the Bolder Vision aims to provide a holistic look at the city centre’s infrastructure and connections to neighbouring communities from a people and place based priority.</p>
3.2	<p>A key objective is to enable key design decisions to be made from a city user perspective on the city’s emerging strategic capital programmes such as BRT Phase 2, Belfast Streets Ahead 3 &amp; 5, the Inner Ring Junctions, as well as informing major regeneration schemes such as Weavers Cross and the Transport Hub, private and public sector developments including housing led regeneration projects and the sustainable and active travel network. The Bolder Vision also aims to bring forward area based infrastructure planning. This will strengthen and support the diversification of the city centre reflecting the changing nature of retail, the development of sustainable and inclusive city centre communities and increased city centre living; tourism and cultural development and improved connectivity with surrounding communities.</p>
3.3	<p>As previously advised to Committee, the public consultation document was influenced by five thematic co-design workshops including a large, cross-sector session that involved Vienna’s former Vice Mayor, who led the transformation agenda in the city. A range of follow up meetings were</p>

	<p>also held with key stakeholders including IMTAC, Transport Hub, Translink, Belfast Harbour, Chamber, INI, Arts Council NI, Developers' Forum, NI Water and the BIDs and council departments.</p>
3.4	<p>This input from stakeholders, coupled with analysis of the opportunities emerging from large infrastructure projects, ongoing strategic alignment across local and central government, and best practice was the basis of the proposed four Key Moves and supporting interventions outlined in the public consultation document (Appendix 1). After securing DfC and DfI Ministerial approval, the consultation was launched by the Lord Mayor, DfC and DfI Ministers on 30 September and will run until 23 December 2021.</p>
3.5	<p><b>A Bolder Vision Proposed Key Moves for transformation</b></p> <p>A Bolder Vision has identified a number of proposed 'Key Moves' to deliver radial change. These are underpinned with proposed short and long-term interventions that would support transformation in critical parts of the city to create a green, people focused, connected city centre for current and future users. The consultation will however seek the view of consultees as to other potential short, medium and long term interventions. Further details on these interventions and the proposed Key Moves are provided in Appendix 1 of this report. The proposed Key Moves are:</p>
3.6	<p><i>1. Create a Civic Spine with a focus on people</i></p> <p>Establish a clearly defined and recognisable strategic north-south Civic Spine, connecting the Ulster University and York Street Interchange through the heart of the city to Queen's University via Botanic Avenue. The Civic Spine would be reconfigured to prioritise space for people and support effective access by public transport while enabling the introduction of green spaces for a diverse, inclusive, future-proofed and vibrant city centre.</p>
3.7	<p><i>2. Reimagine the Inner Ring Road and end Car Dominance</i></p> <p>Transform the Inner Ring Road to reduce physical severance for surrounding communities and become a sustainable mobility corridor. To do this, the Inner Ring should be reconfigured to accommodate high priority public transport services (such as BRT2) as well as fully segregated and green infrastructure for walking, wheeling, and cycling.</p>
3.8	<p><i>3. Promote City Centre Living</i></p> <p>Encourage city centre living by providing greater quality, choice, and affordability of accommodation, to create a shared and inclusive environment. Establish a city-wide network of</p>

	<p>people friendly routes, community focus streets, incorporating city parks and connections to opportunities for play, interaction, rest, and leisure.</p>
3.9	<p><i>4. Embrace the River Lagan and Waterfront</i></p> <p>Capitalise on one of the city's most defining, but underused assets, the River Lagan, by strengthening connections from the city centre to the east and its surrounding communities – enhancing connectivity across and around the River Lagan.</p>
3.10	<p><b><u>Stakeholder engagement and feedback</u></b></p> <p>Council is hosting the online survey on the Engagement HQ platform with DfI and DfC linking to this on their respective consultation sites. A key feature is the Virtual Room that provides boards with information on the background, Key Moves, other supporting capital projects and strategies, timeframe and contact details. Copies of the consultation material, case studies, Frequently Asked Questions are also available to download. It will continue to be pushed through the various BCC Corporate Communications channels and DfC and DfI platforms.</p>
3.11	<p>Whilst engagement will mainly take place online, there is also an extensive programme of in-person and virtual meetings organised throughout the consultation to gain holistic feed back on the proposed interventions, and to take on board additional recommendations to ensure that the final document is representative of the needs of the city centre business, transportation, community, visitor and user perspective.</p>
3.12	<p>Specifically, there is targeted engagement with partnership bodies that have a wide membership and reach and can disseminate information and host engagement sessions including Belfast Chamber, BIDs, Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Area Partnerships, Community Planning Partnership and Boards, disability groups, cultural groups, City Reopening Group, QUB, UU and the Community Campus Regeneration Forum, professional bodies, representatives from tourism and active travel sectors and various BCC internal staff networks including the Women's Network, PROUD and ABLE networks. Officers have also reached out to Council fora such as the Shared City Partnership, Migrant Forum, Greater Belfast Seniors' Forum, Equality Consultative Forum, among others. There will also be focused engagement with different elements of DfI (e.g. Section offices, Active Travel), Translink and DfC (including public realm, MAG, housing and HED).</p>
3.13	<p>Feedback from these sessions will be added to the online public consultation survey which asks the public to comment to what extent they agree or disagree with the proposed Key Moves, the</p>

	<p>short and long term interventions and provide any additional comments or suggestions on these. Within the survey we also asked people to drop a pin into a map to identify their favourite place in Belfast and tell us why.</p>
3.14	<p>To date, feedback is largely positive and supportive. This is, in part, a result of ongoing engagement with key civic stakeholders since the completion of Phase 1 and the use of the Visioning Principles to guide recovery interventions that kept a focus on the wider strategic context of the changing city centre landscape and opportunities for transformation. Officers are closely monitoring the feedback and weekly reports are sent to Jacobs (specialist consultants assisting Council, DfC and DfI) so that they can consider the material on a rolling basis. Jacobs will develop a Post-Consultation report that will provide an overview of the feedback and submissions, and detail the engagement and communications undertaken.</p>
3.15	<p>As of 26 October, there has been 344 responses to the online consultation and 2,200 views of the site and 98.5% of responses have been from individuals. The feedback on the proposed Key Moves indicates strong support for the proposals:</p>
3.16	<p><u>Key Move 1: Create Civic Spine with focus on people</u></p> <p>66.6% Strongly agreed  25% Agree somewhat  3.2% Neither agree nor disagree  2.9% Disagree somewhat  2.3% Strongly disagree</p>
3.17	<p><u>Key Move 2: Reimagine the inner ring road and end car dominance</u></p> <p>70.6% Strongly agreed  18.6% Agree somewhat  4.4% Neither agree nor disagree  2.6% Disagree somewhat  3.8% Strongly disagree</p>
3.18	<p><u>Key Move 3: Promote City Centre Living</u></p> <p>75.9% Strongly agreed  17.7% Agree somewhat  4.7% Neither agree nor disagree  0.9% Disagree somewhat</p>

	0.9% Strongly disagree
3.19	<p><b><u>Key Move 4: Embrace the River Lagan and Waterfront</u></b></p> <p>85.8% Strongly agree  11.6% Agree somewhat  1.8% Neither agree nor disagree  0.3% Disagree somewhat  0.6% Strongly disagree</p>
3.20	<p>In addition, a number specific suggestions have come through the survey which will also be taken into consideration when carrying out the Multi-Criteria Analysis to assess the social, economic and environmental impact of the interventions prior to making the final recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce speed limits in the Belfast metro area to 15pmh</li> <li>• Charging zones for polluting vehicles</li> <li>• No idle zones</li> <li>• Meanwhile use and social enterprise economic zones</li> <li>• Superblocks</li> <li>• Stitch over the grey river. Westlink is the largest economic barrier in the city; add resilience with multiple routes</li> </ul>
3.21	<p>Targeted engagement will continue throughout November and December and it is envisaged that this will raise and highlight specific geographic areas and proposed interventions e.g. Linen Quarter Sustainable District, the INW Regeneration Framework etc. Feedback from presentations carried out to date to groups also indicate support for the Vision and flagged up specific issues e.g. opportunities for enhanced connectivity with neighbouring communities including Sailortown, TQ area, Carrickhill etc; Durham Street and the need for connectivity to the city within Weaver’s Cross development; dereliction around Shaftesbury Square; opportunities for public spaces such as Backstaff Square and opportunities to better link and connect our public spaces.</p>
3.22	<p><b><u>Timeframe and delivery</u></b></p> <p>The programme timeline is intensive, and will require ongoing updates and approvals to keep Members, Ministers, Chief Officers and Permanent Secretaries updated. The indicative timeframe and dates are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation Close: 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021</li> </ul>

- Analysis of emerging interventions: Dec 2021 – Jan 2022
- Review, collate & analyse consultation response: Jan 2022
- Draft Document for sign-off: March 2022
- Finalise and publish document: April 2022
- Identify funding streams & delivery of Interventions: April 2022 – Dec 2026

3.23 Jacobs is aware that ABV interventions need to be both deliverable and aspirational to deliver the effective change that is required to meet our Resilience and Climate targets, which will be at the heart of the Bolder Vision work. Taking into account the major investment opportunities outlined in section 3.1 of this report a focus of ABV is to help shape these major schemes in line with the Bolder Vision principles/key moves but also to identify additional catalyst schemes and interventions that can be delivered at pace, and that can be delivered through joint public/private sector delivery.

3.24 The Innovation & Growth Commission's report 'Reset for Growth' highlighted that a Bolder Vision was fundamental to creating a connected and animated city core. A key proposition within the report was the delivery of key commitments in the Bolder Vision by 2026. It referenced the need to invest in significant transformational interventions arising from ABV, as well as the importance of wider city to community connectivity. In order to accelerate delivery it highlighted the need to establish a long-term city revitalisation programme to support active travel, pedestrianisation and green spaces and that the delivery of the Bolder Vision should be supported by a three year joint funding programme (BCC/DfI/DfC) to accelerate delivery.

3.25 As projects and interventions are refined and developed as the ABV process progresses, consideration will also need to be given as to how the Council and other partners can identify or prioritise funding opportunities and align corporate priorities and programmes against the Bolder Vision Strategy and subsequent action plan.

3.26 **Wider City Connectivity Programme**

ABV provides the foundation for the emerging wider city connectivity programme that seeks to address the need to improve connectivity and active travel from and to the city core right across the city and provide access for communities to key destinations and facilities, including the Belfast Hills. This connectivity programme links into ongoing work across Council and a number of other bodies including DfI, DfC, the private sector, Translink etc. It includes for e.g. DfI's Strategic Cycle Network; active travel and place-making initiatives that address barriers and improve

	<p>connections and capital projects such as greenways. It also aligns with the emerging proposals for the 'Belfast Urban Greenway' (BUG) Initiative, as previously reported to this Committee in October 2020 and August 2021. The BUG will seek to enhance connectivity to and from the city centre and create an urban greenway concept through the city centre.</p>
3.27	<p>Members will also be aware through previous reports (most recently reported in October 2021) that the thematic area of access, connectivity and active travel have been identified in the Community Planning Partnership and the City Development Board as a key priority. The City Development Board has representation across key stakeholders relevant to access, connectivity and active travel including DfI, DfC, Sustrans, Translink, SIB, VCSE, private sector etc. A workshop focused on reinvigorating the Board and shaping and influencing the refresh of the Belfast Agenda is planned for 19 November. The key focus will be on agreeing a collective position on the city's priorities and identification of gaps and opportunities for collaboration that will inform the future action plan. This will also provide an opportunity to bring a cohesive approach this cross cutting area of connectivity and active travel.</p>
3.28	<p><b><u>Governance</u></b></p> <p>The Oversight Group established in Phase 1 consisted of the BCC Chief Executive and the Permanent Secretaries from DfI and DfC. This has continued and provides oversight and decision making for strategic direction at key milestones. Within this structure, the Permanent Secretaries and Chief Executive would escalate decisions to the Ministers and Members for final approval.</p> <p>As part of the ongoing engagement between BCC/DfC/DfI a meeting with the Ministers and the Lord Mayor, CX and senior Council officers is planned to take place in City Hall with a view to discussing strategic infrastructure, regeneration and connectivity schemes that impact on ABV.</p> <p>Regular reports will continue to be brought via the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and political engagement will also be held via the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum. Engagement with the Forum is scheduled for November and mid-February.</p>
3.29	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.30	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report, however, an EQIA Screening will be carried out on the Strategy.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices – Documents attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1: ABV Consultation Brochure</p>