



Subject:	Future City Centre Programme- Tactical Regeneration & 'Grey to Green'
Date:	6 th April 2022
Reporting Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development
Contact Officer:	Richard Griffin, 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 the report is to update Members in relation to a proposed Tactical Regeneration Programme; the Entries Phase 2 scheme; a 5Cs Revitalisation scheme and a 'Grey to Green' initiative for the city centre and linking to surrounding communities.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Note the initial work to develop a 'Tactical Regeneration Programme' aligned to A Bolder Vision, and approve its further development to progress feasibility of potential future projects, including an initial focus on the Great Victoria Street area;(ii) Note the DfC offer of capital funding to deliver the '5Cs Revitalisation' project, and approve Council support for the project by way of progressing design and delivery;

	testing temporary interventions that can shape and inform delivery of permanent public realm, regeneration or infrastructure projects.
3.4	It can also enable better engagement with property owners, agents and others to develop a better understanding of the barriers to delivery and work in partnership to improve specific areas.
3.5	Tactical Regeneration can work on a number of levels, with a variety of outputs, but with a consistent objective to produce outcomes that are well curated, site sensitive and engaged, with a view to making a site or space a more people friendly place while influencing longer term use. Tactical Regeneration is intended to react quickly to immediate need, and where appropriate, go beyond the traditional concept of 'space' (for example, street or park) and also explore opportunities to utilise vacant sites or units for a range of uses.
3.6	<p>There are two main forms of tactical regeneration that Council, working with others can deploy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. 'Tried and Tested'- a back to basics, replicable approach which includes deep cleans, general painting, greening, lighting etc. ii. Opportunity to 'Try and Test'- a site specific approach involving small to medium scale interventions in the public realm, vacant sites, or buildings. These interventions are intended to instigate and encourage positive use, opportunities for civic engagement and participation, for urban prototyping and experimentation. Outputs can include parklets, bespoke site-specific artworks, and features to create destination points, considered and designed venues/locations to facilitate and host meanwhile social, cultural and economic activities.
3.7	Working in partnership with multiple stakeholders, Council have delivered a number of recent initiatives that have included elements of Tactical Regeneration, some examples below and as attached at Appendix A;
3.8	<p><u>Belfast Entries Project</u></p> <p>While this project includes large and complex interventions intended to be in place for several years, such as bespoke feature lighting, it also involved the curation of a number of smaller scale elements, that collectively have significant impact within individual entries, and across the scheme as a whole. Through a general refresh of the area, coupled with bold artworks and lighting schemes, the Entries Programme has added interest and contributed to</p>

wayfinding through the city centre, while promoting the heritage and culture of the entries themselves and have acted as destinations in their own right. Members may also recall that the Entries project won an award in the public-private partnership category at the all-Ireland Urban Land Institute and CBRE Excellence in Placemaking Awards for 2021.

3.9 Marquis Street and Other Examples

Officers worked with local traders, designers, and craftspeople to complete an upgrade to Marquis Street, a key connection from Castle Street into the city centre. Works included general painting, cut and clear of overgrowth, festoon lighting, interpretive panel (to tie in with the Entries and Lanes initiative) and a site-specific artwork. Local businesses have also sought to utilise the enhanced environment, including by securing pavement café licences to enable active use of outdoor space.

3.10 There are other examples of schemes of varying scale and complexity which have been delivered by Council, including a building wrap around vacant properties pending development at Lower Garfield St; a shutter painting scheme in Fountain St; interactive lighting of properties in Castle St and Brunswick St and the temporary lighting installation at the former Bank of Ireland building on Royal Avenue. While generally involving larger scale interventions, the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation programme has also included elements of tactical regeneration, such as, Union St, Adelaide St, Brunswick St, the Linenhall parklets and the Business Cluster & Community Grant projects.

3.11 **Tactical Regeneration Programme**

Officers propose to develop a Tactical Regeneration Programme that will enable a more strategic approach to be taken to the prioritisation and development of individual projects as part of a wider body of work. This approach would support the development of a 'pipeline' of projects tailored to specific locations and circumstances, but, curated and delivered to a consistently high standard that reflects and supports other initiatives and wider city development objectives.

3.12 By working up individual schemes in this context Council would be better placed to capitalise on funding opportunities that often arise at short notice and with limited timescales for delivery, often requiring delivery in line with 'in year' funding requirements from central government. The approach proposed would enable Council to respond quickly with projects that have been developed (for example, outline design / business case where applicable).

3.13	In relation to the proposed development of a tactical regeneration programme, there are a number of emerging project opportunities as below and identified in Appendix B:
3.14	<p><u>5C's Revitalisation Scheme</u></p> <p>Through Developer Contributions Council are working with DfC to develop this public realm scheme across a number of city centre streets - Chichester Street (including sections of Montgomery St & Upper Arthur St), Callender Street, College Street and College Court. Officers have also worked with DfC to identify potential short-term interventions that could be delivered within the project area in advance of the main scheme, and which would address issues outside the scope of a traditional public realm scheme, including treatment of dead frontages, interpretation and wayfinding, feature lighting and additional greening. The interventions would bring short-term benefit to these streets, ahead of the delivery of larger scale permanent works, such as, footway realignment and resurfacing (Appendix B).</p>
3.15	DfC have identified an opportunity to support this initiative with capital funding and, pending receipt of a Letter of Offer, approval is sought to support design and delivery of this scheme.
3.16	As the 5Cs project area is immediately adjacent to Castle Street, there is also an opportunity for Council to consider extending a wider programme of improvements to take in Castle St and to deliver as a further phase of work during 2022/23 as part of the wider proposed Tactical Regeneration Programme.
3.17	<p><u>Great Victoria Street /Shaftsbury Square</u></p> <p>The decline in this area has been raised by this Committee and a number of other Stakeholders on a number of occasions, referencing the period of decline in recent years, with a number of prominent vacant and derelict properties alongside a poor quality of public realm, particularly on Great Victoria Street. Whilst certain businesses have sustained a presence in the area and continue to make a positive contribution in terms of well-maintained active frontages, there are a number of vacancies and the wider area is in need of significant intervention. It should be noted that there are several development proposals progressing through the planning process in the wider area, and major public sector placemaking and infrastructure projects like Belfast Streets Ahead 5 and BRT 2 also have the potential to have a transformative impact.</p>
3.18	However, the timescales associated with emerging or committed public and private projects in this area are lengthy, and in some cases uncertain, and there is a growing consensus

	<p>among local stakeholders that there is a need for shorter term action. DfC had convened a Shaftesbury Square Masterplan Group, while a further group comprising a mix of private sector business and other interests, including Council officers, Translink, NIHE, DfC and DfI has more recently formed by way of a 'South West Quarter Stakeholder Group' in relation to issues and opportunities across the wider 'South West Quarter' area, which takes in Great Victoria Street, Shaftesbury Square, Dublin Road and Sandy Row. Both of these groups acknowledge the longer-term opportunities in the area but have expressed support for Council, working with other partners, to bring forward tactical regeneration proposals to enhance the area in the short term.</p>
3.19	<p>Officers are proposing that a tactical regeneration scheme is worked up for part of this area initially and whilst the detail needs to be developed it could include a combination of minor works to building frontages, while also taking advantage of generous footway widths along Great Victoria Street through measures, such as, removal of street clutter and introduction of soft landscaping and greening opportunities where possible (Appendix B). It is proposed that a scheme be developed that focuses on Great Victoria Street (east and west sides, from Bruce St to Donegall Rd), as a priority given the condition of this area. Potential interventions for other parts of Shaftesbury Square will be identified alongside this work, informed by the potential for funding. DfC have indicated that funding may be available in the 22/23 financial period if projects can be developed up into a business case status. There is also potential for funding from other stakeholders within this South West Quarter Stakeholders Group. The scale and timeframe of funding is yet to be determined however it is proposed to develop a suite of potential interventions within this area that can be tailored to suit the available funding.</p>
3.20	<p>The approach to these interventions will reflect and test the placemaking objectives of the 'Civic Spine' as set out by A Bolder Vision, which is currently being considered in part through Belfast Streets Ahead 5 and Belfast Streets Ahead 3. The BSA 5 team have engaged in recent Bolder Vision workshops, and are currently developing traffic modelling scenarios within the project area, including for Bedford Street, Dublin Road and Great Victoria Street. This modelling will inform further concept design work for BSA 5 and future updates will be brought into this Committee as the plans are developed.</p>
3.21	<p>This report is seeking approval to further develop the feasibility of a Tactical Regeneration Programme, which would include progressing outline designs for the Great Victoria St and</p>

	<p>Castle Street areas. Officers will continue to identify further areas that would benefit from similar types of intervention, for example, Royal Ave.</p>
3.22	<p>Further reports will be brought to this committee and SP&R as appropriate as projects are identified and developed, and as funding opportunities for the capital delivery of these emerge.</p>
3.23	<p><u>Entries Phase 2</u></p> <p>Based on the success of the first phase, alongside significant support from city stakeholders, Phase 2 of Belfast Entries was included within the Belfast City Recovery Revitalisation Programme. The reopening of Sugarhouse Entry is a core element of this work, and DfC propose to fund the main works in this location, in addition to in-kind contributions committed by NI Water and the private sector. Phase 2 of the Entries will also include a refresh to Pattersons Place, College St Mews, Exchange Place, Wellington St and High St Court (Appendix C).</p>
3.24	<p>Reopening Sugarhouse Entry will provide an alternative connection between the retail core, via Pottinger's Entry, to the Cathedral Quarter via Waring Street, and will complement the forthcoming High Street public realm and cycle scheme. The scheme will deliver on the Belfast City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy priorities by improving connectivity and the city living experience, driving regeneration and creating a welcoming, safe and vibrant centre, and supports the aims of A Bolder Vision. Works in this location will be subject to approval from DfI in relation to re-opening this entry.</p>
3.25	<p>In addition to the funding provided through the Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme and, working in collaboration with DfC, Officers have submitted a business case and received a Letter of offer for additional capital funding to deliver the scope of works included within the Entries Phase 2 scheme.</p>
3.26	<p>'Grey to Green'</p> <p>Further to the report on 'City Centre Open Spaces' brought to Committee in August 2021 which updated members on a number of strands of city greening work, officers have undertaken a review of open space and other 'greening' opportunities within the city centre linking to surrounding communities. This work identifies opportunities for improvements to existing, or creation of new, green spaces, with a particular focus on connecting routes with adjoining communities. While in some instances these 'grey to green' improvements can be</p>

	<p>delivered as a component of larger scale capital projects, or as standalone schemes themselves, there is also an opportunity to bring short term benefit and pilot innovative approaches through tactical regeneration projects such as those referred to in this report.</p>
3.27	<p>It is proposed that the incorporation of soft landscaping / city greening forms a key component of the Tactical Regeneration Programme that could include a range of responses to different typologies of space across the city, from an under-utilised space in the primary retail core, to an edge of city centre residential area. The delivery route for these types of improvements will vary and will often involve close co-working with other public, private and community partners. There is an opportunity, through the Tactical Regeneration Programme and more specifically as part of a 'Grey to Green' initiative to develop this area of work with a view to identifying a range of potential interventions and exploring deliverability with other stakeholders and funders.</p>
3.28	<p>There are opportunities within the city centre to work with the private sector and BIDs and to work with community stakeholders through initiatives like the 'Garden Grid' which has involved a number of community organisations working together to co-design green solutions for a network of sites in the inner north area. Led by Ashton, this project proposes to bring multiple small sites into use and link them into a 'grid' of spaces under a common land management organisation as a social enterprise plant nursery. The proposal includes use of 'pop-up' containers and mobile planting techniques to allow for a variety of sites to be adapted quickly with minimal capital. As well as making productive use of spaces, the project aims to work with residents on issues of health and well-being, street safety and food growing initiatives. Officers have been engaging with Ashton and others in relation to this initiative and will bring a further report back to Committee in the near future.</p>
3.29	<p>Co-working across a number of Council departments will also be required to ensure alignment of workstreams including 'Clean, Green, Inclusive & Safe', the Resilience Strategy, the Cultural Strategy, the Belfast Open Space Strategy, the One Million Trees and 'Urban Forest' initiatives.</p>
3.30	<p>While officers have carried out an initial analysis to identify potential sites where greening 'Grey to Green' interventions could be brought forward, there is a need to further assess feasibility and deliverability in order to develop a series of priority projects which could then be designed and costed. Funding options and future delivery and management models could then be considered against these more detailed project proposals, and further reports</p>

	brought to CG&R and SP&R as appropriate. Approval is therefore sought to develop the 'Grey to Green' programme to business case status with an objective to apply for funding from a number of sources, including DfC and Dfl.
3.31	Financial & Resource Implications
	<p>Tactical Regeneration Programme - £100,000 will be met from approved City Regeneration and Development Budget for 22/23 (Future City Centre Programme budget line).</p> <p>5Cs Revitalisation Project – DfC offer of capital funding of £162,000. £20,000 will be met from approved City Regeneration and Development Budget for 22/23 (Future City Centre Programme budget line).</p> <p>Entries Phase 2 – DfC capital funding of £150,000.</p> <p>Grey to Green Programme - £30,000 will be met from approved City Regeneration and Development Budget for 22/23 (Future City Centre Programme budget line).</p>
3.32	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
	<p>The Future City Centre Programme is a high-level regeneration plan. The significant projects taken forward within the plan will be screened in their own right by the lead delivery division.</p> <p>Where appropriate, emerging work strands will be individually screened for Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached
	<p>Appendix A - Tactical Regeneration: Project Examples</p> <p>Appendix B - Tactical Regeneration: Emerging Projects</p> <p>Appendix C - Entries Phase 2: Project Area</p>