

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 28th September, 2022

HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Councillors Bunting, Duffy, Ferguson,
Heading, Hussey, T. Kelly, Lyons, Maskey,
McCabe, McDonough-Brown, McLaughlin,
Murray, Nelson, O'Hara, Spratt and Whyte.

Also present: Councillor de Faoite.

In attendance: Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Dorrian.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee of 10th August were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st September, subject to the amendment under the heading "Ulster University – Belfast Campus Update", the Council had agreed that an All-Party Delegation would be immediately convened with representatives from Ulster University and the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure to expedite works on junctions adjacent to the new Belfast Campus.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 2.a) Major Events Update, Councillor McCabe and Councillor Maskey declared an interest, in that family members were employees of Féile an Phobail, and left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.

Councillor Spratt declared an interest regarding item 4.a) Ulster University Belfast Campus Update, in that his wife worked for the University.

Restricted Item

The information contained in the report associated with the following item was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item

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as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Major Events update

The Committee was provided with an update on the progress of a number of major city events and bidding for the Fleadh Cheoil and One Young World.

It was highlighted that the funding referenced within the report was within existing departmental budgets which had been agreed by the Committee in March and April 2022.

During discussion, the Director of Economic Development explained further the engagement process and timeline for the bidding process.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Agreed to submit a bid to host the Fleadh Cheoil na Éireann in 2024;
- Agreed to provide funding of £7,500 to Ards Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCE) via a funding agreement to cover associated bid costs that voluntary organisation would incur;
- Noted the planning for One Young World Belfast 2023 and the costs related to the handover delegation that attended the Manchester Summit and that those costs were approved by Committee in August 2022;
- Noted the learnings from St. Patricks Day in 2022 and the findings of Commercial and Procurement Services (CPS) with regards to the commissioning approach;
- Agreed to the retrospective approval of the process followed to date, including the award of the service contracts for St. Patricks Day 2022 as per Standing Order 37a (i.e. the public advertisement of tenders) to ensure continued compliance; and
- Agreed to provide £15,000 of funding towards the NI Music Prize from existing departmental budgets.

Presentations

Streetdock

The Chairperson introduced Mr. I. Richardson, CEO, and Mr. D. Kane, CTO Hardware, representing Streetdock to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting.

Mr. Richardson provided an overview of Streetdock, a Belfast start-up focused on sustainable urban logistics solutions. He presented the Streetdock E-cargo Bike Pilot which used e-cargo bikes to operate an on-demand delivery service, open to all businesses, together with using Hub locations for cargo consolidation.

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Mr. Richardson explained that the benefits of using Cargo Bikes included:

- Achieving net zero commitments;
- Reduced congestion, air and noise pollution;
- Making the city centre more liveable, safer and healthier; and
- New and improved services for businesses.

Mr. Richardson highlighted the range of services businesses could avail of and described the end to end user experience. He highlighted the Future Vision of the Company would include: Introducing new services; Adding new hub locations to serve more of Belfast; Adapting our technology to introduce automated processes; and Trailing new equipment and EVs for larger consignments. He advised that retailer incentives and a broader cycle network would help to grow the business.

During Members questions, the representatives explained further the current volume of Businesses using their services, the capacity and speed of the bikes and the plans to grow the business. In relation to a Member's question regarding the etiquette of cyclists, Mr. Richardson pointed out that each rider completed a training programme and followed a code of conduct.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided on the e-cargo delivery pilot that was funded through the DfC Covid Recovery Revitalisation Programme.

**Translink Lagan Junction to Yorkgate
Track Renewal**

The Chairperson welcomed representatives of Translink to the meeting: Mr. G. Smyth, Public Affairs and Project Communications Officer; Mr. M. Gormley, Programme Manager – Renewals (Network Engineering), together with Ms. S. Clements, ARUP and Mr. A. Cupples, Senior Project Manager, Babcock.

The representative's provided a presentation on the Lagan Junction – Yorkgate Track Renewal Project. Mr. Smyth explained the Central Area Track Renewal (CATR) was a track renewal strategy in the centre of Belfast, which started from the south side of Lanyon Station to Yorkgate station as well as 499 metres on the Bangor line from Lagan Junction.

He highlighted that significant track renewal works would be required each year for the next 5 – 6 years to deliver track works in priority order. He advised that this would maintain operational performance and avoid a backlog of renewals building up, which the supply chain would be unable to resource. He advised that the first element of CATR works had been successfully carried out through the renewal of Lagan Junction during 2020.

Mr. Gormley advised that the project location for this element of CATR was from Lagan Junction (where the Bangor line met the Belfast line) to the north side of Yorkgate

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Station over Dargan Bridge. He highlighted that this was a strategic part of NI Railways network for both the Larne and North West lines.

Mr. Cupples provided a detailed overview of the site works, together with the key project facts and construction timeline. He highlighted that the impact of works included:

- The train line between Yorkgate Station and Belfast Lanyon Place Station would be closed on several occasions in line with the possession strategy;
- Yorkgate Station would be closed over the Christmas period;
- A temporary timetable with bus substitution services would operate, ensuring public transport routes were maintained;
- Passengers with valid rail tickets would also be able to travel on scheduled Ulsterbus services 218 operating between Ballymena/Antrim and Belfast in addition to the 212 service between Derry~Londonderry and Belfast during the closure periods; and
- Mitigation measures would be implemented to minimise impact and disruption, for example, noise attenuation, timing of deliveries, appropriate management of stie compounds and considerate working by contractors at all times.

Mr. Smyth pointed out that, unfortunately, some disruption to local residents was inevitable as engineering works progressed. However, Translink would seek to keep noise and inconvenience to a minimum and explained further the mitigation measures which would be put in place.

He highlighted that Translink was undertaking significant community consultation in advance of the construction works, which would include:

- Letters and leaflets posted to individual properties in the vicinity of the works;
- Online project webpage (www.translink.co.uk/catr);
- Train announcements and posters in key train stations;
- Individual engagement and presentations to key stakeholders (elected representatives / local community);
- Use of digital platforms, e.g. social media and webinar;
- A public drop-in session at Lanyon Place Station;
- Dedicated contractor control phone number provided to residents to effectively deal with any queries or complaints; and
- Support for local community initiatives.

During discussion, a Member questioned if there were plans to improve the walkway for pedestrians from Yorkgate to the City Centre. Mr. Smyth advised he would provide feedback on this issue in due course.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

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The Committee noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, Translink would provide further information on the issues raised.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

Ulster University Belfast Campus Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the proposal for a site visit to the Ulster University’s Belfast Campus.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- Agree to a site visit of the Ulster University’s Belfast Campus in the coming weeks.**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Members will recall it was agreed at the meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in August 2022 to receive a presentation from Ulster University on the opening of the Belfast Campus. This was originally scheduled for the postponed main Committee meeting on 14 September.

3.2 Ulster University have subsequently advised that in order to appreciate the significance of the Campus for the whole city it would be most beneficial if Members were to consider undertaking a site visit. This would also include a presentation from representatives of the University, briefing Members on the positive impacts of the new campus, the migration plans to enable a controlled opening and the management of the sustainable transport approach, and the work ongoing to address the wider area issues including any community concerns and ongoing engagement and work of the Community Campus Regeneration Forum, as reported to Committee in August 2022.

3.3 Members will recall that an amendment to the August 2022 City Growth and Regeneration Committee Minutes was put to Council and passed at the September 2022 Full Council Meeting. This was in relation to the Ulster University, Belfast Campus Update ‘That an All-Party Delegation would be immediately convened with representatives from the

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University of Ulster and the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure to expedite works on junctions adjacent to the new Belfast Campus.’ Democratic Services have issued a letter to the University regarding this.

3.4 Members are asked to agree to undertake a site visit of the Ulster University, Belfast Campus within the coming weeks.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

None

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications contained in this report.”

The Committee agreed that a site visit of the Ulster University’s Belfast Campus would take place on Tuesday, 11th October at 12 noon, and information regarding the partial closure of York Street and traffic management at the site would be requested.

Positioning Belfast to Compete

Belfast Imagining 2024 - Partnership Development Opportunities

The Committee was provided with an update on the pre-launch activity with existing and prospective partners for Belfast Imagining 2024, together with the opportunities recently presented for showcasing, collaboration and match funding from partners.

The Director of Economic Development explained that opportunities were being identified to help progress the Council’s plan to develop relationships and map stakeholders and grow collaboration and investment opportunities for the year of culture. He highlighted that the partnership engagement plan included meetings, events and presentations locally and internationally to inform our existing and prospective partners of the plans and invite their collaboration and support in the development and delivery of Belfast imagining 2024. He reported that the co-design and partnership approach was led by best practice and enabled strategic relationships and plans to be scoped and developed where possible before, during and after the public launch communications.

He highlighted that the activity complemented with the themes of the cultural strategy, A City Imagining: A City Belonging, A City Challenging, A City Creating and a City Exploring and a full update report on plans would be presented to the Committee in November, with a view to commencing public communications also in November.

The Director of Economic Development advised that, in relation to partnership opportunities, a unique opportunity had arisen to work with Belfast International Arts Festival during its 60th year celebrations to deliver two key pre-launch special events to

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showcase the talent of globally recognised local artists to potential sponsors and key partners:

- Oona Doherty would present her original dance piece as a premiere at The MAC arts centre, at end of October. British Council had agreed to partner with the Council on this event and had offered match funding towards delivery costs.
- Conor Mitchell would present his new original opera, Propaganda at the Lyric theatre in early November before its international tour.

It was reported that the events would outline investment and collaboration opportunities of the Belfast Imagining 2024 year of culture to supporters and partners in advance of its official public launch in November and would be delivered with key partners, demonstrating collaboration and shared resources.

The Director of Economic Development encouraged all Members to attend the events and advised that further details would be confirmed and invitations issued to Members in early October.

He pointed out that £15,000 would be allocated to Belfast international Arts Festival towards the events (artists and venues) from existing departmental budgets agreed by Committee in March 2022 for the purpose of engagement and promotion for City Imagining 2024. He highlighted that the British Council had also agreed a contribution of match funding hospitality to offset the cost of hosting the MAC reception and enhance value of investment.

The Committee:

- Agreed to co-host Belfast Imagining 2024 engagement events and noted the contents of the report, in particular the recent partnership investment of the events; and
- Agreed participation by Members at two events to be held on 26th October at The MAC, and 2nd November at the Lyric.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

Belfast Cycle Network Delivery Plan

Councillor de Faoite suggested that an update was required on the Belfast Cycle Network Delivery Plan and raised his concerns for the need for a pedestrian crossing at the Ardenlee Avenue junction of the Ravenhill Road.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor Whyte,

Resolved - That the Committee agrees to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to request an update on the proposed timeline for the roll-out the Belfast Cycle Network

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according to the delivery plan that was announced in March 2022, and to further propose an additional piece of infrastructure, in the form of a pedestrian crossing, as part of the delivery on the Ravenhill Road/Ardenlee Avenue Junction.

Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 3rd October for ratification.

Chairperson