



Present Members: Alderman: Hillis (UUP), Knight-McQuillan (DUP)
Councillors: Holmes (UUP), Schenning (SDLP), McShane (SF), K McGurk (SF)

Officers: R Baker, Director of Leisure & Development
N McGurk, Head of Prosperity & Place
N Harkness, SIB Project Manager
J Beggs, SIB Project Manager
L Mullan, Digital & Strategic Projects Officer

In Attendance: P McKeown, Director of Finance and Economic Engagement, North West Regional College
J Gilmore, Head of City & Growth Deals, Department of Finance

NO.		ACTIONS
1.	Welcome and Declaration of Interests	
	Director of Leisure & Development chaired Executive Programme Board (EPB) meeting in the absence of Chief Executive. No declaration of interests declared. Focus for today: EPB to be updated on the progress of individual projects, budgets, cross-Deal Skills Group, and Critical Friend report.	
2.	Apologies	

NO.		ACTIONS
	<p>Councillors: Callan (DUP), Anderson (DUP)</p> <p>Officers: D Jackson, Chief Executive</p> <p>Others: L Maguire, UU Pro Vice-Chancellor Research; M Higgins, NRC Principal/Chief Executive; Kaine Lynch, DfI Director of Major Projects & Procurement</p>	
3	<p>Approval of Minutes from Meeting held 16th June 2022</p>	
	<p>Following amendment by J Gilmore to amend DfE to DoF, minutes of previous meeting agreed.</p>	
4.	<p>Project Updates</p>	
	<p>N Harkness provided Members with a brief overview of progress made on each project and noted the RAG status regarding submission of SOC by 31st March 2023 and project retention.</p> <p>Centre for Drug Discovery (CFDD) – Ulster University (UU) has now held workshops with relevant stakeholders and are subsequently updating SOC to reflect comments. Next step is to informally submit SOC to relevant Department for feedback, prior to formal submission.</p> <p>RAG status for both SOC completion and project retention is <i>GREEN</i>.</p> <p>Business Incubation and Innovation Hub (BIIH) – As noted at previous EPB, it cannot be assumed that the Enterprise Zone is the most appropriate site for such a hub, therefore consultant is exploring all available sites within the Borough. In addition, consultant has employed the services of Tughans LLP to advise on process to be followed when appointing project partner.</p> <p>RAG status for both SOC completion and project retention is <i>GREEN</i>.</p> <p>Food Innovation and Incubation Hub (FIIH) – Uncertainty still remains around displacement/encroachment on CAFRE services. It was noted that NWRC have sought legal</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
	<p>guidance on this matter. It was proposed that a workshop could be arranged with all key stakeholders to discuss path forward following outcome of legal opinion.</p> <p>P McKeown confirmed that NWRC are directly engaging with DfE and update will be provided to EPB in due course.</p> <p>RAG status for SOC completion is <i>GREEN</i>, whilst project retention is currently <i>AMBER</i>.</p> <p>Bushmills Regeneration – Members were provided with an overview of the consultation responses which were primarily positive and highly supportive of the proposals for Bushmills. The three key priorities which emerged were, improved walking and cycling routes, development of a parking hub (although minor disagreement in preferred location for hub) and public realm upgrades.</p> <p>Detailed report containing full responses was previously circulated to Members.</p> <p>RAG status for both SOC completion and project retention is <i>GREEN</i>.</p> <p>Dungiven Regeneration – Members were asked to note, that the current indicative budget for the project would need to be increased to circa £7m or project scaled back. Members were advised that there is scope for this budget to increase if other projects are determined to be unviable and removed from the process.</p> <p>RAG status for both SOC completion and project retention is <i>GREEN</i>.</p> <p>Mountsandel – Members were provided with an update on costings for proposed bridge at the site. Consarc provided initial Concept Cost Estimate for pedestrian bridge over River Bann, which was peer reviewed by WH Stephens. Following both reports, the construction of a bridge and infrastructure to support a major tourist attraction at Mountsandel is likely to cost in the region of £26.9m to £33.3m in Q4 2026.</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
	<p>Director of Leisure & Development advised Members that he, alongside J Beggs met with the Mountsandel Working Group on 3rd March 2023 to discuss way forward. It was noted that the development of Mountsandel is now part of Council's Capital Projects programme and Council will be leading on this development, with the Terms of Reference for the Working Group to be revised. Director of Leisure & Development noted that the Mountsandel Discovery and Heritage Group provided a revised proposal for the site, with a focus on Mixed Reality.</p> <p>RAG status for SOC completion is <i>GREEN</i>, whilst project retention is <i>RED</i>.</p> <p>Dunluce Castle – Members were advised that landowner has not engaged with Council since initial discussions last year. Landowner has taken steps to comply with the conditions of their planning consent and it is believed that they will build centre out to a 'shell' and lease to potential operator.</p> <p>RAG status for SOC completion is <i>GREEN</i>, whilst project retention is <i>RED</i>.</p> <p>Grow the Glens – Phase I of this project is now being delivered, with Phase II currently being redesigned which could result in a slight delay in completion of the OBC.</p> <p>J Gilmore advised that decision to move directly to OBC was correct in this instance and that the Department will be flexible regarding the state of the OBC. PMO do not need to do additional work by extracting SOC for Heads of Terms.</p> <p>RAG status for OBC completion is <i>AMBER</i>, whilst project retention is <i>GREEN</i>.</p> <p>Connected Causeway and Traffic Infrastructure (CCTI) – Members were advised that location for Portstewart parking hub has still to be identified. Dominican College have advised that they would not be able to provide their car park during summer season. Therefore approach has been made to UU, although there are concerns around capacity at this location, due to other commitments for the University.</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
	<p>In relation to Bushmills, proposal has been muted to relocate ticketing to the new parking hub, to be supported by an enhanced shuttle service for both Dunluce Castle and Giant's Causeway.</p> <p>Councillor McShane sought clarification that the Sheskburn site was the only site under consideration for Ballycastle.</p> <p>N Harkness confirmed that this was the case and that this location had been strengthened by the recent award of Levelling Up Fund for Ballycastle Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development also confirmed that community feedback had identified Sheskburn as the preferred site.</p> <p>RAG status for both SOC completion and project retention is <i>GREEN</i>.</p> <p>Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway – Project will be removed from Growth Deal.</p> <p>RAG status for SOC completion is <i>GREEN</i>, whilst project retention is <i>RED</i>.</p> <p>Portrush to Bushmills Greenway – Paper was taken to Leisure & Development Committee to formally bring project into Growth Deal and it is expected that SOC will be delivered by April 2023. Initial indications are that this greenway has a greater chance of garnering support.</p> <p>RAG status for SOC completion is <i>AMBER</i>, whilst project retention is <i>GREEN</i>.</p> <p>Chair opened meeting up to questions from Members.</p> <p>Councillor McShane expressed disappointment that the Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway could not proceed and noted that many businesses would have welcomed a greenway in the area.</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
	<p>Councillor McGurk questioned if Mountsandel could remain as part of the Growth Deal if project scope was reduced.</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development advised that Council would be taking the development of Mountsandel forward under the Capital Projects programme.</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development reminded Members that we will soon be entering the pre-election sensitivity period, therefore decisions regarding the projects will be taken at the next EPB.</p> <p>J Gilmore advised PMO that work can still proceed on Heads of Terms (HoT) document during this period.</p>	
4.	Green Growth	
	<p>J Beggs provided Members with an update from the City and Growth Deal Green Growth workshop held on 9th March 2023 and noted how CCG has the opportunity to build Green Growth initiatives into our Deal at an early stage.</p> <p>He highlighted to Members current policies and Council’s own commitments to Net Zero and the challenges associated with this.</p> <p>He outlined how the PMO intends to move forward with implementing Green Growth into the Deal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learned from LUF funded Ballycastle Leisure Centre in terms of detailed design and measurement methodologies will be applicable to Growth Deal. • Applying a 18% capital cost uplift at SOC (along with OB and inflation) for new buildings. • High Level Targets for Green Growth to be included within HoT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Greenways in terms of modal shift to active transport and environmental benefits ○ Connected Causeway promoting ‘Green Tourism’ across key destination sites • Potential scope for new project(s) to enter Growth Deal (with Green Growth credentials) 	

NO.		ACTIONS
	<p>J Gilmore praised the work already undertaken by Council relating to Green Growth and noted that the Critical Friend relationship established with Ambition North Wales has continued and benefited the Department on this topic.</p> <p>She also noted that the Green Growth targets were agreed by MLAs and that there is a significant gap in the budget which needs to be addressed. Going forward, she hopes that all four Deals will be able to work collaboratively on Green Growth initiatives.</p>	
5.	Cross Deal Skills Group Governance	
	<p>Head of Prosperity & Place provided Members with an overview of the proposed Cross Deal Skills Group which aims to develop and implement a consistent and shared approach to identifying and making recommendations for responding to employability and skills needs arising through City and Growth Deals (allowing sufficient flexibility for unique circumstances).</p> <p>Across all four Deals, Northern Ireland will receive £1.2B of investment, this investment needs to be supported by the appropriate levels of skills development. The Cross Deal Skills Group will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the labour market; • Working collaboratively with Skills Council and Labour Market Partnerships; • Identifying gaps in provisions; and • Assessing how well positioned the current system is to respond to needs. <p>Belfast City Council will take the lead, in the first instance, as they are the most progressed Deal. The primary objective will be to develop and implement a Skills Assessment Action Plan.</p> <p>Head of Prosperity & Place asked Members if they were content for Council to participate in the Cross Deal Skills Group.</p> <p>No objections received.</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
6.	Budget Update	
	<p>J Beggs provided Members with an update on the programme budget and noted that the current budget uncertainty will be resolved once all the SOCs have been completed. At present, the projects currently at risk could release £18.4m back into the Growth Deal if they were not to proceed.</p> <p>He reminded Members of their options should this occur:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uplift budgets for remaining projects (likely to be a necessity to some degree); 2. Introduce new projects (that are at a state-of-readiness); 3. Hold some contingency budget for projects not yet identified; and/or 4. Run a competitive 'Innovation Fund', either in the form of grants or equity in emerging technologies companies (a very new approach for a Council) <p>J Beggs drew Members attention to the need for 10%-20% partnership funding across the Deal and noted that Council could achieve this by introducing some Council's Capital Projects into the Growth Deal i.e. Coleraine Leisure Centre or Portrush Harbour sea defences.</p> <p>Alderman Knight-McQuillan questioned if the previously considered Garvagh project could be reinstated into the Growth Deal.</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development reminded Members that any projects introduced at this stage would need to have an OBC already in place, so that current projects are not delayed any further.</p> <p>J Beggs confirmed to Members that the PMOs revenue budget should be sufficient to complete development of all OBCs.</p> <p>J Gilmore advised that DoF are currently completing a review of BCRD and that any relevant lessons will be shared with Council in due course.</p>	

NO.		ACTIONS
5.	Critical Friend Handbook: Report on visit from Ambition North Wales	
	<p>Head of Prosperity & Place referred to the previously circulated report which highlights good practice and challenges at both programme and project level.</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development noted potential to further explore partnership building through Peace Plus and commented how encouraged he has been by the Critical Friend relationship established by Council now helping the other Deals in NI.</p>	
6.	Programme summary and next steps	
	<p>Director of Leisure & Development provided recap:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOCs are mostly on track for end of March 2023 delivery • Three projects Dunluce Castle, Mountsandel and Ballycastle to Ballymoney Greenway at high risk of removal from the programme: • One project recommended for inclusion in the programme and moved to SOC (Portrush to Bushmills Greenway) • Two projects (BIIH & FIH) may be the subject to ongoing <i>AMBER</i> levels of options uncertainty. <p>He also noted the next step would be for the capital budgets to be reconsidered when SOCs are completed.</p>	
7.	Any Other Relevant Business	
	<p>Councillor Schenning asked if Council would have any input into how UU distributed its funds i.e. could Council influence University to support local bio-medical start-ups.</p> <p>Director of Leisure & Development advised that Council would not be involved in any of those decisions, as the project is University-led.</p> <p>N Harkness advised that Ulster University have included a limited innovation fund within their proposal that could potentially support local bio-medical start-ups.</p>	

NO.			ACTIONS
	<p>J Gilmore noted that DSCD also have a number of exciting projects in this field, leading to potential collaboration opportunities outside of the Borough.</p> <p>Councillor McShane wanted to acknowledge the good work undertaken by Council regarding Net Zero.</p>		
8.	Date of Next Meeting		
	Date and location to be confirmed.		Meeting invites to be issued (RB)

Meeting closed at 8:16pm