

Title of Report: DfC Recovery & Revitalisation – Update on Proposed Public Realm Interventions	Officer Presenting: Regeneration Manager Author: Regeneration Manager
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 To update Members on the current Recovery & Revitalisation Programme funded by the Department for Communities and to seek Members' endorsement and approval to continue to develop these initiatives in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

2 Background

- 2.1 Members will recall items presented to September & December 2020 and also February 2021 E&R Committees in relation to the DfC-funded Recovery Revitalisation programme currently being implemented by Council.
- 2.2 Members will note from the previous reports that this programme comprises of the following elements including; (a) streetscape improvements (b) a business support grant scheme (c) marketing support; (d) animation support. The Environment & Regeneration Department is working in partnership with the Business & Culture Department to deliver and coordinate all of these complementary elements. The E&R Department is leading on the management and delivery of element (a).
- 2.3 In terms of the streetscape improvements, due to nature of the funding available and timescales involved, the physical interventions being proposed are largely environmental improvements consisting of additional street furniture (seating/tables, planting, decorative lighting) as well as the proposed introduction of temporary/part-time vehicular traffic restrictions to identified streets. Such interventions can be permanent or temporary/meanwhile in nature, and will be informed by the local characteristics unique to each of the project elements.
- 2.4 Members will note the paper presented to February 2021 E&R Committee providing an overview on the schemes being progressed in Derry City Centre & Strabane Town Centre at which these proposals were endorsed.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Since the February E&R Committee, Officers have been continuing to progress with the design and delivery arrangements in relation to all of the respective elements. The following is a summary of progress;
- 3.2 **Upper Walled City Streetscape Improvements** – This scheme involves three distinct yet complimentary elements namely (1) Temporary introduction of one-way traffic from upper Carlisle Road along Ferryquay Street towards the Diamond (2) Temporary repurposing of the on-street car parking bays located at the Austins quadrant of the Diamond and (3) introduction of ‘parklets’ on designated on-street car parking spaces to facilitate pavement extensions to enable outdoor trading for participating cafes along this section of Bishop St on both sides of the road.
- 3.3 DfI Roads are working in partnership with Council in terms of facilitating the necessary protocols to assist with the delivery of all of three elements. Statutory notices were placed by DfI in local newspapers in mid-March to advise of the intention to initiate these proposals. In terms of delivery timeframes, it is anticipated that (1) & (2) will be in operation by end of April. Element (3) is currently at detailed design stage with an estimated implementation by July (subject to securing the relevant approvals).
- 3.4 **Queens Quay Pay & Display Car Park & Waterloo Place** – Designs and specifications are currently being finalised with the intention of initiating a procurement exercise for the supply and installation of the various street furniture with on-site implementation estimated by August 2021.
- 3.5 **Castle Street, Strabane** – Members will note the proposals initially being presented in relation to the development of parklets along Castle Street to facilitate outdoor trading for the participating café/hospitality businesses along the street. The parklet concept was designed to complement the Business Support Cluster grant being progressed by the 5 hospitality businesses and led by the B&C Department.
- 3.6 Officers have been engaging with businesses/property owners along Castle Street since December to seek their views. Some non-hospitality businesses have raised concerns around the parklets, in terms of the temporary loss of 6 of the existing 10 on-street car parking spaces. Despite Officers exploring potential mitigation measures to reduce the net loss of spaces in order to address these concerns, Officers have been unable to secure a consensus on the development of parklets.

- 3.7 Following a meeting with most of the businesses on the street on 12th March, agreement was secured for Council to progress with an environmental improvement scheme along the street to upgrade the dated furniture on the 5 locations along the street. Whilst this will visually enhance the streetscape along Castle Street providing new/additional outdoor general seating arrangements, it will not create dedicated outdoor café areas as envisaged by the parklet proposals.
- 3.8 In terms of the business grant support being led by Council's B&C Department, Members will note the open schemes rolled out in August and December 2020 in terms of small business grants of up to £3k. In addition to this, a cluster grant programme was designed to assist collaborative proposals being put forward by businesses with proposals actively progressing in Castle Street in Strabane, Waterloo St & Ebrington in Derry.
- 3.9 Within the business support programmes, Officers have earmarked provision to assist two new clusters specific to the Council-led streetscape improvement projects in the Upper Walled City and Queens Quay. These cluster schemes are targeted primarily at eligible hospitality-type businesses in the direct vicinity of Council-led streetscape improvement projects where it can be demonstrated that they can directly add value/contribute to enhancing the Council-led streetscape schemes by creating outdoor café/trading spaces and areas.
- 3.10 The cluster business grant support will provide assistance for items such as outdoor tables, chairs, awnings and other related equipment – similar to that previously supported under the open schemes and open only to businesses which have not previously received assistance under the open schemes. These two cluster business support schemes are considered crucial to animating the streetscape projects and to encourage café-type businesses to connect with the physical regeneration projects being supported by Council. Now that these two physical regeneration projects are advancing, Officers are proposing to actively progress the cluster grant schemes.
- 3.11 Following liaison with the funder, Officers are currently considering a proposal to incorporate an element of the derelict ground floor Austin's façade (as part of the environmental improvement scheme proposed for the Diamond quadrant) and to undertake some cosmetic improvements to the shutters/windows/fascia in order to maximise the appearance of this quadrant. The ground floor façade occupies a significant portion of frontage within the area proposed for the public realm space on this quadrant of the Diamond. Supporting cosmetic interventions would greatly enhance the user experience of the public realm at this location and improve the current physical appearance which is dominated by a row of shutters. This type of intervention is considered an eligible activity within the DfC funded Recovery Revitalisation Programme.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement, Rural Needs and other Implications

- 4.1 Officers are continuing to progress with the delivery of these schemes and have undertaken/currently initiating procurement processes in line with Council's protocols for the supply of goods and services in order to progress to implementation stages.
- 4.2 Council are in receipt of funding to the rate of 100% from DfC to support the delivery of the proposed interventions as outlined above with no direct cost implications to DCSDC.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and to endorse further development of the initiatives as outlined, in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Background Papers

ER150/20; ER252/20; ER48/21