

Building Impact:

The role the built environment plays in delivering social, environmental and economic benefits to the Belfast region.

July 2022



usefulprojects
part of the Useful Simple Trust



Foreword

The way we live our lives is changing, and so is the way we design, build, use and operate buildings, public realm and infrastructure.

There are the challenges imposed on us by COVID-19. There are the lessons we must learn and the promises that must be kept through COP26. Our world will never be the same again, but it is our responsibility to ensure that it is a better one.

We will play our part in the Belfast region by making this a place for all. We will do so by ensuring sustainable development, delivering inclusive economic growth, reducing inequalities, creating social value and transforming our city into a healthy, low-carbon, climate resilient economy – all in a generation.

It's time for us to stand back and take the long view, asking ourselves how we will reach this destination and who will help us get there.

Renewed Ambition, a joint public private sector-led initiative which aims to shape how we reimagine the future of our city now and act together to deliver it in the months and years ahead, commissioned this report to identify and demonstrate the positive social, economic and environmental impact that real estate and built environment

projects can deliver when done well. We also wanted to know where we could improve, and what the sector needs to do to move things forward.

Looking forward, under new NI legislation and Belfast City Council policy, social value will be at the heart of public procurement, accounting for 10% of award criteria and the ambition that this will rise to 20%. Social value ensures a focus on the wider financial and non-financial impacts on individuals, communities and the environment – increasing secure employment and skills, building ethical and resilient supply chains, delivering zero carbon and safeguarding wellbeing.

This document is an ambitious starting point that points real estate stakeholders from both the private and public sector in the right direction. With social value becoming more and more important, the report highlights how this has changed the wider context for real estate development. It shows how we can help maximise wider benefits from future real estate investment in the Belfast region.

We're up for the challenge and applaud those in the sector who have already embraced the changes required, but we recognise that there's still work to be done to bring the wider sector

Joe O'Neill
Chair, Renewed Ambition
Chief Executive, Belfast Harbour

on board. In essence the report says, 'Lots done, more to do'.

Yet, it's not all about what we have to do, it's also about the benefits a step change in understanding social value can bring. The report is clear, there are hundreds of millions of pounds worth of new jobs, skills and training opportunities as well as other societal benefits to be delivered if we get this right and if we all work together going forward.

However, we should not be under any illusions. The challenges are many – from unemployment, deprivation, and fragile supply chains to climate change, dwindling resources and biodiversity loss. There is extreme pressure on public funding and that pressure will undoubtedly increase. That is why private real estate has a significant role to play in supporting progress. It will be an important partner in helping achieve inclusive and sustainable growth. The public sector has a key role too, to lead by example, be an enabler, and help to overcome the barriers the real estate industry is facing in the Belfast region.

The construction industry and real estate sector have a role to play as stewards of the built environment and as sectors which make a significant impact on the economy.

Case studies in this report show that leading real estate companies operating in the Belfast region are ready to step up to the sustainable development challenge. Indeed, there are examples of how projects have gone beyond minimum building regulations and delivered wider benefits for the economy, society and the environment, but we would welcome a general cultural shift where decisions are based on potential long-term value rather than capital cost alone.

This report features five international case studies that demonstrate that the most successful outcomes have been achieved when the real estate client establishes a project's social, environmental and economic ambitions right at the outset, supported by a robust process for delivery and reporting. This is a key message for all new real estate projects in the Belfast region to take on board, across the private and public sector.

This is a challenging, but exciting period, set against the background of two major initiatives – the Belfast Agenda with its target of attracting 66,000 people to live and work in the city and 31,600 homes by 2035 – and the Belfast Region City Deal, delivering innovation and jobs for a new economic era.

In recent years we have seen major regeneration projects which are helping to transform the city and wider city region and are designed to bring broad social, economic and environmental benefits, examples of which are threaded throughout this report.

Re-developing and re-connecting is the key to the future. It is vital that the public and private sector continue to work together collaboratively to drive investment into the city and wider region; this work involves multiple stakeholders, engages local communities, and understands local needs. In short – a strategy that is based on trust.

The research carried out for this report has been thorough, enlightening and it encourages our Renewed Ambition.

And it demonstrates clearly the wide-ranging and positive economic, environmental and social impact that investment in the built environment can deliver. It demonstrates the commitment from the real estate sector to be a trusted partner towards sustainable growth.

Now it is time for action.



Executive Summary

The role real estate can play in delivering sustainable development

Renewed Ambition¹ has commissioned this research, to identify and demonstrate the positive social, economic and environmental impact that real estate and built environment projects can deliver when done well, and provide recommendations to help deliver wider benefits from future real estate development in the Belfast region, based on international best practice.

Specifically, this project has three objectives:

1. Look back at what social, environmental and economic benefits have been achieved through real estate investment in the Belfast city region over the past five years
2. Look further afield to what best practice looks like through international case studies and a review of sustainable development frameworks and certification schemes
3. Look to the future and provide recommendations to further improve the social, environmental and economic outcomes from future real estate investment in the Belfast city region

This research recognises the

important role that city region partners, including the real estate and construction industry in the Belfast region, and councils in the Belfast region, and the NI Executive, play in delivering sustainable, inclusive development and the wider benefits this brings to the region.

While this report acknowledges the distinct political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) challenges and opportunities that the Belfast city region is facing, the findings and recommendations will be relevant to the whole of Northern Ireland.

Role of the real estate sector in delivering inclusive and sustainable growth

The real estate sector can play a key role in resolving some of the region's societal challenges, including unemployment, skills inequalities, economic growth, housing provision, levelling up, community cohesion, and climate change. As both providers and stewards of the built environment, and as a sector representing a significant proportion of our economy, the real estate industry is a key stakeholder in addressing these challenges.

Wider sustainable development and inclusive growth outcomes can be delivered over the three main phases in the real estate lifecycle: planning and acquisition, development phase and operational phase. Taking a geographical perspective, the real estate sector can help tackle the region's sustainable development challenges within the redline boundary of the asset, within local communities and in the wider Belfast region. In addition, while the real estate and construction sector is an important stakeholder in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth, businesses and residents that

occupy the buildings have a really significant role to play too.

It is evident that leading real estate companies operating in the Belfast region are ready to step up to the sustainable development challenge. The local case studies identified in this report include examples of real estate projects that have gone beyond minimum building regulations and delivered wider social, environmental and economic benefits to the city region.

Challenge and opportunity

The public sector in Northern Ireland has strong ambitions for inclusive and sustainable growth, however progress has been somewhat constrained by the political context in which NI and the Belfast region operate in at present, including planning responsibilities split between the NI Executive and local councils, regeneration and transport powers sitting at an NI executive level, as well as other factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing public sector cost constraints. Real estate developers in the Belfast region face the challenge of low property values; values are not that much higher than the costs

associated with land purchase and construction. As such, the economic case doesn't always stack up and land and buildings are left empty. If developments do go ahead, developers report that delivering wider environmental, social and economic benefits is much more challenging here than in other parts of the UK due to these financial constraints.

Significant growth is planned for the region. The Belfast Agenda, Belfast's first Community Plan set an ambitious target of attracting 66,000 people to live and work in the city and 31,600 additional homes by 2035. The Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) aims to accelerate inclusive economic growth for the region and to deliver thousands of new and better jobs, with pathways and support in place to make them accessible to people from all communities. BRCD unlocks £1 billion of co-investment and includes three capital investment programmes (tourism and regeneration; infrastructure; and innovation and digital), underpinned by an employability and skills programme.

¹ <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/investinbelfast/connections/renewed-ambition>



It is vital that forthcoming investment in the real estate sector is leveraged to help tackle the pressing social, economic and environmental issues the region is facing now and in the future.

As well as addressing wider societal challenges, other benefits to the real estate sector include: improved attractiveness to financial investors; quicker occupation by tenants (and attracting major business tenants from various sectors who are seeking high quality offices that are fit for the future); reduced energy bills and lower maintenance costs; stronger community relationships and brand enhancement or reputational benefits.

Looking back: local case studies

In recent years Belfast has seen record levels of office, hotel and student accommodation development. Through analysis of real estate projects from across the Belfast city region and spanning major regeneration projects; residential and purpose built managed student accommodation; commercial; and culture leisure and tourism, this research has identified the social, economic and environmental benefits these developments

have delivered to the Belfast region. There is evidence of developers, housing associations, university capital investment departments and council capital investment programme demonstrating leadership to deliver broader social, economic and environmental outcomes, however there is limited quantified information about outcomes achieved, and this is an area for improvement.

Titanic Quarter has already delivered £146 million of social value and it is expected that by 2035, £528 million of social value will be generated (social value monetisation calculated using TOMs). During construction of the new Ulster University campus in Belfast, the equivalent of 101.7 years' worth of training, placement and apprenticeship opportunities were delivered to young people, students, and the long term unemployed. The Belfast Transport Hub early works was highly commended by the National Social Value Awards in 2021 for its approach to social value and the outcomes achieved during the enabling works phase. Both Ulster University and Titanic Quarter achieved BREEAM Excellent and Titanic Quarter attained LEED Gold.

Looking forward: pipeline projects

The local private developers interviewed for this report, reported that business tenants are starting to demand higher environmental sustainability standards from real estate, and investors are placing higher emphasis on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors when making investment decisions. These are two key drivers for developers to deliver higher environmental sustainability standards and wider benefits from real estate investment. Industry 'standard' practice is also evolving to consider sustainable development and inclusive growth goals in a more structured and meaningful way.

There are several current and future social, economic and environmental 'trends' in the real estate and sustainable development sector across the UK and further afield, that will inevitably influence future development in the wider Belfast region in the years to come, as discussed in section 6.3.

These include net zero carbon development, embedding circular economy principles into design and construction,

creating social value and shifting towards value-based decision making (as opposed to capital-cost focused decision making).

It is difficult to provide a detailed forecast of future benefits, because each real estate project has the license to set its own ambitions and targets. This report estimates the potential monetised social value (a measure which captures social, economic and environmental value delivered during construction) that could be created.

In summary, there are several major real estate projects, amounting to £3bn in total investment, currently in the pipeline. If the pipeline projects delivered 20% additional "social value through construction", in line with best practice across the UK, they would generate £600m worth of jobs, skills development and local supply chain opportunities, as well as community and wellbeing benefits, for people and businesses in the Belfast region.

“ As well as addressing wider societal challenges, other benefits to the real estate sector include: improved attractiveness to financial investors; quicker occupation by tenants (and attracting major business tenants from various sectors who are seeking high quality offices that are fit for the future); reduced energy bills and lower maintenance costs; stronger community relationships and brand enhancement or reputational benefits. ”



Executive Summary

Key findings and recommendations

This research has resulted in six key findings, and associated recommendations. Three of the recommendations are for the real estate sector and construction supply chain, one relates specifically to BRCD projects, one is focused on the role of local councils, and one relates to the role of the NI Executive. In some cases, these recommendations are already being implemented by some developers or some councils, but they need to become more widespread and accelerated.

Audience	Recommendation
Real estate sector <ul style="list-style-type: none">Private developersInvestorsHousing associationsPublic sector capital investmentConstruction supply chain	1 1. The real estate sector and construction supply chain should demonstrate leadership for delivering wider outcomes.
	2 2. New real estate development projects in the Belfast region should follow the simple four-step process outlined in section 5 of this report, to deliver wider outcomes.
	3 3. The real estate sector needs a cultural shift from capital cost-based decision making to value-based decision making.
BRCD projects	4 4. Built environment investment projects funded through the Belfast Region City Deal should be exemplar in the delivery of wider inclusive growth and sustainability outcomes over the asset lifecycle.
Local councils	5 5. Local councils should continue to drive and support more inclusive and sustainable real estate investment. It can do this through three key levers: lead by example, influence, and invest.
NI Executive	6 6. The NI Executive could support wider and more impactful outcomes to be achieved through several enablers.

1]
Key finding 1: The real estate sector has a significant role to play in helping to address the Belfast region's social, economic and environmental challenges through the planning and acquisition phase, development phase and operation phase. It is an important stakeholder in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth, and can achieve this by delivering wider benefits within the redline boundary of the project, within the local community and across the wider Belfast region.

The business case for sustainability is strengthening internationally. Building owners report that green buildings - whether new or renovated - command a 7% increase in asset value over traditional buildings.

Through the interviews and case study research undertaken for this project, it has become clear that leading real estate companies operating in the Belfast region are ready to step up to the sustainable development challenge. The local case studies in the appendix include several examples of real estate and built environment projects that have gone beyond minimum building

regulations and delivered wider benefits for the economy, society and the environment. There is however the need for a cultural shift across the whole real estate and construction sector operating in the region to make delivery of wider benefits more mainstream and impactful. Together, with focused effort, the real estate sector could create hundreds of millions of pounds of additional social value through real estate investment, for the benefit of local people and the local economy.

Recommendation 1:
The real estate sector and construction supply chain should demonstrate leadership for delivering wider outcomes

All real estate sector stakeholders should step up to the inclusive growth and sustainable development challenge, to help tackle the significant social, economic and environmental issues the Belfast region is facing. There is a need for strong ambition, proactive action, leadership to implement best practice, and collaboration with the supply chain and key stakeholders. A significant cultural shift across the industry is required to make delivery of wider benefits more mainstream



and impactful. As a first step, we recommend that businesses operating in the local real estate and construction sector sign up to the the city's **Inclusive Growth Charter**, a Belfast Business Promise, and start acting on their pledges. This will publicly recognise the good practice of the sector and encourage others to adopt more inclusive and sustainable practices. In addition, they should make commitments to transition towards net zero carbon development, and seek to create social value through design and construction in line with best practice (minimum 10% of construction contract value, moving towards 20%+). The real estate sector should also seek to influence and collaborate with business

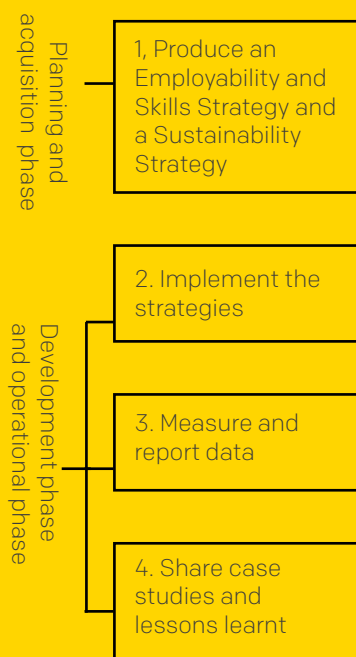


occupiers during long-term property management phase.

2]

Key finding 2: The local and international case studies in this report demonstrate that the most successful outcomes have been achieved when the real estate client establishes the project's social, economic and environmental ambitions and targets and the outset of the project, supported by a strong process for delivery and reporting. Every project is unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach for defining, measuring, and reporting outcomes. Therefore, we are recommending a simple and flexible four-step process for delivering wider benefits from real estate investment projects, as set out in section 5 of this report.

Recommendation 2: *New real estate development projects in the Belfast region should follow the simple four-step process outlined in section 5 of this report, to deliver wider outcomes.*



3]

Key finding 3: In the past, the real estate sector has been challenged by some members of society who viewed it as an industry that prioritises creating wealth for developers and investors, over concern for societal and environmental benefit. It is welcomed that there is a growing trend from the local market to tackle environmental and socio-

economic problems and deliver more inclusive and sustainable development. The UK real estate and construction industry is now on a fundamental shift towards value-based decision making, redefining traditional financial value and a capital cost focus, to also account for social, economic and environmental value over the long-term. Key to delivering wider outcomes, is embedding this into decision making throughout the asset lifecycle.

Recommendation 3: *The real estate sector needs a cultural shift from capital cost-based decision making to value-based decision making*

The real estate and construction sector should embed the delivery of wider outcomes (social, economic and environmental) into decision making over the real estate asset lifecycle (planning and acquisition phase, development phase and operation phase). The Construction Innovation Hub's Value Toolkit can be used for guidance.

4]

Key finding 4: The Belfast Region City Deal presents a unique opportunity to accelerate inclusive growth and sustainable development in the region and the delivery of inclusive growth has been built into the design of the investment programme. The tourism, regeneration, infrastructure and innovation projects funded through the Deal are being developed with inclusive growth and sustainability in mind, underpinned by an employability and skills programme, but more can be achieved. These projects, recognising that they are at different stages of development, should seek where practical to set new standards for the delivery of wider benefits in Northern Ireland and the reporting of outcomes in line with the BCRD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.

Recommendation 4: *Built environment investment projects funded through the Belfast Region City Deal should be exemplar in the delivery of wider inclusive growth and sustainability outcomes over the asset lifecycle.*

In practice, this means putting inclusive growth and

sustainability at the heart of these projects:

- BCRD partners should, taking account of the different stages of development of the projects, integrate inclusion and sustainability into the design and delivery of BCRD real estate projects in line with the BCRD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework and best practice industry trends (e.g., value-based decision making, social value creation, zero carbon design, circular economy principles, biodiversity net gain).
- BCRD partners should seek to work with an innovative and creative supply chain who can help these projects lead by example in terms of inclusive growth and sustainability. Including social value evaluation criteria in procurement will be a key mechanism for achieving this.
- BCRD public and private sector partners should work together to develop new proposals for investment that can help to deliver zero carbon objectives.
- BCRD projects should use a consistent reporting approach and tool for capturing the inclusive growth and sustainability outcomes.

Executive Summary

5]

Key finding 5:

The Belfast region councils are key enablers for more inclusive and sustainable real estate investment. In recent years, they have been setting the tone for this through the publication of policies and strategies and have invested in supporting infrastructure. However, more can be achieved.

Recommendation 5: *Local councils should continue to drive and support more inclusive and sustainable real estate investment. It can do this through three key levers: lead by example, influence, and invest.*

Lead by example

- Leading by example in the design, procurement, construction, and management of council-led capital investment projects. Belfast City Council in particular has already made good strides on embedding sustainability and inclusive growth outcomes into its capital projects, policies and strategies.
- Leading by example by reporting outcomes in a

consistent way on a reporting platform that can aggregate outcomes across all projects.

- Delivering training across the council to increase sustainability expertise and capacity to support wider outcomes to be achieved.
- Influence the real estate sector**
- Influencing the real estate sector (production of strategies, roadmaps, charters etc that set the tone for sustainable real estate investment in the region. This includes encouraging the real estate sector to sign up to the Inclusive Growth City Charter - Belfast Business Promise)
 - Using planning powers to influence the real estate sector to achieve more, through:
 - Local Development Plan (including supplementing existing policies through the future LDP review process)
 - Pre-Application Discussions and support
 - Guiding Developer Contributions investment
 - Capturing and sharing best practice case studies.

Investment

Investing in supporting sustainable infrastructure surrounding real estate developments (e.g. renewable energy schemes, public realm, active travel, climate resilience, meanwhile uses, smart neighbourhoods).

6]

Key finding 6:

The public sector in Northern Ireland has strong ambitions for inclusive and sustainable growth, however progress has been somewhat constrained by barriers including the political context in which NI and the Belfast region operate in at present, as well as other factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing public sector cost constraints. This report highlights several local challenges spanning political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) themes, that the NI Executive has a key role in overcoming. Incoming regional sustainable development policy (e.g., climate change, environment, social value) should help improve the situation, alongside the newly established Infrastructure Commission, and Fiscal Commission. Additionally,

more council devolved powers, notably regeneration, transport, advice on all planning applications involving Listed Buildings, and associated funding; and reform of the planning process, would support a more coherent approach to regeneration and placemaking.

As major regeneration and infrastructure investment responsibility sits with the NI Executive. It has an important role to lead by example, and collaborate with local councils to achieve wider outcomes (in particular, Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure, Department for the Economy).

Recommendation 6: *The NI Executive could support wider and more impactful outcomes to be achieved through several enablers.*

This includes:

- Introducing new policies to support sustainable development (The Climate Change Bill, circular economy policy, biodiversity net gain policy)

- Devolution of regeneration and transport powers as well as advice on all planning applications involving Listed Buildings, and associated funding to councils
- Leading by example on regeneration and infrastructure investment projects (delivery of wider benefits and high environmental sustainability standards)
- Investment in sustainable infrastructure
- Speeding up decisions for developers through the planning consultation process
- Funding and de-risking role



The case for change...

The real estate sector is rapidly evolving across the UK and internationally to tackle global challenges from climate change to inequalities in a more meaningful way than ever before. Here in the Belfast region, we need a **step change** in the way we design, build and operate our built environment, to ensure we achieve our inclusive growth and sustainable development aims and remain a competitive, attractive region to invest, work and live far into the future. This will require **greater ambition** and **collective action** from all stakeholders.

“ Historically, many decisions in the construction sector were made through the lens of cost, with lowest initial price and risk-transfer having a higher priority than outcomes for operators, users, the environment, and society as a whole. Government, clients, and the industry all agree that a different approach is needed. An approach that reflects a shared ambition for a built environment that delivers more – one that enhances communities, sustains the environment, and provides a springboard for economic growth.

Construction Innovation Hub - Value Toolkit ”

“ Climate change is the single greatest threat to a sustainable future, but, at the same time, addressing the climate challenge presents a golden opportunity to promote prosperity, security and a brighter future for all.

Ban Ki-Moon, Former Secretary-General of UN ”

“ The Commission considers that the time for incremental change has passed. What is needed now is a much more radical approach to change, moving faster and deeper. We consider that there is a need to reset and reframe the conversation, coalescing partners around a shared agenda for inclusive and sustainable growth.

Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission ”

“ COVID-19 has inadvertently given us all time to think about what kind of economy, society, and world we want to live in. Now is the time to rethink the role of the real estate sector in terms of not only design and the built environment, but also what the relationship should look like between landlords, tenants, and local communities, how we value location and space, and how real estate can help tackle social and spatial inequalities. With this comes the opportunity to repurpose and link real estate development and investment more closely to local community needs and people's changing living and work patterns. Now is the time to put people and places at the heart of real estate investment and development.

Urban Land Institute ”



Contents

01	Introduction	01
	This section describes the purpose, focus and scope of this report.	
02	The role of real estate in delivering sustainable development and inclusive growth.....	02
	This chapter outlines the important role real estate plays in delivering sustainable development and industry trends which are driving change.	
03	Context	06
	This chapter details the enabling levers the public and private sector can use to drive more inclusive and sustainable development across the Belfast city regions. It includes an overview of the policy levers influencing and directing the industry at a global, regional and council level. The unique challenges and opportunities related to sustainable real estate development in Northern Ireland are also examined within this section.	
04	Assessing the Belfast region's built environment potential.....	19
	An overview of case studies from across the region are summarised in this section. This section also examines industry best practice from the UK, Europe and further afield and identifies pipeline projects in the Belfast city region which are already stepping up to the challenge.	
05	A focused approach to delivering sustainable development.....	23
	This chapter examines the tools and methodologies available for incorporating industry best practice into the real estate lifecycle process.	
06	Key findings and recommendations / Building enabling foundations.....	26
	Details of the six recommendations that public and private partners should adopt to drive sustainable inclusive growth are included in this section. These recommendations should act as enabling levers for city region partners to incorporate sustainable development best practice into real estate development.	
	Glossary	30
	Supporting information	31
	Appendix A: Local case studies from past 5 years	41
	Appendix B: Local pipeline projects	59
	Appendix C: international case studies	69



01 ■ Introduction

This section describes the purpose, focus and scope of this report.

This report seeks to identify and demonstrate the positive social, economic and environmental impact that real estate and built environment projects can deliver when done well, and provide recommendations to help maximise wider benefits from future real estate investment in the Belfast region, based on best practice.

This was achieved by:

- **Looking back** at what has been achieved in the local real estate sector in the past five years through Belfast city region case studies and policy review.
- **Looking further afield** to what best practice looks like through international case studies and review of sustainable development frameworks and certification schemes.
- **Looking to the future** and providing recommendations that will lead to improved economic, social, and environmental outcomes from real estate investment in the Belfast region.

This report recognises the distinct legal, political, economic, social, environmental and technological opportunities and challenges facing Belfast and the wider city region. It has been developed through engagement with representatives from Belfast region councils and City Development Board, elected representatives, the Renewed Ambition partners, real estate developers and housing associations in the Belfast region.

Recommendations and guidance outlined in this report are aimed at the real estate and construction industry operating in the Belfast region, as well as the Belfast region councils and Northern Ireland local government departments. However, they should be relevant to all councils and real estate partners in Northern Ireland.



Figure 1 - The councils in the Belfast region

02.

The role of real estate in delivering sustainable development and inclusive growth

This chapter outlines the important role real estate plays in delivering sustainable development and industry trends which are driving change.

The importance of tackling the key social, economic and environmental issues we are facing as a society is rapidly increasing, for the public and private sector generally, but also more specifically in the real estate and built environment sector.

From unemployment, deprivation, and fragile supply chains to climate change, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss, we have major challenges to address now, and in the future. The construction and real estate industry clearly have a role to play in addressing these issues; as both providers and stewards of the built environment, and as sectors representing a significant proportion of our economy.

This is even more pressing since the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted our economies, revealed stark inequalities and made us reconsider the future way we live and work.

Real estate and urban infrastructure projects serve a fundamental purpose to address societal needs; such as providing housing, office space, cultural destinations, public realm, roads, public transport, low carbon energy supply, clean water and flood protection. The societal

benefits that these projects can generate are not, however, limited to delivering basic functionality and providing jobs during construction. By focusing on delivering broader outcomes, not just engineering outputs, real estate and infrastructure projects can create additional 'social value'. For example, they can help address local socio-economic issues and inequalities; create jobs for long term unemployed or disadvantaged people; provide opportunities for local Small and Medium Enterprises; and ultimately increase the quality of life of people for people who live, work, visit or pass by the asset.

This research seeks to examine the breadth of 'wider' social, economic and environmental benefits that the real estate industry in the Belfast region is already delivering, and provide recommendations to further improve this, to support the Belfast region's aim of inclusive

and sustainable development. It is clear that leading real estate companies operating in the Belfast region are ready to step up to the sustainable development challenge, with several local case studies identifying real estate and built environment projects that have gone beyond minimum building regulations and delivered wider benefits for the economy, society and the environment. However, there is

room to make delivery of wider benefits more mainstream and impactful, creating hundreds of millions of pounds of additional social value through real estate investment, for the benefit of local people and the local economy.

The types of issues covered by each of the three sustainable development 'lenses' are summarised in a simplified illustration in Figure 2.

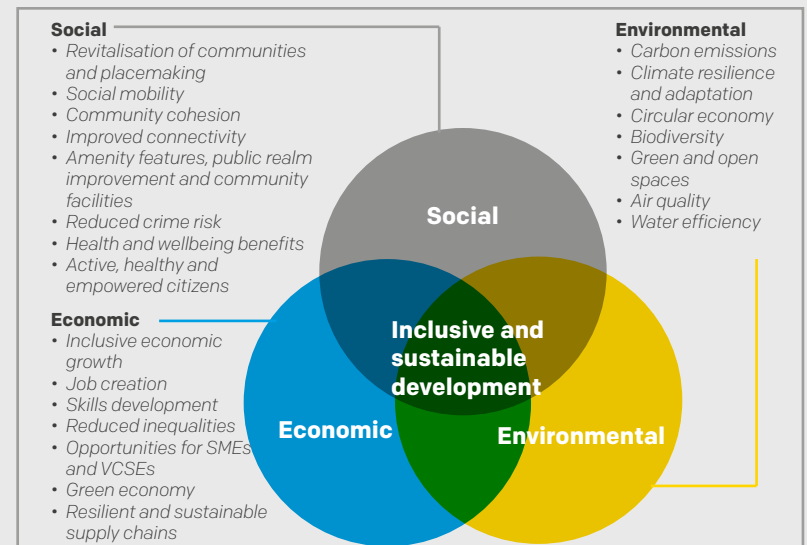


Figure 2: The real estate sector can deliver a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits, to help achieve the Belfast region's aim of inclusive and sustainable development



Figure 3: Wider benefits from real estate investment can be delivered at various geographical scales

In reality, these benefits are very interlinked and the real estate sector has an important role in achieving these outcomes and delivering outcomes both within the immediate redline boundary of the project, surrounding local communities and wider city region.

It is important to recognise the role that real estate can play in helping tackle the region's sustainable development challenges within the redline boundary of the asset, within local communities and in the wider Belfast region. In addition, sustainable development and inclusive growth outcomes can be delivered over the

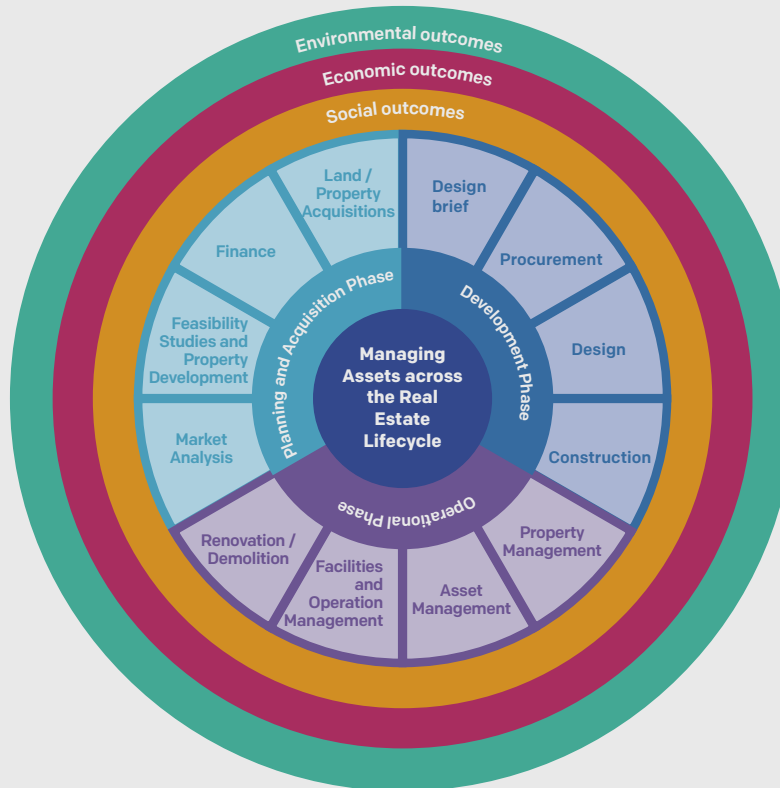


Figure 4: The delivery of wider social, economic and environmental benefits are relevant to every stage of the real estate asset lifecycle.. Base image source: RICS

three main phases in the real estate lifecycle: planning and acquisition, development phase and operational phase. Indeed,

businesses and residents that occupy the buildings upon completion also have a significant impact in delivering social

economic and environmental benefits both within the immediate vicinity of the building and wider local neighbourhood.

Industry trends

Current and future 'trends' in the real estate and sustainable development sector across the UK and further afield will inevitably influence future development in the wider Belfast region. These trends will necessitate a step change in the way we approach development to ensure forthcoming development is future proofed from a social, environmental and economic perspective.

Social Industry Trends

User demand for services within walking distance is changing. Concepts like 'the 15-minute city'² and '15 minute neighbourhood'³ are becoming more popular, which propose that everyone living in a city should have access to essential urban services within a 15 minute walk or bike.

² <https://www.15minutecity.com/>

³ <https://www.smarttransport.org.uk/insight-and-policy/latest-insight-and-policy/what-is-a-15-minute-neighbourhood>

The **creation of social value** has gained increased attention in recent times, particularly in light of COVID-19 which has revealed stark inequalities across society. Both the Department of Finance and Belfast City Council are introducing new procurement policies that set at least 10% of the procurement weighting to social value in public sector procurement. Belfast's draft Local Development Plan also has much more emphasis on inclusive growth and tackling the city's socio-economic issues.

The real estate and construction sector across the UK is increasingly seeking to deliver additional social value through the delivery of construction works. There are now multiple guidance documents, frameworks and reporting tools to support the real estate and construction industry address and report social value.

The Social Value Portal and procurement body Scape recently issued the first published benchmarking report for social value in the construction sector.⁴



It evaluates the social value data reported outcomes from a sample of more than 1,400 construction projects completed in the UK in the past seven years, ranging in contract size from £10,000 to over £1.4bn. It reveals that the additional social value delivered averaged at 24%, using the TOMs social value methodology for calculation. This is only set to increase with higher emphasis placed on social value creation by national and local governments.

To align with this benchmark, as developments in the Belfast region are coming forward, they should seek to target at least 10% additional social value creation (% of construction value), moving towards 20+% over time. This should be led by the client (developer, housing association, university capital investment department, council capital investment department, etc) and included in the strategy and brief for the project as early as possible. It should be noted that this refers to social value creation during design and construction (% of construction value), as opposed to applying 10% of the

procurement weighting to social value (which is the aim of Belfast's social value procurement policy and the Department of Finance's social value procurement policy).

Economic Industry Trends

There is an overall trend towards the reduction in design and construction uplift costs associated with environmentally friendly buildings as sustainable design becomes normalised, supply chains for green materials and technologies mature and the construction industry becomes more skilled and experienced at delivery. **Internationally, building owners report that green buildings - whether new or renovated - command a 7 per cent increase in asset value over traditional buildings⁴.** There is a demonstrated link between the green characteristics of buildings and the ability of these buildings, in some markets, to more easily attract tenants and to command higher rents and sale prices. Green buildings have also been shown to save money through reduced energy and water consumption and lower long-term operations and maintenance

costs. The energy savings alone typically exceed any cost premiums associated with their design and construction within a reasonable payback period⁶.

Financial factors will always be fundamental in the real estate sector to make development viable, but the bottom line is now being influenced by taking a **whole life view, which accounts for capital and operational costs**, and also by an increasingly nuanced and broader view of "value". Investors have an increased focus on ESG related matters, including climate adaptation and mitigation, social impact and diversity, equity and inclusion and realise the importance of high quality buildings and infrastructure for the success of their investments and the cities in which they are investing.

The construction is on the verge of a fundamental shift towards value-based decision making. This is a step forward from capital cost (CAPEX) being the primary driver. The principle of value-based decision making is already used in both government and private sector investment

policy. HM Treasury's Green Book and 'Guide to developing the project business case', and private sector ESG investment criteria, encourage this approach. But implementation often lacks consistency and there is a gap between policy and performance. Tools such as the Construction Leadership Council's Value Toolkit fills this gap by providing a process which shows how to make and implement value-based decisions (described in section 5). This approach helps build the business case for creating wider social, economic and environmental benefits from real estate projects.

Viability assessment is a process of assessing whether a site is financially viable, by looking at whether the value generated by a development is more than the cost of developing it. This includes looking at the key elements of gross development value, costs, land value, landowner premium, and developer return. If developers take into account whole-life value benefits, the viability of some developments may improve.

By taking a whole life cost view, operational expenditure (OPEX)

cost savings can be factored into business cases, such as:

- Reduced energy bills
- Lower maintenance costs
- Quicker occupancy
- Increased rates for workspace
- Increased future resale value
- Brand enhancement/reputational benefits

Furthermore, wider value benefits can be articulated, such as:

- Jobs for local people and disadvantaged people
- Lower energy consumption, carbon emissions and fuel poverty
- Reduced flood risk and climate resilience
- Circular economy benefits
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved accessibility
- Cultural value
- Connected communities
- Local economic benefits.

To align with this shift towards value-based decision making, as real estate developments in the Belfast region are coming forward, they should seek to adopt whole

⁴ https://www.scape.co.uk/uploads/research/Social-Value-Benchmarking-Report-SCAPE-and-SVP_2021-06-24-094811.pdf

⁵ <https://www.worldgbc.org/benefits-green-buildings>

⁶ <https://www.worldgbc.org/news-media/business-case-green-building-review-costs-and-benefits-developers-investors-and-occupants>



life costing, and even better, whole life value decision making.

The circular economy offers a \$4.5 trillion economic opportunity worldwide by reducing waste, stimulating innovation and creating employment⁷. New business models focused on reuse, repair, remanufacturing and sharing models offer significant innovation opportunities. Within the real estate and construction sector, the adoption of circular economy principles into design, construction, refurbishment and end of life is becoming more commonplace. Several guidance documents now exist providing practical steps towards a circular economy, including by identifying different ways companies in the real estate industry can adjust their business models⁸ and financially benefit from the adoption of circular economy approaches.

Environmental Industry Trends

In light of the climate emergency, across the UK, we are seeing a much stronger focus on **whole-life low carbon design**, that takes into account embodied carbon⁹ as well as operational carbon.

In November 2021, the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC) launched the Whole Life Carbon Roadmap¹⁰, a common vision and agreed actions for achieving net zero carbon in the construction, operation and demolition of buildings and infrastructure. While the intended audience of this document is the UK Government, the Devolved Governments may also find the recommendations applicable for their net zero journeys. It iterates the importance of improving the energy efficiency of existing homes and buildings, and a transition from fossil fuel heating to zero carbon heating

technologies, with a significant role for heat-pumps. It also recommends the use planning reforms to prioritise reuse of existing buildings and assets, and disincentivise demolition and new build. In addition, it discusses introducing regulation of embodied carbon for new buildings and major refurbishments.

Governments, local authorities and real estate and construction sector businesses are setting **carbon reduction goals** with a view to becoming net zero carbon in the next decade. For example, many built environment businesses are setting science based targets¹¹, signing up to the United Nations Race to Zero¹² campaign, are signing industry-wide collaborative climate declaration such as the Net Zero Carbon Buildings Commitment¹³, Built Environment Declares¹⁴ and Architects

Declare¹⁵. Net zero carbon (or very low carbon) developments are becoming more commonplace. Examples of note include Goldsmith Street in Norwich (a high density urban social housing development which is the largest Passivhaus scheme in the UK); Paradise office development by Bywaters in London; and Hanham Hall residential project by Barratt Developments in Bristol.

We are also likely to see more **public-private partnerships working together** to achieve carbon emissions reduction. For example, in New York City, the Mayor's Office has launched a public-private partnership to decrease carbon emissions for commercial buildings by at least 30% over the next 10 years as part of the effort for the city to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. To achieve these goals, companies are sourcing energy

from renewable resources and using new technologies and data analysis to aid in reducing energy consumption, waste diversion programs, and decreasing water usage through efficiencies and conservation. Reducing emissions not only reduces carbon output, but also provides long-term value by reducing energy costs, creating operational efficiency and extending the useful life of building systems¹⁶.

Other key environmental topics that have high prominence in the built environment sector include **climate resilience and adaptation strategies, circular economy approaches and biodiversity net gain**.

The real estate sector in the Belfast region should seek to proactively address these important environmental issues.

⁷ <https://newsroom.accenture.com/news/the-circular-economy-could-unlock-4-5-trillion-of-economic-growth-finds-new-book-by-accenture.htm>

⁸ <https://www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/research/section/realising-the-value-of-circular-economy-in-real-estate>

⁹ Embodied carbon means all the CO₂ emitted in producing materials and constructing built environment assets. It includes the energy used to extract and transport raw materials as well as emissions from manufacturing processes.

¹⁰ <https://www.ukgbc.org/ukgbc-work/net-zero-whole-life-roadmap-for-the-built-environment/>

¹¹ <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/>

¹² <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/race-to-zero-campaign>

¹³ <https://www.worldgbc.org/thecommitment>

¹⁴ <https://builtenvironmentdeclares.com/>

¹⁵ <https://www.architectsdeclare.com/>

¹⁶ https://www.ey.com/en_us/real-estate-hospitality-construction/four-pillars-impacting-sustainable-sustainability-in-real-estate

03. Context

This chapter details the enabling levers the public and private sector can use to drive more inclusive and sustainable development across the Belfast city region. It includes an overview of the policy levers influencing and directing the industry at a global, regional and council level. The unique challenges and opportunities related to sustainable real estate development in Northern Ireland are also examined within this section.

The Belfast Agenda, Belfast's first Community Plan set an ambitious target of attracting 66,000 people to live and work in the city and 31,600 additional homes by 2035.

The Belfast Region City Deal is estimated to generate up to 20,000 jobs, delivering a 10-year programme to unlock new innovations and R&D pathways, whilst ushering in a new era of inclusive economic growth.

Case studies examined for this report indicate that while recent developments in Belfast and the wider city region have been delivering social, economic and environmental benefits, there are several barriers and challenges that are unique to the Belfast region and Northern Ireland which have the potential to impact on the region's ability to deliver wider benefits from real estate investment.

There is a significant number of real estate projects in the pipeline, and it is vital that this investment is leveraged to deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits for local communities and the wider Belfast region.

There is an optimistic outlook for the real estate sector becoming

more sustainable and responsible in the way it invests, designs, delivers and maintains real estate. There will soon be an influx of new sustainability policy affecting the real estate sector at the regional and local level, which presents an opportunity to drive more inclusive and sustainable development.

In addition, as highlighted in Section 1, there are several current and future 'trends' in the real estate and sustainable development sector across the UK and further afield, that will inevitably influence future development in the wider Belfast region in the years to come.

Developers and housing associations, the design and construction supply chain, Belfast region councils and the NI

Executive (namely Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure) all have a role to play in ensuring upcoming projects keep up with these trends, to ensure the Belfast region is attractive for businesses and people to locate themselves, and to deliver the much-needed wider benefits needed to deliver inclusive and sustainable growth. These stakeholders have already started on this journey. But much more needs to be done to make this mainstream and deliver increased benefits.

The role of policy as a key lever to drive inclusive and sustainable development

Policy has a crucial role in driving inclusive and sustainable development in the real estate sector, with three key policy levers available to the public sector:

- Policy (e.g., Community Plans, Local Development Plans)
- Advocacy (e.g., Strategies, roadmaps, reports)

Outlined overpage are the key policies and strategies related to sustainable development from international policy down to NI local council policies.



Level	Sustainable development policies and strategies
International	— United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
National (UK Government)	— Sustainable Development Strategy (2005) — HM Treasury: Guide to developing the project business case (2018) — Climate Change Act (2008, 2019) — HM Treasury: The Green Book (2020) — Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth (2021)
Regional (NI Executive)	— Northern Ireland Act 2006 — Sustainable Development Strategy (2010) — Ensuring a Sustainable Transport Future (2011) — Building Regulations NI (2012)* — Regional Development Strategy 2035 (2012) — Strategic Planning Policy Statement (2015)* — Draft Programme for Government Framework (2016) — New Decade, New Approach (2020) — Sustainability for the Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050 (2021) — Climate Change (No. 2) Bill — PPN 01/21 - Scoring Social Value - policy on scoring social value for Northern Ireland (2021) — Programme for Government – Draft Outcomes Framework (2021) — Economic Recovery Action Plan 'Rebuilding a Stronger Economy' (Feb 2021) — 10X Economy - an economic vision for a decade of innovation (2021) — Draft Environment Strategy (Nov 2021) — NI Executive accreditation as a Living Wage Employer
Local (Belfast City Council)	— The Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (2015) — Belfast Agenda (2018) — Belfast Cultural Strategy 2020 – 2030: A City Imagining — Belfast Open Space Strategy (2019) — Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan (2019) — Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-2022(2019) — A Bolder Vision for Belfast: Reimagining the Centre (2019) — A net zero carbon roadmap for Belfast (2020) — Belfast Resilience Assessment (2020) — Developer Contributions Framework (2020)* — Belfast Local Development Plan 2035 – draft (2021)* — Social Value Procurement Policy (2022) — Reset for Growth (2021)
Local - BRCD Partner Councils	— Corporate Plan
- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	— Community Plan
- Ards and North Down Borough Council	— Draft Local Development Plan*
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	

Table 1: Summary of sustainable development policies and strategies that are relevant to this research. The policies which dictate requirements for new development are highlighted with an asterisk.

Policy review

International level

At the international level, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) provide a blueprint for sustainable development and a set of 17 common goals that all countries should work towards. Local governments and the real estate sector have an essential role to play in achieved by these goals, which can be achieved aligning their corporate strategies to the UN SDGs.

Regional level

At the regional level, the NI Executive has developed the Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework which is a new approach focusing on the major societal outcomes that the Executive wants to achieve. The NI Executive has mapped the Programme for Government – Draft Outcomes Framework to the SDGs, and they have strong alignment. The real estate industry has a key role to contribute to the achievement of these outcomes.

A suite of retained Planning Policy Statements (published in 2015) currently provide operational planning policy across a range of subject areas including

sustainable development and the use of Developers Contributions, and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Guidance on the use of Planning Agreements, the mechanism through which Developers Contributions are normally secured, is provided by the Department for Infrastructure (Development Management Practice Note 21). Compared to English Councils' planning requirements, NI planning policy has generally been weaker (e.g., it hasn't included the ambition to achieve BREEAM certification, carbon emissions performance standards, or % affordable housing requirements). When councils adopt their new Local Development Plans, the Planning Policy Statements will cease to have effect.

NI is at an early stage of policy development in relation to climate change and social value; this is now gaining momentum and there has been a recent influx of new policy.

Northern Ireland has not had a legislative requirement to deliver social value through the procurement of public services or goods. Commissioners and procurement professionals have had the power, but no duty to

include social value as scored elements of the assessment criteria. In July 2021 the Executive approved Policy 'PPN 01/21 - Scoring Social Value' which mandates that from 1 June 2022 tenders must include a minimum of 10% of the total award criteria to social value, rising to 20% by 2023. The policy applies to service contracts valued above £123K and construction contracts valued above £4.7m. The policy provides a framework of indicators which departments can draw on, as is relevant to the contract at hand. These indicators are linked to the Programme for Government outcomes.

The UK's Climate Change Act does not apply to Northern Ireland. The introduction of climate change legislation was a commitment in the New Decade, New Approach agreement. In 2021, the Stormont Assembly had been in an unusual position that two pieces of climate change legislation were going through the legislative process, by the NI Green Party and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

In March 2022 it was confirmed that the DAERA Climate Change Bill will proceed, which includes a

target for net zero emissions by 2050 and the appointment of a climate change commissioner.

At COP26, the NI Executive launched a consultation document on Northern Ireland's first ever overarching Environment Strategy. The Environment Strategy will set out Northern Ireland's environmental priorities for the coming decades and will form part of the Executive's Green Growth Delivery Framework. As such, it includes a mix of both existing and new environmental targets and objectives for DAERA and all Northern Ireland departments with a role in improving the environment.

Council level

The introduction of community planning powers for councils in 2015 led to the creation of an overarching vision and shared priorities to shape the development of council areas. Aligned to the emerging draft Local Development Plan, Belfast's Community Plan (Belfast Agenda) and a suite of supporting strategies and policies including The Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, Belfast: Our

Recovery, Developer Contributions Framework, and A Bolder Vision for Belfast – reimagining our city centre, have been developed to support sustainable and inclusive economic growth and regeneration.

“ This places increased emphasis on the need for the real estate sector to be proactive and demonstrate leadership for delivering wider outcomes. ”

However, as identified in 'A Bolder Vision for Belfast', these policies and strategies do not go far enough to achieve the fundamental change needed to deliver on the ambitions of the draft Programme for Government to improve wellbeing for all by tackling disadvantages and driving economic growth. The Reset for Growth report, published by the Belfast Innovation and Growth Commission in June 2021, also emphasises that the levers required to deliver the Belfast Agenda commitments at the pace and scale necessary to make an impact on these ambitions are not currently in place. It sees a number of key gaps, principally in terms of the structural models required to support public-

private collaboration and access to finance to bring forward developments. In addition, Belfast must focus on aligning the environmental and economic policy frameworks across varying levels of government if it is to position itself for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. This places increased emphasis on the need for the real estate sector to be proactive and demonstrate leadership for delivering wider outcomes.

All Belfast region councils are in the process of developing their new Local Development Plan (LDP) which will be the primary consideration for decision making on all new development schemes. The LDPs are all seeking to strengthen sustainable development ambitions, and this will be essential for achieving wider outcomes from real estate development. Belfast's LDP proposes a minimum 20% affordable housing requirement for all residential developments on sites greater than 0.1ha and/or containing 5 or more dwelling units. It also seeks BREEAM Excellent for major developments which is regarded as being a positive step forwards for the delivery of wider outcomes from

real estate investment. Several developments have already achieved BREEAM Excellent in Belfast, as outlined in the local case studies identified as part of this research.

The Belfast Developer Contributions Framework has been in place since 2020 and aims to secure Developer Contributions as part of the planning application process. Developer Contributions may be sought to manage the impacts of development on infrastructure or the environment in sectors where a skills shortage has been identified, during both construction and occupation phases. Belfast City Council currently places a high priority on employability and skills interventions through Developer Contributions, requiring an Employability and Skills Plan to be produced and implemented. The Developer Contributions Framework is clear that the viability of a scheme will be considered when assessing the requirement for contributions.

Belfast declared a climate emergency in October 2019, and in 2020, the Belfast Climate Commission produced a Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast which charts a path to Net Zero

by 2050 and demonstrates a compelling economic case for climate action in Belfast.

Social Value commitments are being integrated into relevant council contracts. Since 2013, Belfast City Council has integrated social value commitments within relevant council contracts to, amongst other things, provide ring-fenced opportunities for employment, work placement and promote opportunities for micro and small businesses. The Social Value Procurement Policy and a Social Value Toolkit includes a points-based system, which builds on and aligns with the Buy Social and National TOMS Framework approaches, to measure and assess the impact of the social value offer. However, for council-led capital investment projects, the NI Government's Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD) Buy Social approach supersedes the Social Value Procurement Policy requirements. Newry Mourne and Down District is developing a social value strategy and aims to

increase the value of social impact clauses at the pre-procurement and procurement award stages to further the social, environmental and economic goals of Newry Mourne and Down District Council.

Sustainable development principles have been embedded into council policies and strategies for several years, which sets the right intentions for new development. However, most don't have planning weight (they are non-statutory). This reinforces the importance of Building Regulations, Local Development Plans and associated Supplementary Planning Documents for setting higher expectations for the development industry. For example, the Greater London Authority's New London Plan has introduced new requirements for net zero carbon buildings, whole life carbon assessments, and circular economy statements. We are also seeing some local authorities in the UK embedding social value into the planning process (rather than just the

procurement of goods and services), such as Manchester City Council, Leicester City Council and Coventry City Council. This is an approach that Belfast region councils may wish to adopt in the future. The Social Value Portal has created guidance on embedding social value into planning¹⁷ which is a useful reference guide.

The Belfast region councils all have sustainable development principles embedded into key policy documents – Community, Corporate and emerging draft Local Development Plans; however, these are at varying stages of development.

¹⁷ https://socialvalueportal.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Integrating-Social-Value-into-the-Planning-System_FINAL_170621.pdf



Unique challenges and opportunities related to sustainable real estate development in Northern Ireland

This section highlights the key challenges and opportunities the region is facing in relation to sustainable real estate, structured using the standard PESTLE framework for analysis (excluding L for Legal which is covered by the policy review earlier in section 3). It also highlights examples where the region is already making positive impact through a range of both public and private sector initiatives.

<div></div> <div>Political</div>	
Challenges	Opportunities/ongoing initiatives
<p>Stalled progress in recent years - It is recognised that political sensitivities exist in relation to how sustainable development is approached. Whilst the principles of sustainable development have been integrated into the work of all Northern Ireland government departments through the draft Programme for Government and the NICS Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018 – 19, as well as progress by local councils, further work has been delayed by various political factors and COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Two-tier planning system - The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 is the principal piece of planning legislation in Northern Ireland and underpins the reformed two-tier planning system which commenced with the transfer of the responsibility for the majority of planning functions from central government to district councils in 2015. However, councils do not have responsibility for urban regeneration, roads and infrastructure investment or public housing (this is currently the responsibility of the Department for Communities and the Department for Infrastructure). This can add complexity and there is a need to ensure strong collaborative relationships across both levels of government in relation to built environment investment and decision making.</p>	<p>New policies - Since reaching agreement on a New Decade, New Approach the NI Executive has led on introducing several new social and environmental policies. In addition, councils in the Belfast region are also introducing new sustainable development-related policies. These are highlighted earlier in section 3.</p> <p>Devolution of regeneration and transport powers - While the planned transfer of regeneration powers from central to local government did not proceed in 2015, the NI Local Government Association continues to lobby for the further devolution of powers to local government, including regeneration which would significantly support a more cohesive approach to sustainable development and placemaking. Bringing forward the devolution of regeneration powers, alongside transferring transport powers and associated funding, would significantly enable improved regeneration and infrastructure development across the Belfast region.</p> <p>Infrastructure Commission - Following the Northern Ireland Executive’s publication of the report ‘Building Forward: Consolidated Covid-19 Recovery Plan’, in August 2021 the Department for Infrastructure committed to establishing an Infrastructure Commission. The Commission should effectively secure a long-term approach to wider infrastructure planning and delivery, and to help Northern Ireland recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit and also enable the region to ambitiously tackle the climate crisis.</p> <p>New governance and finance models - In response to challenges related to the need for improved governance models to support public-private collaboration and access to finance to bring forward developments, Reset for Growth proposes the establishment of a number of new institutions, namely Strategic Land Partnerships and Housing Investment Funds.</p> <p>Housing strategy - The Department for Communities is developing a Housing Supply Strategy aimed at bringing forward institutional, regulatory and policy change, this is currently out for consultation. It is critical however that this ambition will be matched with appropriate levels of funding and policy changes to deliver significant impact.</p>



1/3

Economic

Challenges

Economic growth - BREXIT and the COVID-19 pandemic have had a significant impact on the region's economy. The Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission is concerned that Belfast, as a key part of the region's economy, is at a tipping point. They consider that there is an urgent need to press the reset button on how the city should develop in the next ten years. The Commission's 'Reset for Growth' report stresses that urgent and radical action is needed to turn around Northern Ireland's struggling economy and deliver better future opportunities for people living here.

Productivity, employment and income, and skills

The BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework identifies three key challenges that BRCD capital investment projects should seek to address:

- Slow growth: low levels of productivity, innovation and digital capability
- Employment and income disparities: need for higher value employment opportunities creating sustainable well-paid employment (of the four UK nations, Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of jobs paying below the Real Living Wage.)
- Skills inequalities: disproportionate levels of people with low skills and under-supply of higher skilled workers to meet labour market demand.
- These issues are of high importance for the real estate and construction sector to address through all development in the Belfast region.

Opportunities/ongoing initiatives

Economic recovery - A range of economic forecasts show that NI's economic recovery in 2021 is expected to continue into 2022. Ernst and Young's forecasts show Northern Ireland's GDP is projected to grow by 5.3% in 2022 following a 6% growth in 2021¹⁸. NISRA has recently reported that there was no increase in NI unemployment since furlough ended. The Department for the Economy's economic vision for a '10X Economy', published May 2021, aims to see a tenfold increase in innovation, driving growth and inclusion. The NI Executive's COVID Recovery Plan aims to accelerate economic recovery over a 24-month period through focused, collaborative working. It provides the foundation for renewal and includes strategic Recovery Accelerators: sustainable economic development; green growth and sustainability; tackling inequalities and health of the population. Fundamentally, all future real investment has the potential to address the region's economic challenges by contributing to GDP, providing jobs and skills opportunities, supporting local supply chains, and attracting Foreign Direct Investment.

Addressing low pay - The campaign group the Living Wage Foundation is starting to tackle low pay in Northern Ireland. In November 2021, the Northern Ireland Executive secured accreditation as a Living Wage Employer. The Living Wage Foundation is calling on employers that can afford to go beyond the minimum wage to commit to a Real Living Wage. Any company delivering government services in the north will have to pay their staff at least £9.90 per hour from June 2022.

Funding public services - The establishment of the Independent Fiscal Commission for Northern Ireland was announced in March 2021. The Commission will put forward recommendations on powers for the next NI Executive, following the 2022 election, to enhance the NI Assembly's fiscal responsibilities and increase its ability to raise revenues to sustainably fund public services.

¹⁸ https://www.ey.com/en_ie/strategy-transactions/economic-eye-forecast



2/3

Economic

Challenges

The broader business case: Internationally, building owners report that green buildings – whether new or renovated – command a 7% increase in asset value over traditional buildings. Many interventions don't necessarily add additional capital cost (for example refurbishing rather than demolishing and rebuilding, employing local people, designing for reduced crime risk). It is worth noting the cost of renewable technologies like wind and solar is falling significantly. Other interventions can deliver operational savings over the lifespan of the building (e.g. energy efficiency improvements). Energy efficiency delivers much wider benefits to the population, including lower energy bills and improvements in health.

Effect of the pandemic on real estate - The real estate sector has been negatively affected by the stalled economy and uncertainty. However, despite a slowdown in 2020, in 2021 the Northern Ireland commercial property market recorded its strongest year since 2017 in terms of investment volumes and investment activity which more than doubled year-on-year with almost £290 million invested across 30 transactions. However, there are still challenges across the sector. With footfall levels still down from pre-pandemic numbers, there is a need to radically rethink the form, function and structure of the city centre. As is the case with other regions, following the pandemic there will be more working from home, less shopping on the high street and less international travel – all of which strike at the heart of how the real estate industry currently operates. Some changes in lifestyle and working patterns are temporary, but others are here for good – leading to fundamental rethinking about the future of office space and retail. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for the real estate sector in the Belfast region.

Opportunities/ongoing initiatives

Real estate demand - There have been record levels of office, hotel and student accommodation take-up in Belfast since 2015, with the office market positioned as the city's strongest-performing sector. Looking forward, there is high demand for commercial, housing and logistics accommodation which presents an opportunity for the real estate sector to accelerate investment in new properties and deliver wider benefits.

- Commercial - Since 2015, there have been over £343.5m of office investment deals in Belfast and £34.47m worth of industrial investment. CBRE predicts that an imbalance in supply and demand, coupled with high levels of foreign direct investment, means that the development pipeline will continue to expand over the next few years.
- Housing - Belfast has a unique opportunity to position a significant house building programme at the heart of its economic recovery plans. The high student-to worker retention ratio in Belfast will drive up the demand for new types of housing, much of which will be in the city centre thanks to Belfast City Council's drive to promote city centre living, with a goal of attracting 66,000 people and 31,600 additional homes by 2035. CBRE forecasts multi-family investment to surpass £7bn by 2025, plus a drive of institutional grade capital into Single Family Housing. In addition, there is strong potential for investment in the Build-to-Rent (BTR) sector in Belfast.
- Logistics accommodation - CBRE is currently tracking occupier requirements for in excess of 1.9 million sq ft logistics accommodation throughout Northern Ireland. There is currently no supply to meet this demand. Equally there are very limited new build opportunities for existing businesses to grow into and there is a need for smaller schemes to meet this need.
- Belfast benefits from having one of the lowest occupational and operational costs in the UK as well as access to best-in class ICT infrastructure. CBRE believes that Belfast is uniquely positioned following Brexit to benefit from having dual access to the UK and EU markets.

Covid-19 pandemic – The pandemic has brought with it risks for the Belfast region real estate sector, but also opportunities. This includes rethinking the role of the real estate sector and putting people at the heart of real estate development. This is in terms of design of the built environment and how real estate can help tackle social and spatial inequalities, address local community needs and people's changing living and work patterns. It also presents an opportunity to rethink what the relationship should look like between landlords, tenants, and local communities.

¹⁹ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/call-evidence-high-street-task-force>



3/3

Economic

Challenges

Low property values and increasing construction costs - Real estate developers in the Belfast region face the challenge of low property values; values aren't that much higher than the costs associated with land purchase and construction (which have risen due to increasing materials costs). As such, the economic case doesn't always stack up and land and buildings are left empty. If developments do go ahead, developers report that delivering wider environmental, social and economic benefits is much more challenging here than in other parts of the UK due to these financial constraints. Capital cost concerns have indeed been an inhibiting factor to delivering more sustainable development across public and private sector real estate investment projects across the Belfast region. In fact, across Europe, urban austerity, increasing complexity and requirements (e.g. related to climate adaptation) and interdependencies with the broader built environment has put the quality and feasibility of projects increasingly under pressure.

Opportunities/ongoing initiatives

High streets - In recognition of the challenges facing town and city centres following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Executive Office formed the High Street Task Force (HSTF). The HSTF have identified the challenges and issues that our high streets face and is seeking views on solutions to support our high streets and to contribute to the development of thriving and sustainable city, town and village centres¹⁹.

Vacant land and property - There are several vacant properties and land in the Belfast region, which could create socio-economic value, for example through meanwhile uses (pop-up cafés, restaurants, bars, shops and other temporary uses of empty property). In addition, there are opportunities for the public and private sector to address the vacant building challenge, through innovative funding and incentive mechanisms. For example, developers could offer sub-market rents for ground floor properties for government-backed social enterprises or SMEs on long leases. Another option could be establishing a fund to refurbish run-down smaller buildings to make them into apartments, shops or workspaces for businesses or families that can't afford market rents. This would create notable socio-economic benefits in the long-term, but also through construction.

Inclusive Growth City Charter - This new Belfast Business Promise encourages businesses to sign up to a number of Pledges, that all help to drive inclusive and sustainable growth. It is a free membership and accreditation scheme that enables businesses to get recognition for demonstrating how they are having a positive economic, environmental and social impact through their core business activities.

It is hoped that many businesses, including those operating in the real estate and construction sector, will sign up to the promise, to show Belfast and its people that the sector is invested in the city and that it cares about their welfare, the city economy and the sustainability of the city.

¹⁹ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/call-evidence-high-street-task-force>



Social

Challenges

History - NI has had the Good Friday Agreement in place for over 20 years, but the region still experiences sensitive and complex social tensions, which can be difficult for the real estate sector to navigate.

Deprivation and fuel poverty - Northern Ireland suffers from very high levels of unemployment, economic inactivity and deprivation, with one in six Belfast residents in fuel poverty. A significant proportion of people currently exist outside of the labour market; 1 in 4 people do not work or are not seeking a job. Long-term limiting ill health and disability is the most common reason for this, particularly among men. The inclusive growth and social inequality challenge is significant, and there is high expectation on the real estate sector to contribute to addressing it.

Housing stress - The Belfast region is in housing stress, and there is a need to deliver housing across all tenures (social, affordable, private to rent and private to sale) to meet growing demand. There is also a need for housing to meet changing demographics, i.e. an ageing population.

Opportunities/ongoing initiatives

Belfast Region City Deal - The Belfast Region City Deal is a key opportunity to drive inclusive growth. Building on the region's strengths, the Belfast Region City Deal partners have huge ambition to attract investment as an enabler to accelerate inclusive economic growth for the region and to deliver thousands of new and better jobs, with pathways and support in place to make them accessible to people from all communities. The three capital investment programmes are underpinned by an employability and skills programme, and all BRCD projects are required to adhere to the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework. Through the Belfast Region City Deal Employability and Skills Pillar, Council, College and University partners are working collaboratively to understand the skills needs arising from the city deal investment projects and where required to develop new skills solutions to meet identified needs, adding value to the existing employability and skills offer.

Buy Social construction model for public sector - For capital investment projects the Department of Finance's 'Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD)²⁰' Buy Social construction model is in place. The approach applies to building contracts which have a contract value greater than £2m and civil engineering contracts which have a contract value greater than £4m. In construction build contracts, Buy Social requires 52 person-weeks of paid employment opportunities to be delivered for New Entrant Trainees, for each £1m of contract value (and pro rata). In construction of civil contracts, the approach requires 26 person-weeks of paid employment opportunities to be provided for each £1m of contract value (and pro rata). The Buy Social Training Toolkit is a practical guide for public sector Commissioners, Procurement Officers and Contract Managers which explains how to design, implement and monitor social clauses in construction and services contracts using the Buy Social approach. This toolkit mainly focuses on targeted recruitment and training clauses, but authorities may still choose to include other social value initiatives. This presents the opportunity for councils in the Belfast region to lead by example regarding social value creation on capital investment projects.

Regional social value procurement policy - Policy 'PPN 01/21 - Scoring Social Value' mandates that from 1 June 2022 tenders must include a minimum of 10% of the total award criteria to social value. This applies to construction contracts valued above £5.3m.

Local social value procurement policy - Belfast City Council has demonstrated leadership on the social value agenda by developing a Social Value Procurement Policy and a Social Value Toolkit, which is being implemented on a phased basis since June 2022. A key feature of the toolkit is a points-based system, which builds on and aligns with the Buy Social and National TOMS Framework approaches, to enable Belfast City Council to measure and assess the social value offer being made.

Local Development Plans - All Belfast region councils are in the process of drafting and finalising their Local Development Plans. These documents will establish new ambitions for inclusive growth in the region up to 2035.

²⁰ The Department of Finance's 'Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD)' division provides professional procurement and project delivery services to the NI Civil Service departments and arm's length bodies. CPD work with a wide range of public sector clients achieve best value for money and achieve wider aims on sustainability, the environment, social value and human rights.



1/3

Technological

Challenges

Digital connectivity - Urban living is increasingly mediated through digital technologies – whether in receipt of public services, benefits and information or private services including wayfinding, retail, etc. Therefore, access to low-cost connectivity, and capability to utilise digital services and technology is a growing barrier. Urban development needs to be mindful of its potential to support greater digital connectivity, particularly in supporting the widespread deployment of fibre and wireless infrastructure through the careful planning of building and public realm.

Opportunities/ongoing initiatives

Growing tech sector - NI benefits from an international reputation as a region of expertise and knowledge in tech development and has one of the fastest growing tech sectors in the UK. Belfast made the top 10 Tech Cities of the future 2021 list for Foreign Direct Investment performance. Global technology companies are seeking commercial properties that are fit for the future and are attractive to their employees; this includes sustainable and smart commercial buildings that support employee health and wellbeing, as well as high quality surrounding public realm. Some local real estate developers are already future proofing their buildings to meet these increasing occupier demands, and this trend is set to continue.

Smart Belfast - Belfast has ambitious plans to be a connected and smart city. In 2017, Belfast City Council published its first Smart Belfast Framework: Supporting Urban Innovation. It set out the guiding principles and foundations needed to harness innovation, technology and data science to contribute to the success of the Belfast Agenda. The council has refreshed the Belfast Urban Innovation Framework for 2022-2027 to reflect the challenges and opportunities presented by this pandemic era and to incorporate the practice and learning of the past few years. The framework also considers how digital innovation can best contribute to the council's priorities for city growth, economic recovery and respond to climate change, and the growing impact of new technologies on urban policy and planning.

Broadband improvement - Project Stratum, the £165million broadband improvement scheme, will radically transform rural broadband connectivity by extending gigabit capable full fibre broadband infrastructure to approximately 76,000 homes and businesses across Northern Ireland.

Digital innovation - A successful digital innovation ecosystem within the region will play a critical role in contributing to economic inclusion and sustainable growth. As part of the BRCD a challenge-led, long-term, flexible programme of investment in digital innovation has been developed which includes the creation of challenge funds, investment in enabling infrastructure to allow the development of the Smart District and regional technology testbeds and the creation of regional innovation hubs.



2/3

Technological

Challenges

Opportunities/ongoing initiatives

Live innovation projects - There are several live innovation projects in the region such as the Belfast Smart District, Smart Healthy Homes and neighbourhood test beds, Urban Digital Twins project, the Digital Transparency in the Public Realm project and the i4c Innovation Centre in Ballymena.

Innovation City Belfast - Innovation City Belfast aims to establish Belfast as a globally significant destination for innovation. The partnership has been formed by six of the city's key institutions: Belfast City Council, Belfast Harbour, Catalyst, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, with Invest Northern Ireland as an advisory partner. They are committed to delivering an ambitious long-term plan that will maximise the impact of the £1 billion Belfast Region City Deal which includes an investment of £230 million in university research centres and £120 million in digital innovation.

Skills - The Belfast Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission highlighted the need to develop a range of interventions related to digital and green tech skills including:

- **Digital skills pathways** – providing opportunities for those with low or no relevant skills to access job opportunities within the technology sector
- **Green Tech Skills Academies** - developing targeted upskilling and re-skilling interventions to meet future growth needs.
- **Hydrogen Training Academy** – this pilot project led by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council with key delivery partners Northern Regional College and Belfast Metropolitan College and funded through the UK Community Renewal Fund will train and upskill more than 180 trainees from across academia and industry in hydrogen to ensure Northern Ireland has the skills required to maximise the opportunities presented from the hydrogen economy.



1/3

Environmental

Challenges

Environmental impact of buildings - Currently, 39% of Belfast's carbon emissions come from the domestic housing sector, 24% comes from public and commercial buildings, industry is responsible for 18% and transport is responsible for 20% of emissions.

Resilience - Like many coastal areas, the Belfast region faces unprecedented challenges to build resilience and overcome the risks posed by climate change, and reduce carbon emissions from new development. These are well documented in the Belfast Resilience Strategy.

Environmental quality and health - Belfast suffers from severe traffic congestion and air pollution, which is affecting community health and degrading the environmental quality of the city.

Existing housing stock - In Northern Ireland, less than 50% of housing has an Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) band at C or above.

Stalled policy in recent years - The introduction of regional environmental policy (climate change, circular economy or biodiversity net gain) was stalled during the three-year period without a government in NI. This presents a challenge as this important government lever for driving action in the real estate sector hasn't been in place. Increasing priority is being placed on environmental issues across NI as whole, so it is hoped that this situation will improve over time.

Opportunities/ongoing initiatives

Policy - There are several new sustainability policies being introduced by the NI Executive, as outlined previously, including climate change legislation and Northern Ireland's first ever overarching Environment Strategy.

Climate action - Belfast declared a climate emergency in October 2019, the Belfast Climate Commission has produced a Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast which charts a path to Net Zero by 2050. It demonstrates a compelling economic case for climate action in Belfast: if we invest £180m per annum through to 2030, we can reduce our energy bills by £264m per annum. In December 2020, Belfast produced its first Resilience Strategy and a Resilience and Sustainability Board has been set up to advise and oversee the delivery and implementation of the Strategy. A Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan has been developed for Belfast, and the city also has an ambition to see one million trees planted over a 15-year period. A Bolder Vision for Belfast, developed jointly by Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities and the Department for Infrastructure, focuses on the principles of: promoting wellbeing for all; prioritising walking, cycling and public transport; creating lively, safe and green streets; and removing barriers to movement between the city centre and surrounding communities.

Local Development Plans - The new council Local Development Plans will provide the statutory framework to enable a transition to a low carbon and sustainable urban development. Belfast's LDP core objectives are to promote a green and active place and a smart connected and resilient city.

Belfast Region City Deal projects - BRCD partners are committed to strengthening the sustainability focus of the BRCD by considering the programme's contribution to climate resilience. The implications and long-term economic risk of climate change both globally and across the Belfast region have become increasingly clear since the BRCD programme was initially developed. New legislation to decarbonise the economy will necessitate a step change. Within their individual organisations, BRCD partners have already begun to develop environmental sustainability plans to support the achievement of net zero carbon goals. Partners are also continuing to consider how their physical projects might be designed with climate change in mind so that they align with climate resilience objectives. Partners will also consider whether there is the potential to enhance the contribution to sustainability objectives through additional projects developed through the BRCD complementary fund.



2/3

Environmental

Challenges

Opportunities/ongoing initiatives

Increasing demand from businesses and investors - Local private developers interviewed for this report reported that business tenants are starting to demand higher environmental sustainability standards from real estate, and investors are placing higher emphasis on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors when making investment decisions. These are two key drivers for developers to deliver higher environmental sustainability standards and wider benefits from real estate investment.

Green jobs and skills - Future investment in real estate presents a significant opportunity for green jobs and skills, such as retrofit and energy efficiency improvements, low carbon technology manufacture and installation, and the circular economy.

Pilot retrofit project - The NI Housing Executive is currently delivering a pilot retrofit project that will deliver improved energy efficiency standards for social housing across the city, to be rolled out across all their building stock. Belfast City Council envisages delivery of a series of Retrofit Academies in 2022 to provide opportunity for training and employment in this emerging sector.



04. Assessing the Belfast city region's built environment potential

An overview of case studies from across the region are summarised in this section. This section also examines industry best practice from the UK, Europe and further afield and identifies pipeline projects in the Belfast city region which are already stepping up to the challenge.

Looking back: Local case studies

There have been record levels of new offices, hotels and student accommodation in Belfast since 2015, with the office market positioned as the city's strongest-performing sector. 18 local case studies were identified that have delivered wider benefits in the Belfast region, spanning four real estate asset classes: major regeneration projects; residential and purpose built managed student accommodation; commercial; and culture leisure and tourism. These case studies are provided in Appendix A.

In recent years there has been a transformation in Belfast city with major regeneration projects such as **Titanic Quarter** and **Ulster University's new campus** delivering high quality real estate, enhanced public realm, adding vitality, creating employment opportunities and attracting new residents, visitors and tourists. Titanic Quarter has already delivered £146 million of social

value and it is expected that by 2035 that a total of £528 million of social value will be generated (social value monetisation also calculated using TOMs). During construction of the new Ulster University campus in Belfast, the equivalent of 101.7 years worth of training, placement and apprenticeship opportunities were delivered to young people, students, and the long term unemployed. At Weavers Cross, when developing the **Belfast Transport Hub**, at an early stage, project sponsor, Translink Group, set out to create significant social value through the project. The project was highly commended by the National Social Value Awards in 2021 for its approach to social value and the outcomes achieved during the enabling works phase. Both Ulster University and Titanic Quarter achieved BREEAM Excellent. Since 2009, over 500,000 sq. ft. of Titanic Quarter developments have been accredited LEED Gold or BREEAM Excellent.

All of the Belfast region councils have delivered a variety of cultural, leisure and tourism projects that have purposefully intended to deliver wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Projects of note include The Connswater Community Greenway and Leisure Transformation Programme (Belfast City Council), Hillsborough Park (Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council), The Gobbins Visitor Centre and Carrickfergus Public Realm (Mid and East Antrim Borough Council), as well as Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Derrymore Demesne and Newry Public Realm (Newry, Mourne and Down District Council). These projects have delivered social benefits such as promoting health and wellbeing, creating destinations for people to meet, and contributing to placemaking. They have delivered economic benefits, such as job creation and money being spent in the local economy.

In the commercial asset class, **The Innovation Factory** created a place for new start-up businesses and entrepreneurs in Belfast which included the requirement for a Social Regeneration Plan to be produced as part of the procurement for the long-term operator. This resulted in many socio-economic benefits including creating over 500 jobs, providing skills development opportunities, work placement provision and engaging with young people from schools. The BREEAM Excellent certified Innovation Factory has a 'Buy Local' policy during operation which has resulted in 56% of the spend taking place in Belfast, benefiting the local economy.

Refurbishing rather than demolishing is a key circular economy principle and has social (e.g. heritage), environmental and economic benefits. **Flax House, Flatiron and The Weaving**

Works are three examples of refurbishment projects that have delivered high quality commercial space and retained many original features. **Durham Street by Clanmil Housing** has undergone sensitive restoration and delivered 23 high quality homes. The £16m refurbishment of **John Bell House** transformed a derelict and deteriorating Grade 2 listed building into private student accommodation, providing 413 student beds in Belfast city centre and creating a sense of place for the area. The refurbishment contract was awarded to a local contractor from Newry, contributing to the local economy. Apprenticeships were provided during the construction phase, providing new skills and qualifications for young local people.

Several projects have adopted standard sustainability frameworks and certification

schemes, for example BREEAM, LEED, CEEQUAL and TOMs. **Belfast Harbour City Quays Gardens** will be developed to achieve the 'One Planet Living' accreditation, a first in Northern Ireland.

“ Refurbishing rather than demolishing is a key circular economy principle and has social (e.g. heritage), environmental and economic benefits ”

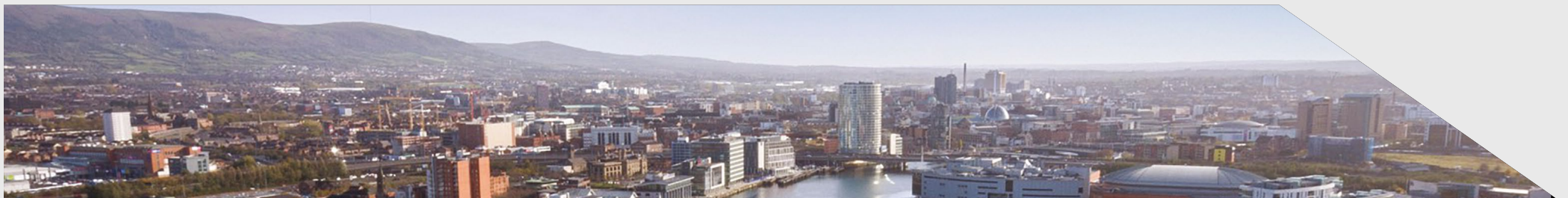
This review of real estate projects delivered in the past five years in the Belfast city region has revealed:

- There are several examples of good practice across all asset classes, particularly in Belfast. However, this is not mainstream.

- There is evidence of developers, housing associations, university capital investment departments and council capital investment programmes demonstrating leadership to deliver broader social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- There is limited quantified information about outcomes achieved, and this is an area for improvement. The Belfast Transport Hub early works, Ulster University's relocation, and Belfast City Council's Leisure Transformation Programme are leading in this regard.
- The best outcomes have been achieved when the project established social, economic and environmental objectives at the beginning of the project and a plan for achieving this.
- Councils have a significant role

to bring forward development sites, deliver public realm improvements and supporting infrastructure, and enable the delivery of wider outcomes.

- There are several major real estate projects that are in the 'pipeline' – by that we mean projects that are currently in design and construction, due to be completed in the future, in the region of £3 billion in Belfast alone. These projects are clearly stepping up to the sustainable development agenda, going further than projects delivered in the last five years (see Section 6.2 for more information). These include the BRCD investments which will be developed in line with the Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework in place for the Deal. This will include embedding social value into procurement processes.



Looking further afield - International best practice

Five exemplar case studies that span different types of real estate development (e.g. waterside regeneration, commercial, residential) and that have delivered successful outcomes across the social, economic and/or environmental lenses of sustainable development were examined as part of this research. All five cases provide an overview of how strategic decisions have led to multiple beneficial impacts. Please refer to Appendix C for the case studies.

The key lessons learnt are:

- The importance of engaging with local communities to understand local needs and build trust.
- The importance of developing a strategy at the outset of the project for delivering wider outcomes (social, economic and environmental) and a clear process for delivery and reporting.
- The importance of client leadership and collaboration with multiple stakeholders for delivering successful outcomes.
- The importance of getting the right design and construction team in place who can help deliver your Sustainability Strategy and bring innovation and creative thinking.
- The importance of public and private sector investment in supporting infrastructure such as public realm and transport.
- Different investment, funding and governance models can lead to positive outcomes.
- Developing brownfield land and reusing buildings rather than demolishing them have many positive benefits.
- Capturing social value using a financial measure (£s of social value created) can be a powerful metric for demonstrating impact.

Pipeline real estate projects stepping up

There are several major real estate projects that are in the 'pipeline' across Belfast and wider city region – by that we mean projects that are currently in design and

construction, due to be completed in the future. It is clear that these projects are stepping up to the sustainable development agenda, going further than projects delivered in the last five years.

Projects of note in Belfast include **Tribeca, The Waterside, Custom House, Giant's Park North Foreshore, Belfast Stories and Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase II**. In the wider region, there are some pipeline regeneration projects that are also seeking to deliver broader social, economic and environmental benefits. This includes **Bangor Waterfront and Queen's Parade** in Ards and North Down Borough Council, **Glengormley town centre regeneration** in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, **Carrickfergus Regeneration** in Mid & East Antrim Borough Council and the **Newry City Centre Regeneration** programme and **Warrenpoint Public Realm** led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Many of the pipeline projects are investments through the Belfast Region City Deal, which are being developed in line





with the inclusive growth and sustainability framework for the deal. This includes the integration of social value requirements into procurement. Many of these projects are at the early stages of planning and design. One of the key recommendations arising from this research project is that built environment investment projects funded through The BRCD should be exemplar in the delivery of wider inclusive growth and sustainability outcomes for the whole Belfast region, over the asset lifecycle.

Pipeline projects of note from a sustainability perspective are briefly summarised in Appendix B.

Forecasting future benefits

It is difficult to provide a detailed forecast of future benefits, because each real estate project has the license to set its own ambitions and targets.

Based on the proposed policies in Belfast's draft Local Development Plan, future real estate development should seek to deliver:

- 20% affordable housing for all residential developments on sites greater than 0.1ha and/or containing 5 or more dwelling units.
- 10% wheelchair accessible units for new schemes over 10 units
- At least 10% of the total site area as public open space linked to local networks
- BREEAM Excellent certification for major developments

The five other councils in the Belfast region are in the process of preparing their Local Development Plans, and will establish their own targets.

The Belfast Developer Contributions Framework is also in place to secure Developer Contributions as part of the planning application process. Developer Contributions may be

sought to manage the impacts of development on infrastructure or the environment. Belfast City Council currently places a high priority on employability and skills interventions through Developer Contributions, requiring an Employability and Skills Plan to be produced.

Currently, Belfast City Council has 12 live major developments where a skills shortage has been identified and where an Employability and Skills Plan is under development or delivery by way of mitigation, through the Developer Contributions Framework. These interventions may be delivered via in-kind or financial contributions (or a hybrid of both) commensurate with the nature and scale of the contract. The interventions are developed on a case by case basis to create pathways for residents to gain employment both during construction and operational phases of the developments. In seven of these live contracts, employability interventions are under delivery, development, or negotiation in respect of the construction phase; these range from initiatives to build career pathways into specific employment roles, the creation of apprenticeships and training opportunities and the creation

of jobs in a range of trades and skills levels, including provision to ringfence roles for the long-term unemployed. The scope of the initiatives ranges, in proportion to the nature of the contract, from large interventions such as those associated with Waterside and Tribeca developments, which are set to create an estimated 8,000 jobs and 2,000 jobs respectively, to smaller commercial and residential developments where initiatives are implemented to upskill and create apprenticeship opportunities in specific trades.

Section 5 in the accompanying supporting information summarises the potential monetised social value (a measure which captures social, economic and environmental value) that could be created.

In summary, there are several major real estate projects, amounting to £3bn in total investment, currently in the pipeline. If the pipeline projects delivered 20% additional "social value through construction", in line with best practice across the UK, they would generate £600m worth of jobs, skills development and local supply chain opportunities, as well as community and wellbeing benefits, for people and businesses in the Belfast region.

05. A focused approach to delivering sustainable development

This chapter examines the tools and methodologies available for incorporating industry best practice into the real estate lifecycle process.

01. Sustainable Development Frameworks and Certification Schemes

Numerous frameworks for sustainable development have been developed to help stakeholders understand the key issues and to provide an organising structure for taking action on real estate and infrastructure projects. Several sustainable design and construction certification schemes also exist, which provide a recognisable and independent standard for buildings and infrastructure that quickly communicates how sustainable a built environment asset is to stakeholders.

Section 2 in the supporting information identifies the main frameworks and certification schemes for real estate construction projects that can be used in the Belfast region, followed by examples of projects in the Belfast region which are already using some of these.

The choice of which industry framework and/or certification scheme to use should be made

on a case-by-case basis by developers, with the support of specialist sustainability consultants, and agreed at the earliest opportunity.

Using frameworks to guide development and attaining sustainable design certifications can have numerous benefits. They provide a consistent and recognisable approach and standard for sustainable development and sustainable buildings. They help ensure a broad range of outcomes are considered, can improve the health and wellbeing of tenants and reduce operational energy costs, both of which attract high profile tenants to occupy the building.

It is best practice for framework and certification schemes to be complemented by a project-specific Sustainability Strategy

However, projects should be wary not to use them in a “tick box” manner, which can lead to inappropriate solutions being delivered to score higher points

or higher levels of certification. In addition, the frameworks and certification schemes do not address employment and skills in detail, which is a high priority for the Belfast region. As such, an Employability and Skills Plan should also be produced at the outset of the project, which covers both construction and operation.

Many built environment projects across the UK have minimum certification requirements established at the beginning of the project, either through the planning process or through the developer’s minimum design standards. For example, Belfast’s new draft Local Development Plan seeks BREEAM Excellent for major developments and 20% affordable housing.

It is best practice for framework and certification schemes to be complemented by a project-specific Sustainability Strategy that takes into account the local context, opportunities and challenges and sets additional outcomes and targets for the built environment asset to achieve in line with client ambitions and the project context.

02. Methodology for setting, implementing, measuring and reporting outcomes

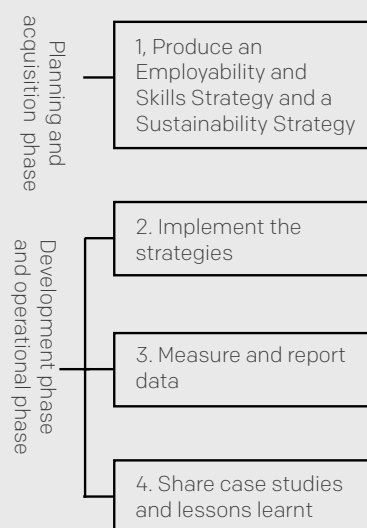
In this section, we set out a simple methodology for real estate developments in the Belfast region. The methodology is for setting, implementing, measuring and reporting outcomes from real estate investment projects that enables projects to have the flexibility to decide what is achieved.

It is based on four steps, shown in Figure 5:

1. Produce an Employability and Skills Strategy, and a Sustainability Strategy

The first step is for a project to develop a project-specific Employability and Skills Strategy, and a Sustainability Strategy at the outset of the project, during the planning and acquisition phase. These documents will determine the types of *outcomes* the development is trying to deliver, the level of ambition and a plan for delivery. They should seek to identify the wider benefits that can be delivered for within the redline boundary of the project, the local community, and the wider Belfast region. Together, they should cover all three pillars of

Figure 5: Process for delivering wider benefits



sustainable development: social, economic and environmental. Belfast City Council already requires developers to produce an Employability and Skills Strategy as part of the Developer Contributions Framework associated with planning permission for Major Developments.

These strategies should inform a *value-based decision making approach* for all phases of the real estate asset lifecycle.

There are many sustainable development frameworks and certification schemes that can be used to guide the Sustainability Strategy, and forecast the potential benefits, as highlighted in Section 2 in supporting document. There is no one-size-fits all approach and the most appropriate frameworks and/or certification schemes should be agreed on a case-by-case basis. Projects delivered through the Belfast Region City Deal should be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework when developing their strategies.

The production of these documents should be led by the developer and may require the support of specialist consultants. It will be important to engage with local communities, stakeholders and the design and construction supply chain early on as to develop the strategies. It is beneficial to include them in planning submissions.

Belfast City Council requires that the Employability and Skills Strategy is designed to deliver inclusive economic growth. It should include employment opportunities for the construction and operational phases. Actions

should align with the project-specific Employability and Skills Strategy. This is a generic list of actions for consideration:

- Recruitment ensuring people who are out of work or wish to have a better job are provided with upskilling, support and access to the job opportunities, engagement with local Jobs and Benefits Offices and Employability and Skills projects across the city
- Work trials and interview guarantees
- Pre-employment training
- Apprenticeships
- Higher Level Apprenticeships
- Vocational training (NVQ)
- Work experience (14-16 years, 16-19 years and 19+ years)
- School, college and university site visits
- Construction skills including CSR cards
- Supervisor training
- Leadership and management training
- Support with transport, childcare and work equipment
- Any further details of in-house training schemes
- Council led employment academies/Department for Economy provisions

- Other third-party delivery or schemes
- Social enterprise development and related capacity building programmes
- Test Trading units
- Business support programmes – including meet the supplier workshops
- Community Engagement programmes and events

The Sustainability Strategy should include targets and outcomes that the project wants to achieve spanning the social, economic and environmental lenses. For example, this could include targets for:

- Overall social value creation (e.g. 20% of construction value)
- Affordable housing provision (e.g. 20%) – in line with Belfast's draft LDP
- Contracts awarded to SMEs or Social Enterprises (e.g. 25%)
- Carbon emissions reduction (e.g. net zero carbon)
- Circular economy (e.g. 95% of construction waste reused or recycled, designed for adaptability and deconstruction)
- Biodiversity (e.g. biodiversity net gain)

- Sustainable design (e.g. BREEAM Excellent) – in line with Belfast's draft LDP

It should also include specific strategies or programmes of work to create additional benefits over the lifecycle of the real estate project, based on local needs.

A survey conducted for this research project revealed that most stakeholders believe that Belfast city region should be very ambitious in maximising social, economic and environmental benefits from real estate and regeneration investment, and this should be a key consideration when producing these plans and strategies.

2. Implement the strategies

The second step is for the developer to embed the strategies into all stages of the project, such as the design brief, design reviews, procurement approach, construction contracts and facilities management contracts. This requires a value-based approach to

decision making and delivery throughout the project lifecycle and will necessitate training and capacity building within the client team and supply chain.

Key actions include:

- Embed sustainability requirements into the design brief
- Carry out community co-design and consultation to identify local needs and maintain strong community relationships
- Embed social, economic and environmental requirements into procurement, to ensure you are working with a supply chain that can help you meet your goals
- Include bid commitments in contracts
- Implement strong design management and contract management to ensure wider outcomes are achieved
- Collaborate with partners, supply chain and key stakeholders to deliver the desired outcomes

As much as possible, broader benefits should be delivered through direct interventions rather than providing a financial contribution.

3. Measure and report data

The third step is to measure and report progress against the Employability and Skills Strategy, and Sustainability Strategy targets and outcomes, through the development and operational phases. This should be led by the developer, with support of the design team and contractor.

All real estate projects should seek to measure and report two different types of data:

- **Quantitative outcomes (data)** such as number of jobs for local people, number of apprenticeships, number of contracts awarded to SMEs, carbon emissions reduction achieved, % social value created). The specific data that is reported should align with the project's Sustainability Strategy and Employment and Skills Strategy.
- **Qualitative outcomes (impact stories)** such as improved community cohesion, improved health and wellbeing, improved access to green space, as well as impact stories or case studies about how the interventions have changed people's lives. This requires talking to key stakeholders to uncover the benefits.

If a project wanted to be in line with UK best practice, it could also monetise the data, to produce a financial figure for the £ of social value created. This is a new and emerging discipline and projects may require the support of expert social value consultants to assist with this, to ensure the methodology for monetisation is rigorous and defensible.

A number of tools can be used to track progress against the project's targets and outcomes, including:

- Simple Excel spreadsheet
- Excel spreadsheet including PowerBI to provide interactive visualizations and dashboards
- TOMs Social Value Measurement Framework²²(free)
- Online tools, for example SustainIQ²³, OnePlanet²⁴ and Impact Reporting²⁵ (fees associated with them)

Methods for reporting outcomes include:

- Design reports, construction-phase progress reports and close-out reports
- Case studies
- Award submissions

The BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework includes example measures

for BRCD projects or activities, which includes real estate investment projects delivered through the Deal. Private-sector-led development and other public sector capital investment projects in the Belfast region could also seek to align with these measures for consistency, but this is of course optional.

4. Share case studies and lessons learnt

The final stage is to share case studies internally and externally across the real estate sector. This should include both the successes and lessons learnt.

Case studies should be produced by developers and/or contractors, and ideally collated by the Belfast region councils.

²² <https://socialvalueportal.com/national-toms/>

²³ <https://sustainiq.com/>

²⁴ <https://oneplanet.com/>

²⁵ <https://impactreporting.co.uk/>



06 ■ Key findings and recommendations

Details of the six recommendations that public and private partners should adopt to drive sustainable inclusive growth are included in this section. These recommendations should act as enabling levers for city region partners to incorporate sustainable development best practice into real estate development.

This research has resulted in six key findings, and associated recommendations, which should act as enabling levers for public and private sector partners to act upon to ensure that future development delivers positive social, environmental and economic benefits across the city region.

Three of the recommendations are for the real estate sector and construction supply chain, one relates specifically to BRCD projects, one is focused on the role of local councils, and one relates to the role of the NI Executive. In some cases, these recommendations are already being implemented by some developers or some councils, but they need to become more widespread and accelerated.

All real estate development stakeholders should produce an Action Plan for implementing these recommendations.

Audience	Recommendation
Real estate sector <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private developers• Investors• Housing associations• Public sector capital investment• Construction supply chain	1. The real estate sector and construction supply chain should demonstrate leadership for delivering wider outcomes. 2. New real estate development projects in the Belfast region should follow the simple four-step process outlined in section 5 of this report, to deliver wider outcomes. 3. The real estate sector needs a cultural shift from capital cost-based decision making to value-based decision making.
BRCD projects	4. Built environment investment projects funded through the Belfast Region City Deal should be exemplar in the delivery of wider inclusive growth and sustainability outcomes over the asset lifecycle.
Local councils	5. Local councils should continue to drive and support more inclusive and sustainable real estate investment. It can do this through three key levers: lead by example, influence, and invest.
NI Executive	6. The NI Executive could support wider and more impactful outcomes to be achieved through several enablers.

Key finding 1

The real estate sector has a significant role to play in helping to address the Belfast Region's social, economic and environmental challenges through the planning and acquisition phase, development phase and operation phase. It is an important stakeholder in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth and can achieve this by delivering wider benefits within the redline boundary of the project, within the local community and across the wider Belfast region. The business case for sustainability is strengthening. Internationally, building owners report that green buildings - whether new or renovated - command a 7% increase in asset value over traditional buildings.

Through the interviews and case study research undertaken for this project, it has become clear that leading real estate companies operating in the Belfast region are ready to step up to the sustainable development challenge. The local case studies in the appendix include several examples of real estate and built environment projects that have gone beyond minimum building regulations

and delivered wider benefits for the economy, society and the environment. There is however the need for a cultural shift across the whole real estate and construction sector operating in the region to make delivery of wider benefits more mainstream and impactful. Together, with focused effort, the real estate sector could create hundreds of millions of pounds of additional social value through real estate investment, for the benefit of local people and the local economy and ultimately the long term success of the city..

Recommendation 1: The real estate sector and construction supply chain should demonstrate leadership for delivering wider outcomes

All real estate sector stakeholders should step up to the inclusive growth and sustainable development challenge, to help tackle the significant social, economic and environmental issues the Belfast region is facing. There is a need for strong ambition, proactive action, leadership to implement best practice, and collaboration with the supply chain and key stakeholders. A significant cultural shift across the industry is required to make

delivery of wider benefits more mainstream and impactful. As a first step, we recommend that business operating in the local real estate and construction sector sign up to the city's Inclusive Growth Charter, a Belfast Business Promise and start acting on their pledges. This will publicly recognise the good practice of the sector and encourage others to adopt more inclusive and sustainable practices. In addition, they should make commitments to transition towards net zero carbon development and seek to create social value through design and construction in line with best practice (minimum 10% of construction contract value, moving towards 20%+).



The real estate sector should also seek to influence and collaborate with business occupiers during long-term property management phase.

Key finding 2

The local and international case studies in this report demonstrate that the most successful outcomes have been achieved when the real estate client establishes the project's social, economic and environmental ambitions and targets at the outset of the project, supported by a strong process for delivery and reporting. Every project is unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach for defining, measuring, and reporting outcomes. Therefore, we are recommending a simple and flexible four-step process for delivering wider benefits from real estate investment projects, as set out in Section 6 of this report.

Recommendation 2: New real estate development projects in the Belfast region should follow the simple four-step process outlined in section 6 of this report, to deliver wider outcomes.

The four steps are:

1. Produce an ambitious **Employability and Skills Strategy** (already required via the Belfast City Council Developer Contributions Framework), and a Sustainability Strategy during the planning and acquisition phase, that take an outcomes-based approach, and deliver wider benefits beyond the redline boundary of the project. The choice to use standard industry sustainability frameworks and certification schemes should be made on a case-by-case basis.
2. Put in place strong processes to implement the strategies through development phase and operational phase.
3. Measure and report the outcomes achieved (quantitative and quantitative outcomes, and, if you want to be leading, monetise the social value that has been created).
4. Share case studies and lessons learnt.

See section 5 for further guidance.



Key finding 3

In the past, the real estate sector has been challenged by some members of society who viewed it as an industry that prioritises creating wealth for developers and investors, over concern for societal and environmental benefit. It is welcomed that there is a growing trend from the local market to tackle environmental and socio-economic problems and deliver more inclusive and sustainable development. The UK real estate and construction industry is now on a fundamental shift towards value-based decision making, redefining traditional financial value and a capital cost focus, to also account for social, economic and environmental value over the long-term. Key to delivering wider outcomes, is embedding this into decision making throughout the asset lifecycle.

Recommendation 3: The real estate sector needs a cultural shift from capital cost-based decision making to value-based decision making

The real estate and construction sector should embed the delivery of wider outcomes (social, economic and environmental)

into decision making over the real estate asset lifecycle (planning and acquisition phase, development phase and operation phase). The Construction Innovation Hub's Value Toolkit can be used for guidance.

Key finding 4

The Belfast Region City Deal presents a unique opportunity to accelerate inclusive growth and sustainable development in the region. The tourism, regeneration, infrastructure and innovation projects funded through the Deal are being developed with inclusive growth and sustainability in mind, underpinned by an employability and skills programme, but more can be achieved. These projects should seek to set new standards for the delivery of wider benefits in Northern Ireland and the reporting of outcomes. The framework for this now exists in the form of the BCRD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.

Recommendation 4: Built environment investment projects funded through The Belfast Region City Deal should be exemplar in the delivery of wider inclusive growth

and sustainability outcomes over the asset lifecycle.

In practice, this means putting inclusive growth and sustainability at the heart of these projects:

- BCRD partners should, taking account of the different stages of development of the projects, integrate inclusion and sustainability into the design and delivery of BCRD real estate projects in line with the BCRD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework and best practice industry trends (e.g., value-based decision making, social value creation, zero carbon design, circular economy principles, biodiversity net gain).
- BCRD partners should seek to work with an innovative and creative supply chain who can help these projects lead by example in terms of inclusive growth and sustainability. Including social value evaluation criteria in procurement will be a key mechanism for achieving this.
- BCRD public and private sector partners should work together to develop new proposals for investment that can help to deliver zero carbon

objectives.

- BCRD projects should use a consistent reporting approach and tool for capturing the inclusive growth and sustainability outcomes.

Key finding 5

The Belfast region councils are key enablers for more inclusive and sustainable real estate investment. In recent years, they have been setting the tone for this through the publication of policies and strategies and have invested in supporting infrastructure. However, more can be achieved.

Recommendation 5: Local councils should continue to drive and support more inclusive and sustainable real estate investment. It can do this through three key levers: lead by example, influence, and invest.

Lead by example

- Leading by example in the design, procurement, construction, and management of council-led capital investment projects. Belfast City Council in particular has already made

good strides on embedding sustainability and inclusive growth outcomes into its capital projects, policies and strategies such as the development of a Social Value Policy and toolkit for all Council contracts.

- Leading by example by reporting outcomes in a consistent way on a reporting platform that can aggregate outcomes across all projects.
- Delivering training across the council to increase sustainability expertise and capacity to support wider outcomes to be achieved.

Influence the real estate sector

Influencing the real estate sector (production of strategies, roadmaps, charters etc that set the tone for sustainable real estate investment in the region. This includes encouraging the real estate sector to sign up to the Inclusive Growth City Charter - Belfast Business Promise).

- Using planning powers to influence and direct the real estate sector to achieve more, through:
 - Local Development Plan (including supplementing existing policies through the

- future LDP review process)
- Building regulations
- Pre-Application Discussions and support
- Guiding Developer Contributions investment
- Capturing and sharing best practice case studies.

Investment

Investing in supporting sustainable infrastructure surrounding real estate developments (e.g., renewable energy schemes, public realm, active travel, climate resilience, meanwhile uses, smart neighbourhoods).

Key finding 6

The public sector in Northern Ireland has strong ambitions for inclusive and sustainable growth, however progress has been somewhat constrained by barriers including the political context in which NI and the Belfast region operate in at present, as well as other factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing public sector cost constraints. This report highlights several local challenges spanning political, economic, social, technological,

legal and environmental (PESTLE) themes, that the NI Executive has a key role in overcoming. Incoming regional sustainable development policy (e.g., climate change, environment, social value) should help improve the situation, alongside the newly established Infrastructure Commission, and Fiscal Commission. Additionally, more council devolved powers, notably regeneration, transport, advice on all planning applications involving Listed Buildings, and associated funding; and reform of the planning process, would support a more coherent approach to regeneration and placemaking.

As major regeneration and infrastructure investment responsibility sits with the NI Executive, it has an important role to lead by example, and collaborate with local councils to achieve wider outcomes (in particular, Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure, Department for the Economy).

Recommendation 6: The NI Executive could support wider and more impactful outcomes to be achieved through several enablers.

This includes:

- Introducing new policies to support sustainable development (accelerating a Climate Change Bill, circular economy policy, biodiversity net gain policy)
- Devolution of regeneration and transport powers as well as advice on all planning applications involving Listed Building, and associated funding to councils
- Leading by example on regeneration and infrastructure investment projects (delivery of wider benefits and high environmental sustainability standards)
- Investment in sustainable infrastructure
- Speeding up decisions for developers through the planning consultation process
- Funding and de-risking role



Glossary

Belfast Region Councils: The six partner Councils in the Belfast Region City Deal: Belfast City Council; Mid & East Antrim Borough Council; Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council; Ards and North Down Borough Council; and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD):

A bespoke package of funding and decision-making powers negotiated between central government and councils in the Belfast Region, aimed at harnessing additional investment, creating new jobs and accelerating inclusive economic growth.

Buy Social: The NI Social Value Unit assists Northern Ireland Government Departments, and their agencies and arm's length bodies, to maximise the social value delivered through public procurement. The Social Value Unit have developed the 'Buy Social' approach, which helps contracting authorities to design, implement and monitor social value in public contracts. 'Buy Social' is also The the name of Social Enterprise UK's campaign that aims to build markets for social enterprises among the general public as well as the private and public sectors.

Circular economy: an economic model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products to retain their value and utility as long as possible without creating waste. It is defined in contradiction to the traditional linear economy where we 'take, make, waste'.

ESG: Environmental, Social and Governance factors provide a set of criteria for a company's operations that socially conscious investors can use to screen their potential investments. Environmental criteria consider how a company performs as a steward of nature. Social factors examine how a company manages its relationships with employees, suppliers, customer and the communities in which it operates. Governance deals with a company's leadership, executive pay, audits, internal controls and shareholders rights.

Inclusive growth: A concept that advances equitable opportunities for economic participants during economic growth with benefits incurred by every section of society. It is about embedding equity into the development process, which demands strong shifts in resources and capabilities, stakeholder and organizational incentives, and trust across social networks.

Meanwhile use: The short-term use of vacant land and temporarily empty buildings such as shops until they can be brought back into commercial use. It takes a potential problem and turns it into an opportunity and helps keep an area vibrant.

Net zero carbon: Net zero means achieving a balance between the carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases put into the atmosphere and those taken out.

SME: The UK government definition of Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) encompasses micro (less than 10 employees and an annual turnover under €2 million), small (less than 50 employees and an annual turnover under €10 million) and medium-sized (less than 250 employees and an annual turnover under €50 million) businesses.

Social value: In the context of the built environment, social value is created when buildings, places and infrastructure support environmental, economic and social wellbeing, and in doing so improve the quality of life of people. Exactly which environmental, economic and social outcomes create social value will depend on the best interests of the people most impacted by the project or built asset. Those outcomes must be defined for each built environment project.

Social enterprise: A social enterprise or social business is defined as a business that has specific social objectives that serve its primary purpose. Like traditional businesses they aim to make a profit but it's what they do with their profits that sets them apart – reinvesting or donating them to create positive social change.

Sustainability, or sustainable development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It has three interlinked pillars: economic, environmental, and social.

TOMS: The National Social Value Measurement Framework – or National TOMs for short – is a method of reporting and measuring social value to a consistent standard. TOMs stands for Themes, Outcomes and Measures. The Framework was developed by Social Value Portal and launched in 2017. The Framework is reviewed and endorsed by the National Social Value Taskforce.

Viability assessment: A process of assessing whether a site is financially viable, by looking at whether the value generated by a development is more than the cost of developing it. This includes looking at the key elements of gross development value, costs, land value, landowner premium, and developer return.

VCSEs: Voluntary, community or social enterprises. They can either be small to medium-sized voluntary organisations defined by having an annual income between £25,000 and £1 m. Alternatively they can be micro charity organisations that have an annual income of less than £25,000.

Supporting Information

1] Local council responsibilities in Northern Ireland

Local government is a devolved matter, meaning that the local government system varies in many ways between the four nations of the UK. In Northern Ireland, local Councils are responsible for a limited range of functions compared to the rest of the United Kingdom.

Table 1 summarises the responsibilities of councils, and which functions are the responsibility of the NI Executive, in relation to the built environment²⁶. In England, Scotland, and Wales, councils are responsible for a much wider set of services, as shown in Table 2.

Table 1

NI Councils:	NI Executive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• local planning functions inc. development management and plan making• enforcement of building regulations• estates management - building design and maintenance• sports, leisure services and recreational facilities• parks, open spaces and playgrounds• community centres• arts, heritage and cultural facilities• small-scale tourism accommodation development• waste collection and disposal• recycling and waste management• environmental protection and improvement• community planning• do we add Advocacy???	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• urban regeneration• roads• public housing• drainage water and sewerage• libraries• street lighting• transport• education

Table 2

		Arts and recreation	Births, deaths, and marriage registration	Building regulations	Burials and cremations	Children's services	Coastal protection	Community safety	Concessionary travel	Consumer protection	Council tax and business rates	Economic development	Education and skills	Elections and electoral registration	Emergency planning	Environmental health	Highways and roads	Housing	Libraries	Licensing	Markets and fairs	Museums and galleries	Parking	Planning	Public conveniences	Public health	Social care	Sports centres and parks	Street cleaning	Tourism	Trading standards	Transport	Waste collection and recycling	Waste disposal			
Two tier areas (England only)	District	■		■			■	■				■	■		■			■		■			■	■	■								■				
	County	■	■			■			■	■			■	■		■				■				■	■		■							■			
Single tier areas	London borough																																				
	Metropolitan district					■		■			■	■						■	■						■		■										
	Unitary authority										■	■						■	■						■		■						■				
	Unitary authority (NI)												■																								
		■ Council holds powers	■ Some councils share powers with a combined authority (England only)																																		

²⁶ For a full list of council services, see <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/local-councils#toc-1>.

Supporting Information

2] Sustainable Development Frameworks and Certification Schemes

This section identifies the main frameworks and certification schemes for real estate construction projects that can be used in the Belfast Region, followed by examples of projects in the Belfast Region that have successfully implemented them.

Table 3: Sustainable Development Frameworks and Certification Schemes

Framework	Brief summary	Application in Belfast Region, where relevant
NI Executive Programme for Government Strategic Outcomes Framework	The NI Executive is bringing forward an Outcomes-based Programme for Government (PfG) that is focused on achieving outcomes of societal wellbeing and delivering real and positive change in people's lives. It will build on the outcomes-based approach that has defined strategic planning across the public sector since 2016, and reflect the messages contained in New Decade New Approach. The draft Framework contains nine strategic Outcomes which, taken together, will set a clear direction of travel for the NI Executive and provide a vision for the future of all citizens. The consultation closed in March 2021.	Regeneration and infrastructure investment projects brought forward by the Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure will need to align with the Strategic Outcomes Framework.
BRCD Inclusive Growth & Sustainability Framework	Given the importance of the inclusive growth ambition as an integral part of the BRCD Programme, the projects forming the capital investment must follow the BRCD Inclusive Growth & Sustainability Framework. This sets out how inclusive growth and sustainability should be considered in: programme design and development; project development and delivery (e.g. procurement, planning); and monitoring delivery. The Framework seeks to tackle four key challenges: slow growth, employment and income disparities, skills inequalities, and climate impacts.	This will be applicable to all real estate projects delivered through the BRCD.
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals	The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are 17 interconnected goals that call for urgent action for all countries through global partnership. The goals cover social, economic and environmental issues and provide a clear framework to measure and indicate areas of improvements for sustainable development. All of the SDGs have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the real estate sector.	Some leading local real estate and construction organisations have aligned their corporate sustainability strategies to the UN SDGs, for example GRAHAM Construction.
The Value Toolkit – Construction Innovation Hub	The Value Toolkit, developed by the Construction Innovation Hub, supports better decision-making throughout the whole investment lifecycle from business case through to procurement and delivery and operation, improving overall sector performance consistent with key policy objectives such as driving Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), delivering social impact and accelerating the path towards Net Zero. The Value Toolkit uses the Four Capitals approach as a way of defining value (natural capital, social capital, human capital and produced capital). Whilst the capitals approach may be new for a construction audience, it is familiar to a corporate audience – where many construction-related decisions are made. It also aligns with HM Treasury's Green Book, against which public sector investment decisions are made.	
One Planet Living	The One Planet Living framework consists of ten simple principles that make it easy to plan, deliver and communicate your commitment a project's commitment to sustainability.	Belfast Harbour City Quays Gardens will be developed to achieve the 'One Planet Living' accreditation, a first in Northern Ireland.

²⁶ For a full list of council services, see <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/local-councils#toc-1>.

Supporting Information

Table 3: Sustainable Development Frameworks and Certification Schemes

Framework	Brief summary	Application in Belfast Region, where relevant
RIBA Sustainable Outcomes Guide	An outcomes-based design approach focused on environmental indicators, for use by developers and architects.	
UK Green Building Council - Framework for Defining Social Value	Defines social value for the built environment and provides a process for creating, delivering and reporting social value over the asset lifecycle.	
The National Social Value Measurement Framework (TOMs)	TOMs consists of five social value Themes, 18 Outcomes, and 35 Measures. Each measure has been allocated a financial proxy value. It provides a menu of options and an excel-based measurement tool that can be applied to any project or Council.	Belfast Transport Hub enabling works and Titanic Quarter have used TOMs to calculate and report social value delivered.
Draft Craft Kit – Co-Produce Your Living High Street	A series of tools that are designed to facilitate local engagement with communities and co-produce specific models for future Living High Streets. The Programme for Government Strategic Outcomes Framework is used by the Draft Craft Kit as indicators for ‘Living High Streets’.	
Healthy Streets Framework	A human-centred framework for embedding public health in transport, public realm, and planning.	

Certification scheme	Brief summary	Application in Belfast Region, where relevant
BREEAM	An international certification scheme providing independent third party certification of the assessment of the sustainability performance of individual buildings, communities, and infrastructure projects.	<p>Several buildings are BREEAM Excellent certified in Belfast, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ulster University Belfast Campus buildings • Queens University’s new buildings and student accommodation • City Quay’s 1,2 and 3 • Titanic Quarter commercial buildings including Olympic House • the Innovation Factory <p>Several other projects are BREEAM Very Good or Good certified including the Gobbins Visitor Centre, and several Council-led capital investment projects.</p>

Supporting Information

Table 3: Sustainable Development Frameworks and Certification Schemes

Certification scheme	Brief summary	Application in Belfast Region, where relevant
LEED	An international certification scheme, similar to BREEAM. Its main difference in comparison to BREEAM is that it was developed in the US, whereas BREEAM was developed in the UK.	Gateway Offices, located in Titanic Quarter, achieved LEED Gold Standard.
WELL building standard	A performance-based system for measuring, certifying and monitoring features of the built environment in order to deliver spaces that enhance human health and wellbeing.	
CEEQUAL	An evidence-based sustainability assessment, rating and awards scheme for civil engineering, infrastructure, landscaping, and public realm projects.	The York Street Interchange in Belfast received an 'Excellent' Interim Client & Design Award, and Luke's Point Wastewater Pumping Station in Ards and North Down Borough Council received an 'Excellent' Whole Team Award.

Best practice standard	Brief summary	Application in Belfast Region, where relevant
RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge	Voluntary operational energy and water use and embodied carbon performance targets for buildings. To help tackle the climate emergency, it is best practice for buildings designed today to aim for RIBA 2025 targets as a minimum and 2030 targets whenever possible.	Gateway Offices, located in Titanic Quarter, achieved LEED Gold Standard.

Supporting Information

3] Pipeline projects of note from a sustainability perspective are briefly summarised in Table 4.

Where the project name has an asterisk against it, there is a case study in Appendix B.

Table 4: Pipeline projects

Project	Project Sponsor	BRCD Project	Inclusive growth and sustainability features
Tribeca*	Castlebrooke Investments	No	A mixed used development that intends to create 60,000 sq. m space for working, living and shopping. The major regeneration project aims to enhance the quality of the area and create links to the Cathedral Quarter. Significant developer contributions support inclusive growth and benefit the local economy and local community including affordable housing, public realm, green travel measures and employability and skills
The Waterside*	Osbourne + Co	No	The largest development in Belfast's recent history, comprising cultural venues, leisure, retail, office space and 750 homes. The developers have the ambition for the regeneration to be exemplar in placemaking, with a strategy based on: connecting with the people of Belfast, contributing to the global appeal of Belfast as a place to do business and convening with industry and academia. The project team has taken a leading approach to social value creation, including the creation of a Social Enterprise to cover the delivery of all phases of the development and operation of the site.
Custom House*	Straidorn Properties	No	A Grade B+ listed building is being refurbished, with the focus on designing for wellness as a core principle. Indoor and outdoor spaces have been designed to provide opportunity for occupants to interact and co-work whilst opportunity for break out space has been maximised.
Smithfield Yard	Bywater Properties / Ashmour	No	A major mixed use city centre regeneration site in central Belfast delivering a benchmark office building, new public realm, small independent retail, entrepreneurial and SME workspaces in a reinvigorated street scape combined with city-centre living. Through extensive and meaningful consultation under the working title Building Blocks, the developer Bywater brought people together to help re-imagine the future of their city and to share their ambitions for Smithfield. Several meanwhile uses have been supported at Smithfield Yard. For example, Belfast Design Week transformed the Butcher's Building into a design lab, and the internationally acclaimed Belfast Photo Festival used the terraces as a canvas during their award-winning festival.
Giants Park North Foreshore*	Giants Park Ltd in conjunction with Belfast City Council.	No	A former landfill is being regenerated into both a leisure park and commercial space, providing significant physical, economic and social benefits for citizens. The council has focused the development on three themes: quality of life, environmental technology and the bio economy. It is hoped Giants Park North Foreshore will be completed by 2026 - and create around 1,600 new jobs for the city.
Belfast Stories*	Belfast City Council	Yes	A flagship project led by Belfast City Council, intending to deliver exemplar social, economic and environmental benefits and using a sustainability reporting platform to capture the outcomes. Will provide a central visitor destination in the heart of Belfast that will act as a catalyst for further social, economic and cultural regeneration. This major tourism anchor will help to revitalise the city centre and create a focal point for the screen industry, allowing people to connect with the city and one another through stories, screen and social spaces.

Supporting Information

Table 4: Pipeline projects

Project	Project Sponsor	BRCD Project	Inclusive growth and sustainability features
Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT) Phase II	Department for Infrastructure	Yes	The rapid transit network will provide a high-quality passenger experience. Services will run using accessible, comfortable, low-emission bespoke rapid transit vehicles. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.
Lagan pedestrian and cycle bridge*	Department for Infrastructure	Yes	This pedestrian and cycle will provide an attractive commuter and leisure linkage and offer workers and visitors a quicker route between the city centre and Ormeau Park. The bridge will improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage a shift to sustainable transport modes while promoting an active lifestyle, improving the wellbeing of those in the region and enhancing social inclusion. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.
Advanced Wireless Infrastructure	Belfast City Council	Yes	This approach will address the current delay in deploying advanced wireless (4G, 5G, LoraWAN etc) networks through bringing together asset owners and upgrading their assets to facilitate deployment of wireless infrastructure. It will also include demonstrator applications that make use of advanced wireless capabilities. The demonstrator area covers the emerging 'smart district' which includes certain communities therein. The programme could help address digital poverty issues within those communities and act as an exemplar to be scaled out across the city and city region. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.
Hub In	Maritime Belfast Trust in conjunction with Belfast City Council	No	Belfast City Council has teamed up with the Maritime Belfast Trust to deliver the exciting 'Hub-In' project along the Maritime Mile in the city's Titanic Quarter. Along with seven other cities in Portugal, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Cyprus, Slovenia and Romania, Belfast is exploring how innovation can spread public benefits from urban regeneration projects in historic areas. In Belfast, the project will focus on the Maritime Mile, along the city's waterfront, which encourages people to explore Belfast's maritime and industrial heritage. It connects key attractions, public realm, sculptures and viewing points on both sides of the River Lagan – and the 'Hub-In' project will allow us to consider innovative ways to further animate and enrich this space. The project is reaching out to communities nearby to engage them on innovation linked to Belfast's maritime heritage. Will be delivered in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.
Glengormley town centre regeneration	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	No	Aims to maximise public space, create a new public centre and provide soft landscaping. It is hoped that this will attract further inward and domestic investment, as well as increase the footfall, increase expenditure and reduce job vacancies within the town – helping to tackle local deprivation. This project is in receipt of funding from the UK Levelling Up Fund.

Supporting Information

Table 4: Pipeline projects

Project	Project Sponsor	BRCD Project	Inclusive growth and sustainability features
Antrim Town Regeneration Project	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	No	The creation of co-working space with a riverfront frontage in Antrim Town Centre with associated environmental improvement works including a riverside boardwalk extension to improve accessibility and linkages to the town centre. This project is in receipt of funding from the UK Levelling Up Fund.
Downpatrick Regeneration*	Newry, Mourne and Down Council	No	This city centre regeneration project aims to create a space that is inclusive and accessible for all. It will include enhancements to the public realm as well as provide facilities for local people to enjoy and use the space.
Newry city centre regeneration*	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	Yes	This multi-faceted regeneration project aims to increase the vibrancy and footfall within Newry city centre. The project includes a new civic hub, theatre, and conference facility as well as traffic and transport strategies that will make Newry a safer and more attractive place to invest in. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.
Gateway to the Mournes	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	Yes	The Mourne Mountains Gateway Project will redefine the visitor experience associated with the Mourne Mountains. The project will deliver a world-class visitor attraction and create improved and more sustainable access to Newcastle and the Mournes. The planned investment will support the sustainable growth of tourism in the Mournes, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural heritage and habitat of the region by creating an appealing year-round, sustainable tourism offering. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.
The Newry Southern Relief Road	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	Yes	Aims to improve traffic flow, connectivity and air quality, and complement the regeneration ambitions of the city. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.
Warrenpoint Front Shore Public Realm Scheme	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	No	A key priority under the Newry Mourne and Down District Council's Economic, Regeneration and Tourism Development Strategy through enhancing and creating a more vibrant public space along the Front Shore area. The project aims to enhance the aesthetic appearance, usage and key linkages within the public space, and includes the installation of new LED street lighting columns.
Bangor waterfront regeneration	Ards and North Down Borough Council	Yes	Bangor Waterfront will be revitalised to offer a series of new sustainable tourism and leisure attractions and experiences that will reconnect the town and sea. The investment will regenerate a two-mile stretch of the waterfront promenade from Ballyholme Beach to Bangor town centre, that will enhance the town's appeal as a place to live, work, study and visit. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework

Supporting Information

Table 4: Pipeline projects

Project	Project Sponsor	BRCD Project	Inclusive growth and sustainability features
Destination Royal Hillsborough	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council	Yes	The vision is to establish Hillsborough as a high quality, distinctive, leading visitor destination and experience, while also regenerating the village with an enhanced, sustainable culture and heritage offer - integrated with Northern Ireland's wider regional heritage offering. Building on a heritage site, this investment at Hillsborough Castle and Gardens will further enhance the existing offer to create a world-class heritage village that extends dwell time and visitor spend. This project responds to the strong appetite for distinctive, immersive experiences that offer authentic expressions of culture. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework
The Gobbins Phase II	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	Yes	Aims to deliver an exhilarating visitor attraction by adding a spectacular viewing platform and staircase to offer a circular three-mile journey incorporating the cliff face and clifftop paths and significantly increasing capacity on the coastal pathway. The project will attract tourists and help boost the local economy. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework
Carrickfergus regeneration	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	Yes	The planned investment includes major investments in the Castle, the historic walls, the town centre and public realm. The investment will regenerate, reposition and rebrand the town to place it firmly on the map as an authentic heritage-led tourism hub. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework
The i4C Innovation Centre at St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	Yes	The Belfast Region City Deal will help deliver new models of regeneration, such as the innovation-led regeneration of the St Patrick's site in Ballymena, which seeks to integrate digital innovation with the drive towards a low carbon economy. The 15 hectare mixed regeneration site situated in the heart of the town will act as a catalyst and enabler of inclusive growth in Ballymena and the wider borough. i4C will be the anchor tenant, building a key economic driver for future growth and allowing local communities to benefit from skills and employability opportunities. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework
The Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC)	Queen's University Belfast	Yes	A state-of-the-art factory of the future is planned, with an ambition to be Northern Ireland's national centre for advanced manufacturing. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.
The Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology (CDHT)	Ulster University	Yes	Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology will provide a world-class space for academia, industry and clinicians to innovate and boost the productivity of the life and health sciences sector by accelerating the development of medical technology devices and diagnostics. Technology, Community and Clinical Living Labs.

Supporting Information

Table 4: Pipeline projects

Project	Project Sponsor	BRCD Project	Inclusive growth and sustainability features
The Global Innovation Institute (GII)	Queen's University Belfast	Yes	A cross-disciplinary digital innovation hub that will build on momentum created by the world-class ECIT (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology) facility that put Belfast on the map for digital innovation. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.
The Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare (i-REACH)	Queen's University Belfast	Yes	The Institute of Research Excellence for Advanced Clinical Healthcare an integrated clinical research centre of excellence, iREACH, is an NHS, industry, and research facility. It will transform the region's ability to test new drugs, medical-technology, care pathways and societal interventions. It will leverage the opportunities that exist at the interface of medical research and digital transformation.
Studio Ulster	Ulster University	Yes	Will provide a Centre of Excellence in Research and Development and Innovation in Virtual Production where academics, researchers and the creative sectors can collaborate using state-of-the-art facilities, helping to both sustain and grow jobs in one of Northern Ireland's most successful sectors. Will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.

Supporting Information

4] Potential monetised social value that could be created by a sample of future development projects

Table 5: Potential monetised social value that could be created by a sample of future development projects

Development Site	Value	Potential social value benefits (10%)	Potential social value benefits (20%)
Titanic Quarter	£1.28bn	£128m	£ 256m
City Quays	£275m	£27.5m	£55m
The Sixth	£75m	£7.5m	£15m
Belfast Waterside	£450m	£45m	£90m
Tribeca Belfast	£500m	£50m	£100m
Giants Park North Foreshore	£500m	£50m	£100m
Smithfield Yard	£60m	£6m	£12m
Queens Quay	£100m	£10m	£20m
Weavers Cross	£380m	£38m	£76m
Residential led developments	£100m	£10m	£20m

Appendix A:

Local case studies delivered in the last 5 years

Appendix A includes a selection of case studies from the Belfast region, that highlight the wider outcomes that have been delivered from development in the last five years.

In each case study, the key approaches, and key outcomes are outlined and structured to highlight good practice across the three sustainable development lenses, where relevant; social, economic and environmental.

Note not all case studies have information across all of the three lenses.

Regeneration sites:

- Titanic Quarter
- Ulster University Relocation
- Weavers Cross & Belfast Transport Hub

Residential and student accommodation:

- Elms BT1 & Elms BT2 Student Accommodation
- John Bell House
- Durham Street
- Blacks Gate

Commercial:

- Innovation Factory
- City Quays
- Flax House
- The Flatiron
- The Weaving Works

Culture, tourism and leisure:

- Connswater Community Greenway (CCG)
- Hillsborough Park
- The Gobbins Visitor centre
- Newry Public Realm
- Leisure Transformation Programme

Major Regeneration Sites: Titanic Quarter



Client: Titanic Quarter Limited

**Completion date: in progress
(final completion by 2035)**

Project Overview

Titanic Quarter is one of Europe's largest urban waterfront regeneration projects and in just over a decade has gone from masterplan to reality as a thriving and bustling destination. Over £618 million has already been invested, delivering a mix of commercial, tourism, education, residential and retail projects. 20,000 people now live, work, visit and stay in Titanic Quarter daily, with the area attracting over 3.6 million visitors each year.

Titanic Quarter Ltd, working in partnership with Belfast Harbour, has already transformed Belfast's former shipyard site into an exciting and prosperous destination which contributes 2.9% of the city's total GVA. Much has already been achieved, however the development has not yet reached even the half-way point. Between 2021 and 2035, Titanic Quarter's ambition is to deliver a further 2,645 new homes, over 1m sq. ft. of new employment space, 37,500 sq. ft. of new support retail space, 175,000 sq. ft. of new leisure uses and a 876 new hotel rooms. This will more than double the current economic contribution, and quadruple the current social value contribution.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- Titanic Quarter is regenerating 185 acres of brownfield site, including the re-use or redevelopment of existing buildings were possible in line with circular economy principles.
- Established requirements for sustainable design early in the process: this includes the requirement for LEED Gold or BREEAM Excellent certification in the brief. This will continue to be the template for future developments.
- Titanic Quarter continues to implement a sustainable and active transportation strategy which supports and promotes the reduction of reliance on private car and promotes the adoption of sustainable active travel modes. As an example, the Belfast Bike rental scheme already operates from 4 docking stations across the site, with further stations to follow in step with development.
- Used the TOMs Social Value Framework to quantify and monetise social value outcomes.

Outcomes

Social:

- £146 million of social value has already been created through work, health and wellbeing, apprenticeships, and volunteering - by 2035, it is estimated that a total of £528 million of social value will be generated.
- Continued delivery of a place that supports reduced dependency on the private car and enables an active and healthy society for all.
- Situated on Belfast's Maritime Mile – a waterfront experience that encourages people to explore Belfast's maritime and industrial history, and connects all key attractions, public realm, sculptures and viewing points. New attractions continue to be being added to the Maritime Mile which will continue to increasing visitor numbers.

Economic:

- 12,000 jobs for all have already been created by the regeneration of Titanic Quarter. This is expected to increase to 28,400 jobs by 2035
- Over £618 million has been invested to date, by 2035 investment levels will be £1.9 billion.
- Titanic Quarter's contribution to city's economic output will increase from a GVA of 2.9% to 6.2% by 2035
- Titanic Quarter is already home to a diverse range of over 100 national and international companies – including Citi, Amazon, Microsoft, IBM and HBO.

- The existing activity in Titanic Quarter collectively generates £7.4 million of rates revenue – this is expected to rise to £21 million by 2035.
- Titanic Quarter already welcomes 3.6 million visitors annually with this expected to increase to 5.6 million by 2035.
- Titanic Studios is one of Europe's largest fully functional film studios attracting producers such as HBO, Paramount, Universal and Playtone. It was home to Game of Thrones for all 8 seasons, bringing an estimated £251 million into the Northern Ireland economy
- The iconic landmark, Titanic Belfast, has attracted over 6.5 million visitors from across 145 countries since opening in 2012, earning it the prestigious accolade of World's Leading Tourist Attraction in 2016
- Belfast Met's Titanic Quarter Campus is a centre of an excellence which brings over 10,000 students to the area.

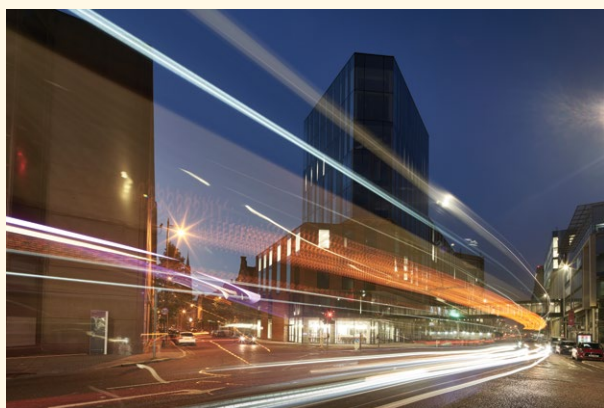
Environment:

- All of the listed buildings and structures within Titanic Quarter have been refurbished and repurposed, showcasing Belfast's rich maritime heritage in a sustainable manner for everyone to enjoy.
- Over the past decade, 500,000 sq ft of the developments have been accredited LEED Gold or BREEAM excellent. The first of these, the Gateway offices was completed to a LEED Gold standard in 2009.

- Continued investment and promotion of sustainable and active transport measures which will significantly reduce the dependence on the private car thus reducing carbon emissions.
- Titanic Quarter has become the first district in Northern Ireland to replace its traditional rubbish bins throughout its external public spaces with dual litter recycling bins.
- Titanic Quarter operates an all-electric corporate vehicle fleet and has installed electric charging points across its public car parking provision.
- Continued investment in high quality public realm, for the benefit of the patrons of Titanic Quarter.

1. Titanic Quarter (n.d.) <https://titanicquarter.com/>

Major Regeneration Sites: Ulster University Relocation



Client: Ulster University

**Completion date: In progress,
due to complete 2022**

Project overview

Ulster University is relocating much of the activity in its Jordanstown campus to a new Belfast campus next to the vibrant Cathedral Quarter in the city centre, where it will benefit from improved networks with business, community and the arts within the city. The relocation will help make Belfast City Centre a thriving student hub and drive further investment and regeneration in the city. Over £300 million worth of investment has spurred the regeneration project which, when fully completed, will cater for over 15,000 students and staff. The new 75,000 sqm campus provides state of the art facilities such as innovative learning spaces at a variety of scales. The project is one of the biggest university capital investments across the UK and Europe. The project is due to complete in 2022, and it is hoped that all teaching staff and students will move to the campus through 2022. Overall, the project adds to the social and economic contributions that the university already makes as they bring together a diverse community of business leaders, policy makers, professional associates, academics and students.

The campus amplifies its status as a civic university that values inclusion and hopes to remove the barriers and widen access to education for the surrounding locals. The project will not only have a pan-university impact, but it also hopes to be a place of cultural celebration and a shared space to bring together the community. Amongst the numerous schemes that hope to engage and

involve the community, two floors of the campus will be open to the public and are designed to draw in neighbours.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- The campus relocation has proactively set out to support inclusive growth and placemaking in the city centre.
- Sustainable design and construction principles and delivering broader social benefits have been at the heart of Ulster University's approach to the relocation.
- The new campus is located in one of the two lowest quartiles of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM), which has one of the lowest rates of educational attainment, when comparing GCSE results to the rest of Northern Ireland. To help address this social issue, the university is actively engaging in sustainable partnerships with communities across the region to drive improvement in educational attainment.
- The university has a key role as a major civic contributor. For example, campaigns to encourage children from social care and foster families to apply to university have been initiated with a wraparound system of supports to help them fulfil their potential. Furthermore, a social justice hub provides free legal advice from law students, supervised by experienced law staff. This also provides accredited legal training for those in the community. Finally, many of the university's staff act as civic ambassadors and are engaging with schools, community organisations and the voluntary sector.

- A 'University Community Benefit Framework' was developed jointly with the Inner North Belfast and Greater Shankill Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships. This will maximise the social, educational, environmental, and economic benefits for the local community that come with the relocation of the university to the city centre.
- The design principles document produced addresses both sustainability and accessibility, including a target to achieve BREEAM Excellent.
- The university champions Belfast as a "car free" campus, promoting low carbon forms of transportation for staff and students as well as walking and cycling.

Outcomes

Social:

- Social clause during construction has delivered the equivalent of 101.7 years worth of training, placement and apprenticeship opportunities to young people, students and the long term unemployed.
- Training in mechanical & electrical work, quantity surveying, procurement & supply chain management, accountancy, construction and administration was provided.
- £403,000 of funding has been given for the care leavers bursary – a campaign to help fostered children to go to university.
- 36 Staff Outreach Ambassadors from across faculties received funding to support engagements with schools, community organisations and the voluntary sector across NI.
- Ulster University Business School programme, Academic Career Enhancement (ACE) module, in partnership with the Science Shop led to £19,216.69 being raised for four local charities.

Economic:

- When open, the campus will provide over 500 jobs.
- 80% of sub-contractors employed were local.
- Created 3,784 job years during construction.
- When the campus is fully operational it is due to support close to £100m annual spending from students.
- The campus will be a catalyst for further investments into the North-central part of the city.

- Using the regeneration multiplier, the project is estimated to generate £1.4 bn in value from the overall regeneration impact on the Northern Ireland economy.

Environmental:

- The longer-term benefits are considered to be an improved built environment as well as improved accessibility and connectivity.

Environmental benefits include energy efficient buildings, more active travel and making Belfast a more liveable city.

- BREEAM Excellent certification achieved.
- The inclusion of a green and brown roof will improve the ecological value of the site.
- The buildings have been designed for longevity, with an impressive 300-year lifespan.

2. Belfast Telegraph (2021). UU students start move to new campus in September, <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/northern-ireland/uu-students-start-move-to-newcampus-in-september-40617091.html>
3. Ulster University (2020). Community Engagement Annual Review.
4. Ulster University (2021). A campus in the city.
5. Ulster University (2021). Campus Impact Study.
6. Ulster University (2021). The New Ulster University Belfast Campus by Numbers, <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/news/2021/june/the-new-ulster-university-belfast-campus-by-numbers>

Major Regeneration Sites: Weavers Cross & Belfast Transport Hub (BTH)



Client: Translink

Completion date: BTH expected in 2025, the wider Weavers Cross will be an additional 10-15 years

Project overview

Weavers Cross intends to be a dynamic city neighbourhood that will offer office-led, mixed-use space right in the heart of Belfast. The regeneration is transport led and exemplifies social innovation in a post conflict society. The transport hub is approximately value at £200million and the wider Weavers cross at £400 million. The transformation of public transport has acted as a catalyst for this regeneration. It plays a vital role in creating a successful economy, promoting social inclusion, health, education and improving the environment. The project also hopes to act as a catalyst for further investments for Belfast city centre. The Belfast Transport Hub will dramatically increase public transport capacity, including 26 bus stands, 8 railway platforms along with cycle and taxi provisions and is situated in the centre of Weavers Cross. The BTH is a modern high quality integrated travel hub, improving both local and international connectivity and is a flagship project for the government.

The BTH is a publicly funded project by the Department for Infrastructure and Translink, Northern Ireland's primary public transport provider and owner of the infrastructure and property portfolio. Recently, Translink has launched a search for a Private Sector Partner (PSP) to develop the broader 20 acre surrounding site.

This case study focuses on the wider outcomes achieved during the Early Works Contract.

During the Early Works Contract (enabling works), Translink partnered with Belfast City Council and its contractors to deliver a 'Construction Employment Academy' (CEA) to deliver training and employment to the local community for the BTH. From the start of the project in 2015, during the 'Design Development and Planning Approval' phases community engagement was initiated. This approach empowered local communities and stakeholders, allowing them to access entry level jobs, training and ongoing support. The CEA focused on supporting the long term unemployed, school leavers and those working less than 16-hour weeks. Overall, the enabling works generated 5000+ construction employment years. Although social value legislation has not been enacted in Northern Ireland, Translink is committed to deliver social value to the local communities through the strategic capital investment. For these reasons the project was commended by the National Social Value Awards in 2021.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- The project has purposefully set out to optimise social value of station investment and regeneration, creating a place that connects people as well as supports economic growth and low carbon travel.
- SustainIQ, an integrated software tool, is being used to measure the social, economic and environmental impacts, alongside the TOMs Social Value Framework to monetise the outcomes.

Outcomes

Social:

- This project has developed a template which can be replicated for how local communities can access employment opportunities through construction projects.
- The BTH design is iconic, taking historical references, whilst making sure that there is enough seating provisions, shelter, sustainability measures and security.
- Better transport infrastructure improves the connectivity for locals both nationally and internationally.
- Enhanced passenger capacity meaning that the new hub can cater for 20 million passenger journeys per year, compared to the current 8 million.
- The unique location of this project generates community connections.
- Provides a great first impression for visitors arriving in Northern Ireland.

Economic:

- The hub will spur economic development in the area. It is hoped that it will attract £1 bn investments into regeneration projects in the city.
- 3 participants secured permanent employment beyond the project.
- Expected to create 400 jobs during the construction phase.

Environmental:

- The transport hub hopes to promote cleaner ways of travelling by cycling, bus and rail.
- Provision for cycle storage and the availability of the Belfast Bike Scheme encourage individuals to make healthier and more active transport choices.
- The design is both resilient and resource efficient, making it future proofed for the growth in the public transport sector with its 20 million passenger capacity.

7. Department for Infrastructure (n.d). Weavers Cross, <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/weavers-cross>
8. National Social Value Awards (2021). Winning Entries, Awards-brochure-2021-final - Weavers Cross Transport Hub.pdf
9. Sarah Scott (2021). Belfast Transport Hub update as first key construction milestone reached, <https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/belfast-transport-hub-update-first-19872968>
10. The Irish News (2021). Translink launches investor search for £400m weavers cross scheme, <https://www.irish-news.com/business/businessnews/2021/06/23/news/translink-launches-investor-search-for-400m-weavers-cross-scheme-2364189/>
11. Translink (2017). Belfast Transport Hub, <https://weaverscross.co.uk/app/uploads/2017/11/Belfast-Transport-Hub-Pre-Application-Community-Consultation-Report-June-2017.pdf>
12. Translink (n.d). Belfast Transport Hub: A multi-modal transport hub at Weavers Cross, <https://www.translink.co.uk/corporate/media/improvementsandprojects/the-hub>
13. Weavers Cross (2020). A new destination in the heart of Belfast, <https://investinbelfast.com/app/uploads/2020/11/WX-Developer-Brochure.pdf>

Residential: Purpose built student accommodation

Elms BT1 and Elms BT2

Client: Queen's University

Completion date: 2018

Project overview

Elms BT1 and Elms BT2 are two new student accommodation blocks built in Belfast city centre. Developed, owned and operated by Queen's University Belfast, they provide 1,237 beds for students on what was a brownfield site. The result is BREEAM Excellent accommodation that hopes to promote student well-being.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- BREEAM Excellent is the university's standard for new buildings. Queen's Estate Directorate stated that they intend to be carbon neutral in the future.
- Substantial thermal mass and the provision of an electric heating system, making it environmentally cleaner to run with the capability to run off renewable energy.
- Car parking is restricted to staff use only to discourage student car ownership. A comprehensive travel plan is in place, including provision of substantial secure, enclosed cycle racks.

Outcomes

- Sustainably designed building that enables improved student well-being.

John Bell House

Client: Lacuna developments

Completion date: 2016

Project overview

This £16 million refurbishment transformed a deteriorating Grade 2 listed building into private student accommodation. Lacuna developments bought the old Belfast Met tech building, in 2014 and transformed it in a joint venture with Watkin Jones. Located in the city centre of Belfast, the development offers housing for 413 students along with study rooms, courtyards, laundry facilities and a common room. It won the Belfast Telegraph Property Awards in 2016.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- The building had been derelict for 5 years, making it challenging to retain important features. Hence, Lacuna had to work very closely with Belfast City Council's planning department to make sure these features were retained.
- Extensive refurbishment was undertaken with the support of the UK Government Business Premises Renovation Allowance (BPRA).

Outcomes

Social:

- The redevelopment has created a sense of place for the area.
- This part of the city has become safer with lower crime and antisocial behaviour.

Economic:

- Student residents are estimated to bring in £4.4 million to Belfast's local economy every year.
- The refurbishment contract, valued at £16 million, was awarded to a local contractor from Newry, contributing to the local economy.
- Apprenticeships were provided during the construction phase.

Environmental:

- Brought back to life an impressive Grade 2 listed building in a sensitive approach which meant that key features such as the main staircase, timber floors and steam engine were kept.

14. Belfast Telegraph (2016). Students move into £16m digs in landmark Belfast building, <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/students-move-into-16m-digs-in-landmark-belfast-building-35052391.html>
15. Lacuna Developments (2016). Belfast Telegraph Property Awards 2016, Lacuna Property Awards 2016 Submission_John Bell House.pdf



Residential: Social/Affordable Housing

Durham Street



Client: Clanmil Housing

Completion date: 2019

Project overview

Clanmil Housing is a leading provider of high quality, social and affordable housing for rent in Northern Ireland and has won several awards for its approach to delivering high design quality schemes that have positive socio-economic outcomes.

For the Durham Street project, Clanmil Housing has restored a 100-year-old abandoned Blood Bank into 23 new homes for the community. Out of 23 of the homes, 11 were new build houses. Completed in 2019, the restoration cost £3.3 million and was partially funded by the Department for Communities in order to create these bright new homes for the community. The restoration was sensitive to the building's heritage, preserving novel features, whilst creating social housing that fitted the needs of the community. It has been incredibly popular and won many awards. These include the top award for Chartered Institute of Housing awards 2020 and the Telegraph award in 2019.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- Clanmil Housing works to create places where people want to live under the belief that good homes provide a strong foundation for sustainable communities. This lies at the core of what they do.
- Clanmil Housing worked closely with local political representatives and St Mary's Local Community Group to ensure they built the right housing mix to meet the identified housing needs in the area.

- All apartments designated for over 55s age range have met 'Lifetime Homes' accessibility criteria, ensuring that people can stay in their homes for longer as they get older.
- The project reused an old building as well as retained original features of the hospital, including curved corners and ceiling junctions, in line with circular economy principles.
- Clanmil Housing offers community days, welcome packs, and a local community group for its housing developments.

Outcomes

Social:

- 23 new social housing homes for the local community provide accommodation for a wide range of ages and residents, which is now fully occupied.
- Innovative design solution is sympathetic to the existing building. The new extension and atrium are separated with an atrium space which has become the 'heart' of the building.
- The main building has now become a centre point of the community.
- Connectivity with city centre features and amenities enabling residents to be active and empowered.

16. Clanmil Housing (2020). Top Award for former blood bank housing development https://www.clanmil.org/newsdetail_front.php?id=444

17. Clanmil Housing (2019). Clanmil celebrates five thousand homes with restoration of former blood transfusion building, https://www.clanmil.org/newsdetail_front.php?id=428

Residential: Social/Affordable Housing Blacks Gate



Client: Radius Housing Association

Completion date: Under Construction

Project overview

Radius Housing Association is in the process of redeveloping a large 22-acre site that was formerly industrial land. Radius Housing Association is the largest provider of high quality, affordable housing for rent in Northern Ireland and has won several awards for its approach. The development will deliver 244 new homes, 3 play parks/open space, a linear park, a community facility and 60,000sqft of commercial space. The housing is due for completion in 2022 and the community facility in 2025.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- Repurposing a brownfield site.
- Significant focus on reuse of materials.
- Undertook significant remediation and demolition of the existing building. Completed major ground remediation programme to allow residential development.
- Detailed and continuous consultation with a wide range of residents and local community groups/representatives.
- Future biodiversity garden to be developed when new tenants all in situ.
- All properties, regardless of tenure, are externally identical and built to same excellent quality.

Outcomes

Social:

- 48 affordable properties for sale to promote mixed tenure.
- 10 bespoke, complex needs homes developed for full accessibility.
- Significant social clauses included to promote community development, employment, and apprenticeships.
- Provision of some travel cards to residents for defined period to promote use of public transport.
- Additional planting and provision of box hedges to properties to promote green growth
- Site certified as secure by design to reduce crime and improve safety

Economic:

- Employed circa 500 people through supply chains through the development process
- Investment to economy estimated will be circa £90m
- Community facilities will provide opportunities for small SMEs/Voluntary agencies

Environmental:

- All social homes are built to full lifetime homes standard.
- Fabric first energy efficiency approach taken for all properties.

Commercial: Innovation Factory



Client: Belfast City Council

Completion date: 2016

Project Overview

Belfast City Council led this development with the ambition to create a place for new businesses and entrepreneurs in Belfast. The site, in west Belfast, was previously derelict and sits at the interface between two communities. After realising that Belfast was not a place where enough new businesses were starting and growing, the council along with support of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) developed these creative workspaces to support the innovators of Belfast. The centre can accommodate 382 workstations across 111 business units when at full capacity. The project has the ambition to drive inclusive growth and be a catalyst for regeneration for the rest of the site.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- Procurement for the operator included requirement for a Social Regeneration Plan. This includes a series of pre-agreed targets to support social regeneration in the area, focusing on job creation, local purchasing and skills development
- Dashboard reports for work placements, local procurement, skills, schools engagement etc.
- Oxford Innovation runs the IF, providing business support and contributing additional social value.
- The management contract for the centre contributes to local trade and skills development for local suppliers, community, schools, and colleges. Part of the entry criteria for all potential tenants verifies their willingness to actively contribute to the centre's social regeneration commitments.

Outcomes

Social:

- The building has livened up this part of the city and promotes innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Several IF customers provided direct support to adjacent communities and vulnerable groups during the pandemic. This included donations of contactless thermometers to a local special school and distribution of care packages to isolating households.

- Digi-skills workshops teach local people key digital skills to help them secure employment.

Economic:

- Business support programmes focus on innovation support and encourage networking and collaborating to take place.
- The centre's 'Buy Local' ethos has resulted in 82% of spend taking place in Belfast, more than half of which has been spent in west Belfast - the area immediately adjacent to the centre.
- Workshops that help young people with employment have been held, such as how to write CVs and cover letters.
- The centre will accommodate 382 workstations across 111 business units when at full capacity. 255 people are currently employed at the centre.
- Within the centre, a range of work placement opportunities are provided. On average, more than 50 work placements are accommodated among tenant businesses each year.

Environmental:

- BREEAM Excellent achieved.

18. BCC(2017). Agenda item: Innovation Factory Performance Review, <https://minutes.belfastcity.gov.uk/mgAi.asp?ID=40580>

Commercial: City Quays



Client: Belfast Harbour

**Completion date: City Quays
1 completed in 2015,**

**City Quays 2 completed in 2019, City
Quays 3 expected in Q4 2021**

Project overview

City Quays is a £275m development regenerating 20 acres of ex-shipping land within Belfast's Harbour. The mixed-use development is predominantly office led and also includes a hotel, local service retail, and some residential units.

To date, 1.6 million sq ft of space has been created across the entire estate, with 27,000 people working on the estate. The developer recognised that occupiers wanted sustainable office space, hence pushed for a strong sustainability strategy which resulted in high profile tenants being attracted to the site including Baker McKenzie, ITV and NBC. Ulster University's Economic Policy Centre has recently engaged to capture the socio-economic and environmental of all Belfast Harbour developments.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- Belfast Harbour is the 2,000 acre estate owner and operator, and as such has a long-term view for the regeneration and wider economic benefit. Sustainability is at the heart of Belfast Harbour's business and is a key theme within their 2035 business strategy.
- Voluntarily adopted the NI Department for Communities aim for 20% affordable or social housing.
- Regular engagement with community group during design and construction phases.
- City Quays 3 made Buy Social requirements for part of the construction contract which encouraged apprentices and unemployed people to get jobs and improved skills during construction.
- A key objective was energy efficient and low carbon design. Key features of City Quays 1 and 2 include high performance solar control glazing which reduces solar heat gain while maintaining high levels of natural light. They have also utilised demand-controlled ventilation, and daylight and presence-controlled LED lighting. A roof-mounted photovoltaic array provides renewable energy for direct use within the common areas of the building.
- City Quays 1 and 2 occupiers have signed up to a Green Lease to ensure that all parties work together to use the building as efficiently as possible in order to maintain BREEAM Excellent accreditation.

Outcomes

Social:

- Housing will be provided, with some of it being affordable/social.

Economic:

- Buildings developed to high quality and environmental standards with an emphasis on reducing tenants' operating costs (Grade A offices and EPC A rated. This attracted major businesses to become tenants.
- 27,000 people are set to work on the estate, bringing in revenue for local businesses.

Environmental:

- Strategically important brownfield site regenerated into a new high quality and sustainable mixed-use development.
- City Quays 1,2 and 3 offices all achieved BREEAM Excellent and Energy Performance Certificate 'A' rated.
- City Quays 1 has been awarded the Commercial prize at the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Awards, Northern Ireland 2016.
- City Quays 2 won the RSUA/RIBA Northern Ireland Sustainability Award 2019.
- Created an improved public realm as well as introduced waterfront walkway and cycleway as well as cycle provisions such as secure bike parking.

19. Belfast Harbour (2014). What makes City Quays 1 so sustainable? <https://www.belfast-harbour.co.uk/news/what-makes-city-quays-1-so-sustainable-77/>

20. Grimshaw (2018). Belfast City Quays 2, <https://grimshaw.global/projects/belfast-city-quays-2/>

Commercial



Flax House

Client: Striador Properties

Completion date: 2018

Project overview

Striador Properties acquired Flax House, formerly a linen mill, in late 2016. The building had been unoccupied for over 30 years. In 2018, the 30,000 sq ft space was refurbished and now houses 5 tenants, from companies such as from MetaSwitch, MCS Group, Flexera and Made to Engage. Many of the unique features of the property have still been retained, whilst bringing back to life part of the street.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- Extensive refurbishment was undertaken with the support of the UK Government Business Premises Renovation Allowance (BPRA).
- Underfloor air conditioning, with full underfloor supply and return air was specified so that the warehouse loft ceilings could be left exposed, retaining the buildings original character.

Outcomes

Economic:

- Used SMEs, local employment and local materials during construction which supported the local economy. Went to market using local contacts, for example, all the internal joinery and windows were manufactured in Northern Ireland
- The building now houses 500 employees, including start-up SMEs increasing footfall and spending in the local area.
- US software firm Flexera has opened its office in Flax House, creating 50 jobs.

21. Striador (2018). Flax House, <http://straiador.com/flax-house/>

The Flatiron Building

Client: Wirefox

Completion date: 2018

Project overview

This iconic building in the centre of Belfast has been refurbished and given a new lease of life as a mixed-use development. The former 1860s warehouse now provides more than 1,600 sq ft of space including offices on the upper floors and a bar on the ground floor with many of the historic features being retained.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- Circular economy principles implemented – the building was refurbished.
- Energy efficient design – Wirefox decided against an AC system and instead went for a passive system through assessing the heating/cooling and airflow within the offices. In addition, LED lighting is used throughout.

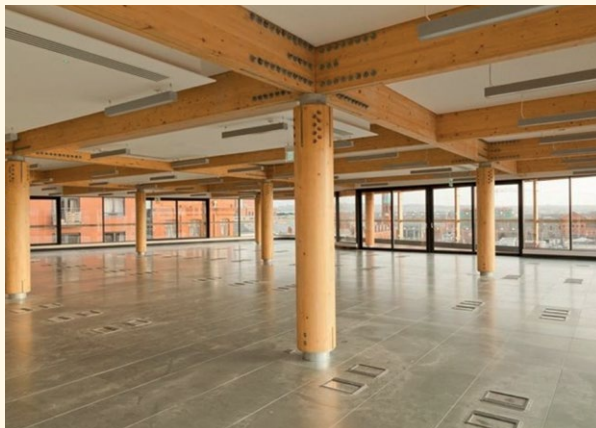
Outcomes

Economic:

- Tenants contribute to the footfall within the local area and use of local amenities especially food and beverage operators in the surrounding area.
- Since being fully let the building has created circa 42-50 jobs.

22. Savills (2018). Iconic Belfast Building Reborn as the Flatiron, <https://www.savills.co.uk/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/247336-0/iconic-belfast-building-reborn-as-the-flatiron>

Commercial Office: The Weaving Works



Client: Karl Asset Management

Completion date: 2018

Project overview

The Weaving Works, a former linen warehouse, was redeveloped by Karl Asset Management into 3,400 m² of Grade A office space and has been valued at £4 million. Last occupied in 2004, this development has bought a new lease of life to the building and the street. Four floors of office space have been created along with the ground floor being converted to provide a café and an 80-seater restaurant. Both the brief and the developer pushed for sustainable design measures to be implemented and the architects designed with the future of climate change in mind.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- The development brief called for high quality, innovative office space that would spur innovation.
- Glue-laminated timber was selected for its merits as a sustainable material and was used for both the primary and secondary structure.
- Sustainably sourced Douglas fir used externally and spruce was used internally.
- The original design has more glass than wall, therefore thermal improvements were made by replacing the windows.
- Design was influenced by the future perceived impacts of climate change. For example, glazing was set back after considerations about the sun path were made, along with an overhang on the roof to prevent the risk of overheating.
- Mechanical ventilation strategies were chosen to provide thermal comfort to occupants.

- Computer modelling of the building performance guided the design.
- Water was integrated into the sustainability strategy- low flush WCs and aerated taps to minimise water use were installed.

Outcomes

Social:

- Activation at the street level with the instalment of the new restaurant.
- The project formed a connection between the Gas Works and the heart of the Linen Quarter which makes the area safer.

Economic:

- The development has acted as a catalyst for further regeneration in the City Centre gateway.
- Achieved full occupancy 8 months prior to completion, demonstrating how attractive high quality sustainability lead design is.

Environmental:

- There are no carparking spaces in the building and it is also well placed for easy access to train, glider and cycling routes to encourage use of public transport and walking / cycling to work.
- The project is a prime example of sensitive building reuse.

23. Karl Asset Management (2018). Belfast Telegraph Property Awards 2018 Commercial Development of the Year Entry, Belfast Telegraph Property Awards 2018 - The Weaving Works Entry for Commercial Development of the Year.pdf

Culture, tourism and leisure: Connswater Community Greenway (CCG)



Client: Belfast City Council

Completion date: 2017

Project Overview

Belfast City Council delivered the Connswater Community Greenway including East Belfast Flood Alleviation project in 2017 in partnership with EastSide Partnership and DfI Rivers. The project was developed by EastSide Partnership EastSide Greenways who now lead its programming and animation. The infrastructure creates 16km of cycle paths and walkways as well as improves flood protection. The project seeks to be a catalyst for ongoing regeneration and will make all of east Belfast greener, safer and cleaner whilst continuing to connect people and places. Furthermore, it also considered the relationship of communities to the network, the potential for network 'hubs' such as CS Lewis Square, integration with other transport infrastructure, linkages with the city centre and titanic quarter and integration with the wider city cycle and pedestrian networks.

In total 9km of linear parkland has been created in the east of Belfast. Not only does the project hope to encourage the use of parks, gardens and rivers and off-road transport routes, but it offers vital flood protection for the surrounding community.

The success of this project was due to a strong partnership approach between Belfast City Council and EastSide Partnership as well as with other key stakeholders and funders including Department of Infrastructure, The National Lottery Community Fund, Department for Communities and Sustrans NI, as well as sustained engagement with the local community throughout. The project acts as a model of best practice for how to deliver a large scale, multi-partner scheme with multiple objectives.

Overview of key sustainability approaches

- To help secure the legacy and future of the greenway, Eastside Partnership established the Connswater Community Greenway Trust as a UK charity to make sure that the CCG acted as a landmark for all to enjoy.
- Belfast City Council, through its Open Spaces Strategy has agreed to manage and maintain the CCG for 40 years to ensure that the physical space remains safe, clean and accessible.
- Multiple objectives were balanced: flood alleviation, community connection and improved ecology all managed to be delivered in a single project.

Outcomes

Social:

- It promotes health and well-being through encouraging more active forms of transport in and around the city.
- On completion the project had exceeded all of its KPIs for community engagement. With 32,000 people visiting, 32 schools engaged with CCG activities, 97% engagement with key stakeholder groups and 452 CCG event being held in total.
- 7 new bridges have been created, acting as connections between local communities.

Economic:

- Economic regeneration of the area occurred due to an influx of visitors.
- 325 direct employment opportunities arose due to the CCG most of which were supporting during project design and construction, including provisions for the unemployed and disadvantaged people, student placements, work placements and apprenticeships.

Environmental:

- The project protects against the risk of flooding along the course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers.
- A long-neglected and polluted ecosystem has been given the change to revive and thrive.
- The ecological status of the water environment improved from poor to moderate.
- 1,444 trees were planted.
- 4.1km of new reinforced concrete flood walls and 1.2km of flood embankments have been installed.
- It has won many awards for sustainability and construction excellence. Notably it was selected as one of the 200 most influential projects in the world by the Institution of Civil Engineers in 2018.

24. Arup (2017). Connswater Community Greenway, <https://www.arup.com/projects/connswater-community-greenway>

25. Connswater Community Greenway (n.d). Reports, <https://www.connswatergreenway.co.uk/reports>

Culture, tourism and leisure



Hillsborough Forest Park



The Gobbins Visitor Centre

Hillsborough Forest Park

Client: Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Completion date: Phase 1 completed in 2019 and Phase 2 will be completed in the next 15 months

Project overview

Hillsborough Forest has been developed into a first-class natural recreation destination for local residents and tourists. The development aims to attract people of all ages and to provide new car parking, path upgrades, footbridges, viewing platforms over the lake, seating, wayfinding signage and new themed play park with equipment for children of varying abilities. Phase one of the project, which is now complete involved the council spending £1.5 million, with 66% of this being funded by a grant from DAERA. The next phase of the project will include the installation of a new sculpture trail.

Outcomes

Social:

- Health and well-being improvements as the park enables a more active and healthy lifestyle for locals
- The community was consulted throughout the process and were very supportive of the changes

Economic:

- New staff were employed in the forest, leading to job creation.

Environmental:

- Biodiversity net gain – non-native trees were felled, and native species were planted. The project enhances the green and open space

26. Lisburn & Castlereagh Council (n.d). Hillsborough Tourism Master plan – Transforming Hillsborough Forest, <https://visitlisburn.com/hillsborough-tourism-masterplan>

The Gobbins Visitor Centre

Client: Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Completion date: 2015

Project overview

The Gobbins Cliff Path is a flagship tourist attraction located along the Causeway Coastal Route in Northern Ireland. One of the aims of the attraction is to bring more visitors to Northern Ireland. The visitor centre incorporates visitor facilities, a community centre, an exhibition space for local arts and crafts, a community café and a children's play park. MEABC is currently bidding for funding through the Belfast Region City Deal to deliver The Gobbins Phase 2 – this proposed project will significantly enhance the features at the Cliff Path site.

Outcomes

Social:

- Community cohesion and place making, through community facilities and creation of a play park
- The scheme reduced inequalities in the area by providing equal access to high quality community facilities
- Increased connectivity within the community with associated health and well-being benefits for the locals as they have a greater sense of social connection

Economic:

- The project created 25 FTE equivalent jobs, including: new staff for the Visitor Centre, tour guides and staff for the café.
- The project allows local artists to display and sell their goods, supporting SMEs in the arts sector

Environmental:

- BREEAM Good Certification achieved

Culture, tourism and leisure: Newry Public Realm



**Client: Newry, Mourne and
Down District Council**

Completion date: 2015

Project overview

A new public realm scheme has been created to fulfil the Department for Communities' commitment to regenerating the city centre. The scheme, costing £2,468,437, improves the streetscape environmentally which in turn has increased the weekday and weekend footfall within the public realm.

This scheme adds to the aspiration to make Newry an attractive place to live, work and visit. The programme has worked collaboratively with the agencies on transport and car parking study as well as integrating elements of the DfI Rivers Flood Alleviation scheme into the public realm works.

Outcomes

Social:

- Placemaking benefits
- Creates a better visitor experience within the city centre
- Improves the safety for pedestrians

Economic:

- Created jobs
- Attracted investment and new businesses
- Further developments have been considered due to this scheme

Environmental:

- The streetscape has been improved aesthetically with the installation of new natural stone, granite paving and footways. The addition of new decorative street lighting, street furniture, tree planting and the undergrounding of overhead services have also formed part of many completed schemes.
- The scheme improves traffic congestion in Newry.

27. Department for Communities, Newry City Centre, <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/over-ps17m-be-invested-newry-city-centre-0>

Culture, tourism and leisure: The Leisure Transformation Programme



Client: Belfast City Council

Completion date: Five of the centres are complete and a further two are underway

Project overview

Belfast City Council's Leisure Transformation Programme (LTP) is a ten year programme of investment designed to completely transform the delivery of leisure services across Belfast. The Programme's main objective is to enable active and healthy lifestyles for all citizens whilst also delivering on a number of the key priorities in the council's current Community Plan, The Belfast Agenda.

The Programme has two main elements: service transformation (a new delivery model) and major capital investment. The capital investment element involves a once in a generation council investment of £105m into the delivery of seven brand new leisure facilities designed to ensure that everyone across the city has access to modern, fit for purpose, leisure facilities and programmes. Heron Brothers, the contractor, went far beyond

their mandatory social responsibility requirements which resulted in multiple wider positive benefits being attained from this development.

Key approaches:

- During procurement, the council required that contractors provided details of how they will maximise the social, economic, and environmental benefits through this contract for Belfast and its people, including mandatory elements such as job creation and apprenticeship opportunities, alongside a range of elective considerations such as school engagement, community engagement and work experience opportunities.
- Implementation of a 'small business friendly procurement policy' and business practices, incorporating initiatives to promote access to supply chain engagement activities to small businesses.

Outcomes:

Social:

- The leisure centres encourage the participation in sport and leisure activities, having a positive impact on local people's health
- School engagement plan was created to promote the construction industry as a career option and reinforce positive role models.
- £7,500 was used to establish a Go Social programme in partnership with Belfast City Council, as part of the Leisure Transformation project, to offer up to 10 participants grants of £750 to help overcome any barriers with starting up or growing their social enterprise or cooperative.

Economic:

- 1/4 of the supply chain is procured from 10 miles of the site and 87% of the supply chain is classified as SME's which supports the local economy.
- The equivalent of 3,120 employment weeks have been developed to date throughout construction (still ongoing) that targeted those furthest removed from the labour market was provided.
- 44 apprenticeships were provided
- Belfast City Council Careers Academy provided an interview and skills development day and site visit with trade demonstration.
- 92% of candidates who completed academy training gained employment.
- The use of the Combined Heat and Power led to six figure cost savings. The electricity and heat generated offsets the grid electricity that would otherwise need to be purchased and the heat that conventional boilers would need to produce to meet the building demands.
- To date over 100 jobs have been created within the leisure industry.

Environmental:

- The installation of LED lighting system has reduced energy consumption by 70% compared to conventional lighting systems.
- All leisure centres benefit from the installation of Combined Heat and Power units, reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions.



Appendix B:

Local pipeline projects

Belfast

Renewed
Ambition

Appendix B includes a selection of pipeline projects in the Belfast region, that are expected to deliver wider social, economic and wider benefits.

The case studies presented are in the design and construction phase at present, so the outcomes are 'aspirational'.

Note not all case studies have information across all of the three lenses.

- Belfast Stories
- Tribeca
- The Waterside
- Giant's Park North Foreshore
- Lagan Pedestrian & Cycle Bridge
- Custom House
- Coffee Culture: Pre-Employment Training Cafe
- Newry City Centre Regeneration
- Downpatrick Regeneration
- A Bolder Vision

Pipeline Project: Belfast Stories



Client: Belfast City Council & Tourism NI

Completion date: Expected 2028

Project overview

Belfast Stories is a £100m transformational project designed to capture the unique spirit of Belfast. This major new city tourism destination will help revitalise the city centre and create a focal point for the screen industry, allowing people to connect with the city and one another through stories, screen and social spaces. Belfast Stories is a flagship project for Belfast City Council and seeks to inspire sustainable development.

The project will be a flagship project for the council, delivered in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.

Aspirational Outcomes

Social:

- Aims to maximise the social return on investment and adopt inclusive design principles.
- Delivering an accessible programme of training, placement and apprenticeship opportunities.

Economic:

- Attracting 1.7m footfall by 2031 including 650,000 ticket sales per annum
- Supporting an estimated 1,439 jobs. 1,064 in construction, 132 FTE and 243 in the wider economy.
- Increase GVA by £14.5m per annum.

Environmental:

- Ambition to be a zero carbon exemplar of the city
- BREEAM Excellent target
- Potential for geothermal energy being explored.

Pipeline Project: Tribeca



Client: Castlebrooke Investments

**Completion date: Outline
Approval (Sept 2020)**

Project overview

Tribeca is a mixed used development that intends to create 60,000 sq. m space for working, living and shopping. The major regeneration project, which is expected to cost £500 million, aims to enhance the area and create links between the area and Cathedral Quarter. Castlebrooke Investments has agreed to S76 agreements that have the potential to bring significant benefits to the local community and economy.

Aspirational outcomes

Social:

- Proposed community uses will provide facilities for cultural use that will be particularly beneficial to existing and new residents.
- The scheme provides a mix of multi-functional space which can provide a transition space for pedestrians as well as an area for temporary events
- The pedestrianisation of North Street, and the introduction of new connectivity links and public squares should contribute to an accessible city centre with permeable connections.

Economic:

- The proposed employment offer will attract additional young professionals to the city centre, which will further enhance the area and support local services.
- Prior to the commencement of development of each Phase, the developer is required to submit a 'Construction Employability and Skills Plan' and an 'Operational Employability and Skills Plan' for approval by Council delivering on the principles of Inclusive Growth and ensuring economic benefit across the city.
- It is expected that 580 direct jobs from construction per year, an additional 400 jobs in the supply chain and 1,700 permanent jobs on site for residents of Belfast City Council

- c£266m per annum in GVA to the local economy including c£7m of regional/district rates income on commercial space per annum
- High quality grade A office space with large floor plates to encourage FDI occupiers
- Cumulative additional income from public sector revenues £31.6 million

Environmental:

- Developer contribution of £45k to the Belfast Bikes scheme upon residential occupation promotes active and low carbon transport options
- Improved public realm with the addition of public art. The developer will contribute £350k towards a public arts strategy

28. Tribeca Belfast (n.d). Tribeca, <https://tribeca-belfast.co.uk/>

Pipeline Project: The Waterside



Client: Osborne+Co

Completion date: Expected 2025

Project overview

The Waterside is a new £450 million Belfast development project located on a 16 acre riverside site in the centre of the city. It is the single largest development in Belfast's recent history, comprising of: cultural venues, leisure, retail, office space and 750 homes. The developers have the ambition for the regeneration to be exemplar in placemaking, with a strategy based on: connecting with the people of Belfast, contributing to the global appeal of Belfast as a place to do business and convening with industry and academia. The project team has taken a leading approach to social value creation, bringing together two interface communities to develop a single vision and plan for providing measurable and sustainable local social and economic benefit.

The Waterside intends to use the "LM3 Live" software tool (www.lm3online.com), not only to establish the social and economic impact of the initial project development phase, but to ensure that the impacts continue to be measured throughout the operation of the new Waterside destination. Henning Larsen's masterplan for The Waterside was awarded Best Urban Design in the 2018 World Architecture News Awards.

Aspirational outcomes

Social:

- A new Social Enterprise has been created which intends to cover the delivery of all phases of the development and operation of the site. The social enterprise will receive professional support from the Waterside Centre for employment, training and development
- 3 types of housing will be available: social, build to rent and build for sale
- Enhance and increase the skill levels of local citizens

Economic:

- When complete it is hoped that it could create 8,000 jobs
- Hopes to attract further FDI
- Intends to reduce economic inequalities
- Intends to increase footfall, dwell time and spend-per-head of visitors

Environmental:

- Microclimate analysis conducted to ensure that people can spend maximum time in the public realm. By reducing the wind speed to 2 m/s, this period can be expanded to 45% of the year, which is 3x longer than the current conditions on site.
- Preserved some of the historic industrial features that were on the site
- Linear park will be created, which will connect to the riverside

29. The Waterside (n.d). <https://www.thewatersidebelfast.com/>

Pipeline Project: Giant's Park North Foreshore



Client: Belfast City Council

Completion: Expected 2026

Project overview

Giant's Park North Foreshore is a large scale council led regeneration project. Home to a former landfill site this 340 acre site is the largest development site in the city. The site offers huge potential to deliver physical, economic, and social benefits for residents, visitors and businesses.

The council prepared the site and completed in 2016 a £9.5m infrastructure project, providing 1,734m of roads, high quality landscaping and a first-class entrance situation. Key services have been installed by the council as part of the road infrastructure scheme. These include water, sewerage, electricity cabling, and ducting for telecommunications.

The site is already home to Belfast Harbour Studios, a £20 million film studio complex developed by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners comprising two film studios and sound stages of approximately 33,000 square feet each, two workshop buildings of approximately 11,000 square feet each and a three-storey 37,000 square feet office and production building. Planning has been granted for an expansion of the Studios in a £45m investment. Studio Ulster will be part of the expansion, funded through the Belfast City Region Deal. Studio Ulster is an exciting collaboration between Ulster University and Belfast Harbour. The £68million investment in Studio Ulster will support over 500 temporary construction jobs and when completed will provide over 500 high skilled, high waged jobs. It is anticipated that construction work on the extension to the film studios will commence in mid 2022.

A preferred developer has been appointed to regenerate 250 acres of the site into a major visitor attraction for the city. The proposed £93 million investment by Giant's Park Belfast Ltd, will create four distinct zones or hubs:

- a welcome hub
- a leisure and sports innovation hub
- an adventure hub
- a theme park hub.

Aspirational outcomes

Social:

- The site hopes to draw in visitors, making the once derelict site a destination

Economic:

- Sustaining 1,400 jobs.
- Building on Northern Ireland's already established world wide reputation as a production location
- Support Screen Industries

Environmental:

- The project will protect and restore biodiversity
- Multiplier benefits for the wider tourism, hospitality and construction sectors. Screen tourism has also been identified as a key growth area by Visit Belfast and Tourism NI.

30. Belfast City Council (n.d) Giants Park, <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/business-and-investment/physical-investment/giant-s-park>

Pipeline Project: Lagan Pedestrian & Cycle Bridge



**Client: Department for Infrastructure
& Belfast City Council**

Completion: Planning approved in 2021

Project overview

This pedestrian and cycle bridge will span 150m over the river Lagan will connect south and east Belfast to the city centre. The iconic structure will provide an attractive commuter and leisure linkage and offer workers and visitors a quicker route between the city centre and Ormeau Park, one of the biggest parks in greater Belfast. The bridge will improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage a shift to sustainable transport modes while promoting an active lifestyle, improving the wellbeing of those in the region and enhancing social inclusion.

The bridge will also help further activate the waterfront, driving residents and visitors to this unique asset and further contributing to its continued regeneration (building on the successful redevelopment of the Lagan Weir). Residents and workers on both sides of the river will be reconnected with the river and the wildlife and open space it offers. As well as opening up such experiences, the new route will offer increased opportunities for visitors to explore the city, shrinking the perceived (and actual) distance between previously disconnected areas. This investment has the potential to unlock new development opportunities, boost tourism and support regeneration efforts.

This project is being delivered through the Belfast Region City Deal and will be developed in line with the BRCD Inclusive Growth and Sustainability Framework.

Aspirational outcomes

Social:

- Connecting two previously disconnected communities, the bridge aims to enhance social cohesion
- The bridge provides a safer way of travelling for cyclists and pedestrians

Economic:

- Improves links for these communities to the city centre, meaning greater access to employment opportunities
- The bridge aspires to be an iconic landmark with the hope that it will bring tourism as well as increase the house prices in the local area

Environmental:

- Encourages individuals to choose healthier and cleaner forms of transport

31. Department for Infrastructure (n.d). Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge, <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/lagan-pedestrian-and-cycle-bridge>

Pipeline Project: Custom House



Client: Straidorn Properties

Completion: May 2022

Project overview

One of Belfast's grandest buildings is being refurbished and upgraded to provide 58,000 sq ft of space which will predominantly be used as offices. Although it is being modernised, many of the historical features are being retained.

Aspirational outcomes

Social:

- The building is being designed with Wellness as a core principle. Indoor and outdoor spaces have been designed to provide opportunity for occupants to interact and co-work whilst opportunity for break out space has been maximised.

Environmental:

- Bringing back to life a culturally significant building with circular economy principles used due to it being a refurbishment
- The firm hopes to engage with other stakeholders in order to link customs house to Cathedral Quarter and City Quays to contribute to Belfast becoming a more vibrant city

32. Belfast Live (2020). Custom House, <https://www.belfast-live.co.uk/news/belfast-news/belfasts-custom-house-sold-long-19232597>

Pipeline Project: Coffee Culture: Pre-Employment Training Café



Client: Belfast South Community Resources and Andras Academy

Completion: At feasibility stage

Project overview

Andras House is a property development and hospitality company that operates six hotels in the Belfast area.

Coffee culture is a training café to train unemployed local people in hospitality skills, with job interviews being offered for roles in Andras House hotels and the wider hospitality sector. The café is run in partnership between Belfast South Community Resources and Andras House. It provides a clear example of real estate developer and operator working in partnership to deliver positive socio-economic outcomes for the local community. The total training time is 10 days, offering courses on work readiness, customer care, health and safety, barista, and employability.

Aspirational outcomes

Social:

- The scheme directly benefits the communities that are located near the training café and Andras House Hotels

Economic:

- Andras House offers interviews for opportunities within Andras House hotel chains to any participant that successfully completes the training, providing those that are unemployed with an opportunity to secure employment.
- Target recruitment is 10 participants per course, with two courses run every year.
- It is anticipated that after this training 100% of successful candidate will be given a job interview by Andras House and that 25% will have entered employment up to 6 months after courses are completed.

Pipeline Project: Newry City Centre Regeneration



**Client: Newry, Mourne and
Down District Council**

Completion: Work to commence in 2022

Project overview

Newry City Centre regeneration is a £42 million multifaceted regeneration project run as part of the City Deal offer. The development is being led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Directorate with the hope that this project will increase the vibrancy and footfall, stimulate further investment and facilitate regeneration for the benefit of the entire district. Once complete it hopes to offer a new civic & regional hub, theatre and conference facility in the heart of the city. The programme of regeneration also includes the creation of new public spaces, an office development fund and the development of a traffic, transport and car parking strategy, a Digital Innovation Hub and includes the 15-acre Albert Basin Park for leisure and play in the former maritime area.

Aspirational Outcomes

Social

- Council's initial investment has spurred a further £8million from the BRCD which will create new public event space and encourage the private sector to develop new Grade A office accommodation
- Hopes to attract more visitors to the town

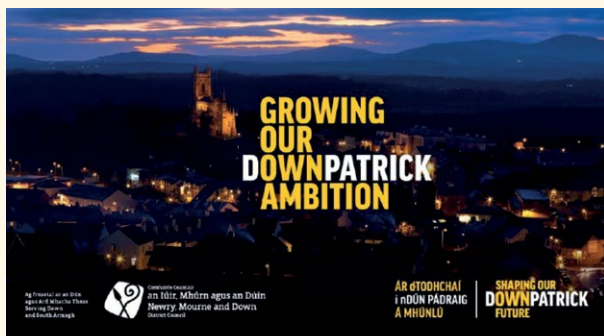
Economic

- To provide employment opportunities
- During construction phase, apprenticeships will be provided

Environmental

- The park will increase the biodiversity of Newry
- The programme for traffic will improve pedestrian and cycle safety and hopes to make the city less car dependant

Pipeline Project: Downpatrick Regeneration



Client: Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and the Department for Communities

Completion: N/A

Project Overview

The aim of the project is to create a catalyst for regeneration and development of the Irish Street site that hopes to create a space that is accessible and inclusive for all. Working closely with various stakeholders and businesses within Downpatrick, the council and Department for Communities has initiated the initial phase of the project's consultations on the production of a brief for the 0.39-hectare site. The regeneration will enhance the public realm and provide various services and facilities to encourage local people to enjoy and use the space.

Aspirational Outcomes

Social

- CPD guidance on social value will be placed within the contract, aiming to deliver social value
- Enhanced public realm will make the city centre more accessible and attractive to visitors

Economic

- Increased visitor numbers will increase the spending in local shops

Pipeline Project: A Bolder Vision

Client: Belfast City Council, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department for Communities (DfC) Completion: N/A

Project Overview

A Bolder Vision is our blueprint for moving forward and will guide our future infrastructure investment decisions that are ambitious, yet deliverable. In early 2020, Belfast City Council (BCC), the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and the Department for Communities (DfC) completed 'A Bolder Vision (ABV) for Belfast' for a shared vision of the city centre. The vision reflects the overwhelming recognition that change needs to happen to ensure economic and environmental resilience is embedded within the liveability and mobility landscape of Belfast as a capital city of today and of the future.

This Bolder Vision is the continuation of a journey for the city, initiated with The Belfast Agenda in 2017 and strengthened by recent policies and strategies focusing on the centre of Belfast towards 2035. The next phases developed on the ambition set out in A Bolder Vision through the Four 'Key Moves' which were tested through consultation and stakeholder engagement. The opportunity for transformation is framed by the climate emergency, and the need to diversify the city centre, putting liveability at the heart of the future city centre.

The Key Moves are:

- 1) Create a civic spine with a focus on people
- 2) Reimagine the inner ring road and end car dominance
- 3) Promote city centre living
- 4) Embrace the river Lagan and waterfront

Each Key Move contains different types of interventions organised into the following categories:

- Streetscape rebalanced
- Public transport and active travel
- On-street parking and multi-storey car parks
- City living and urban greening
- Gateways and wider connectivity

The interventions identified under each of the Key Moves will help to deliver The Bolder Vision and will also help shape the major capital investment decisions that will transform and drive forward the change that is needed in Belfast city centre.

Work is still ongoing to shape the Key Moves to take account of the feedback received during the consultation which will be reflected in the final strategy and delivery plan due to be published in autumn 2022.

Aspirational outcomes

Social:

- City centre as an inclusive place to live, work and visit
- Community focused regeneration and enhanced community connectivity
- Overcoming severance with surrounding communities

Economic:

- Support a vibrant and resilient city centre
- Revitalise the city's economy through capital schemes and enabling placemaking
- Build on the potential of the Lagan as a tourism product

Environmental:

- Active and inclusive public realm and green spaces
- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport
- End private car dominance





Appendix C:

International case studies

A key part of this research is to understand what best practice looks like internationally and to bring key lessons and insights for real estate development projects in the Belfast region.

Five exemplar case studies have been selected that span different types of real estate development (e.g. Waterside regeneration, commercial, residential) and that have delivered successful outcomes across the social, economic and/or environmental lenses of sustainable development

Project details and an overview of the project are provided. Then, investment and design, construction and operations are analysed. Finally, the outcomes across the three sustainable development lenses; social, economic and environmental are explained with a concluding analysis that identify the relevant lessons for Belfast.

- Harbour front Toronto
- Ekla Housing
- 245 Hammersmith Road
- King's Cross Regeneration
- Paxton House

Harbour front Toronto Waterfront Regeneration

Project Details

Location: Ontario, Canada.

Asset class(es): Mixed use with residential properties, commercial offices, leisure and culture.

Completion date: 2025 (estimated).

Project value: \$30-50 billion (mixture of private and public funds).

Client: City of Toronto, Government of Ontario, Government of Canada

Delivery Team: Waterfront Toronto (lead) with multi-partners.

Overview of project

The site contains 2,000 acres of largely vacant or under-utilised industrial lands and open spaces. The new development will include 400 acres of new parks, a continuous waterfront promenade, new cultural and tourism facilities, 40,000 new housing units and 10 million square feet for new businesses. The project is one of the largest infrastructure project in North America and one of the largest waterfront redevelopment initiatives undertaken in the world. Their ambition is to become a model for low-carbon and resilient urban development.

Planning and acquisition phase

Following the release of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force's report in March 2000, the governments of Canada, Ontario and the City of Toronto jointly announced the creation of Waterfront Toronto. Set up formally in 2001 as a joint corporation, Waterfront Toronto, tasking the obtained 25 year mandate to transform the 2,000 acres of brownfield site into a sustainable, mixed-

use communities with new public spaces.

Binding contribution agreements were signed between the three governmental bodies. They each provided \$500 million in seed capital for the 25-year mandate and a 13-member Board of Directors was appointed to oversee the strategic direction of the site.

The vast majority of the land belonged to one of the three governments involved. They chose a funding model that leveraged public capital by working with private development partners who buy the land for development. The money received was then used to fund public infrastructure.

Various strategies and frameworks were developed including:

- A Designated Waterfront Area was established, setting the responsibility of each partner in terms of planning and development management.
- In 2003, the Waterfront Parks and Public Spaces Framework was developed. It identified more than 90 parks and public spaces that would be developed and designed in a sustainable way. You can learn more about the framework [here](#).
- A Resilience and Innovation Framework was produced. It sets the development's environmental strategy and targets. The [framework](#) also includes a detailed [action plan](#).
- To maintain design excellence and guide their work, Waterfront Toronto established a Design Review Panel in 2005. They also hold regular international design competitions.



Overview of the site being developed, which to date is the largest waterfront regeneration project in the world.



Waterfront Toronto's vision for the design of the harbour is people centred, whilst aiming to boost economic growth, improve health and well-being and attract new talent to Toronto.

33. Waterfront Toronto (2021) Our Waterfront Vision. <https://waterfronttoronto.ca/nbe/portal/waterfront/Home/waterfronthome/our-vision>

- Waterfront Toronto has set Green Building Requirements which were updated in 2021. This [document](#) sets operational Greenhouse Gas (GHG) limits, energy performance requirements, embodied carbon targets and details the development's biodiversity, water resilience, urban agriculture, sustainable materials, solid waste and transport considerations.

Development phase

As part of their procurement policy, Waterfront Toronto is encouraging working with local businesses and using 'made-in Toronto' solutions, whilst learning from global best practice. The detailed procurement policy can be found [here](#).

Waterfront Toronto is also maximising opportunities around new green technologies and low-carbon innovations. One example is the creation of a Soil Recycling Facility Pilot Project. This project was established to assess technologies and approaches to clean and process contaminated soils.

Outcomes

Economic

- The new development will support 40,000 new jobs for local people. The development will create green jobs and trial new low-carbon, green technologies. 30% of waterfront lands is allocated for commercial purposes.
- Thanks to apprenticeships provided on site, the development also contributes to skills development.
- Between 2001 and 2013, work on the waterfront has already generated 16,200 full-time years of employment, \$1.7 billion of value added (direct, indirect and induced) and increased tax revenues by \$621.8 million.

Environmental

- Creation of 300 hectares of parks and public spaces. 25% of the waterfront area is reserved for parks. Since 2004, 27 new or improved parks or public spaces have been opened.
- The site aims to be low-carbon and climate resilient with rainwater harvesting, urban agriculture, water efficiency and biodiversity net gain provision.

Social

- 40,000 new residential units. This will increase the supply of affordable housing in the city.
- The development include extensive investment in public transit and active travel. It aims to enable active, healthy lifestyles through people-centred design.
- The site will be Canada's first open-access, ultra high-speed broadband community network. Neighbourhood-wide wifi access will

ensure digital innovations can be implemented across the site.

- The development will revitalise local communities, providing new amenities, public realms and community facilities.

Analysis and lessons for Belfast

The approach taken by Waterfront Toronto is one of strategic revitalization rather than simple real estate development. Lessons learnt for Belfast include:

- Making best use of brownfield land and underutilised vacant industrial space by setting up research facilities to test new approaches and technologies. Learning can then be exported globally.
- Clear governance frameworks to coordinate responsibility and funding between multiple partners is key. The three governments set up a dedicated body, Waterfront Toronto, to steer the development.
- The three governments also adopted a funding framework that allowed them to easily attract and leverage private investments which is essential given the scale of the redevelopment.
- Procurement is an important lever to maximise social value and local job creation. For example, Waterfront Toronto works with international firms, but requires they partner with locally-based firms.
- The use of design review panels and design competitions has allowed Waterfront Toronto to draw on emerging best practice and stay at the forefront of innovative design.

34. Urban Strategies Inc. (2021). Toronto Waterfront Revitalization. <https://www.urbanstrategies.com/project/Toronto-waterfront-revitalization/>

35. City of Toronto (2021). Waterfront Secretariat Overview. <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/waterfront/waterfront-secretariat-overview/>

Ekla Housing

Mixed Use Regeneration

Project Details

Location: Brussels, Belgium

Asset Class(es): Residential with some mixed used functions

Completion Date: 2016 - Second phase aims to be delivered in 2023

Project Value: €32 million

Client: Revive

Delivery Team: BESIX, BURO II & Archi +I and

Establis

Overview of project

The Ekla project aimed to decontaminate a +6,000m² site that housed a former brewery and transform it into an 18-storey residential tower with mixed used facilities. Revive, the client, allocated €32m to build 45 apartments for affordable housing, 39 apartments for social housing, 50 student housing units, a primary school, nursery, retail space, a social innovation hub and offices. The site is located in the second poorest municipality in Belgium, Sint-Jans-Molenbeek. However, recent transport infrastructure investments mean that the area is well connected to Brussels city centre and hence was seen as having great potential.

A second phase of the development has been initiated and is currently under construction. This phase will add a technical secondary school, along with another 100 residential units. The 700- student

school brings education to a region that has high dropout rates. In total the project spans 24,000m² which has transformed the neighbourhood and brought new residents in, whilst the school has brought much needed education to the deprived area. Ultimately, the project not only aimed to revive the area, but also aimed to provide affordable housing and a good education for locals. The project was nominated for the European Awards for Excellence in 2020.

Planning and acquisition phase

The project was funded through the Revive investment fund and will be held for a minimum of 10 years. It is hoped that this investment will act as a catalyst to transform the surrounding neighbourhoods, which also require regeneration.

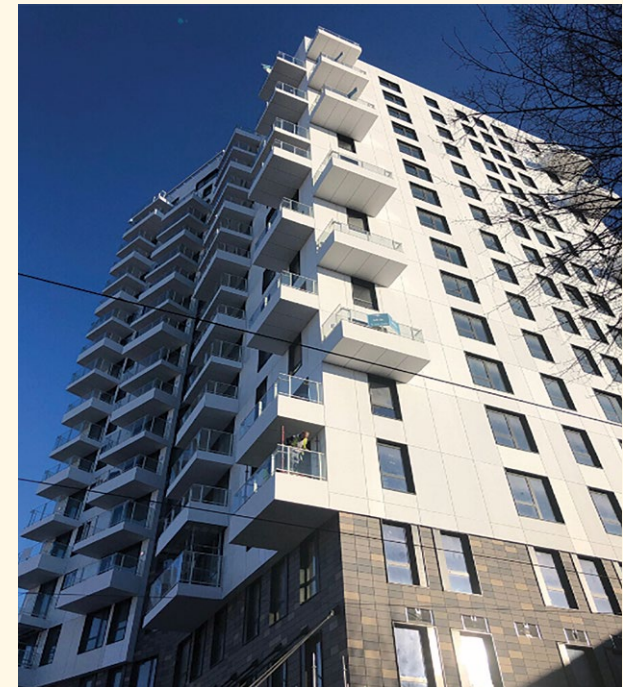
Development phase

Revive had an objective to create energy-efficient, low maintenance buildings with provisions such as high speed WiFi and parking spaces for 200 bicycles. This leads to a reduction in tenant energy bills and service charges, and the owner will see reduced maintenance costs. This model focuses on the full cost of living, which not only takes into account rent, but also energy and transport costs into account.

Designed by B2ai Architects, the building has elements systematically removed to allow residents to visually engage with the surroundings at different levels.



Architectural render showing how the project will sit within existing buildings and how it will be a catalyst for transformation.



The completed 18-storey residential tower with mixed use facilities below that sits on the now decontaminated site of a former brewery.

Operational phase

The building is owned by Revive, with some units sold to private tenants and investors. Within the 18 storey residential tower, part of the units were sold to private households and investors, however, 20 apartments were held by Revive investment fund for the co-living brand Heijme, promoting the “housing as a service” concept. Heijme provides a rental service that included Wi-Fi, water, electricity and even food deliveries in one single payment and is suited for temporary or mid-term stays.

Outcomes

Economic

- 15% reduction in typical household energy bills due to improved energy efficiency.
- 15% reduction in travel cost due to location, close to travel hub that provides train, metro, tram and bus connections.
- This project hopes to spur further projects and economic investment in the neighbouring communities.
- Social innovation hub will offer office space and business support for the younger generation in the community.

Environmental

- Net-zero targets set for parts of the project.
- Creation of a local park.
- Sustainable design features included: good insulation, reuse of rainwater, green roof, high efficiency gas boiler and glazing.
- The developments maximise the use of renewables throughout, with the use of photovoltaic panels installed.

- Villo! Bicycle point has been installed, a public bicycle rental programme

Social

- Increases the supply of affordable housing in the area.
- Improved connectivity to the city centre.
- The extensive space for bicycle parking encourages an active and healthy lifestyles.
- The social innovation hub also acts as a space to bring the diverse community together.

Analysis and lessons for Belfast

The approach taken by Revive prove that higher initial investments can have positive knock on effects for both tenant and investor. The client has sensitively navigated the needs of the area, making sure that residents can stay with affordable housing provisions, whilst at the same time encouraging new residents to the area.

Lessons learnt for Belfast include:

- Public investment into upgrading the train/metro/tram and bus hub next door meant that the neighbourhood had intrinsic opportunities and hence the development was attractive to both buyers, letters and those from the area. It proves the importance of installing adequate transport networks to connect a community to a city centre.

- This project made the best use of a brownfield site and proved how investment can lead to decontamination and an improved built environment. Investing in one deprived area has the potential to attract other investors to neighbouring areas, thus can improve a wider area of a city than initially intended.
- The importance of a higher initial investment of the client has been shown, as it not only improves the efficiency of a building making it less energy intensive, but also results in reduced costs for both owner and tenant.
- Reduced owner costs such as energy, service and transport cost are key to make affordable housing inclusive and low cost.

36. Boydens (2021). ‘Ekla’ residential tower, offices, kindergarten and primary school, <https://www.boydens.be/projects/residential/residential-tower-kindergarten-primary-school-offices-ekla-ninoofsesteenweg-alphonse-vandenpeereboomstraat-edmond-bonehillstraat-pierre-van-humbeekstraat-1080-sint-jans-mo/>

37. Revive (2018). Social and Environmental impact report, <https://www.revive.be/assets/files/general/Sustainability-report-finale-verise-kleiner.pdf>

38. ULI Europe (2020). EKLA, <https://europe.uli.org/programmes/awards-and-competitions/awardsforexcellence/past-uli-europe-awards-for-excellence/2020-uli-europe-awards-for-excellence/2020-finalists/ekla/>

39. Urban Land Institute (2020). Promoting Housing Affordability, file:///10.0.50.28/jobs/1526%20Belfast%20City%20Council%20Real%20Estate/07%20Calculations%20&%20research/Research/International%20case%20studies/Housing%20Affordability%20Report%202020%20Final.pdf

245 Hammersmith Road Sustainable Offices

Project Details

Location: London, United Kingdom.

Asset class(es): Commercial with offices, restaurants, retail and public realm provision.

Completion date: 2019.

Project value: £100 million (construction costs).

Client: London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

Delivery Team: Legal & General Property, Lendlease and BNP Paribas.

Overview of project

245 Hammersmith Road is a 330,000 square foot office-led scheme in West London. The scheme includes offices, restaurants, retail, a new public plaza and a secluded park.

With long-term environmental and social sustainability at the heart of its design, this development, which launched in September 2019, has delivered over £28 million in social value.

The ambition is for 245 Hammersmith Road to contribute to regenerating the centre of Hammersmith, providing a model for sustainable commercial-led projects.

Planning and acquisition phase

Legal & General Property approached the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham with a proposal to redevelop a large property, focusing on delivering social value to the local communities.

Legal & General Property worked with Social Value Portal to look at how their proposed approach would maximise social value. As part of the process, it was concluded that additional social value is generated through every stage of the building life cycle, through the choices made about materials sourcing, employment decisions, environmental considerations, building management solutions and corporate social responsibility programmes.

The S106 contribution was initially set at £1 million. However, informed by conversation with Social Value Portal, the delivery team looked at an alternative to the traditional Section 106 cash-negotiation approach. Indeed, the delivery team argued S106 contributions should go beyond cash considerations and focus on delivering community benefits and meeting local needs.

Therefore, the assessment of local needs was done in close collaboration with the council, the developer and the main contractors. Collaboratively, they developed a means of measuring social value using the National Social Value Measurement TOMs Framework. You can find more information about TOMs [here](https://socialvalueportal.com/case-study-integrating-social-value-into-planning/). The matrix developed was tailored to the council's priorities and to the area to better reflect local needs. The matrix and its proposed measures was then added to the Social Value Portal's online platform to ensure targets were met throughout the lifetime of the development.



245 Hammersmith Road also includes three retail units, a public plaza and an urban park where year-round event take place.



245 Hammersmith Road offers over 242,000 sq ft of flexible, collaborative space.

40. Social Value Portal (2021) Case Study: Integration Social Value into Planning. <https://socialvalueportal.com/case-study-integrating-social-value-into-planning/>

41. UKGBC (2021) Hammersmith Road <https://www.ukgbc.org/ukgbc-work/hammersmith-road/>

Development phase

The new building, designed by architect Sheppard Robson, replaced an outmoded office block and was built by Lendlease over 106 weeks.

Special considerations were given to how materials and labour were sourced during both the manufacturing and construction phases.

The design and contracting teams continually shared information and tactics to make the most of local opportunities. This included meet-the-buyer events, liaising with specialist recruiting agencies and working with local job centres that support SMEs.

All contractors and suppliers involved in the construction process had to abide to the Social Value National TOMs framework.

Operational phase

The building is owned by Legal and General Property and Mitsubishi Estate London, and managed by BNP Paribas Real Estate Property Management Team.

To maximise social value, the total life cycle of the building was considered. It was recognised early on that the building management team has a significant role to play in maximising delivery of community benefits both in how they support occupiers and how they award ongoing service contracts. It is why social value was embedded within all contract procurement process.

BNP Paribas Real Estate Property Management team has delivered over £600,000 of additional social value contribution.

Outcomes

Economic

- The development contributed to economic growth and local job creation. The scheme increased local employment by 51.4% and delivered £26.1 million in local economic value.
- Local supply chain spend brought £21.4 million, local people employed brought £4.7 million and apprenticeships and work placement brought £42,500 in value added

Environmental

- 26,654 t of waste was diverted from landfill.
- 148 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions saved.
- £2.4 million in environmental value was delivered with this scheme.

Social

- Overall, the project has so far delivered £28.2 million in social value. The total social value added per £ contract value was 28.2%. The scheme won the Social Innovation Project Award in 2021.
- The Hammersmith scheme will deliver £100m in social value over ten years of occupation and more than £300 million over a 30-year period at no additional capital cost.
- The focus on social value led to extensive community engagement. This resulted in a less confrontational process and more benefits delivered to the community.
- The project resulted in 440 hours of community volunteering and 600 donations were made to local community projects.

Analysis and lessons for Belfast

The development of 245 Hammersmith Road provided a better understanding of how social value is created and measured. Without appropriate interventions, a huge amount of social value and associated community benefits would not have been delivered or would have remained unaccounted for. Lessons learnt for Belfast include:

- Delivering social value does not have to come with additional capital costs, although it is likely to involve using different procurement and management practices.
- S106 negotiations should focus on cash contributions and community benefits.
- Community outcomes delivered by a scheme should be valued against a social value framework and compared with any cash contributions suggested by the developer.
- Communities should be actively engaged throughout the process and supported in developing their own social value charters and TOMs matrices.
- Developers should be encouraged to create social value strategies.
- Operations-wise, building managers should focus on local sourcing and buying opportunities and on community engagement programmes.

42. Social Value Portal (2019) Case Study: 245 Hammersmith Road Social Value Delivery Report <https://socialvalue-portal.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Hammersmith-Highlights-with-Legal-General-v3.pdf>

43. BNP Paris Real Estate (2021). 245 Hammersmith Road Leading the Way for Social Value and Community. <https://www.realestate.bnpparibas.co.uk/245-hammersmith-road-leading-way-social-value-and-community>

King Cross Regeneration

New Mixed Use Community

Project Details

Location: London, United Kingdom

Asset class(es): Mixed use

Completion date: 2008-2022

Project value: £3 billion invested on the site since 2008

Client: King's Cross Central Limited Partnerships

Delivery Team: Argent

Overview of project

The ongoing regeneration of King's Cross has supported over 10,000 jobs to date and in excess of £600 million in added value to the economy per year. It is a 67 acre site that used to be an under-used industrial wasteland. It now hosts homes, shows, offices, galleries, bars, restaurants, schools and a university. They have also opened a series of public squares and gardens. It has been lauded as an exemplar urban development and place-making development.

Planning and acquisition phase

The 67 acre site has a rich history and unique setting. It was a underused industrial wasteland that was transformed and even got a new postcode.

Early plans for redevelopment fell through, but the 1996 decision to move the Channel Tunnel Rail Link from Waterloo to St Pancras became the catalyst for change. The landowners – London & Continental Railways Limited and Excel (now DHL) decided to develop the land. In 2001, Argent was selected as

the development partner. The project began with several years of intensive studies and consultation with the local community, government and other stakeholders. This work formed the basis for a vision for the development, from which the master-plan evolved.

Development phase

In 2008, Argent, London & Continental Railways and DHL formed a joint partnership: Kings Cross Central Limited Partnership. The partnership was the single landowner at King's Cross. Early infrastructure works began in June 2007, with development starting in earnest in November 2008. Much of the early investment was focused in and around the Victorian buildings that once formed the Goods Yard. In September 2011 the University of the Arts London moved to the Granary Complex and parts of the development opened to the public for the first time.

Since then, restaurants have opened, the Great Northern Hotel has been refurbished and residents have moved in. The historic Coal Drops have been redeveloped as a unique shopping destination and companies such as Google, Louis Vuitton, Universal Music and Havas are choosing to locate here.

A whole series of new public squares and gardens have opened, among them Granary Square with its spectacular fountains, Lewis Cubitt Park and Square and Gasholder Park.

A skills centre was also set up on site.



The new integrated with the old. The photo also shows the extent of public realm improvements.



Public realm improvements sat within the renovated post-industrial landscape.

Outcomes

Economic

- Supported over 10,000 jobs and excess of £600 million in added value to the economy per year.
- Construction process has supported 1,300 jobs. 1,500 suppliers have been used including 300 local businesses supporting 500 local jobs and generating GVA of £33 million per year in the local area.
- 19 new and refurbished office building providing 3 million sq ft of commercial office space with a 97% occupancy rate (pre COVID).
- 8,599 employees work on site generating a total economic value of £480 million GBA per year.

Environmental

- 10.5 ha of public realm delivered and 7 restored heritage buildings. £1.2 million uplift public space. 163 events organised.
- 85% of waste diverted.

Social

- 800 new homes have been delivered supporting £77 million of additional local spend per year from new residents which is estimated to have supported 200 jobs in the local area and generated £1.4 million in additional council tax per year. 36% of home delivered are affordable (325) – 17% are social rent or supported housing and 19% are affordable and shared ownership (This compares to average of 25% affordable across inner London boroughs over past three years)

- 600 young people and 420 businesses volunteers involved in volunteering at Global Generation's Skip Garden in 2015/16
- 900 new homes delivered providing accommodation for 1,200 working age residents as well as 750 student accommodation rooms
- Over 600 local people placed into work on site, including 330 previously unemployed local people – generating a public value of £4.6m pa.
- £12.5 million uplift in well-being.

Analysis and lessons for Belfast

A study was commissioned by Regeneris to identify the socio-economic benefits delivered. They have analysed the benefits for the 67 acres site and for the wider local area. More information about the social value report can be found [here](#).

Whilst the project has delivered many socio-economic benefits, it has also faced criticism about gentrification. In addition, the affordable housing provision was lower compared to what was planned. The original agreement signed with Camden council in 2006 specified that Argent would built 750 affordable homes, 500 of which would be available for social rent. But a "cascade" mechanism was built into the agreement to safeguard the developer's profits, meaning that if minimum prices could no longer be achieved, the quantity of affordable housing could be reduced. In 2015 Argent successfully negotiated the number of affordable homes down to 637.

Lessons learnt for Belfast include:

- Social value needs to be embedded from the onset of a project and reported on throughout in order to fully understand the wider socio-economic benefits that have been delivered.

- Taking the time to conduct intensive studies and consult the local community will generate a unified vision that everyone feels as though they have contributed to build.
- Old industrial buildings have great potential to be refurbished, using principles from the circular economy, which has numerous environmental benefits over demolition and starting from new.
- Public realm improvements are essential for place making and have allowed for multiple events to be hosted on site, making the development a destination.
- Market conditions can affect the financial viability of development, and can affect the delivery of affordable housing provision and other sustainability features.

45. Kings Cross (2017) Major Study Reveals Social and Economic Value of King's Cross Regeneration. <https://www.kingscross.co.uk/blog/2017/12/06/major-study-reveals-social-economic-value-kings-cross-regeneration>

44. King Cross (2021). The Story so Far. <https://www.kingscross.co.uk/the-story-so-far>

Paxton House Residential (retrofit)

Project Details

Location: Croydon, London

Asset Class(es): Residential

Completion Date: 2017

Project Value: £5 million

Client: Joseph Homes

Delivery Team: Alma-nac, Civic Engineers, Integration UK

Overview of project

Paxton House is an innovative housing solution, that re-purposed an existing concrete-framed 1960s office block, that was being used by squatters, into open and airy apartments with shared communal spaces designed to foster a strong sense of community within the building.

The four storey L-shaped building has now been converted into 43 apartments spanning 2495m², under standard permitted development legislation, along with a series of shared spaces for the residents. This number of apartments was only possible due to the innovative architectural decision to use an external circulation strategy which wrapped around the building.

In 2018 it won the AJ retrofit awards.

Planning and acquisition phase

The client, Joseph Homes, took a risk on the brownfield development, but saw the value in the office block as well as the site, which is located close to a train station with easy connections to central London.

There was a planning risk associated with the standard permitted development application. This forced the architects to subdivide their planning application submissions in order to 'de-risk' elements in the hope that more elements would be signed off. This is one of the challenges when adapting a building through standard permitted development.

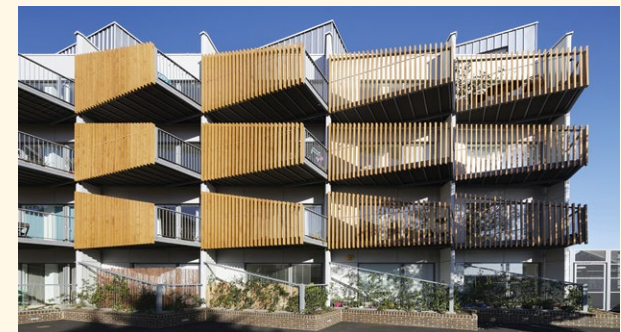
Development phase

During design phase, the architect realised the importance of adapting the design to go above and beyond, when repurposing an uninspiring office building. The architect focused on quality and privacy for the surrounding residents to prevent backlash from locals.

The architects and client strived to create "healthy homes", with many of the blocks being dual aspect, with south facing living spaces, along with balconies. Communal spaces, including a spare bedroom, a multi-use workspace, roof-garden, herb garden and shared BBQ areas have all been created to foster a sense of community between dwellings.



Overview of Paxton House adjacent to its local context, close to the train station.



Each apartment was designed to be dual aspect and each with balconies due to an emphasis on happy and healthy living.



www.investinbelfast.com

Belfast

**Renewed
Ambition**

usefulprojects

part of the Useful Simple Trust