







# CONTENTS

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	<b>02</b>
Deal ambition .....	02
Delivery in 2022/23 .....	02
Looking ahead .....	03
<b>Section 1</b> .....	<b>04</b>
Background and overview .....	04
Case for investing .....	05
Inclusive, sustainable growth .....	06
Pillars of investment .....	07
<b>Section 2</b> .....	<b>08</b>
Governance arrangements .....	08
Council Panel .....	08
Executive Board and Pillar Boards .....	08
Lead authority and accountable body .....	09
<b>Section 3</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Innovation</b> .....	<b>10</b>
AMIC – Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre .....	11
i-REACH Health – Institute of Research Excellence for Advanced Clinical Healthcare .....	12
Global Innovation Institute .....	13
CDHT – Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology .....	14
Studio Ulster .....	15
<b>Digital Programme</b> .....	<b>16</b>
(i) Enabling infrastructure .....	16
(ii) Challenge Fund Programme .....	17
(iii) Regional Innovation Hubs .....	18
<b>Tourism and regeneration</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Bangor Waterfront .....	21
Belfast Stories .....	22
Destination Royal Hillsborough .....	23
Carrickfergus Regeneration .....	24
The Gobbins Phase 2 .....	25
Mourne Mountain Gateway .....	26
Newry City Centre Regeneration .....	27
<b>Infrastructure</b> .....	<b>28</b>
Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge .....	29
Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 .....	30
Newry Southern Relief Road .....	31
<b>Employability and skills</b> .....	<b>32</b>
Skills assessment and delivery .....	32
Social value .....	32
<b>Section 4</b> .....	<b>34</b>
Financial Statement .....	34
<b>Section 5</b> .....	<b>36</b>
Realising benefits and collaborating to succeed – next steps .....	36
Benefits realisation .....	36
Collaborating to succeed .....	36
Delivering in 2023 /24 .....	37
Appendix 1 Council Panel 2022/23 .....	38
Appendix 2 Glossary of supporting documentation .....	40
BRCDC Key contacts .....	41

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Deal ambition

The signing of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) in December 2021 secured the financial commitment of the UK Government, NI Executive and BRCD partners, to work with industry to deliver a £1bn programme of investment that offers a 'once in a generation' opportunity to accelerate inclusive economic growth for the region.

The BRCD partners are committed to ensuring that this Deal serves not only as a driver for growth and investment, but also as a catalyst for a sustained approach to collaborative working, so that we can maximise its overall economic and societal impact.

The investment made through the BRCD projects will strengthen the region's offer in growth sectors such as life and health sciences, the digital and creative industries, and advanced manufacturing. It will support next generation digital capabilities, boost tourism, and support the region's regeneration, underpinned by infrastructure developments and skills investment to connect people to jobs and services.

Over the lifetime of the Deal, the following benefits are anticipated:



support the creation of up to **20,000 jobs**



connect local people to new and better jobs



place the region at the **top table of digital innovation**



deliver **£400 million in GVA** directly on-site and within the region



target delivery of almost **£1 billion of private sector leverage**



create compelling **world-class visitor attractions**



help to **regenerate major towns and cities**



foster **collaborative working**

However, time will not stand still as the Deal is delivered. Partners will continue to review and reflect on the changing economic and political landscape, taking account of emerging priorities such as net zero, and ensuring that all projects and programmes respond to emerging challenges and remain relevant, while continuing to align with our wider inclusive growth and social value ambitions.

## Delivery in 2022/23

The ambition for 2022/23 for the BRCD partners was to move the Deal from the development phase into the delivery phase, supporting the design and delivery of our ambitious projects with BRCD funding. For BRCD projects to move into the delivery phase and be able to access BRCD funding, they require Outline Business Case (OBC) approval and signed Contracts for Funding and Funding Agreements.

As we have sought to make this transition into delivery, the BRCD partners have faced the considerable challenges of inflation, economic and political uncertainty and constraints on the public finances, alongside the complexities of City Deal financing and governance.

Despite these challenges, significant progress has been made across the programme during 2022/23, working with government colleagues to drive delivery.

Eleven Outline Business Cases have now been approved, with an additional three at advanced stages of the approval process, and seven also having Contracts for Funding and Funding Agreements signed.

The first contract was signed by Ulster University for Studio Ulster in July 2022 and has been followed in recent months with contracts signed with council partners for Carrickfergus Regeneration, Bangor Waterfront Regeneration and Newry City Centre Regeneration. In the latter part of 2022/23 contracts were signed with Queen's University for the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (also supported by Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council and Ulster University), Global Innovation Institute and Institute of Research Excellence for Advanced Clinical Healthcare projects.

The seven Contracts for Funding that have been signed will enable project delivery with an approximate value of £430m. In addition, the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge and Newry Southern Relief Road - which will be financed directly through BRCD funds available to the Department of Infrastructure - also have the approvals necessary to move into the delivery phase.

The first funding drawdown requests for the BRCD have now been submitted to the Department for Economy and Department for Communities and the first claim to a BRCD partner has been completed, marking significant milestones for Deal delivery.

Another key milestone for deal partners was commencement of construction on the first project, the 57,000ft<sup>2</sup> Studio Ulster site at Giant's Park in October 2022.



2022/23 also saw work commence on the skills assessment process to understand and respond to the labour and skills implications and opportunities of the City Deal investment projects. The first assessment, focusing on the construction opportunities arising through the investment, has already informed a series of recommendations for BRCD partners and other stakeholders. The report included a recommendation in relation to early market engagement which resulted in the delivery of two extremely well attended events in March 2023, hosted with the support of the Construction Employers Federation, to raise awareness among local businesses of upcoming construction and professional services opportunities through the BRCD. A Task and Finish Group looking across Northern Ireland at skills for advanced manufacturing has completed its work, with a report due in summer 2023.

In January 2023 the BRCD partners launched the new BRCD website to assist in increasing awareness and understanding of the Deal, its ambitions and the benefits it will deliver. Not surprisingly given the progress made by many BRCD projects during 2022/23, the Deal attracted considerable positive coverage in broadcast, print and social media.

**// Belfast Region City Deal signed off today //** *BBC NI Newslines 15 December 2021*

**// £1bn 'turbocharge' to bring 20,000 jobs //** *Irish News 16 December 2021*

**// First fruits of £1bn City Deal to flow within days //**

*Belfast Telegraph 16 December 2021*

**// A first for NI as £1bn Belfast Region City Deal signed //**

*Public Sector Executive 17 December 2021*

**// City Deal will bring a decade of opportunities for Belfast Region //**

*Newtownabbey Times 17 March 2022*

## Looking ahead

During 2023/2024 we will agree Contracts for Funding for all the projects with approval, or currently at an advanced stage of approval, and aim to award more than 15 major contracts for design and delivery/ construction, providing a much-needed boost to our local economy during a further period of economic and financial uncertainty. We will complete the advanced manufacturing and virtual production skills assessments, working with partners, industry and government to identify how we align plans and resources to meet the needs of the high-quality jobs that will be created in growth sectors. We will also step up our efforts with the NI and UK Governments and partner agencies to ensure that the opportunities created through the BRCD and the City and Growth Deals across NI are promoted effectively across the UK, Ireland and internationally as a driver for future investment and business growth.

As the most advanced part of the Deal, all projects within the Innovation Pillar, comprising more than £300m capital funding, are aiming for completion by 2027, with Studio Ulster scheduled to be the first project fully completed (by July 2024). Many of the projects within the Tourism and Regeneration Pillar are also at an advanced stage, with Newry Regeneration project scheduled to complete in late 2025 and the Lagan Cycling and Pedestrian Bridge due for completion by late 2025.

The Digital Programme is at an earlier stage of development, but the i4C Cleantech Innovation Centre in Ballymena and plans for a national Digital Twin centre to be established in Belfast by Digital Catapult are both at an advanced stage of Outline Business Case approval.



## BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

City Deals were first introduced in 2011 by the UK Government as an arrangement that would enable bespoke packages of funding and decision-making powers to be negotiated between the UK Government and local councils.

They represent a new way of working between central and local government and regional partners, decentralising decisions to give greater powers to specific regions and allowing them to tailor investment to meet the particular challenges and opportunities associated with their own areas.

City and Growth Deals have a key role to play in supporting long-term economic recovery across Northern Ireland. Over the next few years, Northern

Ireland will benefit from a package of investment worth £1.2bn, over four City and Growth Deals across the region.

The Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) represents a package of more than £850 million investment which - supplemented by anticipated private sector investment - will create a £1 billion programme to deliver inclusive economic growth through the provision of more and better jobs, a positive impact on the most deprived communities and a balanced spread of benefits across the region.



The Belfast Region City Deal will strengthen the region's offer in growth sectors such as:

- **life and health sciences;**
- **the digital and creative industries; and**
- **advanced manufacturing.**

It has been designed to

- **support next generation digital capabilities**
- **boost tourism and support the regeneration of our region**
- **be underpinned by infrastructure developments and investment in skills**
- **connect people to jobs and services**



## CASE FOR INVESTING

The BRCD partners comprise the six local authorities; Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council, Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the region's two universities; Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, and four of the region's further education colleges; Belfast Metropolitan College, Northern Regional College, Southern Regional College and the South Eastern Regional College.

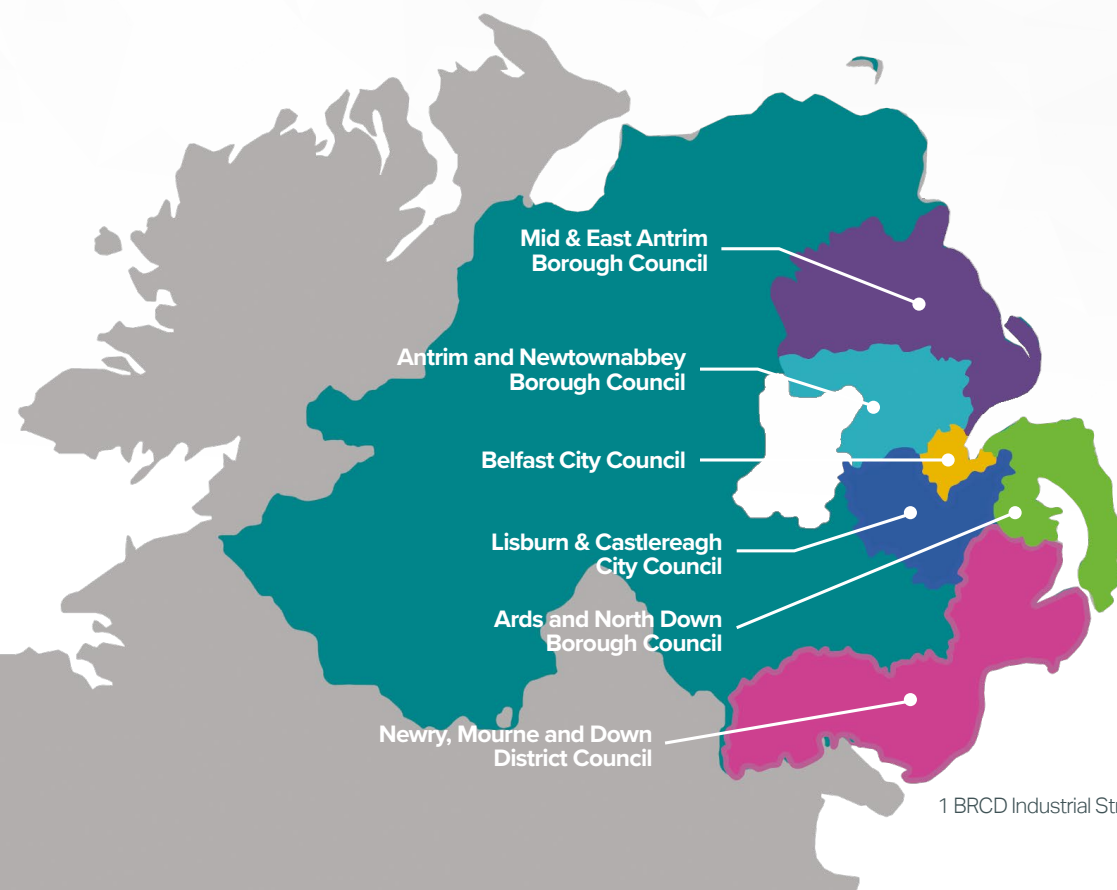
The BRCD region, stretching from Mid and East Antrim to Newry, Mourne and Down, is a functional economic area based on the local authorities that comprise the Belfast Travel to Work Area. With a population of 1.1 million residents, more than half of whom are under the age of 40, the BRCD region is young, ambitious, and growing.

As a city region, the BRCD provides a scale that enables the delivery of a coherent sub-regional approach. Contributing more than two-thirds (£27.4bn, 2019) of Northern Ireland's economic output (Gross Value Added) and home to 40% of the total Northern Ireland business base, the BRCD area has an employment share of 63% of the Northern

Ireland total<sup>1</sup>, provides critical access and transport links for trade and tourism, and considers itself the economic engine of Northern Ireland. The region benefits from a young and growing population with almost 60% of Northern Ireland's 1.9m residents living within its boundaries (2021 census).

However, like many regions, the BRCD faces a range of barriers to continued economic growth - it requires significant additional investment to tackle persistent regional and local inequalities in terms of investment and outcomes. Reflecting the wider Northern Ireland pattern, the region continues to suffer from low productivity and innovation levels and lower levels of disposable income and higher poverty levels than the UK average. It also experiences high levels of benefit dependency and persistent skills mismatches (particularly among those with the lowest levels of formal qualification).

By delivering projects designed to attract business and visitor investment - and focusing on areas in which the region can become genuinely world-class - new economic opportunities will emerge that can begin to address these challenges and support the region's ambition for inclusive economic growth.



<sup>1</sup> BRCD Industrial Strategic Framework, 2018

## INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

BRCD partners have committed to a vision of:

**// inclusive economic growth that delivers more and better jobs, a positive impact on the most deprived communities and a balanced spread of benefits across the region. //**

From the earliest stages of the Deal's development, partners have demonstrated their commitment to delivering growth that offers everyone the opportunity to succeed. This has informed the range of projects making up the Deal, ensuring that a commitment to inclusive growth has been embedded in their development and actively creating approaches to connect communities and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to economic opportunity through the underpinning employability and skills programme, improved infrastructure, and social value interventions.

Over the past year partners have also been continuing to demonstrate their commitment to the 'inclusive' growth ambitions of the BRCD by ensuring that opportunities for social value are incorporated into procurement exercises as projects enter the delivery stages. At the same time, the BRCD Programme Management Office is supporting all projects, on a cross-deal skills basis, to understand the skills needs of the emerging job opportunities, so that

joined up, inclusive pathways can be created. The approach adopted incorporates engagement with key representatives from each of the priority sectoral areas to ensure solutions continue to reflect industry and economic need.

As well as improving inclusivity, BRCD partners are also committed to strengthening the sustainability focus of the deal by considering its contribution to climate resilience. The implications and long-term economic risks 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, which commits the UK to a 'net zero carbon' target by 2050, will necessitate a step change in all of our plans.

To help inform the plans of partners going forward, the BRCD commissioned Leeds University to undertake 'An analysis of the Net-Zero Carbon options in the BRCD Region' that will offer an evidence base for the decisions across the region. BRCD partners, working with their communities and alongside industry and government departments, can use this report to inform their local plans to tackle the net-zero challenge going forward. However, in addition, it will assist the BRCD to identify new collective opportunities to strengthen the sustainability ambitions of the Deal.

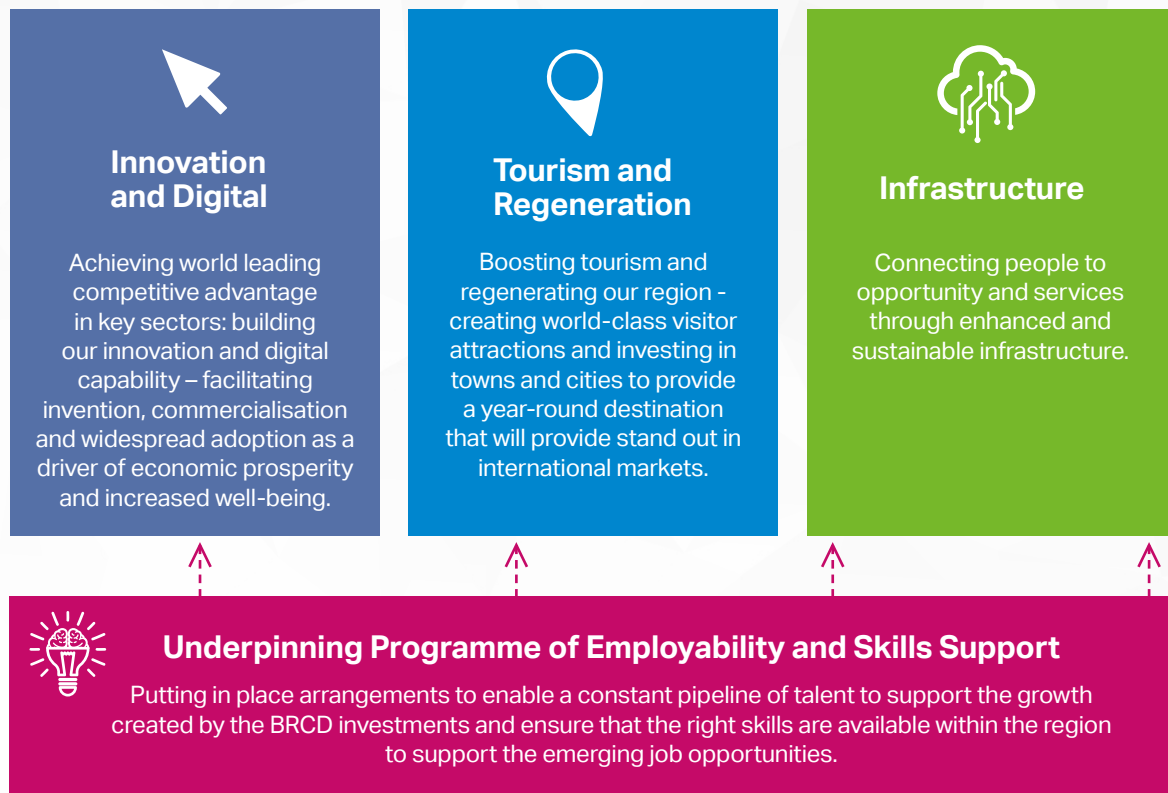




# PILLARS OF INVESTMENT

The BRCD is based upon robust evidence, including an Industrial Framework<sup>2</sup> that seeks to build upon the region's strengths and unique characteristics, including the rapid growth of the knowledge economy. The Deal is directly aligned with the UK Industrial Strategy<sup>3</sup> and Innovation Strategy, 10X Economy<sup>4</sup> and the NI Executive's Programme for Government<sup>5</sup> and aims to tackle head-on the fundamental structural barriers that have traditionally constrained productivity and excluded many from enjoying the benefits of economic prosperity.

The BRCD aims to focus its efforts on areas in which the region can become genuinely world-class: in particular, digital and creative industries, life and health sciences and the advanced manufacturing and tourism sectors. Its ambitions for inclusive economic growth will be delivered through four pillars of investment:



<sup>2</sup>BRCD Industrial Strategic Framework, 2018

<sup>3</sup><https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/the-uks-industrial-strategy>

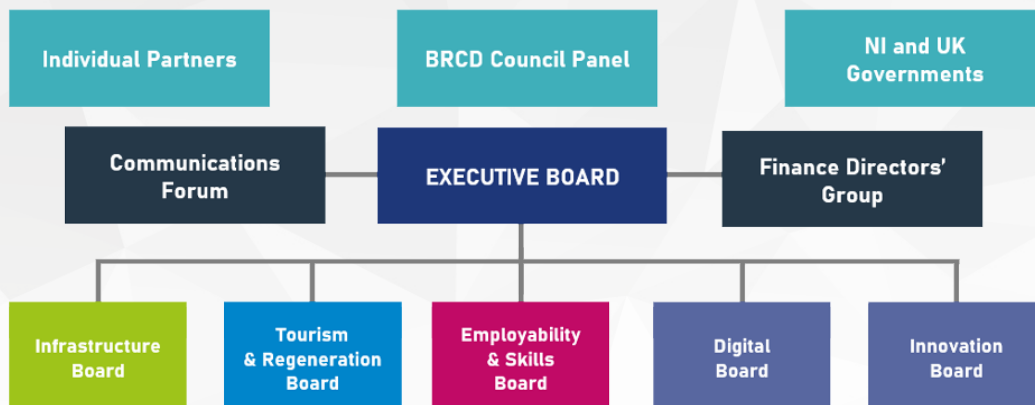
<sup>4</sup><https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/10x-economy-economic-vision>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/programme-government-pfg>

## GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The BRCD operates under a set of governance arrangements which align with those established for all Northern Ireland City and Growth Deals. The arrangements agreed by the partners are regularly

reviewed, to ensure that decisions continue to be taken in an open and transparent way, while remaining in step with partner organisations' individual decision-making structures.



### Individual Partners

Individual partners are responsible for delivering their own approved projects in accordance with the requirements of their signed Funding Agreements and all partners are required to obtain the necessary programme and project approvals and satisfy requirements in accordance with their own internal governance arrangements. All partners are also committed to the shared ambitions of the Partnership as outlined in the agreed BRCD Memorandum of Understanding.

### Council Panel

Councillors in the Belfast Region are committed to improving the quality of life of citizens in their areas and play an important community and political leadership role. During the development of the BRCD, the six participating councils brought forward proposals that reflected local priorities and opportunities, within the context of a collective vision for inclusive growth across the region. This shared approach to tackling economic challenges helped to inform the agreed programme of investment that unlocks the potential of the region's economy.

A Council Panel<sup>6</sup> - with four members from each of the six local councils - plays a central role in the BRCD governance arrangements. The Panel helps to ensure that the Deal continues to align to the vision of inclusive economic growth and to the ambitions of each of the council partners..

<sup>6</sup> Details of the Council Panel during the current term are included in Appendix 1

### Executive Board and Pillar Boards

The Executive Board - comprising the Chief Executives of the six partner councils, and the Vice Chancellors of Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, a senior representative from the Further Education Sector, the Chair of the Digital Board, observers from NICS and the Senior Responsible Officer for the BRCD - drives delivery of the BRCD programme in accordance with the requirements of the Deal document.

The Executive Board is supported in its work by a number of Boards which are responsible for overseeing each of the pillars of investment, programme finances and programme communication. Terms of Reference for each Board are refreshed and refined at each stage of Deal development and delivery. A Framework<sup>7</sup> setting out the governance, assurance and programme management requirements of the BRCD programme also underpins the decision-making process. This Framework outlines the procedures that BRCD partners will follow in relation to decision making and delivery of the Deal. These arrangements help to ensure that public money is spent responsibly, is accounted for, and that decisions are made strategically and transparently for the benefit of the whole region.



## Lead authority and accountable body

Belfast City Council is the 'Lead Authority' for the BRCD. This means that it carries out a range of functions that support and enable regional partnership working, such as employing the BRCD Programme Management Office (PMO) and providing administrative, professional, and technical support as required to support the Deal.

It is also the 'Accountable Body' for the Deal, ensuring that the partnership makes decisions in accordance with all legal, financial, and administrative requirements. All capital grant funding from government is channelled through Belfast City Council (except for funding for infrastructure projects which goes directly to the Department for Infrastructure).

The Accountable Body manages the overall range of projects to ensure the Deal remains within the overall funding envelope available. It will also have the authority to hold to account any of the members of the bodies within the governance structure or projects, should they present a risk to the overall programme.

BRCD project sponsors report on the progress, key risks, finances and delivery of each project through their own governance structures and to the Programme Management Office. Regular reports are provided for review and consideration by relevant BRCD Boards.

Following agreement of Contracts for Funding, detailed quarterly reports (as outlined below) for each BRCD project are also provided for consideration at Accountability Boards established by the relevant departments.

Quarterly performance reports (aligned to project plans)	Quarterly financial reports
Project overview – lifetime milestones	Expenditure over lifetime of project
Key deliverables since previous quarter	Cashflow over lifetime of project
Top risks and issues likely to or impacting delivery	Variations and explanations
Change control	
Progress in respect of key workstreams	
Key tasks upcoming	

<sup>7</sup> The Governance and Assurance Framework

## INNOVATION

Research<sup>8</sup> has shown the importance of a high performing innovation system in supporting strong overall economic performance, particularly for small economies such as Northern Ireland. Yet comparisons with other UK regions suggest Northern Ireland is still punching well below its weight; currently ranking last of the 12 UK regions in terms of innovation investment.

Despite this, with a growing knowledge economy and research and innovation excellence in a number of priority areas, the additional potential offered through the BRCD investment creates a clear opportunity to catalyse a step change and make a transformative impact in the region's innovation capabilities.

With Belfast included in the poll of top 25 Tech cities of the future and named as one of the world's top 15 Digital Economies of the Future, 2nd in UK (9th in Europe) (FT, 2021), the BRCD investments in innovation build upon the research strengths of our local universities, aligned to sectors that are already demonstrating potential for exceptional growth. The investment involves the creation of new centres of excellence that span the advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences and digital and creative sectors, bringing together great minds and creative thinking to solve some of the biggest global challenges, while also creating real-world impact through connected-up, purpose-driven innovation.

In addition to unlocking private sector investment, the City Deal centres of excellence will be critical in enabling access to an estimated £250 million of R&D funding in which Northern Ireland has been missing out<sup>9</sup>. The projects will support businesses to access major funding opportunities from outside the region,

enabling the region to seize the opportunity to reap the benefits of distinctive, long-term sectoral strengths.

Taken together, the BRCD innovation projects offer a real opportunity to integrate research and innovation into the plans of our businesses, driving innovation through collaboration between government, universities, business and communities that establish thriving ecosystems, and build business capacity to become innovation-active by supporting the translation of research into the creation of breakthrough technologies, products and services.

### Key to progress:

**SOC** Strategic Outline Case

**OBC** Outline Business Case approved

**FBC** Full Business Case approved



Construction commences



Project operational

<sup>8</sup> The strategic integration of skills and innovation policy in Northern Ireland: An international small economy perspective, David Skilling, July 2019

<sup>9</sup> The Missing £4 Billion Making R&D work for the whole UK, NESTA, May 2020

# AMIC – ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INNOVATION CENTRE

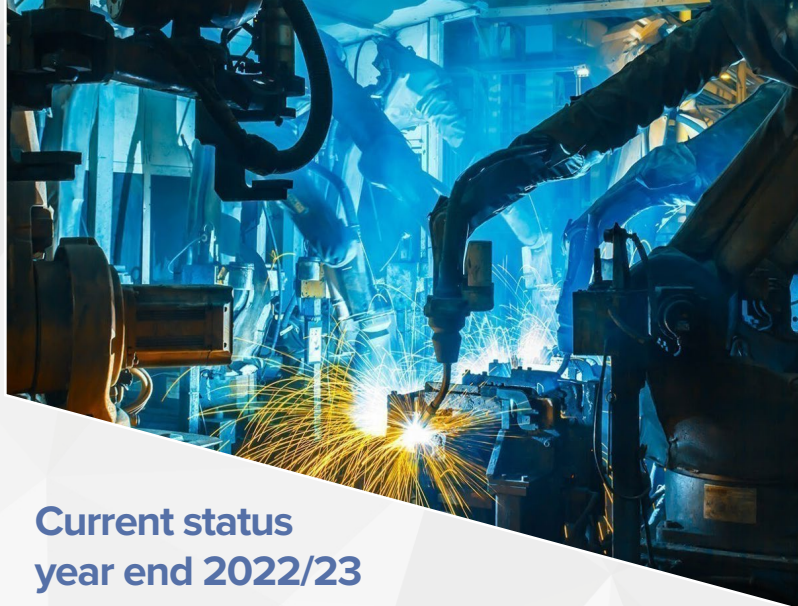
## Location:

New investment at existing Northern Ireland Advanced Composites and Engineering Centre (NIACE), and creation of the project's flagship facility, Factory of the Future at Global Point, Newtownabbey.

## Project overview:

The AMIC project, led by Queen's University Belfast in partnership with Ulster University and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, will be an industry led, open access manufacturing innovation centre that provides fresh capabilities for the NI Advanced Composites and Engineering Centre and create a 10,500m<sup>2</sup> state-of-the-art facility in Newtownabbey, giving advanced manufacturing and engineering businesses access to the very latest technology, specialist equipment and expertise. This flagship facility will become a national centre for advanced manufacturing, with state-of-the-art facilities and an expert engineering team, underpinned by academic excellence.

AMIC will operate at the interface between academia and industry, creating new opportunities for manufacturing companies, unlocking innovation, and applying learnings to solve real-world challenges. AMIC will create a unique environment where companies can de-risk investment in R&D to develop prototypes, demonstrate scale-up and experiment with new processes. By significantly accelerating levels of innovation and collaboration between industry and researchers, AMIC will be facilitating a strong contribution to society and global markets, providing local companies with a competitive advantage.



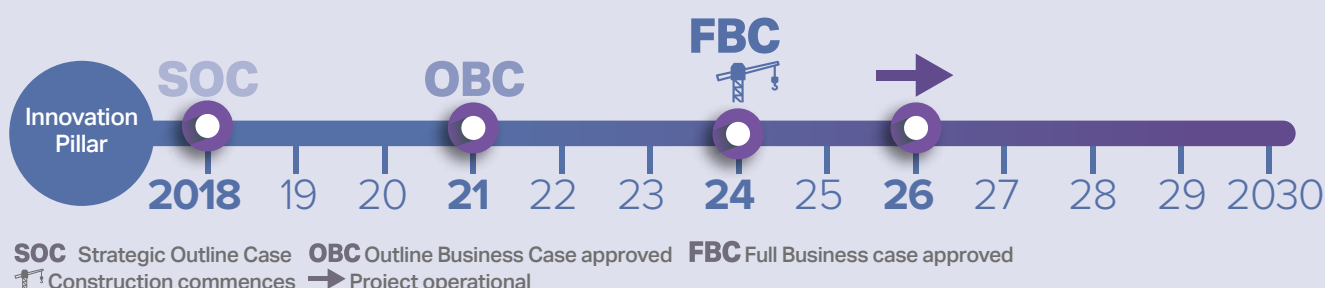
## Current status year end 2022/23

AMIC had its Outline Business Case approved in September 2021 and is now proceeding to commence detailed design stage with construction expected to start in 2024.

A new partnership between Queen's University and the UK's High Value Manufacturing (HVM) Catapult, which included the secondment of Sam Turner from HVM Catapult as Chief Executive Officer of AMIC, was formed in October 2022. The centre has established an Industry Board and performed detailed technology road mapping to inform the development of a range of launch projects. AMIC has also supported the assessment of advanced manufacturing skills requirements for Northern Ireland in partnership with industry, training providers and other sectoral stakeholders.

Following the signing of the Contract for Funding in January 2023, the project completed the Pre-Qualification phase of its contractor procurement, submitted its planning application to Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council and by year-end was progressing through the Invitation to Tender stage, with appointment expected early in the new financial year.

**£78.7 million**  
BRCD contribution





# SECTION 03

## I-REACH HEALTH – INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FOR ADVANCED CLINICAL HEALTHCARE

### Location:

Adjacent to Belfast City Hospital, Belfast.

### Project overview:

iREACH Health is an integrated clinical research centre of excellence that will be at the centre of the emerging life sciences innovation, translation, and commercialisation eco-system.

The project will integrate the activities of clinicians, life scientists and data scientists with industry partners to identify and develop new diagnostic tests, treatments, and health technologies to improve patient outcomes and contribute to economic growth.

iREACH Health will ensure that the right infrastructure and partnerships are in place to help grow health and life science clusters and networks, so that Northern Ireland can compete globally in health research, strengthening the important contribution that Northern Ireland has already made to local, UK and global research. It will bring together an infrastructure for clinical trials in Northern Ireland that will improve inclusivity and accessibility for patients.

iREACH Health will grow and connect Northern Ireland's Life and Health Sciences ecosystem by:

- partnering with Health and Social Care to embed clinical research in the NHS ensuring efficient utilisation of Northern Ireland's health and social care data assets, and health care infrastructure to ensure patient access to the latest life science innovations and develop Northern Ireland as a global hub for innovative clinical research



- providing high quality clinical trials space to increase capacity and improve capability to better support the delivery of clinical research and digital health innovations

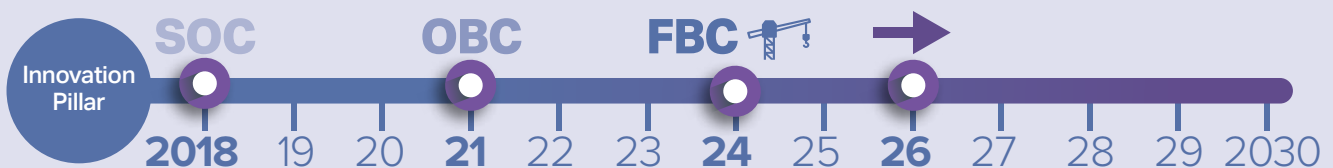
Co-locating Health Trust, University, and Industry to deliver the full suite of clinical trials and on-market evidence generation, patient, and public engagement. This will result in innovative co-design and delivery of the future of clinical trials, deliver new research and commercialisation opportunities, create high quality jobs, skills development and career pathways, and better patient experience and outcomes.

### Current status year end 2022/23

iREACH Health had its Outline Business Case approved in December 2021 and the Contract for Funding was signed in March 2023. During the past year, the project has been progressing through concept design stage. Contracts have been exchanged for the site purchase (Radius Housing site). The project team is actively progressing with the planning, design and procurement processes.

By year end, Pre-Qualification Questionnaire and Invitation to Tender documents were drafted ahead of the planned publication of the Contract Notice and the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire for procuring the contractor early in the new financial year.

**£39.7 million**  
BRCD contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case   **OBC** Outline Business Case approved   **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences   Project operational

# GLOBAL INNOVATION INSTITUTE

## Location:

Queen's University Institute of Electronics, Communications, and Information Technology (ECIT) in the Titanic Quarter's Innovation District.

## Project overview:

Global Innovation Institute will support the transformation of Northern Ireland's digital economy by substantially increasing both the volume and range of digital innovation taking place and developing skills to meet industry needs.

The project will benefit from the unique combination of expertise contributed by ECIT, which unlocks an integrated approach to Secure Connected Intelligence (cyber security, advanced wireless, data science and scalable computing) to tackle big societal challenges. Local and global companies, entrepreneurs and researchers will come together in a multi-disciplinary innovation environment, providing a nexus for co-innovation between researchers and industry in data security, connectivity and analytics.

The project will:

- grow capacity and capability in secure connected intelligence (academic and technical/engineering), equipping the regional economy to grasp the opportunities of the data revolution, serving companies large and small which have the potential to grow and diversify based on digital innovation
- provide a platform to connect emerging data-related technologies in the ICT sector with real-world challenges across the One Health spectrum, spanning the continuum between the health/life sciences and agri-food sectors, to maximise economic and societal benefit.

- found an agile, multi-sector digital innovation ecosystem with cross-cutting expertise, which establishes Belfast as an international go-to destination for global companies seeking to locate research and development operations in relevant sectors and technology areas

This will help businesses that are more innovation-active and digitally enabled, build future-focussed digital skills capabilities in key sectors such as health and agri-food, with real world impacts that benefit the Northern Ireland population in health and sustainability. Global Innovation Institute ensures continued growth of the incredibly attractive investment proposition that Northern Ireland provides in secure, connected technologies.

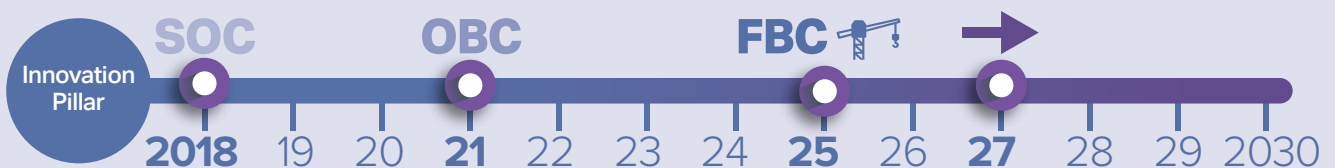
## Current status year end 2022/23

Global Innovation Institute had its Outline Business Case approved in September 2021 and the Contract for Funding was signed in March 2023.

During the past year the project has been progressing through concept design stage, reviewing its procurement policy and has recently commenced plans for completing its Full Business Case.

In parallel to work relating to its physical build, the project has also announced over £100,000 of funding for a series of pilot projects which will drive health and agri-food research activity in partnership with industry.

**£52.4 million**  
BRCd contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case   **OBC** Outline Business Case approved   **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences   Project operational

# SECTION 03

## CDHT – CENTRE FOR DIGITAL HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGY

### Location:

A community living lab based in the main CDHT building adjacent to the new Ulster University Belfast campus and a Clinical Innovation Living Lab based at the Belfast City and Royal Victoria Hospital sites.

### Project overview:

CDHT represents a significant investment to develop a unique Research and Innovation Digital Healthcare Technology Centre in Belfast City Centre where over 140 researchers and companies with strong clinical integration will address a range of healthcare challenges through world-class research and innovation.

The project will establish new innovation pathways – linking researchers and business to patients and clinicians in a real-life clinical setting. It will drive a faster, more productive and more successful rate of commercialisation for new products by co-locating academic and clinical researchers alongside industry. The project will include a community living lab based in the main CDHT building adjacent to the new Ulster University Belfast campus and a clinical innovation living lab based at the Royal Victoria Hospital site.

CDHT will support all users to successfully ideate, prototype, develop, test and validate new ideas successfully within a unique rapid feedback clinical setting. It will be a key contributor to the achievement of outcomes within the UK Industrial Strategy, specifically aligning to the Ageing Society Grand Challenge.

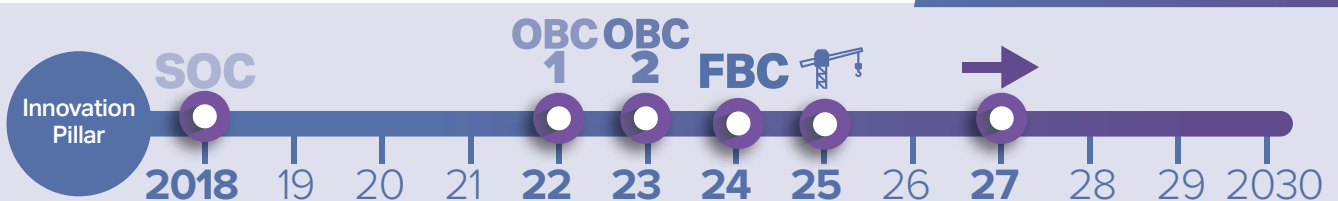
### Current status year end 2022/23

The Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology had its Outline Business Case approved in May 2022. However, as the result of a proposed change for the project, an updated Outline Business Case 2 (OBC2) is being developed, which will allow for early procurement of specialist equipment to support accelerated delivery of the Clinical Living Labs within the Belfast Trust.

The updated Outline Business Case is due to be completed for Departmental submission early in the new financial year.



**£34.0 million**  
BRCD contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case    **OBC** Outline Business Case approved    **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences    Project operational



# STUDIO ULSTER

## Location:

Giant's Park on the North Foreshore, Belfast

## Project overview:

Developed by Ulster University, in partnership with Belfast Harbour and supported by Northern Ireland Screen, Studio Ulster is a unique investment in a large-scale Virtual Production studio complex in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Virtual Production has been identified as driving a revolution in production pipelines across converging sectors with application in film, broadcast, commercial, animation, games, immersive and visual effects. The complex will include world-class commercial virtual production stages, fully supported by an integrated Research, Development and Innovation Centre of Excellence in real-time and virtual production.

Studio Ulster will work with globally important production companies and university research and development teams to plug the skills gap in virtual production and develop highly skilled graduates. In addition, it will give local creative companies access to hardware and software that will enhance their product and allow them to scale up and grow into global players in the industry.

This project will drive collaboration in R&D on an unprecedented scale with researchers from virtual production, film, broadcast, animation, games and immersive co-locating with screen production and technology professionals.



## Current status year end 2022/23

Studio Ulster had its Outline Business Case approved in June 2021 and Contract for Funding signed in July 2022.

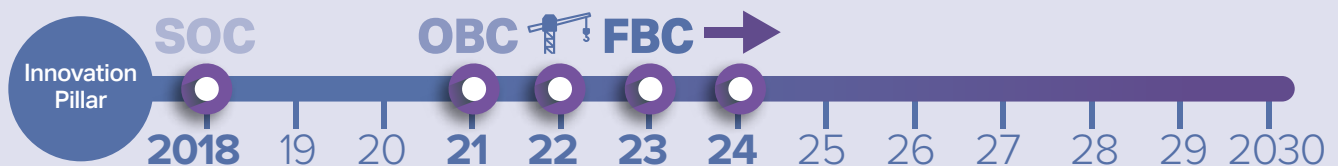
In October 2022 the project commenced construction on-site at the Belfast Harbour's North Foreshore – with the substructure significantly advanced by year end.

In parallel with this, Ulster University commenced procurement for Studio Ulster's Operator and Delivery Partner, in December 2022 completed its Pre-Qualification and shortlisting phase and is now progressing through a Competitive Dialogue process which will conclude early in the new financial year.

Ulster University is also now developing the Full Business Case for the project and aim to appoint the Operator and Delivery Partner in 2023.

**£25.2 million**

BRCDC contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case   **OBC** Outline Business Case approved   **FBC** Full Business case approved  
🏗️ Construction commences   ➡️ Project operational

## DIGITAL PROGRAMME

A successful digital innovation ecosystem has a key role to play in contributing to economic inclusion and sustainable growth for the region. The BRCD's £125m long-term, challenge-led, flexible programme has been developed to enable partners to keep pace with the rate of technological and societal change.

The programme of digital investment will help to address key areas of challenge such as artificial intelligence and data, health and wellbeing and sustainability and resilience and will complement the investments being made by the deal in centres of excellence in innovation, research and development, with a consistent focus on areas where the region can be distinctive and competitive.

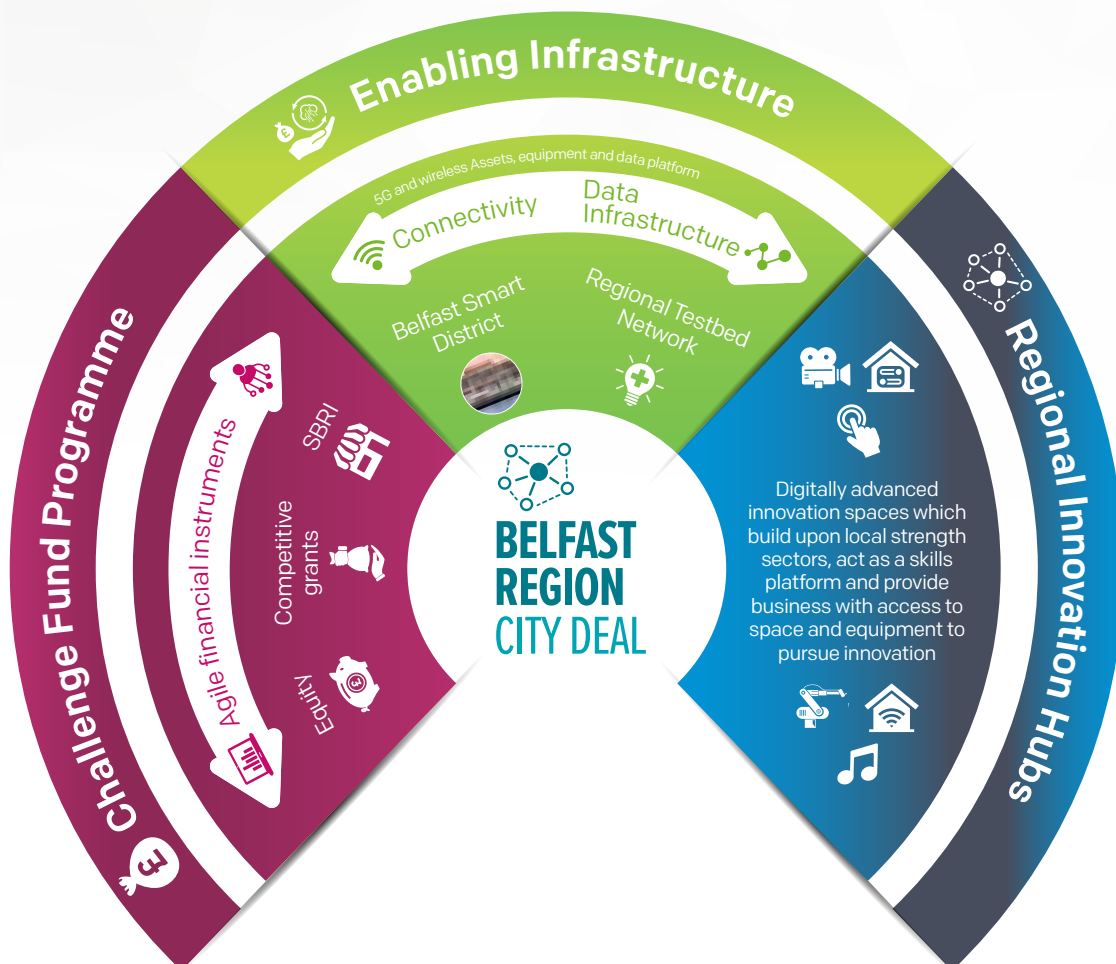
The Digital Programme is at an earlier stage of development and is broken into three distinct areas of investment.

### (i) Enabling infrastructure

Investment in enabling infrastructure will stimulate the conditions for innovation and business growth by supporting proposed investments in digital connectivity, data infrastructure and other enabling infrastructure to support the development of a Belfast Smart District and regional testbeds. Given technology's underpinning role in the future of many commercial and public services across a wide range of sectors, the funding will have a particular focus on supporting the rapid availability of advanced wireless networks.

#### Project in development:

The deal is refocusing on site-specific opportunities for deployment of advanced connectivity as proposals for a broader approach across the region have not proved successful. Work is therefore being undertaken to develop an Outline Business Case for an advanced wireless project to support the delivery of a testbed in Belfast's Smart District, with proposals for further testbeds across the region at an earlier stage of development.



## (ii) Challenge Fund Programme

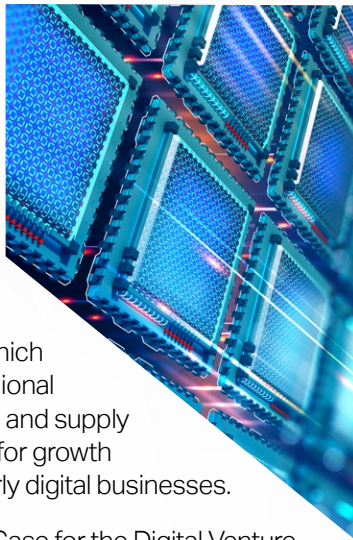
BRCDC partners are investing in challenge funding because we recognise that we exist in a rapidly changing environment. And while the City Deal offers funding across a ten-year time scale, many of the challenges, solutions, and in particular technologies will often change over periods of time measured in months, not years. The Challenge Fund will provide a funding mix that will be influenced by the specific needs of each mission and is likely to include equity/debt financing, competitive capital grants and innovation for societal impact.

### Projects in development:

## DIGITAL VENTURE FUND

A proposal is under development to invest £20m in a Digital Venture Fund which will help to address regional imbalances in demand and supply of early-stage finance for growth businesses - particularly digital businesses.

The Outline Business Case for the Digital Venture Fund is under way with significant engagement with Departments, Invest NI, the private sector and partner Councils to inform its design and proposed operation – with submission of the final Outline Business Case planned later in 2023/24.



## AUGMENT THE CITY

This Small Business Research Initiative type challenge call is a pilot project to test the planned Innovation for the Societal Impact Challenge Fund in early real-world learning. It is hoped this will help to inform design of a full programme of such challenges.



Its focus will be on Digital Innovation in Tourism - exploring the early impact of 5G and immersive technologies on the planned investments in new visitor experiences and in Creative Digital - addressing the lack of formalised innovation in many of the more than 1,300 creative technology businesses across NI which are creating games, apps, immersive experiences and animation.

A Business Case has been developed for the project – and is expected to be submitted for consideration by BRCDC partners and the Department early in the new financial year – with launch later in 2023.



## (iii) Regional Innovation Hubs

Regional Innovation Hubs will provide local businesses and communities the space to pursue innovation projects at small and medium scale and a space where people with shared interests, especially in advanced computing or technology, can gather to work together on projects.

The Hubs will ensure diffusion of innovation and skills to support a regionally balanced economy, further building on sub-regional sectoral strengths in areas such as cleantech and creative industries.

Each Hub will have a specific sectoral focus and purpose and collectively, they will offer support to expedite the widespread adoption of digital technologies by companies at different levels of digital maturity.

## I4C INNOVATION AND CLEANTECH CENTRE

### Location:

St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena

### Project overview:

The i4C project, led by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council, involves the construction of a new, significant scale innovation and clean technology centre. The centre includes a range of accommodation types to facilitate SME innovation activity i.e. incubation labs and workshops, Grade A office and co-working office space, as well as meeting and event spaces to encourage open innovation and collaboration. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will appoint a specialist operator to manage i4C and offer innovation supports/programmes and has also signed a joint collaboration 'Memorandum of Understanding' with AMIC. The Innovation Lab at i4C also forms a key part of the i4C proposal allowing for an engineering staff led, fully equipped workshop that focuses on developing products, services, training and solutions for the cleantech sector across Northern Ireland i.e. in the emerging hydrogen economy.

### Current status year end 2022/23

The i4C Innovation Centre had its Outline Business Case approved by the Economy Minister in Spring 2022. However, due primarily to the impacts of construction inflation, the project has updated its Outline Business Case and has resubmitted this for re-approval by the Department for Economy, prior to Department of Finance consideration.



Despite this delay, the project has continued to make progress, with the procurement competition for an Integrated Consultancy Team now underway. In parallel, whilst plans for the i4c Innovation Centre progress, the Hydrogen Training Academy in Ballymena is delivering a range of hydrogen training for industry.

**£20.5 million**  
BRCD contribution

# DIGITAL TWIN

## Location:

Titanic Quarter, Belfast.

## Project overview:

The Digital Twin Centre, led by Digital Catapult, will provide common, shared physical and digital infrastructure to support the development of digital twins, elements of which include common data architecture, tools, models, software, systems and hardware. The centre will initially focus in sectors including maritime, aerospace and defence but have the capability and plans to explore other sectors.

Digital Catapult plans for the Digital Twin Centre are intended to support the diffusion of Digital Twin research, development and innovation projects regionally and nationally. Digital twins can fast track the time from idea to successful transformational product or process adoption within the marketplace, thereby reducing the costly rework, waste and reliance on multiple expensive prototypes that traditional non-digital twin development processes rely on. It will support the longer-term sustainability of industry in Northern Ireland.



## Current status year end 2022/23

Digital Catapult has led on the development of the Outline Business Case for the Digital Twin Centre in Northern Ireland which received Economy Minister approval in October 2022. The project is currently working towards refining its operating model and seeking approval for an updated Outline Business Case early in new financial year.

**£15.0 million**  
BRCD contribution

## TOURISM AND REGENERATION

Pre-pandemic the Belfast Region saw a prolonged period of healthy, sustained growth of the tourist industry and the capacity of the existing tourism infrastructure was beginning to constrain the industry. Whilst the Covid pandemic dramatically altered the position in the short-medium term, the opportunity for recovery and long-term growth remains. This will require Northern Ireland to expand its offer through the provision of new attractions and experiences of scale; a critical mass of new, innovative tourism products of sufficient appeal and credibility; products that respond to international and domestic consumer demand; which add new and complementary dimensions to the current offer.

In response, the BRCD programme of investment in tourism and regeneration aims to create a regional, sustainable, year-round tourism product that will provide standout in international markets and create spill over benefits for local economies, including delivery of a range of employment opportunities across all skill levels.

The proposed tourism and regeneration projects will help to address a legacy of under investment, building on key areas of economic strength and creating resilience to future shocks and stresses. Alongside new tourism products, investment is being directed towards towns that have suffered from industrial decline and economic restructuring, so that they have the opportunity to play a full part in the region's growth.

The regeneration outturn of this investment will see transformational improvements in the quality of the environment that will benefit local economies and communities and promote public wellbeing and will also serve as a catalyst for investment from, and collaboration with, private sector businesses.

Digital technology will also be used to support, improve and extend the quality of visitors' experience and to help tackle the regeneration challenges faced by our rapidly changing towns and city centres. Innovative and creative use of digital technology in our tourism and regeneration projects can also provide a platform to advance schemes that anticipate climate change and support the UK government's 2050 carbon neutral commitment.

### Key to progress:

**SOC** Strategic Outline Case

**OBC** Outline Business Case approved

**FBC** Full Business Case approved



Construction commences



Project operational





# BANGOR WATERFRONT

## Location:

Bangor, Ards and North Down Council area.

## Project overview:

Bangor has been a thriving resort and commuter town since the introduction of the rail links in the 19th Century. With a rich architectural heritage including high quality Victorian buildings overlooking the seafront, as well as the largest 5-star marina development on the island of Ireland, it has achieved Blue-Flag status and continues to attract a considerable number of vessels.

However, a period of underinvestment, compounded by changes in travel culture, has seen the town's popularity as a holiday destination in decline over recent years. By reconnecting the town with the sea, and regenerating assets including Bangor Marina,

Ballyholme Yacht Club, Pickie Fun Park and a new Music Hub, this investment will provide high quality public spaces, enhancing the town and encouraging further investment.

By supporting an ambitious, sensitive and site-specific waterfront development for Bangor that reflects the individuality of the community, the location and shared collective heritage and culture in a sustainable, unique and distinctive manner, this project has been designed to revive Bangor as a 'destination of choice'.



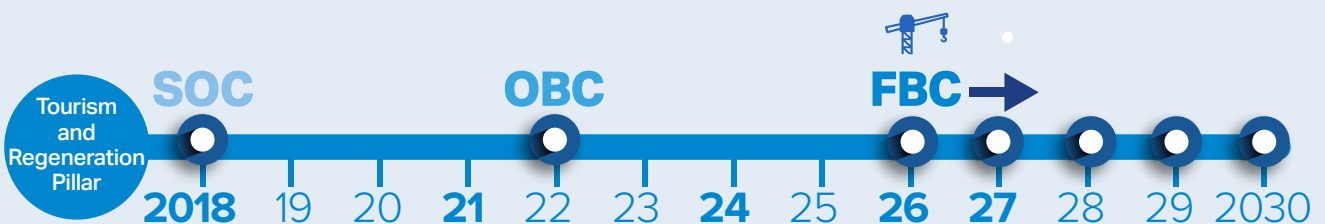
## Current status year end 2022/23

The Outline Business Case for the project was approved in March 2022 and a Contract for Funding was signed in January 2023.

Work has commenced on the procurement of professional services teams to develop the Urban Waterfront and Public Realm, Ballyholme Yacht Club, Pickie Fun Park and the Music Centre projects. Pre-market engagement with the professional services market in relation to the upcoming design procurements took place in March 2023.

Procurement of an Operator for both the Marina and Harbour and Pickie Fun Park has also been progressing alongside Design Team procurement, to ensure operator knowledge and expertise informs the design development of both facilities. Specialist support to lead on procuring an operator has been commissioned for the Marina and Harbour and is being procured for Pickie Fun Park and pre-market engagement is planned for both over the coming months.

**£40.0 million**  
BRC D contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case **OBC** Outline Business Case approved **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences Project operational

# SECTION 03

## BELFAST STORIES

### Location:

Belfast city centre close to Belfast's Cathedral Quarter.

### Project overview:

Belfast Stories is a transformative tourism-led regeneration project in the heart of Belfast city centre, on the edge of the historic Cathedral Quarter.

Due to open in 2029, Belfast Stories will restore one of the city's most loved and unique heritage buildings, the art deco former Bank of Ireland building on Royal Avenue, as part of the redevelopment of the 4,000 metre<sup>2</sup> site into a world-class, interactive visitor attraction that tells the stories of Belfast; the people and the place. The best of immersive storytelling will be supported by vibrant public spaces to meet, eat, drink, network and enjoy new cultural experiences.

As a major tourism anchor, it will help revitalise our 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.



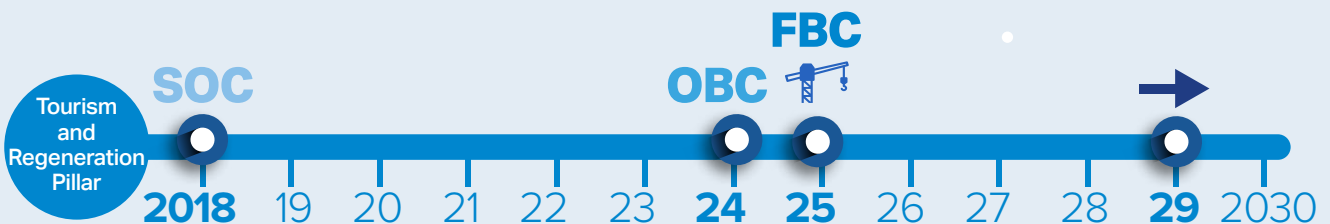
### Current status year end 2022/23

Following submission of an interim Outline Business Case, it was agreed that that Belfast Stories would progress to Concept Stage to enable a full Outline Business Case to be developed, working towards finalisation and consideration by a Departmental Casework review in 2024.

The site has now been purchased by Belfast City Council and procurement of professional services which includes an Integrated Design Team and Interpretative Planning and Exhibition Design Team is progressing well, with appointment expected in Autumn 2023.

In November 2022 a 14-week formal public consultation exercise was completed and a further public consultation will take place in 2024 when draft plans for the site have been developed.

**£65.0 million**  
BRCD contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case **OBC** Outline Business Case approved **FBC** Full Business case approved  
🏗️ Construction commences → Project operational



# DESTINATION ROYAL HILLSBOROUGH

## Location:

Royal Hillsborough village

## Project overview:

Building on an already popular destination in Hillsborough Castle, this investment in the wider Royal Hillsborough village 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.

The vision is to establish Royal Hillsborough as a high quality, leading visitor destination and experience while also regenerating the village with an enhanced, sustainable culture and heritage offer (integrated with the wider regional heritage offering in Northern Ireland as a whole).

The project will offer integrated and improved access and connections to key attractions such as the Castle, Courthouse, Fort, Forest, Gardens and wider village area and deliver an enriched heritage tourism potential.



## Current status year end 2022/23

Destination Royal Hillsborough received Outline Business Case approval in March 2023 and the Contract for Funding has now been drafted. Updated project governance arrangements are being put in place and the first Programme Board meeting is scheduled for April 2023.

The planning application for the public realm project, which is the first element of the programme to be delivered, has been submitted. The procurement strategy is being developed and work has commenced on the procurement of professional services teams to develop the projects.

**£20.0 million**  
BRC D contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case   **OBC** Outline Business Case approved   **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences   Project operational



# SECTION 03

## CARRICKFERGUS REGENERATION

### Location:

Carrickfergus Town Centre.

### Project overview:

The historic town of Carrickfergus already benefits from its proximity to Belfast and the enduring and ever-rising appeal of the Causeway Coast. Further investment will regenerate, reposition and rebrand the town to place it firmly on the map as an authentic heritage-led tourism hub and the 'must visit' starting point of the internationally recognised Causeway Coastal Route.

This project will strengthen the visitor offering at the south end of the Coastal Causeway Route offering greater opportunity to consume the route as a whole, extending visitor stay and spend. It will also drive additional outcomes in terms of the economic benefits to Carrickfergus town centre; provision of new training and employment opportunities and the promotion of social inclusion and well-being for all.



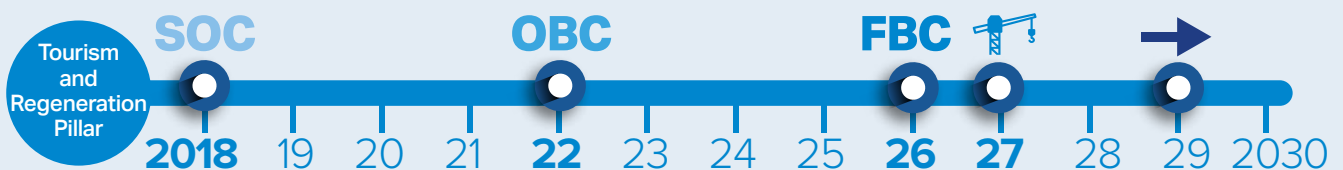
### Current status year end 2022/23

Carrickfergus Regeneration received Outline Business Case approval in January 2022 and a Contract for Funding was signed in November 2022.

Mid and East Antrim undertook a Gateway Zero review for the MEABC BRCD projects and have implemented the recommendations from the Gateway process.

A Procurement Strategy has been agreed and procurement of the Integrated Consultancy Team and Conservation Management Plan is progressing with appointment expected in Autumn 2023. Specialist support has been commissioned to develop the Target Operating Model and soft market testing is continuing.

**£26.4 million**  
BRCD contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case **OBC** Outline Business Case approved **FBC** Full Business case approved  
🏗️ Construction commences → Project operational

# THE GOBBINS PHASE 2

## Location:

Islandmagee, Larne.

## Project overview:

As an established visitor attraction, the Gobbins experience offers unparalleled access to the Antrim coastline, immersing visitors in a coastal environment while connecting them to the local landscape. Its world class credentials will be secured by creating a spectacular and iconic staircase structure to link the experience across the existing cliff top and cliff face paths, creating a circular closed loop and significantly increasing visitor capacity.

The project also includes a major upgrade to the cliff top path providing stunning views across the Irish Sea, and opportunities to cross a new rope bridge that stretches across the coastline below.

A new cliff top Welcome Hub with amenity facilities will be provided to act as a starting point for visitors to the site. A 360° immersive visualisation experience will also be delivered at the current visitor centre via a Virtual Reality Dome. The Gobbins Phase 2 will offer an exhilarating and accessible 'must see' visitor attraction at the southern end of the Causeway Coastal Route.

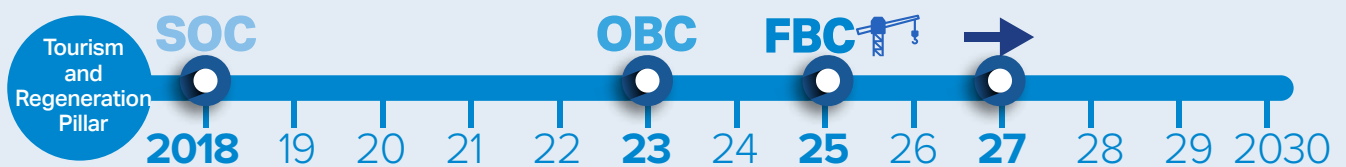


## Current status year end 2022/23

The Gobbins Phase 2 Outline Business Case was revised and considered by a Casework Committee in February 2022, but does not yet have approval from the Department of Economy and Department of Finance. While awaiting re-endorsement of the business case, Mid and East Antrim Brough Council is proceeding at risk with procurement of the Integrated Design Team which should be in place in Autumn 2023 as well as progressing with ecological surveys.

Engagement with the landowner has commenced and work to understand the Target Operating Model, which will be linked to Carrickfergus Castle, has begun.

**£12.6 million**  
BRC D contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case   **OBC** Outline Business Case approved   **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences   Project operational

# SECTION 03

## MOURNE MOUNTAIN GATEWAY

### Location:

Mourne Mountain access at Donard Park, Newcastle.

### Project overview:

To enhance and redefine the visitor experience associated with the Mourne Mountains, the Mourne Mountain Gateway Project includes the establishment of a Visitor Centre in the Mourne Mountains and the creation of a mountainside Gondola experience commencing in Donard Park, Newcastle. Such a centre will give visitors an opportunity to connect with nature's rugged beauty, discover the secrets of the Mourne Mountains, and experience unobstructed views.

The project will deliver a world-class international tourist attraction and more sustainable access, including better transport infrastructure and green travel options, to Newcastle and the Mourne Mountains.

By protecting and enhancing the natural heritage and habitat of the region and creating an appealing year-round, sustainable tourism offering, the project will also support the sustainable growth of tourism in the Mourne Mountains and will help to position the local area as one of the premier tourism destinations on the island.



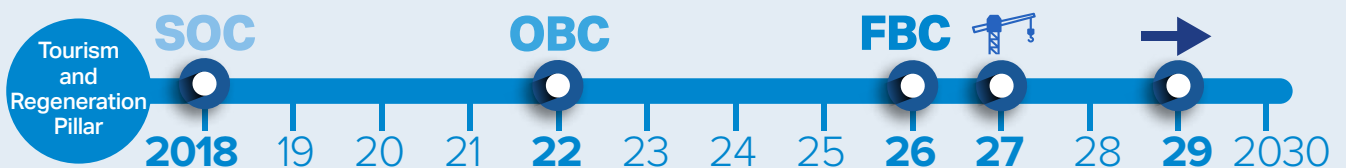
### Current status year end 2022/23

Outline Business Case approval for the Mourne Mountain Gateway Project was received in February 2022 and a Contract for Funding for this project has now been drafted.

The Procurement Strategy has been developed and the procurement of the Integrated Design Team has commenced and is expected to complete by the end of 2023. Pre-market engagement with the professional services market in relation to the upcoming design procurements took place in March 2023.

A number of public engagement events have taken place in Newcastle and engagement with statutory bodies and landowners will continue through project development and delivery.

**£30.0 million**  
BRCD contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case   **OBC** Outline Business Case approved   **FBC** Full Business case approved  
🏗️ Construction commences   ➔ Project operational



# NEWRY CITY CENTRE REGENERATION

## Location:

Newry city centre.

## Project overview:

The Newry, Mourne and Down District is an ambitious and entrepreneurial region, with a strategic cross border location that ensures a regional and international focus. Despite major advances in recent years, high levels of deprivation and economic inactivity demonstrate that the local economy in Newry has been underperforming in comparison to the rest of Northern Ireland. This investment in Newry city centre will support the re-imagining of the city centre by delivering a civic and regional hub, theatre and conferencing facilities, improvements to the public realm and investment in Grade A office provision.

This project will put in place the economic infrastructure to enable a competitive economy. It aims to revitalise the area and improve the experience of residents and visitors, to increase footfall and, by attracting private sector investment, to reduce levels of retail and residential vacancy. The project will unlock the potential of the area and support growth of the local economy. As well as regenerating the city centre, the investment will create employment opportunities, increase visitor numbers, stimulate the evening economy, improve civic pride, and help encourage further private sector investment. Rural areas will also benefit from the wider range of employment opportunities that increased investment in the city will bring, contributing to the inclusive growth ambitions of the City Deal.



## Current status year end 2022/23

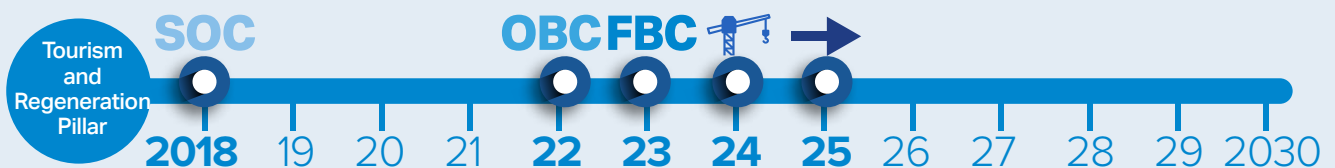
A Contract for Funding was signed for Newry City Centre Regeneration in January 2023 following receipt of Outline Business Case approval in January 2022.

Integrated Design Teams have developed the designs for the Theatre and Conference facility and the Civic Hub and associated public realm and planning applications for both projects were submitted at the beginning of the year.

The development of the procurement documentation for the Integrated Supply Teams is ongoing and pre-market engagement took place with contractors in March 2023.

Work to develop the Full Business Case has commenced and engagement is ongoing with stakeholders in relation to the Office Development Fund and how this can support development of Grade A office accommodation.

**£8.0 million**  
BRC D contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case   **OBC** Outline Business Case approved   **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences   Project operational

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Modern, world class infrastructure enables economic growth, builds connections to markets and opportunities, gets people to jobs in a sustainable way and is a key consideration for inward investors.

Quality skills provision is an important enabler to support people into employment, but the conditions for economic growth to enable job creation must also be present and the structural barriers to employment, such as transport infrastructure, need to be addressed. Investing in infrastructure is therefore important in delivering balanced, inclusive economic growth and ensuring that job opportunities can be accessed by all communities.

However, the Belfast Region continues to wrestle with the consequences of underinvestment in transport infrastructure, particularly public transport, and the resulting high levels of car use, pollution, and congestion.

For continued economic growth, improvements to inter-regional and intra-regional transport are vital. Connectivity will be key to providing access to jobs and increasing the pool of talent from which business can hire. The infrastructure projects included within the BRCD investment are about adding to the prospects which will position the region to support these efforts.

### Key to progress:

- SOC** Strategic Outline Case
- OBC** Outline Business Case approved
- FBC** Full Business Case approved
-  Construction commences
-  Project operational





# LAGAN PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE BRIDGE

## Location:

Connecting south and east Belfast to the city centre.

## Project overview:

This pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Lagan 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.

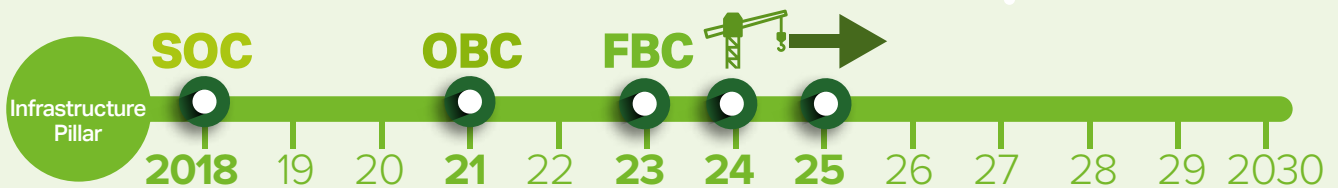
The bridge will also help further activate the waterfront, driving residents and visitors to this unique asset and further contributing to its continued regeneration (building on the successful redevelopment of the Lagan Weir). Residents and workers on both sides of the river will be reconnected with 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.



## Current status year end 2022/23

An Outline Business Case has been approved, with planning permission and other statutory approvals in place. Technical consultants were appointed in October 2022 to complete the preliminary design, prepare procurement documents and manage the procurement competition. The current programme suggests that a contract to complete the detailed design and construct the bridge could be awarded in the next financial year. Completing the work is then expected to take up to 24 months from contract award.

**£12.1 million**  
BRCD contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case   **OBC** Outline Business Case approved   **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences   Project operational



# SECTION 03

## BELFAST RAPID TRANSIT PHASE 2

### Location:

North to Antrim and Newtownabbey and south to Lisburn and Castlereagh..

### Project overview:

The Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2 project is the further development of the Belfast Rapid Transit system north to Antrim and Newtownabbey and south to Lisburn and Castlereagh and an extension of the existing CITI route to serve Queen’s University and City Hospital.

The rapid transit network will provide a high-quality passenger experience and services will run using accessible, comfortable, low-emission bespoke rapid transit vehicles that combine the quality and feel of a tram-like system.

The project aims to increase numbers travelling by public transport instead of car and contribute to an enhanced city image support regeneration efforts.



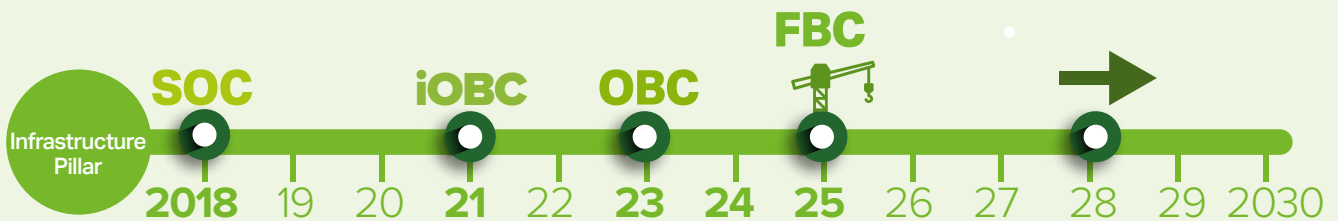
### Current status year end 2022/23

An Interim Outline Business Case for Belfast Rapid Transit 2 was submitted in August 2020.

A public consultation on route options took place during 2021 and the preferred route for the BRT2 was announced by the then Infrastructure Minister in October 2022. £20m additional funding has been approved in principle for inclusion in the New Deal Northern Ireland funding subject to HM Treasury Business Case approval to assist in addressing the funding shortfall for the project.

In line with the Minister’s announcement, the Outline Business Case is being reviewed and updated, by the Department for Infrastructure, to determine the feasibility of extensions to Glengormley and Carryduff. Further engagement will take place with residents, businesses and other stakeholders along the preferred route as the project progresses, in particular during development of detailed designs.

**£35.0 million**  
BRCD contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case    **OBC** Outline Business Case approved    **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences    Project operational

# NEWRY SOUTHERN RELIEF ROAD

## Location:

From the A1 Belfast to Dublin Road, South of Newry to the A2 Newry-Warrenpoint dual carriageway

## Project overview:

Newry is strategically located on the Eastern Seaboard between Belfast and Dublin. It is a major inter-regional gateway that includes through access to Warrenpoint Harbour, Northern Ireland's second busiest port. Its location means the city experiences periods of high traffic demand, in particular from shoppers and visitors coming from the Republic of Ireland, as well as a significant number of HGVs travelling to and from the Harbour to Belfast and Dublin. This contributes to delays and congestion on the local and strategic road network.

This project proposes development of a high standard relief road to improve traffic flow and connectivity. An alternative route for strategic through traffic will improve journey times and journey time reliability for strategic traffic and reduce the conflict between strategic and local traffic movements in Newry city centre, complementing the city's regeneration ambitions.



## Current status year end 2022/23

An interim Outline Business Case for the Newry Southern Relief Road was prepared in September 2020 and development work on the project is ongoing.

The current development stage involves finalising the scheme design and preparing the associated technical assessment reports, as well as the draft Statutory Orders and Environmental Impact Assessment Report in advance of their publication and statutory public consultation.

The Department for Infrastructure recently confirmed that its preferred option for the bridge on the Newry Southern Relief Road is a non-opening 50m fixed bridge, allowing this work to commence.

**£93.4 million**  
BRCD contribution



**SOC** Strategic Outline Case **OBC** Outline Business Case approved **FBC** Full Business case approved  
 Construction commences Project operational

## EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS

The overall BRCD capital investment is intended to help rebalance the local economy by building on our competitive strengths, increasing productivity, and supporting the creation of more and better jobs. However, it will be critical that the right skills are in place to enable as wide a range of people as possible to avail of the opportunities arising from this investment if we are to drive inclusive growth - a fundamental aspect of City and Growth deals across the UK. For this reason, the BRCD Employability and Skills programme is framed around the need for opportunities at various skills levels, which will involve identifying the need for both:

- **Skills for growth:** including opportunities in high growth sectors identified by the BRCD – aligning with those identified by the Department of the Economy’s Skills for a 10x Economy strategic framework; and
- **Skills for inclusion:** Including opportunities for unemployed, economically inactive and marginalised groups - aligning with Department for Communities’ Labour Market Partnership ambitions.

To effectively deliver the skills solutions we know will be required we recognise the need, also acknowledged through recent Northern Ireland Government employability and skills related strategies and plans<sup>10</sup>, to operate within an ever more agile skills system. Greater collaboration will be needed to underpin such agility. Northern Ireland’s City and Growth Deals can support this ambition by working together to tackle shared challenges and consider more joined-up responses to the skills needs anticipated through their planned investment projects.

A newly formed Cross Deal Skills Group will oversee a series of sectoral skills assessments that will consider the anticipated skills needs and job opportunities emerging through the city and growth deal projects, formulating recommendations to be taken forward by City and Growth Deal partners working alongside industry and government departments and agencies. The planned programme of assessments has been informed by the projects planned across all four Northern Ireland City and Growth Deals.

### Current status year end 2022/23

Over the past year the BRCD Employability and Skills team has been supporting partners in a range of complementary skills related activity to underpin and support their future city deal investments.

### Skills assessment and delivery

The first BRCD skills assessment in relation to construction has been completed, with key recommendations in relation to market engagement implemented and further recommendations, including on digital and net-zero upskilling under consideration by partners.

To support the implementation of skills assessments the partners have developed a number of collaborative proposals for funding. Further and higher education partners are working on proposals to build on work funded by the Department for the Economy. This resulted in the creation of proposals for the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF)

In May 2020, the BRCD led the collaborative cross Deal bid for the creation of the £6m DTFF and since then an additional £1.1m has been earmarked to support rural micro businesses (led by DAERA), providing a potential total fund of circa £7.1m for the project, which will be available on a Northern Ireland wide basis.

<sup>10</sup> Such as DfE’s ‘10x Economy – an Economic Vision for a decade of Innovation’, DfE’s ‘Skills Strategy for NI – Skills for a 10x Economy’, and DfC Employability NI plans





Led by Newry, Mourne and Down Council, the DTFF is a Northern Ireland wide programme, funded through the City and Growth Deals Complementary Fund, facilitated by Full Fibre NI partnership on behalf of all local authorities which seeks to support economic recovery by fast tracking SMEs response to the business opportunities provided through digital transformation. The fund seeks to address the financial barriers micro businesses and SMEs face by establishing a capital grant fund to support investment in capital equipment (hardware and software) critical to business strategic digital transformation plans.

The DTFF investments will enable business transformation rather than the 'digitalisation' of existing business models or operations and will be based on the following advanced digital technologies /tools:

- Smart technologies/ smart environments, the Internet of Things and simulation,
- Process automation via robotics/ cobotics, additive manufacturing,
- Big-data and analytics,
- Immersive Technologies,
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning; and
- Horizontal and vertical system integration, distributed ledger systems/ blockchain technologies.

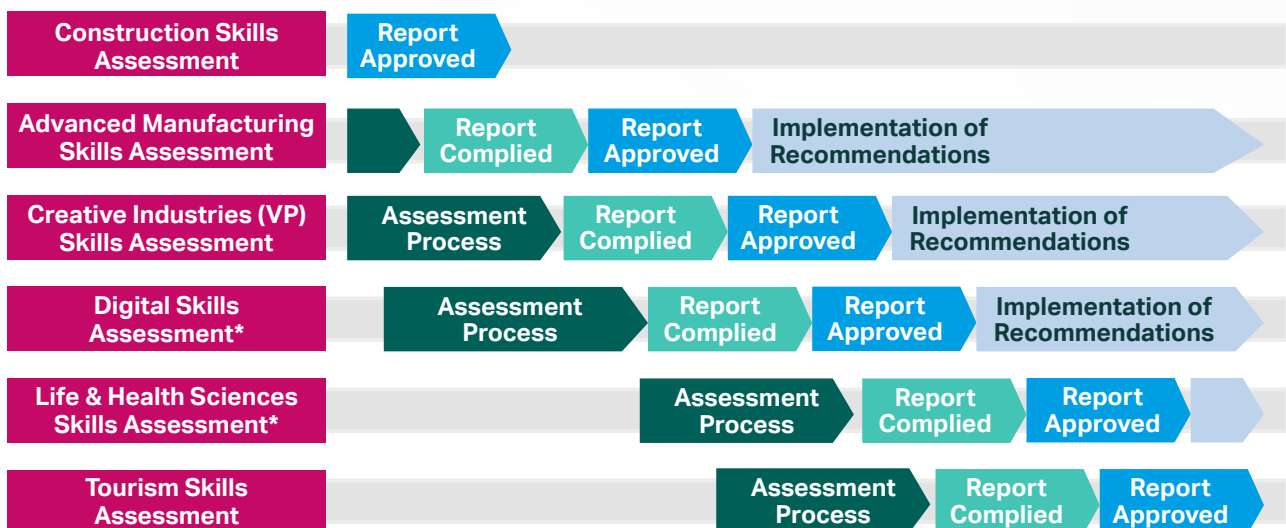
The Outline Business Case for the project is currently at the casework stage, having been submitted to Invest NI in January 2023.

Meanwhile Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is progressing with pre-development work, including developing the grant funding process and marketing materials in preparation for a successful outcome and launch of the fund.

### Social value

During the year, the BRCD Executive Board agreed to apply the Strategic Investment Board's (SIB) Points Based Model as a minimum requirement for City Deal funded projects. This led to the creation of BRCD specific guidance outlining the process for the integration, management and monitoring of such benefits. Using the overall monitoring and reporting mechanisms in place for the deal as a whole, projects will report quarterly on how social value is being integrated into contracts and to flag any emerging issues or challenges. At the end of 2022/23 only a relatively small number of contracts had been awarded, but several procurements have gone live in recent months. As contractors' social value plans become available, they will be connected to available and relevant employability and skills services.

The SIB continues to provide regular training to all projects to ensure full awareness and understanding of the agreed approach to social value.



# SECTION 04

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Pillar	Project	BRCB capital investment £'000	Partner capital investment £'000
Innovation	AMIC	78,700.00	10,800.00
	I-REACH Health	39,700.00	2,374.70
	Global Innovation Institute	52,400.00	6,000.39
	CDHT	34,000.00	6,896.21
	Studio Ulster	25,200.00	3,611.70
Digital	Enabling Infrastructure	40,000.00	-
	Challenge Programme	55,000.00	-
	Regional Innovation Hubs	25,000.00	6,500.00
	Digital Twin *included in Regional Innovation Hubs above	15,000.00	-
Tourism & Regeneration	I4C *13.5m contribution included in Regional Innovation Hubs above and additional £7m contribution from Tourism & Regeneration pillar	20,500.00	3,569.00
	Bangor Waterfront	40,000.00	20,000.03
	Belfast Stories	65,000.00	35,000.00
	Destination Royal Hillsborough	20,000.00	4,250.00
	Carrickfergus Regeneration	26,400.00	14,399.10
	The Gobbins Phase 2	12,600.00	1,000.00
	Mourne Mountain Gateway	30,000.00	14,451.12
	Newry City Centre Regeneration	8,000.00	34,849.91
Infrastructure	Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge	12,100.00	875.00
	Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2	35,000.00	-
	Newry Southern Relief Road	93,400.00	-

Other capital investment £'000	Total planned capital investment £'000	Contract for Funding and Funding Agreement signed	Drawdown requested	BRC D spend
10,000.00	99,500.00	Jan-23	1,350,000.00	1,337,009.30
4,499.96	46,574.66	Mar-23	869,582.81	
-	58,400.39	Mar-23	562,780.89	
2,000.00	42,896.21			
-	28,811.70	Jul-22		
-	40,000.00	N/A		
-	55,000.00	N/A		
	31,500.00	N/A		
35,000.00	50,000.00			
-	24,069.00			
12,792.36	72,792.39	Jan-23		
-	100,000.00			
1,725.20	25,975.20			
1,405.23	42,204.33	Nov-22		
-	13,600.00			
-	44,451.12			
-	42,849.91	Jan-23	189,890.00	
-	12,975.00	N/A		100,000.00
20,000.00	142,000.00	N/A		
14,194.87	107,594.87	N/A		



## REALISING BENEFITS AND COLLABORATING TO SUCCEED – NEXT STEPS

### Benefits realisation

The BRCD Partnership remains focused on ensuring the achievement of the benefits and outcomes that the deal has been designed to deliver. As projects move into the delivery there will be additional focus on ensuring the necessary plans are in place to optimise the delivery of benefits in terms of jobs, productivity, visitors, and inclusion as outlined in the business cases and as contained within the Funding Agreements. Each project is responsible for managing delivery and reporting progress against targets contained within their Project Benefits Realisation Plans.

A Programme level Benefits Realisation Framework will be developed to enable the BRCD Partnership to focus on its collective endeavours to maximise the impact of the government and partner investment. Work will be undertaken during 2023/24 to assess the impact of construction inflation on reducing the overall deal benefits and to develop options that will seek to maintain the impact of the deal.

### Collaborating to succeed

The BRCD continues to focus on the benefits not only of the deal itself but of the wider partnership to the region. The existence of the BRCD partnership provides the mechanisms and incentives for more effective and deliberative engagement of stakeholders in the design and delivery of regional and sub-regional priorities and programmes. In particular, it creates the capability to respond to opportunities by mobilising and aligning partner and stakeholder resources quickly. This was demonstrated through the co-ordinated response to applications

to the City and Growth Deal Complementary Fund which facilitated the development of a Joint Hydrogen bid by Queen's University Belfast and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and provided the leadership for the establishment of a Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DFTT) which involves all the City and Growth Deals in Northern Ireland.

The BRCD partners have also come together with industry through the Renewed Ambition Partnership to identify and promote investment opportunities of a scale that will be of interest to major private and institutional investors. This provides the Belfast Region with an offer that can be showcased at national and international events and which enables the region to compete with other major UK city regions.

There is no doubt that the appeal of such a significant capital investment as the BRCD will itself attract further investment into the region - a result of the confidence that this level of investment brings to the private sector. Such confidence has already been displayed at the Global Point site – location for the Queen's-led Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre - which has helped to attract Sensata Technologies (£16.5m R&D headquarters) marking the location as a prime investment location.

Our university and industry partners are already seeing the benefits of the BRCD investment, even in advance of projects being operational, with additional funding secured, from Innovate UK, through the High Value Manufacturing Catapult for AMIC and from the Levelling Up Fund for Studio Ulster. A number of further bids for funding to support innovation, which rely on the collaborative nature, capacity and capability that is being created through the BRCD investment are under development with industry partners.



## Delivering in 2023 / 2024

A key priority for the BRCD Partnership in the coming year will be to continue to work with colleagues in government departments to refine and streamline processes to facilitate the signing of Contracts for Funding for projects with Outline Business Case approval, agree timelines and key decision points for the approval of Full Business Cases to minimise delays and ensure funding flows to projects in line with financial profiles.

### During 2023/24 we will:

- obtain approval for updated Business Cases and at least 5 additional Outline Business Case Approvals
- sign at least seven additional Contracts for Funding
- obtain approval for four Full Business Cases
- award at least 15 major contracts for design and delivery/construction
- oversee implementation of the first social value delivery plans
- complete Skills Assessment for Advanced Manufacturing and Virtual Production
- support the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (funded through City and Growth Deal Complementary Fund) and Augment the City projects to move into full operation

With a majority of projects in delivery phase, partners will also be ramping up communication and engagement with industry partners and with local communities in 2023/24. This will be essential to inform the design and delivery of projects which respond to industry and community needs and to build support and momentum for project delivery.

We remain committed to identifying and addressing the challenge of construction inflation and its potential impact on affordability and delivery of benefits. Options at both programme and project level will be developed including the identification of potential additional funding streams.

The partnership also recognises the need to consider how to respond to the Net-Zero challenge and welcomes the lead the Northern Ireland government departments are taking across all the deals to facilitate this. Initial work carried out to analyse net-zero options at a regional level will also help to inform future plans for the development of the deal and may assist deal partners in seeking new opportunities and resources associated with delivery of the net-zero agenda.

All projects are in process of putting in place the considerable resources and governance arrangements that are essential to support delivery and during 2023/24, with the signing of Contracts for Funding across all Pillars of Investment, the monitoring and reporting arrangements set out on Funding Agreements and in line with processes agreed with the Accountable Body will be in full operation.



# APPENDIX 1

## COUNCIL PANEL 2022/23

### Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council



Councillor  
Matthew Magill



Alderman  
Mark Cosgrove



Councillor  
Julie Gilmour



Alderman  
Stephen Ross

### Ards and North Down Borough Council



Alderman  
Alan McDowell



Councillor  
Alistair Cathcart



Councillor  
Stephen Dunlop



Councillor  
Richard Smart

### Belfast City Council



Belfast  
City Council



Alderman  
George Dorrian



Councillor  
Ronan McLaughlin



Councillor  
Michael Long



Councillor  
Carl Whyte



### Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council



Alderman  
Allan Ewart MBE



Alderman  
Amanda Grehan



Alderman  
Michael Henderson MBE



Councillor  
Uel Mackin

### Mid and East Antrim Borough Council



Alderman  
Billy Ashe MBE



Alderman  
Audrey Wales MBE



Councillor  
Timothy Gaston



Councillor  
Robin Stewart

### Newry Mourne and Down



Councillor  
Geraldine Kearns



Councillor  
Barra O'Muirí



Councillor  
Robert Burgess



Councillor  
Pete Byrne

## GLOSSARY OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The BRCD has a number of frameworks and plans that sit behind the main Deal document agreed in December 2021 and help describe the arrangements in place to ensure we deliver an effective Programme.

Document	Purpose
Deal Document	Document that confirms the joint partner commitment to full implementation of the BRCD. The Deal Document represents the statement of commitment to support and deliver the Deal.
Implementation Plan	Provides a high-level summary of each project - including capital costs, key milestones, risks, mitigations, outcomes, benefits, and targets. Reviewed annually as part of the Annual Conversation.
Financial Agreement	Outlines the collective financial commitment of all partners over the lifetime of the Deal to deliver the project outcomes as detailed in each approved business case.
Financial Plan	Outlines detailed funding profiles for each project and programme and the appropriate financial stewardship, protocols, and controls to ensure accountable delivery.
Employability and Skills Proposition	Outlines how partners can maximise the benefit of the investment by identifying the skills needs and opportunities it will create and by addressing barriers to employment that might hinder inclusion.
Governance and Assurance Framework	Outlines the procedures that BRCD partners will follow in relation to decision making and delivery of the Deal.
Communications Protocol	Sets out an agreed framework for communication protocols around the BRCD to ensure areas of responsibility and working practices are clearly defined.
Inclusive and Sustainable Growth Framework	Demonstrates the commitment of BRCD partners to improving inclusivity across society in the implementation of projects, while also strengthening the sustainability focus of the deal by considering opportunities to support climate resilience.
Risk and Issue Management Framework and Registers	Outlines partners' commitment to good corporate governance and helping to improve decision making, enhance outcomes and strengthen accountability.

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City Council



**Antrim and Newtownabbey**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



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**Lisburn & Castlereagh**  
City Council



**Mid & East Antrim**  
Borough Council



Comhairle Ceantair  
**an Iúir, Mhúrn agus an Dúin**  
**Newry, Mourne and Down**  
District Council



**QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY**  
**BELFAST**



**Ulster University**



**NORTHERN**  
Regional College



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