



# NI CITY AND GROWTH DEALS

## ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2023/2024



Transformative  
for NI



Over £1.3  
billion capital  
investment



Economic  
Growth



Partnerships  
that lead to  
Collaboration



Skills, Jobs,  
Higher Wages



Innovation &  
Creativity will  
be a Game  
Changer

# FOREWORD

I am pleased to publish the second City and Growth Deals Annual Progress Report for 2023-24. This report reflects on progress across the four Deals and highlights key milestones to come.

The suite of projects across the four City and Growth Deals ranges from cutting-edge innovation centres and research facilities to digital transformation projects, developments in local infrastructure, exciting tourism offerings and regeneration of local cities and towns. Central to each Deal will be growth, inclusivity, sustainability and employability.

While this report focuses on the 2023-24 financial year, I am delighted that the initiative has reached some major milestones since then, with the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal signing Heads of Terms in April 2024 and the Derry City and Strabane District Council City Deal Signing in September 2024.

I should also reference the recent unexpected pause on UK Government funding. Whilst it is welcome that the pause was lifted for both Belfast Region City Deal and Derry and Strabane District Council City Deal, the unsettling, ongoing pause on UK funding for the Mid South West and Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deals remains in place until consideration by Treasury during its Spending Review. Collectively, the Finance Minister and elected representatives from across the political sphere have called for the funding to be reinstated and made clear there should be no disparity between our Deals.

The Belfast Region City Deal is well into delivery phase, with construction already commenced and additional planning permission in place. The Derry and Strabane Deal has now been signed and has entered into delivery phase.

Work is ramping up by the many organisations working together in partnership to deliver positive, transformative outcomes for our citizens, local businesses and visitors.

This year's Annual Progress Report showcases the Belfast Region City Deal and its Annual Report, and I look forward to sharing similar updates on the other Deals in the years to come.

If you have any queries or want to find out more about City and Growth Deals in Northern Ireland, please contact: [CityDeals@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:CityDeals@finance-ni.gov.uk), or visit [www.finance-ni.gov.uk/citydeals](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/citydeals). Direct contact details for each Deal can be found later in the report.



**Neil Gibson**  
Permanent Secretary  
Department of Finance  
NICS City and Growth Deals  
Senior Responsible Owner

## BELFAST REGION CITY DEAL (BRCD)



BRCD is a six council City Deal receiving £700 million of central Government funding over 19+ projects.

BRCD partners will contribute a further £255 million, and by leveraging additional private sector investment, BRCD will deliver a £1 billion programme

BRCD signed its Deal in December 2021 and is now in delivery stage

 [belfastregioncitydeal.co.uk](https://belfastregioncitydeal.co.uk)

 [brcd@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:brcd@belfastcity.gov.uk)

## DERRY CITY & STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL (DCSDC)



DCSDC City Deal is a single council Deal receiving £210 million of central Government funding across nine projects.

This includes both City Deal investment and investment from the Inclusive Future Fund. DCSDC partners will contribute a further £83 million bringing the total programme value to £293m.

DCSDC signed its Deal in September 2024 and is now in delivery stage.

 [www.derrystrabane.com/about-council/city-deal](https://www.derrystrabane.com/about-council/city-deal)

 [Eamon.Molloy@derrystrabane.com](mailto:Eamon.Molloy@derrystrabane.com)

## CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS (CCG)



Grow Causeway  
Coast & Glens  
Connection | Destination | Innovation



Causeway  
Coast & Glens  
Borough Council

CCG Growth Deal is a single council Deal receiving £72 million of central Government funding.

CCG Heads of Terms were signed in April 2024, and the Growth Deal is now beginning to develop Outline Business Cases for each project.

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/work/strategic-projects/growth-deal](https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/work/strategic-projects/growth-deal)

[Niall.McGurk@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk](mailto:Niall.McGurk@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)

## MID SOUTH WEST (MSW)



MSW Growth Deal is a three council Deal receiving £252 million of central Government funding.

MSW is working towards signing Heads of Terms, to enable it to progress to developing Outline Business Cases, for the different projects within the Growth Deal.

[midsouthwestregion.org](https://midsouthwestregion.org)

[info@midsouthwestregion.org](mailto:info@midsouthwestregion.org)

## COMPLEMENTARY FUND



Northern Ireland  
Executive

The Complementary Fund was agreed by the NI Executive on May 4th, 2020, and it comprises £100 million of capital funding.

In the first round of funding, £52 million was allocated for a total of five projects, which are currently being developed.

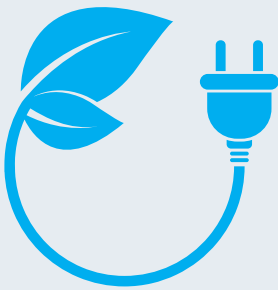
Three business cases have been approved to date – Newry City Park, Whitespots and the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund.

# SUSTAINABILITY, INCLUSIVITY, EMPLOYABILITY

## GREEN GROWTH

The City & Growth Deals Cross-Deal Climate & Environmental Working Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis.

The group has heard from several experts in the field of Green Growth, taking the opportunity to share best practice and collaboratively work on how to best implement Net Zero targets, promoting consistency and best practice across the four Deals.



### City and Growth Deals recognise the need to respond to the Net Zero challenge.

### BRCD

Several of the BRCD projects will play an important role in the journey to net zero.

These projects include i4C & AMIC, laying the groundwork for the hydrogen supply chain, infrastructure projects encouraging sustainable travel and innovation challenge funds supporting the role of innovation in achieving net zero targets.

### DCSDC

DCSDC City Deal will support green growth, sustainable transport systems and climate change mitigations.

The region's precious natural heritage and biodiversity will be protected, restored, and enhanced. Growth will be channelled through circular, zero-waste, and resource-efficient initiatives.

### CCG

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has recognised a climate emergency and agreed a policy which targets operational net zero for all new Council owned buildings.

Where possible and practicable, the projects proposed for the Causeway Coast and Glens Growth Deal will be delivered in a way that is consistent with these commitments.

### MSW

Commitment to addressing the 'Climate Emergency' will be core to the Growth Deal and will be supported through the delivery of the MSW Councils' Climate Action Plans to accelerate progress towards achieving NI Net Zero targets.

# SUSTAINABILITY, INCLUSIVITY, EMPLOYABILITY

## EMPLOYABILITY & INCLUSIVITY



**Driving employability and developing new skills is at the heart of City and Growth Deals.**

### BRCD

Inclusive growth is at the heart of BRCD investment; the Deal presents an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate inclusive economic growth across the region.

This approach to economic progress and development reflects the Deal's commitment to balance societal, economic and environmental needs.

### DCSDC

Inclusive growth metrics will be agreed as part of the overall monitoring and evaluation framework for the Deal.

This will include the use of social value criteria in the award of contracts required to deliver the transformational projects and collaborating to develop HR policies that promote inclusion such as the public sector apprenticeship programme.

### CCG

Causeway Coast and Glens are working hard to enable social, economic and environmental wellbeing within the implementation of the Growth Deal.

This will include the use of social value criteria in the award of contracts required to deliver these transformational projects.

### MSW

Sustainability and inclusivity will be key elements underpinning the transformative MSW Growth Deal projects.

This will include the use of social value criteria in the award of contracts required to deliver the Growth Deal.

# SUSTAINABILITY, INCLUSIVITY & PARTNERSHIP

## PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

City and Growth Deals are an ideal opportunity for partnerships. Many of the projects will be longer-term capital builds, but some are shorter-term projects, providing more immediate benefits such as Challenge Funds in the innovation and digital space to help local businesses transform.



**Partnership and collaboration is key to the success of City and Growth Deals.**

For example, through the Executive’s £100 million Complementary Fund and additional funding provided by DCSDC, the four Deals recently worked together to launch the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund. This Fund will give small and medium Enterprises (SME) and Microbusinesses’ the opportunity to bid for grants of up to £20,000 to help accelerate their digital transformation ambitions.

### **CALL 1 – NOVEMBER 2023**

The first call for expressions of interest generated 135, with 108 businesses eligible to submit applications. 63 applications were received, with 45 successful in securing the funding.

### **CALL 2 – MARCH 2024**

The second call for expressions of interest generated 207, with 153 businesses eligible to submit applications. 78 applications were received, with 37 successful in securing funding.

### **CALL 3 – 2024/2025**

As the DTFF project continues into 2024/2025, the third call for expressions of interest was completed in June 2024, continuing to build on the promotional efforts for the project, and its benefits, by all councils and partners. It is expected the assessment period will begin in October 2024 with funding to be delivered in March 2025.

For further information on the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund and to find out how your business might benefit, click the link below.

[Digital Transformation Flexible Fund \(dtff.co.uk\)](https://dtff.co.uk)



**Digital  
Transformation  
Flexible Fund**



# BRC D ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

BRC D have made significant progress during 2023/24, having firmly entered delivery stage and projects designed to stimulate economic growth, enhance infrastructure and promote social well-being are now beginning to take shape.

The most advanced projects, for which contracts for funding and funding agreements are now in place, are recruiting and upskilling staff, constructing new premises, co-designing projects with industry, procuring next generation technology and equipment, and moving fully into operation.

As BRC D moves into Year 3 of delivery, they are committed to achieving the benefits and outcomes that the Deal is designed to deliver. This will include a focus on the benefits not only of the Deal itself, but of the wider partnership to the region.

 [BRC D Annual Report](#)



## DEVELOPMENT TO DELIVERY

BRC D has now moved some of its projects from signing Contracts for Funding to the approval of their Full Business Cases.

These signed Contracts for Funding enable project delivery with an approximate value of £500m.

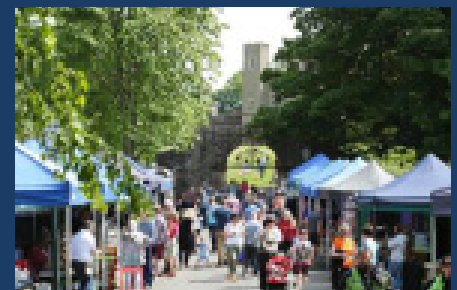
This allows those projects to begin construction which is one of the many fantastic milestones the Deal has achieved over the past year.



## DELIVERY CHALLENGES

As construction commences and many projects now finishing the design phase, several challenges remain, with complex financing and governance processes and inflationary pressures, continuing to impact.

In addition, the introduction of the Subsidy Control Act in January 2023 added further complexity to the project approval process and created some unforeseen delays in delivery timescales.



## STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

In February 2024 BRC D held a breakfast event with local businesses, to provide them with detail on the Deal and show them the opportunities that exist for local businesses.

BRC D will continue into the next year by implementing their Strategic Engagement Plan, which will continue the focus on political and business engagement.



# BRC D ANNUAL REPORT



## Construction Commences

Two projects are now in the construction phase, with planning approval in place for two others.

The Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC), having received full business case approval in March 2024, has now begun construction at its site in Newtownabbey, representing a huge milestone achievement for BRC D.

Studio Ulster is continuing to move at pace, it is currently having specialist equipment fitted to allow it to begin operation in early 2025.

In addition, the Augment the City Challenge Competition has been launched and this project is now in delivery.

## Skills Assessments

As the BRC D continues to progress sectoral skills assessments to better understand and respond to the opportunities presented by these investments, there will also be a renewed focus on skills investment. As projects harness the support of further and higher education partners and other skills providers to ensure local communities can avail of emerging opportunities. To this end the BRC D partners have continued to support the delivery of the Employability and Skills programme.

The first BRC D skills assessment for the opportunities the deal will create throughout the construction sector, was completed in the 2022/23 period. Over the last year, a second cross deal Skills Assessment has also been completed for the Advanced Manufacturing sector.

Two further skills assessments, for the Digital and Creative Industries sectors, will be completed in 2024/2025 and a third will commence for the Health and Life Sciences sector.

## Milestones Achieved

<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE / ADDENDUM DRAFTING	OUTLINE BUSINESS CASES APPROVED	CONTRACT FOR FUNDING SIGNED	FULL BUSINESS CASE DRAFTING	FULL BUSINESS CASE SUBMITTED	FULL BUSINESS CASE APPROVED	SKILLS ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED	SKILLS ASSESSMENT DRAFTING

<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
INTEGRATED DESIGN TEAM PROCUREMENT ONGOING	INTEGRATED DESIGN TEAM CONTRACTS AWARDED	DESIGN STAGE	PLANNING SUBMITTED	PLANNING APPROVED	INTEGRATED DESIGN TEAM PROCUREMENT ONGOING	CONSTRUCTION	OPERATIONAL

## MILESTONES FOR 2024-2025

<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>40</b>
SIGN FIVE ADDITIONAL CONTRACTS FOR FUNDING	RECEIVE APPROVAL FOR THREE ADDITIONAL FULL BUSINESS CASES	COMMIT TO AN ADDITIONAL £150 MILLION IN SIGNED CONTRACTS FOR FUNDING	DRAWDOWN CIRCA £40 MILLION IN CITY AND GROWTH DEALS FUNDING

## FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any queries or want to find out more about City and Growth Deals in Northern Ireland, please contact:

 [www.finance-ni.gov.uk/citydeals](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/citydeals)

 [CityDeals@finance-ni.gov.uk](mailto:CityDeals@finance-ni.gov.uk)



Transformative for NI



Over £1.3 billion capital investment



Economic Growth



Partnerships that lead to Collaboration



Skills, Jobs, Higher Wages



Innovation & Creativity will be a Game Changer

# CITY AND GROWTH DEAL PARTNERS

## CO-FUNDED BY



UK Government

## BELFAST REGION CITY DEAL (BRCD)



## DERRY CITY & STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL (DCSDC)



## CAUSEWAY COAST & GLENS (CCG)



## MID SOUTH WEST (MSW)

