

A graphic featuring a stylized map of the Belfast 5G Innovation Region in dark blue. The word "Belfast" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font with a yellow outline, and "5G" is written below it in a similar style. The background is a dark blue gradient with vibrant, multi-colored light streaks (yellow, orange, red, pink, purple, blue) radiating from the left side, creating a sense of speed and technology.

Belfast

5G

INNOVATION REGION

5G Funding Competition briefing

Webinar will start soon. This briefing is being recorded.

Please post any questions you have in the Q&A chat.



Belfast
City Council



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council



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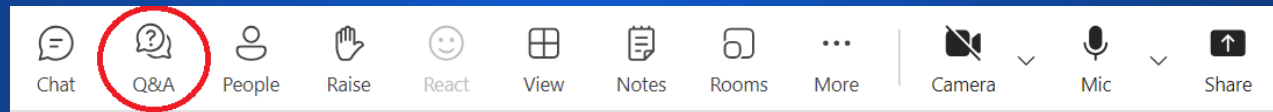


Agenda

10.30am - 10.35am	Introduction to the briefing session Paula Fee, Belfast City Council
10.35am - 10.40am	Belfast 5G Innovation Region Programme Mark McCann, Belfast City Council
10.40am – 11.15am	5G funding competition overview Guy Middleton, Spirit Public Sector
11.15am - 11.30am	Questions & answers – please use Q&A facility in Teams
11.30am	Close

Questions & Answers

Please use the Q&A facility in Teams



All questions and answers will be published on the competition web page

Belfast 5GIR Programme

£5.1 million DSIT funded programme 2024-2026



5G Enablement Programme

A sustainable programme to foster the local advanced wireless ecosystem, drive adoption of advanced wireless technologies, and aggregate and demonstrate demand for investment in advanced wireless technologies.



5G Funding Competition

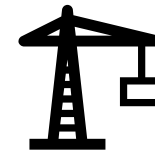
Grants to support local businesses and organisations to deploy 5G use cases and improve operations and productivity.

5G Anchor Projects

Five projects in key local sectors.



5G Studio - UU's Studio Ulster



5G Port - Belfast Harbour



5G Transport - Translink



5G Construction - QUB's Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre



5G Public Services Hub - Belfast City Council



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Ards and North Down Borough Council



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Delivered to date



Nine 5G use cases delivered



Three Private 5G Networks deployed



£1.5 million additional commercial investment leveraged



5G Adoption Toolkit launched and NI Sustainable 5G Ecosystem Plan developed



200+ businesses and organisations engaged



Promoted at 28 events

5G Funding Competition

Criteria, scope and application process



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Details are in the guidance document

- Aiming to highlight key points
- Aiming to prompt questions
- Aiming to help you to develop compelling applications
- Please ask questions in the Q&A

Key dates - Process

ACTIVITY	DATES
Partner Introduction Webinar	11.30am, 3 July 2025
Deadline to request Applicant Support	5pm, 11 July 2025
Deadline for clarification questions	5pm, 27 August 2025
Submission deadline	11.59pm, 8 September 2025
Applicants notified	W/C 22 September 2025
Grant Funding Agreements signed	End September / beginning October 2025

Key dates - Delivery

ACTIVITY	DATES
Project mobilisation	October 2025
Implementation deadline (Technical solution implemented, use cases live and operational, period of benefits realisation completed, and case study. All grant funded activities must be completed by this date.)	31 March 2026
Grant funding period	October 2025 – 31 March 2028

Funding

- Total funding available: Up to £550,000
- Applicants can apply for grants between £50,000 and £100,000
- Grant is **Capital** funding only
- 30% match funding required from applicants (can include in-kind contributions)
- All grant funded activities must be completed by **31 March 2026**
- Covers implementation costs (purchase and installation). Operational costs must be met by other funds.



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Eligibility criteria

Competition is open to:

- businesses and organisations in the Belfast Region City Deal council areas: Antrim and Newtownabbey; Ards and North Down; Belfast; Lisburn and Castlereagh; Mid and East Antrim; and Newry, Mourne and Down
- all industry sectors
- private sector, public sector, academia, RTO, non-profit and charitable sectors

Projects must be delivered in the Belfast Region City Deal area.

Lead applicant must be the use case owner/buyer not the supplier.

Lead applicant can work with partners and suppliers including those outside of the BRCD area.



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Objectives of competition

- Drive **adoption** of advanced wireless solutions, especially 5G
- **Adoption** – i.e. not experimentation and development etc, not coverage, but take-up of existing technology solutions to address real-world business problems
- Competition is about **removing barriers** to take-up of 5G and other advanced wireless technologies
- Drive **economic growth** and innovation

Project scope

Proposals should:

- Demonstrate one or more use cases for 5G or other advanced wireless connectivity.
- Aim to solve real-world issues such as delivering improvements to existing business operations or processes.
- Deliver use cases in a real-world setting (testbeds, trials, research won't be funded).
- Deliver economic, social and/or environmental benefits such as cost savings, productivity gains, efficiencies, welfare improvements etc.
- Projects must show a pathway to commercial sustainability.

Advanced wireless connectivity

- Applications of all kinds of advanced wireless are eligible.
- **5G and roadmap to 5G** will score more highly because the barriers to adoption are higher.
- Roadmap – e.g. based on LTE today and 5G ready, or pilot phase uses WiFi and full scale would use 5G private network etc.
- Hybrid networks – e.g. uses 5G for backhaul for devices connected by WiFi or LoRaWAN gateway, or uses satellite backhaul and local 5G connection etc.

Use Cases

- “Use Case” describes a specific scenario, process, method or transaction that relies on the use of advanced wireless technologies
- Key feature of a Use Case is the use of advanced wireless connectivity to **support a business or organisation activity** i.e. the application of wireless, not just its availability.
- Projects that just increase coverage without using it directly are unlikely to score well. New connectivity infrastructure to support a use case is acceptable.
- **Relies** on advanced wireless – i.e. needs wireless, not just a replacement for existing connectivity.

5G use cases funded by Belfast 5GIR

Using 5G (private and public) and digital technologies such as IoT devices, sensors, cameras, robotics, machine learning, Push-To-Talk etc. to deliver improvements to business operations.

- **5G Port** – Belfast Harbour is accelerating the digitalisation of port operations including automatic bulk freight handling, safety improvements, air quality monitoring and in-car connectivity for Harbour Police.
- **5G Smart Logistics Hub** – Manfreight is enhancing its chilled distribution hub operations by optimising the movement and storage of trailers and product across its warehouse facility.
- **5G Film Anywhere** – UU and Studio Ulster are accelerating screen production processes.
- **5G Virtual Reality** – Retinize is enhancing its Animotive virtual reality platform, bringing advanced motion capture technology to educational institutions and production companies.
- **5G Smart Trailer Yard** – Stena Line is delivering more efficient operations at its freight trailer yard.
- **5G Construction** – QUB is using 5G to design and construct its Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre.
- **5G Transport** – Translink is delivering enhanced public transport operations and network planning.



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Applications

- **Project Design**
What is the project? Who will you work with?
- **Match Funding**
How will you meet your part of the costs?
- **Application Forms**
Make sure the submission does the project justice
- If it's not clear, please ask...



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Applications – Project Design

- Develop the ideas for your project asap
- Check **Eligibility criteria** – of the organisation, and of the costs
- Consider the objectives of the competition
- Focus on the use cases – what problem is addressed by using advanced wireless connectivity, what is the technology solution, what are the expected benefits/impact and how will you measure it
- Think about who will deliver the technology
- Think about how the project will be managed to deliver on time
- Consider the business change activities to make it work
- Consider how it will be commercially sustainable
- i.e. What is the project for, how will it be delivered, and by whom... and how will it endure

Applications – Match funding

- **30% match funding**
i.e. 30% applicant, 70% 5G Funding Competition
- **Match funding**
Does not have to be capital
Must be spent by 31 March 2026
Can be contribution in-kind (e.g. staff costs)
Must be new money or new effort

Applications – Forms

- Use the checklist (end of application form) – make sure you submit everything
- Understand the evaluation scoring methodology
- Make clear how the project meets the funding objectives
- **Address every part of the requirements**
- Use the word count carefully
- Be clear, use plain language, use illustrative diagrams
- **Make sure that your legal team has reviewed the draft Grant Funding Agreement**

Clarification questions

- Study the guidance as soon as possible.
- If in doubt, ask.
- Submit clarification questions to innovationfunding@belfastcity.gov.uk **ASAP** - well before the clarification deadline of 5pm, 27 August 2025.
 - Responses may trigger follow-up questions
 - You'll want maximum time to make use of responses
 - Regularly check the competition website for responses

Assessment process

Key dates

- **Assessment period starts:** 9 September 2025
- **Applicants notified:** W/C 22 September 2025

Scoring

- **Eligibility questions:** Pass or fail
- **Assessment questions:** Assessed according to criteria (0-5)
- Individual assessment of proposals on own merits as per criteria



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If successful...

- If you are offered a grant funding award you will be required to sign the Grant Funding Agreement at the end of September / beginning of October 2025 to enable your project to start in October.
- Ask your legal team to review the draft Grant Funding Agreement before you submit your application.
- Familiarise yourself with your internal processes for signing GFAs – who needs to sign it and what approvals do you need? Make them aware of the timeline for signing the GFA.
- Ensure your resources are in place to mobilise your project in October.

Support for applicants

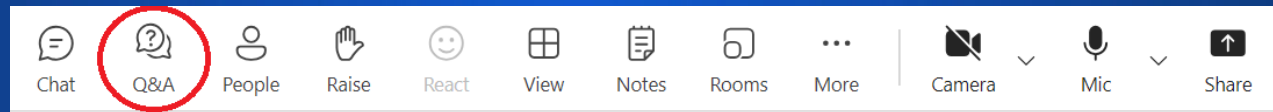
- **Applicant support** - Applicants can apply for up to three days of support to help develop 5G/advanced wireless projects. Email innovationfunding@belfastcity.gov.uk to register your interest by 11 July 2025. If you register after this date, you will be added to a reserve list.
- **Partner Introduction Webinar (3 July)** - Supporting applicants to learn about 5G use cases being delivered across UK, explore collaborative opportunities with partners, and connect with potential suppliers. Attendees can pitch their ideas or offerings. Email innovationfunding@belfastcity.gov.uk if interested in presenting a 3-minute pitch. Register for the webinar at www.smartbelfast.city

Support for applicants

- **NI 5G Adoption Toolkit** – Practical information on 5G adoption, example 5G use cases, and information on the local 5G ecosystem. Download at www.smartbelfast.city
- **UKTIN** – UK Telecoms Innovation Network website www.uktin.net has examples of 5G/advanced wireless use cases and the latest news.

Questions & Answers

Please use the Q&A facility in Teams



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Key information

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More information

www.smartbelfast.city

Email for clarification questions

innovationfunding@belfastcity.gov.uk



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The session has now ended



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