

# Public Document Pack

## BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

### **SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**TO: THE LORD MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND THE COUNCILLORS OF THE COUNCIL**

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast on Monday, 2nd December, 2024 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 10)
5. Official Announcements
6. Request to Address the Council - Sandy Row Traders
7. Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 11 - 40)
8. Minutes of the People and Communities Committee (Pages 41 - 56)
9. Minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 57 - 80)
10. Minutes of the Licensing Committee (Pages 81 - 92)
11. Minutes of the Planning Committee (Pages 93 - 108)
12. Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 109 - 116)
13. Minutes of the Standards and Business Committee (Pages 117 - 118)
14. Minutes of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee (Pages 119 - 126)

The Members of Belfast City Council are hereby summoned to attend.

John Walsh

Chief Executive

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## Council

### MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall  
on Monday, 4th November, 2024 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Murray (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCormick);  
The High Sheriff of Belfast, Councillor S. Douglas; and  
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey,  
McCullough and Rodgers; and  
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Beattie, Bell, Black,  
Bower, Bradley, Brennan, R. Brooks, T. Brooks,  
Bunting, Canavan, Carson, Cobain, Collins,  
de Faoite, Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,  
R. M. Donnelly, Doran, D. Douglas, Duffy,  
Ferguson, Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey,  
Kelly, Long, Lyons, Maghie, Maskey,  
McAteer, McCabe, McCann,  
McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKay,  
McKeown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,  
Murphy, Nelson, Nic Bhranair, O'Neill, Smyth,  
Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

#### **Summons**

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

#### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Magee.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Doherty declared an interest in relation to the item "Social Supermarkets – Update" within the People and Communities Committee minutes, in that his employer had received funding.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the items "Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25" within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, "Social Supermarkets – Update" within the People and Communities Committee minutes and "Major Events Update" within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee minutes, in that she was employed by Forward South Partnership.

Councillor Groogan further declared an interest in relation to the item "Belfast 2024" within the City Growth and Regeneration Committee minutes, in that she had undertaken freelance work for the programme.

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Councillor Long declared an interest in relation to the item “Belfast City Council response to NI Executive's draft Programme for Government” in that his wife was the Minister for Justice.

Councillor McDonough-Brown declared an interest Councillor McDonough-Brown declared an interest in relation to the item “Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his partner was employed by Save the Children.

Councillor R. McLaughlin declared an interest in relation to the item “Ending Violence against Women and Girls” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that his partner was a Minister in the Executive Office and he left the room whilst the item was being discussed.

Councillor Nic Bhranair declared an interest in relation to the item “Ending Violence against Women and Girls” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee minutes, in that she was employed as a Special Adviser to a Minister in the Executive and she left the room whilst the item was being discussed.

**Minutes of the Council**

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Murray),  
Seconded by Councillor Black, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 1st October, be taken as read and signed as correct.

**Official Announcements**

The Lord Mayor paid tribute to Mrs. G. Neill who had recently retired from the Council and wished her well in her retirement.

The Lord Mayor highlighted the recent SEUPB announcement of £13.5m of PEACEPLUS funding that had been awarded to Reconnected Belfast, focussed on the Waterworks and Alexandra Park in North Belfast.

The Lord Mayor acceded to a request from Councillor De Faoite to write to the family of the late Ms. Candy Devine to offer condolences on her recent passing.

Alderman Lawlor congratulated the organisers and recipients of the recent Northern Ireland Veterans Awards which recognised the important contribution that service leavers had made to the community as they transitioned to life after service.

Alderman McCullough congratulated the Lord Carson Memorial Junior LOL 132 on its constitution in the hall where Lord Carson lay the first foundation stone, North Belfast Orange Memorial and he credited Belfast Harbour LOL 1883, Ballymacarrett District LOL 6, Junior District Ballymacarrett LOL 3 and the Junior Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland on the formation of the new junior lodge.

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Councillor T. Brooks congratulated all those officers involved in the St Colmgall's Project which had won a RICS Award for its refurbishment and revitalisation.

Councillor De Faoite thanked the cultural events team and Belfast One for the events which had taken place over the Halloween period.

Councillor Doran congratulated Tynedale Residents Group in Ballysillan which had won Best Community Group in the Belfast in Bloom awards.

Councillor D. Douglas thanked all those who had participated in a 24 hour spinathon which had been organised by the Powered by Poppy campaign on aid of Laura Snodden and her family.

Councillor Ferguson thanked Sirocco Works Football Club who had invited him to attend its recent centenary dinner at City Hall and he congratulated the club on its centenary.

Councillor Flynn acknowledged the recent flash flooding that had occurred in Valencia, Spain and spoke of the need for more resources to be allocated the Climate and City Resilience Committee to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Councillor Groogan condemned the alarming recent news with regard to violence against women and girls and stated that more needed to be done as a society to address the issue and she paid credit to a number of activist groups, including Walkie Talkie Girls and Reclaim the Agenda, that had been trying to make change and called on the other Members to attend the upcoming Reclaim the Night event.

Councillor Kelly shared Councillor Groogan's sentiment with regard to violence against women and girls and encouraged attendance at the upcoming Reclaim the Night event.

Councillor Maghie highlighted the upcoming World Ventilate Day and the importance of clean indoor air.

Councillor McAteer congratulated Dundela Infants' School for winning the Belfast In Bloom award for Best School Garden – East Belfast and the Lord Mayor agreed to send a letter of congratulations to the school.

**Request to Address the Council**

The Chief Executive reported that a request to address the Council had been received from Ms. A. Whyte. Ms. White wished to address the Council in relation to the Motion on the agenda under the heading "Special Educational Needs – Legal Protection for Young People in NI", to discuss CalebsCauseNI and the lack of post-19 special educational needs education.

The Council acceded to the request and, accordingly, Ms. White was welcomed to the meeting by the Lord Mayor.

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Ms. White explained that CalebsCauseNI was a parent led campaign that was pushing for new legislation to be implemented for young people with disabilities when they leave school. She stated that her son, Caleb, was 16 years old and had complex needs, and that when he reached the age of 19, there would be no educational provision for him aside from local charities, however, the issue needed to be addressed by a change in legislation.

She stated that, unlike England and Wales, there was no such legislation in Northern Ireland and that she believed it was time to line up with the rest of the UK and she had started CalebsCauseNI to campaign for thousands of families that were in the same position.

Ms. White appealed to the Council to support her campaign for legislation to provide provision post 19 years of age education for those with complex needs.

The Lord Mayor thanked Ms. White for her presentation and wished her well in her campaign.

**Change of Position of Responsibility**

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from Sinn Fein that it wished make the following changes:

- Councillor Bradley to replace Councillor Magee as its representative on the North Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership (DPCSP); and
- Councillor Bradley to replace Councillor Magee as Deputy Chairperson of the Standards and Business Committee.

The Chief Executive further reported that notification had been received from the SDLP indicating that it wished to replace Councillor Whyte with Councillor Doherty as its representative on the Board of the Ulster Orchestra Society Limited.

The Council noted the changes.

**Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee**

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Duffy, and

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October and 1st November, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council,  
Monday, 4th November, 2024**

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Long,  
Seconded by Councillor Groogan,

“That the Council agrees that erection of all the signage at the Forth Meadow Community Greenway be trilingual, that is, in English, Irish and Ulster Scots.”

On a vote, fifteen Members voted for the amendment and forty-two against and it was declared lost.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Accordingly, minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 25th October and 1st November, 2024, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, were approved and adopted.

**Extract from minutes of: Strategic Policy and Resources  
Committee 20th September - Dual Language Signage  
at Olympia Leisure Centre**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that the decision in relation to Dual Language Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre had been subject to call-in and that the legal opinion had been circulated and concluded that the call-in did not have merit.

He explained that if the Council was minded to ratify the decision, it would be required to do so by adopting the minute, or if a vote was required, it would be by simple majority.

Moved by Councillor Murphy,  
Seconded by Councillor Beattie

That the minute, under the heading “Dual Language Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September, 2024, be approved and adopted.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Kelly,  
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

“That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September under the heading “Dual Language Signage at the Olympia Leisure Centre” be rejected.”

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On a vote, sixteen Members voted for the amendment and forty-one against and it was declared lost.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Accordingly, the minute under the heading “Dual Language Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre” within the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th September, 2024, was approved and adopted.

**Minutes of People and Communities Committee**

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,  
Seconded by Councillor Verner,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th October, be approved and adopted.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Abernethy,  
Seconded by Councillor Maghie, and

Resolved – That the Council agrees that the decision of the People and Communities Committee at its meeting on 8th October, under the heading “Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) – Proposed Annual Schedule of Charges 2025/26” be taken back to the Committee for further consideration.”

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor McKay,  
Seconded by Councillor O’Neill,

“That the Council agrees that the decision of the People and Communities Committee at its meeting on 8th October, in relation to an application for a second street nameplate at Wellington Park Terrace, under the heading “Proposal for Dual Language Street Signage” be taken back to the Committee for further consideration, together with other similar applications which have met the threshold for approval but have been previously deferred, following an undertaking by officers to look at international best practice and develop a mechanism to deal with such applications.”

On a vote, forty-one Members voted for the amendment and sixteen against and it was declared carried.



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**Adoption of Minutes**

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th October, were approved and adopted.

**Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee**

Moved by Nelson,  
Seconded by Smyth, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th and 23rd October, be approved and adopted.

**Minutes of Licensing Committee**

Moved by Alderman Rodgers,  
Seconded by Alderman McCullough, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th October, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Minutes of Planning Committee**

Moved by Councillor Carson,  
Seconded by Councillor Murphy, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 15th October, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

**Minutes of Standards and Business Committee**

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,  
Seconded by Councillor D. Douglas and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 24th October, be approved and adopted.

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**Motion**

**Special Educational Needs –  
Legal Protection for Young People in NI**

In accordance with notice on the agenda, Councillor Doherty proposed the following motion:

“The Council is concerned that no legislation providing legal protection for young people over the age of 19 with Special Education Needs exists in NI, in contrast with England and Wales.

The Council commends tireless efforts and campaigning of everyone connected with Caleb's Cause.

And will write to Ministers for Communities, Education and Health requesting that the required legislation be enacted to provide legal protection to young people in Northern Ireland.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Whyte.

At the request of Councillor O'Neill, the proposer and seconder agreed to insert the following paragraph:

*“Alongside addressing the current gaps in Equality and Disability Legislation, that this council calls on the Minister of Education to ensure the intended outcomes of the RAISE programme are adjusted to meet the needs and experience of young people transitioning from Special Education and/or with SEND”*

The motion, as amended, therefore read:

“The Council is concerned that no legislation providing legal protection for young people over the age of 19 with Special Education Needs exists in NI, in contrast with England and Wales.

The Council commends tireless efforts and campaigning of everyone connected with Caleb's Cause.

**Alongside addressing the current gaps in Equality and Disability Legislation, that this council calls on the Minister of Education to ensure the intended outcomes of the RAISE programme are adjusted to meet the needs and experience of young people transitioning from Special Education and/or with SEND** and will write to Ministers for Communities, Education and Health requesting that the required legislation be enacted to provide legal protection to young people in Northern Ireland.”

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The motion, as amended, standing in the name of Councillor Doherty, was put to the meeting and passed.

Lord Mayor  
Chairperson

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## Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 22nd November, 2024

### MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson); and  
Alderman McCoubrey;  
Councillors Beattie, Black, Brennan, Bunting, Cobain,  
R-M. Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett, Groogan, Long,  
Maghie, McDonough-Brown, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,  
Nelson and Whyte.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;  
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director  
of Corporate Services;  
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and  
Civic Services;  
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;  
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and  
Development;  
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;  
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;  
Mr J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mr Pól Hamilton, Lead Officer, Neighbourhood Services; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance  
Manager.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor de Faoite.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of 25th October and 1st November were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 4th November, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Brennan and Groogan declared an interest in item 2(c) Update on Hardship Fund in that they were employed by organisations in receipt of funding; and Councillor McDonough-Brown in that his partner worked for an organisation in receipt of funding and all left the meeting whilst this item was under discussion.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

Councillor Brennan declared an interest in item 2(e) Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme Review in that her employer was involved in the Review and left the meeting during discussion on this item.

Councillors Duffy and R-M Donnelly declared an interest in item 8(a) Minutes of the Shared City Partnership in so far as it related to PEACEPLUS in that they worked for organisations which had applied for funding. As the item did not become the subject of debate they were not required to leave the meeting.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following five items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Quarter 2 Finance Report 2024/25**

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing information on the financial position for Quarter 2 2024/25.

He reported that, at the end of Quarter 2, the financial position for the Council had shown an underspend of £113k, representing 0.13% of the net expenditure budget. The Quarter 2 Departmental forecast was an underspend of £728k, representing 0.4% of the net expenditure budget.

The Director then provided updates on the 2024/25 reserves position, additional vat receipts, the rates finalisation 2024/25 and the capital projects.

The Committee:

- noted the Quarter 2 financial position;
- noted the forecast underspend of £418k and agreed that reallocations of forecast underspends would be considered as part of year end reporting; and
- noted the half year Treasury Management report.

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**Revenue Estimates 2025-26 and  
Medium-Term Financial Planning**

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee's consideration a report which provided an update on the key issues which influenced the rate setting process for 2025/26 and the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2025/26 till 2028/29. He advised that there were six key elements to the annual setting of the district rate which, under the requirements of the Local Government Finance act, must be struck by 15th February, 2025. He then reviewed each of the areas which were Business as usual Revenue Estimates, the Efficiency Programme, Growth Proposals/Priority Areas, the Capital Finance Budget, the Estimated Penny Product and General Reserves.

The Committee:

- noted the challenges since the last update to be taken into consideration as part of the annual and medium-term rate setting; and
- agreed to monthly rate update reports to enable the striking of the district rate by February 2025.

**Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the current position regarding the development and implementation of a 2024-25 Hardship Programme to support those vulnerable people impacted by the cost-of-living crises across the city.

The Committee:

- i. noted the current budget available (£1,100,773) for the development and delivery of a hardship support programme in 2024/25;
- ii. agreed the proposed funding allocation and delivery model as set out at paragraph 3.9 of the report; and
- iii. agreed the proposed extension of the delivery period for the hardship programme to June 2025.

**Housing Led Regeneration Programme-  
Appointment of a Private Sector Partner**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the matter for a further period of one week, with a special meeting to be held at 9.30 am on Friday, 29th November.

**Summer Community Diversionary  
Festival Programme Review**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the independent evaluation of the Summer Community Diversionary Festival Programme (SCDFP) and which requested the Committee to consider the delivery of future programmes.

The Committee:

- i. agreed to defer consideration of the 3 options for the future delivery of the SCDFP to allow for further discussion on the issues which had been raised to be considered by the Party Group Leaders Forum and a report to be brought back to the December meeting of the Committee; and
- ii. agreed to the programme being delivered in a 3-year funding cycle, instead of the current annual application process, which would allow groups adequate time to plan events on an annual basis and use the security of the funding over 3 years to attract additional financial support from other sources to enhance the impact and delivery of their programmes.

**Heritage Assets Update**

The Committee considered a report which sought approval on a range of assets under the Council's heritage/historic asset base.

The Committee noted the update on the Council's heritage/historic asset base and agreed the following –

- **Wilmont House** – that Wilmont House be added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow for the submission of a grant application by a partner organisation to be taken forward with the Council for the redevelopment of Wilmont House and noted that the Council would seek advice from conservation specialists on the preservation of the building taking into account its current condition;
- **Floral Hall** – that the Floral Hall be added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* as a programme of health and safety works and that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with the contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender received and full commitment to deliver;
- **Fernhill House and Courtyard** – that the Council explores options for bringing the Courtyard at Fernhill back into active use space linked to the Access to the Hills project and building on the success of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway and authorised officers to discuss this opportunity with potential partners; and that officers investigate whether the Wolfhill Road project could be linked in as part of the Access to the Hills project also;



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- **Historic Cemeteries** –that the Historic Cemeteries be added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* and that further options, including funding options, are explored by Property and Projects and City and Neighbourhood Services; that officers investigate the ownership of the Belvoir Cemetery to see if it could be used a tourist opportunity; and considering the link that the Shankill, Friars Bush and Clifton Street Cemeteries had to the Famine, to check the possible of funding from the Shared Island Fund;
- **Palm House** – noted the update on the Palm House which was on the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* and agreed that a feasibility study be carried out with funding opportunities to be explored; and
- **Historic Tiled Street Signs** – that the Historic Tiled Street Signs project be added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* and approved the submission of a funding application for a pilot refurbishment programme for a number of signs to any funding sources which are identified. Agreed also that officers look at possible funding streams for tiled signage in the parts of the city being developed under the city centre regeneration.

The Committee agreed further that report be submitted to a future meeting on all the Council's listed assets and their condition.

**Smart Belfast: City Innovation Programme Update**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted for the Committee's consideration a report on City Innovation initiatives and seeking approval on a number of key projects.

The Committee:

1. noted the success of the £2.5 million Belfast Digital Healthcare Technology Accelerator bid and work under way with Ulster University on maximising its local impact;
2. noted the award of £320,056 of funding to four Belfast companies under the Belfast 5G Innovation Region funding competition;
3. approved a £10,000 budget to support the development of a Belfast bid of up to £2 million to the UK 5G Innovation Regions programme and noted that if a contract was offered by DSIT, this would be brought to Committee for approval;
4. approved the design and delivery of a dissemination event for tourism and BRCD partners on the outworkings of Augment the City with invitations extended to all Members of the Council;
5. approved a financial contribution to the Inclusive Innovation workshop planned for 28 January 2025 and noted that invitations would be extended to all Members of the Council; and

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6. approved three-year extensions to the three current roles working in support of the development of business case proposals to the Belfast Region City Deal Digital pillar.

**Matters referred back from Council/Motions**

**Notice of Motion – Epilepsy –  
Education and Training**

The Members were informed that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th October, had considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 2nd December:

‘This Council notes the fact that Northern Ireland has the highest prevalence of Epilepsy in the UK.

The Council agrees to consider providing better education about Epilepsy, and training for staff and Councillors in how to deal with seizures and other episodes.’

The motion had been proposed by Councillor Long and seconded by the High Sheriff, Councillor S. Douglas.

The Committee noted that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(i), Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report. Accordingly, the motion was before the Committee as it was responsible for Human Resources and the People Strategy; and the Members’ Development Programme.

The Committee noted that the Motion had been received and agreed that a subsequent report be brought to the Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Motion and the potential costs implications.

**Notice of Motion – Blood and  
Bone Marrow Donations**

The Members were informed that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th October, had considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 2nd December:

‘This Council recognises that donating blood and bone marrow is one of the most precious things a person can do as it can help to save a life. Our Council wants to encourage any eligible staff to take part in regular blood donation by providing them with appropriate time off to do so. This motion requests that we provide our staff with adequate paid time to take part in the selfless act of giving blood and/or to donate bone marrow. We also request that the Council

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explores ways in which they can make it easier for staff to donate blood, such as, blood donation events at the workplace.'

The motion had been proposed by Councillor Bower and seconded by Councillor T. Brooks.

The Committee noted that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(i), Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report and was, therefore, before the Committee as it was responsible for Human Resources.

The Committee noted that the Motion had been received and agreed that a subsequent report be brought to the Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Motion and the potential costs implications.

**Notice of Motion – NILGOSC –  
Disposal of Government Bonds**

The Members were informed that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 24th October, had considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 2nd December:

'This council notes that Northern Ireland Local Government pension provider NILGOSC purchased government bonds from the Israeli government which were being used by the Tel Aviv administration to fund its operations both within Israel and elsewhere.

As the pension provider for all local council workers, the Education Authority, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, NI Libraries and many others including schools, it was a shock to many of the 176,000 members of this pension scheme that it was directly funding the Netanyahu-led government. Given the widespread horror felt by people of all political backgrounds at the targeting of civilians and children by the Israeli government in the war in Gaza the use of workers' and public sector money in a loan to the Israeli government was and is unacceptable.

Belfast City Council expresses its deep concern at the decision to purchase these bonds, welcomes the fact they have now been divested, and will write to NILGOSC requiring that purchase of Israeli government bonds is never repeated.

Belfast City Council will commission an independent report evaluating the relationship between the council and NILGOSC, the performance of the NILGOSC fund when compared to similar pension funds, all contributions made by the council to the fund, including how they are impacted by the fund's performance.'

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The motion had been proposed by Councillor Whyte and seconded by Councillor Doherty.

The Committee noted that, in accordance with Standing Order 13(i), Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate Committee for consideration and report, which in this case was the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee as it was responsible for financial matters.

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Whyte,  
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin,

That the Committee agrees to write to NILGOSC on the terms as set out in the motion and that a report be brought back to the Committee in relation to the other issues which had been raised.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Bunting,  
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the Committee agrees, in the first instance, to write to NILGOSC to ascertain if the decision to divest the government bonds which had been purchased from the Israeli government had been as a result of political pressure.

On a vote, five Members voted for the amendment and thirteen against and it was declared lost.

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor Whyte and seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin was put to the meeting when thirteen Members voted for it and five against and it was declared carried.

**Governance**

**Schedule of Meetings 2025**

The Committee approved the schedule of meetings set out below and agreed to the holding of additional special meetings, if required, to consider the rate-setting process, on dates to be determined in consultation with the Chairperson:

- **Friday 17th January at 9.30 a.m. (Rate setting, if required)**
- **Friday 24th January at 9.30 a.m.**
- **Friday 21st February at 9.30 a.m.**
- **Friday 21st March at 9.30 a.m.**

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Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

- Friday 18th April at 9.30 a.m.
- Friday, 23rd May at 9.30 a.m.
- Friday 20th June at 9.30 a.m.
- No monthly meeting in July
- Friday 22nd August at 9.30 a.m.
- Friday 19th September at 9.30 a.m.
- Friday 24th October at 9.30 a.m.
- Friday 21st November at 9.30 a.m.
- Friday 19th December at 9.30 a.m.

**Change of Date of Council Meeting in  
January and Schedule of Meetings 2025**

The Committee agree to move the Council meeting in January from Thursday 2nd January to Thursday 9th January, 2025 and noted the schedule of meetings as set out below:

- Thursday 9th January at 6.00 p.m.
- Monday 3rd February at 6.00 p.m.
- Monday 3rd March at 6.00 p.m.
- Tuesday 1st April at 6.00 p.m.
- Thursday 1st May at 6.00 p.m.
- Monday 2nd June at 6.00 p.m. – Annual Meeting
- Monday 1st July at 10.45 a.m. – Special: Somme Commemoration
- Monday 1st July at 6.00 p.m.
- No monthly meeting in August
- Monday 1st September at 6.00 p.m.
- Wednesday 1st October at 6.00 p.m.
- Monday 3rd November at 6.00 p.m.
- Monday 1st December at 6.00 p.m.

**Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

**Women's Safety in the City**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update Members on recent committee discussions and other meetings related to addressing the issue of violence against women and girls and possible interventions to improve women's safety in the city.**

## 2.0 Recommendations

### 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Consider the discussions held and decisions taken at the People and Communities and City Growth and Regeneration Committees (November 2024);
- Note the cross-departmental and cross sectoral work being delivered by, supported, or endorsed by the council;
- Note the multi-agency stakeholders currently involved in this work and the discussions which took place at the Multi-Agency Operational Task Force on the City Centre which took place on 13 November 2024;
- Agree short-term interventions to support women's safety in greater Belfast, together with plans for further engagement with stakeholders to develop further interventions for implementation in the medium term and that these form part of considerations for use of in-year underspend or external funding, if applicable.

## 3.0 Background and Main Issues

3.1 Members have discussed the important issues of ending violence against women and girls and improving safety for women in several recent committee meetings. This has included:

3.2 Discussion of The Executive Office (TEO) Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Funding Initiative – 2024-2026 which was discussed at SP&R committee on 25 October 2024;

The Women's Night Safety Charter, discussed at SP&R meeting on 25 October 2024;

Proposal raised by Cllr Ruth Brooks at the People and Communities Committee on 5 November 2024 that:

*...officers (should) examine existing budgets and funding streams with a view to identifying initiatives that would support women's safety in greater Belfast. It was agreed also that a report in this regard be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 22nd November, for consideration.*

3.3 In addition, the People and Communities Committee agreed that, in conjunction with the City Growth and Regeneration

Committee, a special meeting be convened to which a range of stakeholders would be invited to consider city-wide and multi-agency initiatives to support women's safety in greater Belfast. The proposals were also raised at the City Growth and Regeneration Committee by Cllr Tracy Kelly where they were endorsed.

- 3.4 This report is intended to fulfil the Committees' request for a report to be brought to SP&R Committee, as outlined above, and provide an update on activity currently underway by council, partners and other stakeholders in this space.
- 3.5 Appendix 1 contains information about the range of council activity currently underway.

This work cuts across a number of partnerships and programmes and includes:

- Onus Safe City Award;
- White Ribbon Charter;
- Onus Workplace Charter on Domestic Violence - Platinum level;
- Actions within the Gender Action Plan 2024-27;
- Delivery of the Local Change Fund and Regional Grant Programme as part of TEO's Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Strategic Framework;
- Programme of projects funded by and delivered through the PCSP structures; and
- Delivery of interventions, advice and guidance to end violence against women and girls within the Wider University & Lower Ormeau (WULO) Action Plan.

- 3.6 These initiatives provide a useful foundation upon which to build future interventions in partnership with relevant stakeholders and support groups.

#### Update since Committee Discussions

- 3.7 When the issue was raised, Members at the People & Communities and City Growth & Regeneration Committees were concerned that actions should be identified, if possible, in advance of the Christmas period. A meeting of the Multi-Agency Operational Task Force on the City Centre subsequently met on Wednesday 13 November 2024, attended by DfC, DfI, PSNI, Linen Quarter BID, Cathedral BID, Belfast One, Retail NI, Belfast Chamber and Belfast City Council. At this meeting partners provided a number of updates about activity in the run up to Christmas including:

- Distribution of personal safety alarms to the Linen Quarter BID, with a request for additional funding being brought forward to PCSPs for the purchase and supply of additional devices;
  - Partnership working with UU and QUB, with a student safety survey having been undertaken and the Community Safety team hosting a number of pop-up safety events and supplying a number of personal safety alarms to students.
  - The commencement of the PSNI Christmas Programme of activity and
  - BCC Safe Neighbourhood Officers are planning additional programming over the December period which will see an increase visibility of PSNI and SNOs throughout the day and evening.
- 3.8 The BCC Women's Steering Group, which includes elected Members and officers met on 11 November 2024 and together with the Women's Network, will consider the possibility of aligning further resource to their action plan particularly those actions designed to highlight the issue of EVAWG including the programme of activity related to International Women's Day. Information has also been circulated in respect of the Reclaim the Night march on Saturday 30 November 2024.
- 3.9 An internal officer meeting was also held to consider suggestions made by Members at Committee, including the provision of self defence classes in community facilities and the provision of alarms. It has been confirmed that alarms can be covered from within existing PCSP budgets and it is likely that the initial provision of self defence classes will be under £5,000 and it is anticipated this can be found within existing departmental spend limits.
- 3.10 It is intended that further engagement will take place with stakeholders to discuss further potential interventions so that these can be considered as part of any future discussion around the use of in-year underspend and to take advantage of any external funding opportunities.
- 3.11 In previous years, anti-spike kits were procured through the PCSP with the aim of distributing to licensed premises across the city. When this proved difficult to implement, the kits were distributed to women and girls through community organisations. Consideration is also being given to whether kits should be made available at council-run events and other events on council land.



- 3.12 This year saw the delivery of EmpowHER workshops which included safety information to women and girls, including personal alarms. It is proposed that officers work with local community groups and our own Community Services Team to ensure the distribution of the remaining personal alarms before Christmas.

**On-going engagement**

- 3.13 Belfast City Council host and/or participate in a range of multi-agency forums which focus on safety issues and concerns, they include:

- Police and Community Safety Partnerships
- Multi-Agency Operational Task Group
- City Centre Tasking Group (Community Safety)
- Strategic Leadership Group including Complex Lives
- Community Safety Forums across Belfast
- Night Time Volunteer Group

- 3.14 With the limited time before the Christmas period and the range of multi-agency meetings currently taking place it may be difficult to get the same stakeholders together to host a conversation on women's safety.

- 3.15 Given this, the opportunity will be taken to include 'Women's Safety' and 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' to the above multi agency meeting agendas to ensure coordination of initiatives and strategies.

- 3.16 Arrangements will be made for the specific joint meeting of People and Communities Committee and City Growth and Regeneration Committee with stakeholders, which was requested at the November People and Communities meeting as soon as possible following council ratification.

**Safer Socialising Initiative and Women's Night Safety Charter**

- 3.17 Members will recall that at its October meeting the Committee received a request to approve the Council's involvement in the Safer Socialising Initiative and for the organisation to sign up to the Women's Night Safety Charter. Members deferred for consideration of the matter to enable further information to be provided. Members are asked to note that a meeting between Members and Hospitality Ulster is being arranged.

**Related Notices of Motion**

- 3.18 At the SP&R meeting on 25 October 2024, Members asked that an update on related notices of motion be provided to the committee. An overview of these motions including their latest status will be brought to the December SP&R meeting.**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.19 The immediate cost implications of this report can be met from within existing departmental expenditure limits.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.20 The proposals are intended to support the safety of women and girls in the city.”**

The Committee:

- noted the discussions held and decisions taken at the People and Communities and City Growth and Regeneration Committees (November 2024);
- noted the cross-departmental and cross sectoral work being delivered by, supported, or endorsed by the Council;
- noted the multi-agency stakeholders currently involved in this work and the discussions which had taken place at the Multi-Agency Operational Task Force on the City Centre which took place on 13 November 2024;
- agreed short-term interventions to support women’s safety in greater Belfast, together with plans for further engagement with stakeholders to develop further interventions for implementation in the medium term and that these form part of considerations for use of in-year underspend or external funding, if applicable;
- agreed to investigate as to whether the Council could fund additional security measures; and
- agreed that officers ascertain which agency/organisation had responsibility to deal with unlicensed taxis.

**Planning Update**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on major planning applications and applications which had been determined by the Planning Committee.

## Physical Programme and Asset Management

### Physical Programme Update

The Committee considered the following report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1** The Council’s Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council’s Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report presents requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme, along with updates on capital planning, the temporary container at Cathedral Gardens and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- **Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2025/26** – Note the update on the Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2025/26.
- **Capital Programme Stage Movements:**
  - **St George’s Market – New Stalls** – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
  - **Waterfront Hall Chiller Units** - Agree to move the project to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.
  - **Innovation Factory Access Control** – Agree to move the project to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

- **Cathedral Gardens** – Note that the temporary active travel container at Cathedral Gardens will be relocated to Strangford Avenue, subject to final installation arrangements.
- **Shared Prosperity Fund** – Note the update on Shared Prosperity Funding for 2024/25.

**3.0 Main report**

**Key Issues**

**3.1 Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2025/26**

In March 2024 Members agreed to a series of workshops regarding future capital priorities linked to the medium-term financial planning process. To prepare for this it is agreed that a series of Party Group Briefings are to be held to update Members on the existing Capital Programme, ascertain future priorities to determine the level of financing required, as well as exploring the implications of any future investment decisions and the potential impact on the district rate. **These briefings are now being scheduled for late November and early December in line with the rates setting process for 2025/26.**

As Members will be aware, the Capital Programme has an expenditure horizon of around three years. CIPFA capital planning guidance recommends taking a longer-term view (8-10 years). The Council is continuing to adopt this best practice approach for the Capital Programme, alongside the standard planning for short to mid term programme requirements in 2025/26. Work as usual still continues, and any project at an appropriate stage of readiness is still brought before Members via the three stage approvals process.

This activity feeds through to the planned consultation on the draft Corporate Plan in early 2025, and the target date of March 2025 to publish the Corporate Plan.

**Members are asked to note the update on Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2025/26.**

**Capital Programme - Proposed Movements**

- 3.2** Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. Members are advised

that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.

Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Members are asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
St George's Market – New Stalls	Replacement of market stalls in St George's Market.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed
Waterfront Hall - Chiller Units	Replacement of the chiller units at the Waterfront Hall to ensure adequate cooling for events and operational requirements.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Innovation Factory Access Control System	Procurement of a replacement for the access control system at the Innovation Factory.	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted

### 3.3 St George's Market – New Stalls

In March 2024, SP&R Committee agreed that St George's Market – New Stalls project be moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow a business case to be developed. The project is for the replacement of the 180 market stalls in St Georges Market. The current stalls are more than 18 years old and many are in a poor state of repair, presenting a health and safety risk both for staff and for traders. An Outline Business Case has now been worked up in line with the three stage approvals process.

Members are asked to agree that 'St George's Market – New Stalls' is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement

processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

#### Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units

- 3.4 The existing chiller units at the Belfast Waterfront Hall have reached the end of their economic life. The proposal is to replace the existing chiller units with high efficiency equivalents to improve performance and resilience. An Outline Business Case will now be worked up on the proposal.

Members are asked to agree that 'Waterfront Hall – Chiller Units' is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

#### Innovation Factory Access Control

- 3.5 The project is for the replacement of the access control system at Innovation Factory. The current system is no longer fit for purpose. As previously advised, this project is progressing at pace. There is a requirement to upgrade the system which includes new door controllers, readers, and associated software. An Outline Business Case will now be worked up on the proposal.

Members are asked to agree that 'Innovation Factory Access Control' is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

#### Cathedral Gardens

- 3.6 Members will be aware that the Cathedral Gardens project is at *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* on the Capital Programme. A temporary Active Travel Hub had been installed in the space via external funding comprising two shipping containers. Members will recall that the hub was a temporary measure rather than part of the overall masterplan for Cathedral Gardens. Sustrans held a temporary licence to provide active travel services at the hub, which has now expired. The containers can be relocated for use elsewhere.

Relocation of the containers to Strangford Ave Playing Fields would complement recent works to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, including replacement of gates and

extending pathways, and the creation of a loop suitable for wheelchairs and adapted bikes. This site is situated across the road from a school campus shared by four disability schools which cater for 660 young people who have a physical or learning disability. Although recent improvements have been welcomed, the logistics of transporting pupils and bikes to and from the park is incredibly challenging and has proved unsustainable. The bike storage container will provide a location for bikes to be stored, including adapted bikes for pupils with a physical disability and will enable a disability bike programme to be delivered from the park. The containers can also allow a wider outdoor recreational programme to be developed, supported by CNS Department.

Members are asked to note that the temporary active travel container at Cathedral Gardens will be relocated to Strangford Avenue, subject to final installation arrangements.

#### Shared Prosperity Fund

- 3.7 Members will recall that in September the Council received a report on a funding opportunity under the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) for 2024/25. The Council has since been successful in securing the full allocation of £1,787,615 for Belfast. The funding received is for the list of activities as agreed by Members, namely: pitch improvements; playgrounds improvements; Vacant to Vibrant scheme; feasibility studies for key city centre sites and assets; and a programme of animation, lighting enhancements and marketing linked to key city events (e.g. Halloween, Christmas). Work is complete on several of the activities - this approach was permissible under the eligibility criteria, and work is underway on the delivery of the remaining activities for completion by end March 2025.

Members are asked to note the update on Shared Prosperity Funding for 2024/25.

- 3.8 Financial & Resource Implications

*Financial Implications* – A financial allocation of £1,787,615 is secured for the SPF activities in 2024/25.

*Resource Implications* – Officer time to deliver.

- 3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

### **Assets Report**

The Committee:

- i) Ulster Hall – Agreement for Rory Gallagher Statue**
  - Approved an agreement between the Council and The Rory Gallagher Statue Project Trust for the gifting of a Rory Gallagher Statue to be located at the Ulster Hall; and
  - Approved a short-term licence agreement between Council and Martin Contracting Services Ltd for the statue installation and associated base at the Ulster Hall.
  -
- ii) Dromara Street and Balfour Avenue – Licence Agreement and Easement**
  - Approved a licence and an easement for installation and siting of gas mains / apparatus at Dromara Street Open Space and Balfour Avenue Open Space between the Council and Phoenix Energy Group Limited.
  -
- iii) Kent Street Car Park – Licence Agreement**
  - Approved the renewal of a Licence agreement from the Department for Communities in relation to the Council operated off-street car park at Kent Street.
  -
- iv) Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre – Agreements**
  - Approved a short-term month to month licence agreement between the Council and Streetbeat Youth Project for its use of Upper Ardoyne Youth Centre and a lease agreement thereafter if approval is obtained from DfC; and
  - Approved the submission of an application to the Department for Communities to seek approval for a rent at less than best value.

### **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

### **Contracts Update**

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in appendix 1 (table 1) below;
- approved the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in appendix 1 (table 2); and
- approved the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in appendix 1 (table 3):



**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Est. Max Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Short description of goods / services</b>
Framework Agreement for Goods for Resale at Belfast Zoo. Previously approved Feb 2024 for £520,000 but has now been reviewed.	Up to 4 years	£832,000 (Costs recouped via sales/income)	D Martin	Supply of a range of goods (i.e. toys, souvenirs etc) to sell in shops at Belfast Zoo.
Supply of mechanical sweeper brushes	Up to 3 years	£380,000	D Sales	To support vehicle maintenance for street cleaning and sweeping.
A new Folder inserter for NIHE, and internally for council departments. Previously approved SP&R Sept 2024 for up to 2 years at £110,000. Both duration and value now been reviewed.	Up to 5 years	£155,000	P Gribben	This project aims to enable Digital Services to continue to provide SLA mail processing service for NIHE, and internally for council departments. All revenue costs are covered by DS budget.
Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) Framework	Up to 4 years	Framework value £4,000,000 BCC contribution 2024/25 £80,000	D Martin	This multi-supplier framework agreement will allow BCC, as the lead partner of the BCRPP, to engage a pre-qualified supplier on a needs led basis, ensuring that each call-off contract represents best value for the partnership.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Est. Max Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Short description of goods / services</b>
				The BCRPP Partnership is delivered as a public private sector sponsorship fund, which includes a BCC contribution of £80,000 for the 2024 / 2025 programme, as approved by CG&R Committee, June 2024. External funding will form the majority of this overall budget.
Collection, treatment and disposal of hazardous waste	Up to 4 years	£500,000	D Sales	This service ensures that dumped hazardous wastes and those brought to BCC recycling centres are identified, collected, treated and disposed of by specialist and trained contractors in line with legislation.
Search tool for the Council external website	Up to 3 years	£50,000	P Gribben	Belfast City Council has emphasised their search function since the implementation of an updated website in 2020. This is well used, with an average of almost 119,000 searches a year on our website. These have resulted in an average of over 51,000 clicks (43.59% click through rate)

**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Est. Max Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>STA Reason Code</b>
Port Health Interactive Live Information	Up to 2 years	£75,749	P Gribben	Extend the utilisation of the Port Health Interactive Live Information	East Suffolk Council	3

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Est. Max Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>	<b>STA Reason Code</b>
System (PHILIS) (Fully Funded)				System (PHILIS) which has become the industrial standard for Port Health. No other supplier exists for digitised Food Import system. We currently use PHILIS system.		
Support and maintenance for MapInfo mapping software	Up to 3 years	£51,750	P Gribben	The platform has been extensively used to provide developed functionality and projects. It would be a major exercise to replace or change this product and the costs and risk would be prohibitive.	CDR Group	3
Visit Belfast enhanced key event marketing and promotion	Up to 5 months	£115,000	D Martin	Visit Belfast has an extensive knowledge, unique media partnerships and buying power for a greater out of state campaign and reach not achievable by Council.	Visit Belfast	3

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

**Table 3: Modification to Contract**

<b>Title of Contract</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Modification</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supplier</b>
T1998 (3) - Provision of catering at the Stables Café. Income based contract - approx £20,000 pa income	Up to 5 years	Additional 1 month and £1,500 (income)	S Leonard	A one month contract extension is required for the current contract to align it with the proposed start date of the new contract which is being tendered.	USEL
T2544 - Art of Reconciliation for Belfast 2024	Up to 4 months	Additional 3 months	D Martin	Contract duration extended to include performance during Belfast International Arts Festival. No increase in value.	Féile an Phobail
T2138 - Provision of Taxi Services	Up to 3 years	Additional 6 months	T Wallace	Extension required to allow for a reassessment of the current specification to develop a more efficient method of invoicing and payment processes for both supplier and council staff and finance team.	Value Cabs

**Equality and Good Relations**

**Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 11th November 2024**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 11th November 2024, including:

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

**Presentation from Active Communities Network**

- To note the contents of the presentation detailed in the minutes.

**Presentation from Victims Support NI**

- To note the contents of the presentation detailed in the minutes.

**Shared City Partnership Membership – Verbal Update**

- The Shared City Partnership noted and agreed the update provided by the Good Relations Manager, recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the update.

**Community Recovery Fund Update**

- The Partnership noted and agreed and recommends the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to agree the Community Recovery Fund Action Plan.

**TEO Asylum Dispersal Funding and Refugee Integration Funding**

- The Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.

**PEACE IV – Secretariat Update**

- The Partnership notes the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.

**PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan – Update**

- The Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.
- Members approved the Community Recovery Fund plan, with the exception of area plans.

A Member requested under item Community Recovery Fund (Section Area Based – CRF008) that additional data and information be taken back to the Strategic Policy and Resources to agree the geographically areas which should be included in the development of mini area plans and the Committee agreed accordingly.

**Operational Issues**

**Minutes of Meeting of the Party  
Group Leaders Consultative Forum**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum of 14th November.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

**Requests for use of the City Hall  
and the provision of Hospitality**

The Committee approved the recommendations as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED
<b>2025 Functions</b>					
Blackie River Community Organisations	25 January 2025	<p><b>Student Graduation</b> for adult learners on achievement of health and social care level 3 to childcare management level 5. The event will promote community-based education programmes for adult learners.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 100</p>	C & D	Current rate free as <b>charity</b>	Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as <b>charity</b>
Invest NI	5 February 2025	<p><b>Business Networking evening</b> for NI business influencers, Invest NI client companies, Ulster Rugby management/players</p> <p>Australian visitors: players/managers/sponsors from Queensland Reds Rugby team.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 60 – 80</p>	A & B	Room hire £450	No hospitality as Government Dept.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

Money and Pension Service – Dept of Work and Pensions	19 February 2025	<b>Scam/ Fraud Consumer advice showcase</b> to offer guidance on scam/fraud concerns, share approaches, best practice and support available for organisations and consumers. Aim is to work together to help reduce the numbers of people falling foul of scams/frauds.  Numbers attending – 200	D	Room hire £450	No hospitality as Government Dept.
Department of Health	20 February 2025	<b>Celebration for Early Years Practitioners</b> - those who work with babies and young children in Belfast. For all those practitioners who work in our community, voluntary and statutory childcare  Numbers attending – 150	C	Room hire £450	No hospitality as Government Dept.
Cairde Bhunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin	28 February 2025	<b>Night of Celebration for 30th Anniversary of Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagáin</b> - Reception, Dinner, Speeches, entertainment and dancing.  Numbers attending – 200 - 250	C & D	Current rate free as <b>charity</b>	Yes, Wine and Soft Drink reception as <b>significant anniversary</b>

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 22nd November, 2024**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Cost of Living Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Cost of Living Working Group of 12th November.

Chairperson



# Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 29th November, 2024

## MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson); and  
Alderman McCoubrey;  
Councillors Beattie, Black, Brennan, Bunting, de Faoite,  
Cobain, R-M. Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett, Groogan,  
Long, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin and Nelson.

In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;  
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director  
of Corporate Services;  
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and  
Development;  
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance  
Manager.

### Apologies

No apologies were reported.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interested were recorded.

### Restricted Items

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following item is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,  
Friday, 29th November, 2024**

**Housing Led Regeneration Programme –  
Appointment of a Private Sector Partner**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the conclusion of the public procurement exercise for a Private Sector Partner, and which sought approval to award the contract.

The Committee noted:

- the content of this report outlining completion of the public procurement process undertaken to seek a Private Sector Delivery Partner to work with Council on a housing led regeneration programme, and agreed to the award of the contract to the highest-ranking bidder; and
- that this approval was for appointment of a Delivery Partner only and that development proposals in respect of any Council lands will be brought back for a series of Committee approvals in line with the agreed approvals processes as set out in the report.

**Standing Order 14 - Submission of minutes to Council**

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 4th November for ratification.

Chairperson

## People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 5th November, 2024

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor R. Brooks (Chairperson);  
Councillors Abernethy, Black, Bower, Bradley,  
Bunting, Canavan, Cobain, Doherty, R-M Donnelly,  
Flynn, Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McKeown,  
I. McLaughlin and Verner.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services; and  
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

### Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor M. Donnelly.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th November, subject to the following amendments, that:

- the Council agreed that the decision of the Committee of 8th October, under the heading “Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) – Proposed Annual Schedule of Charges 2025/26” be taken back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- the Council agreed that the decision of the Committee of 8th October, in relation to an application for a second street nameplate at Wellington Park Terrace, under the heading “Proposal for Dual Language Street Signage”, be taken back to the Committee for further consideration, together with other similar applications which had met the threshold for approval but had been previously deferred, following an undertaking by officers to look at international best practice and develop a mechanism to deal with such applications.

Since the decisions referred to above were subject to the call-in mechanism, the Committee noted that both items would be re-considered at the meeting scheduled for 2nd December.

### Declarations of Interest

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in respect of item 3 (b), viz., ‘Healthwise and Physical Activity Referral Programme - Six-monthly Update’ in that he was employed by an organisation which was involved in the programme. Councillor McKeown left the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

**People and Communities Committee,  
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In respect of item 6 (b) 'Communication Boards in Council Parks', discussion ensued on the provision of a board at the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park, which would be used by pupils at Mitchell House School. The Chairperson declared an interest in that she was a member of the board of governors of the school and took no part in the discussion nor decision-making in the matter.

**Committee Schedule 2025**

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for the People and Communities Committee in 2025 and agreed that all meetings would commence at 5.15 pm:

- Tuesday 14th January at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 4th February at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 11th March at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 8th April at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 6th May at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 3rd June at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 5th August at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 9th September at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 7th October at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 4th November at 5.15 pm
- Tuesday 2nd December at 5.15 pm

**Restricted**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following three items was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42 (4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Committee was advised that content of restricted reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as confidential information and no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL)  
Leisure Management Contract Six-monthly Update**

The Committee considered a report in respect of the above-mentioned matter.

**People and Communities Committee,  
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The Committee noted the information as set out within the report, specifically the following matters:

- the information provided at 3.2.1 in relation to contract compliance,
- the information provided at 3.2.2 in relation to key performance indicators,
- the supporting narrative at 3.2.3,
- the facility asset management monitoring information at 3.2.4; and
- the Health & Safety compliance assurances at 3.2.5.

**Healthwise and Physical Activity Referral Programme - Six-monthly Update**

The Committee noted the contents of a report in relation to the above-mentioned matter.

**City of Belfast Crematorium Income Generation Options**

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 8th October, it had deferred consideration of a report which had outlined a range of options for consideration in respect of income generation at the City of Belfast Crematorium. That deferral had been agreed to enable Members to consider in greater detail the cost implications of the options.

The Committee agreed that the options set out within the report be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration within the overall rate-setting process for 2025/26.

**Committee/Strategic Issues**

**Committee Plan 2024/25 - Six-month Update**

The Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services outlined the principal aspects of a report which provided a six-month update on the Committee Plan for 2024/25.

In response to a Member's query in relation to the delay which had been encountered in the recruitment of a Bio-Diversity Officer, the Strategic Director acknowledged that there had been a delay experienced in the recruitment of that post. He explained that the recruitment of the post had been subject to additional funding being secured and would be considered within the context of the overall corporate vacancy control mechanism in 2025/26.

The Committee noted the information which had been provided and agreed also that representatives of the Council's HMO Service would be invited to provide a presentation at a future meeting in respect of its ongoing work.

**Belfast Boxing Strategy 2024/25 – Update**

(Mr. P. McGrattan, Leisure Development Manager, attended in connection with this item).

**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 5th November, 2024**

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in March 2024, it had agreed to extend the Belfast Boxing Strategy to enable the delivery of an action plan for the year 2024/25. Accordingly, the Committee considered the contents of a mid-year progress report which provided details on the key performance indicators within the action plan.

In response to a question from a Member, the Leisure Development Manager undertook to provide further clarity in respect of the number of international events which had been supported through the action plan in the current year.

The Committee noted the progress to date of the annual action plan for 2024/25.

**Stadia Community Benefits Initiative - Update**

The Committee considered a report which outlined the six-month progress of the Stadia Communications Benefits Initiative for 2024/25.

During discussion, the Chairperson referred to the figure reported for the number of disabled participants that had partaken in the programme as set out within the section of the benefits realisation plan overseen by the Irish Football Association. In response, the Leisure Development Manager clarified that the reported figure should be considered within context, since a majority of the sessions delivered by the association in this regard would take place over the winter and spring periods.

Moved by Councillor Brooks,  
Seconded by Councillor Black and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to note the contents of the report and agrees that an invitation be extended to representatives of the Irish Football Association to present at a future meeting in respect of its work in increasing the number of disabled persons participating in the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative. In addition, the Committee agrees also that the IFA be requested to present an overview of the criteria, standards and regulations as applied for intermediate clubs in local leagues.

**2026 European City of Sport – Application**

The Committee considered a report which outlined proposals for Belfast to be designated 2026 European City of Sport. The Director of Neighbourhood Services explained that the bid for recognition would be made to ACES, which was a Belgian-based non-profit association which assigned such recognition in accordance with the principles of responsibility and ethics, together with improvement in the quality of life and well-being for all social classes.

The Director explained that the overall cost of the bid would be approximately £30,000, which included the bid, evaluation costs and branding rights, 50% of which would be met by the Council's leisure provider, Greenwich Leisure Limited. He added that, should Belfast be designated as European City of Sport, it would provide an opportunity to showcase the sports and leisure facilities/services provided by the Council and highlight the rich sporting heritage of the city.

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The Committee agreed that officers would progress the application and agreed further that a 'letter of intent' be submitted in advance of a formal bid submission in 2025.

**All-Party Reference Group on Older People**

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an overview of the most recent work of the All-Party Reference Group on Older People and agreed that Members be authorised to nominate a party colleague to attend future meetings should they be unable to attend.

**Northern Ireland Local Government Partnership on Traveller Issues**

The Committee noted a report in respect of the above-mentioned matter and noted further that Councillors Bower and R-M Donnelly had been nominated to represent the Council on the Partnership for 2024/25.

**Operational Issues**

**Integrated Advice Partnership Fund  
Additional Funding for Debt**

The Committee considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 The main purpose of this report is;**

- To advise members of communication received from Department for Communities in relation to a proposed Integrated Advice Partnership Fund which will provide additional funding for debt advice.
- To ask members to consider the proposed approach for seeking proposals and awarding funding.

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and approve the recommended approach for seeking and approving proposals for funding.**

**3.0 Main Report**

**Background information**

**3.1 Members will be aware that Council provides significant funding for advice services through the Community Support Programme (funded by Department for Communities - DfC) and through direct council funding. In September 24, DfC contacted council officials informally to provide information about a proposed Integrated**

Advice Partnership Fund which will provide additional funding for debt advice.

- 3.2 DfC has a statutory requirement to provide debt advice to individuals and households in need. The debt advice levy provides the Department funding to deliver free debt advice in NI. Additional, one-off funding has become available due to HMT revisiting previous years debt levy allocations and applying a revised calculation for all the devolved nations. Therefore, this is temporary funding which will not continue beyond 2025/26.
- 3.3 At the time of writing, no formal award has been made to Council. However, in the interests of progressing this work, members are asked to consider the contents of this report which are based on the draft MOU for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund and indicative allocation for Belfast.
- 3.4 The draft MOU outlines that the objective of the fund is to 'improve the uptake of free, independent regulated debt advice through a collaborative partnership approach'. The aim is to reach a broader section of the community who would benefit from debt advice but have not yet presented themselves to any advice services. This could include having advice partners in non-traditional advice settings to break down the barriers people have before coming forward for debt advice.

To achieve this project must:

- deliver holistic (income maximisation, debt and welfare) advice in community accessible settings such as health, education, faith-based locations.
- be a collaborative partnership with two or more organisations, one of which can supply the free, independent, FCA regulated debt advice. Projects can be led by a single organisation with the planned collaboration evidenced in their proposal.
- demonstrate improved outcomes (financial and wellbeing) for people accessing the service.
- include an aspect of face to face/in person delivery.

#### Proposed approach

- 3.5 Members will be aware that advice services in Belfast are currently provided through funding agreements with five area consortiums to deliver generalist advice services across all geographies (n,s,e,w, central) within the city. Council has an existing funding relationship with the 5 lead partners in each consortia which are listed below;



North – Vine Centre

South – Ballynafeigh Community Development Agency (BCDA)

East – Advice Space (East)

West – Falls Community Council

Central – Advice Space (Central)

- 3.6 Members will also be aware that CNS completed an independent review of Belfast City Council Advice Services in December 2023 which included several recommendations which members accepted and agreed that officers would work with the Belfast Advice Group to implement. This review recommended that Council retain the Consortia Structure for the delivery of generalist advice services.
- 3.7 Given the review recommendations and that the aim of this fund is to support partnerships and open new access routes for referrals, officers recommend that activity is delivered through the current consortia model and that lead organisations are asked to submit proposals that meet the outcomes of the fund. The current partners are well placed to use this funding to enhance their reach, develop new programmes and increase awareness and opportunities for people to access advice.
- 3.8 Each consortia has members from different community and advice organisations within their area and there are strong referral networks and pathways between partners. Organisations who currently deliver advice services have expertise and existing staff who can deliver appropriate advice to those in need. In addition, some partners, such as Advice Space, have relationships with organisations whose members can be particularly impacted by issues that require advice support, including Macmillan Cancer Support, Chest, Heart and Stroke and Cedar.
- 3.9 Over the past 4 years, Council has supported Social Supermarkets and delivery of recent Hardship Programmes. There has been support from officers to increase connections across different programmes and the organisations involved in delivery of activity. An event held on 29th October in City Hall, was organised in response to request from organisations that council facilitate awareness raising of existing services and promote collaboration. Our advice partners participate in this work and will use these connections to develop proposals for the Integrated Advice Partnership Fund.
- 3.10 Members should also note that the likely delivery timeframe will be from February 25 – March 26. This provides further rationale for using the existing model since development of other delivery models would impact on actual delivery time.

- 3.11 Officers recommend that council should seek proposals from existing Lead partners within each advice consortia that will meet the aims of this Fund. These proposals will then be assessed against agreed criteria and a further report on the outcome of assessments will be brought back to committee for consideration in January 25. Once council approval has been given, funding can be issued to groups in February 25. This timeframe is based on receipt of the official MOU from DfC by end of November 24.
- 3.12 Members are asked to note that proposals may include both area and city-wide project delivery. This is based on initial feedback from all advice leads and the fact that partner organisations must have a staff member qualified to provide regulated debt advice, this will impact on the project proposals which are developed.

The suggested allocation for Belfast is;

24/25	25/26	Total
£160,804.82	£87,448.66	£248,253.48

DfC have confirmed that any unspent allocation in 24/25 can be carried forward to 25/26, all funds must be spent by 31st March 2026.

Members may recall that a further recommendation from the Review of Belfast Advice Services was that council consider its funding allocation towards advice services in the city. A significant issue in relation to funding advice services in the city is that there is no dedicated budget for the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service which has been funded through in year council underspend since 2013.

Members have agreed to consider a growth bid for advice funding that will create ongoing funding for the Tribunal Service and an enhancement to existing generalist advice funding from 25/26. Council will agree the required resource and outputs for generalist and tribunal advice when the outcome of this bid is known. This growth bid is separate to the funding explored in this report as the funding in this report is for an additional area of work over a short time frame.

Officers are completing work with the Belfast Advice Group (BAG) (a consortia of all 5 lead partners) to formalise BAG governance. This will ensure accountability for advice services that are delivered collaboratively and enhance opportunities to share staff and other resources across BAG, another recommendation from the review.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.13 The administration of this fund will be conducted by existing staff, there is no financial impact for council as 100% funding is being provided by DfC.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.14 Belfast City Council will conduct a screening exercise for this programme.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out in 2.1 of the report.

**Request for Events in Parks**

The Committee considered the following two requests which had been received seeking permission to host events in parks:

- CIYMS Boxing Day Fun Run by Orangegrove Athletics Club at Belmont Park on 26th December 2024; and
- Belfast Photo Festival at Botanic Gardens from 5th to 30th June, 2025.

The Committee granted authority for the hosting of both events, subject to the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Strategic Director and on the condition that the event organisers:

- resolve all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction;
- meet all statutory requirements, including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and
- will consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.

The Committee noted that the above decision was taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing to a more structured framework and policy for events, which was currently being considered in conjunction with the Council’s commercial team.

**Council Litter Bin Infrastructure**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 **Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 To update members on the litter bin infrastructure review and improvement project.

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Members are asked to note:**

- (a) the update on the street litter bin improvement projects.**
- (b) that a report will be brought back to the committee on the outworkings of the various pilot initiatives (Dog Fouling bin options & smart technology option for City Hall) detailed within this report, with recommendations for next steps.**

**3.0 Main Report**

- 3.1 Over the past year Officers have been working to improve our street litter bin provision across the City, including rolling out pilot initiatives aimed at improving recycling. As part of this work, Officers have put in place a new litter bin provision contract which provides the Council with a wider range of options for bin provision, including access to replacement metal litter bins, a single and double polyethylene option, recycling options, replacement provision for greenways, and a post mounted option. Within the contract, the Council also reserved the right to 'add or remove items from the Contract in line with the Council's requirements. Following a procurement exercise, Safety Solutions NI were successful and were awarded the contract which has been operational since May 2024.**
- 3.2 Alongside this, Officers have been conducting a litter bin condition survey. It is hoped that data collected through this will help to inform the roll out of a full litter bin replacement programme, subject to resources being available. This programme will also consider the best options for litter bin placement throughout the city and has been designed to support the new In Cab technology programme. Officers aim to complete this survey by the end of the financial year, subject to resource availability. Final data will include a GPS map of all litter bins within the city.**
- 3.3 Members will be aware that many of our current street litter bins are either in a poor state of repair, or have been completely removed due to having become a health and safety risk. In the first instance, the Council will prioritise replacement of those bins that have been removed due to having become a health and safety hazard.**
- 3.4 Following that, those bins that are in a very poor state of repair will be replaced. Requests for new bin placement will be**

considered but will be subject to operational considerations and resource availability.

3.5 In an effort to try to minimise waste and extend the life of all of our litter bins, Officers are hoping to put in place a dedicated operational team that would have responsibility for city wide litter bin maintenance. This, along with a proposed bin replacement budget enhancement, has been submitted for consideration as part of a service growth proposal.

3.6 Litter Bin Pilot Initiatives:

(a) **Dog Fouling Waste Bins:** Members had asked Officers to considering a pilot initiative aimed at tackling Dog fouling through the provision of specific dog waste bin options. Prior to roll out, officers are undertaking a benchmarking exercise looking at best practise and operations within other Councils. A paper will be brought back to a future committee to consider the outworkings of this work, proposal areas to be included and next steps.

(b) **Smart Technology (BigBelly) Bins:** Members will have noticed that some of our traditional black metal litter bins within the grounds of city hall have been replaced with new smart technology (Bigbelly) litter bins. These bins have been installed free of charge, including maintenance, for a trial period. One general waste bin was installed within the grounds of City Hall, and a double being (general waster plus recycling) installed at Cathedral gardens, with the. Photos below of bins in situ.



- 3.7 **Benefits of Big Belly Bins and the smart technology include the elimination of windblown litter. This, along with seagulls removing litter from bins, has been an issue for some time at City Hall. They will also help to reduce collections as bins communicate ready-to-collect status and can hold 5x the capacity for traditional litter bin. Smarts and added capacity can reduce collections by over 80%. The fully enclosed bin eliminates a major food source for rats and other pests. This will be particularly welcome during the Christmas Market period. As well as these operational benefits the bins aim to enhance public space recycling options, reduced GHG Emission due to fewer collections reducing fuel consumption and GHG emissions. Crucially, these bins have great potential advertising / data revenue source which would make them a more viable option for appropriate spaces longer term.**
- 3.8 **Officers plan to extend the pilot to include a further eight bins installed with the grounds of city hall in time for the start of the Christmas market set up.**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.9 **There are no financial or resource implications within this report. All actions to date have been covered within existing service revenue budgets.**

**Equality or Good Relations Implications /  
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.10 **There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report.”**

The Committee adopted the recommendation as set out in section 2.1 of the report.

**Proposals for Dual Language Street Signage**

The Committee agreed to the erection of a second street nameplates, in Irish, at the following streets: Glenveagh Drive, Glenbawn Link, Mount Eagles, Knutsford Drive, Mill Valley Lodge, Rosapenna Drive, Hawthorn Glen and Brenda Park.

In respect of the application for a second street nameplate at Marlborough Park North, the Committee, at the request of Councillor Bunting, agreed, despite the application meeting the threshold for approval within the policy, that it be deferred to enable further consultation to be undertaken with residents.

It was noted that the aforementioned application would be re-submitted, in accordance with the Council’s decision of 4th November, as part of an overall report, together with other similar applications which had met the threshold for approval but had previously been deferred,

following an examination by officers of international best practice and the development of a mechanism to consider such deferred applications.

### **Renaming of a Section of Durham Street**

(Councillor Kelly attended in connection with this item).

The Committee considered the following report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 To consider a request to rename a section of Durham Street between Glengall Street and Hope Street**

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Based on the information presented, the Committee can either:**

- grant the renaming of the section of Durham Street between Glengall Street and Hope Street to Boyne Bridge Place or
- refuse the request.

#### **3.0 Main Report**

##### **Key Issues**

**3.1 The power for the Council to name streets is contained in Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995. Belfast City Council’s Street naming policy also considers requests to rename streets.**

**3.2 A request has been received from Blackstaff Residents Association to rename the section of Durham Street between Glengall Street and the junction with Hope Street. The proposed name is Boyne Bridge Place.**

**3.3 In line with the street naming policy any request for the renaming of a street must consider the impact on occupiers who reside on the street and who would be affected by the subsequent change to their address. The policy indicates that any application/request for re-naming of a street should be accompanied by an initial petition of not less than one third of residents of the street showing a positive interest in changing the street name. Following a review of the section of road being considered, the Building Control Service has concluded that there are no residents who occupy this part of the Durham Street and who would be affected by this name change, including the businesses which have access from Durham Street. Therefore, no petition is possible in the specific circumstances of this request.**

- 3.4 In addition, the policy requires two thirds of the residents of the street who appear on the electoral list to be in support of the renaming. No survey has been conducted as indicated by the policy as there are no residents residing in this portion of the street and who would be affected by this proposal.
- 3.5 Officers have spoken to businesses in the Murrays Exchange building who have confirmed that while access to the building is provided from the section of Durham Street under consideration, none use this for addressing purposes.
- 3.6 The new Grand Central Station is addressed off the section of Durham Street between the Grosvenor Road and Glengall Street and is therefore not affected by the proposed renaming. Officers have also consulted with Royal Mail who have confirmed that they have no objections to the proposed name, which is not contained in the Council's Streets Register and does not duplicate existing approved street names in the city.
- 3.7 Blackstaff Residents Association have advised that the name is proposed for this section of Durham Street to preserve and promote the history of the area, due to it being the site of the Boyne Bridge, which is due to be demolished as part of the ongoing construction work at Grand Central Station.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

- 3.10 There are no Financial, Human Resources, Assets and other implications in this report.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

- 3.11 There are no direct Equality or Good Relations implications.”

In accordance with Standing Order 42, the Chairperson invited Councillor Kelly to address the Committee in respect of the proposal to rename the section of Durham Street. Councillor Kelly informed the Members that she and several other locally-elected representatives were in support of the request submitted by the Blackstaff Residents' Association. She pointed out that the section of the street in question had, for many decades, been referred to simply as 'the Boyne Bridge' - and not Durham Street - thus the renaming would be in keeping with past and current practice.

Councillor Kelly added that, should the Committee accede to the request to adopt the name Boyne Bridge Place, it would preserve the historical significance of the Boyne Bridge and safeguard the legacy of the landmark in accordance with the views of local residents.



**People and Communities Committee,  
Tuesday, 5th November, 2024**

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Maskey,  
Seconded by Councillor Black,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the renaming of a section of Durham Street to enable an Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken in respect of the overall context of renaming streets within Belfast.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Bunting,  
Seconded by Councillor I. McLaughlin,

That the proposal be amended to provide that no Equality Impact Assessment be conducted in respect of the renaming of the section of Durham Street and, accordingly, the Committee agrees that the section of the street in question be renamed Boyne Bridge Place.

On a recorded vote, ten Members voted for the amendment and seven against and it was declared carried.

<b>For 10</b>	<b>Against 7</b>
Councillors Brooks, Abernethy, Bell, Bower, Bunting, Cobain, Flynn, Maghie I. McLaughlin and Verner.	Councillors Black, Bradley, Canavan, Doherty, R-M Donnelly, Maskey and McKeown.

The amendment was thereupon put to the Committee as the substantive motion and passed.

Arising from discussion, the Director of Planning and Building Control undertook to consult with the Council's Equality Unit in respect of the requirement to undertake an EQIA regarding the renaming of streets.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Bryson Charitable Trust (raised by the Chairperson)**

The Committee agreed to receive, at its meeting on 2nd December, a presentation from representatives of Bryson Charitable Trust regarding the social benefits which its projects delivered across the Council area.

**Communication Boards (raised by Councillor Bunting)**

At the request of Councillor Bunting, the Committee agreed that officers re-examine existing budgets with a view to expediting the provision of Communication Boards at the Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park and Taughmonagh Play Park.

**Women's Safety in Belfast (raised by the Chairperson)**

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that there had been a prolonged discussion on the safety of women in Belfast at the meeting of the Council the previous evening. She pointed out that both November and December were the busiest months for the hospitality and retail sectors and suggested that the Council should, in conjunction with a range of other agencies and bodies, take immediate steps to ensure that women feel safer across Belfast. She outlined a range of proposals in this regard, such as the hosting of a joint meeting with the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, to which a range of partners would be invited, to address the matter and to consider what immediate and practical steps could be put in place to enhance safety for women.

The Chairperson pointed out that, for funding to be made available in time for the Christmas period, it would be necessary for officers to examine existing budgets and present a report in this regard to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 22nd November. Such a course of action would enable funding to be approved by the Council on 2nd December, thus ensuring that any agreed plans could be implemented in time for the Christmas period.

Several Members of the Committee concurred with the comments of Councillor Brooks and welcomed the course of action outlined.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that officers would examine existing budgets and funding streams with a view to identifying initiatives to support women's safety in greater Belfast. It was agreed also that a report in this regard be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 22nd November, for consideration.

In addition, the Committee agreed that a special meeting be convened, in conjunction with the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, to which a range of stakeholders would be invited, to consider city-wide and multi-agency initiatives to support women's safety in greater Belfast.

Chairperson

## City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 6th November, 2024

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Nelson (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCormick;  
Alderman Lawlor;  
Councillors Black, de Faoite, D. Douglas, Duffy,  
Harvey, Kelly, Maskey, F. McAteer, McCabe,  
McDonough-Brown, McDowell, McKay, I. McLaughlin,  
R. McLaughlin, O'Neill and Smyth.
- In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration  
and Development;  
Ms. L. Toland, Senior Manager, Economy;  
Ms. L. O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism;  
Ms. E. Clark, Programme Manager;  
Mr. A. Cairns, Zoo Manager;  
Mr. F. Grant, Assets Development Manager;  
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance  
Coordinator.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were received.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 9th and 23rd October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th November.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

In relation to items 3(a) Major Events Update and 3(b) Belfast 2024, Councillor McCabe declared an interest, in that she was employed by Féile an Phobail and left the meeting whilst the items were being considered.

Councillor Duffy declared an interest in item 5(a) Committee Plan 2024-25 - Six Monthly Update, in that the organisation that he worked for was associated with the employment skills and tourism work plans and left the room whilst the item was under discussion.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,  
Wednesday, 6th November, 2024**

**Schedule of Meetings 2025**

The Committee approved its schedule of meetings for the period from January to December 2025:

- Wednesday, 15th January at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 29th January at 5.15 pm (Special);
- Wednesday, 5th February at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 12th March at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 26th March at 5.15 pm (Special);
- Wednesday, 9th April at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 7th May at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 28th May at 5.15 pm (Special);
- Wednesday, 4th June at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 6th August at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 27th August at 5.15 pm (Special);
- Wednesday, 10th September at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 8th October at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 29th October at 5.15 pm (Special);
- Wednesday, 5th November at 5.15 pm;
- Wednesday, 26th November at 5.15 pm (Special); and
- Wednesday, 3rd December at 5.15 pm.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the report associated with the following three items was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Members were also reminded that the content of ‘restricted’ reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as ‘confidential information’ and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

### **Vacant to Vibrant Scheme Update**

The Committee was provided with an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and the associated recommendations from the assessment panel.

The Committee:

- i. Noted the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant Programme that, subject to the approval of three applications, would support up to 35 businesses to locate or expand into long term vacant city centre units;
- ii. Agreed the recommended grant awards outlined in the report; and
- iii. Agreed the update in relation to the position of external funding applications to bring forward the proposed city wide Vacant to Vibrant scheme and wrap around support services.

### **Zoo Quarter 2 Update**

The Committee was provided with an update on the performance of Belfast Zoo in Quarter 2 (July-September) of 2024-25.

During discussion, Members raised concerns in relation to animal welfare and staffing at the Zoo, together with the need for a wider independent review of the Zoo and its governance model.

### **Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Smyth,  
Seconded by Councillor O'Neill, and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees that the concerns raised be discussed at the forthcoming Special Meeting.

During further discussion, the Zoo Manager answered a range of questions in relation to health and safety, risk assessments, animal welfare, staffing and absence figures.

The Senior Manager, Economy advised that an update could be provided at the Special Meeting on 27th November, and that, as a formal Health and Safety investigation was ongoing, the Committee would be provided with the outcome of this, in due course.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the Zoo performance update report for the period July to September 2024; and
- Agreed that an update on the issues raised in relation to animal welfare and staffing at the Zoo would be discussed further at the Special Meeting of the Committee in November, together with next steps.

### **Belfast Bikes Quarter 2 Update**

The Committee was provided with an update on the performance of the Belfast Bike Scheme for Year 10 in Quarter 2 (July-September) of 2024-25.

The Committee noted the Belfast Bike Scheme update report for the period July to September.

### **Positioning Belfast to Compete**

### **Major Events Update**

The Senior Manager Culture, Tourism and Events provided an overview of the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on a number of major events.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 Committee is asked to:**

- **Note the contents of this paper.**
- **Agree support for enhanced St Patricks day activity to be funded through Shared Prosperity funding.**
- **Approve officers to enter into license or Service Level Agreements required for the successful delivery of the Maritime Festival.**

**3.0 Main Report:**

**Christmas**

**3.1 Christmas preparation continues for the switch on event on the 16th November 2024 as per update report to last month’s committee.**

**Fleadh Cheoil**

**3.2 A detailed update was provided to the Committee in October and as outlined, work is intensifying to secure the Fleadh for Belfast in partnership with Ards CCE in 2026, including through continuing participation in Comhaltas meetings and events, hosting visits by senior representatives and starting to put in place the necessary resources, plans and governance arrangements.**

**Oireachtas 2025**

- 3.3 Members of the events unit and key delivery partners attended the event this year from the 30th October to 2nd November in advance of delivery planning and preparation for Belfast to host in 2025. Working groups will continue to integrate with event organisers and update reports will be provided to members in due course.

**Lord Mayors Day**

- 3.4 Lord Mayors Day will be held on a Saturday in mid April 2025. The final date will be agreed with the Lord Mayor's Office and City Hall management team. Officers will meet with Lord Mayor's team on programming in November.

The aim is to create an event that is inclusive, celebrates all that is good, creative and fun about Belfast and offers something for all ages to enjoy at a neutral, easy to access venue in the city. The approved budget for 2024 was £42,000, and draft estimates are similar for 2025.

**St Patrick's Day 2025:**

- 3.5 Members will be aware that Council delivered a significant programme of events in 2024 with a number of partners and delivery input from the Council events team. In preparation for 2025, as presented to CG&R in May 2024, a small number of tenders have been issued to encourage creative sector interventions. A tender for a City Centre Music Programme has been awarded to Tradfest, and contract management has commenced.

In a similar manner, a tender for Parade content was issued for float provision, community participation and professional performers. It is anticipated that one successful contractor will provide a suite of floats consisting of 34 processional pieces and 21 professional performers, their animated production will include 68 dancers sourced via local community and amateur arts groups. It is also envisaged that two further contractors will facilitate community circus workshops; one will work with 40 children and 8 adult emerging artists and will showcase various circus skills developed at the St Patrick's Day Parade. A second will facilitate, co-ordinate and deliver a stilt walking workshop for 20 children to showcase in the parade.

A further contractor will facilitate coordinate and deliver multiple cross- community arts workshops and aim to recruit

**300 plus participants from North, South, East and West Belfast to create props and work on costumes to showcase and deliver within the St Patrick's Day parade.**

**Feile an Phobail have been awarded year 2 of their previous tender for their Trad Trail project.**

**The Council team will provide wrap-around logistical support for the parade in particular. Additionally,**

**Members will also be aware that an element of the St Patricks day programme is delivered by Seachtain na Gaeilge which runs from the 1st – 17th March. As part of additional monies made available through the shared prosperity funds officers are recommending an additional £20,000 for enhanced activity to support a headline event on Saturday 8th of March, this would be a family celebration event to take place at Custom House Square and 2 Royal Avenue and would support Belfast City Council's delivery and engagement in the run into the Oireachtas festival at the end of October.**

**As in previous years, Council Corporate Communications will provide a MARCOMM's package to promote the entire programme.**

**Maritime Festival 2025:**

- 3.6 Members will be aware that the event is now on a biennial basis and budget allocations reflect this. The Belfast Maritime Festival will take place on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th September 2025. There are ongoing discussions with Maritime Belfast Trust on programming, which is well advanced. The festival footprint is currently under review, but is planned for almost the entire Maritime Mile, with the new City Quay's Gardens coming on line for the first time. Research continues on the availability and costs for visiting Tall Ships supplemented by ongoing discussions with the Royal Navy and Commissioners for Irish Lights. There are several procurement processes in respect of the creative sector participation, and Legal / Land Agreements being considered.**

**Committee is also asked to approve officers to enter into any license agreements or Service Level Agreements required for the successful delivery of these events. For example, use of TQ, DFI and Odyssey Trust land, and partnership programming with Maritime Belfast Trust. Legal Services require Council minutes giving this authority prior to entering into these agreements.**



**The Open Championship**

**3.7 Officers are currently exploring opportunities with Tourism NI on the role that Belfast could play during the event week. Given the significant number of visitors that will be in the city during that time and the potential to provide additional animation and activation.**

**4.0 Financial and Resource Implications:**

**Major events are being progressed within previously agreed budgets and the budget of £20,000 for additional St Patrick's day event will be funded from Shared Prosperity funding.**

**5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment:**

**There are no Equality, Good Relations nor Rural Needs Implications associated with this paper.”**

During discussion, in response to Members' questions, the Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism advised that officers were currently exploring opportunities on the role that Belfast could play for the Open Championship and UEFA Euros 2028. She advised that costings for reestablishing a celebrity guest to switch on the Christmas lights could also be explored.

In relation to the St. Patrick's Day 2025, several Members highlighted the importance of inclusivity and engagement with the Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist community for the programme of events. One Member suggested the potential for further funding, such as small grant match funding or community festival funding for St. Patrick's Day events across the city. The Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism undertook to update the Committee in December.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report;
- Approved support for enhanced St Patrick's day activity to be funded through the Shared Prosperity Fund;
- Approved officers entering into license or Service Level Agreements required for the successful delivery of the Maritime Festival; and
- Agreed that officers investigate the potential for additional community festival funding for St. Patrick's Day events.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,  
Wednesday, 6th November, 2024**

**Belfast 2024**

The Committee was reminded that Belfast 2024 had been launched officially on 29th February 2024, and had achieved significant successes across the programme so far.

The Programme Manager advised that there had been a wide range of events, performances, and engagement throughout the city to create an extensive range of artistic and creative work, while supporting the sector to build skills and capacity as well as showcasing Belfast as a cultural destination, which included:

- £2.7m directly invested into creative and cultural sector commissioning locally;
- £960k to Direct Commissions and partnerships, including Little Amal, Eden Project, BBC concert, International Artist Project;
- £0.9m towards strategic and music-based events to celebrate and embrace UNESCO City of Music designation and our music strategy;
- 800+ contracts have been created for B24 delivery within the creative sector including artists, production staff, facilitators and designers;
- 500+ workshops and events have taken place across the city with more to come by December;
- 16 artists supported on Creative Bursary programme;
- 6 International Artists working in residence with communities for 2 years with British Council partnership funding; and
- 35,000 attendees and participants to date.

She explained that the Belfast 2024 Interim Report, November 2024, attached at [Appendix 1](#) provided an overview of the events completed so far and outlined important feedback which had been received as part of the Evaluation Framework. The report covered the period up to end of August 2024 and provided information on:

- Background and Strategic Context of Belfast 2024;
- Belfast 2024 Programme Structure;
- Belfast 2024 Programme;
- Programme Delivery to End September;
- Marketing and Communications Update;
- Partnership Development and Delivery;
- Evaluation, impact and Feedback so far; and
- Lessons Learned and Legacy Planning.

The Programme Manager highlighted that the evaluation findings were at an interim stage, including the statistics outlined below:

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,  
Wednesday, 6th November, 2024**

***Belfast 2024 programme statistics summary to date***

Events	549
Participants/attendees	35,000
Artists & Contractors involved	811
Programme Partners	203

***Feedback so far based on 600 audience/contractor surveys:***

- 99 % of attendees agreed they had a good time
- 97 % agreed the activity was absorbing and held their attention
- 98 % agreed they would come to something like this again

***Attendees also report:***

- 98 % of attendees agreed they felt welcome and included
- 95 % agreed they felt connected to others
- 97 % agreed that they felt proud that it was happening in Belfast

***Lessons learned and Legacy***

The Programme Manager informed the Committee that Belfast 2024 was, at its core, an 'accelerator' project for the Council's Cultural Strategy 2020-30, to create the conditions to support capacity building, test new ways of working, strengthen existing and forge new connection between cultural delivery within the Council and the wider city. The legacy of this significant project was critical to show the return on investment, to ensure lessons learnt were captured, and to embed critical elements of the programme into 'business as usual'.

She pointed out that work was ongoing to capture and learn lessons both positive and negative in relation to the planning and delivery of Belfast 2024 and to consider how these could be applied to future programmes and plans, including through application of co-design models for the delivery of City events and Tourism and to ensure that there was an effective legacy from the programme. She highlighted that the emerging themes for legacy development included:

- Informing Implementation Plan for Second Phase of Cultural Strategy A City Imagining 2025-2030;
- Supporting the delivery of Belfast Stories, including through Our Stories Festival;
- Supporting legacy of the projects and artists /creators; and
- Still to come in Belfast 2024.

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The Programme Manager advised that, during Autumn, the programme continued to deliver a broad range of events, activities, workshops and participative opportunities across the city, appealing to a range of audiences from communities to visitors and international tourists, such as the City Hall Immersive Experience, Are You On The Bus, Touch, Hear, Feel premiere – an inclusive performance engaging all senses, Hearth our film of Belfast by Belfast with Mark Cousins and Belfast Film Festival and the Our Stories Festival In partnership with Belfast Stories.

She provided an overview of the Belfast Stories Partnership – Our Stories Festival 20th – 24th November, designed in partnership with Oliver Jeffers/Jeffers Studios, Nerve Centre, and NI Science Festival as well as Ulster University, which were celebrating their 175th year. This was an exciting programme which would see the city centre come to life with a combination of talks, workshops, art installations, comedy, music and food and engagement with local communities on the future of the city – housed at City Hall, 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast Stories site and Ulster University’s new campus. Guests included Oliver Jeffers, Tim Smit – founder of Eden Project, Martin Green CBE, Hannah Peel, Ruth McCarthy and Stacey Gregg, with further names to be confirmed including Chris Packham and local artists who would lead on a series of engagements, as well as integration with a number of our Bank of Ideas projects who had come through the participatory budgeting programme.

During discussion, in response to a Member’s question in relation to the value for money per participant of each event, the Programme Manager explained that there was an error in the Boom Clap Play - Wiggle Room attendance published in the report, in that the figure for attendance of 750 was for how many people would have visited since it opened at the end of September to the report date. The actual overall figure would be calculated as a minimum of 3360 and was anticipated to increase by the 29th November, the closing date of the project.

After discussion, the Committee noted the progress of the Belfast 2024 programme.

**Growing Business and the Economy**

**Response to Invest Northern Ireland Business Strategy**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

**1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a draft response from Belfast City Council to Invest NI’s business strategy 2024-2027 and to update members on the Department for the Economy’s recently published sub-regional economic plan.**

**2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- Note the draft response to Invest NI's draft business strategy and agree that this is submitted to Invest NI following the committee meeting in order to meet the 14 November deadline – with the caveat that the response is subject to formal council ratification
- Note that the Department for Economy has recently produced a 'sub-regional economic plan' and agree to receive a further update at the next committee meeting as to how some of the key proposals in this plan might be taken forward in Belfast.

### **3.0 Main Report**

**3.1** Invest NI recently launched their new business strategy 'Our Future in Focus' in mid-October 2024. The strategy covers the period 2024-2027. All councils were invited to attend briefings on the draft strategy and these took place across the region over the last number of weeks. The deadline for written responses is 14 November 2024.

**3.2** The draft strategy is attached as Appendix 1. The consultation survey on the strategy is structured around a series of questions, namely:

- Does our Vision set a suitable level of ambition and successfully frame our shared destination for the Northern Ireland economy?
- As an entrepreneur, business leader, partner or stakeholder, does our Mission Statement appeal to you and does it convey what you need from Invest Northern Ireland?
- Does the overall strategy feel right? Are there any major omissions/areas of focus to be added/areas that should be removed
- Are the draft targets the correct ones to deliver maximum impact?
- Is a Client model approach, that enables us to prioritise resources and intensify support with those businesses with the greatest growth potential, the correct approach?
- Is the definition and engagement model sufficiently broad to enable us to deliver for all businesses strategically?
- Do you agree that the priority sectors identified are the correct ones to focus on?
- Which market opportunities or technologies do you believe present the greatest challenge for you over the long term?

- Do you agree with the strategic priorities (Boosting business investment; Accelerating innovation and skills; Driving global ambition; Developing and achieving sustainability; Maximising City and Growth Deals and Promoting places and partnerships).
- 3.3 The draft strategy aims to support an economy characterised by high productivity, good jobs, regional balance and decarbonisation. It therefore reflects the Minister for the Economy's vision, set out in February this year, which focused on driving regional balance; improving productivity; reducing carbon emissions and delivering more 'good jobs'.
- 3.4 The draft Belfast City Council response to the consultation is attached as Appendix 2. One of the key points in the draft strategy is the commitment to 'build capacity outside of the Belfast Metropolitan Area (BMA)'. By that, they mean Belfast as well as the three adjacent council areas of Lisburn and Castlereagh; Ards and North Down and Antrim and Newtownabbey. There is a specific objective of making 65% of investments 'outside of the BMA' by 2026/27 – representing an increase of 6%. It is understood that this target relates to the number of investments rather than the value of the investments. In reality, it is unclear how this will impact in practice in Belfast. However we know from Invest NI's own data that investments in Belfast-based business generate greater return than investments in other locations (second to Antrim and Newtownabbey) so it is unclear how this can square with the focus on driving productivity.
- 3.5 The draft strategy notes that the commitment to build capacity outside the BMA will be done by 'incentivising and supporting greater levels of investment' in non-BMA areas. It does not detail what these incentives and supports might look like – and whether it will mean that some incentives are not available at all in the BMA or whether it is simply an enhanced level of investment in areas outside of the metropolitan area – but that all parts of the region can access the same menu of support.
- 3.6 To counter concerns, the strategy notes that 'building foundational capacity outside the BMA will not come at the expense of the BMA'. It recognises that Belfast and the adjacent areas remain the economic engine for the wider region. It also acknowledges that – while the BMA may be more productive than other parts of the region – the area is not without its challenges. To that end, the draft strategy notes that 'we will be acutely responsive to the need to address inequalities and disadvantage present within the

wider BMA through investments we support in the area' and that 'a collaborative partnership approach will be key to achieve this'.

- 3.7 The draft strategy contains six strategic priorities, one of which is Maximising City and Growth Deals. Commitments within this priority focus on using the investments to build strong, globally competitive clusters and generate 'enhanced skills progression pathways'. Given that the Belfast deal is further progressed than the others, there is an opportunity to pilot new approaches, focusing on maximising the benefits from the capital investment projects. At present, officers are exploring how this can be done for those projects that are more advanced as well as considering how we can build the learning into future schemes. This approach is essential in order to ensure that our residents and businesses benefit from these centres of excellence. We are particularly interested in exploring inclusive skills pathways, building on the learning from our previous Academy approaches.
- 3.8 Another strategic priority is 'Promoting Places and Partnerships'. Under this priority, Invest NI plans to deliver on its commitment to increase investment outside of the BMA and notes its proposals to 'factor regional balance into all investment decisions'. The methodology for doing this is not clear at present and we have included a question on this as part of our response. Invest NI also commits to expanding from four regional offices to five, but there is no clarification on what the area breakdown will be. There is also a commitment to increase the number of staff in the regional offices by 40%. In reality, this is a bigger issue for areas outside Belfast than for the city, given that a lot of Belfast-based companies are supported by staff based in the Bedford Street HQ – although it may be helpful in ensuring an enhanced focus on our indigenous businesses. The final proposal under this priority is to develop a new Regional Property Programme. Invest NI has very limited space in Belfast: it owns two business parks, one at Forthriver (location of the council's Innovation Factory) and one in the Whiterock area. A number of years ago, the organisation did bring forward a programme to support proposals for new business sites focused on small businesses but this did not progress. As part of the engagement work, Invest NI has been clear that they do not yet have the resources that may be required to support this work and that it may take some time to build the necessary funding.

Department for the Economy's Sub-Regional Economic Plan

- 3.9** Just ahead of the publication of the Invest NI business strategy, the Department for the Economy issued its Sub-Regional Economic Plan. The Ministerial ambition behind this plan is ‘through local partnerships, central government, Invest NI, Councils and our network of education providers and civic society, we will work together to identify the main barriers to economic development, and the interventions that will unlock the area’s potential’.
- 3.10** The plan focuses on recognising and tackling regional imbalance across each of the council areas. It sets out a series of indicators and ranks each council area from 1 to 11 in terms of how they sit against each of these. Metrics include labour productivity; median wages, greenhouse emissions and sub-regional employment rate. While Belfast ranks top in the first three, it ranks 10 out of 11 for greenhouse gas emissions.
- 3.11** At a recent meeting with the Minister for the Economy, members took the opportunity to outline the anomalies in some of this data and to point out that, while jobs and wages in Belfast are generally better than other council areas, almost half of those that work in Belfast do not live in Belfast – so this skews the figures significantly. They also noted that those living outside of Belfast but working in the city earn on average £3,474 a year more than Belfast residents and that, while Belfast supports proportionately more higher-level jobs than other areas, it also has a disproportionate level of deprivation in many neighbourhoods: 6 of the top 10 most deprived wards in NI are in Belfast while the top 15 most deprived wards for the Education, Skills and Training domain are all in Belfast. Therefore there is an inherent risk in assessing sub-regional performance purely by looking at council-level data without understanding the nuances of these insights.
- 3.12** Another point that members made to the Minister for the Economy was that, while productivity levels in Belfast are higher than other parts of the region, Belfast still lags behind most UK cities – and significant behind RoI cities. Instead, they argued, future policy should aim to help places achieve their productivity potential, which will differ from area to area, rather than trying to get every council area to achieve the same level of productivity. Investment decisions are taken on a global level: so Belfast is not competing with its neighbouring towns and cities for FDI investment in particular – we are competing against other global cities.



3.13 As a means of tackling imbalance, the Minister proposes to support the establishment of Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) in each council area. These partnerships will be able to access funding from the Department – an indicative three- year budget of £45million has been identified but it is understood that this funding has not yet been secured. Officials are currently working on guidance and a funding formula around the partnerships and these are likely to be forthcoming in the next few weeks. The partnerships are to focus on improving productivity, raising median wages, increasing the employment rate, lowering economic inactivity and taking steps towards delivering net zero and industrial decarbonisation.

3.14 The indicative timelines in the plan are that the LEPs should be formed by the end of the calendar year and that projects to be funded should be finalised by end March 2025 with a view to delivery starting from April 2025.

3.15 Early indications from engagement across council areas is that most intend to use existing partnerships as a structure around which they will base their LEP. In reality, this means using either Labour Market Partnership (LMP) or Community Planning structures or, alternatively, establishing a new structure to take forward this work. Officers are currently working on options and will bring forward proposals to the December committee in order to seek member endorsement for the Belfast approach. Following that, work will begin on identifying priority projects for investment although, in reality, it is likely that these will have been identified through our previous engagement work with partners.

3.16 **Financial and Resource Implications**

No specific financial implications at this point. The LEPs are likely to have access to a budget of £45million over three years although DfE has not yet finalised the funding allocation model.

3.17 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/  
Rural Needs Assessment**

All activities to be undertaken will be subject to equality screening. This funding formula will be determined by the Department for the Economy.”

During discussion, Members raised the following points to be considered for inclusion in the draft response to the Invest NI Business Strategy:

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,  
Wednesday, 6th November, 2024**

- Consider the importance of a community wealth building approach to build capacity to grow the economy and local employment;
- The definition of a 'good job' needed clarification; and
- Highlight the importance of Green Growth, including the retrofitting of homes.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the draft response to Invest NI's draft business strategy and agreed that it be submitted to Invest NI following the Committee meeting in order to meet the 14th November deadline – with the caveat that the response was subject to formal Council ratification;
- Noted that feedback from the Committee would be considered for inclusion in the response; and
- Noted that the Department for the Economy had recently produced a Sub-Regional Economic Plan and agreed to receive a further update at the next committee meeting as to how some of the key proposals in the plan might be taken forward in Belfast.

**Strategic and Operational Issues**

**Committee Plan 2024-25 - Six Monthly Update**

The Committee considered the six-month progress update on the key actions contained in the 2024-25 City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan, as agreed by the Committee at its special meeting on the 29th September, 2024.

The Committee was informed that [Appendix 1](#) outlined the progress with the main commitments in the Committee Plan for the six month period, April-September 2024. It was highlighted that many of the commitments would continue to be delivered over the course of the year and that the Committee would be kept informed of progress.

It was reported that, in total, the Committee Plan contained a total of 105 deliverables across 16 Strategic Priorities. In addition, the Plan included a total of 18 Key Performance Indicators.

In response to a Member's question in relation to the progression of key performance indicators and targets, the Director of City Regeneration and Development advised that baselines were currently being established and further targets would be set in due course.

The Committee noted the contents of the mid-year report and progress against the agreed actions within the 2024-25 City Growth and Regeneration Committee Plan and that further targets were being considered.

**Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

**Women's Safety in the City**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the issue had also been raised at the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting in November, and highlighted that the following decision had been agreed:

- ***That officers examine existing budgets and funding streams with a view to identifying initiatives that would support women's safety in greater Belfast. It was agreed also that a report in this regard be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 22nd November, for consideration; and***
- ***In conjunction with the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, a special meeting would be convened to which a range of stakeholders would be invited to consider city-wide and multi-agency initiatives to support women's safety in greater Belfast.***
- 

**Proposal**

Moved by Councillor Kelly,  
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor, and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees that, due to the importance of the issues raised, that officers consider the potential to use departmental underspend to support the work being undertaken.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the decision of the People and Communities Committee at its meeting on 5th November; and
- Agreed that officers examined the potential to use departmental underspend as part of the report which would be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 22nd November.

Chairperson

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# City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 27th November, 2024

## SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Nelson (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCormick;  
Alderman Lawlor;  
Councillors Black, de Faoite, D. Douglas, Duffy,  
Kelly, Lyons, Maskey, F. McAteer, McCabe,  
McDowell, McKay, I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin,  
O'Neill and Smyth.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration  
and Development;  
Ms. L. Toland, Senior Manager, Economy;  
Ms. L. O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism;  
Mr. F. Grant, Assets Development Manager; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance  
Coordinator.

### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

### **Restricted Items**

The information contained in the report associated with the following three items i was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee,  
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**Presentation - The MAC**

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. L. McGinley, Interim Director of the MAC to the meeting.

Ms. McGinley provided an overview of the work being undertaken by the MAC and its transformation programme of the last eight months under the themes of resilience, sustainability and accessibility.

She described the work which had been undertaken included the restructure of leadership and provided an overview of a recent visitor survey. She highlighted the MAC's alignment to Belfast's key strategies and the Belfast Agenda.

She informed the Committee of the various exhibitions and events which had taken place and how the space was used.

She outlined the MAC's commitment to growth and regeneration and its plans for the future and intended key outcomes.

She informed Members that she looked forward to the continuation of the collaboration with the Council and pointed out that continued lobbying for arts funding was required.

During discussion, Ms. McGinley answered a range of questions in relation to socio-economic accessibility of the MAC, its corporate hire and outreach to local communities.

After discussion, the Committee noted the update provided by the MAC on its transformation journey.

**Presentation - Translink (Grand Central Station Update)**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. McAllister, Head of Belfast Grand Central Station Programme, and Mr. D. Bannon, Central Area Manager, representing Translink, to the meeting.

Mr. Bannon provided an update of the City Centre traffic congestion and mitigation plans including bus and rail night-time services over the festive season which would start on 30th November. He also explained the passenger journey analysis which had been undertaken, together with promotional activities.

In relation to the Belfast Grand Central Station/Weavers Cross Transport Led Regeneration Project, following questions from the Committee during its last presentation, Mr. McAllister presented a comprehensive overview of the social value delivery figures of the project. He explained the number of apprentices and training placements, Community Social Value Projects, engagement with local schools and arts and heritage activity which had been undertaken.

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During discussion, the representatives answered a wide range of questions regarding night-time services, congestion on the Grosvenor Road and the employment and placement application process.

In response to a Member's question in relation to traffic flow on Sandy Row and the impact on local traders, Mr. McAllister advised that Translink had engaged with the Linen Quarter BID representatives to progress the issue. He also highlighted that the Variable Message Signage used to communicate travel information should not be blank and he would investigate the issue.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, Translink would provide further information on the issues raised.

**Zoo Update**

The Committee noted the update on the issues raised by the Committee at its meeting on 6th November.

**Department for Infrastructure (Roads) - Annual Report**

The Chairperson introduced Mr. D. McFarlane, Divisional Roads Manager, Mr. G. Salmon, Network Traffic Manager, Mr. J. Torney and Mr. D. Williams, Section Engineers, to the Committee and they were admitted to the meeting to present their Annual Report.

Mr. McFarlane provided an overview of works completed across the Council area during the year 2023/24 and outlined the initial proposals for schemes to be undertaken in the year 2024/25.

He highlighted that the opening Capital budget for structural maintenance of the road network in 2024/25 was £89m, which would enable the delivery of the highest priority resurfacing, roadside stability and drainage projects and those projects to be delivered within the Belfast Council area were outlined in the report.

He reminded the Committee that, for many years, the Department had operated within a constrained Resource budget and had continued to prioritise key essential services. This meant that the Department would continue with a Limited Service policy for routine maintenance activities such as defect repair, grass cutting and gully emptying. The Limited Service policy allowed the Department to repair defects greater than 50mm on all roads including low trafficked rural roads and on high trafficked roads, defects greater than 20mm would also be repaired, subject to available resources. The Department would aim to cut all roadside verges and sightline grass at least twice between April and October on the more heavily trafficked roads and once a year on other roads, when it was safe to do so. He explained that this aimed to balance the need for road safety while protecting the environment and encouraging biodiversity. However, sightlines at bends and junctions would be cut as frequently as required to ensure public safety.

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Mr. McFarlane pointed out that the Division continued to face significant staffing pressures which was impacting on their ability to deliver. In an effort to maximise effectiveness, he encouraged Councillors to report road defects using the DfI online reporting facility provided by NIDirect.

He stated that the Department recognised that investing in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure could help make the streets feel safer and more accessible for the many people who wanted greater choice in how they travelled, particularly for shorter everyday journeys. It could also help to reduce air pollution and tackle climate change, particularly in combination with public transport. He advised that DfI were developing a Northern Ireland wide Active Travel Delivery Plan that included an update of its policies and design guidance for Active Travel as well as network plans for our larger towns and cities. He pointed out that public consultation on the plan was scheduled for later in 2024. When complete, the Active Travel Delivery Plan would complement the Belfast Cycling Network Delivery Plan and the Strategic Plan for Greenways to provide a firm basis for the prioritisation, design, and delivery of active travel across the north.

He advised that the Department continued to work closely with Councils to better understand their five-year active travel programme and to develop an effective grant and support framework for the effective delivery of greenways and other measures to promote and encourage active travel.

In relation to Major Projects in the Council area, he informed the Committee that the publication of the prioritised list of major road schemes explained that development work on York Street Interchange was currently paused. A decision on the schemes within this list would be considered following confirmation of the Department's Transport Plans and the availability of funding.

He provided the Committee with updates on the main strategic transportation schemes for the city, together with an overview of the DfI Roads Programme of Works for 2023/24 for those projects and schemes that had been completed and were in progress, which included updates on minor works, maintenance of structures and inspections.

He also provided a summary of the Belfast Cycling Network, network traffic and street lighting, collision remedial schemes, traffic schemes and pedestrian measures and resident's parking schemes.

During discussion, Members raised concerns regarding the lack of progress in commencing the pedestrian crossing on Knockbreda Road, which would facilitate the opening of the rear gate to Cherryvale by Belfast City Council and highlighted the support which had been received for the crossing in the last consultation. Mr. Salmon advised that a request for the Council to carry out a DfI joint consultation with residents on the latest proposal was still required and they would request that the Council reconsider its position. He stated that he was prepared to assist and carry out a letter drop to residents in the near future.

In response to a Member's question in relation to plans for further traffic calming or active travel measures on either Ravenhill Park or Onslow Parade. Mr. Salmon advised that a scheme for this location was currently being designed and explained the process



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to progress the scheme was subject to resources and the completion of the necessary legislative process.

In relation to a Member's request to reassess road safety and traffic calming in the Grosvenor Road/Distillery Street Area due to the new Transport Hub and number of parked cars. Mr Salmon advised that it was likely that another assessment of the area would have the same priority outcome.

In response to a Member's question to accelerate residents car parking schemes in the Iveagh Street/Distillery Street areas, Mr. McFarlane advised that a review of the Residents Parking Scheme was complete and work was being undertaken to develop processes to ensure the balance of all stakeholder needs.

Regarding the gritting of roads in the South Belfast and the Rosetta area. Mr. Williams advised that a robust criterion was in place but saltboxes could be considered for any specific streets of concern.

The Members drew the attention of the officers from DfI Roads to a number of additional matters, which Mr. McFarlane advised would be investigated and a further update submitted to the Committee in due course:

- Ravenhill Cycle Lane Consultation update;
- Due to the Boyne Bridge closure, the traffic lights at the junction of Sandy Row and Hope Street causing congestion and access issues for residents in the Linfield Road area;
- Discuss with Translink the Sandy Row Variable Message Signage which should not be blank and note that Sandy Row is open for Business;
- Removal of orange bollards on Donegall Road and an update on the cycle lanes and removal of orange bollards is required; and
- Easter Transport Plan timescales update.

In relation to a Member's question in relation to plans to increase cycling safety on Clifton Street. Mr. McFarlane advised that all accidents were investigated by the PSNI, along with DfI. He highlighted that cyclist provision was linked to the Easter Transport Plan and would be redefined in due course.

Mr. McFarlane advised that, where relevant, action would be taken on these issues if it was deemed necessary after inspection. He highlighted that in relation to the city centre congestion, a Strategic Group had been set up to look at mitigations to try to assist and monitor the issue.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

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The Committee noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, DfI Roads would provide further information on the issues raised.

**Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes**

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 2nd December for ratification.

Chairperson

## Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 20th November, 2024

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);  
Alderman McCullough;  
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bradley,  
T. Brooks, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly, Doran,  
D. Douglas, Kelly, F. McAteer, McCann,  
McDowell, McKay, McKeown, Ó Néill  
and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;  
Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Manager;  
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning); and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 16th October, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 4th November, 2024, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

#### **Schedule of Meetings 2025**

The Committee agreed to meet on the following dates from January to December 2025, with all meetings to commence at 5.15pm:

- Wednesday, 22nd January
- Wednesday, 19th February
- Wednesday, 19th March
- Wednesday, 16th April
- Wednesday, 21st May
- Wednesday, 18th June

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- Wednesday, 20th August
- Wednesday, 17th September
- Wednesday, 15th October
- Wednesday, 19th November
- Wednesday, 10th December

**Non-Delegated Matters**

**Airbnbs and Short Term Let Accommodation**

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided the Committee with the responses which had been received from the Minister for the Economy and Tourism NI regarding the regulation of short term lets, such as Airbnbs, in Northern Ireland.

She explained that both responses had made reference to engagement with the Council through the Development Plan Working Group. The Members were advised that the next meeting of the Working Group was scheduled to take place on 12th December, 2024 and that the Acting Planning Manager (Plans and Policy) would be attending on behalf of the Council. The Committee was assured that the officers who were working on the Local Development Plan were acutely aware of the issues which had been raised by the Committee, including anti-social behaviour and rises in rent costs and house prices, and they would ensure that those views were represented at the Working Group meeting.

A Member welcomed the responses and the update which had been provided and asked that the Committee would continue to be kept informed of any developments.

The Committee noted the update.

**Restricted Item**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following item is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following three items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

### **Legal Update - Change of Ownership applications**

The City Solicitor provided the Committee with an update on the outcome of recent judicial review proceedings in relation to Change of Ownership applications.

After discussion, the Committee:

- noted the update on the outcome of the legal proceedings;
- agreed to hold a Workshop on HMO applications, specifically in relation to where a change or transfer of ownership of a property had occurred, with Senior Counsel invited to attend; and
- that a synopsis of the issues be provided to the Committee in advance of the Workshop.

### **Delegated Matters**

#### **THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT UNDER STANDING ORDER 37(d)**

### **Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted a list of applications for licences which had, since its last meeting, been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

### **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted a list of applications which had been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation during August, September and October, 2024.

### **Application for a New Licence to operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 10 Sandymount Street**

The Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Manager outlined the details of the application to the Committee.

He explained that the property had had the benefit of an HMO licence issued by the Council on 11th May, 2020, to Mr. H. Curran and Ms. B. Mulholland, with an expiry date of 11th May, 2025. In February 2021, the ownership of the property had been transferred to Torrbeg Properties Limited and, in accordance with Section 28 (2) of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (NI) 2016, the existing license ceased to have effect on the date of transfer. The NIHMO Unit had not been informed of the change of ownership at that time. An application for a new HMO licence was received from Torrbeg properties Limited on 2nd August, 2024.

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The HMO Manager outlined that, pursuant to the 2016 Act, the Council could only grant a licence if it was satisfied that:

- a) the occupation of the living accommodation as an HMO would not constitute a breach of planning control;
- b) the owner, and any managing agent of it, were fit and proper persons;
- c) the proposed management arrangements were satisfactory;
- d) the granting of the licence would not result in overprovision of HMOs in the locality;
- e) the living accommodation was fit for human habitation and—
  - i. was suitable for occupation as an HMO by the number of persons to be specified in the licence, or
  - ii. could be made so suitable by including conditions in the licence.

The Committee was advised that, as it was a new application, the Council's Planning Service was consulted. It had confirmed that a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development ("CLEUD") was granted on 17th January, 2020.

It was reported that the NIHMO Unit had consulted with the Environmental Protection Unit in relation to nighttime and daytime noise; the Public Health and Housing Unit in relation to rubbish accumulation/filthy premises; and the Enforcement Unit in relation to litter and waste and all had confirmed that there had been no relevant enforcement action required in respect of any of the issues in the HMO in the last 5 years. The applicant had confirmed that they had not been convicted of any relevant offences pursuant to the 2016 Act.

For the purpose of Section 12(2) of the 2016 Act, the Council had determined the locality of the accommodation as being Housing Management Area (HMA) "2/17 Sandymount" as defined in the document Council's Local Development Plan Strategy, which was formally adopted on 2nd May, 2023. It was reported that Legal Services had advised that there was a clear requirement in section 8 of the 2016 Act upon the Council to be satisfied that the granting of a licence would not result in overprovision.

The officers had had regard to:

- a) the number and capacity of licensed HMOs in the locality; and
- b) the need for housing accommodation in the locality and the extent to which HMO accommodation was required to meet that need.

To inform the Council in its consideration of the above provisions, the Council had taken account of the 2023 Strategy given that "Nurturing sustainable and balanced

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communities was a fundamental aim of the LDP's housing policies." In particular, the Council had considered Policy HOU10, which stated:

"Within designated HMAs, planning permission will only be granted for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and/or flats/apartments where the total number of HMOs and flats/apartments combined would not as a result exceed 20% of all dwelling units within an HMA."

The Committee was advised that, on the date of assessment, 17th October 2024, 76% of all dwelling units in policy area "HMA 2/17 Sandymount" were made up of HMOs and flats/apartments, which in turn exceeded the 20% development limit as set out in Policy HOU10. There were 109 (64%) licensed HMOs with a capacity of 469 persons in that HMA.

The Committee was advised that the fact that the use of the property as an HMO was permitted for planning purposes was a relevant consideration in determining whether the granting of the licence would result in overprovision.

The Committee was advised that, on 17th October, 2024, out of 80 premises available for rent within the BT9 area on PropertyNews.com there were 18 licensed HMOs which represented 69 bed spaces.

The Houses in Multiple Occupation Manager reminded the Committee that there was a need for intensive forms of housing and, to meet that demand, HMOs were an important component of the housing provision. HMOs, alongside other accommodation options within the private rented sector, played an important role in meeting the housing needs of people who were single, who had temporary employment, students, low income households and, more recently, migrant workers and asylum seekers.

He reported that the Ulster University Director of Campus Life, in December 2022, had advised the Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee that there was an "increase in competition for HMOs particularly from NIHE, Immigration Services and statutory agencies and there were increasing accommodation issues across the housing sector which required a holistic view and should include the consideration of international students, families and graduates looking for professional accommodation."

However, the QUB Director of Student Plus had confirmed that the current trend indicated a significant move of students to purpose-built student accommodation blocks. She had advised the Members that there were 7,000 purpose built managed student accommodation (PBMSA) rooms in the city, the majority having been built since 2018, and approximately 5,000 in the city centre.

The Committee was reminded that recent monitoring information produced by the Council's Planning Service for PBMSA indicated that 2055 bedspaces were currently under construction with an operational date of 2024, 92 bedspaces approved but where construction had not yet commenced and a further 1426 bedspaces going through the planning process.

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Therefore, with the continued expansion of the PBMSA sector and students transitioning from private rentals to PBMSAs, it was too early to tell whether the increased competition from non-students for HMOs was a temporary problem which could be managed by the contraction in students residing in existing HMO accommodation within the locality, or evidence of an emerging long-term supply issue.

The Houses in Multiple Occupation Manager explained that, in assessing the number and capacity of licensed HMOs, as well as the need for HMO accommodation in the locality, officers could not be satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would not result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the accommodation for the purpose of section 8(2)(d) of the 2016 Act.

The Committee was advised that no objections had been received in relation to the application.

It was reported that the accommodation had been certified as complying with the physical standards for an HMO for 5 persons by a technical officer from the NIHMO service, on 30th August, 2024.

On 17th October, 2024, pursuant to Paragraph 9 of Schedule 2 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, officers had issued a Notice of Proposed Decision to the Applicant advising that it was proposing to refuse the licence on the grounds of overprovision.

On 6th November, 2024, representations had been received, on behalf of the applicant, from the Elliot Trainor Partnership. The correspondence details another property owned by the same applicant which had been recently approved. The Committee's attention was drawn to those representations and to the officers' response. The officer had outlined to the applicant that the application in question had been approved in error and that it should, in fact, have been brought before the Licensing Committee with a recommendation for refusal on the grounds of overprovision. The Members were assured that additional advice and training had been provided to staff to mitigate against any future recurrence.

The HMO Manager read out a statement which had been submitted by the applicant, Mr. H. Curran, who was not in attendance at the meeting. The applicant had stated that he had owned and let the property out in multiple occupation since 1990, having complied with all planning and regulatory controls. He outlined that, in consultation with his accountant, he had been advised to transfer the property to a private limited company, with he and his wife as the sole directors and shareholders. He outlined that he had been meticulous in his business dealings. He outlined that he had retired from legal practice in 2019. In his understanding of the HMO Act (NI) 2016 he had interpreted that it was unnecessary for him to apply for a new HMO licence because the ownership had been transferred to a private company essentially in his ownership and that, while he had changed managing agent, the ownership had therefore been continuous. Therefore, he felt that the granting of a licence for the property was not an addition to the area, as it was being dealt with by officers, as it had been an HMO for approximately 30 years. He stated that he felt that officers were perhaps using the refusal as a quest to reduce



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the number of HMOs in the area. He emphasised that there was a need for both students at Queen's and employees of essential services such as hospitals to live in the area.

The Chairperson thanked the HMO Manager for the information which had been provided.

Moved by Councillor McKay,  
Seconded by Councillor McCann,

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to refuse the application as, in accordance with Section 12 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, it was satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the accommodation, as determined under section 8(2)(d) of the Act.

**Application for a New Licence to operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 8 Artana Street**

The HMO Manager advised the Committee that correspondence had been received from the applicant requesting a deferral of the application to a future meeting.

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application to a future meeting, noting that the applicant had consented to an extension of time application to the Court, should it be required.

**Application for a New Licence to operate a House of Multiple Occupation for 15 Agincourt Street**

The Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Manager outlined the details of the application to the Committee.

He explained that the property had had the benefit of an HMO licence issued by the Housing Executive, in the name of Mr. John Macauley, with an expiry date of 2nd June, 2019. On 19th April, 2019, an application was received in the name of Ms. Mary Macauley, which was subsequently granted with an expiry date of 2nd June, 2024.

On 8th May, 2024, an application was received from Mr. John Macauley. On 16th May, 2024, the HMO office had requested confirmation of ownership from Mr. Macauley and on 21st May, 2024, confirmation was received from his solicitor that he had been the sole owner of the accommodation since 29th July, 2005.

The Committee was advised that Section 8 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (NI) 2016 required an application for an HMO Licence to be made to the Council by the owner of the living accommodation in question, as the application submitted on 19th April, 2019, was not in the name of the owner, the provisions of Section 8 were not fulfilled. As such, the Council was therefore obligated to consider the application submitted by Mr. Macauley on 16th May, 2024, as a new application.

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The HMO Manager outlined that, pursuant to the 2016 Act, the Council could only grant a licence if it was satisfied that:

- a) the occupation of the living accommodation as an HMO would not constitute a breach of planning control;
- b) the owner, and any managing agent of it, were fit and proper persons;
- c) the proposed management arrangements were satisfactory;
- d) the granting of the licence would not result in overprovision of HMOs in the locality;
- e) the living accommodation was fit for human habitation and—
  - i. was suitable for occupation as an HMO by the number of persons to be specified in the licence, or
  - ii. could be made so suitable by including conditions in the licence.

The Committee was advised that, as it was a new application, the Council's Planning Service was consulted. It had confirmed that a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development ("CLEUD") was granted on 9th September, 2019.

It was reported that the NIHMO Unit had consulted with the Environmental Protection Unit in relation to nighttime and daytime noise; the Public Health and Housing Unit in relation to rubbish accumulation/filthy premises; and the Enforcement Unit in relation to litter and waste and all had confirmed that there had been no relevant enforcement action required in respect of any of the issues in the HMO in the last 5 years. The applicant had confirmed that they had not been convicted of any relevant offences pursuant to the 2016 Act.

For the purpose of Section 12(2) of the 2016 Act, the Council had determined the locality of the accommodation as being Housing Management Area (HMA) "2/22 Botanic, Holylands, Rugby" as defined in the document Council's Local Development Plan Strategy, which was formally adopted on 2nd May, 2023. It was reported that Legal Services had advised that there was a clear requirement in section 8 of the 2016 Act upon the Council to be satisfied that the granting of a licence would not result in overprovision.

The officers had had regard to:

- a) the number and capacity of licensed HMOs in the locality; and
- b) the need for housing accommodation in the locality and the extent to which HMO accommodation was required to meet that need.

To inform the Council in its consideration of the above provisions, the Council had taken account of the 2023 Strategy given that "Nurturing sustainable and balanced

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communities was a fundamental aim of the LDP's housing policies." In particular, the Council had considered Policy HOU10, which stated:

"Within designated HMAs, planning permission will only be granted for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and/or flats/apartments where the total number of HMOs and flats/apartments combined would not as a result exceed 20% of all dwelling units within an HMA."

The Committee was advised that, on the date of assessment, 15th October 2024, 88% of all dwelling units in policy area "HMA 2/22" were made up of HMOs and flats/apartments, which in turn exceeded the 20% development limit as set out in Policy HOU10. There were 1131 (46%) licensed HMOs with a capacity of 4784 persons in that HMA.

It was outlined that there were a total of 2476 dwelling units in HMA 2/22. The Committee was advised that the fact that the use of the property as an HMO was permitted for planning purposes was a relevant consideration in determining whether the granting of the licence would result in overprovision.

The Committee was advised that, on 15th October, 2024, out of 47 premises available for rent within the BT7 area on PropertyNews.com there were 12 licensed HMOs which represented 51 bed spaces.

The Houses in Multiple Occupation Manager reminded the Committee that there was a need for intensive forms of housing and, to meet that demand, HMOs were an important component of the housing provision. HMOs, alongside other accommodation options within the private rented sector, played an important role in meeting the housing needs of people who were single, who had temporary employment, students, low income households and, more recently, migrant workers and asylum seekers.

He reported that the Ulster University Director of Campus Life, in December 2022, had advised the Council's City Growth and Regeneration Committee that there was an "increase in competition for HMOs particularly from NIHE, Immigration Services and statutory agencies and there were increasing accommodation issues across the housing sector which required a holistic view and should include the consideration of international students, families and graduates looking for professional accommodation."

However, the QUB Director of Student Plus had confirmed that the current trend indicated a significant move of students to purpose-built student accommodation blocks. She had advised the Members that there were 7,000 purpose built managed student accommodation (PBMSA) rooms in the city, the majority having been built since 2018, and approximately 5,000 in the city centre.

The Committee was reminded that recent monitoring information produced by the Council's Planning Service for PBMSA indicated that 2055 bedspaces were currently under construction with an operational date of 2024, 92 bedspaces approved but where construction had not yet commenced and a further 1426 bedspaces going through the planning process.

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Therefore, with the continued expansion of the PBMSA sector and students transitioning from private rentals to PBMSAs, it was too early to tell whether the increased competition from non-students for HMOs was a temporary problem which could be managed by the contraction in students residing in existing HMO accommodation within the locality, or evidence of an emerging long-term supply issue.

The Houses in Multiple Occupation Manager explained that, in assessing the number and capacity of licensed HMOs, as well as the need for HMO accommodation in the locality, officers could not be satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would not result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the accommodation for the purpose of section 8(2)(d) of the 2016 Act.

The Committee was advised that no objections had been received in relation to the application.

On 12th August, 2024, the accommodation had been certified as complying with the physical standards for an HMO for 5 persons by a technical officer from the NIHMO service.

On 15th October, 2024, pursuant to Paragraph 9 of Schedule 2 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, officers had issued a Notice of Proposed Decision to the Applicant advising that it was proposing to refuse the licence on the grounds of overprovision.

On 6th November, 2024, representations were received on behalf of the applicant from McCann & McCann Solicitors. The correspondence stated that Mr. J. Macaulay had been the sole owner of the property since 29th July, 2005 and that the original HMO registration had been taken out in Mr Macaulay's name and had been renewed by the Council in that name. Mr Macaulay had used an Agent to run the HMO, that Agent being Property People, and they were involved in the applications. Property People also acted for Mr Macaulay's mother, Mary McAulay, in relation to a number of different properties. When the new HMO Act 2016 had come into effect in 2019, a Certificate was issued for 15 Agincourt Street in the name of Mary Macaulay. Mr Macaulay was unclear as to how the Council had managed to issue a licence in the name of Mary Macaulay when he was always the owner and the HMO Applications were always in his name. He had asked the Council to check their records to confirm how the issue had arisen but it had been unable to do so.

Mr. Macaulay applied to renew his HMO Licence for the above property in 2024 and his application was accepted. The HMO Unit had then indicated a Notice of Intention to Refuse a Licence on the basis that it was treating the application as a new application rather than a renewal. Mr. Macaulay submits that the HMO Unit should treat the application as a renewal rather than a fresh application as clearly an administrative error had taken place while the HMO regime was being operated by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, which had led to his mother's name being placed on the registration, and subsequently the Licence, through no fault of his own.

The basis of the refusal was over provision whereas, if it was treated as a renewal, then the issue of over provision would not arise. Mr. Macaulay maintained that the Council

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would be acting unreasonably if they refused to treat the Application as a renewal, given the administrative error that had occurred through no fault of his own.

The Chairperson welcomed the applicant, Mr. J. Macauley, to the meeting. He reiterated a number of the points which had been made through the correspondence from his solicitor. He also advised the Committee that he had spent a considerable amount of money investing in the upkeep and maintenance of the property. He stated that he kept the rent at an affordable rate and that he had complied with all legislative and regulatory requirements for HMOs since 2006.

He queried how someone who did not own a property could submit an application for an HMO licence and be approved. In response the HMO Manager explained that they were aware of the issue and that officers were considering imposing a new requirement for applicants to provide a proof of title letter as part of the process.

After hearing from the applicant and following some queries from some Members, the City Solicitor confirmed that officers would be content to reconsider the details of the application, if the Committee agreed.

The Committee agreed that officers should reconsider the details of the application, in light of the issues which had been raised.

Chairperson

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## Planning Committee

Tuesday, 12th November, 2024

### MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Carson (Chairperson);  
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;  
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bell, Brennan,  
T. Brooks, Doran, Ferguson, Garrett,  
Groogan, Hanvey, McCabe, McCann and Murphy.

In attendance: Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning);  
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager;  
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;  
Ms. L. Walshe, Principal Planning Officer;  
Mr. P. O'Reilly, Senior Planning Officer; and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Councillors S. Douglas, Magee and Whyte.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th October, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 4th November, 2024, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

### Declarations of Interest

Councillor T. Brooks declared an interest in relation to item 8a on the agenda, LA04/2020/0568/F and LA04/2020/0569/LBC - Change of use (including refurbishment of and 9 storey extension to rear) of former police station to 74 bedroom hotel with associated restaurant, bar and ancillary facilities. Demolition of building and structures at rear, part demolition to internal features, refurbishment and extension to listed building (amended description). - 21 Queen Street, in that her husband was associated with the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society.

The Deputy Chairperson (Councillor T. Brooks) declared an interest in relation to item 9c on the agenda, LA04/2024/0393/F - Proposed 5 storey extension to the East of the ECIT Building (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology), and 3 storey extension to the West, to provide additional research and development space with associated landscaping and site works - ECIT Building Queen's Road, Queen's Island, in that she was employed by Queen's University, Belfast.

Councillor Murphy declared an interest in relation to item 9h on the agenda, LA04/2024/0755/F - Retrospective application for extension to film studio for switch

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room/dimmer array building with associated external plant deck, installation of a new sliding access gate and reconfiguration of internal access arrangements on site. - Lands immediately north and south of existing film studios, north of Dargan Road (within wider Belfast City Council lands known as North Foreshore/Giants Park), in that he was a Member of the Harbour Commission.

**Withdrawn Item**

The Committee noted that the following item had been withdrawn from the agenda:

- LA04/2024/1591/F and LA04/2024/1593/DCA - Demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of a two-storey replacement dwelling with accommodation in the roof, new garden store, widened site access, new gates and pillars and associated site works. – 20 Deramore Park.

**Planning Committee Schedule of Meetings 2025**

The Committee noted the schedule of meetings for 2025 as follows:

- Tuesday, 21st January;
- Tuesday, 11th February;
- Thursday, 13th February (for Workshop);
- Tuesday, 18th March;
- Tuesday, 20th March (for Workshop)
- Tuesday, 15th April;
- Thursday 17th April (for Workshop)
- Tuesday 13th May;
- Thursday 15th May (for Workshop)
- Tuesday, 17th June;
- Thursday, 19th June (for Workshop);
- No meetings in July (recess)
- Tuesday, 12th August;
- Thursday, 14th August (for Workshop);
- Tuesday, 16th September;
- Thursday, 18th September (for Workshop);
- Tuesday, 14th October;
- Thursday, 16th October (if required);
- Tuesday, 11th November;
- Thursday, 13th November (if required); and



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- Tuesday, 9th December.

**Committee Site Visits**

The Committee noted the site visits and agreed to undertake three pre-emptive site visits in relation to the following application:

- Pre-emptive Committee Site Visit: LA04/2024/1138/F and LA04/2024/1141/DCA - Demolition of existing buildings and construction of Purpose Built Multi Storey Managed Student Accommodation (821no. rooms) with heights of between 6-9 storeys and associated shared/ancillary spaces with ground floor retail/retail service units, resident's gym/cinema and ancillary development/uses - Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street.

**Notifications of Provision/Removal  
of Accessible Parking Bays**

The Committee noted the notifications regarding accessible parking bays at the following locations:

- Provision at 42 Ballycairn Close;
- Provision at 48 Carncaver Road;
- Removal at 79 Wheatfield Crescent;
- Removal at 173 Donegall Avenue; and
- Provision at 65 North Parade.

**Planning Appeals**

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

**Planning Decisions Issued**

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in October, 2024.

**Live Applications for Major Development**

The Committee noted the list of live applications for major development.

**Committee Decisions yet to issue**

The Committee noted the list of Committee decisions which had not yet been issued.

**Planning Applications previously considered**

(Councillor T. Brooks left the meeting whilst the following item was under consideration.)

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**LA04/2020/0568/F and LA04/2020/0569/LBC -  
Change of use (including refurbishment of and  
9 storey extension to rear) of former police  
station to 74 bedroom hotel with associated  
restaurant, bar and ancillary facilities. Demolition  
of building and structures at rear, part demolition  
to internal features, refurbishment and extension  
to listed building (amended description). -  
21 Queen Street, Belfast BT1 6EA.**

The Planning Manager explained that planning permission and Listed Building Consent had been granted by the Committee at its meeting in February, 2024 and issued in March, 2024, and that subsequently, a Pre-Action Protocol letter had been received on behalf of Ulster Architectural Heritage (UAH), dated 19th June, 2024.

He pointed out to the Committee that UAH had not engaged with the original planning application process, nor had it submitted an objection to the applications.

He reported that officers had examined the grounds of challenge as set out in the Pre - Action Protocol letter and accepted that, on balance, the Council's decisions to grant planning permission and Listed Building Consent should be quashed on the basis that the report presented to the Committee should have been clearer that the building and structures proposed to be demolished at the rear were part of the Listed Building and how the relevant planning policy had been applied.

The Planning Manager outlined the application to the Committee and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- The principle of a hotel at this location;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Impact on the special architectural and historic qualities of the Listed Building;
- Archaeology;
- Ancillary open space;
- Climate change;
- Traffic, movement and parking;
- Environmental impacts;
- Drainage and flood risk; and
- Natural heritage.

He outlined the most recent advice from DfC Historic Environment Division (HED) in which it advised that, if nothing was done, the front/main building could eventually be lost completely, and quickly.

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He outlined the objection from UAH which had been submitted earlier that day, as set out below:

**Conflict with Policy BH1**

That the Committee report failed to give appropriate weight to Policy BH1 and presumption in favour of retaining Listed Buildings, that there were no exceptional reasons why the Listed Building could not be retained in its original, or a reasonably modified form.

He advised that the Committee report clearly set out the exceptional reasons as to why part of the Listed Building should be demolished, and that the Committee report failed to address or give appropriate weight to the following:

- the importance of the building;
- the particular features of the building;
- the setting of the building and its contribution to the area;
- the extent to which the proposal would bring substantial benefits to the community;
- evidence that reasonable efforts had been made to sustain existing uses or find viable alternative ones;
- whether the proposal would provide substantial community benefits that would decisively outweigh the loss from demolition;
- consent would not simply be given because redevelopment was economically more attractive to the developer;
- the condition of the building and the cost of repair, as against the importance of the building and value derived from its continued use; and
- the Council should be satisfied that genuine attempts to find alternative uses had been made and with the merits of the alternative proposal.

He referred to the Committee report and addressed the relevant points. He advised that the condition of the building was plainly clear and pointed to the building having been vacant since 2000 and the importance of the various parts of the building had been made clear in the report and the officer presentation.

He stated that the proposal would bring about substantial community benefits in securing the restoration and long-term future of the main Listed Building, investment and job creation.

**Conflict with Policy BH2**

- Failed to give reasons for departure from Conservation advice;
- No provision for the recording of the building; and
- HED failed to have regard to Policy BH2.

The Planning Manager referred to the Committee report which clearly set out the assessment of the proposal against relevant conservation area policies and advised that a condition would be included to require the recording of the building prior to demolition.

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He reported that HED's prime remit was consideration of the impacts on the Listed Building and not the conservation area.

**Conflict with Policies DES1 and DES3**

**Conflict with DM Practice Note 5: Historic Environment:**

- Failure to consider that the entire building is Listed; and
- Failure to consider the relevant caselaw (UAH v DoE NI NIQB 21 2014).

The Planning Manager referred to the Committee report and stated that it had made clear the extent of the Listed Building, and to the case law and how the current proposal differed from that case.

**Conflict with the SPPS**

He referred to the assessment of policy in the Committee report.

Other issues as raised in its Judicial Review of the original decisions.

- Contrary to the provisions of the Act;
- Inadequate consultation;
- Incorrect descriptions of the proposal;
- Failure to carry out an EIA; and
- Failure to address climate changes policies and objectives.

He confirmed that the recommendation was not in conflict with the above points and that climate change planning policies had been addressed in the Committee report.

The Planning Manager confirmed that UAH had not been notified that the applications were to be reported back to the Committee following the quashing of the original decisions as a matter of courtesy, and that UAH had not been formally re-consulted. He reported that the status of the applications had yet to be updated on the NI Planning Portal but that this was not relevant to the Committee's consideration of the applications. He advised that there had been no requirement to reconsult or re-advertise the application and that procedural requirements had been followed.

He explained that the proposed demolition must be viewed in the context of the architectural and historic merits of those parts of the Listed Building to be demolished, previous planning applications, that the building has been vacant since 2000, its condition and presence on the Buildings at Risk Register, HED's advice and that the proposal would ensure the restoration and long-term future of this part of the Listed Building at the front.

He stated that, having regard to these factors, it was considered that there were exceptional reasons as to why the demolition of the Listed structures at the rear was acceptable with the demolition required to facilitate the important redevelopment proposals.

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He added that regard has also been had to the legislative requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and that the proposal had been considered to be compliant with Policy BH1 and relevant provisions of the SPPS.

He stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable and that it was recommended that planning permission and Listed Building Consent were granted.

The Chairperson put the recommendation to the Committee and, upon audible dissent, called for a vote, when fifteen Members voted for the recommendation and one against and it was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee granted planning permission and Listed Building Consent, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of conditions and to deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.

(Councillor T. Brooks returned to the meeting.)

**Planning Applications**

**LA04/2024/0369/F - Proposed Specialist Nursing and Residential Care Facility comprising approximately 158 no. beds, day/dining rooms, treatment rooms, staff rooms, office/store rooms, including car parking provision, cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping, and associated site and access works. - Lands at Former Monarch Laundry site, and Broadway Hall Site, No's 451 - 457 Donegall Road**

The Planning Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following main issues relevant to consideration of the application:

- Principle of a Nursing and Residential Care facility in the location;
- Flood Risk;
- Design and Placemaking;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Impact on amenity;
- Climate change;
- Open space;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Natural heritage;
- Waste management;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-Application Community Consultation.

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He explained that the application site was within the 1 in 100-year climate change fluvial flood plain and that the proposed use was for bespoke accommodation for vulnerable groups, for which there was a presumption against, within a flood plain. He stated that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) had been submitted, however, DfI Rivers had not assessed it given that the proposal was not an exception to the policy. He added that the applicant had submitted a peer review of the FRA which verified its content and conclusions and that officers had no reason to dispute these.

He reported that the application proposed thirty-eight parking spaces, a shortfall of twenty spaces under the parking standards, and that DfI Roads had requested a parking survey which had been submitted by the applicant subsequent to the publication of the Committee report and that DfI Roads had since been reconsulted.

The Planning Manager informed the Committee that an Air Quality Impact Assessment had also been received, subsequent to the report having been published, and accordingly, Environmental Health had been consulted. He added that NI Water had objected to the application on grounds of insufficient wastewater infrastructure and that no objections had been received from other statutory or non-statutory consultees.

He stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission was refused on grounds of flood risk and insufficient parking provision.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Stokes, Mr. G. Yates, and Mr. K. Sommerville, who were representing the applicant, to the meeting.

Mr. Stokes stated that Healthcare Ireland Group was one of the fastest growing healthcare companies in Northern Ireland, which managed twenty-five care facilities and offered professional, high standard care to residents, which included both short-term and long-term care for older people as well as care assistance for people living with dementia, complex needs and palliative care.

He explained that Healthcare Ireland Group employed around 2,300 people and that, in Northern Ireland, there was a demand for over 3,000 beds and that the primary reason for the significant delays in discharge rates across the Belfast Trust was the lack of care home capacity.

He stated that Healthcare Ireland Group would provide care home beds that would reduce pressure on the NHS and hospital settings and pointed out that the application site was ideally located between both the Royal Victoria Hospital and Belfast City Hospital.

He explained that the site was a brownfield derelict site that had been previously developed and located in an interface area which had been subject to anti-social behaviour. He stated that he believed that the development would remove ongoing issues at the site and had been welcomed by the local community.

Mr. Stokes then addressed the recommended reasons for refusal contained within the report. He stated that, with regard to the first reason related to flood risk at the site, it would

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be possible to access and leave the site whilst flooding was occurring, that the Flood Risk Assessment was robust, had been peer reviewed independently and clearly demonstrated that the proposed development did not flood.

With regard to the refusal reason based on insufficient parking, Mr. Stokes stated that a parking survey, which had been submitted, demonstrated that sufficient parking would be available.

He concluded by stating that the proposal represented an overall investment of around £18m from a local healthcare company and would create 150 construction jobs and around 185 full and part time healthcare jobs. He requested that the Committee approve the application for the following reasons:

- The FRA and independent peer review should satisfy the Committee that the flood risk at the site as a result of the development had been fully taken account of and demonstrated that there was no risk to vulnerable groups;
- The redevelopment of the site at an interface/flash point area would help eradicate the anti-social behaviour which currently existed at the site;
- The brownfield site and the proposal incorporated the restoration of the landmark chimney, protecting an historic monument; and
- That it was well documented that there was a national health crisis and that the site was extremely well placed to assist with freeing up much needed bed spaces within over-subscribed hospitals, therefore alleviating pressure on the NHS.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to potential evacuation of vulnerable people from the site during an unusual flooding event, Mr. Sommerville explained that access would be from the Donegal Road and that the site would be only be subject to shallow flooding and that most of the care home and surrounding area would remain dry.

A Member pointed out that the site was located in a deprived area of the city and asked the representatives how they intended to engage with the local Community. In response, Mr. Yates, Managing Director, Healthcare Ireland Group, stated that a comparable development, Bradley Manor, was a care home which had won awards for its contribution to the local community and that the organisation offered free training and had an ethos that 80% of the staff should come from the local area in order to provide residents with familiarity and comfort.

In response to a question from a Member, the Planning Manager explained that, since the flood map had been remodelled, it had shown that less of the surrounding land would actually flood during a flood event and that the actual risks to occupants of the site were clear from the FRA.

**Proposal**

Moved by Alderman McCullough,  
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor,

“That the Committee approves the application and grants planning permission, subject to conditions that would include the requirement for a flood evacuation plan and a Section 76 planning agreement, and delegates authority

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to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the Section 76 planning agreement and conditions, resolve the outstanding consultations from DfI Roads and Environmental Health and deal with any other matters that arise, provided that they were not substantive.”

On a vote, thirteen Members voted for the proposal and four against and it was declared carried.

**LA04/2024/0664/F - Demolition of existing Fanum House and Norwood House and erection of a new 17 storey building comprised of 594-bed Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (comprising a mix of clusters and studios) including landscaped roof terraces, and all other site and access works. - Lands comprising existing Fanum House, Norwood House and adjacent lands, No's 96-110 Great Victoria Street**

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and referred to the following key issues:

- Principle of PBMSA in the location;
- Design and Placemaking;
- Impact on Heritage Assets;
- Impact on the Conservation Area;
- Impact on Amenity;
- Climate Change;
- Open Space;
- Access and Transport;
- Health Impacts;
- Environmental Protection;
- Flood risk and Drainage;
- Waste-water Infrastructure;
- Natural Heritage;
- Waste Management;
- Section 76 Planning Agreement; and
- Pre-Application Community Consultation.

She explained that the site was a very sustainable location within the City Centre, close to transport links such as Grand Central Station and other public transport services and that the application was supported by satisfactory evidence of need for the proposal.

She reported that, following a public consultation, two objections had been received, NI Water had also submitted an objection and that DfI Roads' response was outstanding, on request for dimensioned drawing for access to accessible parking spaces. She stated that all other consultees had been content, subject to conditions.



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The Principal Planning Officer reported that, having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 79 planning agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Stokes, Mr. M. Mallon and Mr. S. Lennon, who attended on behalf of the applicant, to the meeting.

Mr. Stokes stated that the proposal was an opportunity to redevelop the long standing vacant and derelict Fanum House, which had been an eyesore within the city centre for some years.

He explained that the development would create high quality Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) in a highly sustainable location, that would support ongoing regeneration of the surrounding area.

He stated that the development would meet an identified need for PBMSA, as evidenced in the submission of a Student Needs Assessment which had been undertaken as part of the application, and the Council's Population and Housing Team had reviewed and confirmed.

He added that the development would upgrade the public realm along its entire frontage that would include the planting of new street trees.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement, and to resolve the outstanding consultation from DfI Roads in relation to the details of the access to the development, and deal with any other issues that arise, provided that the issues were not substantive.

(Councillor T. Brooks left the meeting whilst the following item was under consideration.)

**LA04/2024/0393/F - Proposed 5 storey extension to the East of the ECIT Building (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology), and 3 storey extension to the West, to provide additional research and development space with associated landscaping and site works - ECIT Building Queen's Road, Queen's Island**

The Planning Manager explained that the site was in a sustainable location with access to and from the city centre via established walking, cycling and public transport connections and was located within a grouping of similar science-based buildings within the Titanic Quarter business community, that included the Catalyst managed Innovation Centre, White Star House and the Legacy buildings.

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He provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of development;
- Design and Placemaking;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Climate change;
- Open space;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Natural heritage;
- Waste management;
- Section 76 planning agreement; and
- Pre-Application Community Consultation.

He reported that DfI Roads had advised of agreement in principle and was satisfied that the proposal was unlikely to generate significant additional private vehicular trips over the extant permission. He added that DfI Roads had requested further engagement to achieve agreement of the management and monitoring of trips and sustainable transport, travel plan and service management plan which would be achieved through conditions and a planning agreement.

He stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P. Flemming, agent for the applicant, to the meeting.

Mr. Flemming stated that the proposed new facility would be known as Momentum One Zero (M1.0) and aimed to build on the internationally outstanding research capacity at ECIT. He added that M1.0 would be a nexus for co-innovation between researchers and industry in data security, connectivity and analytics where global and local companies, entrepreneurs and researchers would come together.

He explained that the project was being delivered through the Belfast Region City Deal and was one of three Innovations Centres which included the iREACH health facility on the Lisburn Road which had been previously approved by the Committee.

He stated that the planning process had involved a constructive pre-application discussion process and that there had been no objections from consultees and on third party representations submitted. He explained that a Section 76 planning agreement would deliver a travel fund for green travel measures and a site-specific travel plan.

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He concluded by stating that the construction phase of the proposal would generate around 175 jobs over a two-year period and that the direct, full-time equivalent permanent employment in the facility would be 265 in the opening year of 2027/28 and expected to grow to an estimated 650.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and to deal with any other issues that might arise, including a further detailed consultation response from DfI Roads, provided that the issues were not substantive.

(The Chairperson (Councillor Carson) left the meeting whilst the following item was under consideration, Deputy Chairperson (Councillor T. Brooks) in the Chair.)

**LA04/2022/1206/F and LA04/2022/1458/F - Demolition of existing 1960s three-storey block and caretakers house and erection of split level two-storey extension and refurbishment of original school building to provide 21no. classrooms, including 4no. support classrooms, a nurture suite and a school canteen. New boundary walls with railings, landscaping, car parking, new access from the Shankill Road and retention of existing access from Upper Riga Street. Works to include 4no temporary classroom units for the duration of construction work. (revised description and plans) - Glenwood Primary School, 4-22 Upper Riga Street**

The Senior Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and explained the following key items for consideration:

- Acceptable pedestrian/vehicular accesses and parking;
- No increase in pupil numbers proposed;
- No impact on character of existing listing buildings;
- No impact on character of ATC due to limited views;
- No third party objections;
- No objection in principle from any consultees, subject to conditions;  
and
- NIEA Natural Heritage.

He reported that, since publication of the Committee report, DfI Rivers had responded to consultation with no objection, subject to the condition that, prior to the construction of the drainage network, a final drainage assessment would be submitted and approved by the Council.

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The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions, and deal with the outstanding consultation responses and any other issues that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

(Chairperson (Councillor Carson) in the Chair.)

**LA04/2024/1020/F - Proposed change of use from dwelling (C1) to 3 Bedroom HMO (Sui generis) including partial demolition of existing rear extension to create new flat roof, fenestration changes and new roof light window to front (amended proposal description). - 6 Paxton Street**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application in order that a site visit could be undertaken.

**LA04/2024/1623/F - Change of use from 4 bed dwelling (C1) to 5 bed House of Multiple Occupancy (Sui Generis) - 49 Woodcot Avenue**

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the application in order that a site visit could be undertaken.

**LA04/2024/1486/F - Community garden consisting of level changes, paladin fencing, landscaping, raised planter beds, polytunnels, container/storage unit, picnic tables and associated works. - Green space adjacent to Highfield Community Centre.**

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application for the Committee and explained that, having regard to the Development Plan and other material considerations, the proposal had been considered acceptable and that planning permission was recommended, subject to conditions.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other matters that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

(Councillor Murphy retired from the meeting.)

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**LA04/2024/0755/F - Retrospective application for extension to film studio for switch room/dimmer array building with associated external plant deck, installation of a new sliding access gate and reconfiguration of internal access arrangements on site. - Lands immediately north and south of existing film studios, north of Dargan Road (within wider Belfast City Council lands known at North Foreshore/Giants Park), Belfast.**

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with a summary of the application and explained that the proposal had been required to house critical components associated with the safe distribution of electrical power to the wider film studios development.

She stated that, having regard to the Development plan and other material considerations, the proposal had been considered acceptable and it was recommended that planning permission be granted.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other matters that might arise, provided that they were not substantive.

Chairperson

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## Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 7th November, 2024

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor R-M Donnelly (Chairperson);  
Alderman Copeland;  
Councillors Anglin, Bell, Bower, R. Brooks, T. Brooks,  
Brennan, Bunting, P. Doherty, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,  
S. Douglas, Flynn, Long, and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;  
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner;  
Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

No apologies were recorded.

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th September were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### Schedule of Meetings 2025

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for the Climate and City Resilience Committee in 2025 and agreed that all meetings would commence at 5.15 pm:

- Thursday 16th January at 5.15 pm
- Thursday 6th February at 5.15 pm
- Thursday 13th March at 5.15 pm
- Thursday 10th April at 5.15 pm
- Thursday 8th May at 5.15 pm
- Thursday 12th June at 5.15 pm
- Thursday 7th August at 5.15 pm
- Thursday 11th September at 5.15 pm

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- Thursday 9th October at 5.15 pm
- Thursday 6th November at 5.15 pm
- Thursday 11th December at 5.15 pm

**Presentations**

**Segregation and the Environment:  
Breaking Down Barriers**

(Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer, attended in connection with the agenda item).

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. P. Osborne (Researcher) and the Good Relations Officer to the meeting.

The Good Relations Officer began by highlighting that, according to the Council's 2020 Resilience Strategy, "Belfast's resilience was weakened because, unlike other cities, it was not socially cohesive". He advised that the research was commissioned to seek to understand this further and seek ways to overcome what was termed in the research as the city's "segregation handicap" which would help to play a key role in helping Belfast to meet its ambitious targets to tackle climate change.

At this stage in proceedings Mr. P. Osborne thanked the Members for the opportunity to present the findings of the Segregation and the Environment; Breaking Down Barriers report which had identified strong links between a legacy of segregation and division in some parts of Belfast and the city's future ability to respond to the challenges posed by climate change. He commenced by providing an overview of the history of segregation in the city, which included information in respect of the following:

- Development in the city;
- Housing;
- Education;
- Impact of the Troubles;
- Peace Barriers; and
- The Design of the city.

He advised that the Belfast Climate Commission had set a target for net zero city by 2050, 42% by 2020, 66% by 2025 and 80% by 2030, and referenced where emissions arose from and noted that, whilst the conflict was no longer an over-riding risk factor, the legacy of division continued to undermine urban resilience and social cohesion.

He then referred to the various aspects of segregation within the city and provided a brief overview, citing the following examples:

- The Westlink, which was a barrier to access for many to the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH). The RVH car park accounted for 0.02% of the emission's target;



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- The continued presence of peace barriers/peace walls in many communities across the city, reducing connectivity, mobility and increasing reliance on the car;
- 94% Belfast social housing still segregated;
- 65% (primary) and 38% (post-primary) pupils go to school by car;
- 130m miles was expended bussing children to schools; and
- Duplication of emissions from public buildings, due to a legacy of duplicating services.

He also drew reference to the socio-economic linkages, including the location of the interfaces, hidden barriers, quality of life issues and the engagement of traditionally excluded groups and highlighted the four strategic priority areas that had been identified within the research, as follows:

- Segregation Handicap;
- Environmental Justice;
- Security Architecture; and
- Good Relations.

The Good Relations Officer referred to the findings of the UK Climate Change Predictions (UKCP18), including flood maps and the details of multi-level impacts. He stated that the poorest communities were those that continued to be most impacted by the segregation and division, those located in the closest proximity to peace barriers and in addition, according to the prediction maps, these areas would be those communities most impacted by climate change unless a concerted effort was made to dismantle segregation and division. He outlined that the report emphasised that, if more was done to reduce the “segregation handicap”, it would have the added benefit of helping Belfast achieve its vision of creating a more sustainable and resilient city by 2050.

In conclusion Mr. Osborne referred to the following four strategic themes of the recommendations arising from the report:

- Recognise and reduce the Segregation Handicap caused by duplication by reducing the carbon footprint of the city, adapting the effects of climate change and increasing biodiversity;
- Identify where the Security Architecture still reflects the grimmest days of the conflict and work to remove or re-wild those locations;
- Identify issues of injustice in communities where the most disadvantaged across all faith backgrounds have less access to or engagement with the environment, identify where communities are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change and seek Environmental Justice remedies; and
- Acknowledge the role good relations plays in reducing division, encouraging an end to segregation and an increase in cohesion and resilience in the city, with impactful Good Relations projects on a theme of the environment, climate change, and biodiversity.

It was noted that, whilst the Council did not have the powers of ownership over interfaces, it could provide leadership and support further gradual improvement through its good relations strategy and action plan, Peaceplus, and its other functions, particularly

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Community Planning. This would require further engagement with other public agencies and the community and voluntary sectors.

The Good Relations Officer highlighted that there were 19 recommendations within the research report. These were designed to be progressed as part of the current business and he noted that officers were seeking to embed the recommendations into existing strategies and plans.

Detailed discussion ensued regarding the barriers and walls that remained throughout the city. It was noted that some progress had been made in removing, reducing, or re-imaging peace or interface barriers, however, all present agreed that the removal of the barriers remained a complex challenge.

The Members discussed the flood risks, segregation in education, duplication in services, access to green space in which the success of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway and Access to the Hills Projects were noted.

Several of the Members expressed a desire to be further involved in the implementation of the recommendations arising from the report.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Good Relations Officer and Mr. Osborne for the informative presentation and they retired from the meeting.

The Committee noted the research and the presentation and that officers would report on the implementation of the recommendations through the Corporate Management Team for its initial consideration as to how it could be progressed and that an update report would be submitted to the relevant Committee in due course.

**Our Future of Urban Treescapes Programme**

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. R. McCabe, Head of Northern Ireland – Involve, to the meeting.

The Adaptation and Resilience Advisor commenced by providing a brief overview of Belfast City Council's involvement with the Future of Urban Trees Programme.

Ms. McCabe advised that the programme aimed to understand the environmental and societal benefits of landscapes in which trees played a significant role. She advised that the UK Treescapes programme aimed to deliver new environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural understanding of the treescapes of the UK across three main themes and detailed that each of the funded projects addressed one or more of the themes. She advised that the locations of the projects were Belfast, Bannau Brycheiniog, Manchester and the Tweed Valley and provided an overview of the project objectives and details regarding the National Advisory Group.

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The Committee noted that the Membership of Belfast's Local Stewarding Group was made up of the following organisations:

- Belfast City Council.
- Belfast Hills Partnership;
- Eastside Greenways;
- QUB Centre for Public Health;
- Woodland Trust;
- DAERA; and
- Belfast Metropolitan Residents Association.

The Members noted the following emerging themes:

- Planning – Longer term thinking, the right tree in the right place, pockets of green and flood protection;
- Stewardship – Everyone is a custodian, trees for food, involving communities and protection trees;
- Education – an important role for schools;
- Wellbeing – Medical value of trees, clean air, beauty and spaces to 'switch off';
- Biodiversity – Habitat and shelter, variety of trees, complementary species and tree communities; and
- Decision Making – Accountability, equity of access and false dichotomy: trees v jobs.

The representative concluded by outlining that the next steps in progressing the programme, as follows:

- Second local dialogue event – Saturday, 16th November in the Girdwood Community Hub;
- Second national dialogue event – Saturday, 7th December – online;
- Report and infographic to be published February 2025; and
- Policy Workshop March 2025.

Following a query from a Member, it was agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting considering the potential of a 'Tree Bank'. It was further agreed that the Programme and the Adaptation and Resilience Advisor would forward to the Members more detail regarding the different species of trees currently in the city.

The Committee noted the presentation on the UK Future of Urban Treescapes Programme and the representative left the meeting.

### **Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following items are restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following two items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of ‘restricted’ reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as ‘confidential information’ and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

### **Presentation - Update on Potential Delivery models for a Heat Network in Belfast**

The Climate Commissioner provided the Members with an update on the market engagement which had been undertaken to date on a potential heat network in Belfast. She referred to work undertaken with institutional investors, heat developers and other councils as part of that process and stated that this work was ongoing.

The Members were informed that Belfast, with its density of buildings, was ideally suited to the introduction of a heat network which formed a key part of the local energy plan, alongside the retro-fit of buildings, as part of the Council’s net-zero carbon ambitions.

The Climate Commissioner reminded the Members that a Heat Network Working Group had been established to inform the development of the Council’s approach to incentivising the development of a heat network in Belfast, this Group would be encouraging public sector bodies, which owned buildings in the city with a high heat demand, to engage in discussions and market engagement as potential heat off-takers.

The Committee was informed that, as previously agreed by the Council in March 2024, a commercial and legal advisor, Bird and Bird, had now been appointed to help support the market engagement process.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. S. Cairns and Mr. M. Rudd, partners in Bird and Bird, to the meeting.

The representatives commenced by providing an overview of Bird and Bird, an international firm employing more than 1,700 lawyers worldwide. They then provided detail regarding the delivery models used for Local Authorities, this included information regarding funding models, including the use of a private sector investor and specific detail regarding the capacity for the Council to procure renewable, low carbon and energy efficiency solutions which would be funded by the private sector.

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They advised that early market engagement with heat developers had suggested that there was strong private sector interest to invest in heat networks with the provision of lands for the development of an energy centre, provision of grant finance and an available source of waste heat energy, as being strong support structures as part of the heat network development process. The representatives provided an insight into both the technical and contractual frameworks available to secure the best value for money in terms of the operation of long-term district heating energy contracts.

The presentation concluded with the representatives providing comprehensive information on the principles that would influence the preferred delivery models and energy management strategies. These included details in respect of BCC resourcing, funding, asset ownership, control of the project (day to day or strategic), risk (and reward) in the project and the market appetite.

Following a query from a Member regarding the risk of private sector investment, the representatives confirmed that contracts would be required to be agreed which would offer protection to both the Council and the investor.

The Committee noted the presentation on the Potential Delivery Models for a Heat Network in Belfast.

**Rooftop Solar PV potential in the  
UP2030 area - emerging results**

The Climate Commissioner provided the Members with an update on Phase 2 of the Solar PV Project that had been exploring the solar PV potential of buildings within the UP2030 area.

She reminded the Members that the scale up of solar PV (particularly rooftop solar) was one of five priority projects that had been identified by the Belfast Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) as a cost-effective means of reaching the city's emission targets. The project was a partnership between Belfast City Council, the Department for the Economy and GIA. This project was the second phase of an earlier study, which had previously been presented to the Committee at its August 2023 meeting. The study used cutting-edge 3D modelling, bespoke spatial analysis tools, and expert daylight modelling techniques to assess the amount of power that could be generated by installing solar PV on 24 Council buildings. This second phase had expanded the work to include every rooftop in the UP2030 area of the city and she explained that the data would inform the development of a framework for creating a low carbon neighbourhood and future plans for the UP2030 area.

The Members noted that the Department for the Economy (DfE) was interested in applying the results from this area across other areas in the region, with the potential for spatial mapping and the creation of a publicly accessible interactive portal to catalyse the scale up of rooftop solar.

The Committee:

- noted the update and the potential to use the data to catalyse investment in rooftop solar PV, along with the ongoing work to use the data to create web based and interactive maps to enable users to select a building and view

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the solar PV potential with a total useable area, potential generation, and the number of panels; and

- agreed that once the full report had been published by DfE that a presentation would be made to a future meeting of the Committee.

Chairperson

## Standards and Business Committee

Thursday, 21st November, 2024

### HYBRID MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Lawlor (Chairperson) and Aldermen McCullough; and Councillors Bradley, Donnelly, Carson, D. Douglas, Groogan, Kelly, Lyons, Murphy, F. McAteer, McCormick, McDonough-Brown, Nic Bhranair and R. McLaughlin.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services; Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager, and Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were recorded from Councillors de Faoite and Maghie.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 24th October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 4th November.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Lyons declared an interest in agenda item 2 (a) in that he was employed by a Teachers Trade Union. As there was no discussion, he was not required to leave the meeting.

#### **Schedule of Meetings 2025**

The Committee approved the following schedule of meetings for the Standards and Business Committee in 2025 and agreed that all meetings would commence at 5.30 pm:

- Tuesday, 7th January;
- Thursday, 23rd January;
- Thursday, 20th February;
- Tuesday, 25th March;
- Monday, 28th April;
- Thursday, 22nd May;
- Tuesday, 24th June;

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- Thursday, 21st August;
- Tuesday, 23rd September;
- Thursday, 23rd October; and
- Thursday, 20th November.

**Motions**

The Committee considered the following four motions which had been received in advance of the Council's meeting on 2nd December:

**Addressing Educational Inequalities in Belfast**

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Long, be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

**Retail Business in Sandy Row**

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Kelly and seconded by Councillor R. Brooks, be referred, in the first instance, to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

**Armed Forces Covenant**

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Alderman Lawlor and seconded by Alderman McCullough, be referred, in the first instance, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

**Removal of Knockbreda Out of Hours Doctors Service**

**Proposal**

Moved by Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCormick,  
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

That the motion be adopted.

On a vote by show of hands, twelve Members voted for the proposal to adopt the motion, with two against and with one no vote it was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by the Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor McCormick and seconded by Alderman McCullough, be adopted.

Chairperson



## **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**

Monday, 18th November, 2024

### **HYBRID MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE**

Members present: Councillor Ferguson (Chairperson); and  
Councillors Bower, Brennan, Bell, R. Brooks, Canavan,  
Doherty, S. Douglas, Flynn, Maghie, McCabe, McCann,  
McKay, Nic Bhranair and Ó Néill.

In attendance: Mrs. L. Toland, Senior Manager, Economy;  
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mr. C. Shields, Programme Delivery Manager;  
Mr. I. Bell, Acting Chief Executive and Director of  
Finance, Risk and Corporate Services (ICC Belfast);  
Mr. C. McCloskey, Director of Events and Customer  
Experience (ICC Belfast); and  
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were received.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 16th September, 2024, were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st October.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

#### **Schedule of Meetings 2025**

The Committee approved its schedule of meetings for the period from January to December 2025:

- Monday 20th January at 5.15 pm;
- Monday 10th March at 5.15 pm;
- Monday 16th June at 5.15 pm;
- Monday 15th September at 5.15 pm; and
- Monday 10th November at 5.15 pm.

**Capital and Maintenance Update**

The Programme Delivery Manager provided the Committee with an update on the capital and maintenance works at the International Conference Centre (ICC), Waterfront and Ulster Hall.

He advised Members that works in relation to the smoke curtains in the Waterfront's auditorium, and the replacement of chiller units, would be included in the capital programme and that consultants had been appointed to help support the design and delivery of the works.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and that a programme of works in respect of the toilets in the Waterfront, had been completed and included upgrades to lighting and emergency lighting, ventilation, and facilities commensurate with that provided within the ICC.

**Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the reports associated with the following three items are restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of the items as, due to the nature of the items, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Performance Update Quarter 2 2024/2025**

The Acting Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Risk and Corporate Services (ICC Belfast) provided the Committee with an update on Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.'s (BWUH Ltd.) performance for Quarter 2 of 2024/2025, covering the period 1st April, 2024, to 30th September, 2024.

He informed Members that Quarter 2 was quiet, as expected, with the Waterfront Hall's closure in July and August to facilitate a major refurbishment of the cityside toilets which would improve customer experience within the venue.

The Committee was provided with an overview of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd.'s performance for Quarter 2 year-to-date for 2024/25, in relation to its key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets.

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The Director of Events and Customer Experience (ICC Belfast) updated the Committee on BWUH Ltd.'s corporate social responsibility including, apprenticeships and placements, its partnership with the charity 'Inspire', the roll out of its team engagement strategy, and its continuing work in respect of embedding diversity and inclusion in the culture of the organisation.

In addition, he also highlighted the importance of BWUH Ltd.'s engagement with the local community, which included the hosting of 10 charity and community entertainment events in Quarter 2 and its continued support to the Ulster Orchestra.

The Acting Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Risk and Corporate Services (ICC Belfast) provided an update on BWUH Ltd.'s work in respect of sustainability, governance, and risk management.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to the impact of Covid-19, performance targets, apprenticeships and placements, and the Venue Sustainability Forum (VSF).

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Annual Report and Financial Statements**  
**for year ended 31 March 2024**

The Committee was provided with the BWUH Ltd. Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024.

The Members were advised that the BWUH Ltd. Annual Report and Financial Statements were agreed as final by the BWUH Ltd. Audit Risk and Compliance Committee on 28th May, 2024, and that they were adopted by the BWUH Ltd. Board on 6th June, 2024.

The Committee noted the BWUH Ltd Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024.

**Chief Executive and Non-Executive**  
**Director Recruitment**

The Senior Manager, Economy updated the Committee on the recruitment for senior positions to BWUH Ltd, including the appointment of a new Non-Executive Director and the remuneration of a new Chief Executive.

In response to a number of issues raised by Members in respect of the remuneration of a new Chief Executive, the Senior Manager advised that a report would be submitted to the Committee that provided additional information.

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**Monday, 18th November, 2024**

After discussion, the Committee:

- I. Approved the appointment of one new Non-Executive Director to BWUH Ltd for a three-year term; and
- II. Agreed to defer the decision in respect of the new Chief Executive's remuneration, to a special meeting of the Committee on Monday 25th November, and that a report be submitted that would provide further details and clarification on the remuneration for the new BWUH Ltd Chief Executive.

Chairperson

# **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**

Monday, 25th November, 2024

## **SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE**

Members present: Councillor Ferguson (Chairperson);  
Alderman Copeland; and  
Councillors Bower, Brennan, R. Brooks, Canavan, Collins,  
Doherty, S. Douglas, Flynn, Maghie, McCabe, McDowell,  
McKay, Nic Bhranair, Ó Néill and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mrs. L. Toland, Senior Manager, Economy;  
Mr. C. Campbell, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mr. S. Daniels, Chairman (BWUH Ltd.);  
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance  
Manager;  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance  
Coordinator; and  
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor McCann.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

### **Restricted Items**

**The information contained in the report associated with the following item is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of the item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Chief Executive Recruitment**

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report that provided additional information on issues raised by Members at a special meeting of the Committee on 18th November, in relation to the recruitment and remuneration of a new Chief Executive to Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd (BWUH Ltd.).

The Chairman, BWUH Ltd., provided the Committee with additional information and further detail including, contextual information, the recruitment process, and a response to each of the issues raised by Members at the Committee's special meeting on 18th November.

During discussion, the Chairman, BWUH Ltd., answered a range of questions in relation to the recruitment and remuneration of a new Chief Executive to BWUH Ltd.

During further discussion, the Divisional Solicitor explained further the legal aspects in respect of the new Chief Executive's remuneration and that further advice on the issue would be provided in due course.

After discussion, the Committee:

- I. Agreed that an overview be provided to the Committee at its meeting on 20th January, 2025, focusing on Governance and the Shareholders' Agreement, together with the remit of the Committee;
- II. Agreed to defer the decision in respect of the new Chief Executive's remuneration, to a special meeting of the Committee, so that further legal advice could be provided; and
- III. Agreed that, in order to facilitate a timely decision, to request that the Council delegates authority to the Committee to take any such decision or decisions in relation to that issue.

Chairperson

# **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee**

Friday, 29th November, 2024

## **SPECIAL HYBRID MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST WATERFRONT AND ULSTER HALL LTD. SHAREHOLDERS' COMMITTEE**

Members present: Councillor Ferguson (Chairperson); and  
Councillors Brennan, S. Douglas, Flynn, McCabe,  
McCann, McDowell, McKay, Nic Bhranair, Ó Néill and  
Verner.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;  
Mr. C. Campbell, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance  
Manager; and  
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Bower, R. Brooks and Canavan.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Restricted Item**

**The information contained in the report associated with the following item is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.**

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the Press and public from the meeting during discussion of the item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Section 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

### **Chief Executive Recruitment**

The Divisional Solicitor presented an update to the Committee on the legal aspects in respect of the remuneration for the new Chief Executive of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. (BWUH Ltd.).

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**Friday, 29th November, 2024**

After discussion, the Committee agreed to defer the decision, to a further special meeting, in respect of the new Chief Executive's remuneration, until further information in relation to the appointment process and associated timeline, is provided to the Committee for its consideration.

**Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes**

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 2nd December for ratification.

Chairperson