



Subject:	People and Communities Committee Workshop on Unadopted Alleyways
Date:	11 th June 2024
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Operational Director, CNS

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained.
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction.
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	Following the P&C Committee workshop on the 26 th February 2024, Members requested that a paper summarising the main findings be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee. This paper sets out the main findings from the workshop for Members to consider.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Members are asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To note the contents of the report and to consider approval for officers to engage with statutory partners regarding the feasibility of a pilot project on unadopted alleyways; and • To note that a paper will be presented to a future meeting of People and Communities Committee on the feasibility of a pilot programme, including the potential costs for delivery.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Members and key stakeholders attended a workshop on the 26 th February 2024 to discuss the issues, challenges, and options for progression to address the maintenance, repair, and management of issues related to and ongoing with unadopted alleyways across the city.
3.2	The workshop was attended by People and Communities Committee members, Belfast City Council officers and representatives from the Department of Infrastructure, Housing Executive, Choice Housing, and Connswater Housing Association. There was no representation from the Department for Communities and the Department of Justice (NI). Apologies were received from DoJ following the meeting and they have indicated a willingness to participate in any future work. DfC have indicated through discussions with elected representatives that they are also willing to participate in any future work.
3.3	<p>Following a short presentation from officers and other statutory partners, the Committee Chair opened the floor for discussion from members and stakeholders. The following issues and challenges were identified.</p> <p><u>Key issues & Challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General standard of unadopted alleyways includes a significant state of disrepair, poor standard of cleanliness, significant safety issues , poor practices adopted-fly tipping/dumping and health and safety issues including sharps/ vermin. • Accessibility for residents, transport, front -line council services etc • Identification and ownership of alleyways. It was recognised that establishing ownership through various approaches would be difficult and would require a collaborative approach to mapping these areas. • Problems exist with other areas like walkways and would need to be included. • No accountability/framework in place to enable the hazards encountered to be progressed. • Health and Safety concerns that restrict progression and have significant impact for residents, staff, transport, and those requiring access. • Poor engagement with and lack of support to local communities/community groups impacted upon by un-adopted alleyways. • No funding in place to support interventions required. A request for all agencies to consider the allocation of resources to deal with the risks posed by these areas.

- Risk based approach to interventions will be needed Safety implications and hazardous conditions will impact upon the viability of local communities to intervene- the space would need to be safe before this approach could be considered.
- Legacy issues pertaining to historic ownership, use and planning and development within these areas.

Partner Input

3.4 A request for Dfl to outline the standard required and to consider a review of its related policy for the adoption of alleyways was requested. The Dfl representative committed to providing this detail once investigated within Dfl.

The housing associations present - Choice and Connswater, committed to look at available resources and work collaboratively with parties that are able to support in maintaining and progressing issues related to unadopted alleyways that remain an issue, within the association's residencies.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive representative committed to providing an assist with mapping and identifying unadopted alleyways in conjunction with council, Dfl and other parties to ascertain a true picture of boundaries, ownership, and location of unadopted alleyways. This approach may also assist with identifying previous owners and establish an ability to track the ownership of alleyways. The Housing Executive representative also noted that the mapping resource is facilitated though a digital online service and that this could be utilised to support the mapping exercise.

3.5 The workshop asked for consideration be given to the formation of a multi-agency working group be established to deliver the following:

1. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with all key stakeholders that will outline current responsibilities in relation to unadopted alleyways, resources available to address the problems and how key stakeholders will work together.
2. To complete a mapping exercise in conjunction with key partners and statutory bodies to ascertain ownership, boundaries and clarify unadopted alleyway locations across the city.
3. Resources permitting a small Pilot scheme is devised to test locations for improvements. Agreed locations to be identified and prioritised through risk ranking. Alleyways posing major/significant safety concerns suggested as first priority.
4. Agreed to liaise and actively communicate with communities and CVS organisations willing to participate in restoring and maintaining alleyways within residential areas and consider how these groups can be supported.
5. All partners to review current budgets to establish what monies can be sourced to deliver improvements.

It was accepted that given the size of the issue significant resource will be required to deliver this work.

Next Steps

3.6 If Members are agreeable, officers will engage partners and will present a report to a future meeting of the People and Communities Committee on the feasibility of a pilot scheme, including the costs associated with delivery. The work to consider all points listed in section 3.5 above.

3.7	<p><u>Financial and Human Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Whilst funds are available to officers to engage with statutory partners regarding the proposed pilot, Members are asked to note that there are currently no funds available for delivery of the pilot, and that any request for funding would need to proceed to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality Impact/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None</p>