Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 21st August, 2026

HYBRID MEETING OF THE
STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Carson (Deputy Chairperson);
Councillors Beattie, Black, Brennan,
Bunting, Doran, de Faoite, Long, Lyons,
Maghie, R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Nelson,
Ó Néill, Smyth and Verner.

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;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. S. Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet, Transport and Open Spaces and Street Scene;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and Development;
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;
Mr. D. Logan, Senior Programme Delivery Manager
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance Coordinator.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of the Chairperson, Councillor I. McLaughlin and Councillors Cobain and Garrett.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 19th June, 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 July, subject to the following amendments:

- *Belfast Stories* - That the decision of the Committee of 19th June under the above-mentioned heading be rejected and, accordingly, the Council agreed to proceed with the proposed user for the studio and event space at the site.

- *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann* - That the Council agreed that the decision of the Committee of 19th June, under the above-mentioned heading, be amended to reflect that a delegation of traders from Smithfield Market be invited to a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee to discuss a range of issues relating to the site; and a cleaning and enhancement operation be undertaken thereat. The Council notes also that the Chief Executive would revert to Members in respect of the proposed usage of the car park during Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

- *Minutes of the Shared City Partnership* - The Council agreed that the decision of the Committee of 19th June, under the above-mentioned heading, be amended to reflect, should any additional Good Relations funding be made available by The Executive Office to address the causes of the recent disorder, that delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to distribute such funding.

- *Installations Working Group* - The Council agreed that the decision of the Committee of 19th June, under the above-mentioned heading, be amended to reflect that, within the third bullet point, the words 'stained glass window' be replaced by 'plaque'; and the words 'in due course' be replaced by 'in September' in relation to the proposed Fire Service memorial in the City Hall.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Nelson declared an interest in item 3.m) Belfast Hills Partnership - Request for increase to annual funding, in that he was on the Board of the partnership and he left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration. He also declared an interest in item 4.c) Correspondence received – Department of Justice – Tackling Anti-Social Scrambler and E-Scooter Use in Belfast Response, in that his partner was named in the correspondence.

In relation to Item 5.b) Independently Managed Community Centres (IMCC's), Councillor Black declared an interest in that she was employed by Grosvenor Recreation Centre and she left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Councillor de Faoite declared an interest under item 5. (d) Planning Information, in that he was on the Board of Governors of Forge Integrated Primary School. As the item did not become the subject of debate, he was not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor Verner declared and interest in items 3.a) Area-based Community Planning and Community Wealth Building and 8.a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting of 12th August, 2026, in that she was associated with an organisation which was noted in the reports and left the meeting whilst the items were under consideration

In relation to items 3.b) EVAWG: Local and Regional Change Fund 2026/2027 and 3.g) TEO Rapid Response Funding, Councillor R. McLaughlin declared an interest in that his partner was a Junior Minister, and he left the meeting whilst the items were under consideration.

Regarding item 3.a) Area-based Community Planning and Community Wealth Building, Councillor Brennan declared and interest in that she was a Council appointee on the board of the Forward South Partnership but she was not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor Long declared an interest in item 4.c) Correspondence received – Department of Justice – Tackling Anti-Social Scrambler and E-Scooter Use in Belfast Response, Councillor Long declared an interest, in that his wife was the Justice Minister and he left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Presentation

Ulster University Job Cuts – Vice Chancellor (Prof. Bartholomew)

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting the Vice Chancellor of Ulster University, Prof. P. Bartholomew.

Prof. Bartholomew provided members with a detailed overview of the circumstances and challenges that had emerged over the previous 18 months, culminating in Ulster University's decision to introduce a voluntary Staff Reduction Scheme across all campuses. He outlined the financial and operational pressures facing the University, including sector-wide challenges affecting higher education institutions.

He explained that the Staff Reduction Scheme formed part of a broader programme of measures designed to ensure the University's long-term financial sustainability while minimising the need for compulsory redundancies.

Prof. Bartholomew also provided an overview of the current higher education funding model and the challenges associated with it. He highlighted increasing costs, constraints on public funding, and the growing gap between institutional income and expenditure. He noted that these pressures had created an increasingly difficult financial environment for universities and suggested that significant change would be required to ensure the sector remained viable and competitive in the future.

In concluding, he emphasised that the existing funding model was no longer sustainable in its current form and that universities would need to adapt to a changing financial landscape.

The Chairperson thanked the Vice Chancellor for his presentation.

Noted.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following fourteen 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 fourteen 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 advised that content of ‘restricted’ reports and any discussion which takes 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.

**Area-based Community Planning
and Community Wealth Building**

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty provided an update on the proposed next steps in relation to the development of area-based community plans alongside enabling communities to bring forward proposals to transform local places through demonstrator projects.

The Committee:

I. Noted the contents of the report, which included a summary of the area-based community planning fund submissions so far;

II. Agreed to proceed to the next stage of the process to allocate the funding to take forward the proposals submitted for North, West, East and Greater Shankill;

III. Noted that a further report would be brought back to Committee in September 2026 outlining proposals for South Belfast;

IV. Noted that a further report would be brought back outlining proposals on how the £100k DfC funding might be used; and

V. Noted that progress updates on the area-based community planning process would be submitted for the consideration of the Committee.

EVAWG: Local and Regional Change Fund 2026/2027

(Ms. S. Gowling, Safer City Coordinator, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered a report which outlined the recent correspondence from The Executive Office (TEO) in terms of the role of the Council in supporting the implementation of the Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Women and Girls, and associated delivery plan for the next 2 years, 2026 – 2028.

The Committee was reminded that, in January, the it had agreed to accept the planned extension to the 2025/2026 Letter of Offer for the Regional Change Fund to mitigate against any risks to business continuity of programme delivery, noting that that extension was for a period of three months to ensure business continuity and provide security for staff currently in place. A further extension was received to September 2026.

The Safer City Coordinator also advised that, since the report had been published, the TEO had agreed to allow groups to also apply for Tier 2 and Tier 3 grants.

During discussion, a range of suggestions were put forward by the Committee, in particular, the need for online engagement and the Director of Resources, Fleet, Transport and Open Spaces and Street Scene confirmed that the final Action Plan would reflect the Committee's discussion.

After discussion, the Committee:

i. Noted the related council resource requirements to ensure successful delivery of the programme and the opportunity to compliment Council's Corporate Plan 2025 – 2028;

ii. Accepted the TEO's letter of offer for 2026/2027 and agreed that, as part of the Local Change Fund (LCF), the Council would deliver EVAWG Grants to equip Belfast's community voluntary sector to prevent violence against women and girls;

iii. Noted that TEO had confirmed it was content to raise the Tier 1 grant maximum award to £10,000 and had agreed to allow groups to also apply for Tier 2 and Tier 3 grants; and the total amount available for grants was £229,500;

iv. Therefore, agreed that Belfast City Council offers EVAWG Local Change Fund Grants with the same value for Tier 2 and Tier 3, but increases the value of Tier 1 up to £10,000; with the last day for delivery Wednesday 31st March 2027;

v. Agreed the recipients of 2026/2027 Tier 1 EVAWG Local Change Fund Grant awards would be approved under delegated authority by the Operational Director of Neighbourhood Services;

vi. Agreed to maintain the minimum score of 60% to ensure a good standard of projects within a complex topic and often with vulnerable people;

vii. Would consider Councillors' desire to support more project activity with men and boys and agreed that guidance for the grant scheme would emphasise that projects of this nature would be particularly welcome;

viii. Accepted the TEO's letter of offer for 2026/2027 and agreed that, as part of the Local Change Fund, the Council continues to lead the EVAWG Momentum Programme delivering a strategic approach to prevent violence against women and girls;

ix. Noted that the EVAWG Momentum Programme 2026/2027 offer included work under the following headings:

Communications

- Amplify what Belfast was doing to End Violence Against Women and Girls.
- Continue to communicate the key messages and campaigns of the EVAWG strategy.
- Showcase and maximise the impact of the change fund activity to inform shared learning and good practice events.

- Improve and maintain the End Violence page and social media production and promotion

Work with men and boys
- Continue to engage with appropriate networks working with men and boys. Enhance how men and boys observe and understand VAWG and build their capacity to end it.
- Empower community leaders working with men and boys by providing tailored resources, enhancing their knowledge, skills and confidence to EVAWG.

Area work
- Engage new people and support community understanding of VAWG so that they consider how they can play an active role in preventing it.
- Area work will widen engagement with new people, identify and address area specific needs and empower groups of all sizes, whether funded by Change Fund or not.
- Collaborative neighbourhood activities to EVAWG, codesigned with community partners.

Training
- Appropriate EVAWG training for a range of participants including the public, third sector volunteers, community leaders, BCC elected members and officers

Thematic delivery
- Showcasing and shared learning events with a particular focus on arts and culture, safe spaces and sports.

Networking and funding advice
- Networking, information and funding advice to support potential EVAWG grant applicants.

x. Noted that officers would complete and submit the final Action Plan to reflect committee discussions;

xi. Accepted the TEO's letter of offer to continue to lead the EVAWG Regional Change Fund with the roll out of current contracts, offering funding to March 2027; and

xii. Noted that the total Regional Change Fund delivery budget for 2026/2027 was £1,483,154, however, there was the potential for this to increase should further need for investment be identified and additional budget secured.

Northern Ireland Local Growth Fund

The Director of City Regeneration and Development presented a report to update the Committee on the Northern Ireland Local Growth Fund (LGF), including potential for in year allocation for the Council's projects and future direction of travel for 2027/28 and 2028/29.

The Committee:

I. Noted the update on the Local Growth Fund 2026/27 in year allocation, including the potential allocations to Belfast City Council Projects;

II. Noted the update on the "Pride in Place Impact Fund" (formerly referred to as the Belfast Trailblazer) as referenced in the June 2025 budget statement, including correspondence issued by the Chief Executive to the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and Cabinet Office which sought clarification on the £2m annual allocation for Belfast. The Committee noted that the Chief Executive would seek further clarification on the matter from the NIO and also request confirmation from the Department of Finance on the issue;

III. Noted that further detailed reports would be brought back to the Committee and the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, as appropriate, in relation to further developments and funding updates associated with the Local Growth Fund;

IV. Noted that a further detailed paper would be brought to the September meeting of the Committee outlining the wider emerging external funding landscape and opportunities across various funding streams; and

V. Agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting regarding potential emerging projects for Members consideration in the context of future funding opportunities across various funding streams.

Update on Employees on Temporary Contracts and Agency Workers

The Committee noted the quarterly update on the number of employees occupying temporary posts, employees on secondment arrangements, agency assignees engaged by the Council and recent recruitment activity.

Organisational Reviews and Change Programme

The Committee noted the progress on the work programme for the Organisational Reviews and Change Portfolio and timescales going forward.

TEO Rapid Response Funding

(Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Good Relations Manager advised that, following the recent disorder in Belfast, the Executive Committee sought proposals from Council under a "Rapid Response Fund", which was intended to ensure Belfast City as a whole was in a state of preparedness if this ever happened again whilst providing support in the current environment following the racist disorder.

The Committee agreed to the proposed programme outlined in the report and noted that the Committee's suggestions regarding the support programme, integration into sport and use of amenities would be investigated.

2026-27 Quarter 1 Finance Report

The Committee noted the Quarter 1 financial position and year end forecast (Appendix1) and the Quarter 1 Treasury Management report (Appendix 2).

The Committee also noted that a Workshop had been scheduled for 2nd October and Members feedback on the venue and time would be considered.

An Droichead – Stabilisation Support

The Director of Finance provided an update on the due diligence which had been undertaken in relation to the An Droichead stabilisation grant request and sought agreement on a timeline for the release of funding for stabilisation support.

The Committee:

1. noted that the organisation remained financially high risk, but that the recovery plan provided a plausible route to short-term stabilisation and medium-term breakeven if external support, strict delivery discipline and strengthened governance were all secured;

2. noted that any proposal for Council financial assistance should only be considered on a restricted, time-limited and conditional basis, with phased drawdown and enhanced monitoring arrangements; and

3. agreed to the release of £50k financial support, and additional payments of £25k would then be made at the end of Quarter 2 and Quarter 3, (total support of £100k), subject to further due diligence including monthly financial reporting, milestone-based monitoring, restrictions on use of funds, and a requirement to demonstrate continuing progress toward breakeven and stronger reserves.

**Outcome of Structural Review – Northern
Ireland Houses of Multiple Occupancy (NIHMO)
Service, City and Neighbourhood Services Department**

The Committee was apprised of the Continuous Improvement (CI) findings of a structural review carried out within the Northern Ireland Houses of Multiple Occupancy (NIHMO) Service, within City and Neighbourhood Services Department.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and approved the revised staffing structure.

Waste Specialist

The Director of Resources, Fleet, Transport and Open Spaces and Street Scene provided an update on the work of the Waste Specialist working on behalf of the eleven Councils through the Operational Partnership Agreement (OPA).

The Committee noted the work of the Waste Specialist to date and the intention to extend the contract of employment for a further two years to assist the Council in the implementation of a number of key waste policies.

5-year Service Level Agreement for the management of 11 chargers across 5 Council depots, installed via the Depot Charging Scheme

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting in October 2025, it had approved the submission of an application to the Depot Charging Scheme.

The Committee considered an update on the Scheme and the subsequent Service Level Agreement with a charge point operator.

The Committee:

- Agreed that the Council enter into a 5-year Service Level Agreement with the charge point operator, Weev, for the management of the 11 phase one chargers across 5 Council depots; and

- Noted the Depot Charging Scheme phase one and phase two updates.

Belfast Hills Partnership – Request For Increase to annual funding

It was reported that a request had been received for an increase in the funding support provided to Belfast Hills Partnership on an annual basis which was referred by the People and Communities Committee at its meeting of 23rd June, 2026.

The Committee approved the request for additional funding from the Belfast Hills Partnership for a 30 per cent increase in funding from Belfast City Council from £36,900 to £47,970: an increase of £11,070.

Website Upgrade

(Mr. P. Gribben, Head of Digital Services, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered an update in relation to the website upgrade of the Council’s website estate for security reasons.

The Committee noted:

- the ‘go live’ date of 22nd September, 2026;

- the blackout dates 7th September to 21st September, 2026; and

- that this was a Phase 1 update (to ensure website security).

Strategic Acquisition

The Director of City Regeneration and Development presented a report which sought approval to the targeted acquisition of property in the city centre.

The Committee:

I. Agreed that a conditional offer be made to acquire a city centre property as outlined in the report, subject to:

   - completion of all necessary legal and due diligence requirements and on terms to be agreed by the City Solicitor and the Director City Regeneration and Development.
   - external funding as noted in the report.

II. Noted that it created an enhanced opportunity to address vacancy and bring forward a comprehensive regeneration scheme and provide an investment return to the Council; and

III. Noted that further reports would be brought back to the Council in relation to the short- and longer-term proposals for the property.

Matters referred back from Council/Motions

Correspondence received - Removal of Ring-fenced Protection for Youth Service Funding - Department of Education

The Committee noted the correspondence which had been received from the Department of Education in relation to the removal of ring-fenced protection for youth service funding within the Education Authority (Appendix 1).

Correspondence received - Pre Accession Assistance – EU

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd May, 2026, it had agreed to write to the EU Commission and the British and Irish Governments to request that Northern Ireland be granted access to the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for the ability to draw down on the available funding.

Subsequently, Democratic Services wrote to the European Commission on the issue which had been raised, and the following response had been received via email for consideration:

"…Thank you for contacting the Europe Direct Contact Centre.

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) supports countries that are formally recognised as EU candidate or potential

candidate countries in preparing for EU membership. It is not intended for regions within Member States or third countries outside the enlargement framework. Northern Ireland, as part of the United Kingdom, is therefore not eligible for IPA funding.

For more information, please refer to the following page:
https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-technical-assistance/overview-instrument-pre-accession-assistance_en...”

It was reported that an additional update would be provided to the Committee once further responses had been received.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees that the Council should continue to work in partnership with the British and Irish Governments to advocate for Northern Ireland's access to the funding, or to a future dedicated funding programme.

After discussion, the Committee noted the correspondence as set out in the report and agreed that the Council should continue to work in partnership with the British and Irish Governments to advocate for Northern Ireland's access to the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funding, or to a future dedicated funding programme.

Motion Correspondence received – Tackling Anti-Social Scrambler and E-Scooter Use in Belfast - Department of Justice

The Committee noted the response which had been received from the Department of Justice (Appendix 1) in relation to the Motion which had expressed concern at the growing impact of antisocial scrambler and e-scooter use across the City.

Motion Correspondence received - Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder- Department of Health and Public Health Agency

The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department of Health (Appendix 1) and Public Health Agency (Appendix 2) as set out in the report.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Belfast Region City Deal - Annual Report

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 This report is to provide an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and seek approval for the

BRCD Annual Report 2025/26 and for Belfast City Council to commence work on the AI Adoption Programme on behalf of BRCD.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Approve the BRCD Annual Report for 2025/26**
- **Approve the commencement of work on a £4.6 million AI Adoption programme on behalf of Belfast Region City Deal partners (subject to DfE business case approval).**

3.0 Main report

Annual Report 2025/26

3.1 The agreed reporting arrangements for all City and Growth Deals requires both the production of an Annual Report and a meeting with the Northern Ireland Delivery Board in order to discuss deal progress as part of an 'Annual Conversation' which is scheduled for 25th August 2026.

3.2 A high level, outward focused Annual Report has now been produced for 2025/26 to outline the progress made at programme level. A number of notable achievements are included in this reporting year.

To date at Programme level:

- **22 projects with Outline Business Cases and 5 with Full Business Cases approved.**
- **More than £674m investment committed to the BRCD in signed Contracts for Funding.**
- **More than £86m paid out to partners for the projects.**
- **22 contracts - with an estimated value of £158m - initiated across the Programme. Together these contracts have committed more than 15,000 in social value points.**
- **Two projects now have their Operators appointed, 3 are at Fit Out stage, 3 more at construction stage and 12 are at design stage.**
- **Further information on emerging benefits and real world impacts can be found in section 3 of the report.**

During the year at project level:

- **Construction was completed at AMIC's Factory of the Future in Newtownabbey.**

- **The first productions were filmed and broadcast.at Studio Ulster.**
- **Construction continued at iREACH Health and Momentum One Zero and planning permission was granted for CDHT.**
- **An operator was appointed for I4C Innovation and Cleantech centre.**
- **The UK Digital Twin Centre completed its first Industry Accelerator.**
- **A funding agreement was signed for the £4.4m Regional Contracts for Innovation and a £2m BRCD Innovation Centre Collaborative Grants Programme was approved. In addition an OBC was approved for the Enabling Infrastructure Fund.**
- **DFI approved the OBC for BRT2 and procurement for a contractor for the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge is underway. Newry Southern Relief Road awaits a decision on the need for a public enquiry before it can be further progressed.**
- **Belfast Stories OBC was approved and progress is continuing on Bangor Waterfront, and Destination Royal Hillsborough.**
- **Construction for the theatre and conference element of Newry Regeneration was scheduled to commence in June and engagement continues at Carrickfergus Regeneration.**
- **An additional cross deals skills assessment was completed for the Life and Health Sciences sector – bringing the total completed to 5 – and engagement is underway to strengthen the contribution projects make to inclusive growth particularly through skills.**

3.3 **The Annual Report, which was approved by the BRCD Executive Board in June, is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration. The individual BRCD partners will also be seeking approval for the Annual Report through their own governance structures. The report will be formally published after all approvals have been secured.**

3.4 **The report will then be shared with the Department of Finance and used to inform the Annual Conversation.**

3.5 **Moving into Year 5 (2026/27) we will see significant progress across the programme with:**

- **Construction due to commence on CDHT and Newry Regeneration Theatre and Conference Centre and continuing for iREACH Health and Momentum One Zero.**
- **Design Teams will be appointed for Bangor Waterfront Urban Waterfront and Public Realm and Marina.**

- **Belfast Stories Contract for Funding will be signed, the planning application submitted and a Contractor appointed.**
- **Carrickfergus Regeneration planning applications will be submitted and the Supply Team Contract packages will be issued to market.**
- **The BRCD Regional Contracts for Innovation programme and the BRCD Innovation Centres Collaborative Grants programme will be launched.**
- **Further business cases to support adoption of innovative projects utilising advanced wireless and AI technologies will be submitted and approved.**
- **The OBC Addendums for Destination Royal Hillsborough, i4c Innovation & Cleantech Centre and The Gobbins Phase II will be approved, enabling design development and submission of planning applications.**
- **Our final Skills Assessment on Tourism and Hospitality will be produced.**

Financial and Implementation Plan

3.6 The overarching deal document is supported by a Financial and Implementation Plan and the annual submission for 2025/26 sits alongside the Annual Report.

3.7 As the programme is now firmly in delivery phase this year's financial and implementation plan has again been combined into one document. The document includes the expenditure profile of all the projects broken down annually and the high level project milestones based on the Quarter 4 financial and performance returns. The PMO engaged closely with partners and following consideration by the Finance Directors' Group and the Executive Board it was formally submitted to the Department of Finance at the end of June as required by the governance and assurance arrangements.

3.8 During 2025/26 a further £46.2m was drawn down from both the Department for the Economy and the Department for Communities demonstrating the positive progress being made across the programme. Up to 31st March 2026, claims totalling £87m have been processed by Programme Management Office (£46m in FY25-26).

Belfast Region AI Adoption programme

3.9 Belfast City Council, on behalf of Belfast Region City Deal partners, has submitted a business case proposal to the Department for the Economy (DfE) to deliver a £4.6 million AI Adoption programme across the region.

3.10 The new programme will provide rounds of competitive grants of between approximately £20,000 to £100,000 to support organisations in the innovative adoption of AI in ways that contribute to increased productivity and improved service delivery. The programme will also offer expert guidance to organisations during the bid development phase and afterwards during the implementation of those projects that are awarded funding.

3.11 The AI Adoption programme will directly contribute to the growth ambitions of the Belfast Region City Deal Digital pillar and it also aligns well with a key recommendation of the recent NI Science Panel AI report to *'establish new programmes of support for established companies- integrating AI into their organisations and operations'*.

3.12 Subject to DfE approval of the business case, which is expected imminently, Members are asked to approve the commencement of work on the programme by Belfast City Council. The business case includes funding to Belfast City Council for staffing and programme costs. It also includes funding for the Council to commission technical third-party support, approval for which is included in this month's Contracts Report.

<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>

3.13 All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets. Belfast City Council's staffing and programme costs for the delivery of the Belfast Region AI Adoption programme will be funded by Belfast Region City Deal.

<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/</u>
<u>Rural Needs Assessment</u>

3.14 The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that;

> ***'BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.'***

During discussion, regarding the AI Adoption Programme, the Deputy Chief Executive answered a range of questions in relation to the environmental and economic impact of AI. She explained further the intended use of the Programme and scope of the competitive grants.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Smyth,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Committee agrees to defer consideration of the report so that further information could be provided in relation to the environment and economic impact, together with detailed analysis of the fund, the target sectors and how it aligned to the Council's Strategic Objectives and Belfast Agenda.

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

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Approved the BRCD Annual Report for 2025/26;

- Approved the commencement of work on a £4.6 million AI Adoption Programme on behalf of Belfast Region City Deal partners (subject to DfE business case approval);

- Noted that a further report would be submitted to a future committee regarding the AI Adoption Programme and the broader impact of AI.

Independently Managed Community Centres (IMCC's)

(Ms. M Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- **advise committee of correspondence received from Shaftesbury Community Recreation Centre on 23rd July 2026 and seek their view on the request for additional funding for 2026/27.**
- **Provide an update on actions agreed at SP&R committee in March 2026.**

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee consider the request for additional funding contained in the correspondence and the update on recent and planned activity in relation to IMCCs.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 Members will recall Council has long standing arrangements in place to provide financial support to 7 Council community centres that are managed independently by the community sector.

3.2 In March 2026, following a written request from 4 IMCCs, SP&R agreed to double the annual award to these facilities so that they received an uplift of £74,000 each (totalling £296,000) for 2025/26 financial year.

3.3 In July this year, Council received a further request from these 4 facilities to pay the same uplift in the 2026/27 year. Members are asked to consider this and whether they wish to approve an additional payment. Detail of this request can be found in Appendix I.

3.4 The table below shows the individual allocations to IMCCs for 2026/27. To date 50% of these awards have been issued. An annual CPI increase of 2.8 % for 2026/27 will be included with the second payment which will be paid in October 2026. The 4 organisations requesting the increase are highlighted.

Independently Managed Centres	Amount	CPI Increase	Total 2026/27
Shaftesbury Recreation Centre	£74,056.80	£2,073.59	£76,130.39
Grosvenor Recreation Centre	£74,056.80	£2,073.59	£76,130.39
Denmark Street Community Centre	£25,680.28	£719,04.	£26,399.32
Carrick Hill Community Centre	£40,867.01	£1,144.27	£42,011.28
Sally Gardens	£74,056.80	£2,073.59	£76,130.39
Hanwood Trust	£74,056.80	£2,073.59	£76,130.39
Total	£362,774.49		£372,932.15

3.5 In March 2026, when considering the request for additional funding, SP&R agreed that a number of actions would be

completed by council officers. An update on these is provided below:

- **Agreed that a report would be brought back to the committee which would provide members with options on proceeding with standard Legal Agreements outlining Terms and Conditions for all IMCCs at a future meeting.**

3.6 Officers have been working on a cross departmental basis to gather this information for all IMCCs and are working with IMCCs to gather information that will inform a consistent approach in relation to legal agreements, funding levels and capture of activity and outcomes delivered by IMCCs.

3.7 At its meeting on 11th August People and Communities Committee agreed that an elected member workshop on Community Services would be held at 5.15pm on 26th October. An update on the outcome of the work above and options for a consistent approach to IMCC funding and legal agreements will form part of the agenda for this workshop. All elected members will be invited to attend.

- **Agreed that a condition survey would be undertaken across all Independently Managed Community Centres.**

3.8 This work is underway by Property and Projects Department and is due for completion in the Autumn.

<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>

3.9 Annual awards to IMCC's including CPI increases are contained within approved budgets and factored into future budgeting/forecasting processes. There is no available departmental budget to pay the additional funding of £296,000 in the 26/27 financial year that has been requested.

<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u>

3.10 This will be considered throughout and any appropriate issues highlighted to Members. Any amendments to existing arrangements will be considered in the context of any Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs considerations.

<u>Proposal</u>

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

Resolved - That the Committee agrees, in principle, to the request for additional funding of £296,000 in the 2026/27 financial year so that £74k could be allocated to each of the following IMCCs: Shaftesbury Recreation Centre, Grosvenor Recreation Centre, Sally Gardens, and Hanwood Trust, subject to the identification of sufficient in-year underspend or specified reserve and also agrees to delegate authority to the Director of Finance to release the funding, subject to the conditions being met.

In addition, the Committee noted the update on recent and planned activities relating to IMCCs.

Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Belfast Place Based Growth & Regeneration Proposition and ongoing engagement in relation to devolution and associated funding.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

I. **Note the update on the Belfast Place Based Growth and Regeneration Proposition, including the update on ongoing strategic engagement with the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.**

II. **Note the update on the Scottish Cities Alliance Devolved Nations Political Leaders Meeting and approve the signing of a joint letter to the Prime Minister aimed at working together to develop models of city and regional empowerment within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that unlock growth. Further updates to be brought to Committee as this engagement progresses.**

III. **Approve attendance of the Lord Mayor as set out in the report at the Belfast MP's sponsored event at Houses of Parliament in Westminster, as part of advocacy and engagement activities to support the Belfast Place Based Growth & Regeneration Proposition.**

3.0 Background

3.1 The Committee will recall receiving an update in November 2025, followed by a further report to the CG&R Committee in February 2026, on the Belfast Place-Based Growth & Regeneration Proposition. The Proposition sets out the case for enhanced regeneration funding consistent with other UK cities, and aligned with a growth proposition which is underpinned by a full Business

Case predicated on city regeneration priorities. As part of this work, the Council has submitted a proposal to the UK Government seeking support for a new £250 million City Regeneration Fund and associated powers to drive growth, regeneration and investment in the city.

3.2 As previously reported to Committee, Belfast faces a structural regeneration deficit that cannot be addressed through existing funding mechanisms. The city has experienced long-term underinvestment in regeneration, limited devolved powers and stalled development activity. Public spending on regeneration is approximately half that of comparable English cities, while key funding streams available elsewhere in the UK have not been extended to Northern Ireland, resulting in missed economic and social opportunities. The English Devolution White Paper signalled a significant shift in funding and powers for English cities. Without parity of targeted regeneration investment, Belfast risks falling further behind in terms of growth, competitiveness and investment attraction.

3.3 The Belfast Place-Based Growth & Regeneration Proposition seeks the powers and responsibilities required to drive growth and investment in the city, centred on the establishment of a £250 million City Regeneration Fund (CRF). The proposal responds directly to Belfast's longstanding regeneration challenges through targeted investment in housing-led regeneration across all tenures, the remediation of derelict and underutilised sites, green and blue infrastructure, public realm and placemaking, and enabling infrastructure to unlock strategic development opportunities.

3.4 The CRF is designed to complement and enhance the impact of other investment, including the Belfast Region City Deal by accelerating regeneration and development activity, unlocking private sector investment and supporting inclusive economic growth. The Proposition would provide Belfast with investment mechanisms comparable to those available to English Core Cities without impacting on the Northern Ireland Executive's core funding settlement.

3.5 As set out in the Proposition, the proposal builds on existing governance structures established through Belfast City Council's City Centre Investment Fund and draws on proven investment models operating in cities such as Liverpool, Leeds and Greater Manchester. It is intended to deliver a strong economic and social return through robust governance, targeted investment and the creation of long-term regeneration capacity.

3.6 Development of the Proposition has been informed by extensive engagement with cross-sector stakeholders and aligns with the findings of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment

Strategy (BCCRIS) Stocktake, which received political and stakeholder endorsement.

4.0 Main Report

Belfast Business Case for Place-Based Growth & Regeneration Investment

4.1 As previously reported to Committee in November 2025, the Belfast Place-Based Growth & Regeneration Proposition is underpinned by a full Five Case Business Case comprising the Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management Cases. The business case sets out the rationale for enhanced regeneration investment and powers for Belfast and demonstrates the significant preparatory work undertaken by the Council and its partners to establish the conditions for successful delivery.

4.2 The business case seeks the powers and responsibilities required to drive growth and investment in the city, centred on the establishment of a new £250 million City Regeneration Fund (CRF). The proposed fund would support targeted investment in housing-led regeneration, green urban infrastructure, placemaking, site assembly and remediation, enabling infrastructure, and the delivery of strategic regeneration schemes, including stalled major schemes, capable of unlocking wider economic and social benefits The business case emphasises the Council's commitment to working collaboratively with the Executive and relevant departments through a new model of partnership and joint delivery to maximise the impact of any investment secured.

4.3 Importantly, the business case and delivery at city-region level demonstrates that Belfast already possesses many of the governance and delivery mechanisms required to expedite delivery. Building on the governance arrangements established through the City Centre Investment Fund, this approach draws on proven investment models operating across a number of English cities, including the Chrysalis Fund in Liverpool, the Leeds Revolving Investment Fund and the Greater Manchester Property Venture Fund, which have successfully used targeted public investment to stimulate regeneration and attract private sector capital.

4.4 The proposed City Regeneration Fund is intended to complement and enhance the impact of other investment including the Belfast Region City Deal by accelerating regeneration and development activity, unlocking private sector investment and supporting inclusive economic growth.

4.5 The CRF also proposes a more collaborative model of working between local and central government, enabling Belfast City

Council and Northern Ireland departments to respond more effectively to market opportunities and regeneration challenges. This approach is consistent with the principles of place-based growth and devolved decision-making set out within the UK Government's English Devolution White Paper and more recent Integrated Settlements model for Mayoral Combined Authorities. The CRF would place Belfast on a footing more comparable with the English Core Cities by providing access to dedicated regeneration funding additional to existing City Deal arrangements.

4.6 It is important to note that council has a number of partnerships committed to attracting investment and finance to the city and city-region and a collaborative, unified approach will be taken to engagement and advocacy. More information will be brought to Members as this develops further.

<u>Advocacy and Engagement</u>

4.7 A programme of advocacy and engagement continues to support the advancement of the Proposition. Council officers and Elected Members have undertaken a programme of engagement with the Northern Ireland Office, HM Treasury and MHCLG, alongside Belfast MPs and Northern Ireland Executive departments, to advocate for the proposal and demonstrate its alignment with the UK Government's growth mission and place-based investment priorities.

<u>Scottish Cities Alliance Devolved Nations Political Leaders Meeting</u>

4.8 Following approval at SP&R Committee in November 2025, the Lord Mayor, the Council's nominated Elected Member BCRD Lead and senior officers attended a devolution-focused roundtable with city leaders from Scotland and Wales in London in January 2026.

4.9 The meeting was convened by the Scottish Cities Alliance (SCA), a collaboration between Scotland's eight cities and the Scottish Government. It brought together representatives from the SCA, the Cardiff Capital Region, and Belfast City Council to discuss evolving city-regional governance and devolution arrangements across the UK.

4.10 Discussions focused on the implications of the accelerating programme of English devolution, particularly the establishment of Mayoral Combined Authorities, and the potential impact on the competitiveness, investment attractiveness and reform capacity of cities in the devolved nations. Participants noted the increasing momentum behind English devolution deals, the continued extension of mayoral powers, and growing alignment between

English city regions and UK Government funding, policy development, and institutional focus.

4.11 The meeting concluded that, without coordinated action, the pace and scale of English devolution could reshape the UK's economic and institutional landscape in ways that disadvantage cities in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. However, participants also recognised a significant opportunity to secure deeper, fairer and more effective city-level devolution through collective advocacy, evidence-based case making and governance models tailored to the specific circumstances of each devolved nation.

4.12 A follow up meeting was held in May 2026 at UKREiiF, the UK Real Estate, investment and infrastructure Forum. As approved by CG&R Committee in February 2026, the Chair of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee and the Council's nominated Elected Member/Chair of the BRCD Council Panel attended this meeting.

4.13 Building on the January discussions, participants considered the challenges facing cities in the devolved nations, including what the shared diagnosis of the "double squeeze" of UK-level decision-making and limited devolved powers at city-regional level. It was argued that this combination restricts access to long-term funding, capital flows and policy discretion available to English Mayoral Authorities. Participants felt that deeper, faster devolution tailored to national contexts is required, supported by long-term funding under city control and strengthened multi-level governance between UK Government, devolved governments and city regions. Five areas of common ground were identified: the readiness of cities to deliver growth; the value of place based governance pluralism; the need for varied pace and models of devolution; opportunities for joined-up engagement; and the importance of a sustained collective voice in UK-level discussions.

4.14 Participants considered continued group engagement and joint case-making to Westminster, to include the development of shared representation to the new Prime Minster. A draft letter has been prepared by the SCA welcoming the new Prime Minister's focus on advancing devolution, noting that there is a significant opportunity to work together to develop models of city and regional empowerment within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that unlock growth while complementing the responsibilities of devolved governments and seeking engagement with UK Government, the devolved administrations and city and regional leaders on the next phase of devolution. Subject to approval from Members, it is proposed that Belfast City Council signs this joint letter and continues ongoing engagement alongside Scotland and Wales, with updates to be brought back to Committee as this engagement progresses.

4.15 During UKREiiF, senior Council officers also participated in a roundtable discussion with senior HMT officials, facilitated by Core Cities and also attended by other UK Core City representatives. The roundtable concluded with agreement to convene a further engagement between HM Treasury and representatives from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast to consider how the economic potential of these cities can be more fully reflected within the UK Government's growth agenda, while remaining consistent with the respective devolution settlements across the devolved nations. Discussions highlighted the particular importance of investment policy and the use of financial and fiscal levers, recognising that current arrangements differ across jurisdictions. Participants noted the significant opportunities to leverage private sector investment and accelerate regeneration priorities with resultant economic growth, as demonstrated through engagement at UKREiiF. HM Treasury officials indicated a willingness to continue the dialogue through a dedicated follow-up meeting with the Devolved Nation Core Cites to explore these issues in greater detail and identify areas for future collaboration focused on regeneration and place-based growth. Work is on-going to arrange this follow up meeting.

Westminster Engagement

4.16 To support engagement with Westminster on the Belfast Place Based Growth & Regeneration Proposition, Belfast's MPs have agreed to host a roundtable meeting with Members of Parliament and Peers in September at the Houses of Parliament in Westminster. Approval is sought for the Lord Mayor, accompanied by senior Council officers, to attend this engagement in order to promote the Belfast Proposition, strengthen relationships with key stakeholders, and participate in a programme of one-to-one meetings to further advance the proposition.

4.17 This engagement is particularly important given the recent changes within the UK Government. Work is ongoing to build relationships with the new administration and to align the Belfast Place Based Growth & Regeneration Proposition with emerging government priorities, including the renewed focus on devolution, place based regeneration, regional growth, and commitment to undertake the biggest transfer of power, funding and responsibility from Westminster in a generation. The proposed engagement will provide an opportunity to raise Belfast's profile and the Place Proposition, notably in advance of the Autumn Statement, and importantly, complements ongoing work across innovation, economic development and City Deals.

Engagement with the Northern Ireland Executive

4.18 As noted in the November 2025 Committee update, the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) has facilitated a number of high-level engagements with the Northern Ireland Executive to advance the Belfast Place Based Growth & Regeneration Proposition. This engagement has included convening a joint Ministerial meeting with the Ministers for Finance, Economy, Infrastructure and Communities in September 2025; a meeting with the First Minister and Deputy First Minister held in April 2026; and subsequent follow up meeting with Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) officials and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) in May 2026.

4.19 In addition, following an invite from the BCRPP, the Minister for Communities attended UKREiiF supporting the region's presence at the UK's leading forum for real estate, regeneration and infrastructure investment. This provided a further opportunity to discuss the Belfast Place Based Growth & Regeneration Proposition, including a ministerial roundtable facilitated by the Director of Core Cities UK.

5.0 <u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>

5.1 Financial impact directly associated with the proposition and business case recommendations will be brought back to Committee in due course following consideration by UK Government.

5.2 Costs including travel and subsistence for the Lord Mayor's attendance at the Belfast MPs sponsored event in the Houses of Parliament at the time of preparing the report for Committee are estimated at £900.

6.0 <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u>

None associated with this report.

The Committee:

i. Noted the update on the Belfast Place Based Growth and Regeneration Proposition, including the update on ongoing strategic engagement with the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive;

ii. Noted the update on the Scottish Cities Alliance Devolved Nations Political Leaders Meeting and approved the signing of a joint letter to the Prime Minister aimed at working together to develop models of city and regional empowerment within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that would unlock growth. Further updates to be brought to Committee as this engagement progresses; and

iii. Approved the attendance of the Lord Mayor as set out in the report at the Belfast MP's sponsored event at Houses of Parliament in Westminster, as part of advocacy and engagement activities to support the Belfast Place Based Growth and Regeneration Proposition.

Planning Update

The Committee noted the update which had been provided on Major planning applications and applications which had been determined by the Planning Committee.

Performance Improvement Plan

The Committee was reminded that Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act required councils to agree improvement objectives on an annual basis and publish these in the form of a Performance Improvement Plan, by 30th June. The Act also required that progress was regularly monitored against the improvement objectives and reported in an annual Self-Assessment of Performance, to be published by 30th September.

It was reported that a draft 2025-2026 Performance Improvement Self-Assessment Report (Appendix 1) included 33 actions and 57 key performance indicators (7 statutory and 50 self-imposed).

Following consideration by the Committee the proposed next steps were outlined as follows:

- 1st September - Full Council ratification of PIP Self-Assessment report;
- 11th September: Audit and Risk Panel Performance Update; and
- 30th September: Submission of PIP Self-Assessment report to NIAO and published online.

The Committee:

i. approved the draft Performance Improvement Self-Assessment report 2025-26 (Appendix 1); and

ii. authorised its publication on the council's website by the statutory deadline of 30th September (subject to any minor updates required, including the receipt of outstanding data detailed in section 3.3 and formal ratification by full council on 1st September).

Irish Language Policy – Implementation Plan

The City Solicitor presented the following report for consideration:

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress relating to the implementation of the Irish Language Policy and associated two-year implementation plan previously approved by the Council in October 2025.

The report highlights the next steps required to support programme delivery, including consideration of governance arrangements and resourcing requirements.

2.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- **Note the contents of this report;**
- **Note that officers have continued to progress the planning and scoping phase of the Irish Language Policy implementation plan;**
- **Note that implementation timelines have been impacted due to a number of factors, primarily by the call-in of the initial Council decision to adopt the Policy, which was reported to Council in June 2026, supporting delivery of the Fleadh over the summer and leave arrangements;**
- **Note that officers are developing the programme governance and delivery arrangements required to support implementation of the policy; and**
- **that a further update report will be brought back to Committee in September.**

3.0 Main report

Background

Members will recall that the Council approved the Irish Language Policy and the associated high-level two-year implementation plan in October 2025. The implementation plan identified a number of priority areas including the development of a bilingual corporate identity, bilingual signage, enhanced Irish language visibility across Council communications and social media channels, and preparatory work for future website improvements.

Members will note that the Plan envisages 5 key stages over a 2 year period and adopts a phased approach to the implementation of the policy. Phase 1 is “Planning and Scoping”. This is preparatory in nature and will take place in the first 3 months. Once this phase is complete, there will be a need for further decisions, on such matters as design or logo/materials, programme plan and governance model. Phase 2 is “Design and Procurement”. Phase 3 is “Build and Development”. Phase 4 continues the roll-out. Phase 5 is “Review and evaluation”. The Implementation Plan is subject to review and is likely to be amended throughout its lifespan in order to reflect developments throughout the phases.

The initial phase of the Implementation Plan focused on planning and scoping activities, including the development of programme

planning, communications protocols, developing design guidelines and stakeholder engagement.

Alongside the Implementation Plan, officers continue to progress a range of commitments contained within the Language Strategy Action Plan, including actions relating to service provision, staff awareness, communications and language development initiatives.

3.1 Progress to date

Since approval of the policy, officers have continued preparatory work to enable implementation and have maintained engagement across relevant Council services regarding future delivery requirements. This has included planning in relation to communications, branding and service-delivery commitments arising from the policy and a preliminary assessment of resource and staffing requirements to support delivery of the Implementation Plan.

A cross-departmental officer working group will oversee and coordinate the first phase of the Implementation Plan and will oversee the implementation of the Policy until such times as it has bedded in as business as usual.

3.2 Governance and Resourcing Requirements

Given the cross-cutting nature of the Implementation Plan, which impacts on multiple Council services and workstreams, dedicated programme governance arrangements will be required to ensure effective coordination, oversight and delivery.

The Implementation Plan contains a broad range of commitments spanning communications, branding, signage, website development, stakeholder engagement, procurement, monitoring and reporting. Delivery of these commitments will require coordinated oversight across a number of Council departments and external partners.

This work will be aligned with the outcomes of the Equality and Diversity Unit review and any relevant workforce planning processes.

3.3 Next Steps

In accordance with the Implementation Plan, the initial planning and scoping phase will take 3 months before we move into active delivery. Notwithstanding being in this initial phase, bilingual signage will be factored into design work and procurement arrangements for any new projects. The communications commitments in the Language Strategy Action Plan will continue

in terms of the promotion of Irish language related matters bilingually etc.

Key actions over the next 3 months will include:

- **Developing recommendations arising from the working group regarding governance, programme management and resource requirements;**
- **Development of a detailed programme plan;**
- **Development of design guidelines for signage, uniforms etc;**
- **Development of communications guidelines; and**
- **Continued stakeholder engagement.**

The cross-departmental working group will oversee delivery of the planning and scoping phase and regular updates will be brought to the Language Strategy Working Group and Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.

3.4 Financial and Resource Implications

The Council has approved a financial commitment of £1.9 million to cover early-stage activation priorities aligned with the draft policy, including branding, staffing, signage, communications, ICT requirements.

The Equality and Diversity Unit will be responsible for assisting the City Solicitor in monitoring compliance with this Policy, along with the other proposed language policies under the Language Strategy. The Unit is currently undergoing a service review and may require additional resources to deliver the Council's commitments in the Language Strategy to develop bespoke policies in respect of each of the 5 language strands.

3.5 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

The development of the Irish Language Policy was carried out in line with the Council's Equality Scheme. A draft EQIA was prepared for the policy and was consulted upon alongside the draft policy.

A Rural Needs Assessment was also prepared and included within the consultation documentation.

During discussion, one Member requested monthly progress reports on the implementation.

In response to a Member's question in relation to expenditure of the plan, the City Solicitor advised that details would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report;

- Noted that officers had continued to progress the planning and scoping phase of the Irish Language Policy implementation plan;

- Noted that implementation timelines had been impacted due to a number of factors, primarily by the call-in of the initial Council decision to adopt the Policy, which was reported to the Council in June 2026, supporting delivery of the Fleadh over the summer and leave arrangements;

- Noted that officers would be developing the programme governance and delivery arrangements required to support implementation of the policy; and

- Noted that monthly updates would be provided to the Committee.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Physical Programme Update

The Committee:

Capital Programme Stage Movements –

- **Fire Service Blitz Memorial** – Agreed that the project be moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to £5,000.
- **Depot Charging Scheme 2026/27** - Agreed that the project be moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to the Committee in due course.
- **Drumglass Park SuDS Project –** Agreed that the project be moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to the Committee in due course. Note that this project was fully funded by NI Water and DfI.
- **Belfast Castle** - Agreed that the project be moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to the Committee in due course.
- **City Hall Programmable Floodlighting Replacement** - Agreed that the project be added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.
- **Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall 3010 Modernisation** - Agreed that the project be added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.

Project Updates

- **Girdwood Hub Health & Safety Works -** Agreed up to £300,000 to carry out essential health and safety remedial works.

- **Capital Letters of Offer** - Noted the update in relation to capital letters of offer.
- **Contracts awarded in Q1 2026/27** - Noted the update in relation to contracts awarded.

<u>Asset Management</u>

The Senior Programme Delivery Manager provided an update on the Botanic Gardens (Lower Section) –Proposed Licence Agreements in connection with the Upsurge Project.

He advised that Queens University Belfast (QUB) and Friends of the Field (FotF) had been working in partnership with Belfast City Council on the delivery of the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project at Botanic Gardens (Lower Section).

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 20th February, 2026, approval was granted for a licence agreement with Friends of Belfast Botanic Gardens (FoBBG) for the delivery of the UPSURGE project at this location for a six-month period. The Senior Programme Delivery Manager advised that, subject to Members' approval, it was proposed that the Council now entered into new licence agreements with QUB, FotF and FoBBG, commencing 1st September, 2026 and running to 31st August, 2027. He highlighted that, in line with the established UPSURGE partnership arrangements, no licence fees would apply.

The Committee was also reminded that, at its meeting on 6th February, 2026, it had been agreed that the development of a GAA pitch on the Lower Section be progressed as part of the approved implementation plan. Entering into the proposed licences with QUB, FotF and FoBBG up to 31st August, 2027 would not impede delivery of the pitch project, which remained at design stage and would be subject to the statutory planning process.

The Senior Programme Delivery Manager provided an update on the Upsurge Project. He pointed out that the Upsurge Project (both the demonstrator site and community garden) would remain at the Lower Botanic site until construction of the GAA pitch was scheduled to commence. This was currently estimated as Quarter 3 2027/28, however, this would be subject to further refinement as the project was developed and was dependent also on planning timelines.

He explained that, when the Upsurge Project was first approved in August 2020, Members were advised that the project had a 48-month duration. The Project started in September 2021 and was scheduled to finish in September 2025, however, an extension was granted until February 2026. He highlighted that, it subsequently transpired that there was a further period of time required for the exploitation of the results of the Project and this was due to expire in February 2030.

The Senior Programme Delivery Manager advised that there was no absolute obligation to retain the UPSURGE Project in situ until that time. However, if it was to be moved, the Council must implement viable mitigating measures in order to avoid the risk of funding clawback. Cognisant of the Committee's decision to develop a GAA pitch at this location, officers were exploring whether it was possible to co-locate the projects. In tandem, they were also seeking to identify suitable alternative sites. As part of that process, they would engage with EU Horizon, QUB and the organisations that use the Upsurge site as appropriate.

He pointed out that the Climate and Resilience Committee would be kept up to date as those discussions progressed. However, any final decision in relation to this site would be for Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider.

During discussion, Members requested further information on the initial requirements and duration of the project and its subsequent extension. The Senior Programme Delivery Manager advised that these queries would be included in a cross departmental response on the project which had previously been requested at the Climate and Resilience Committee.

In response to a query regarding the commencement of the Pitches Strategy Consultation, the Director of Resources, Fleet, Transport and Open Spaces and Street Scene advised that a further update would be brought to the Committee in September.

In relation to a Member's proposal for further information regarding sports development and biodiversity initiatives, the City Solicitor advised that the request should be raised at the People and Communities Committee for consideration.

The Committee:

i. Approved licence extensions at Botanic Gardens (Lower Section) for the continued delivery of the Horizon 2020 Upsurge Project for each partner; and

ii. Noted the update in relation to the Upsurge Project as set out within this report and that a further update would be provided in due course.

Physical Programmes - SEUPB Grant Funding Increase Request for Additional Activity

(Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was advised that the Council had been approached by the Urban Villages (UV) team within The Executive Office (TEO) to make a request for grant funding increase to SEUPB for the Ballysillan Redevelopment project that was currently on site.

It was reported that the funding request related to the Council's Letter of Offer which was in place for the Local Action Plan (LAP) and, if successful, the Council would receive additional monies through this Letter of Offer to be spent (or claimed back from spend) on the Ballysillan project (which was being delivered in partnership with UV).

The Committee was advised that discussion on the matter had taken place at the Shared City Partnership meeting on 12th August and the minute of the Partnership and its recommendation formed a separate item on the Committee's agenda.

The Committee was reminded that, in April 2026, it had agreed for proposals to be submitted to SEUPB for additional funding in the region of £2-3m. This application (included the Fleadh and Forthmeadow Greenway signage) was considered in July 2026 by SEUPB as “not sufficiently meeting the selection criteria”.

SEUPB had since advised that they would accept a new application relating to the Ballysillan Project as outlined above. The application deadline had been extended to 18th August and was due to be assessed on 20th August at a special panel and the deadline could not be extended further. As advised at the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum meeting of 13th August, the application would need to be submitted by officers under delegated authority, in advance of the Committee meeting, owing to the immovable deadline restriction, however, the Council maintained the right to withdraw the application if it was not subsequently ratified.

It was reported that the grant funding increase request would focus primarily on a 3G pitch, event space and programming. The application (including programming) was for approximately £1.4m. The grant funding must be spent / claimed by the end of September at the latest and the entire claim process completed within the 2026 calendar year. For this reason, it was not feasible to submit other projects.

During discussion, several Members raised concern in relation to the management of the fund and the associated decision making processes, as well as the need to ensure a balanced distribution of funding across the city.

After discussion, the Committee approved the submission of the grant funding increase request to SEUPB for 26/27 monies and noted that its comments on the matter would be incorporated into the letter from the Shared City Partnership to SEUPB, as detailed in the Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting of 12th August, 2026.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Contracts Update

The Deputy Chief Executive provided an overview of the Contracts Update report.

She highlighted that, since the report had been published, an amendment had been received in relation to the Provision of Property Details Surveys to Land and Property Services as outlined under paragraph 8.0 of the report. She explained that LPS had requested that the contract for this service be renewed, effective from 1st April, 2026, with modifications as outlined in the report for a further term of **1 year**, with the option to extend for 2 periods of 12 months.

The Committee:

- Approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1);

- Approved the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 2);

- Noted the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 3);

- Approved the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 4);

- Approved Contracts awarded by Arc 21 on behalf of the Council (Table 5)

- Note the non-procurement expenditure (Table 6); and
- Under 8.0 of the report - Provision of Property Details Surveys to Land and Property Services - noted that LPS had requested that the contract for this service be renewed, effective from 1st April, 2026, with modifications as outlined in the report for a further term of 1 year, with the option to extend for 2 periods of 12 months.

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)	Prior Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
Traffic management service for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 27	Up to 1 year	£400,000	D Martin	Due to this expanded scope and the need for a dedicated, event-specific solution, a new standalone contract must be procured to ensure safe, compliant and effective delivery of traffic management services for Fleadh 2027. Please note that due to time required in planning and road closure notices this tender was advertised w/c 3rd August to allow sufficient time for award and implementation.	N	N	N
Provision of the cleaning services	Up to 5 years	£1,000,000	N Largey	Critical service to ensure facilities are clean and operational for staff, visitors and	Y	N	N

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)	Prior Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
				commercial partners across a wide range of facilities and services across Belfast This contract is used across Departments to cover assets and buildings not historically covered by in-house cleaning teams.			
Supply and delivery of playground parts	Up to 3 years	£60,000	S Leonard	This contract will ensure a steady supply of replacement playground parts for the Council's playground inspection teams.	Y	N	N
Supply, delivery and installation of summer plants and containers	Up to 3 years	£250,000	D Sales	This contract supports OSS and Bereavement Services with hanging baskets, flower towers, wall mounted manger baskets and barrier/troughs for Belfast in Bloom	Y	N	N
Assessment of biodiversity enhancement opportunities across parks and open spaces, pitches, playgrounds and amenity spaces	Up to 18 months	£41,667	S Leonard	One of the specific deliverables within the Nature Towns and Cities Project is professional work on the topic – Enhancing existing parks and open spaces for nature and climate resilience	N	N	N

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services	On published pipeline (Y/N)	Prior Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
Hotel Accommodation for Fleadh 2027	Up to 8 days	£300,000	D Martin	The contractual agreement between Council and Comhaltas includes the provision of hotel accommodation and business suite facilities. Dates for Fleadh 27 need to be secured with hotel accommodation asap.	N	N	N
Annual abstract of accounts training, technical guidance & treasury management advice	Up to 4 years	£31,200	T Wallace	Specialist consultancy services and training required for compliance purposes Please note that this procurement was conducted by Newry, Mourne & Down District Council on behalf of all NI councils with contracts award in July 26.	N	N	N
Web streaming and AV services at Roselawn Crematorium	Up to 3 years	£90,000	P Gribben	To facilitate secure remote access to funeral services for invited attendees who are unable to attend in person. This will enhance the quality and accessibility of the service provided to bereaved families during a difficult time.	N	N	N

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason	Other Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
Delivery of Output Belfast - Ireland's biggest one-day music conference	Up to 4 months	£22,000	K Forster	There are no other suppliers who can deliver the conference activity. The Output Conference is a key event within the City of Music programme and Music Matters strategy. 2 months & £11k being reported as retrospective	Score Draw Music Ltd	2.	CG&R committee 15/04/2026	N
The provision 3D model, design and planning software	Up to 3 years & 8 months	£48,500	P Gribben	The current platform is widely used by key architectural practices across Northern Ireland who subscribe to the VU.CITY model. Replacing the current supplier at this stage would require a significant system configuration, implementation, migration of historical and live data, testing, user training and managed transition to a	VU.City	7.	N	N

				replacement platform.				

Table 3: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason	Other Committee approval (Y/N) If Y name Committee & Date	External Funding (Y/N)
Park & Ride management for Fleadh 26	Up to 8 days	£170,000	D Martin	The end-to-end car park management solution is required for 3 x park and ride locations with Translink as part of Fleadh 26. The requirement emerged late in the planning stages and did not allow sufficient time to tender. This requirement will be procured via open competition for Fleadh 27.	Car Parking Services	5.	N	N
Delivery of Output Belfast - Ireland's biggest one-day music conference	Up to 2 months	£11,000	K Forster	Further to STA request above this is retrospective STA approval to cover services from July and Aug 26	Score Draw Music Ltd	2.	CG&R committee 15/04/2026	N
The provision 3D model, design and	Up to 4 months	£4,500	P Gribben	Further to STA request above this is retrospective	VU.City	7.	N	N

planning software				STA approval to cover services from 4 months from May to Sept 26.				

Table 4: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Original Duration & Value	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
Research on Advanced Wireless Investment Models (T2696)	Up to 3 months & £70k	Additional 3 months	S McNicholl	Initial contract provided for a second sprint to develop proposals for investing Enabling Infrastructure Funds but subsequent agreement with DfE was that developing a business case would be an improved outcome for that work. The modification is retrospective.	Bloom Procurement Services (NEPRO3)
Health & Safety advice for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 26	Up to 1 year & £30k	Additional £20,000	K Forster	The additional funds are required due to the increased level of support required from the contractor in the months leading up to and over the delivery period of the Fleadh. The nature of the support will not change. The modification is down to the increased level of support required to deliver this event for the first time. Contract is being reported as it now exceeds £30k.	Paul Scott
Deliver the resourcing plan to support the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 26	Up to 3 months & £29k	Additional £8,500	K Forster	The Eventor is already in contract to manage this programme for Fleadh and therefore it makes sense that they continue to manage the additional asks and pressures on the programme and budget.	The Eventor

				The nature of the support will not change. The modification is down to the increased level of support required to deliver this event for the first time. Contract is being reported as it now exceeds £30k.	

Table 5: Contracts awarded by Arc 21 on behalf of the Council

Title of Contract	Original Duration & Value	Modification Required	SRO	Description	Supplier
The receipt and processing of kerbside mixed dry recyclables – lot 1	Up to 7 years & £4.5m (BCC Spend)	Additional 6 months & £330k	D Sales	Arc21 are in the process of procuring a new contract for reception and treatment of dry recyclables (our blue bin waste) but due to delay in the DAERA consultation on future collections schemes Arc 21 are going to extend their contract for an additional six months.	Contract managed by arc 21

Table 6: Non-Procurement Expenditure

Title	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
The Northern Light Incubation Project at Studio Ulster	Up to 2 years	£700,000	D Martin	As part of the Council's Local Economic Partnership Ulster University have been selected to support the delivery of this project. This is considered an exempted contract under the Act in line with Schedule 2, section 3 (1) - horizontal arrangement. Externally Funded	Ulster University

<u>Request for funding - Belmont Bowling Club</u>

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the People and Communities Committee on 11th August, the request for funding was raised by a Member for Belmont Bowling Club to support updates to the clubhouse to become DDA compliant to host the Atlantic Challenge Bowling Championships in September 2026.

Subsequently, the People and Communities Committee agreed that, given the timeframe, a report would be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August to ascertain if any funding streams could be utilised to support the hosting of the Atlantic Challenge bowls event at Belmont Bowling Club, specifically in the provision of an access ramp and toilet facilities.

Further to the Committee meeting, officers followed up with the Club to gather more information in relation to the event and to the request which was detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

It was reported that the Irish Bowling Association had requested the use of Belmont Bowling Club for the Atlantic Challenge on 6th-10th September 2026, an event which was listed in the European City of Sport bid document. The competition was between Scotland, Ireland, USA and Canada, involving Ladies, Men's and Para players.

The Committee approved the request of the reprofiling of European City of Sport funding of up to £6,500 to the Irish Bowling Association to support the upgrade of Belmont Bowling Club in becoming DDA compliant in advance of the Atlantic Challenge Bowling Championships in September 2026.

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of Shared City Partnership of 12th August 2026

(Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approved the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 12th August, including:

Members Updates

- Updates were received from the North and East Belfast Community representatives and are noted in the minutes for members information.

Good Relations Q1 Action Plan Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report

PEACEPLUS – Local Community Action Plan Secretariat Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that members of the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) committee note the contents of the report and agree an additional funding proposal of up to £1.5m (10% of the LAP LoO) for the Ballysillan Urban Villages project is explored and submitted to SEUPB.
- Shared City Partnership also recommends to SP&R, that Officers correspond on behalf of the Shared City Partnership to SEUPB to outline Council's disappointment that the four projects which had been submitted

for support within the programme-wide underspend had not been deemed eligible for funding and request the specific and detailed reasons for the decisions be provided.

Peace Plus Thriving and Peaceful Communities Thematic Update

- Shared City Partnership noted the contents of the report and agree and recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report and agree **TPC1 Community Empowerment** – a change request to enable flexibility regarding the duration of the Local Community Empowerment Programme (LCEP) delivery of between 7-18 months, to enable condensed delivery.

Peace Plus Celebrating Culture and Diversity Thematic Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee Members note the contents of the report and agree CCD1 – Interfaith and Belief - a contract extension to 31 March 2028

Community Regeneration and Transformation Thematic Update

- The Shared City Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report

Update from June Special SCP

- Shared City Partnership noted the update provided by the Good Relations Manager

Any Other Business

- There was no further business reported.

Operational Issues

Minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 13th August

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 13th August, 2026.

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

The Committee:

- Agreed to delegate authority to the City Solicitor to agree an appropriate room hire fee with the organisers of the UNISON conference scheduled for 13th November, 2026; and

- Approved the recommendations as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	CHARGES
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	12 October 2026	**Launch of the Belfast Child Document –** which outlines the design for a seamless developmental pathway for children in Belfast. Numbers attending - 250	Yes	• ROOM HIRE OF £1250 • Any applicable additional charges
Ulster Baseball & Softball Club	17 October 2026	**30th Anniversary End of Season Awards** evening event with drinks reception, awards, speeches and dinner to celebrate the work of the club over last 30 years to promote the playing of baseball and softball locally. Numbers attending - 100	Yes	• NO ROOM HIRE • Any applicable additional charges *With 20% charity deduction applied to final total*
UNISON	13 November 2026	**UNISON LGBT+ Conference Reception** evening event with drinks reception and speeches. The event is attached to the national UNISON LGBT+ conference which will bring around 200 delegates to Belfast for a weekend conference in the ICC. Numbers attending – 200	Yes	• ROOM HIRE *– To be considered* • Any applicable additional charges

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	CHARGES
Newington Housing Association Ltd	16 November 2026	**Newington HA 50th Anniversary Celebration** - celebrating with the local community and voluntary sector 50 years since formation as a registered social housing provided in 1976 with dinner, speeches and entertainment. Numbers attending – 150	Yes	• NO ROOM HIRE • Any applicable additional charges *With 20% charity deduction applied to final total*
Conradh Na Gaeilge	20 November 2026	**ELEN General Assembly Launch Event –** is hosted by Conradh Na Gaeilge in Belfast bringing together delegates and language activist organizations from across Europe to discuss minoritised languages and language rights. Numbers attending – 100	Yes	• ROOM HIRE OF £450 • Any applicable additional charges *With 20% charity deduction applied to final total*
Consulate General of India, Belfast	16 January 2027	**Republic of India (National Day)** Celebration evening with cultural performances and dinner. The event will showcase India's rich heritage, culture and democratic values and would also reinforce Belfast's growing international partnerships, supporting good relations and cultural exchange Numbers attending - 300	Yes	• ROOM HIRE OF £1250 • Any applicable additional charges

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	CHARGES
Northern Ireland Medico Legal Society	6 April 2027	**Northern Ireland Medico Legal Society 50th Anniversary Dinner -** established to foster collaboration, mutual understanding, and collegiality between the medical practitioners, barristers, solicitors and members of the judiciary the evening will consist of a drinks reception and dinner accompanied by speeches, historical talk and music. Numbers attending – 150	Yes	• NO ROOM HIRE • Any applicable additional charges
British Nuclear Medicine Society	18 May 2027	**BNMS Annual Awards Dinner – Spring 2027** – Drinks reception followed by an awards ceremony an ending with dinner. Event to support conference activity in the city with 300-400 delegates. Numbers attending – 200	Yes	• ROOM HIRE OF £1250 • Any applicable additional charges *With 20% charity deduction applied to final total*
Aflac Northern Ireland	25 November 2027	**Aflac NI Con 27 -** Internal employee conference for technology and cyber Security company with keynotes speeches, panel discussions, presentations and refreshments throughout. Numbers attending – 160	Yes	• ROOM HIRE OF £1250 • Any applicable additional charges

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	CHARGES
Society for Endocrinology	7 March 2028	**SfE BES 2028 Conference Dinner –** UK and Irish Endocrine Society will hold their annual conference at the ICC. This evening event will include welcome drinks and dinner followed by speeches and entertainment. Numbers attending – 300	Yes	• ROOM HIRE OF £1250 • Any applicable additional charges *With 20% charity deduction applied to final total*

<u>Request for Use of City Hall Grounds for two events in Autumn 2026</u>

The Committee was advised that the following two requests had been received for events in October to use the City Hall Grounds and, due to the larger scale of activities involved, it was deemed necessary to seek Committee approval:

- Northern Ireland Housing Executive on 19th October, 2026 to host Domestic Abuse Awareness Week Candlelit Vigil; and

- Belfast One BID on 30th – 31st October, 2026 for Halloween themed animation.

During discussion, in response to a Member's request for an update on the Halloween city animation that had been planned for this year, the City Solicitor advised that the enquiry would be referred to the Strategic Director of Place and Economy.

After discussion, the Committee:

1. Authorised the use of City Hall grounds on dates noted above; and

2. Authorised the events to take place on the basis of submission of an event management plan and risk assessment to ensure delivery of a safe public events.

<u>Minutes of the Disability Working Group of 14th August, 2026</u>

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Disability Working Group of 14th August, 2026.

Request for Illumination of City Hall to mark International Safe Abortion Day 2026

The Committee considered a request which had been received from the National Women's Council of Ireland for the illumination of City Hall in the colour green to mark International Safe Abortion Day, on the 28th September, 2026.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Maghie,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

That the Committee agrees to the request to illuminate the City Hall in the colour green to mark International Safe Abortion Day on 28th September 2026.

On a vote, eleven Members voted for the amendment and three against and it was declared carried.

Accordingly, the Committee approved the request from the National Women's Council of Ireland for the illumination of City Hall in the colour green to mark International Safe Abortion Day, on the 28th September, 2026.

Chairperson