

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**



**Belfast
City Council**

19th May 2025

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall and remotely via Teams on Friday, 23rd May, 2025 at 9.30 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

2. Restricted Items

- (a) Social Supermarket Fund 25/26
- (b) City Hall Income Generation Project (Pages 1 - 4)

3. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

- (a) Corporate Plan 2025-28 and Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26 (Pages 5 - 84)
- (b) Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 (Pages 85 - 134)

- (c) Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership Project - sponsorship (Pages 135 - 138)
 - (d) Planning Information (Pages 139 - 152)
 - (e) Smart Belfast: Inclusive Innovation programme (Pages 153 - 156)
 - (f) Diversity Mark Sponsorship (Pages 157 - 160)
 - (g) Sign Language Bill - response to Call for Evidence (Pages 161 - 172)
 - (h) City Centre Governance (Pages 173 - 178)
 - (i) Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure - Consultation
4. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**
- (a) Physical Programme
 - (b) Asset Management
5. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**
- (a) Discretionary Payments Framework (Pages 179 - 190)
 - (b) Requests for Funding (Pages 191 - 194)
 - (c) Contracts update
 - (d) Commercial and Procurement Services Social Value Working Group
6. **Equality and Good Relations**
- (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 12th May 2025 (Pages 195 - 208)
 - (b) Equality and Diversity: Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Quarter 4 2024-25 (Pages 209 - 216)
 - (c) Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 – DAERA Annual Monitoring Report (Pages 217 - 220)
7. **Operational Issues**
- (a) Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 221 - 226)
 - (b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality (Pages 227 - 232)
 - (c) Use of City Hall Grounds - Trad Fest July 2025 (Pages 233 - 236)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Document is Restricted

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Subject:	Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, Chief Executive John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy
Contact Officers:	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth & Anti-Poverty Geoff Dickson, Strategic Planning & Policy Manager Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Strategic Performance Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="width: 60%;"> <p>After Committee Decision</p> <p>After Council Decision</p> <p>Sometime in the future</p> <p>Never</p> </div> <div style="width: 35%; text-align: center;"> <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/> </div> </div>	

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To present Committee with the Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and the accompanying annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26 for consideration and approval.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. agree the draft Corporate Plan (2025-28) as attached at Appendix 1, for publication, subject to minor edits based on Member comments; ii. agree the draft annual Corporate Delivery Plan (2025-26) as attached at Appendix 2.
3.0	Key Issues
	<p>Background</p> <p>3.1 Members will be aware of the challenging environment within which the Council currently operates. The escalating fiscal strain, fuelled by rising prices, a cost-of-living crisis and economic challenges are having significant adverse impacts on individuals, families and services across the city and widening inequalities.</p> <p>3.2 Members have set the challenge to the Council of pivoting its focus and resources to meet the challenges and opportunities which emerge over this Council term. The process through which the new three-year corporate plan has been co-designed with elected members was essential and provided a platform to help inform and connect the Council's resource planning cycles (budgets, people, capital and assets) and the development of a Medium-Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>3.3 Members will be aware of the discussions which has taken place since the election of the new Council through Standing Committees, Party Group Leaders meetings and all Member workshops in relation to the emerging draft Corporate Plan and proposed priorities for future investment.</p> <p>3.4 In December 2024, SP&R Committee agreed that a draft Corporate Plan be published for a public consultation exercise between January – March 2025. Whilst response numbers were small, most comments received were supportive of the priorities outlined in the corporate plan. Minor changes to language have been made to the draft corporate plan where feedback highlighted the need for greater clarity in some areas.</p> <p>Corporate Plan 2025-2028</p>

3.5	Members will be aware of the importance of the corporate plan as a key governance document, cited in the Council's constitution as the means by which the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee sets the strategic direction of the council. It sets out what the council wants to achieve for the city and the key priority actions to make this happen. These priorities are then used as the basis for informing any emerging medium-term financial plan.
3.6	The corporate plan is also a key communication tool for staff across the organisation in understanding the strategic importance of their work in terms of helping to shape the city and improving people's lives. This contribution and impact ranges from cleaning our streets, lifting bins, maintaining our excellent parks, delivering key strategic programmes such as our employability schemes, delivering large scale events or providing essential back office support.
3.7	Subject to Committee consideration and approval, it is proposed that the members approve the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28 for publication (subject to Full Council). Should Members do so, it will be published online, and an underpinning communications plan will commence in June that articulates the Members ambitions for the Council, as laid out in our corporate plan.
	Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-2026
3.8	As the 3 year corporate plan is strategic in nature, it is accompanied by an annual Corporate Delivery Plan (2025-16). This gives Members greater detail on what will be delivered against each priority with the resources allocated for 2025-26. It also contains a series of performance indicators for 2025-26 and associated targets. This give Members greater oversight of what is being delivered within the financial year and articulates the scale of work which continues to be delivered by Council and the impact of this within communities across the city. Members are asked to endorse this draft Delivery Plan, which will form the basis of progress updates to Committee throughout the year and accompanied by a year-end report to SP&R Committee.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.9	There are no immediate resource implications. However, the priorities agreed in the corporate plan will form the basis of the rate setting process over the coming years. Members are also asked to note that a financial planning workshop for Members is currently being arranged that will discuss the financial needs of the priorities contained within the corporate plan.
	<u>Equality of Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.10	Equality screening has been completed as part of the plan development process.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached

	Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan 2025-28 Appendix 2 – Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26
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Corporate Plan

2025 - 2028

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Belfast
City Council

www.belfastcity.gov.uk

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Welcome

“Our residents and our staff are at the heart of everything we do”

Our new Council Corporate Plan is a significant milestone in the development of our organisation. It sets out a clear and positive statement of what we want to achieve for Belfast over the next four years, aligned to our Medium-Term Financial Strategy, it sets out the high-level policy direction for the whole organisation to be delivered through our key strategies, investments, our service delivery plans and the huge contributions that our staff make to the city every day.

The Corporate Plan takes the priorities of the city’s community plan ([The Belfast Agenda](#)) and sets out the ways in which the council will deliver these to grow a sustainable, inclusive economy, and equitable society.

Belfast is a place where ambition thrives. It is a place where people get things done, translating aspiration into action. We are proud of what we have achieved over the past two years and are very excited about the future for our council and city as we go forward with confidence to fulfil and advance the objectives of our Corporate Plan 2025–28.

While Belfast has faced unprecedented levels of uncertainty in recent years as a result of global shocks such as COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, our citizens have demonstrated great resilience, and it is vitally important we don’t lose sight of delivering strong local services that contribute to tackling inequalities and improving the quality of life for our residents. As we plan ahead it is essential that we continue to engage with political leaders and decision-makers at all levels, and with communities across the city to enable us to continue to develop and deliver a successful city that works for everyone.

We are proud to serve Belfast and represent our residents. This is why our new Corporate Plan will put our residents at the heart of everything we do. Our collaborative approach with partners and communities offers a path to redesigning and delivering services that are responsive to local needs and delivering the investment that are essential for continuing success. The new Plan means that citizens, city partners, and investors will know what direction the council is heading, what it stands for and provide the opportunity to hold us to account.

Chair of Strategic Policy & Resources Committee

The city vision

Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent.

A great place to live and work for everyone.

Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by all its citizens, free from the legacy of conflict.

A compassionate city offering opportunities for everyone.

A confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region.

A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world.

A city people dream to visit.



Our core values and behaviours

Creativity



We are creative, always seeking new ways of working. Imagining and delivering a bright future for the city. We encourage innovation and new ideas in all that we do; giving positive recognition to those who contribute to our creativity.

Responsibility



We accept responsibility for our actions, individually and collectively. We act responsibly, respecting each other and taking care of Belfast's cultures and the environment.

Integrity



We are open and honest. We adhere to the highest possible ethical standards. We want the people of Belfast to trust us to do the right thing. We trust and support one another.

Problem Solving



We overcome problems through hard work, ingenuity, determination and real resilience. We overcome barriers and resistance and use our creativity to think about challenges in a different way.

Belfast at a glance



348,005 Belfast population



15% of people are aged 65+



72% of school leavers achieve at least 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths



11,400 VAT registered businesses



247,100 jobs in the city (approx)



£28,677 average salary



70,000 students in further/higher education, training or apprenticeships



67% employment rate



96% of school leavers enter education, employment or training



90% of resident properties have broadband coverage; more than double UK average



57% Achieve 2+ A-Levels A* - E



149,200 Households



access to world class airports, harbour and strong public transport infrastructure



800,000 trees with plans to plant 1m more by 2035



33,000 properties at risk of surface water flooding



generates the regions lowest amount of household waste per capital



92% of residents consider the city as welcoming



42% aged 30 years or younger

Belfast

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Northern
Ireland

Scotland

Ireland

Wales

England

Our City Priorities for 2035

Our Corporate Plan sets out how we will deliver against the strategic priority areas for action (themes) and the significant ambitions set out within the Belfast Agenda for our city and its people. We are committed to a journey of continuous improvement, delivering strong civic leadership and creating a modern and responsive organisation. We want to continue delivering high quality services whilst continuing to invest in local community assets and facilities.

Our focus for the next three years will include:

Theme 1: Our services

Delivering responsive and value for money services.

Theme 2: Our organisation

Ensuring the correct foundations are in place and we continue to be a fit-for-purpose organisation.

Theme 3: Our people and communities

Making life better for all our residents.

Theme 4: Our economy

Creating inclusive, innovative and sustainable growth, learning and opportunity.

Theme 5: Our place

Creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city.

Theme 6: Our planet

Creating a sustainable and nature-positive city.

Theme 7: Compassionate city

Making Belfast a welcoming, caring, fair and inclusive city- leaving no one behind.



Our services

Delivering high quality, effective and efficient services that meet your needs is at the heart of everything we do. We will continually strive to invest in improving our services and facilities to ensure they meet the expectations of our services users and improve the lives of the people of Belfast. Below are some of the key services we delivered in 2023-24 and will continue to deliver over the course of this corporate plan. For a full list of all our services, please visit: www.belfastcity.gov.uk/all-services

Our people and communities

- 20 major projects were completed including:
 - The restoration and expansion of Templemore Baths and upgrades at Belfast Zoo
 - Upgrades to Sally Gardens, Areema Drive, Cavehill and Loughside play parks
- Thousands of people were supported through our £1m hardship programme in response to the cost-of-living crisis
- 3,483 housing, 2,336 food safety and 703 health and safety inspections were carried out
- 1,530 daytime and 3,767 nighttime noise requests were responded to
- 1,142 burials and 3,261 cremations were carried out.
- 3,987 births, 3,294 deaths, 1,500 marriages and 20 civil partnerships were registered
- Summer schemes were delivered at 30 community and play centres to 989 children

Our planet

- 200 of our larger vehicles (comprising 90% of our fleet fuel consumption) were switched to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) reducing carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide emissions by 25%
- Nine Faster (50kW+) chargers for electric vehicles were installed at leisure centres
- The proportion of all waste sent to landfill was 29%
- The household reuse, recycling and composting rate was 41%
- 10.5 million bins (including Bryson collections) and 70,000 bulky waste items were collected
- 116 community cleanups involving 1,591 volunteers were facilitated
- 884 fixed penalty notices for littering were issued

12km
walking and cycling path completed as part of **Forth Meadow Community Greenway**

23,700
health and **fitness** members used our gyms, pools, fitness studios and courts

1,000 people (approx) benefited from the **Healthwise programme**

17,941
trees were planted - a total of 110,254 since 2021

58,500
(approx) tonnes of waste was recycled, reused and composted

19,000
young people attended 258 school visits and 447 litter workshops



Our economy

- 688 individuals were engaged in business start-up activities
- 263 business plans were produced for start-up businesses
- 57 organisations were supported to start a social economy or cooperative business
- 348 existing businesses were supported with business growth activity
- 222 people were supported to achieve vocationally- specific, level 3-5 qualifications
- 900 people were supported through Gateway to Choices (G2C) to access training and employment
- 850 people attended our Belfast Jobsfair
- 238 young people benefited from our GCSE Support Programme
- 1,759 individuals were engaged through enterprise awareness activity
- There were 816 participants on our Employment and Upskilling Academies

Our place

- 27 major and 1,300 local planning applications were determined
- 179 dangerous structures dealt with
- 435 entertainment licensing applications were processed and we undertook 829 inspections
- 6,143 building regulations applications were processed and 15,026 inspections undertaken
- The St Patrick's Day music weekend events attracted 30,000 people
- The Maritime Festival attracted 80,000 people
- 213,000 visitors were welcomed to Belfast Zoo
- 310,500 visitors were welcomed to City Hall exhibition and guided tours
- Over 234,000 visitors were welcomed and 808 events held at 2 Royal Avenue
- Six new Belfast Bikes stations and six active travel cycle stands were installed
- 112,000 journeys were taken on Belfast Bikes
- New Brown's Bridge on the Lagan Towpath was installed
- Funding support for over 100 cultural organisations annually

1,759

individuals were engaged through enterprise awareness activity

263

business plans were developed, supporting the creation of 233 jobs through our support for business start-ups

816

participants on our Employment and Upskilling Academies, with 87% progressing into work or gaining a better job

1,600

new homes were approved

Belfast 2024

an ambitious cultural celebration for our city - was launched

1 million+

Over one million visitors were welcomed to St George's Market

Our Organisation

Foundations for
success



Our Organisation: Foundations for Success

‘Our ambition is to be recognised for excellence in our role as service provider and as an employer’

We recognise the need to continually develop and improve our internal services to support our key priorities and ambitions set out within this corporate plan. Our foundations reflect our capacity to deliver and achieve successful outcomes, both for the organisation and the city, and we will work to ensure their strength over the next three years.

People

Our People are at the heart of everything we do. We will prioritise the implementation of our **People Strategy (2023 – 2026)** to provide opportunities for employees to develop and progress within the organisation. We will support departments to develop and implement strategic workforce planning to address resource and skills gaps whilst embedding inclusive growth into our approach to recruitment and apprenticeships. We will also continue to provide capacity building and support for our Elected Members to ensure they are equipped to carry out their roles effectively.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

Belfast is a vibrant city with a diverse population. We promote and uphold equality and diversity in how we plan, offer, and provide our services. We will deliver against a number of action plans as part of the EDI Strategic Framework including **Race Equality** and **Diversity Action Plans**, making equality central to our policy and decision-making processes.

Digital Technology

Council will continue to explore enhancing our digital services and capability through the implementation of our **Digital Strategy**. This will focus on maximising our technology investments and systems to support service improvement across the council. Our Digital projects will focus on self-service and automation. We aim to create a data-driven culture which fosters responsible, ethical and innovative use of data to support evidence-based decision-making.

Continuous Improvement

Our **Continuous Improvement Programme** will continue to deliver a sequenced programme of improvement projects that place our citizens at the centre of the services the Council delivers, resolve organisational challenges, rationalise cost, build capacity, agility, capability, and enable delivery of our objectives. This work will focus on enhancing our services including Customer Programme, Digital Services, HR, Finance and Procurement.

Belfast Agenda (2024-2028)

The Council will work closely with the city partners to help deliver positive outcomes across the city. The **refreshed Belfast Agenda** will underpin the work of Council over the next three years to ensure that we achieve our ambitions to deliver a city where everyone fulfils their potential; benefiting from a thriving and prosperous economy, and better health & wellbeing.

Strategic Partnerships

Partnership working is essential to drive real change in the city – no single organisation can deliver the outcomes we want to see for the people of Belfast. To maximise the impact of our partnerships, a **strategic partnership framework will be developed** to cement key partnerships across the city.

Planning & Performance Management

The Council will implement a **planning and performance management framework** that supports the implementation of the corporate, departmental and service plans through regular monitoring, reporting and review.

Customer Focus Programme

To enhance our services and customer experience we will develop and deliver phase 3 of our **Customer Focus Programme**.

Celebrating language diversity

Council will implement a **Language Strategy Action Plan** which will promote, protect and enhance the linguistic diversity which exists within and across the city and our workforce.

Asset Management

Our property assets are an important part of supporting and enabling us to transform the way we deliver our services and our regeneration priorities. We will develop an **asset management strategy** which will set the framework for managing our property portfolio effectively.

Finance

The financial sustainability of the organisation is a fundamental priority to ensure that we are effectively resourced to deliver high quality services whilst ensuring value for money for the ratepayer.

We will develop a new **medium term financial plan 2025-2028** and **efficiency plan** to support the delivery of this corporate plan.

We will also produce a new capital programme financing strategy for 2025-2028 to outline our approach towards financing Council's capital programme.

Funding Framework

A corporate level **funding framework** will be established to enable Council to become more strategic and targeted when securing external investment into the city: enhancing services, creating new facilities, assets, and transforming local places.

Governance

We will review our **governance arrangements** to ensure effective and efficient political decision-making. We will focus on the implementation of agreed audit actions arising from delivery of the annual Audit Plan, ensuring adequate and effective risk, control, and assurance arrangements are in place.

Communications and Engagement

Council recognises the importance of communicating with ratepayers and other audiences through a range of platforms to keep people informed of services and projects. We will continue to innovate in how we **communicate, consult, and engage** to ensure communication reflects changing audience demands and emerging tools and platforms.

We will strive to ensure that our staff are continually engaged and informed through the introduction of a modern employee engagement platform that will become the main internal communications channel for council.

Commercial and Procurement Services

Developing and embedding the corporate approach to **sustainable** procurement activity across the organisation will support our aspirations to ensure inclusive growth and social value key factors within our procurement policies. We will refresh our **Commercial Strategy** as part of a medium-term financial plan, making sure we are maximising output for the minimum input, and developing a procurement approach for resources and fleet.

City innovation

Council will prioritise the development of an **Innovation Strategy and Policy** to help drive service transformation. We will collaborate closely with partners to influence investment in digital infrastructure in the city and support the work of Innovation City Belfast and the Innovation Commissioner. Council will provide strategic guidance and support on innovative approaches for the city and the Council, integrated with key corporate strategies. We will develop a strategic approach to managing and curating city data to support innovative approaches to delivering on the Belfast Agenda.

Our people and communities

Making life better for
all our residents



Our people and communities are at the heart of Belfast, and we will strive to ensure that we can positively impact the quality of life and wellbeing of all our residents. We will work to deliver impactful neighbourhood improvements for residents and continue to address key issues at a local level.

We will also continue to engage with key partners and networks to encourage more participation and engagement in communities, ensuring that local people can have a say in the key challenges within their neighbourhoods.

Community and Neighbourhood Regeneration

Physical Programme

Working in partnership to leverage significant investment from external sources towards ongoing delivery of the **£600m Physical Programme**, creating new community assets and a wide range of facilities across the city. Highlights include delivery of Cathedral Gardens, a state-of-the-art open space in the city centre and major improvements to parks including the Urban Villages £6.9m Ballysillan Playing Fields project and the €13.5m PEACE PLUS Reconnected Belfast: Waterworks and Alexandra Park. Working with a range of partners including National Lottery Heritage Fund we will redevelop the Strand Arts Centre, preserving and enhancing this iconic cinema.

Invest in our neighbourhoods

We will work with our community planning partners to develop a joined-up approach to **neighbourhood regeneration** by developing

tailored, placed-based interventions addressing specific social economic needs.

We will continue to deliver our **£10.28 million Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund** that will support local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) groups across the city to deliver major capital projects in their communities which help develop neighbourhood tourism, improve environmental sustainability, and support the city's social economy.

Council will take a strategic approach towards the development and management of **neighbourhood assets and facilities**, exploring opportunities for community wealth building and asset transfers to support and facilitate community ownership where possible.

Focus will be given to developing key **arterial routes** that will connect our communities.

We will continue to develop ways to strengthen **community participation** through inclusive co-design and ensure residents have a say in issues and interventions in their areas.

Enhance our open spaces and physical assets

Enhancement and improvement of our **public spaces and facilities** as part of our Physical Programme will be prioritised to support accessibility as well as physical, social and emotional wellbeing for all.

This work will include the continued delivery of our annual **Playground Improvement Programme** to ensure that young people can access high quality outdoor play facilities from an early age. We will also deliver animation programmes in our new parks: Páirc Nua Chollan, Ballysillan, Marrowbone and Pitt Park.

We will continue to deliver on our [Belfast Open Spaces strategy](#) for 2035 through the implementation of a revised action plan, in line with its strategic principles.

We will work with our partners to deliver a programme of **Greenways, pathways** and **Access to the Hills** projects including Sydenham, Blackstaff, West Belfast and Colin Greenways and pathways at Black Mountain, Glencairn, Ligoniel and Squire's Hill.

Build capacity within our communities

Our communities are an essential part of the fabric of Belfast. We will provide physical investment, revenue support and funding to **enhance our communities**. We will continue to build on our engagement framework to ensure

that the support that we offer meets local needs and addresses key challenges to help deliver long lasting and sustainable impact.

We will also continue to be **responsive** in times of need and develop interventions to support those most affected by emerging or ongoing

social issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and support our local VCSE organisations through Council managed grant programmes.

Health Inequalities

Support the delivery of integrated health services

We will continue to work in partnership with key agencies to deliver a local area approach to **reduce health inequalities** and address health related challenges across Belfast. Improved coordination and integration of established systems and processes can help to deliver a 'One Belfast Vulnerability Model' to support interventions such as **Complex Lives** which is aimed at vulnerable people identified as being impacted by chronic homelessness.

Our approach will be underpinned by our [Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy](#) which will bring together partners across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors with residents, clubs, schools, leisure providers and others to develop a locally led approach to improving participating in physical activity, recreation, and sport.

We will also continue to invest in our leisure provision through our [Leisure Transformation Programme](#) to ensure that our leisure centres and programmes deliver quality services that meets the needs of our communities.

Increase opportunities for people to be physically active

Evidence demonstrates that leading an active life with a healthy lifestyle brings multiple health benefits. We want to increase the number of people in Belfast that lead active, healthy lifestyles throughout the course of their lives.

We will deliver our Parks Improvement Programme and continue to deliver our pitch surface replacement programme. This will ensure our facilities are kept to a high standard, enhancing the playing experience and delivering health benefits.

Our economy

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Creating inclusive,
innovative and
sustainable growth,
learning and opportunity



Council is committed to ensuring that Belfast has a thriving and prosperous economy that is a hub for business and provides diverse employment opportunities for our population. Belfast and the Belfast City Region are central to driving productivity, innovation and growth in the Northern Ireland economy contributing more than two-thirds (£28.9bn) of Northern Ireland's economic output (Gross Value Added) and home to 50.5% of the total Northern Ireland business base, with an employment share of 63.5% of the Northern Ireland total.

Belfast region city deal

The highly ambitious [Belfast Region City Deal](#) (BRCD) represents a new way of working between central and local government and regional partners. The deal secured a bespoke package of investment from central government and the BRCD partners of more than £850 million to support the delivery of a shared vision to deliver “inclusive economic growth that delivers more and better jobs, a positive impact on the most deprived communities and a balanced spread of benefits across the region”.

Over the next three years we will work to implement the first £200m of BRCD funded projects emerging in the city (Studio Ulster, Digital Twin, Belfast Rapid Transit 2, Lagan Pedestrian Bridge, Momentum One Zero, I-REACH, Augment the City and Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology).

We will also continue to work closely with partners to support the delivery of other programmes such as the NI wide [Digital Transformation Flexible Fund](#).

Productivity and innovation

We will work with our partners, government, and key agencies to create more and better jobs that are sustainable and rewarding. We will focus on delivering the benefits of the **BRCD**, supporting innovation and application of advanced technologies that will drive the economy of the future in digital and creative industries, financial services and FinTech; life and health sciences and MedTech; and advanced manufacturing, engineering and green economy.

This will include delivery of the first phase of the £55 million **BRCD Innovation Challenge Fund** which aims to address the emerging needs and unique characteristics of the region and is designed to stimulate collaborative innovation and investment. The fund will stimulate innovation to address the region's 'Grand Challenges' of (i) artificial intelligence and data, (ii) health and wellbeing and (iii) sustainability and resilience.

We will promote the critical role of Belfast and the Belfast Region in driving productivity and delivering inclusive growth and work

collaboratively with public and private sector partners to support and encourage continuing international, business and government investment in the Region.

Inclusive, sustainable growth and opportunity

We will work with partners to deliver high quality enterprise support covering all stages of the business growth lifecycle. The **Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service** ([Go Succeed](#)) – led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 local authorities – will offer an enhanced menu of flexible support to anyone thinking about starting or growing a business. There will be specific support for key target groups including female entrepreneurs and those with a disability. It will also provide targeted support for social enterprises and cooperatives.

We will continue to develop our **City Markets**, in recognition of the key role that they play in enhancing the economic offering, vibrancy and employment opportunities in the city.

Economic activity and employment rates in parts of Belfast are amongst the lowest in Northern

Ireland. Employment rates and income levels also vary greatly across the city, and this can create barriers and exacerbate social exclusion challenges. We will therefore prioritise creating inclusive pathways to good employment opportunities through the delivery of **Belfast Employment Academies** which are short, intensive employment interventions designed to better equip residents to find good jobs.

Our work will include the ongoing collaboration with a wide range of partners through the **Belfast Labour Market Partnership** (LMP) which is focused on improving Belfast's employability outcomes and labour market conditions.

The Labour Market Partnership (LMP) will be key to building sector specific upskilling pathways, connecting residents with new or better employment opportunities, particular in our key growth sectors and areas of opportunity. We will target support for disadvantaged groups and places to ensure inclusivity and address existing imbalances. This work will require close collaboration with a wider range of community-based partners whose outreach and engagement work is essential in enabling us to attract participation from across key target groups. We will work with partners to build consensus around how we can make most effective use of resources to increase labour market participation, including

consideration of any future Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) interventions.

Council will continue to work with partners to optimise links between the business community and education / training providers to enable young people and adults to develop the skills and qualifications they need to progress in the workforce, at all stages of their career. Skills development is central to creating the conditions for sustained innovation, excellence, and growth for our Belfast businesses.

We will also support the delivery of the [Belfast Business Promise](#) which represents a new accreditation for employers who are working together to make Belfast a city that provides good jobs, better wages for employees, whilst also supporting a sustainable local economy and building a healthier city for everyone. It will create a community of organisations committed to improving how they do business together.

Council will continue to support and strive for the creation of a **sustainable circular economy** meaning materials are not wasted and nature is regenerated. We will also work with partners to help develop an ecosystem that supports and encourages innovation and collaboration in green tech amongst existing companies and start-ups and deliver the skills essential to

converting the net-zero challenge into an economic opportunity.



Our place

Creating a liveable and
connected, vibrant and
competitive city



A key ambition of the Belfast Agenda is to attract a further 66,000 residents to the city by 2035 and work in partnership with key agencies to ensure that all residents have access to the high-quality, sustainable homes they deserve. In order to achieve this Council has a key role to play in terms of supporting housing led regeneration across the city.

Quality Place-Making and Housing Led Regeneration

While the Council does not have direct responsibility for building new homes, it does have a range of powers that can support quality place-making and contribute to housing quality and housing development. These include the implementation of our Local Development Plan, HMO licensing, building control, planning control, non-statutory regeneration activities, economic development, promoting the city to investors and using our own land for household development and regeneration.

Local Development Plan

The Belfast **Local Development Plan** (LDP) 2035 Strategy was adopted in 2023 and sets a vision for how Belfast should look in the future. The LDP will guide investment decisions in the city, supporting the ambitions of the city for inclusive, sustainable growth and development.

We want to ensure quality placemaking, that Belfast is a liveable city, in which local people are connected to their community, where both residents and visitors are able to connect with jobs, services and amenities in safe, active, accessible, and sustainable way.

Over the next three years, Council will produce the Local Policies Plan (LPP) which will contain local policies and site-specific proposals in relation to the development and use of land. The Plan will set out designations and land use zonings required to deliver the Council's vision, objectives and strategic policies.

To support the Local Development Plan and the strategic growth of the city, we will implement our **planning improvement programme** and streamline our planning application processes to provide a more efficient, effective and customer-focused service.

Support and work with partners to address housing challenges

Council will continue to work with partners such as Northern Ireland Housing Executive to support

Enhancing our city centre is also crucial to ensure that Belfast is a thriving and inclusive destination for residents and visitors alike. We will continue to strengthen and build on our sense of place by accelerating major regeneration schemes. These will seek to deliver inclusive economic, social and environmental benefits, whilst protecting and enhancing access to our built and natural heritage.

increased provision of social homes through the [Social Housing Development Programme](#).

We will procure and engage with our long-term private sector partner (PSP) to act as a **master developer to deliver residential-led, mixed-use developments** in support of our city's growth targets.

Working with partners we will seek to **Accelerate City Centre Living** through the transformation of derelict and underutilised city centre buildings into mixed-use and residential tenures.

Strategic Site Assessments

A key priority for Council will be to deliver Phase Two of our **Strategic Site Assessments** to bring forward housing-led regeneration schemes.

Active and Sustainable Travel

Connectivity is vital for a city to be successful. Whilst Belfast is the transport and logistical hub for the entire region, it must also meet the needs of our communities, ensuring they have access to jobs and to each other. Improving connectivity within the city centre as well as between the city centre and neighbourhoods is critical to our future success.

We will work to deliver and implement an overarching programme including **access, active and sustainable travel, and connectivity** across the city.

Strategic Place Making Partnerships

The [Eastern Transport Plan](#) (ETP) is a strategic framework for bringing forward climate commitments, supporting the integration of a prioritised and modernised public transport system and a network of walking and cycling routes across a number of Council areas including Belfast. The Council will work closely with the Department for Infrastructure to ensure that the ETP aligns with and supports our ambitions for a connected and sustainable city.

Future City Centre and Wider City Regeneration and Investment

We will lead on the delivery of a range of strategic regeneration and investment schemes across Belfast to ensure that the potential of the wider city is maximized in a way that benefits all citizens and results in improved outcomes for communities.

We will also work to secure funding to sustain the long-term use of **2 Royal Avenue** in line with the acquisition objectives and recommendations set out in the operator feasibility report.

Future City Centre Programme

Our **Future City Centre Programme** seeks to address challenges facing the city centre. These include the emerging retail, tourism and hospitality landscape and the need to reimagine and diversify to future-proof the city centre. We will reimagine the city centre, promoting mixed uses, open and green spaces and community infrastructure.

A Bolder Vision

An ambitious blueprint developed jointly by Council, Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure to explore a shared

approach to creating a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre. [A Bolder Vision](#) is built on the principles of promoting wellbeing for all; prioritising walking, cycling and public transport; creating lively, safe and green streets; and removing barriers to movement between the city centre and surrounding communities.

We will prioritise the development of **A Bolder Vision** Delivery Plan that will identify a range of outline pilot projects and interventions that will be most beneficial for city centre.

Safeguarding our built Heritage

We will endeavour to safeguard our historic and heritage assets across the city, including Wilmont House, Palm House, Floral Hall and Fernhill House, as well as the continued maintenance of other significant heritage assets including City Hall, St. George's Market, Ulster Hall and the Tropical Ravine.

Cultural and Tourism Development

We will continue to work with our partners to deliver on our ambitions to grow, position and sustain our tourism industry, offer an improved visitor experience, strengthen our position in national and international tourism markets while developing sustainably to attract more people to

the city and to encourage them to stay longer and spend more. We aim to profile and leverage Belfast's position as a gateway city.

Neighbourhood tourism

We will prioritise growing our tourism product by investing in **neighbourhood tourism** and supporting the incredible range of community and cultural festivals and events that take place across the city.

We will continue to invest in an annual major events programme and seek to attract large scale events, such as the Fleadh Cheoil which will be hosted across Belfast in 2026, with all the benefits that these bring both to our economy and the liveability of the city.

Cultural Strategy and Tourism Plan

Council will drive delivery on our **Cultural Strategy - 'A City Imagining' and 10-year Tourism Plan 'Make Yourself At Home'** to create a culturally vibrant city which embraces and embeds culture, arts, events and festivals at its heart.

We will build on the legacy of **Belfast2024**, a cultural celebration for our city through supporting innovation, enhanced community engagement and key strategic partnerships to foster a sense of identity, social cohesion and economic growth...We will embrace our new status as a UNESCO City of Music and deliver the Multi-Annual Cultural and Arts Support Programme.

Belfast has been recognised as a UNESCO Learning City, to support this Council has been proud to deliver the Belfast Learning Festival annually and is committed to continue to promote Lifelong Learning with the support of our key partners across the city.

Belfast Stories

Belfast Stories is a key project within the Belfast Regional City Deal (BRCD). Due to open in 2030, it will be located in the historic Bank of Ireland building and the surrounding 5,000 m2 site at the

top of Royal Avenue. The key strategic objectives of Belfast Stories are to:

- Grow Belfast's economy through tourism led regeneration and support for screen-based creative industries.
- Create and sustain a diversified, vibrant city centre where people want to live and work, visit, and invest.
- Support a greater sense of connection with Belfast.

Belfast Stories brings together three threads as one:

- A public space – a place for everyone to gather, helping us to express our unique identities and share them with others.
- A visitor attraction which clearly communicates the spirit of the city – its past, its present and its future.
- A creative hub where writers, musicians, artists and film makers can meet to create and collaborate.



Our planet

Creating a sustainable,
nature-positive city



We are committed to tackling climate change and biodiversity loss head on to ensure that Belfast can be a place where people and nature thrive together, a place where we can reduce waste and single-use plastics, harness green energy and plant more trees.

To deliver a sustainable city we will work with our residents and industries to reduce their carbon footprints. Belfast has a great opportunity to lead the way in providing global green solutions by leveraging our unique market access and international networks to become a hub for low carbon design and manufacturing. We will therefore support our industries to thrive on all the opportunities in the green economy whilst creating a much cleaner environment.

Re-naturing the city and increasing resilience to climate change

We will support and shape a city that is learning and building on its existing strengths to become a green, transformed, and healthy city, promoting the uptake of nature based solutions across the city to support climate. Delivery, with city partners organisations, of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan (2021 – 2026) will continue in improving air quality for Belfast.

We value our natural ecosystems and will nurture and expand these further in areas most needed such as our inner city, to protect and support urban communities to thrive.

We will deliver our [Tree Strategy](#) to help manage and improve the tree-scape in the city, to provide a resilient and diverse urban forest for future generations.

The strategy sets out a commitment to delivering key priorities and actions over the next ten years.

Creating a sustainable circular economy

There is a real opportunity for Belfast to become a leading-edge city in driving forward a **sustainable circular economy** that minimises waste and promotes the sustainable use of natural resources.

This offers a potential route to **reducing waste**, reversing environmental harm and increasing the sustainability of products and supply chains.

Over the next three years, we will transform our throwaway economy into one where waste is reduced, resources are circulated, and nature is regenerated. Leaving no-one behind, we will maximise the social opportunities of the

transition and reduce the risks so that everyone benefits.

We will deliver local solutions to sustainable, healthy, and affordable food for our citizens. Bring together the right people to tackle the barriers that are preventing the uptake of energy efficiency measures in buildings across the city and develop a heat network project for the city centre to create jobs and prosperity. In particular we will:

- Promote sustainable circular economy approaches.
- Promote a Just Transition to Net Zero in Belfast.
- Increase the use of Electric Vehicles in Belfast and improve access to charge points.
- Reduce energy consumption (and bills) of housing and public and commercial buildings.
- Decarbonise the heat supply to buildings in the city.

Promote sustainable circular economy approaches

We will support the development of circular economy systems where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. We will work to **reduce the carbon / environmental impact of municipal waste** across Belfast, working in partnership with others to ensure items are reused, recycled or recovered.

Council is supportive of the need to produce, process, distribute and dispose of good food that can contribute to thriving local economies and sustainable livelihoods, protect the diversity of both plants and animals and the welfare of farmed and wild species whilst avoiding damaging or wasting natural resources or contributing to climate change.

We will seek re-accreditation as a [Sustainable Food City](#) and prioritise the development of a **Belfast Sustainable Food Strategy**. We will coordinate the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership and create and deliver the Belfast Sustainable Food Place whilst supporting community-based approaches to sustainable food in Belfast.

We will continue to deliver our **Fleet Strategy** gradually replacing existing old fleet with new low emission vehicles, investing in necessary infrastructure on our assets to support the transition; upgrading the electrical infrastructure at Duncrue to support EV vehicles.

In order to reduce energy consumption and costs for housing, public, and commercial buildings support will be given to the development of a neighbourhood retrofit pilot through the Belfast Retrofit Hub.

Innovating to Net Zero

Climate Action Plan

The Council will deliver its Climate Action Plan which sets out a roadmap to achieve its net zero ambitions. The plan features a range of actions across

five key themes; Tools for Transition, Energy and Buildings, Transport, Waste Management and Adaptation.

Enable the city to decarbonise at scale

Over the next three years, we will deliver on our ambition and roadmap to become an inclusive, net-zero emissions, climate-resilient economy by working with city partners to deliver the **Belfast Local Area Energy Plan** and develop a portfolio of net zero projects to achieve the city's emission reduction targets and support an inclusive transition to net zero. We will identify and respond to emerging funding opportunities, continuing to engage with investors and financial institutions. Council will lever existing and planned assets and investment through place-based interventions to become an exemplar of a low carbon economy creating opportunities for training, employment and green growth. The aim is to expand existing clusters of net zero technology companies which exist in the city to create a burgeoning **GreenTech sector** which drives growth across NI and helps realise the objectives of the Green Growth Strategy.

Investment in the physical and digital infrastructure to develop a GreenTech ecosystem will encourage innovation and collaboration amongst existing companies and start-ups to draw in more investment and to unlock new high-growth technology for domestic use and export. In particular we will:

- Support local energy projects.
- Create an exemplar net zero park to design and demonstrate green technology.
- Develop a stable supply of green energy to the Net Zero Park and surrounding lands to support the industrial cluster.
- Accelerate the transition to low carbon manufacturing.
- Support Green Multi-Modal Mobility.

Compassionate city

Making Belfast a
welcoming, caring,
fair and inclusive city -
Leaving no one behind



As a compassionate city, we recognise the complexity and diversity of our people, and we are determined to make life better for everyone. To do this it will be vital to build on the innovation, expertise and assets which already exists within our communities. We will continue to develop pathways connecting and engaging everyone, particularly those harder to reach. Working collaboratively, through specific actions and through our overall approach to programmes and projects we are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind.

Inclusive growth and anti-poverty

Promoting and embedding Inclusive Growth

Council is committed to inclusive growth and ensuring the success of the city reaches every citizen. Our aim is to support and connect all residents with economic growth to create vibrant communities where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed. We recognise that the council must take the lead and demonstrate how we use our range of powers to create an inclusive city. In our role as a civic leader, this includes signing up to the Belfast Business Promise (our inclusive growth city charter) and integrating inclusive growth into Council's decision-making processes so that we can support social mobility and create more inclusive labour markets and places across the city. We will continue to work with city partners, particularly key anchor institutions, to respond to the imperative to develop a more inclusive economy.

Addressing vulnerabilities and responding to societal challenges

We will continue to work with partners and stakeholders to help address vulnerabilities and key issues that impact on individuals and communities across the city. This will include the continued implementation of 'Complex Lives' which is a whole-system approach focused on people experiencing chronic homelessness. The Complex Lives initiative seeks to improve collaborative working between statutory bodies and voluntary sector organisations, so as to provide the right support to people who need it at the right time and in the right place.

We will also continue to respond to societal pressures such as the cost-of-living crisis to provide much needed support for children and young people, families and individuals across the city. This will include developing targeted and joined up approaches to address food, fuel and transport poverty and their impact on low-income households and adopting a responsive approach to other pressures that may emerge over the next four-year period.

Good relations and shared future

Good Relations Action Plan

Over the past five years, the number of displaced people has increased globally, and whilst not large, the asylum seeking and refugee population is growing in Northern Ireland, with the majority accommodated in the greater Belfast area. Refugees and asylum seekers represent some of the most vulnerable people in our society and they often find themselves settling in areas with the highest levels of multiple deprivation, causing further stress to communities who themselves are still recovering from division and conflict.

We will therefore prioritise **supporting new communities** to ensure that Belfast is a diverse and vibrant city where all people can live in peace, as equals. This work will include the implementation of our Good Relations Action Plan and mainstreaming of Good Relations into Council work, to promote positive cultural change. We will also develop an inclusive Belfast Intervention Plan to address inequalities and support the inclusion and integration of all including ethnic minorities and deliver racial equality, shared education and cultural inclusion programmes and activities.

We will work across government and with communities to deliver programmes such as the Urban Villages initiative which helps transform local places, create thriving spaces and deliver good relations outcomes.

PeacePlus

PEACEPLUS is a European Union funding programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the PEACE and INTERREG programmes.

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) has allocated up to €17,433,277 to us for a [Local Community Action Plan](#) to fund community activities and infrastructure projects that help build peace and reconciliation in Belfast. We have worked with communities and partners across the city to further develop the plan for Belfast which will deliver projects on the following three themes: local community regeneration and transformation, thriving and peaceful communities, and celebrating cultures and diversity.

We will prioritise the implementation of the Local Community Action Plan throughout the next four-year period to deliver real and lasting peace and reconciliation across Belfast.

We have secured significant investment to enhance existing assets across the city including Waterworks Park and Alexandra Park.

We will also look at proposals for an Intercultural Hub(s) in the city.

Community Safety

We will work to ensure that Belfast is a safe city that encourages cooperation with, and inspires confidence in, the justice system and the police. We will engage in our multi-agency Police and Community Safety Partnerships and implement a new Police and Community Safety Action Plan for the city.

Ending Violence against Women & Girls

As a council, Belfast is supporting the NI Executive to roll out their [Ending Violence Against Women & Girls](#) Strategy, this is a pressing societal challenge however we are committed to ensuring that women & girls should feel, and be, safe everywhere.

Work has already begun; early 2025 saw the delivery of a training offer for community & voluntary groups, with plans to deliver more in the future.

Older people

Belfast Age Friendly Plan

We want Belfast to be a great place to grow older. To do this, we need to plan for an increasing aging population in a way that ensures our older people can continue to live happier, healthier and more connected lives. We will therefore prioritise delivering on the [2022-2026 Belfast Age Friendly Plan](#) which sets out a range of important priorities and actions for Council and partner organisations to implement to support the health and wellbeing of our older people.

We could not fulfil our vision of Belfast being a city where older people live life to the full without the input, support and challenge provided by [Greater Belfast Seniors Forum](#), the six local older people's forums and the many groups they represent.

We want to ensure that the needs of older people are considered during service development and to maximise the benefits of older people's experience.

Belfast is an Age Friendly City and we are currently implementing our 3rd Age Friendly plan which is delivered through the Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership which is facilitated by Belfast City Council. The plan contains a range of actions in relation to priorities identified by older people

Children and young people

We want all our children and young people to have the best start in life and will work closely with key agencies and partners to ensure that early intervention and early years support is available for all across Belfast.

Council will also work to ensure that we can empower our children and young people to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives to achieve a sustainable, inclusive and child-friendly place to live. We will facilitate, an active and engaged [Belfast City Youth Council](#) who work

with relevant fora and elected members to ensure that the needs of children and young people are reflected within our Belfast Agenda and council priorities.

We will also prioritise the development of a three-year action plan for play development across the city to ensure children and young people have access to high quality play opportunities from an early age.



Financing the plan

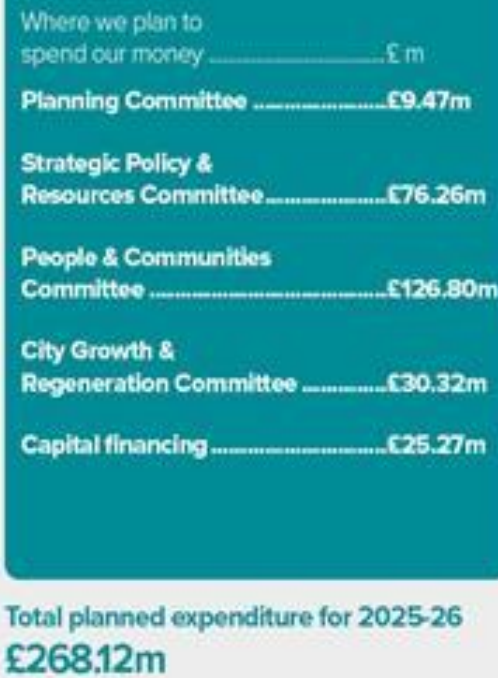
Our corporate plan is based on a planned investment of £268.12 million for 2025-26. This includes a projection of £212.98 million from the district rate, £24.84 million from fees and charges, £15.13 million from grant funding and £15.17 million from other.

Where we get our money from

We get our money from these key areas:



Where we plan to spend our money



Measuring and Reviewing our Progress

We will implement a performance and improvement framework to enable council to monitor the delivery of our identified actions and support the achievement of our agreed performance targets. The council's monitoring and reporting structures have been designed to ensure proper oversight and accountability arrangements are in place, and to provide our Elected Members and management teams with assurances that our governance arrangements are robust. This helps to ensure transparency, accountability and drive continuous improvement.

To support the ambitions of our corporate plan, an accompanying annual Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan will be developed that details what will be delivered against each of our priorities and associated performance indicators and targets. Reporting arrangements for the Annual Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan are detailed below:

Annual Corporate Delivery and Improvement Plan	
Reports to	Frequency
Corporate Management Team Oversight Board	Quarterly
Standing Committees	Bi-annually
Full Council	Bi-annually

Updates are provided to the relevant Standing Committees and full Council by relevant Chief Officers at mid-year and end of year to facilitate appropriate scrutiny, challenge and evaluation.

As well as reporting against the corporate plan, we are also required to publish an annual self-assessment of our Performance Improvement Plan and statutory targets on the Council's website by 30 September each year. This is supported by quarterly updates to CMT, the council's Audit and Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel as well as the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee to track progress regularly throughout the year.

Our Elected members

In May 2023, a new council was elected. Belfast City Council has 60 democratically elected councillors, representing ten District Electoral Areas, as indicated in the map. Our councillors play a key role in representing the interests of their constituents and ensuring that the views of their electoral areas and the entire population of Belfast are reflected in the decisions that the council takes.



Belfast
City Council

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/your-council

Balmoral (Belvoir, Finaghy, Malone, Musgrave and Upper Malone)



Councillor
Natasha Brennan
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Tara Brooks
Alliance



Councillor
Sarah Bunting
DUP



Councillor
Dónal Lyons
SDLP



(Lord Mayor) Councillor
Micky Murray
Alliance

Black Mountain (Andersonstown, Ballymurphy, Beechmount, Colin Glen, Falls Park, Shaw's Road and Turf Lodge)



Councillor
Ciaran Beattie
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Arder Carson
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Paul Doherty
SDLP



Councillor
Micheal Donnelly
Sinn Féin



Councillor Máire Donnelly
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Áine McCabe
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Ronan McLaughlin
Sinn Féin

Botanic (Blackstaff, Central, Ormeau, Stranmillis and Windsor)



Councillor
Áine Groogan
Green Party



Councillor
Tracy Kelly
DUP



Councillor Emmet
McDonough-Brown
Alliance



Councillor
Conor McKay
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Gary McKeown
SDLP

Castle (Bellevue, Cavehill, Chichester Park, Duncairn, Fortwilliam and Innisfayle)



Councillor
Brónach Anglin
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Fred Cobain
DUP



Councillor
Conor Maskey
Sinn Féin



Alderman Dean A
McCullough
DUP



Councillor
Sam Nelson
Alliance



Councillor
Carl Whyte
SDLP

Collin (Dunmurry, Ladybrook, Lagmore, Poleglass, Stewartstown and Twinbrook)



Councillor Michael Collins
People Before Profit
Alliance



Councillor
Joe Duffy
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Matt Garrett
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Caoimhín McCann
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Siobhán McCallin
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Séanna Walsh
Sinn Féin

Court (Ballygomartin, Clonard, Falls, Forth River, Shankill and Woodvale)



Councillor
Christina Black
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Claire Canavan
Sinn Féin



Alderman
Frank McCoubrey
DUP



Councillor
Ron McDowell
TUV



Councillor
Ian McLaughlin
DUP



Councillor
Nicola Verner
DUP

Lisnasharragh (Cregagh, Hillfoot, Merok, Orangefield, Ravenhill and Rosetta)



Councillor
Séamas de Faoite
SDLP



Councillor
Davy Douglas
DUP



Councillor
Bradley Ferguson
DUP



Councillor
Eric Hanvey
Alliance



Councillor
Michael Long
Alliance



Councillor
Brian Smyth
Green Party

Oldpark (Ardoyne, Ballysillan, Cliftonville, Ligoniel, New Lodge and Water Works)



Councillor
Nichola Bradley
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Jordan Doran
DUP



Councillor
JJ Magee
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Paul McCusker
Independent



Councillor
Ryan Murphy
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Tomás Ó Néill
Sinn Féin

Ormiston (Belmont, Garnerville, Gilnahirk, Knock, Sandown, Shandon, and Stormont)



Councillor Hedley
Abernethy
Alliance



Councillor
Christine Bower
Alliance



Councillor
Anthony Flynn
Green Party



Alderman
James Lawlor
DUP



Councillor
Jenna Maghie
Alliance



(Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Andrew
McCormick DUP



Alderman Jim
Rodgers OBE
UUP

Titanic (Ballymacarrett, Beersbridge, Bloomfield, Connswater, Sydenham and Woodstock)



Councillor
David Bell
Alliance



Councillor
Ruth Brooks
DUP



Alderman
Sonia Copeland
UUP



Councillor
Pádraig Donnelly
Sinn Féin



Councillor
Sammy Douglas
DUP



Councillor
Fiona McAteer
Alliance

District Electoral Areas



Strategy, Programmes
and Partnerships team

City Hall

Belfast

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www.belfastcity.gov.uk/corporateplan

Access to information

As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. This document is available in alternative formats such as Braille, easy-read, audio, large print and also in other languages on request by contacting: 028 9027 0234.



Belfast
City Council

Corporate Delivery Plan

2025-2026

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Alternate formats 

We're committed to making sure that our publications are available to all sections of the community and will consider providing this in other formats. If you need an alternative format, please call 028 9032 0202.

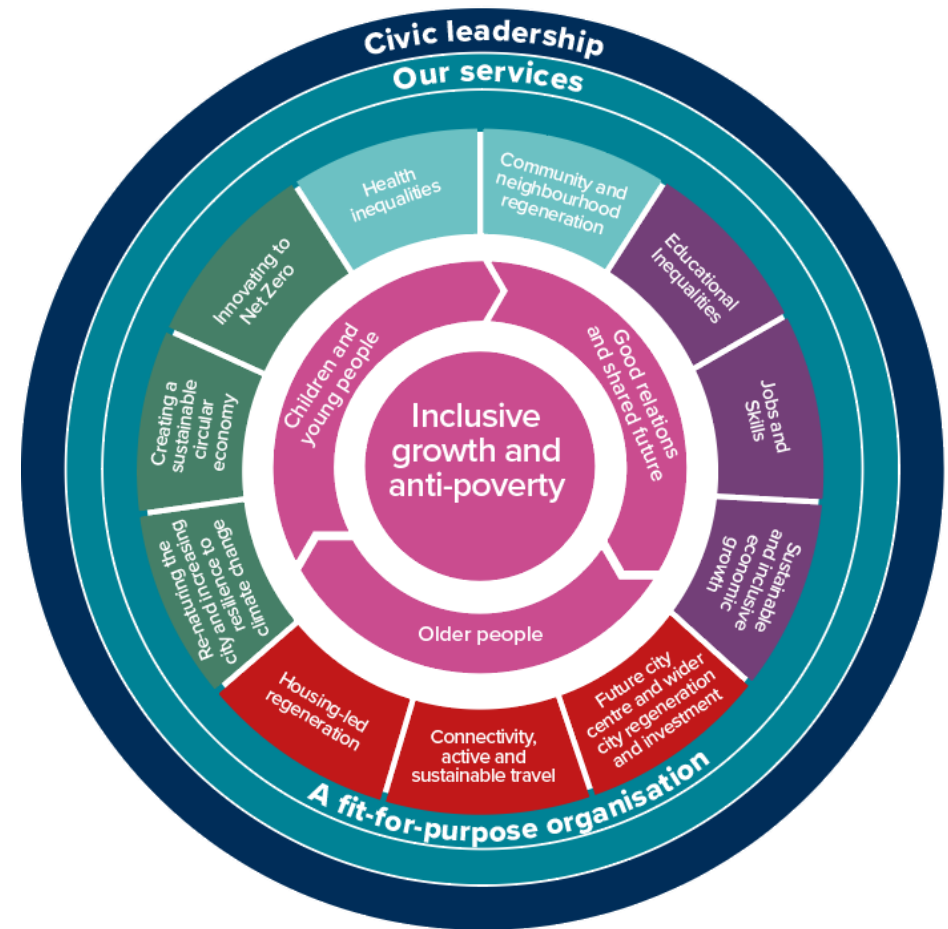
Introduction

The new Belfast City Council Corporate Plan 2025-28 sets out the Council's priorities, objectives and ambitions over the next three years. Our Corporate Plan is supported by this annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26 – a key document for identifying the priority services and actions that will help deliver the objectives of the three-year plan. The annual delivery plan also includes a range of key performance indicators and targets that will enable us to measure, monitor and review our corporate performance and achievements.

This delivery plan is our shorter-term roadmap to drive change, continuous improvement and show progress towards achieving a more efficient, effective, and dynamic organisation. In today's rapidly evolving landscape, where we continue to face challenges such as the cost-of-living crisis, global economic and political uncertainty, the demands on local authorities are complex and extensive but we are committed to ensuring that our residents and stakeholders receive the highest standards in service delivery, transparency, and responsiveness while optimising our resources and capacity.

It is important to recognise that both the Corporate Plan 2025-28 and the annual Delivery Plan 2025-26 are not static documents, and more activity may be included over time to respond to new corporate policy and strategy, new and evolving corporate priorities, risk, opportunities and legislative changes.

Our Corporate Delivery Plan is also inextricably linked to the city's community plan, The Belfast Agenda and is structured around 7 strategic themes outlined below:



Theme 1: Our services

As a council we are committed to delivering highly effective, efficient and customer focused services for our residents and stakeholders. We aim to achieve this through modern, integrated, high-quality, agile, and cost-effective delivery on a city-wide basis. Our extensive range of statutory and core services include waste collection and recycling; street cleansing; planning and building control; bereavement services; inspections and enforcements relating to public and environmental health.

To deliver effective and efficient services, in 2025-26 we will:

Our Services		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Planning and Building Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Planning Service Improvements leading to high quality, timely planning decisions aligned to the Belfast Agenda and Local Development Plan. • Maximise the value of the regional planning IT system. • Deliver effective and responsive statutory Building Control functions in relation to building regulations including quality checking of plan assessments. • Deliver effective and responsive statutory Building Control functions in relation to entertainment and other licensing functions. • Finalise the implementation of the building control IT system and review its benefits. • Implement agreed programme to deal with dangerous structures and dilapidated premises. 	Strategic Policy & Resources Planning Licensing People & Communities
Bereavement Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver a high standard and customer focused Bereavement and Cemetery Service. • Support the Identification, acquisition, and development of new burial land provision for Belfast City Council. • Prepare for the new Crematorium development and the repurposing of the existing crematorium in the grounds of Roselawn Cemetery. 	P&C Committee SP&R Committee

Waste Collection and Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate daily bin collections of household and commercial waste through the deployment of adequate & efficient resources. • Delivery of waste management services across Belfast. • Implement the single bin policy and develop a supporting and costed action plan. • Create an operational control room to assist pre-planning, daily control of collections and data analysis. • Continue to pilot the introduction of smaller refuse collection vehicles to improve collection service to narrow and congested streets. • Continue to operate Household Recycling Centre's services across Belfast segregating various waste streams and working in partnership with others to ensure items are reused, recycled, or recovered. • Deliver phase two of the kerbside glass expansion programme to enhance customer service and improve recycling rates. 	P&C Committee
Port Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement the Northern Ireland protocol (including the Windsor framework) and operational activity with competent authorities including Food Standards Agency (FSA), Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and other Ports/Local Councils. 	P&C Committee
Cleansing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a street cleansing programme to create a cleaner and greener city. • Progress relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot 	<p>P&C Committee</p> <p>SP&R Committee</p>

Our Services – Corporate Performance Indicators		
Priority area and objective	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Our Services – We will deliver efficient and effective services	Percentage of service requests completed for open spaces and streetscene within 5 working days	75%
	Percentage of service requests completed for missed bins within 5 working days	92%
	Number of additional households provided with kerbside glass collections	23,000 households
	Amount of additional tonnes of glass collected for recycling	650 tonnes
	City cleanliness index score	65%
	Average processing time of major planning applications	30 weeks
	Average processing time of local planning applications	15 weeks
	Average processing time of householder applications and advertisement consent applications	12 weeks
	Average processing time of tree works applications and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)	6 weeks
	Percentage of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	70%
	Achieving average processing time of less than 12 weeks for Householder applications and Advertisement Consent applications	12 weeks
	Achieving average processing time of less than 6 weeks for tree works applications and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)	6 weeks

Theme 2: Our organisation

We will continue to ensure that we are an efficient, effective, and agile council, delivering value for money and achieving positive outcomes for the city. We will prioritise our people, continuous improvement, performance management and build on our internal foundations and key enablers for success to help us meet our corporate objectives and priorities.

To continue to be a fit for purpose organisation, in 2025-26 we will:

Our organisation		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Prioritise the implementation of our People Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show continued visible commitment to our people by working towards and achieving Diversity Charter Mark - Gold Level.• Update our learning and development policy to include a review of the PDP process.• Continue to develop our frontline staff through the frontline development programme.• Continue to develop our leaders and managers at all levels through our leadership development programme.• Undertake a review of the Pilot Workstyles Policy which outlines arrangements for the hybrid working model.• Deliver the Elected Members and Leadership Development Programme to provide dedicated support and build the capacity of our elected members.• Review and implement our approach to individual performance management cascading gradually to all tiers.• Explore and identify opportunities to create apprenticeships and internships across the Council.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver the 'Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy' and positively impact on employees, mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. • Continue to manage attendance. • Provide ring fenced job opportunities to the long term unemployed, providing pre-recruitment employment academies and increased employability outreach in communities to support our inclusive growth ambitions. • Develop a staff mentoring scheme that supports continued personal development and career progression. • Produce and implement a workforce development plan to underpin new ways of working. 	
Continue to explore enhancing our digital services and capability through the implementation of our Digital Strategy .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for National Cyber Security Centre – Cyber Assessment Framework completion • Deliver Windows 11 upgrade • Deliver digital elements of priority corporate projects (HR & Payroll, Corporate EDRMS, Corporate Asset Management, Time & Attendance, other policies as required) • Deliver digital elements of Service design improvements (In-Cab Tech, City Services, Building Control, Customer Focus) • Data Analytics/Information as an Asset - e.g. Inclusive Growth, Performance Management, Data Architecture; AI adoption, Corporate EDRMS • Implement corporate infrastructure improvements (Network, ISP renewal, security architecture) • Progress plans to replace the current software system with a single modern and intuitive case management system designed to embed mobile technology and digitally transform how we plan, manage, and monitor our service delivery across the core regulatory areas of City Services & community safety within Neighbourhood Services. • Implement new software to support the planning, routing, and visibility of our fleet of vehicle's which will improve operations, increase safety, and reduce carbon emissions. 	<p>Strategic Policy & Resources</p> <p>P&C Committee</p>
We will seek to continually improve our organisation through a sequenced programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to ensure that structural management and maintenance are appropriately governed and allow for the production of accurate management information to enable effective decision making and identify key areas for corporate improvement. 	

of improvement projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the resolution to outstanding Single Status Issues where practicable for staff on BCC T&Cs below Chief Officer. • Develop and agree the long-term Staff Car Parking Policy. • Agree and implement the updated policy and resourcing model for Job Evaluations and appeals. • Complete a profiling of as-is Organisational Support arrangements to inform the wider approach to organisational support and improved quality of service. • Develop corporate approach to the design of services in collaboration with digital services and the customer programme. <p>Deliver the Customer Focus Programme to build organisational capacity to enhance our services and customer experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement "Voice of Customer" dashboard covering areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer Satisfaction of Service, Google Analytics, Complaints, Comments & Compliments, Speed of Closures of Requests • Develop Corporate Personas that can be used to support design of services. • Implement a Report it App to be used across frontline Community Safety in relation to Sharps reporting and workflows. • Benchmarking and research of local government use of customer portals to support self-service elements available across all services. <p>We will prioritise the development of an Innovation Strategy and Policy to help drive service transformation. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and inform the roll-out of the organisational improvement and transformation agenda thought the use of innovative technology to drive service transformation. 	
Work closely with the city partners to help deliver positive outcomes across the city through the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with city partners and key stakeholders to drive and deliver the key actions outlined within the Belfast Agenda (2024-2028). • Develop approach to creating area-based community plans. 	SP&R Committee

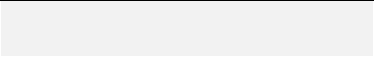
refreshed Belfast Agenda .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the refresh of the Belfast Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise Sector Advisory Panel and new Terms of Reference. • Development of enhanced online presence for Community Planning within Belfast. 	
Implement a planning and performance management framework that supports the implementation of the corporate, departmental and service plans through regular monitoring, reporting and review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New planning and performance management framework agreed and operationalised. • Corporate Plan 2025-28 launched. • Corporate Delivery plan agreed and monitored through CMT Oversight Board and SP&R Committee. • Development and publication of the Council's Performance Improvement Plan (2025-2026). 	SP&R Committee
Implement a Language Strategy Action Plan which will promote, protect and enhance the linguistic diversity which exists within and across the city and our workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of those priorities within the Action Plan which listed for delivery during 2025-26. • Carry out an annual review of the action plan delivery. • Provide regular updates to the Elected Member Language Strategy Working Group which reports to the Council's Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. 	Strategic Policy and Resources
Continue to promote and uphold equality and diversity in how we plan, offer and provide our services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 5-year review of Equality Scheme including design of new assurance model for decision makers and equality action plan. • Design new Disability Action Plan and commence implementation. • Review of the Equality and Diversity Network implemented. • Deliver Year 1 of the Race Equality Action Plan, including improved guidance on engagement and consultation with migrant and minority ethnic groups in the city, targeted outreach programmes, 	Strategic Policy and Resources

<p>Develop an asset management strategy which will set the framework for managing our property portfolio effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate the development of an overarching Asset Management Strategy to set out how Council owned and managed land and property assets will be used to support service delivery and the delivery of objectives in the Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda. • Develop thematic based Asset Management Plans for different assets. • Review Asset Management policies. • Establish governance arrangements to ensure that a multi-disciplinary approach that supports alignment of assets within the Corporate Plan and Belfast Agenda is taken and provides a challenge function in terms of the Council's asset base to maximise contribution to corporate objectives. • Embed the use of the Asset Management System. • Commence a rolling programme of condition surveys of assets to develop an evidence based longer term planned maintenance programme. • Deliver the Planned Maintenance Programme for 2025-26. • Progress delivery of physical improvements to Council civic accommodation including the Cecil Ward Building and Duncrue Complex. 	<p>Strategic Policy and Resources</p>
<p>Develop a new medium term financial plan (MTFP) 2025-2028 to support the delivery of this corporate plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft MTFP – June 2025. • Identified levels of efficiencies required – September 2025. • Updated MTFP following estimate process – February 2026. • Establish a corporate level funding and financing framework to enable Council to become more strategic and targeted in relation to securing external investment into city • Promotion and awareness within the Council and among partners of available funding opportunities through the GrantFinder system. • Develop a Corporate Social Responsibility Framework which will support the alignment of available funding to priorities identified for the city. 	<p>SP&R Committee</p>
<p>Review our governance arrangements to ensure effective and efficient political decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a Governance Review – to include a review of the Council's Constitution • Continue to deliver the 2025/26 audit plan. • Review and update Risk Strategy and Risk Appetite Statements. 	<p>SP&R Committee</p> <p>Audit Panel</p>

Continue to innovate in how we communicate and ensuring our communication tactics reflect changing audience demands and new tools and platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress the recommendations within the audit on digital accessibility regarding the establishment of a corporate approach to digital accessibility. • Increase evaluation and impact of output by baselining and monitoring with view to developing relevant KPIs and informing strategic decisions about updated and/or new channels. 	Strategic Policy and Resources
Develop and embed the corporate approach to sustainable procurement .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign the Social Value Procurement Policy as a Sustainable Procurement Policy to include, Social Value, Ethical, Low Carbon • Review and Inform the Council's Internal Procurement Policy in line with the Council's Low Carbon Social Value, efficiency and ethical ambitions 	Strategic Policy and Resources
Develop a Commercial Strategy as part of a medium-term financial plan and efficiency realisation work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Commercial Strategy 	Strategic Policy and Resources

Our organisation – Corporate performance indicators		
Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Our organisation – We will continue to be a fit-for-purpose organisation.	Percentage customer satisfaction levels (with customer hub contacts)	80%
	Percentage of corporate complaints resolved within timeframe	65%
	Percentage of improvement actions introduced for corporate complaints	80%
	Diversity Charter Mark status achieved	Gold
	Number of work placements and apprenticeships created (incl. inclusive apprenticeships)	60 work placements and 5 apprentices
	% of planned audit assignments delivered	Majority
	% Uptime	100%
	% compliance with cyber awareness training	70%
	% customer satisfaction with digital service desk	90%
	% of council contracts awarded where social value policy has been applied	TBC
	% or Value (£) of procurement spend in local and social economy	Establish a baseline
	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 calendar days	90%
	Percentage of invoices paid within 10 working days	80%
	Actual outturn as a percentage of budgeted expenditure	+5%/-2%
	Number of condition surveys for Council assets completed	10
	Include certificate of compliance from the NIAO – Performance Improvement	Achieved
	% FOIs responded to within 20 working days	TBC

	Committee papers published on time	TBC
	Number of Equality Screenings completed annually	TBC



Theme 3: Our people and communities

Our people and communities are at the heart of Belfast, and we will strive to ensure that we can positively impact the quality of life and wellbeing of all our residents. We will work to deliver impactful neighbourhood improvements for residents and continue to address key issues at a local level.

We will also continue to engage with key partners and networks to encourage more participation and engagement in communities, ensuring that local people can have a say in the key challenges within their neighbourhoods.

To support our people and communities, in 2025-26 we will:

Community and neighbourhood regeneration		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Invest in our neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the development and delivery of the Council's Physical Programme to enable needs led investment across the city i.e. Capital Programme, Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund, Belfast Investment Fund, Local Investment Fund, Social Outcomes Fund, PEACEPLUS, Urban Villages and other initiatives. 	Strategic Policy & Resources
Enhance and create new community assets and facilities across the city through the ongoing delivery of our £500m physical programme .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress delivery of the Council's Capital Programme. Progress the development of capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy. Continue partnership delivery of capital schemes under Urban Villages, PEACEPLUS, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Levelling up Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and central government agencies. Progress delivery of the £10.28m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. Continue to progress delivery of committed projects through the Belfast Investment Fund, Local Investment Fund and Social Outcomes Fund. Progress the Greenways Programme to improve the connectivity of the city. Progress infrastructure works at the North Foreshore to support the development of the site 	Strategic Policy & Resources

Deliver our £10.28m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support 20 Stage 3 Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund projects across the city. Completion of one Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund project. 	Strategic Policy & Resources
Enhance our open spaces and physical assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain our Green Flag and Green Flag Heritage Award status across our parks and open spaces to ensure that our residents can access high quality open spaces. Deliver animation and outreach activities to encourage and engage people to participate in our community, play and leisure development programmes. Enhance our playgrounds, to ensure that we continue to provide high quality facilities and equipment across the city (Playground Improvement Programme). Continue to deliver animation programmes in 7 new/ refurbished parks: Pairc an Lonnain, Shankill Bullring, Pairc Nua Colainn, Ballysillan, Marrowbone, Colin Glen and Pitt Park. Deliver and facilitate a range of events and community programmes within our parks and open spaces. Deliver improvements to parks and open spaces to improve people's health and wellbeing through multimillion pound transformational schemes* including: - Progressing delivery of Cathedral Gardens, a state-of-the-art open space in the city centre. - Progressing delivery of major improvements to parks including the Urban Villages £6.9m Ballysillan Playing Fields project and the €13.5m PEACE PLUS Reconnected Belfast: Waterworks and Alexandra Park under Theme 1.4 Reimaging Communities. Progress delivery of the PEACEPLUS Reconnected Belfast: Alexandra Park and Waterworks under Theme 1.4 Re-imaging Communities. Progress delivery of the open space focussed PEACEPLUS projects including Reconnected Belfast – Waterworks and Alexandra Park, Distillery Street Redevelopment project, Annadale Open Space and Access to the Hills. 	<p>P&C Committee</p> <p>SP&R Committee</p>

Build capacity within our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a new Community Support Plan for the period (2025-29) which sets out the basis for how we provide support to local communities and residents across the city. This will include support to the community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors. • Implement the recommendations of the review of Belfast City Council Funded advice services. • Provide funding and support to community-based advice services across the city to provide dedicated and tailored support to individuals. 	P&C Committee
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Health inequalities		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Increase opportunities for people to be physically active.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of people using our leisure centres, to participate in sport and physical activity. • Progress the development of capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy to enhance the quality and accessibility of sports and physical activity provision in Belfast. • Progress the development of Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility. 	<p>P&C Committee</p> <p>SP&R Committee</p>

Our people and communities – Corporate performance indicators		
Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Health Inequalities	Number of people using our leisure centres	3.35 million
	Number of community, play and leisure outreach programmes delivered	200
	Number of outdoor leisure bookings (pitches, bowling greens)	160,000
	Numbers attending events in our parks	180,000
	Number of adult and junior leisure centre monthly prepaid memberships (including swim school)	31,250
	Number of events in parks	350
	Number of people supported who are impacted by, or at risk of, chronic homelessness	50
Community & Neighbourhood Regeneration	Number of major improvements to our parks progressed	3
	Number of major improvements to our open space progressed	1
	Number of development works commenced on capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy	3
	Amount invested in delivering the annual playground improvement programme	£580k
	Number of projects completed under the Physical Programme	10
	Number of projects developed under the Physical Programme	100
	Number of organisations supported under the £10.28m NRF Programme	20
	Number of projects completed under NRF	1

	Number of parks with green flag and heritage award accreditation	23
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Theme 4: Our economy

Council is committed to ensuring that Belfast has a thriving and prosperous economy that is a hub for businesses and provides diverse employment opportunities for our population. Belfast and the Belfast City Region are central to driving productivity, innovation and growth in the Northern Ireland economy contributing more than two-thirds (£27.4bn, 2019) of Northern Ireland's economic output (Gross Value Added) and home to 40% of the total Northern Ireland business base, with an employment share of 63% of the Northern Ireland total.

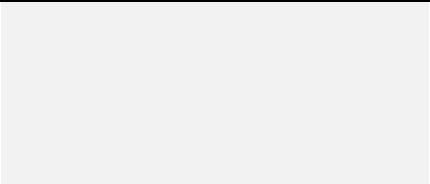
To support our economy in 2025-26 we will:

Productivity and innovation		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Work to implement the first £200m of Belfast Region City Deal funded projects and develop strategic partnerships and initiatives to encourage investment in our innovation economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support delivery of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) projects at all stages of progress • Establish Benefits Realisation Framework for the Programme • Provide, in our role as Accountable Body, effective programme management arrangements • Integrate Social Value considerations into projects across the programme • Represent BRCD partnership in respect of cross cutting programme activity (e.g. engagement, negotiation, communication) and in engagement with government partners as Lead Authority • Maximise the benefits emerging from Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) • Develop and maximise international linkages to support inclusive economic growth through approval and implementation of new international relations framework 	Strategic Policy and Resources CG&R Committee
Deliver first phase of the £55 million BRCD Innovation Challenge Fund which aims to address the emerging needs and unique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed 2025-2026 Actions for BRCD PMO/City Innovation Service (replicates current Corporate Plan wording) • Develop and submit proposals for a BRCD digital innovation grants programme linked to the new centres of excellence and a local authority led SBRI Programme • Deliver the Belfast Region City Deal Innovation Challenge Fund to stimulate innovation to address the region's 'Grand Challenges' of (i) artificial intelligence and data, (ii) health and wellbeing and (iii) sustainability and resilience 	Strategic Policy and Resources

Continue to support and strive for the creation of a sustainable circular economy to ensure that materials aren't wasted and nature is regenerated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support our suppliers by helping business cashflow through the prompt payment of invoices. 	
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Our economy – Corporate performance indicators		
Priority area and objective	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Productivity and innovation	Number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) supported to engage in digital innovation	425 SMEs
	Amount of funding made available to organisations to engage in digital innovation	£600,000
Inclusive and Sustainable Growth	Number of events delivered through the Belfast Learning City Festival	130 events
	Number of organisations signed up to the Belfast Business Promise accreditation	100
	Number of jobs promoted through business start-up activity. (The delivery of client-led business plans under the Go Succeed programme)	325
	Number of (i) Regional and (ii) Belfast individuals/ entrepreneurs supported through start-up activity.	(i) 4300 (ii) 839
	Number of (i) Regional and (ii) Belfast businesses supported through business growth activity.	(i) 2000

		(ii) 380
	Percentage of (i) Regional and (ii) Belfast Go Succeed participants engaged who are female	(i) 50% (ii) 50%
	Percentage of participants who move into a positive outcome from an Employment or Upskilling Academy.	75%



Theme 5: Our place

A key ambition of the Belfast Agenda is to attract a further 66,000 residents to the city by 2035 and work in partnership with key agencies to ensure that all residents have access to the high-quality, sustainable homes they deserve. In order to achieve this, Council has a key role to play in terms of supporting housing led regeneration across the city.

We also want to ensure quality placemaking and that Belfast is a liveable city in which local people are connected to their community and both residents and visitors are able to connect with jobs, services and amenities in safe, active, accessible, and sustainable ways in the long-term.

Enhancing our city centre is also crucial to ensure that Belfast is a thriving and inclusive destination for residents and visitors alike.

We will continue to strengthen and build on our sense of place by accelerating major regeneration schemes. These will seek to deliver inclusive economic, social and environmental benefits, whilst protecting and enhancing access to our built and natural heritage.

To enhance our place in 2025-26 we will:

Quality place-making and housing-led regeneration		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Support and work with partners to address housing challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Deliver the housing-led regeneration programme, working in partnership with the Private Sector Partner (PSP) and external partners, including establishing and overseeing governance arrangements across the PSP indicative workstreams, progressing the Strategic Site Assessments Phase 2, including Tranche 1 delivery routes, partnership working with DfC and Clanmil Housing Association as an outworking of the Inner North West Development Brief for the development of a city centre housing-led regeneration scheme and advancing placemaking action plan for agreed priority areas.	Strategic Policy and Resources City Growth & Regeneration
Monitor the implementation of the Plan Strategy and produce the Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitor the implementation of the Local Development Plan Strategy.Progress the development of the Local Policies Plan (LPP) to public consultation.	Strategic Policy & Resources

Policies Plan (LPP) which will contain local policies and site-specific proposals in relation to the development and use of land		Planning
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Connectivity, active and sustainable travel		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Transform connectivity within the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver an overarching programme to support enhanced Connectivity, Active and Sustainable Travel across the city including development of strategic projects aligned to the Waterfront Promenade Framework and A Bolder Vision (Under the Bridges and Sailortown to Titanic Quarter bridge) and delivery of Section 76 public realm improvements at Little York Street, Little Patrick Street, 5Cs and Blackstaff Square & Environs. Refresh A Bolder Vision strategy in line with the Eastern Transport Plan. Undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment and publish final documents with a Delivery Prospectus. Engage with partners and government to facilitate, support, progress and enable the Council's preferred position for major infrastructure projects including e.g. York Street Interchange; Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2; Belfast Cycle Network; Living with Water project; Belfast Streets Ahead; and Weaver's Cross Progressing two greenways/pathways to improve the connectivity of the city e.g. Sydenham Greenway, Colin Greenway, Black Mountain Pathway. 	City Growth & Regeneration
		SP&R Committee
	Belfast Bikes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee the implementation and mobilisation plan for changing to the new Belfast Bikes operator/ operating model in September 2025. Oversee the delivery of the Belfast Bikes public bike hire scheme, maximising revenue and reducing vandalism costs. 	City Growth & Regeneration

Ensure the Eastern Transport Plan aligns with and supports our ambitions for a connected and sustainable city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Department for Infrastructure to ensure that the Eastern Transport Plan aligns with and supports our ambitions for a connected and sustainable city. 	City Growth & Regeneration

City Regeneration and Investment		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Safeguard our heritage and historic assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake work to safeguard our historic and heritage assets within the Capital Programme including Wilmont House, Floral Hall, City Hall, St. George's Market, Ulster Hall, Palm House and others, ensuring their appropriate end use where necessary. Undertake health & safety works at Floral Hall. Progress a feasibility study for the Palm House. Initiate development work on Historic Cemeteries within the Capital Programme. Progress delivery of physical improvements to Belfast Zoo as part of the Capital Programme. 	Strategic Policy & Resources
Work to secure funding to sustain the long-term use of 2 Royal Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclude the EoI for the sustainable long-term use of the ground Floor for 2 Royal Avenue. Continued development of the LGBTQIA+ Hub proposal at 2 Royal Avenue through the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. 	Strategic Policy & Resources

Address the challenges facing the city to maximise investment, generate rates and support growth in the surrounding neighbourhoods and wider region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a strategic engagement programme aligned to the Belfast Place Based Growth Proposition, working with city, regional and national government partners to seek to secure place-based and regeneration investment funding. • Deliver an overarching City Development and Investment programme, including progressing options for vesting and/or acquisition by agreement of the Tribeca site in whole or in part; implementing the proposed recommendations from the City Centre Investment Fund Review; and progressing options for the future use and development of the Sixth in partnership with the council's LLP partner. • Delivery of the City Wide Vacant to Vibrant capital grant scheme. • Position the City to Compete, working in partnership with the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership. • Work with external partners to deliver the Future City Centre Programme. • 	<p>Strategic Policy & Resources</p> <p>City Growth & Regeneration</p>
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Cultural and tourism development

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Grow Tourism in the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress Belfast Stories, a landmark major tourism anchor in the city centre, to RIBA stage 3a and secure BRCD funding. • Deliver year 4 of Make Yourself at Home, the 10-year tourism plan for Belfast. • Position and promote Belfast in national and international markets through investment in Visit Belfast to increase the value of tourism to the local economy. • Deliver the annual City Events programme of large-scale public city events and activities attracting local audiences and out-of-state visitors. • Plan and prepare to host the Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann 2026. • Manage and oversee the delivery of the commercial assets, including Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle & Malone House, ensuring value for money and long-term sustainability. • Improve the visitor experience at St George's Market to drive footfall and enhance customer satisfaction and provide support for city markets. 	<p>Strategic Policy & Resources</p> <p>City Growth & Regeneration</p> <p>Strategic Policy & Resources</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and progress the delivery of neighbourhood tourism physical projects, improving the city's local tourism facilities and infrastructure i.e. Titanic People Exhibition Centre, the Act Initiative Community Hub & Visitor Centre and Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre. 	
Create a culturally vibrant city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Year 5 of A City Imagining, Belfast's 10-year cultural strategy. • Deliver Year 2 of the music strategy, Music Matters – a roadmap for Belfast. 	City Growth & Regeneration

Our place – Corporate performance indicators

Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
Connectivity, active and sustainable travel	Number of greenways/ pathways progressed	2
City regeneration and investment	Progressed the delivery of landfill gas extraction system at North Foreshore	TBC
	Progressed the delivery of additional NIE capacity at North Foreshore	TBC
	Progressed work with the developer undertaken to progress the Master Development Agreement for the 250-acre Giant's Park site	TBC
	Total number of previously vacant city-wide properties that are occupied as a result of the Vacant to Vibrant intervention	20
Cultural and tourism development.	Number of neighbourhood tourism physical projects progressed	3
	Number of projects securing match funding from external partners for neighbourhood tourism physical projects	3
	Number of visitor servicing enquiries (Visit Belfast)	805000
	Number of people attending the annual programme of large-scale public city events	111,000

Theme 6: Our planet

We are committed to tackling climate change and biodiversity loss to ensure that Belfast can be a place where people and nature thrive together. To deliver a sustainable city we will work with our residents and industries to reduce their carbon footprints. We will also lead the way in providing global green solutions by leveraging our unique market access and international networks to become a hub for low carbon design and manufacturing. We will work to support our industries to thrive on all the opportunities in the green economy whilst creating a much cleaner environment. We will lead by example, embedding a climate aware approach into every aspect of our work, minimising the impact we have and planning for a sustainable future throughout the entire council and beyond.

To support our planet in 2025-26 we will:

Re-naturing the city and increasing resilience to climate change		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Increase the number of trees across the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch the tree warden scheme to improve the maintenance of existing woodland, urban tree and street trees. Continue to deliver the Belfast City Council's Tree Strategy and action plan to help manage and improve the tree scape in the city. Start to implement the tree establishment strategy. 	
Protect and enhance our local environment and natural eco-systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the Local Biodiversity Action Plan to set out our approach to address threatened species and habitats and protect and restore biological systems. Develop a demonstrator site in Botanic Gardens and test nature-based solutions through the UPSURGE project to strengthen climate resilience. 	P&C Committee
Promote the uptake of nature-based solutions across the city to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and target funding opportunities to scale up nature-based solutions across the city, targeting areas most in need. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

support climate resilience.		
Improve air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate the delivery of the Belfast City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2021 – 2026, in working partnership with Belfast Air Quality Steering Group Members. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

Creating a sustainable circular economy		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Reduce the carbon / environmental impact of municipal waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve a Single Use Plastic Policy for the Council. 	
Promote sustainable circular economy approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Horizon Europe funded UP2030 project which aims to embed net zero in urban planning. 	City Growth & Regeneration Climate and City Resilience Committee
Embed sustainable food practices and partnership working in Belfast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of a city-wide Sustainable Food Strategy, with associated delivery and monitoring arrangements and start implementation. Continue to coordinate the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership. Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee
Reduce energy consumption (and bills) of housing and public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of a neighbourhood retrofit pilot (led by social housing providers) through the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

and commercial buildings.		
Decarbonise the heat supply to buildings in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete feasibility study, market readiness assessment, business model development, route to market, community opportunities assessment and impact assessment for a low carbon heat network. Initiate pre-procurement market engagement for a low carbon Heat Network for Belfast City Centre. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

Innovating to net-zero

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Enable the city to decarbonise at scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a pipeline of investable local energy projects arising from the Local Area Energy Plan, with a focus on a heat network and solar PV. Identify and respond to emerging funding opportunities and secure funding for projects. Continue to engage with investors and financial institutions to explore new financial models. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee
Create an exemplar net Zero Tech Park in the Harbour Estate to develop, test and commercialise green technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to contribute to a shared vision and a compelling place-based narrative to attract investors. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee
Develop a stable supply of green energy to the Net Zero Park and surrounding lands to support the industrial cluster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with city stakeholders to create an affordable sustainable energy supply including exploring a green energy hub. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee

Monitoring, learning and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate climate data for annual disclosure to the Carbon Disclosure Project and Council Climate Action Scorecards. 	Climate and City Resilience Committee
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Climate Action Plan

Commence delivery of the Council Corporate Climate Action Plan to increase the climate resilience of Council assets and services and progress towards Council net zero emissions*

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Ensuring BCC is equipped with the tools and mechanisms to successfully enable it to become a net zero, resilient council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and launch an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions. Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol. Prepare departments for data collection required for Public Body Reporting under the Climate Change Act. Prepare mitigation report (Oct 2025) and adaptation report (March 2026) for submission to DAERA in line with Public Body Reporting requirements. Develop a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents to support a transition to an inclusive, net zero and resilient future. 	C&CR Committee
Ensuring BCC is future proofed and resilient to flood and heat related risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the BCC Climate Risk Assessment in line with the new mandatory Public Body Reporting requirements (under the Climate Change Act). Apply SUDs policy and guidance (SUDS Manual C753) as standard practice in the Capital Programme Start to deliver the Tree Establishment Strategy and continue the One Million Trees Programme. 	C&CR Committee
Achievement of a low-carbon and sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a second phase of building energy audits - (Andersonstown LC, Lisnasharragh LC, Templemore Av LC, Brook LC) and the Waterfront Hall. 	C&CR Committee

energy system and Council estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the integration of whole life carbon assessments as standard practice in the Capital Programme. • Launch a phased metering and retrofitting programme across BCC's top energy users based on the findings of the building level audits of Adelaide, Cecil Ward, City Hall and Duncrue. • Scope out a strategy to increase renewable and low-carbon energy use through corporate power purchase agreements. 	
Achievement of net zero and sustainable Council-related transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Business Travel Policy and develop the Sustainable Staff Travel Plan to encourage modal shift, active travel and more fuel-efficient driving for Council staff. • Conduct a commercial assessment of Council land suitable for installing low emission vehicle (LEV) charging points. • Repurpose parking spaces for car clubs and cycle parking and integrate appropriate facilities to support active travel e.g. shower and changing facilities. • Through sustainable procurement, aim to use local suppliers to the Council to reduce miles travelled within the confines of procurement legislation and Local Govt Act restrictions. 	C&CR Committee
Continue to deliver our Fleet Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to developing the Net Zero Fleet Replacement Strategy to agree council approach to transition to an alternative (non-fossil) fuel. • Continue to deliver the Fleet Replacement Programme gradually replacing existing old fleet with new low emission vehicles. 	P&C Committee
Enabling the Council and its operations to support the transition to a more circular economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate the development an internal Council-level Waste Management Plan which aligns with the Waste Management Hierarchy and with an emphasis on green waste. • Continue to progress the proposal for a single use plastics policy for the Council. • Develop a mechanism to track and report on internal Council generated waste. 	C&CR Committee

Our planet – Corporate performance indicators

Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
a) Re-naturing the city and increasing resilience to climate change	Number of Council open space sites with dedicated areas positively managed for biodiversity (e.g. grassland management, wetlands, hedgerows, woodlands, fen etc)	4
	The number of hectares of council lands within designated parks and open spaces positively managed for biodiversity (e.g. grassland management, wetlands, hedgerows, woodlands, fen grassland management etc.)	Establish a baseline
	Air Quality Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrogen dioxide (NO2). • Particulate matter PM10 • Fine particulate matter PM2.5 • Carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and ozone objectives. 	100% 100% 100% 100%
b) Creating a sustainable circular economy	Percentage of council municipal waste arisings that is sent for recycling	38.5%
	Amount of (tonnage) of biodegradable council collected waste that is landfilled	7,000t
	Percentage of household waste collected that is sent for recycling (including waste prepared for re-use)	42%
	Amount (tonnage) of council collected municipal waste arisings	160,000t
c) Innovating to net zero	Council CO2e emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope 1 - gas, oil, HVO, diesel • Scope 2 - purchased – electricity consumption • Scope 3 - purchased - goods and services, business travel, employee commuting, waste) 	TBC
	Global Carbon Disclosure Project Score	A

	Number of Council Corporate Climate Action Plan short-term priorities completed	19
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Theme 7: Compassionate city

As a compassionate city, we recognise the diversity and complexity of our people, and we are determined to make life better for everyone. We will proactively support the most vulnerable people in our society and work with partners to address key social and economic challenges that exist. We will work collaboratively, through specific actions and through our overall approach to ensure that no one is left behind and that people across Belfast can enjoy a better quality of life.

To create a compassionate city in 2025-26 we will:

Inclusive growth and anti-poverty		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Promote and embed Inclusive Growth into our business as usual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the Inclusive Growth Toolkit and start to embed its use across the Council. Finalise the Inclusive Growth Index and start to embed its application across the Council. 	SP&R Committee
Through our inclusive growth commitments, continue to build on our procurement, employment, and investment practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign the Social Value Procurement Policy as a Sustainable Procurement Policy to include, Social Value, Ethical, Low Carbon. Review and Inform the Council's Internal Procurement Policy in line with the Council's Low Carbon Social Value, efficiency and ethical ambitions. Develop a Procurement Framework for the city. 	Strategic Policy and Resources
Help address vulnerabilities in Belfast and respond to societal challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver an enhanced Learning City Festival to promote and encourage lifelong learning for people of all ages across Belfast. Establish an Anti-Poverty Network in Belfast to support and facilitate a co-ordinated approach to tackling poverty across the city. Extend delivery of the Hardship Programme to ensure that support is available for those most impacted by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis. Provide funding and support to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to enable them to deliver local services across the city. 	SP&R Committee

Good relations and a shared future		
Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Prioritise supporting new communities through the implementation of our Good Relations Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the Good Relations Action Plan to support the delivery of locally identified good relations priorities. Complete two capital projects in partnership with The Executive Office's Urban Villages Initiative, designed to deliver good relations outcomes including ABC Health & Leisure Hub and Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub. 	SP&R Committee
Through the EY funded PEACEPLUS, support peace and prosperity through the implementation of the Local Community Action Plan .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver local community actions plans as part of the Peace PLUS programme, to fund community activities and infrastructure project that help build peace and reconciliation in Belfast. Progress delivery of up to 5 capital projects across the city as part of the PEACE PLUS Local Action Plan to promote inclusive and shared spaces across Belfast. i.e. Sanctuary Theatre, Distillery Street Redevelopment Project, Annadale Open Space, Access to the Hills and LGBTQIA+ Hub. 	P&C Committee SP&R Committee
Continue to work to ensure that Belfast is a safe city through the implementation of a new Police and Community Safety Action Plan for the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Police and Community Safety Action Plan to make people feel safer and increase confidence in Policing. Continue to facilitate the five multi-agency (D) PCSP's which work to make communities safer, making sure that the voices of local people are heard. Deliver a programme to help end violence against women and girls (EVAWG). 	P&C Committee

Older people

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Help make Belfast a great place to grow older through delivering on the 2022-2026 Belfast Age Friendly Plan .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and deliver the Belfast Age Friendly Plan 2023-27 to help enhance the quality of life for people as they age. 	P&C Committee

Children and young people

Strategic Intent	Actions for 2025-26	Committee
Facilitate, an active and engaged Belfast City Youth Council to ensure that the needs of children and young people are reflected within our Belfast Agenda and council priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate, an active and engaged Belfast City Youth Council who work with relevant fora and elected members to ensure that the needs of children and young people are reflected within the Belfast Agenda and council priorities. 	P&C Committee
Prioritise the development of a three-year action plan for play development across the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a three-year action plan for play development across the city. 	P&C Committee

Compassionate city – Corporate performance indicators

Priority area	Key performance indicators	Targets 2025-26
a) Inclusive growth and anti-poverty	Amount (£) of hardship programme funding delivered	£1.1m
	Number of social supermarkets supported	15
	Retain Belfast Business Promise Ambassador Status	Retained
b) Good relations and a shared future	Number of Local Community Action Plans delivered	10
	Amount (£) of EVAWG funding awarded and delivered funding as part of an open call small grants programme	£255k
	Amount (£) of funding administered through the Regional Change Funding to EVAWG expert organisations	£1.2m
	Number of capital projects progressed under PEACE PLUS Local Action Plan	5
	Number of good relations projects supported	25
	Amount (£) of Good Relations grant funding awarded	£160,000
	Number of participants engaged in good relations activity	35,000
c) Older people	Number of participants at age friendly events	1000
d) Children and young people	Number of Play sessions delivered	1500

Monitoring and Reporting

We will implement a Performance and Improvement Framework to enable council to monitor the delivery of our identified actions and support the achievement of our agreed performance targets. The council’s monitoring and reporting structures have been designed to ensure proper oversight and accountability arrangements are in place, and to provide our management teams and Elected Members with assurances that our governance arrangements are robust. This helps to ensure transparency, accountability and drive continuous improvement.

We are committed to delivering high quality services and ensuring high performance at all levels of our organisation. This is aided through implementing robust monitoring and reporting processes and ensuring that our key corporate strategies and plans, aims, and objectives align and cascade down through the organisation. Reporting arrangements for the Annual Corporate Delivery Plan are detailed below:

Annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26	
Reports to	Frequency
Corporate Management Team	Quarterly
Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee	Annually
Full Council	Annually

Formal reporting arrangements are in place to ensure that the Annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26 is effectively delivered in tandem with our Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26. Progress is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to ensure delivery remains on track and performance targets are being achieved.

Our CMT is responsible for the delivery and reporting of the statutory and self-imposed and indicators outlined in our Annual Corporate Delivery Plan and Performance Improvement Plan.

Updates are provided to the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee and full Council by relevant Chief Officers throughout the year with a formal end of year report to facilitate appropriate scrutiny, challenge and evaluation.

We are also required to publish an annual self-assessment of our Performance Improvement Plan and statutory targets on the Council’s website by 30 September each year. This is supported by quarterly updates to CMT, the council’s Audit and Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel as well as the Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee to track progress regularly throughout the year.

The Audit and Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panels are responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to secure continuous improvement of Council functions and to provide assurance of council’s operations.

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Subject:	Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officers:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officers:	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty, Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Strategic Performance Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members on the findings of the public consultation on the draft performance improvement objectives and to present the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2025-26 for Committee consideration and approval.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2025-26 attached in Appendix 1, for publication on the Council's website, subject to minor edits and formal ratification by the Full Council on 2 June 2025.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires councils to consult residents on proposed improvement objectives and to publish an annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) by the 30 June. The PIP identifies the agreed improvement objectives for the year ahead, the actions to be delivered and the measures of success to be achieved. The PIP helps to meet the outcomes and objectives of the Community Plan and the Corporate Plan 2025-28. The PIP doesn't include everything that the Council plans to do in a given year, it focuses specifically on areas for improvement and feeds into the Annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26. The performance improvement objectives are aligned to the key themes and priorities identified within the new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and the Belfast Agenda 2024-28.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Consultation exercise and findings</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that we carried out an eight-week public consultation in relation to Council's draft improvement objectives 2025-26 and associated actions between 17 February - 14 April 2025. The public consultation process included an online survey via Council's Your Say Belfast consultation and engagement website and two targeted focus groups. The survey was promoted using a range of communication methods including social media posts, posters in community buildings, email marketing to existing mailing lists, intranet promotion and websites.</p>
3.3	<p>Out of the 88 people that completed the survey, it should be noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there was broad consensus across majority of respondents supporting the improvement objectives. ▪ the highest level of 86.3% was received from respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with 'Our people and communities' improvement objective based on supporting our residents to become healthier and engaged. ▪ the lowest of level of 73.9% was received from respondents who strong agreed or agreed with the 'Compassionate city' improvement objective based on supporting our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe and inclusive city.
3.4	<p>In addition, two focus groups with 62 young people and 9 older people were facilitated to enable participants to reflect their priorities and areas for improvement. A detailed summary of the feedback received is included in the consultation report in Appendix 2.</p>

3.5	<p>The qualitative feedback and comments received was shared and considered internally by key officers from the relevant departments to action where relevant and help inform future delivery and/ or amend current activity. Some minor amendments were made to realign actions within the PIP. Members will also be aware that some of the areas suggested are being progressed through existing strategies, plans and programmes of work, and in partnership as part of the Belfast Agenda 2024-28 including addressing key issues across the city such as housing provision, homelessness, mental health and addiction.</p> <p><u>Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26</u></p>
3.6	<p>The updated Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 is attached in Appendix 1 which reflects public consultation feedback and engagement with key Council officers.</p>
3.7	<p>Members are asked to approve the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 in Appendix 1 and to authorise its publication on the Council website by 30 June 2025. In order to meet our statutory deadline, the plan will be published subject to formal ratification by the Full Council on the 2 June 2025.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The improvement plan has already been reflected in the formal planning and budgeting processes of council; there are no resource implications contained in this report.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no direct equality, good relations or rural needs implications of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Appendices – Documents Attached</u></p>
	<p>Appendix 1: Draft Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.</p> <p>Appendix 2: Consultation feedback report: performance improvement objectives 2025-26.</p>

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PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025-26

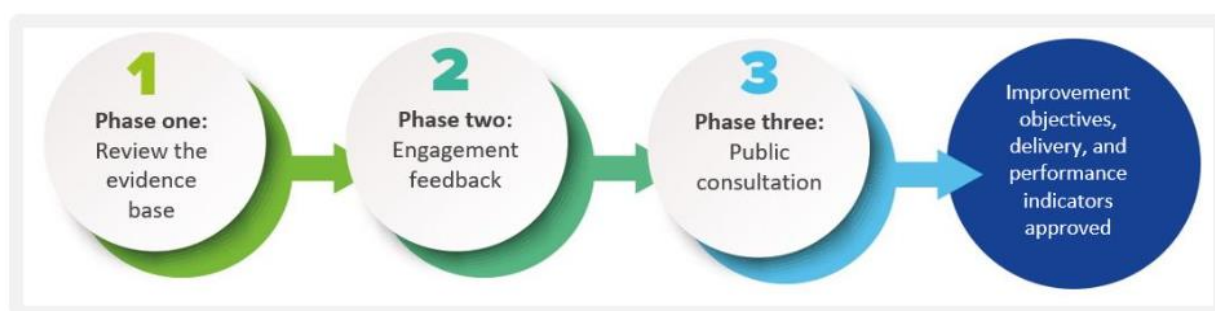
Draft Consultation Summary Report

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to highlight the process for informing the development of Council's Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26. The report outlines the approach and feedback received during the consultation process.

1.1 Approach to developing our improvement objectives

The improvement objectives and related actions for 2025-26 were developed based on the implementation of a three-phased approach as summarised below. This report focuses on the findings from Phase 3 of the approach.



Phase 1: Review the evidence base
<p>Conducted a review of existing baseline information and data to contextualise potential improvement opportunities. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results and trend data from our 2024-25 Performance Improvement Assessment report.• Ongoing monitoring and review of 2024-25 Corporate Delivery Plan (via quarterly reporting).• Inclusion of guidance issued by the Department for Communities and recommendations provided by the NI auditor (including the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Section 95 report).• Evidence and issues arising from committee and meetings of the Full Council.• Areas for improvement emerging from the internal audit and risk management processes.• Priorities identified during the development of the new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and rate setting process.• Alignment with key Council and city strategies including The Belfast Agenda and the Corporate Plan 2025-28.• A review of customer complaints received.• Good practice data benchmarking with other local authorities.
Phase 2: Engagement feedback
<p>A series of internal engagements were carried out with members, Chief Officers, departments and key staff across Council. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial meetings with departments to identify priorities and improvement activity.• Regular engagement with departmental teams and key officers, at every phase – ensuring alignment to departmental and service level budget setting and planning processes.

- Priorities identified during corporate planning engagement with Party Group Leaders, elected members and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- Reports presented and discussed at Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee and the Full Council.
- Approval granted via scheduled meetings with senior management teams, CMT, committee and full council meetings.

Phase 3: Public consultation

An eight-week public consultation process was carried out to enable residents and stakeholders to inform our improvement objectives 2025-26. This included an online survey via council's Your Say Belfast consultation and engagement website (yoursay.belfastcity.gov.uk) and two targeted focus groups. The survey was promoted using a range of communication methods including social media posts, posters in community buildings, email marketing to existing mailing lists, intranet promotion and websites. As part of phase three, we:

- Received 88 survey completions via the Your Say Belfast website.
- Facilitated 2 focus groups with 62 young people and 9 older people to reflect their priorities and areas for improvement.
- Worked closely with departmental teams and key officers to consider consultation feedback and refine the Performance Improvement Plan.
- Secured approval of the final objectives through the normal Council governance cycle (CMT, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the Full Council meeting).

2. Public consultation

The eight-week public consultation period in relation to Council's draft improvement objectives 2025-26 ran between 17th February - 14th April 2025 via Council's YourSay engagement platform. An online survey was carried out with 88 completed responses alongside 2 focus groups which engaged with 62 young people and 9 older people respectively. This section of the report presents and overview of the consultation findings including qualitative feedback received from survey respondents and focus group participants.

2.1 Draft improvement objectives

Draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26

Our Services

We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.

Our people and communities

We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged

Our place

We will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).

Our planet

We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.

Our economy

We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.

Compassionate city

We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe, and inclusive city.

3. On-line survey – high level analysis

3.1 Support for improvement objectives (survey responses)

78.4%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our services' improvement
objective

86.3%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our people and communities'
improvement objective

81.9%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our place' improvement
objective

76.2%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our planet' improvement
objective

84.1%

strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Our economy' improvement
objective

73.9%

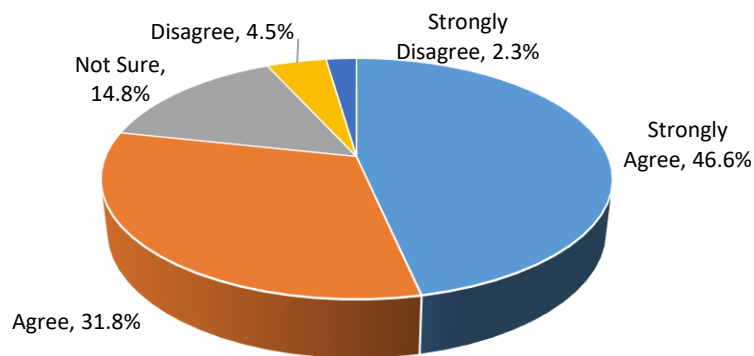
strongly agreed or agreed with
the 'Compassionate city'
improvement objective

3.2 Generic feedback

The generic feedback received included minor suggestions and improvements to internal practices within Council, including the need to improve communications and raise awareness of the different levels of planning within the Council and how they all link together and providing more opportunities for staff to network and collaborate. These areas will be actioned by the Council as part of business-as-usual practices and communication and awareness raising internally will be taken forward as part of the formal launch of the Corporate Plan 2025-28.

4. On-line survey – Improvement objectives analysis

4.1 'Our services' Improvement Objective



- 46.6% strongly agreed
- 31.8% agreed
- 14.8% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Develop solutions that prioritise waste minimisation instead of more recycling campaigns.
- Assign extra resources to ensure waste collection services are more efficient and can reduce littering and clogging up streets with bins.

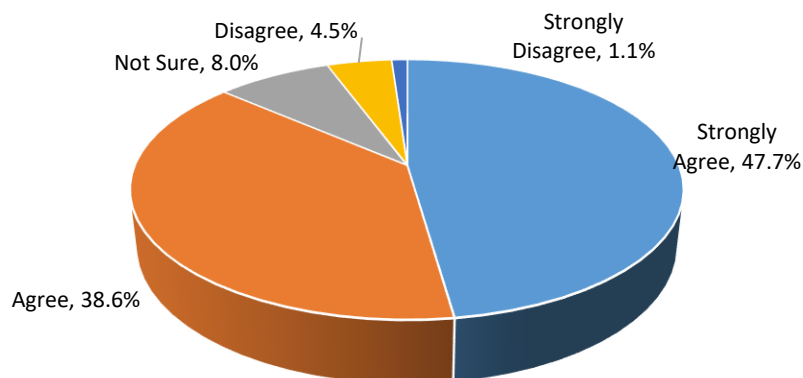


- Consider more specific improvement activity and actions relating to this objective.



- Whilst the implementation of the glass collection is a positive step forward, it should be extended across the city.

4.2 'Our people and communities' improvement objective



- 46.6% strongly agreed
- 31.8% agreed
- 14.8% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

Qualitative feedback

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



- Enhance key local amenities such as re-surfacing works at the Bog Meadows to engage more people in their local areas.



- Invest further in sport and leisure facilities, specifically outdoor tennis courts to encourage more participation.
- Cost for leisure facilities is prohibitive for many people to access – consider more inclusive pricing to encourage participation.

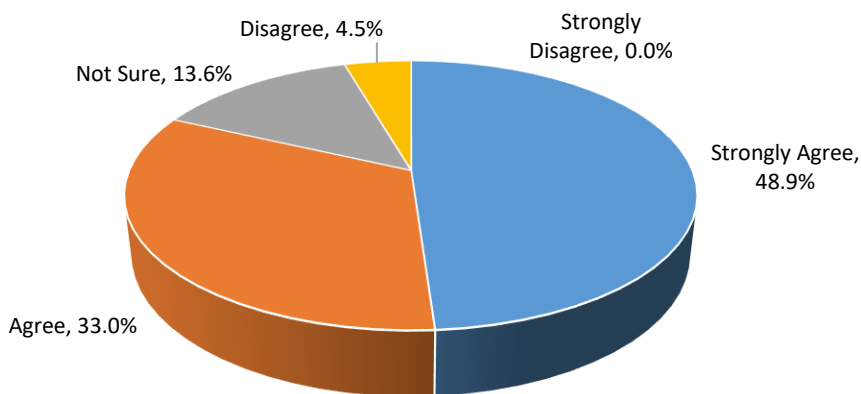


- Council should proactively prioritise participation of residents in civic society. Develop innovative ways to engage and support people and groups across the city.



- After decades of catching up, Belfast seems to have fallen behind the rest of UK and Ireland. Promotion of inclusion and reducing the segregation of our city should be prioritised.

4.3 'Our place' improvement objective



- 48.9% strongly agreed
- 33.0% agreed
- 13.6% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 0.0% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Focus on greater pedestrianisation of city centre, reducing vehicles in and around commercial and shopping areas as well as enhancing active travel infrastructure.



- Consider how to prioritise increasing use of communal green spaces that are easily accessible and open to the public.



- Work with partners to enhance public transport provision and infrastructure, including provision of bus stops at Council facilities.



- Prioritise investment in addressing unadopted alleyways to deliver a 'cleaner and greener' city.

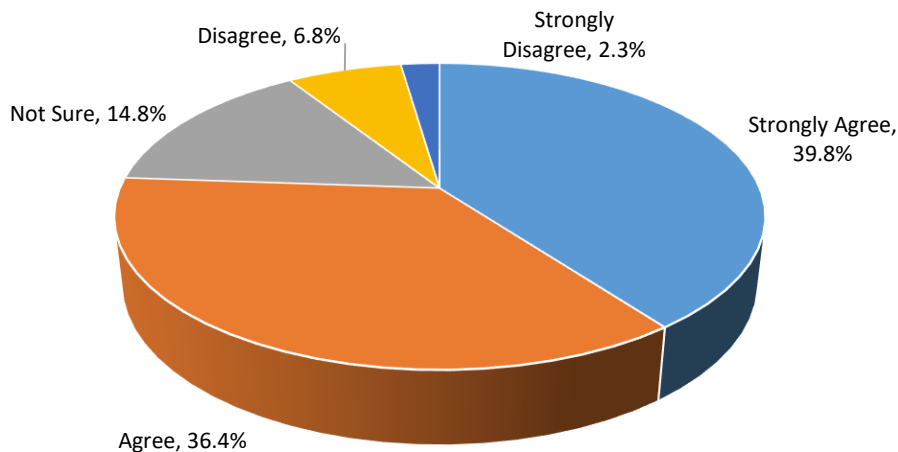


- Progress works with property developers and landowners to increase housing in areas where new housing is needed.



- Vacancy across the city not just the city centre needs to be addressed as dereliction is a major problem in housing as well as businesses.

4.4 'Our planet' improvement objective



- 39.8% strongly agreed
- 36.4% agreed
- 14.8% not sure
- 6.8% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Whilst acknowledging positive tree planting ambitions across the city, it's also important to recognise the importance of hedges to the environment and beauty of the city.



- Reducing car use in the city and encouraging shared car schemes to try and address issues of parking across the city. Consider options to promote access to short term car usage, for example the GoCar in Ireland.



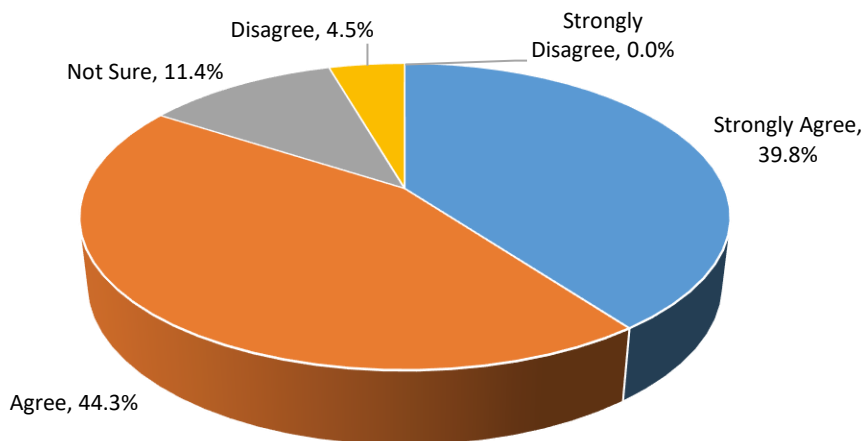
- Consider practical ways to educate and raise awareness in relation to climate change such as community science projects on air quality across the city.



- Council should use their leadership position as part of this theme to deliver positive action alongside partners.

- 39.8% strongly agreed
- 44.3% agreed

4.5 'Our economy' improvement objective



- 11.4% not sure
- 4.5% disagreed
- 0.0% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Council should be encouraging local supply chains and reducing exporting of resources as waste that could be used by other businesses as a material in production to deliver a 'circular economy'.

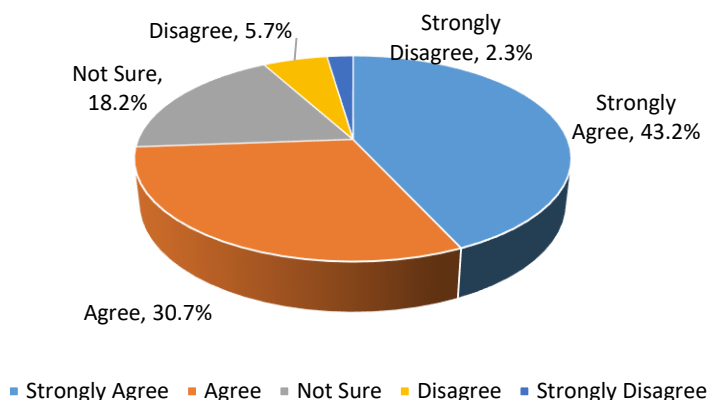


- An events strategy for outdoor concerts in Belfast is required to set out the approach in terms of event frequency etc in Belfast Parks in particular.



- Greater promotion, emphasis and visibility of arts and culture as key economic drivers that help to showcase what the city has to offer both for residents and visitors.

4.6 'Compassionate city' improvement objective



- 43.2% strongly agreed
- 30.7% agreed
- 18.2% not sure
- 5.7% disagreed
- 2.3% strongly disagreed

■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Not Sure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Qualitative feedback



- Important that Council tackle the root cause for numerous issues in relation to violence against women and girls of which drug use and increased immigration are considered to be enablers.



- Whilst it is commendable that Council is taking the lead on poverty, this should be an issue for Central Government to deliver on.



- Council should make a commitment to rigorously understanding the causal factors of inequality, poverty and violence and to lead the city to change them so that the difference between those who are well off and those who are not is reduced.



- Focus on the services to support the most at risk, those with disability, homeless, addictions issues and review ways of working, For example - combining the family support hubs, complex lives, community safety etc and embrace joined up working.

5. Focus group feedback

Council's Strategic Performance Team facilitated two focus groups with 62 young people aged 18-24 and 9 members of the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum who represent the views of older people across the city. Workshops focused on identifying the needs and priorities for the two respective target groups. Key feedback is summarised below:

5.1 Older people focus group

Communication and awareness

Council should consider more traditional methods to engage and communicate with older residents. Many don't or can't access online methods and therefore don't stay informed, for example providing more frequent newsletters, brochures, key contact details and radio announcements would be beneficial.

Better understanding of older people's needs

The needs of older people can be sometimes overlooked, older people would welcome direct engagement, particularly with Elected Members to look at opportunities to help support them.

Increased public toilet provision

The lack of public toilet provision across the city restricts older people from getting out and about. Older people feel apprehensive that they won't be able to access toilet provision and therefore can become isolated from society. Reviewing toilet provision and how the city can better accommodate older people should be prioritised.

Working with partners

Council should be a civic leader and demand more from key partner organisations to improve the quality of life and provision for people across the city. Improving our roads, availability of public transport and improving accessibility of all facilities are key issues which should be delivered on.

5.2 Young people focus group

Mental health support

Mental health is a major issue for young people with more and more individuals seeking support. Service demand is vastly outweighing supply and thus many young people cannot access the support they need. Council should work with partners to consider interventions and supports to help address the challenges presented.

Social justice

Young people want to live in a city that is inclusive and equitable, ensuring everyone has the same rights and access to basic necessities. Council therefore has a key role to play in terms of addressing systemic inequalities and discrimination, through delivering interventions and programmes that promoting a society where everyone can thrive.

Youth unemployment

Accessing good quality jobs a priority for young people who feel that the cost of living crisis and political decisions (National Insurance increase) could lead to higher levels of youth unemployment. Young people would like to see better training and educational opportunities to ensure they are better equipped to access and sustain employment.

Homelessness

Homelessness was noted as a key issue for young people who feel more dedicated and wholistic support is required. Council should consider how they can help tackle the issue to reduce stereotyping and review practical solutions to support those in need i.e. extend Complex Lives, transform derelict buildings into safe spaces etc.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Addressing the growing issue of violence against women and girls is a major priority for young people who feel that Council has a key role to play in terms of providing infrastructure, delivering legislation and education to help tackle the societal issue. Young people feel that Council need to show leadership and work with partners to ensure that Belfast is a safe place for everyone.

Climate change

Young people noted the positive work of Council in terms of the leading role in helping to address climate change in Belfast. They also stressed the importance that this work continues to be prioritised and elevated further to safeguard future generations.

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Performance Improvement Plan

2025 - 26

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Foreword

I'm delighted to introduce Belfast City Council's Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 which is a key element of our arrangements to secure continuous improvement. Driving improvement is a priority for Council, evidenced by our recently developed Planning and Performance Framework which is a crucial component that will help us to embed a consistent approach to how we plan, deliver, monitor and measure the impact of our services and work across the organisation.

As we move past a decade since local government reform which was implemented to enhance service delivery and improve cost effectiveness for local authorities in Northern Ireland, as a Council we remain committed to improving the quality of life and environment for our ratepayers and communities over the next year and beyond.

This commitment is echoed in our new Corporate Plan 2025-28 which is closely aligned to The Belfast Agenda, our city's community plan. Our new Corporate Plan sets out our priorities and ambitions in terms of improving our services, supporting our people and communities, enhancing our place, growing our economy, protecting our planet, promoting a compassionate city and ensuring that we are an organisation fit to lead and serve.

Looking back on 2024-25, we are proud of the progress that we achieved and the positive impact that the work of council staff continues to have on our residents and stakeholders. Reflecting on last year's Performance, this plan highlights some of our key achievements, such the delivery of over £14.5m of investment in two PEACE IV projects- Shankill Shared Women's Centre and Black Mountain Shared Space.

These facilities will undoubtedly play a crucial role in connecting communities as we continue to strive towards a shared future for everyone.

We will continue to prioritise our commitment to creating a sustainable, nature positive city and championing climate action by increasing the climate resilience of Council assets and services.

To improve the health and wellbeing of our residents, we will maximise our contribution through investing in and offering a diverse range of activities in parks, open spaces, play and leisure facilities. Additionally, we uphold our dedication to stimulating inclusive growth and innovation and enhancing the prosperity of our city, through supporting local businesses and creating opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.

We have supported and continue to deliver real improvements for all our citizens, particularly those who are most vulnerable, underpinned by the desire to make Belfast a compassionate city, a city which is caring, safe and inclusive for all.

However, whilst much has been achieved, our continuous improvement journey is ongoing, and we remain determined not to stand still. As an organisation, we look forward to the year ahead as we strive to improve the quality of life and opportunities for all our citizens and stakeholders.

John Walsh, Chief Executive

Introduction

Our Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 sets out Council’s key priorities for improvement over the next 12-month period to ensure that we fulfil our “Duty to Improve”.

Duty to improve

Under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, we have a statutory duty to agree improvement objectives, publish an annual Improvement Plan and ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to achieve them.

Defining improvement

In accordance with the Act and accompanying guidance, for us “improvement” is about *enhancing the sustainable quality of life and environment for ratepayers and communities* rather than limited to gains in service output or efficiencies.

The development of this year’s Performance Improvement Plan has coincided with the production of Council’s new Corporate Plan 2025-2028. As a result, Council has been able to clearly define key priorities and areas for improvement this year, ensuring alignment between both plans and our overarching community plan, The Belfast Agenda.

Our Performance Improvement Plan has also been developed against the backdrop of Council’s new Planning and Performance Management Framework to embed a consistent, streamlined approach to planning and performance management throughout the organisation. It will also help to build an effective culture of performance management to ensure all members, staff and stakeholders work to achieve the best possible outcomes and value for money for the residents and communities in Belfast. The Framework will also be a crucial tool to support informed decision-making, more effective use of resources and drive improvement across the organisation.

Our medium and longer-term arrangements to ensure continuous improvement are outlined in figure 1. This plan sets out our performance improvement objectives for 2025 – 26 which are compliant with the requirement for them to be:

- **legitimate** - making a *demonstrable contribution* to at least one (or, probably, more than one) of the aspects of improvement listed in the Local Government Act.
- **clear** - setting out the *visible improvement* that citizens can expect.
- **robust** - with defined *terms of success* (whether *quantitative* or *qualitative*).
- **deliverable** - with established *links to individual service programmes and budgets*.
- **demonstrable** - capable of being supported by *objective* (but *not necessarily measured or quantitative*) evidence.



Looking back - performance improvement summary achievements 2024-25

Our 2024-25 year-end self-assessment will be published on our website in September 2025 and some key achievements are summarised below:

100%

of actions achieved or partially achieved

87.5%

of available performance indicators either met or exceeded target

89.6%

of available performance indicators have either maintained or showed improvement on previous years



Signed up 57 companies to the Belfast Business Promise pledge (target 50)



Delivered over €17m investment in two PEACE IV projects - Shankill Shared Women's Centre and Black Mountain Shared Space.

Occupied 46 previously vacant city centre properties as a result of the Vacant to Vibrant intervention. (target 26).



Completed 91.93% of service requests for missed bins within 5 working days (target 85%)



Achieved 84% customer satisfaction levels with customer hub contacts (target 80%)



Increased the % of household waste collected that is sent for recycling to 42.7% (target 42%)



Increased the % of council contracts (over £30k value) where the SVPP has been applied to 75% (target 40%)



Processed 77% of planning enforcement cases within 39 weeks – exceeding the statutory 70% target



Completed over 26 Physical Programme projects (target 10)

Our arrangements to ensure continuous improvement

The Council has a statutory duty to put arrangements in place to secure continuous performance improvement. We are also specifically required to produce an annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). However, everything we do in Council is focused on improving the lives of people who live in or visit Belfast. The following legislative context, plans and strategies combine to form our performance management framework for improving outcomes for the people of Belfast and demonstrates how the Council's corporate objectives are cascaded throughout the organisation.

FIGURE 1: Council's performance management framework.



These arrangements are in accordance with Part 12 (Section 84 (2)) of the Local Government Act which states that they should improve our functions in terms of:



Strategic context

Our community plan, the Belfast Agenda was updated in 2024, with input from partners, residents, and other stakeholders to reflect the city's current priorities. The overarching strategic plan explains the WHY of what we are doing, providing a holistic view of the needs and aspirations of the city, and articulating this in five long-term outcomes. It outlines how partners will work collectively to support the most vulnerable in our city while growing the economy, regenerating neighbourhoods, supporting communities, and achieving our climate targets. Figure 2 depicts the five strategic themes and priorities, the five things' people want for Belfast by 2035 (our outcomes) and our ambitions which outline our key targets to make our vision a reality.

The Council's Corporate Plan 2025-28 sets out our approach to delivering for local people in a time of both significant opportunity and considerable challenges for our city. The Corporate Plan is inextricably linked to the Belfast Agenda and explains WHAT the Council will do to contribute to the outcomes above as well as outlining the key priorities for us as an organisation. And finally, Committee plans, and other departmental and business plans detail the HOW. Our corporate priority themes for the next three years are outlined in figure 3.



FIGURE 2: The Belfast Agenda 2024-28

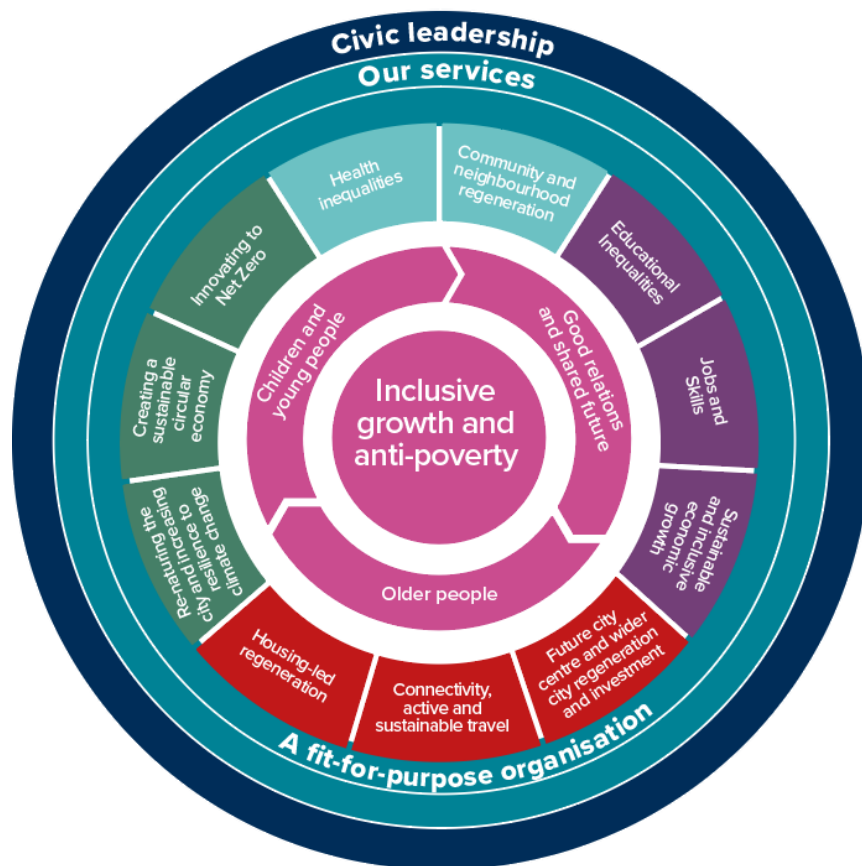
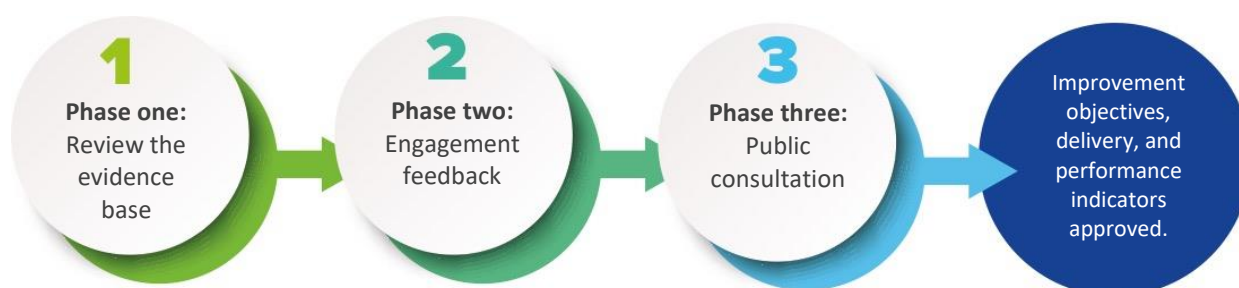


FIGURE 3: Council's Corporate Plan 2025-28

Identifying our performance improvement objectives for 2025-26

All our key strategies and plans are informed and developed by listening to our residents, businesses, partners, staff, and elected representatives. Our 2025-26 performance improvement objectives were developed via a three-phase process. In phase one, we reviewed the evidence base, in phase two, we engaged internally and in phase three, we conducted public consultation. The rich and diverse analysis and feedback we received throughout this process has been shaped into this revitalised Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.

FIGURE 4: Three-phase process



Phase one: Reviewing the evidence base.

Understanding the needs of users, citizens and the internal and external environment is critically important. We analysed baseline evidence drawn from existing engagement findings, survey results, performance data and a review of relevant strategies and plans, including:

- Results and trend data from our 2024-25 Performance Improvement Assessment report.
- Feedback gleaned from partners, residents, and other stakeholders as part of the consultation and engagement process for the Belfast Agenda's refresh.
- Ongoing monitoring and review of 2024-25 Corporate Delivery Plan (via quarterly reporting) to identify areas of potential under-performance.
- Inclusion of guidance issued by the Department for Communities and recommendations provided by the NI auditor (including the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Section 95 report).
- Evidence and issues arising from Committee and meetings of the Full Council.
- Areas for improvement emerging from the internal audit and risk management processes.
- Priorities identified during the development of the new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and rate setting process.
- Alignment with key Council and city strategies including The Belfast Agenda, Corporate Plan 2025-28 etc.
- A review of customer complaints received.
- Good practice data benchmarking with other local authorities.

Phase two: Engagement feedback

Feedback was gleaned and approval granted from a series of internal engagements with members, Chief Officers, departments and key staff across the Council. This included:

- Templates completed and initial meetings held with departments to identify priorities and improvement activity.
- Regular engagement with departmental teams and key officers, at every phase – ensuring alignment to departmental and service level budget setting and planning processes.
- Priorities identified during corporate planning engagement with Party Group Leaders, elected members and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).
- Reports presented and discussed at CMT, Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee and the Full Council.
- Approval granted via scheduled meetings with senior management teams, CMT, Committee and Full Council meetings.

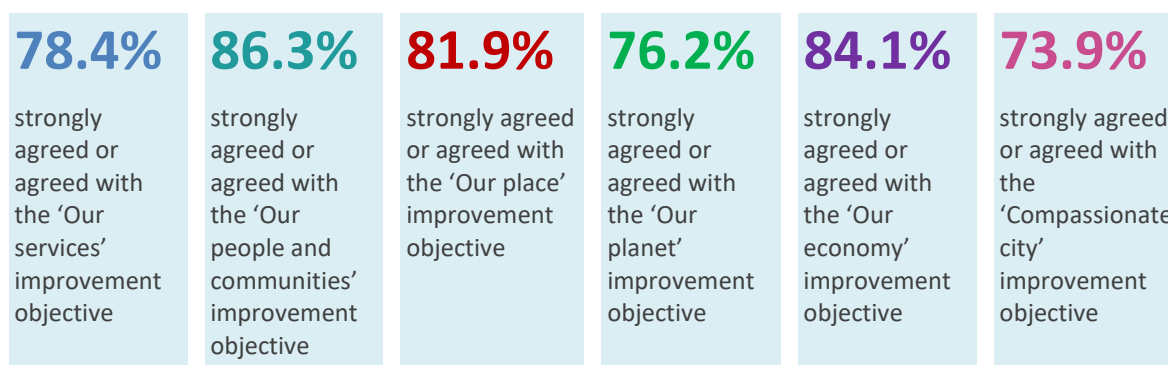
Phase three: Public consultation

An eight-week public consultation process was carried out to enable residents and stakeholders to inform our improvement objectives 2025-26. This included an online survey via council's Your Say Belfast consultation and engagement website and two targeted focus groups. The survey was promoted using a range of communication methods including social media posts, posters in community buildings, email marketing to existing mailing lists, intranet promotion and websites. As part of phase three, we:

- Received 88 survey completions via the Your Say Belfast website.
- Facilitated 2 focus groups with 62 young people and 9 older people to reflect their priorities and areas for improvement.
- Worked closely with departmental teams and key officers to consider consultation feedback and refine the final Performance Improvement Plan.
- Secured approval of the final objectives through the normal council governance cycle (CMT, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the full Council meeting).

Consultation feedback summary

A summary of the consultation results is set out below:



The issues or improvements that respondents felt should be considered in relation to the draft 2025-26 improvement objectives are thematically summarised below. It is important to note that some of the areas highlighted as part of the public consultation process are already being progressed through existing strategies, plans, and programmes, and in partnership as part of the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, for example housing provision, homelessness, and mental health.

Survey feedback summary

Our services

- Develop solutions that prioritise waste minimisation instead of more recycling campaigns.
- Assign extra resources to ensure waste collection services are more efficient and can reduce littering and clogging up streets with bins.
- Consider more specific improvement activity and actions relating to this objective.
- Whilst the implementation of the glass collection is a positive step forward, it should be extended across the city.

Our people and communities

- Enhance key local amenities such as re-surfacing works at the Bog Meadows to engage more people in their local areas.
- Invest further in sport and leisure facilities, specifically outdoor tennis courts to encourage more participation.
- Cost for leisure facilities is prohibitive for many people to access – consider more inclusive pricing to encourage participation.
- Council should proactively prioritise participation of residents in civic society and promote inclusion. Develop innovative ways to engage and support people and groups across the city.

Our place

- Focus on greater pedestrianisation of city centre, reducing vehicles in and around commercial and shopping areas as well as enhancing active travel infrastructure.
- Consider how to prioritise increasing use of communal green spaces that are easily accessible and open to the public.
- Work with partners to enhance public transport provision and infrastructure, including provision of bus stops at Council facilities.
- Prioritise investment in addressing unadopted alleyways to deliver a 'cleaner and greener' city.
- Progress works with property developers and landowners to increase housing in areas where new housing is needed.
- Vacancy across the city not just the city centre needs to be addressed as dereliction is a major problem in housing as well as businesses.

Our planet

- Whilst acknowledging positive tree planting ambitions across the city, it's also important to recognise the importance of hedges to the environment and beauty of the city.
- Reducing car use in the city and encouraging shared car schemes to try and address issues of parking across the city. Consider options to promote access to short term car usage, for example GoCar in Ireland.
- Consider practical ways to educate and raise awareness in relation to climate change such as community science projects on air quality across the city.
- Council should use their leadership position as part of this theme to deliver more positive actions alongside partners.

Our economy

- Council should be encouraging local supply chains and reducing exporting of resources as waste that could be used by other businesses as a material in production to deliver a 'circular economy'.
- An events strategy for outdoor concerts in Belfast is required to set out the approach in terms of event frequency etc in Belfast Parks in particular.
- Greater promotion, emphasis and visibility of arts and culture as key economic drivers that help to showcase what the city has to offer both for residents and visitors.

Compassionate City

- Important that Council tackle the root cause for numerous issues in relation to violence against women and girls of which drug use and increased immigration are considered to be enablers.
- Whilst it is commendable that Council is taking the lead on poverty, this should be an issue for Central Government to deliver on.
- There needs to be more focus on disability – a disability strategy should be in place with associated improvement objectives around inclusion and accessibility in terms of goods, facilities and services.
- Council should make a commitment to rigorously understanding the causal factors of inequality, poverty and violence and to lead the city to change them so that the difference between those who are well off and those who are not is reduced.
- Focus on the services to support the most at risk, those with disability, homeless, addictions issues and review ways of working, for example, combining the family support hubs, complex lives, community safety and embrace joined up working.

Focus group feedback

Two focus groups were carried with sixty-two young people aged 18-24 and 9 older people to better understand the needs and priorities of these traditionally under-represented target groups. A high-level thematic summary of the key feedback from each respective focus group is provided below:

Older people focus group

Communication and awareness

Council should consider more traditional methods to engage and communicate with older residents. Many don't or can't access online methods and therefore don't stay informed. Providing more frequent newsletters, brochures, key contact details and radio announcements would be beneficial.

Better understanding of older people's needs

The needs of older people are often overlooked, older people would welcome direct engagement with Elected Members to look at opportunities to help support them.

Increased public toilet provision

The lack of public toilet provision across the city restricts older people from getting out and about. Older people feel apprehensive that they won't be able to access toilet provision and therefore can become isolated from society. Reviewing toilet provision and how the city can better accommodate older people should be prioritised.

Working with partners

Council should be a civic leader and demand more from key partner organisations to improve the quality of life and provision for people across the city. Improving our roads, availability of public transport and improving accessibility of all facilities are key issues which should be delivered on.

Young people (aged 18-24) focus group

Mental health support

Mental health is a major issue for young people with more and more individuals seeking support. Service demand is vastly outweighing supply and thus many young people cannot access the support they need. Council should work with partners to consider interventions and supports to help address the challenges presented.

Social justice

Young people want to live in a city that is inclusive and equitable, ensuring everyone has the same rights and access to basic necessities. Council therefore has a key role to play in terms of addressing systemic inequalities and discrimination, through delivering interventions and programmes that promoting a society where everyone can thrive.

Youth unemployment

Accessing good quality jobs, a priority for young people who feel that the cost-of-living crisis and political decisions (National Insurance increase) could lead to higher levels of youth unemployment. Young people would like to see better training and educational opportunities to ensure they are better equipped to access and sustain employment.

Homelessness

Homelessness was noted as a key issue for young people who feel more dedicated and wholistic support is required. Council should consider how they can help tackle the issue to reduce stereotyping and review practical solutions to support those in need i.e. extend Complex Lives, transform derelict buildings into safe spaces etc.

Ending violence against women and girls

Addressing the growing issue of violence against women and girls is a major priority for young people who feel that Council has a key role to play in terms of providing infrastructure, delivering legislation and education to help tackle the societal issue. Young people feel that Council need to show leadership and work with partners to ensure that Belfast is a safe place for everyone.

Climate change

Young people noted the positive work of Council in terms of the leading role in helping to address climate change in Belfast. They also stressed the importance that this work continues to be prioritised and elevated further to safeguard future generations.

Looking forward – performance improvement objectives 2025-26

Our performance improvement objectives, are clearly aligned with the Belfast Agenda 2024-28 and Corporate Plan 2025-28. Reflecting on our 2024-25 performance and feedback from residents and stakeholders we will continue to progress five out of the six performance objectives identified in the previous year, with refined associated actions. To meet the evolving needs of the city we have broadened the scope of our Compassionate city objective:



We are, therefore, committed to the following improvement objectives during 2025-26:

Our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.
Our people and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged.
Our place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).
Our planet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.
Our economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.
Compassionate city	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe and inclusive city.

We have assessed each of these objectives and consider that they all meet the following statutory aspects of improvement:

Strategic effectiveness	Service quality, availability, and fairness	Sustainability	Efficiency	Innovation
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Improvement objective 1: Our services

In addition to the specific improvement activities set out below, we will implement our regular programme of service redesign and adjustments to ways of working through the implementation of risk and audit actions to continually adapt and improve our services.

Belfast Agenda Outcome	Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.
Corporate Plan themes and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our services – Delivering effective and efficient services. • Foundations for success - Creating a fit for purpose organisation
Improvement objective	We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.
Why is this important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from residents focused on improving the delivery of services. • Identified as a priority by Elected Members. • Aligned to the Corporate Plan
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Customer Focus Programme to build organisational capacity to enhance our services and customer experience. • Continue to deliver the Planning Service Improvement Plan. • Deliver a street cleansing programme to create a cleaner and greener city. • Operate daily bin collections of household and commercial waste through the deployment of adequate and efficient resources. • Deliver phase two of the kerbside glass expansion programme to enhance customer service and improve recycling rates. • Initiate the development of an overarching Asset Management Strategy to set out how Council owned and managed land and property assets will be used to support service delivery and the delivery of objectives in the Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our people and communities	Our place	Our planet	Our economy	Compassionate City
Resolving 65% of corporate complaints within timeframe.	✓				
Introducing improvement actions for 80% of corporate complaints.	✓				
Deliver Customer Service Training qualification to a cohort of staff.	✓				
Achieving the 30-week target for average processing time for major planning applications (statutory indicator).		✓			
Achieving the 15-week target for average processing time for local planning applications (statutory indicator).		✓			
Processing 70% of enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks (statutory indicator).		✓			
Achieving less than 12 weeks average processing time for householder applications and advertisement consent applications.		✓			
Achieving less than 6 weeks average processing time of tree works applications and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).		✓	✓		
Completing 75% of service requests for open spaces and street scene within 5 working days.	✓	✓			
Completing 92% of service requests for missed bins within 5 working days.					
Providing 23,000 additional households with kerbside glass collections.			✓		
Collecting an additional 650 tonnes of glass.			✓		
Completing the Asset Management Strategy.	✓		✓		

**What is
our wider
policy
impact?**

- **Regional:** Waste Legislation NI (various), Waste Management Plan NI, Local Government Finance Act 2011, Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).
- **Local:** Belfast City Council Resilience Strategy, Local Development Plan (LDP) 2035, Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS), Belfast City Council Financial Regulations 2015, Putting You First: Transforming Customer Experience, Belfast City Council Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

Improvement objective 2: Our people and communities

In addition to the specifics set out below, we will improve our local areas and improve health and wellbeing for our residents, by delivering programmes of work and activities contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome

Belfast will be a city where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing.

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

- Our people and communities – Making life better for all our residents.
 - Health inequalities and community and neighbourhood

Improvement objective

We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged.

Why is this important?

- Recent health data shows that life expectancy overall has stopped increasing and there is a growing need to tackle obesity and increase the levels of physical activity across Belfast.
- Based on resident feedback.
- Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.

What will we do?

- Enhance our playgrounds, to ensure that we continue to provide high quality facilities and equipment across the city.
- Increase the number of people using our leisure centres, to participate in sport and physical activity.
- Deliver animation and outreach activities in community, play and leisure development programmes.
- Deliver and facilitate a range of events and community programmes within our parks and open spaces.
- Deliver improvements to parks and open spaces to improve people's health and wellbeing through multimillion pound transformational schemes.
- Progress the development of capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy to enhance the quality and accessibility of sports and physical activity provision in Belfast.
- Progress the development and delivery of the Council's Physical Programme to enable needs led investment across the city.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our place	Our planet	Our economy	Compassionate City
Investing £580k and delivering the annual playground improvement programme.		✓	✓		
Increasing the number of people using our leisure centres to 3.35million.	✓				
Increasing the number of community, play and leisure outreach programmes delivered to 200.	✓				
Increasing the number of outdoor leisure bookings (pitches, bowling greens) to 160,000.	✓				
Increasing the numbers attending events in our parks to 180,000.	✓				
Progressing major improvements to three parks (Ballysillan Playing Fields, Waterworks, Alexandra Park).	✓	✓			
Progressing major improvements to one open space (Cathedral Gardens).	✓	✓			
Commencing development work on three selected sites (aligned to the Leisure Programme, Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy).	✓	✓			
Completing 10 projects under the Physical Programme.	✓	✓			
Developing 100 projects under the Physical Programme.	✓	✓			
Supporting 20 organisations under the £10.28m NRF programme.	✓	✓			
Completing one project under NRF.	✓	✓			

What is
our wider
policy
impact?

- **Regional:** Programme for Government (PfG) 2024-27 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most', Active Living the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for NI (2022), Marking Life Better – Strategic Framework for public health, Whole Systems Approach to Obesity Prevention, Regional Development Strategy (2035), SPPS.
- **Local:** The Department of Health's Annual Health Inequalities report, The World Health Organisation's Belfast Healthy Cities Strategy, LDP, BOSS, Get Active Belfast – A framework for physical activity – Active Belfast Partnership.

Improvement objective 3: Our place

In addition to the improvement action below, we will create a more attractive, vibrant, and connected city by delivering programmes of work and activities contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome	Belfast will be a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.
Corporate Plan themes and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our place – Creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connectivity, active and sustainable travel. ○ City regeneration and investment.
Improvement objective	Our Place - we will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).
Why is this important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on resident feedback. • Identified as a priority by elected members. • Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver the Vacant to Vibrant Programme 2025-26 to address city-wide vacancy rates. • Progress the Greenways and Access to the Hills Programme to improve the connectivity of the city. • Support and progress the delivery of neighbourhood tourism physical projects, improving the city's local tourism facilities and infrastructure. • Progress infrastructure works at the North Foreshore to support the development of the site. • Progress the Master Development Agreement for the 250-acre Giant's Park site in accordance with the schedule of works.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our planet	Our economy	Compassionate City
Occupying 20 previously vacant city-wide properties as a result of the Vacant to Vibrant intervention.		✓			
Awarding £470,000 through Vacant to Vibrant funding to city-wide traders.		✓			
Progressing two greenways and pathways to improve the connectivity of the city for example Sydenham Greenway, Colin Greenway and Black Mountain Pathway.		✓	✓		
Progressing three physical neighbourhood tourism projects - Act Initiative, Titanic People Exhibition Centre and Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre.		✓			
Progressing match funding for three projects from external partners for neighbourhood tourism physical projects.		✓			
Undertaking works with the developer to progress the development phase of the 250-acre Giant's Park site.		✓			
Progressing the delivery of landfill gas extraction system at the North Foreshore.		✓			
Progressing the delivery of additional NIE capacity at the North Foreshore.		✓			

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** Eastern Transport Plan 2035 (under development); Regional Development Strategy 2035, PfG.
- **Local:** Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS); A Bolder Vision for Belfast; Belfast Resilience Strategy, LDP.

Improvement objective 4: Our planet

In addition to the specific improvement actions set out below, we will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast by delivering our normal programme of work contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, Committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome	Belfast is a vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable city.
Corporate Plan themes and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our services, Our people and communities, Our place, and Our planet.
Improvement objective	Our planet - We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.
Why is this important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change is a global concern. Since we declared a climate emergency in 2019 and launched our Resilience Strategy in 2020, we have been taking action to transition the city to an inclusive, zero-emissions and climate-resilient economy in a generation. Council has statutory responsibility. Identified as a concern by residents and stakeholders. Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.
What will we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the planet section of the Belfast Agenda, which aims to create a sustainable, nature positive city (including investable local energy projects, an UPSURGE demonstrator site and a neighbourhood retrofit pilot). Commence delivery of the Council Corporate Climate Action Plan to increase the climate resilience of Council assets and services and progress towards Council net zero emissions, (over 20 priorities including a Sustainable Food Policy, energy audits of Council buildings and retrofitting of Council buildings). Deliver an effective waste management service across the city. Deliver year three of the Belfast Tree Strategy and action plan to help manage and improve the tree scape across the city, including the establishment of the woodland management programme.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our place	Our economy	Compassionate City
Progressing three Belfast Agenda Climate Projects (investable local energy projects, UPSURGE demonstrator site, neighbourhood retrofit pilot).		✓	✓		
Completing one Belfast Agenda Climate Project (Horizon Europe UP2030).		✓	✓		
Completing 19 short-term Council Corporate Climate Action Plan priorities.	✓				
Achieving 38.5% of council municipal waste arisings is sent for recycling.	✓	✓	✓		
Reducing the tonnage of biodegradable council collected waste that is landfilled to 7,000 tonnes (statutory indicator).	✓	✓	✓		
Maintaining the % of household waste collected that is sent for recycling at 42% (or prepared for re-use) (statutory indicator).	✓	✓	✓		
Achieving 160,000 tonnage of council collected municipal waste arisings (statutory indicator).	✓	✓	✓		
Planting 500 linear metres of new hedging.		✓	✓		

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland)2022, Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024, Energy Strategy –The Path to Net Zero Energy, Draft Green Growth Strategy, PfG, Second Cycle NI Flood Risk Management Plan 2021-2027, Strategic Planning Policy Statement.
- **Local:** Belfast Resilience Strategy, A Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Belfast, A Bolder Vision for Belfast, Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), Belfast Open Spaces Strategy, Belfast Air Quality Action Plan, Belfast Green and Blue Infrastructure Plan, Belfast (Draft) Economic Strategy, Belfast (Draft) Adaptation Strategy, Belfast Local Area Energy Plan.

Improvement objective 5: Our economy

In addition to the specifics set out below, we will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment by delivering our normal programme of work contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, Committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome

Belfast is a place where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy.

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

- Our economy – Creating inclusive and sustainable growth, learning and opportunity.

Improvement objective

Our economy - We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.

Why is this important?

- Based on resident feedback.
- Identified by elected members as a priority.
- Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities

What will we do?

- Work with the Enterprise Support Service to deliver 'Go Succeed' to increase the number of new business starts.
- Deliver employment and upskilling academies in priority sectors in line with industry demand.
- Deliver the Smart Belfast urban innovation programme to enhance Belfast's capacity for digital innovation.
- Deliver an enhanced Learning City Festival to promote and encourage lifelong learning for people of all ages across Belfast.
- Extend the delivery of Belfast Business Promise (BBP) initiative to support the provision of good jobs and a sustainable local economy.
- Support our suppliers by helping business cashflow through the prompt payment of invoices.

How will we measure success?					
Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our place	Our planet	Compassionate City
Completing 325 business plans to promote business start-up and job promotion (statutory indicator).		✓			
Supporting 75% of participants to move into a positive outcome from an Employment or Upskilling Academy.		✓			
Supporting 425 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to engage in digital innovation.		✓	✓		
Awarding £600,000 of funding to organisations to engage in digital innovation.		✓	✓		
Delivering 130 events through the Belfast Learning City Festival.		✓	✓		✓
Supporting 10 businesses (existing BBP members) to improve their recognition level (reaching Member or Ambassador status).		✓			✓
Producing four good practice 'case studies' to highlight the Belfast Business Promise journey and 'inclusive growth in practice'.		✓			✓
Paying 90% of invoices within 30 calendar days.	✓				
Paying 80% of invoices within 10 working days.	✓				

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** A 10X Economy - Northern Ireland's Decade of Innovation; Innovation Strategy for NI 2014-25, Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland, Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor Action Plan, PfG.
- **Local:** Belfast Economic Strategy 2022-30, Belfast Inclusive Growth Strategy, Belfast Region City Deal, SMART Belfast - Belfast Urban Innovation Framework 2022 – 26, Belfast City Council Social Value Procurement Policy.

Improvement objective 6: Compassionate city

In addition to the specific actions set out below, we will support our residents through the cost-of-living crisis by delivering of our normal programme of work contained within the Belfast Agenda 2024-28, the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28, committee plans and supporting departmental and business plans.

Belfast Agenda Outcome

Belfast is a place where everyone fulfils their potential.

Corporate Plan themes and priorities

- Compassionate City – Making Belfast a welcoming, caring, and inclusive city – leaving no-one behind.
- Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty.

Improvement objective

We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe and inclusive city.

Why is this important?

- Based on resident and stakeholder feedback.
- Identified as an Elected Member priority.
- Part of our statutory duty.
- Aligned to Belfast Agenda and Corporate Plan priorities.
- Evolution of policy environment (Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG)).

What will we do?

- Deliver local community actions plans as part of the PEACEPLUS programme, to fund community activities and infrastructure project that help build peace and reconciliation in Belfast.
- Establish an Anti-Poverty Network in Belfast to support and facilitate a co-ordinated approach to tackling poverty across the city.
- Extend delivery of the Hardship Programme to ensure that support is available for those most impacted by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
- Deliver a programme to help end violence against women and girls (EVAWG).
- Progress delivery of up to five capital projects across the city as part of the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan to promote inclusive and shared spaces across Belfast.

How will we measure success?

Measures of success	Cross-cutting themes/objectives:				
	Our Services	Our People and Communities	Our place	Our planet	Our economy
Delivering 10 local community action plans (including relevant peace monitoring information).		✓	✓		
Establishing the Anti-Poverty Network		✓			
Delivering £1.1m of Hardship Programme funding		✓			
Awarding and delivering £255k as part of an open call small grants programme as part of the EVAWG programme.		✓			
Administering £1.2m of Regional Change Funding to 8 EVAWG expert organisations.		✓			
Engaging a minimum of 8,000 children and young people as part of the EVAWG programme		✓			
Progressing up to five capital projects under PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan (Sanctuary Theatre, Distillery Street Redevelopment Project, Annadale Open Space, Reconnected Belfast and LGBTQIA+ Hub)		✓	✓	✓	

What is our wider policy impact?

- **Regional:** The Executive's Child Poverty Strategy, NI Audit Office Child Poverty in Northern Ireland Report, The Trussell Trust State of Hunger Report, DfC Poverty, and Income Inequality (PII) Report, Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG), NI Act 1998 (Section 75), Race Relations Order 1997, PfG.
- **Local:** Belfast Inclusive Growth Strategy, Belfast City Council Social Value Procurement Policy, Equality Scheme, Good Relations Strategy, PEACEPLUS Programme.

Performance monitoring and reporting arrangements

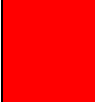








To ensure that we continuously improve and meet the needs and outcomes of our city and residents, we have established governance arrangements in relation to corporate performance management, summarised and set out in figure 5 below.

Governance arrangements

Monitoring and regular reporting of performance is essential to ensure that priorities are being achieved, and that the information that was collected informed decision making and plans.

Progress is monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the Corporate Management Team (CMT), on a quarterly basis to the Audit Assurance Board and the Audit and Risk Panel, and regularly to relevant working groups, relevant committees, and the Full Council. At year end, corporate performance is assessed using the key below on figure 5.

FIGURE 5: Performance status and trend key

Actions/milestones		Performance indicator target		Performance indicator trend	
	Not achieved		Adrift of target (5% or more)		Negative change
	Partially achieved		Slightly adrift of target (between 1% and 5%)		No significant change
	Achieved/ completed		On target or exceeded target (within 1% or better)		Positive change

Corporate, Committee and departmental business plans and strategies containing statutory or self-imposed performance indicators, are monitored, and reported both internally to departmental and the Corporate Management Team and formally to the relevant Committee.

In addition, action plans and programme plans relating to council's key priority projects are monitored and reported through cross-departmental groups, management teams and boards, and regularly to the relevant committee.

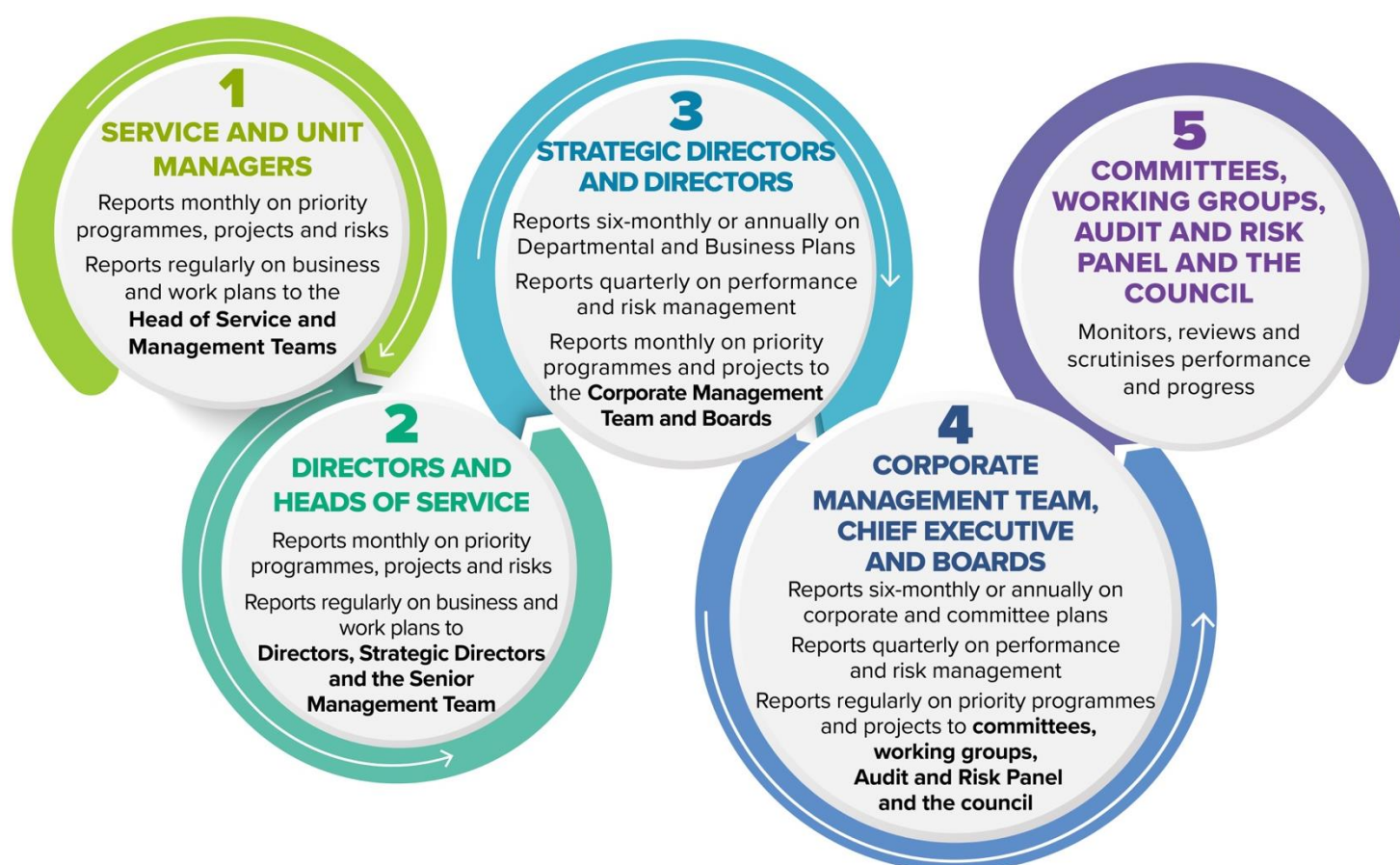
Figure 6 summarises the high-level governance arrangements and the responsibilities for implementing these.

Each year, we publish a self-assessment report, setting out details of how we have performed as a Council and benchmarked against other local authorities where possible. The Council is a member of the Association of Public Sector Excellence (APSE), which is a public sector benchmarking organisation. This enables us to compare and improve our performance across a range of services and activities, with other comparable councils.

The Council's internal audit team regularly review the improvement framework, and this is reported to the Audit and Risk Panel. Annually the NIAO reviews the processes and arrangements as part of the annual performance improvement audit and publicly publishes this.

A new planning and performance management framework is currently being developed which will refresh the current arrangements, provide a co-ordinated focus and a robust framework to enhance our continuous improvement journey. This new framework will enable us to deliver our collective responsibility with community planning partners, as well as supporting us to carry out our statutory duty to improve, deliver best value and achieve the best possible impact for the people of Belfast.

FIGURE 6: High-level governance arrangements

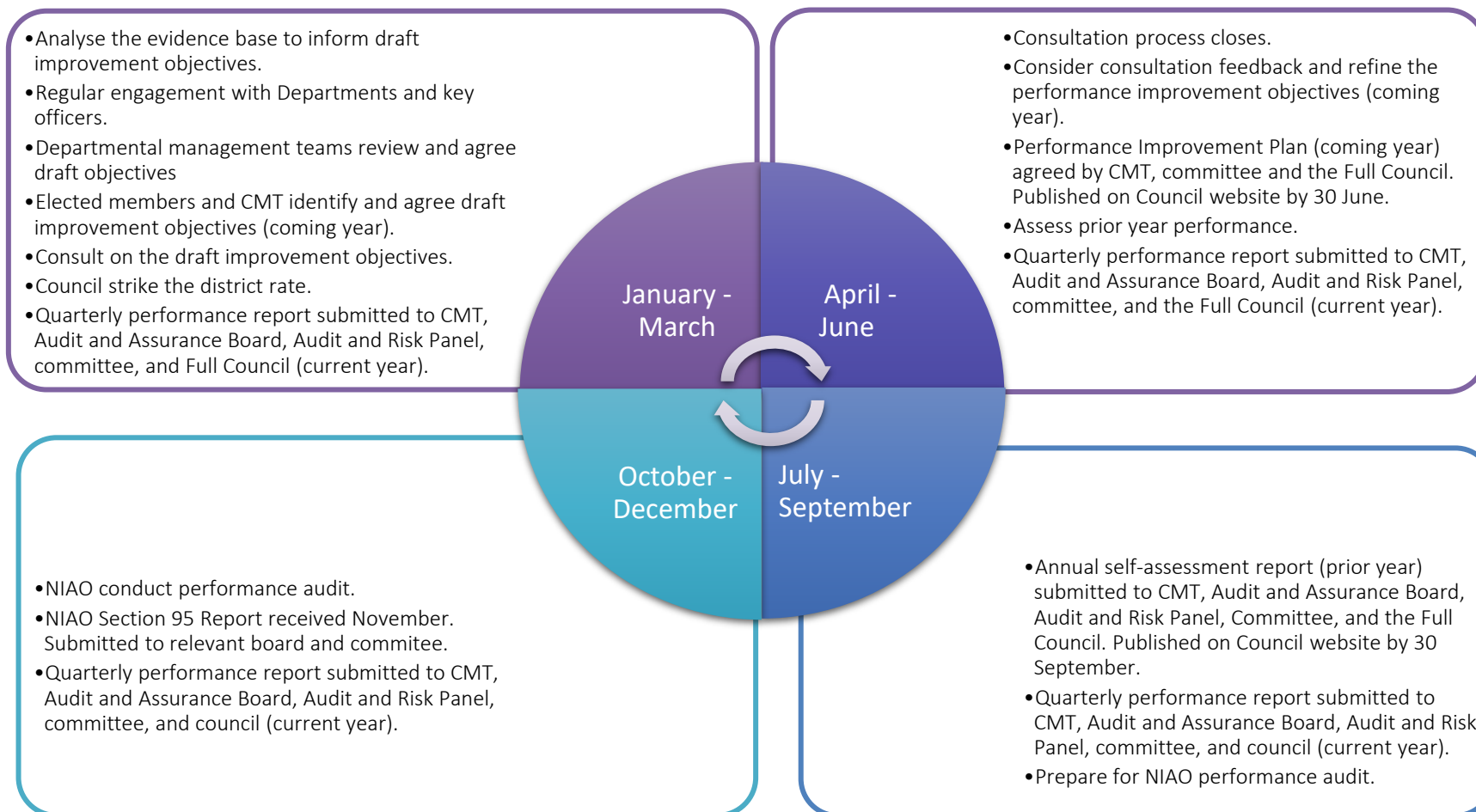


** Please note these arrangements may change as part of the development of the corporate planning and performance framework*

Annual performance management and improvement cycle

Every year, we review and update our performance improvement objectives and plan to ensure we are continuously improving. Our annual process to develop, monitor, report and review the council's progress to deliver performance improvement is set out in Figure 7 below.

FIGURE 7: Annual process.



Feedback on areas for improvement

We welcome ongoing feedback, comments, and suggestions on how we might improve our services and performance.

Your feedback matters

Please use one of the following methods to provide your comments or suggestions at any time of the year:

Email: performance@belfastcity.gov.uk

In writing to the:

Strategic Performance Unit
City Organisational and Strategy Department
Belfast City Council
Belfast City Hall
Room 212
BT1 5GS

You can also provide us with feedback or comments at any time via our website:
www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/complaints-comments-compliments

Alternative formats

This document is also available in hard copy format and can be provided in alternative formats by contacting the Strategic Performance Unit using the contact details above.

Contact us:

City and Organisational Strategy
City Hall
Donegall Square North
Belfast
BT1 5GS



performance@belfastcity.gov.uk



028 9032 0202



www.belfastcity.gov.uk/corporateplan



Belfast
City Council



Subject:	Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership Event - Funding Agreement
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
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After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform Committee of a proposal by the non-profit Management and Leadership Network (MLN) to host a prominent climate leadership event 'Sustain Exchange' with up to 300 decision-makers.

	To request approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between Belfast City Council and the event organiser with the value of £8,450+vat. The event will put the challenges, opportunities and absolute need for positive action associated with climate change, on the agenda for local organisations and leaders.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support this climate leadership conference by approving a funding agreement to the value of £8450+vat be entered into with the event organiser.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>It is now beyond doubt that organisations of all shapes, sizes and sectors need to radically reduce their environmental impact both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. The extreme weather experienced across the globe over the past 12 months has further evidenced the reality that the effects of climate change are being felt now and the need for decisive action from organisations, championed by their leaders, is now. We are fast approaching the point of no return.</p> <p>It is a truly transformative time for organisations as they address climate risks and identify new opportunities in the green economy. The transition is not straightforward. Organisations need help in developing planet positive practices, securing cleaner power, heat and transport solutions. They need help in navigating new markets to find more environmentally sustainable solutions in their supply chain, and they need to do it fast. There has never been a more important time to find specialist help to navigate the transition, and to educate, inform and engage by sharing the existing knowledge and exemplar experience of those at the forefront of the transition.</p>
3.2	<p>Purpose and format of event</p> <p>The Sustain Exchange Summit will deliver on the objectives above and will connect local decision-makers with international thought leaders as well as those at the forefront of the transition locally.</p> <p>The event is expected to attract some 300 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB and third sectors) to a Belfast City Centre venue with strong public transport links to ensure the carbon footprint of the event is kept to a minimum. The Sustain Exchange project will ensure the messages, around the need and importance of positive climate action are heard, and the Council's proactivity in this area will be strongly profiled before and during the event.</p>

3.3	<p>Content</p> <p>Previous speakers at this event have included the eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator Sir Jonathan Porritt CBE, Norman Crowley (global entrepreneur and founder of CoolPlanet) and Sit Tim Smit KBE (Founder of The Eden Project and world-renowned thought leader in sustainability) and John Elkington (the global godfather of sustainability and creator of the triple bottom line concept). The 2025 Sustain Exchange Summit will again be delivered to a world-class standard and will feature globally-renowned speakers (Mary Robinson is the first in-person speaker to be confirmed). The speakers will encourage and empower attending organisations to consider their own climate impact and take the first (or next) steps in their quest to become 'planet positive'. Previous local speakers at this event have demonstrated how leaders from humble beginnings in Belfast have become game-changers in their respective fields. These include the likes of Dr Andrew Woods from Catagen (Sustain Exchange 2022), Eddie McGoldrick from The Electric Storage Company (Sustain Exchange 2021), Philip Rainey from Weev (Sustain Exchange 2023) and Dr Katrina Thompson from Artemis Technologies (Sustain Exchange 2024). The 2025 event will once again showcase how leaders from Belfast are leading the charge when it comes to the quest to avoid what is now a 'code red for humanity'. In doing this MLN plans to galvanise existing businesses to act and to inspire the next cohort of planet positive pioneers to emerge from our city.</p> <p>The event will also provide the opportunity to make the broader leadership community in NI aware of the proactive work of Belfast City Council when it comes to the climate emergency.</p>
3.4	<p>Management and Leadership Network Experience</p> <p>The Management and Leadership Network (MLN) is a non-profit which exists to connect decision-makers in NI with the insights of thought-leaders and world-class performers. The rationale is that be enhancing our leadership competence we will, empower local organisations, strengthen our economy, enrich our society and ultimately improve lives.</p> <p>MLN has worked with some of the most respected leaders on the planet and is vastly experienced in creating and delivering truly world-class events that engage, enrich and elevate attendees. As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. Belfast City Council would once again be invited to participate and profile its extensive climate work i.e the Mini Stern Report, Resilience Strategy, Climate Commission, One Million Trees etc.</p>
3.5	<p>Date, Venue & Contingence</p> <p>The Sustain Exchange Summit will take place on 20th October 2025. The total cost of the project will be in excess of £75k. Belfast City Council has been a key partner in the Sustain Exchange Summit since its inception in 2021 and its support has been crucial in the growth of the initiative</p>

	<p>and its impact. In order to reduce the financial cost to Belfast City Council and increase collaboration MLN will seek financial support from additional sources to include the private sector. MLN will give previous sponsors the opportunity to remain as partners. These have included Belfast-based organisations such as Danske Bank, AAB, CarbonFit, International Synergies (circular economy specialists), Belfast Harbour and Mills Selig Solicitors. As well as demonstrating real collaboration, these partnerships have allowed MLN to reduce Belfast City Council's financial contribution from £10,000+vat in 2021 to £8,450+vat in 2025.</p>
3.6	<p>Partner Contribution & Profile Benefits</p> <p>If Belfast City Council chooses to support the Summit, it would be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners (examples given in 3.5). The Council brand would be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as 'at-event'. A Council representative would be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN would be delighted for the Lord Mayor of Belfast to speak at the event. Council would also promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>£8,450+vat to support this initiative has been allocated from within the existing Climate programme budget.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None</p>



Subject:	Planning Information
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
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Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide an update on Major planning applications and applications that have been determined by the Planning Committee.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The report is for notation.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	The Committee received an update on Planning Performance at its meeting on the 27 th August 2024. At that meeting and previously, the Committee sought a regular update on Major applications and applications that have been determined by the Planning Committee, especially those where a Decision Notice has yet to be issued.
3.2	All Major applications must be determined by the Planning Committee. The Key Performance Indicator (given in weeks) is calculated from when an application is considered to be valid to when the Decision Notice ("Green Form") is issued. This means that any delays either pre- or post- committee will impact on the KPI. The target for determining a Major application is 30 weeks.
	<u>Major applications</u>
3.3	Appendix 1 sets out the Major applications that are currently with the Council to determine. Details are given on the location, proposal, the validation date and target date for determination (using the 30 week target set out in the Key Performance Indicator) as well as a status update.
	<u>Applications determined by Committee</u>
3.4	Appendix 2 sets out the applications that have been determined by Committee since February 2022 which are yet to issue. For completeness information is also given on those applications determined by Committee which have had their Decision Notice issued. Details are given on the time taken (in weeks) to bring the applications before Committee and where decisions are yet to be issued, information is given relating to the main reason for the delay.
	<u>Conclusion</u>
3.5	This report will be brought to each Planning Committee and to each Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for information on an ongoing basis
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.6	There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.7	There are no equality or good relations / rural needs implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Major planning applications at May 2025 Appendix 2 – Applications determined by Committee at May 2025

Number	Application No.	Category	Location	Proposal	Date Valid	Target Date	Weeks since valid	Status
1	LA04/2022/0809/F	Major	Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews Belfast.	Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 94 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works.	21-Apr-22		158	Under Consideration
2	LA04/2023/2633/F	Major	St Teresa's GAC, 2 Glen Road Heights, Belfast BT11 8ER	Proposed extension to existing clubhouse to provide indoor sports hall, changing rooms, reception, and fitness suite. Proposed relocation of grass pitch and new 4G training pitch with integrated ball walls. Proposed annex building with club store and matchday shop. Site works including increased parking, fencing, catch nets, floodlighting, dugouts, paths, and other associated amenities.	14-Mar-23	10-Oct-23	112	Under Consideration
3	LA04/2023/3799/F	Major	Vacant lands (partial site of the former Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill) located to the south, of Wolfhill Manor, north of Wolfhill Grove and west of Mill Avenue, Ligoniel Road, Belfast, BT14 8NR	New single storey 10-class based primary school, separate nursery school accommodation and school meals accommodation to facilitate the relocation of St. Vincent De Paul Primary School and Nursery from existing site on Ligoniel Road, Belfast. Proposal includes new pedestrian and vehicular accesses onto Mill Avenue, car parking, covered cycle storage area and hard play areas. Hard and soft landscaping including wildlife walkway, fencing, retaining walls, underground drainage system to include the reinstatement of underground storm sewer and headwall into adjacent DFI River wayleave. Includes temporary contractors compound and all associated site works.	09-Oct-23	06-May-24	82	Under Consideration
4	LA04/2023/4181/F	Major	Lands comprising the existing Sydenham Wastewater Pumping Station west of Park Avenue, Connswater River and King George V Playing Fields, to the south of the Sydenham By-Pass, east of The Oval football stadium, north and east of Parkgate Gardens and north of Parkgate Crescent, Parkgate Parade and Mersey Street, Belfast	Demolition of existing Wastewater Pumping Station (WwPS) with reinstatement of site as a landscaped area. Construction of a replacement WwPS including associated control building and hardstanding, the raising of site levels, in-channel works, provision of new rising main, other ancillary buildings, the creation of an access road on lands within the King George V Playing Fields to serve the facility, landscaping and other ancillary works. Provision of a temporary working area on lands within the King George V Playing Fields, the creation of a temporary access road from Mersey Street to facilitate construction traffic on lands to the rear of 1-35 Parkgate Gardens, the creation of a temporary footway adjacent to 88 Park Avenue and other ancillary development and landscaping restoration works.	14-Nov-23	11-Jun-24	77	Under Consideration
5	LA04/2024/0015/F	Major	Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4	Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works (amended description and plans).	22-Dec-23	19-Jul-24	71	Under Consideration
6	LA04/2024/0211/F	Major	Existing Football Stadium The Oval Parkgate Drive Belfast BT4 1EW.	Redevelopment of the existing stadium by way of demolition of both existing stands and construction of two new spectator stands with reconfiguration of existing standing terracing at goal ends, new turnstiles and associated siteworks including new floodlighting, additional car parking and improved circulation routes to provide an overall capacity for 6000 spectators on site.	15-Mar-24	11-Oct-24	59	Under Consideration

7	LA04/2024/0570/F	Major	Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castlevue Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30), Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22), and Summerhill Park (nos. 37 & 39).	Change of use of from hotel, conference centre and offices (sui generis) to a 97-bed care home (Use Class C3(b) and 1,559sqm diagnostic medical facility (Use Class D1(a), associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space.	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	56	Under Consideration
8	LA04/2024/0569/O	Major	STORMONT HOTEL 587 UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD BALLYCLOUGHAN BELFAST BT4 3LP	Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for independent living and assisted living retirement apartments (Use Class C3), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castlevue Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping.	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	56	Under Consideration
9	LA04/2024/0910/F	Major	70 whitewell Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7ES Site at Hazelwood Integrated College	Redevelopment of Hazelwood Integrated College to include demolition of existing building and development of new school campus, new sports pitch, outdoor play areas, car parking, hard and soft landscaping and retention and refurbishment of the Listed Building (Graymount House) and other associated site works including a temporary mobile village during the construction process.	23-May-24	19-Dec-24	49	Under Consideration
10	LA04/2024/1121/F	Major	The Kings Hall And RUAS Site South Of Upper Lisburn Road/Balmoral Avenue West Of Harberton Park And North- east Of Balmoral Golf Club Belfast BT9 6GW	Vary of condition 6 of planning application LA04/2020/0747/F to extend timing of works from 3 years to 5 to accommodate design changes to elevations and vary of condition 7 of planning application LA04/2020/0747/F to accommodate design changes to the roof.	26-Jun-24	22-Jan-25	44	Under Consideration
11	LA04/2024/1592/F	Major	Marlborough House, (no. 28-32 Victoria Street), and no. 8 Marlborough Street, Belfast BT1 3GG	Residential development comprising the demolition of no. 8 Marlborough Street, partial demolition of existing Marlborough House, and the refurbishment of existing Listed Building (Princes Court) (3 storeys), for the erection of 103 no. apartments (mix of 1-bed, 2-bed and 3 bed units) (8 storeys), with provision of private amenity, and internal and external communal amenity spaces; and associated site and infrastructure works. (amended description)	20-Sep-24	18-Apr-25	32	Under Consideration
12	LA04/2024/1761/RM	Major	Land forming Plot 9 of the Kings Hall development as approved by LA04/2020/0845/O.	Application for approval of reserved matters application for a medical facility in accordance with outline planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details	15-Oct-24	13-May-25	29	Under Consideration
13	LA04/2024/1836/F	Major	Lands between Ballygomartin Road and Upper Whiterock Road and to the west (rear) of Moyard Parade and New Barnsley Crescent, Belfast Co. Antrim BT13 3QZ	Proposed development of new walking trails linking Black Mountain Shared Space Project building (approved under LA04/2022/0853/F) on the Ballygomartin Road with the Upper Whiterock Road and Moyard Parade. Proposal to include gated accesses, stockproof fencing, seated areas, information signage, landscaping and associated site works.	25-Nov-24	23-Jun-25	23	Under Consideration
14	LA04/2024/2044/F	Major	Lands at 39 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3BA	Erection of 895 room Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) across 9-20 storey building blocks with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space including landscaped courtyard and roof terraces and ancillary accommodation. With additional use outside term time (no more than 50% of the rooms) as short-term let accommodation and (no more than 50% of the rooms) accommodation for use by further or higher education institutions	26-Nov-24	24-Jun-25	23	Under Consideration

15	LA04/2024/2024/RM	Major	Royal Ulster Agricultural Society, the Kings Hall, 488-516 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GW	41no. retirement living apartments at Plot 6, parking and landscaping in accordance with outline planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details	18-Dec-24	16-Jul-25	19	Under Consideration
16	LA04/2024/2026/RM	Major	Royal Ulster Agricultural Society the Kings Hall, 488-516 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GW	Multi Storey Car Park with ground floor units for local retail uses, restaurant and cafe uses, leisure and gym facilities at Plot 8, new public realm and amenity open space including a central plaza in accordance with outline planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details	29-Nov-24	27-Jun-25	22	Under Consideration
17	LA04/2024/2077/F	Major	Adelaide Business Centre 2-6 Apollo Road, Belfast, BT12 6HP	Proposed change of use from office space to Bowling Alley, Restaurant, Indoor Golf, Children's Soft Play, VR Zone & Amusements, Smoking Area, Car Parking and Associated Site Works.	29-Jan-25	27-Aug-25	13	Under Consideration
18	LA04/2024/2145/F	Major	Lands at North Foreshore / Giant's Park Dargan Road, Belfast, BT3 9LZ	Creation of a new Adventure Park comprising a community / visitor hub building including café, creche, flexible exhibition / community space, ancillary office space and maintenance yard. Development includes community gardens, bmx track, crazy golf, dog park, walking/running/cycle paths, outdoor amphitheatre, bio diversity zones, and recreational facilities. Associated landscaping and infrastructure (drainage, lighting, car / coach parking, WC block etc).	15-Jan-25	13-Aug-25	15	Under Consideration
19	LA04/2024/2131/F	Major	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Section 54 planning application to revise the wording of the planning condition numbers 13 and 15 (Relating access gradient and visibility splays) of planning approval LA04/2023/3778/F.	31-Jan-25	29-Aug-25	13	Under Consideration
20	LA04/2025/0012/F	Major	Lands at the Waterworks Park, located off the Cavehill Road; and lands at Alexandra Park, located between Castleton Gardens and Deacon Street; extending along Castleton Gardens and Camberwell Terrace to the road junction approximately 30 metres to the north west of 347 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2HF	Refurbishment and safety work to the Waterworks upper and lower reservoirs, and Alexandra Park Lake reservoir, to be complemented with wider environmental, landscape and connectivity improvements. The reservoir works comprise of a new overflow structure with reinforcement and protection of the return embankment parallel to the by-wash channel at Waterworks Upper reservoir. Repairs to the upstream face of Waterworks Lower reservoir with the addition of wetland planting to reduce the overall capacity of the reservoir. Removal of an existing parapet wall and embankment reinforcement at the Alexandra Park Lake reservoir. Improvements at Waterworks Park comprise the demolition of the existing Waterworks Bothy and replacement with a new building to include public toilets, Changing facilities, multi-purpose community room and kitchenette. Extension to existing Cavehill Road gatehouse building. Entrance improvements, new events space including multipurpose decking; resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; a dog park; replacement platforms and viewing area. New 3-on-3 basketball court; replacement surface to existing small sided 3G pitch; and upgrades to existing Queen Mary's playground. Improvements at Alexandra Park include the resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; new reinforced grass event space; new lake viewing area; new public toilets and changing places; entrance improvements. 2no existing bridges replaced; new pedestrian entrance; reimagined peace wall; new multi-sport synthetic surface with cover; and upgrades to existing play parks. Streetscape improvements along Camberwell Terrace and Castleton Gardens include resurfacing of footways with new kerbs; resurfaced carriageways and new tactile paving at pedestrian crossings; and all associated works.	20-Dec-24	18-Jul-25	19	Under Consideration
21	LA04/2024/2134/F	Major	Site of the former Dunmurry Cricket Club, Ashley Park, Dunmurry, Belfast BT17 0QQ, located north of 1-10 Ashley Park and south of 1-20 Areema Grove and Areema Drive, Dunmurry.	Mixed use scheme for new community recreational facilities, including basketball court, parkland and residential development comprising 40no social/affordable housing units with landscaping and associated works.	21-Dec-24	19-Jul-25	19	Under Consideration
22	LA04/2025/0184/O	Major	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Mixed-use development comprising Use Class B1 (c): Business, Research & Development and Use Class, D1: Community and Cultural Uses, including landscaping, parking, and servicing.	10-Feb-25	08-Sep-25	12	Under Consideration

23	LA04/2025/0242/F	Major	2 - 10 Botanic Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1JG	Erection of hotel (164 beds) including ground floor bar / restaurant; proposed heights of 8 storeys (c. 26.8m to parapet) at Donegall Pass, reducing to 5 storeys at Botanic Avenue and 4 storeys at Ratcliffe Street; and associated works including demolition of existing building	13-Feb-25	11-Sep-25	11	Under Consideration
24	LA04/2025/0305/F	Major	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Section 54 application to amend condition 8 of planning approval LA04/2023/3778/F relating to the submission of foul and surface water drainage details.	20-Feb-25	18-Sep-25	10	Under Consideration
25	LA04/2025/0535/F	Major	Lands West of Monagh By- Pass South of Upper Springfield Road & 30-34 Upper Springfield Road & West of Aitnamona Crescent & St Theresa's Primary School. North and East of 2-22 Old Brewery Lane, Glanaulin, 137-143a Glen Road & Airfield Heights & St Mary's CBG School Belfast	Variation of conditions 1, 2, ,3, 4 ,5, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 36, 37 and 41 of LA04/2023/2390/F to remove the previously approved retaining wall at this location,, retain existing sloped ground levels and landscaping, and the removal of 31 approved dwellings at this location.				Under Consideration

Planning Applications Discussed at Committee Between 01 Apr 2019 and 06 May 2025

(Red issued refusal decision - Amber to be issued - Green issued approval decision)

Decision Description	Totals
	25
Consent Granted	2
Consent Refused	
Permission Granted	3
Permission Refused	
Total	30

Application No.	Location	Proposal	Category	Date Valid	Delegated Committe	Committee Date	Weeks between Valid date and Comm date	Weeks Since Committee	Weeks between Comm Date and Issued Date 2	Decision	Issue date	Todays Date	Reason decision not issued	
Page 375	LA04/2022/2059/F	Lands south of 56 Highcairn Drive Belfast BT13 3RU Site located at junction between Highcairn Drive and Dunboyne Park Belfast.	Proposed Social Housing Development Comprising of 12 no. 3p/2b semi-detached dwelling houses with incurtilage parking and associated site works. (amended description and site location plan)	LOC	04-Nov-22	C	29/06/2023	33	96	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
	LA04/2020/1858/F	Hillview Retail Park Crumlin Road Belfast.	Proposed residential development of 18 no. social housing units, comprising two terraces. Development includes associated car parking, gardens, landscaping, site access and all other site works. (amended plans uploaded to the Planning Portal on the 5th April 2023 that revise the proposed access and road layout, including the introduction of a traffic island).	LOC	08-Jan-21	C	14/11/2023	148	77	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

LA04/2021/2016/F	21-29 Corporation Street & 18-24 Tomb Street Belfast.	Demolition of existing multi-storey car park and the erection of 298no. build for rent apartments (19 storey) including ground floor commercial unit (A1/A2), car/cycle parking provision along with associated development. (Further information received).	MAJ	26-Aug-21	C	16/01/2024	124	68	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2020/2105/F	1-5 Gaffikin Street Belfast BT12 5FH	Residential development comprising 55no. apartments comprising 12 no social, and 43 no private apartments and associated site works.	MAJ	21-Oct-20	C	19/03/2024	177	59	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2022/0612/F	Lands at the junction of Shankill Road, Lanark Way, and bound by Caledon Street, Belfast.	Residential scheme of 53 no. dwellings comprising 34 no. semi-detached and 4 no. detached) and 15 no. apartments (7 no. 2-bed and 8 no. 1-bed), amenity space, bin and bicycle storage, landscaping, access, car parking and all associated site works.(revised description	MAJ	15-Apr-22	C	18/06/2024	113	46	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0483/F	34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast	Proposed change of use from Office (B1) and restaurant (Sui Generis) to Hotel comprising of 88 no. bedrooms, two storey rooftop extension, restaurant and bar offerings, gym facilities, including new dormer windows on roof, internal	MAJ	19-Mar-24	C	15/10/2024	30	29	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0480/D CA	34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast	Part demolition of existing buildings (stripping back of roof, shopfront and other external alterations to facilitate change of use and extension of buildings to hotel use.	LOC	29-Mar-24	C	15/10/2024	28	29	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

LA04/2024/0393/F	ECIT Building Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast, BT3 9DT	Proposed 5 storey extension to the East of the ECIT Building (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology), and 3 storey extension to the West, to provide additional research and development space with	MAJ	21-Mar-24	C	12/11/2024	33	25	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0369/F	Lands at Former Monarch Laundry site, and Broadway Hall Site, No's 451 - 457 Donegall Road, Belfast, BT12 6HD.	Proposed Specialist Nursing and Residential Care Facility comprising approximately 158 no. beds, day/dining rooms, treatment rooms, staff rooms, office/store rooms, including car parking provision, cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping, and associated site and access works.	MAJ	08-Feb-24	C	12/11/2024	39	25	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/1744/LB C	Belfast City Hall, 2 Donegall Square North, Belfast, BT1 5GS	Installation of metal gates to the Titanic Memorial Garden at the ground of Belfast City Hall	LOC	16-Oct-24	C	10/12/2024	7	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Deferred for Site Visit
LA04/2024/1138/F	Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street, Belfast.	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of Purpose Built Multi Storey Managed Student Accommodation (821no. rooms) with additional Short Term use outside of term time. Proposed heights of between 6-9 storeys and associated shared/ancillary spaces with ground floor retail/retail service units, resident's gym/cinema and ancillary development/uses. (Amended Description)	MAJ	16-Oct-24	C	10/12/2024	7	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

LA04/2024/1141/D CA	Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street, Belfast	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of Purpose Built Multi Storey Managed Student Accommodation (821no. rooms) with heights of between 6-9 storeys and associated shared/ancillary spaces with ground floor retail/retail service units, resident's gym/cinema and ancillary development/uses	LOC	28-Jun-24	C	10/12/2024	23	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2023/2557/F	Lands East of Meadowhill, North of Glencolin Court, North and East of Glencolin Rise, East of Glencolin Grove, North and West of Glen Road Rise, and North of Glen Road	260 no. dwellings, children's play area and other ancillary and associated works.	MAJ	24-Feb-23	C	10/12/2024	93	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0754/F Page 48	Lands immediately north and south of existing film studios, north of Dargan Road (within wider Belfast City Council lands known at North Foreshore/Giants Park), Belfast.	Retrospective application for the construction of a landscaped earth mound, new fencing, the reconfiguration of internal access arrangements to provide a new turning head, and associated site works. (Amended	LOC	26-Apr-24	C	21/01/2025	38	15	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing
LA04/2020/2325/F	Lands at Former Maple Leaf Club 41-43 Park Avenue Belfast.	Proposed erection 21no. dwellings (social/affordable housing units comprising 17no. townhouses and 4no. semi-detached), car parking, landscaping and all associated site and access works (Amended drawings, additional information)	LOC	06-Nov-20	C	11/02/2025	222	12	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing
LA04/2019/0081/F	Lands at former Maple Leaf Club 41-43 Park Avenue Belfast.	Erection of 12No. apartments (social/affordable housing units comprising 3No. one bed & 9No. two bed) with provision of community pocket park, car parking, landscaping and all associated site and access	LOC	04-Oct-24	C	11/02/2025	18	12	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing

LA04/2024/1458/F	Divis and The Black Mountain National Trust Site, Divis Road, Hannahstown, Belfast, BT17 0NG.	Alterations to the site include refurbishing and repurposing of 3no existing vernacular buildings to provide visitor facilities and replacing 1 shed, a small garage and an agricultural structure with a new amenity building. Enhancements to the existing pond network, introduction of signage interpretation and a suite of site-appropriate furniture. Wider site improvement works are proposed including path	MAJ	20-Sep-24	C	11/02/2025	20	12	10	Permission Granted	24 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/1869/F	The Edge, 48-52 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AS	Temporary Change of Use of 92 No. Student Bedrooms to Short Term Let Accommodation	LOC	01-Nov-24	C	18/03/2025	19	7	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2025/0140/LB C	Belfast City Hall, 2 Donegall Square, Belfast, BT1 5GS	Installation of new stained glass window within City Hall	LOC	29-Jan-25	C	18/03/2025	6	7	3	Consent Granted	09 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Consent Granted
LA04/2024/1281/F	60 Carnanmore Park, Belfast, BT11 9YL	Construction of a new 3G football pitch on existing grass football pitches and associated site works.	LOC	10-Jun-24	C	18/03/2025	40	7	3	Permission Granted	11 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Permission Granted

LA04/2024/0626/F	1 Havelock House Havelock Place, Ormeau, Belfast, BT7 1EB .	Erection of 104no. social rented residential units (comprising a mix of General Social Housing and Category 1 over 55's accommodation) across two detached blocks [ranging between 3 and 5 storeys], landscaping, communal and private amenity space, ancillary cycle and car parking provision, and other associated site works	MAJ	17-Apr-24	C	18/03/2025	47	7	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Dfl issued holding direction. Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0126/F	15-16 Donegall Square South and 2-14 Bedford Street; and No. 7 James Street South, Belfast	Conversion of existing buildings into Hotel, comprising of 102 no. bedrooms with public bars and restaurants. Development includes ground floor extension, staff and service elevator, interior and exterior alterations and all	LOC	22-Jan-24	C	18/03/2025	60	7	4	Permission Granted	17 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Permission Granted
LA04/2024/0138/LB C	15-16 Donegall Square South and 2-14 Bedford Street, Belfast	Proposed ground floor extension, staff and service elevator, interior and exterior alterations and all associated works to facilitate conversion of the existing building into a hotel.	LOC	22-Jan-24	C	18/03/2025	60	7	4	Consent Granted	17 Apr 2025	06/05/2025	Consent Granted
LA04/2022/1046/F	18 Annadale Avenue Belfast BT7 3JH	Proposed demolition of existing building and construction of a residential development consisting of 14 No. units (9 No. apartments within a three storey building and 5 No. two storey terraced dwellings) with associated landscaping and car	LOC	04-May-22	C	15/04/2025	153	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Deferred for additional viability information that considers options to retain existing building

LA04/2024/0675/F	The Arches Centre 11-13 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5AA	Change of Use of first and second floor to 39 No. apartments; extension to second floor for 6 No. apartments and erection of new third floor for 19 No. apartments (all social housing dwellings, 64 No. in total), and ancillary/associated works. Solar panels on roof (amended plans and	MAJ	13-May-24	C	15/04/2025	48	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/1385/F	Olympic House, Titanic Quarter, 5 Queens Road, Belfast, BT3 9DH	Amendment to planning permission Z/2013/0931/F to permit occupation for Class B1(a) office and/or Class B1(c) research and development. (amended description and information)	MAJ	09-Aug-24	C	15/04/2025	35	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2025/0239/F	21a Cyprus Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5NT	Renewal of LA04/2019/2651/F - Demolition of existing garage, carport, porch and roof to dwelling. Single storey extension to side and rear. Porch extension to front, new roof creating a new ridge level and associated site works.	LOC	13-Feb-25	C	15/04/2025	8	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing
LA04/2025/0240/D CA	21a Cyprus Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5NT	Renewal of LA04/2019/2628/DCA - Demolition of existing garage, carport, porch and roof to dwelling.	LOC	11-Feb-25	C	15/04/2025	9	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing

LA04/2025/0305/F	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Section 54 application to amend condition 8 of planning approval LA04/2023/3778/F relating to the submission of foul and surface water drainage details.	MAJ	20-Feb-25	C	15/04/2025	7	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing
LA04/2024/2131/F	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Section 54 planning application to revise the wording of the planning condition numbers 13 and 15 (Relating access gradient and visibility splays) of planning approval LA04/2023/3778/F.	MAJ	31-Jan-25	C	15/04/2025	10	3	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		06/05/2025	Awaiting issuing



Subject:	Smart Belfast: Inclusive Innovation programme
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Mark McCann, City Innovation Manager Deirdre Ferguson, Innovation Broker

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek Committee approval for the design and delivery of a Belfast inclusive innovation public dialogue series that will inform a new programme of work that seeks to unlock new inclusive growth opportunities from the Belfast Region City Deal and other investments.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the Inclusive Innovation public dialogue series at City Hall as part of the development of an Inclusive Innovation programme. 2. To note that the £85,000 proposal by Newcastle University to work with Belfast and three other cities to develop tools and techniques for inclusive innovation, has been accepted by the Economic and Social Research Council and that the project will commence in June 2025 with a planning workshop with partners in Newcastle Upon Tyne.
3.0	Main report
3.1	The innovative adoption of technology by all sectors of the economy is a core element of the Government's strategy for increasing productivity, generating new jobs and businesses. By way of example, in the realm of AI tech adoption alone the Government is projecting a boost to UK's GDP by over 10% by 2030. To support this approach the Government is encouraging cities and regions to build the conditions that will encourage collaborative innovation by all actors including industry and business, government, academia and communities.
3.2	The Government's approach is echoed in the strategic rationale for the Innovation, Digital and Skills pillars of the Belfast Region City Deal. These investments are designed to foster a regional innovation ecosystem that encourages R&D, innovation, tech adoption in ways that generate inclusive benefits for SMEs, communities and individuals.
3.3	However, an innovation-driven economy offers both opportunities and challenges for city leaders committed to inclusive growth. While such an economy will generate significant growth and wealth for a region, there is evidence that without well-planned, citizen-focused interventions, such an economy can actually widen inequalities and generate new barriers to jobs, services, and business opportunities.
3.4	'Inclusive innovation' is an increasingly popular term for the types of interventions that are required to address such risks. While there is no settled opinion as to which interventions are likely to be the most effective, there is important, current research in this area by institutions including King's College, Cardiff University, Newcastle University, Nesta, and locally at Queen's University. Much of this research is being considered by UK Government as it seeks to ensure an inclusive approach to the national economic strategy.
3.5	Locally, the Belfast Innovation Commissioner recently co-authored a new paper with Robyn Klingler-Vidra and Alex Glennie of King's College on measuring inclusive innovation. The

	research draws on the Belfast experience and will be published in Global Policy Journal ¹ on 16 May.
3.6	Working with the Belfast Innovation Commissioner, and City Deal partners, the Council's City Innovation Office is aiming to unlock this research and practice to generate new inclusive growth opportunities through the Belfast Region City Deal investments. While there is recognition nationally about the inclusion risks and challenges of an innovation-driven economy, there has been only limited local discussion on the mitigations that need to be put in place to address them.
3.7	As a first step the City Innovation, Office working with the Commissioner, is therefore proposing an initial series of public engagements at City Hall aimed at politicians, leaders and policy makers to build shared understanding about the challenges that inclusive innovation represents, and work towards a series of interventions and programmes at scale. (It's proposed that this would take a similar format to the Council's influential <i>'Belfast: State of the City'</i> dialogue that sought to engage on urban policy in the period leading up to the Review Public Administration.)
3.8	Co-chaired by the Council's Chief Executive and the Belfast Innovation Commissioner, each session would bring leading thinkers to bear on the critical elements of any future Belfast inclusive innovation programme. A small steering group working with ICB would establish the final programme themes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activating community infrastructure to realise the benefits of inclusive innovation • The impact of AI on education and learning • Skills for Good Jobs in a rapidly changing economy • New models of entrepreneurship in the era of AI • Measuring inclusive innovation
3.9	The series would support a number of outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help shape a shared understanding and approach to inclusive amongst Belfast partners. • It would ensure a framework for citizen co-design and collaboration is informed by thought leaders across inclusive skills, economies and innovation. • Shape the inclusive innovation programme of Belfast City Council and partners including the work of Innovation City Belfast • Inform decision-making on projects associated the Skills, Innovation and Digital pillars of BRCD. • Support Belfast in engaging with potential funders of inclusive innovation initiatives at both the national and European levels.

¹ <https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/16/05/2025/we-need-a-new-framework-measuring-inclusive-innovation-efforts>

3.10	Members are asked to approve the Inclusive Innovation dialogue series as part of the development of the inclusive innovation programme.
	Current inclusive innovation initiatives
3.11	While a full inclusive innovation programme is still to be developed, the City Innovation Office has been working on a number of 'pilot' inclusive innovation projects. These include a one-year 'citizen science' project in collaboration with Queen's University's QCAP team that will work with two inner city communities and is due to begin this Spring. The City Innovation Office is also working with Ulster University on a new £2.5 million EPSRC funded project that is seeking to maximise the place-based social and economic impact of the new Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology (CDHT).
3.12	Finally, Members will recall that the Council was approached by 'i30' a research collaboration between Newcastle University, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Oslo and EAFIT University. i30 has been particularly interested in how 'City Deal'-type investments have supported inclusive innovation ambitions in cities in the UK and elsewhere. Their work is helping Newcastle City Council to shape its social inclusion strategy, while their work with Pittsburgh is ensuring that that their city's innovation district is having wider social impact. Belfast has been invited to be the fourth city in this inclusive innovation project.
3.13	Members should note that the £85,000 proposal has been accepted by the Economic and Social Research Council and the project will commence in June 2025 with a planning workshop with partners to which officers have been invited to attend. The project will build on i30's existing work to deliver a range of tools, policy guidance and practice that can support cities in delivering their inclusive innovation outcomes.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.14	Resources for these initiatives have been identified within the existing departmental budgets. Based on costings for similar events it's estimated that the series would require a budget of approximately £40,000 (This would include travel, AV, promotional materials, write-ups, catering, etc). The series would be organised in-house.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.15	None at this stage.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None.



Subject:	Diversity Mark Summit 2025 - Sponsorship
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Christine Sheridan -Director of Human Resources
Contact Officer:	Catherine Christy – Corporate HR Manager - Development

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval to sponsor the Diversity Mark Summit 2025 taking place at Titanic Belfast on 8 October 2025.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to the sponsorship of the Diversity Mark Summit 2025.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>At its meeting on 21 June 2024, the Committee approved sponsorship of the 2024 Diversity Mark Summit. Diversity Mark is an independent not-for-profit Diversity and Inclusion Accreditation in Northern Ireland and has to date accredited almost 200 organisations across the UK and Ireland on their path to a more inclusive workplace. Membership provides support to employers to make and demonstrate progressive improvement in creating an inclusive & diverse workplace. The Council holds Silver Diversity mark Accreditation and is currently working towards attaining Gold Accreditation. The Council continues to work closely with Diversity Mark on a number of initiatives and forums aimed at sharing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion best practice.</p>
3.2	<p>The Council has been invited again, along with a small number of other organisations to contribute to the 2025 summit as a supporting sponsor. The main sponsor of the event is Allstate.</p>
3.3	<p>The benefits for sponsoring organisations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Involvement: Continued involvement in the EDI Forum. The forum will support on shaping the strategic direction of this annual summit and meet to explore best practice and global trends in EDI as identified by Diversity Mark. • Prominent Recognition: Elevate your organisation's profile with extensive recognition and promotional opportunities throughout the summit as a valued supporting sponsor, ensuring visibility among industry leaders and decision-makers. • Exclusive Attendance: Secure up to 15 in-person summit passes for employees, promoting diversity from senior levels throughout, with the flexibility to invite guests or donate tickets to charitable organisations. • Thought Leadership Platform: Opportunity to showcase your expertise by speaking at the summit or suggesting influential speakers. • Comprehensive Branding: Benefit from extensive branding across all promotional materials, advertisements, and the website, with logo prominently displayed

	throughout the summit venue as a supporting sponsor, reinforcing your organisation's commitment to EDI and its pivotal role in driving economic growth and inclusivity.
3.4	<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p> <p>The investment required for this sponsorship is £2,250. this includes 15 places at the summit and a seat at the Steering Committee will be met from the existing Organisation Development budget.</p>
3.5	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>Sponsorship of this event will allow the Council to demonstrate its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as well as showcase our best practice as an employer and civic leader.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

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Subject:	Sign Language Bill – response to Call for Evidence
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor / Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officers:	Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer Michael Johnston, Language Officer

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek retrospective approval from Members for the attached officer response to the Call for Evidence for a Sign Language Bill which was submitted to the Northern Ireland Assembly prior to the deadline of 9 th May 2025.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	It is recommended that Members: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the contents of this report. 2. Provide retrospective approval for the officer response to the Call for Evidence which was submitted on 2nd May 2025.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	In March 2004, the then British Secretary of State, Paul Murphy, formally recognised British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) as languages in their own right. This recognition does not provide any statutory protection for the languages.
3.2	The Sign Language Partnership Group (SLPG) led by the Department for Communities (DfC) was established as a forum in 2007 to bring together the government Departments and key organisations and representatives representing the Deaf community to improve access to public services for sign language users. The Council's Language Officer sits on the SLPG.
3.3	In 2016, a Sign Language Framework was launched by DfC, which provides details to address the lack of support and historical under investment for ISL and BSL, including proposals for legislation to officially recognise, promote and protect both languages and to provide support for the parents and families of deaf children.
3.4	On 23 rd January 2025, Communities Minister Lyons announced at the Executive that he was introducing the draft Sign Language Bill to the Assembly. This took place on 18 th February 2025. The Sign Language Bill has been referred to the Assembly's Committee for Communities so that the Committee can consider and take evidence on the Bill and report its opinion to the Assembly.
	<u>Call for Evidence – Sign Language Bill</u>
3.5	The Committee is seeking views from stakeholders on the objectives, proposals and potential consequences of the Bill. Link to Sign Language Bill.
3.6	The Bill has 15 clauses. Clauses in Chapter 2 of the Bill requires prescribed organisations which includes Councils to carry out duties to ensure information and services provided are as

	<p>accessible to individuals in the deaf community as they are to individuals who are not in the deaf community and to offer or facilitate the use of British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language for the benefit of the individuals in the deaf community in accessing information and services provided by the organisation. Prescribed organisations will be required to develop and implement five year Sign Language Action Plans and to submit updates to the Department for Communities.</p>
3.7	<p>The Council has prepared and submitted a response to each clause by the submission deadline, Friday 9th May 2025.</p>
3.8	<p>Committee will note that the Council has already committed to the proposed obligations in the Sign Language Bill. We have a Language Strategy which includes Sign Languages as one of the language strands. We have a Language Action Plan which covers actions to improve Sign Language provision within the Council. Our work to date in relation to Sign Languages is set out below.</p>
	<p>British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language Charter - In March 2019, the Council signed up to the British Deaf Association's British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language Charter and one of the pledges made was to ensure council staff working with Deaf people can communicate effectively using British Sign Language and/or Irish Sign Language.</p> <p>Sign Language Users' Forum - A Sign Language Users' Forum consisting of local Sign Language users was established in June 2019 and meets twice a year to advise, guide and support the Council to respond better to the needs of Sign Language Users in Belfast.</p> <p>Staff training - Sign Language courses are provided to council staff.</p> <p>Video Relay Service/Video Remoting Interpreting Service - The Council established a contact with SignVideo in 2020 to deliver interpreting support for Sign Language customers contacting the Customer Hub and visiting council venues.</p> <p>City Hall Visitor Exhibition & Tropical Ravine Sign Language Videos - Sign Language visitors can access translated videos via the Council's YouTube channel when visiting the Visitor Exhibition at the City Hall and at Tropical Ravine, Botanic Gardens.</p> <p>Public events - Sign Language interpreters are present at Council public events during the year e.g. Christmas and St Patrick's Day.</p> <p>Communication Support - Sign Language users can request a Sign Language interpreter for appointments/meetings. Documents/leaflets can also be requested in British Sign Language and/or Irish Sign Language.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None at this time.</p>

3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications</u></p> <p>The Sign Language Bill if passed will promote equality of opportunity for Deaf Sign Language Users.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Response to the NI Assembly

Response to NI Assembly

Council's response to the Sign Language Bill – Call for Evidence.

[Sign Language Bill - Call for Evidence - Page 1 of 17 - Northern Ireland Assembly - Citizen Space](#)

Please confirm you have read the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee privacy notice by clicking the button below:

[Privacy Notice](#)

(tick) I have read the privacy notice

Do you consent to your submission being published on the Committee's website and included in the Committee's report?

(0) Yes, publish in full.

(tick) Yes, publish but my personal information and any content that could be used to identify me redacted.

Clause 1

Clause 1 formally recognises BSL and ISL equally as languages of Northern Ireland, whilst preserving the architecture of existing disability and equality legislation.

Do you feel Clause 1 goes far enough in formally recognising BSL and ISL as languages of Northern Ireland?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

Clause 1 clearly states that British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) is formally recognised as languages of Northern Ireland, whilst preserving the architecture of existing disability and equality legislation that applies to Northern Ireland.

(261 characters)

Clause 2

Clause 2 places a duty on the Department for Communities to promote:

- the greater use and understanding of BSL and ISL (including an obligation to provide for the availability of classes BSL and ISL for deaf children, their close families, guardians and carers);

- the general entitlement of individuals in the deaf community to use BSL or ISL; and,
- the further development of deaf culture by the deaf community through the use of BSL and ISL.

Do you feel Clause 2 goes far enough in promoting the use of BSL and ISL and developing deaf culture?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We are supportive of this Clause. We welcome the inclusion of available classes for deaf children, their close families, guardians, carers and individuals in the deaf community to learn BSL or ISL.

(197 characters)

Are there any other approaches (apart from providing for the availability of classes) that could help to meet the objective of the greater use and understanding of BSL and ISL?

Yes (tick)

No (tick)

Clause 3

Clause 3 places a duty on prescribed organisations to take reasonable steps to:

- ensure the information and services provided by them are as accessible to members of the deaf community as they are to the people who are not in the deaf community, at no extra cost to them; and,
- offer or facilitate the use of BSL or ISL for the benefit of individuals in the deaf community in accessing information and services provided by the organisation.

In considering what is reasonable, prescribed organisations may take account of cost and practicability.

[Further details are available in the Explanatory and Financial Memorandum included with the Bill which you can read here.](#)

Do you think the duty placed on prescribed organisations to make the information and services accessible to members of the deaf community is sufficient?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We have a Language Strategy which includes Sign Languages as one of the language strands therefore as a public body, we are committed to making sure our information and services are accessible to members of the deaf community.

(226 characters)

Clause 4

Clause 4 provides for the Department for Communities to list the public bodies (known as the prescribed organisations) that are subject to the duties in Clause 3.

Do you support the approach taken by Clause 4?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

As a public body, we support this approach.

(44 characters)

Clause 5

Clause 5 states that the Department for Communities must issue guidance about the effects of the provisions in the Bill relating to BSL and ISL and the interests of the deaf community. This clause states that, when devising or revising guidance the Department for Communities must consult:

- each of the prescribed organisations; and,
- at least one person or group appearing to the Department to be acting on behalf of the deaf community.

Do you support the approach to consultation required in Clause 5?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We will welcome the opportunity to work with the Department for Communities to ensure our information and services are accessible to Sign Language users.

(154 characters)

Clause 6

Clause 6 states that the Department for Communities guidance should include best practice advice on the implications of the recognition of BSL and ISL in the Bill for public bodies, including prescribed organisations. This would include:

- what may or must be viewed as amounting to reasonable steps to be taken by prescribed organisations;
- how prescribed organisations should develop plans to be called sign language action plans; and,
- advice on best practice for interacting with people who rely for communication on BSL or ISL.

Do you support the approach taken in this clause?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We are satisfied with this approach. We have a Language Strategy Action Plan which covers actions to improve Sign Language provision within the Council therefore we are supportive of developing Sign Language Actions plans and the use of best practice advice and guidance from the Department for Communities.

(309 characters)

Do you feel there is anything else this Clause should include?

Yes

No (tick)

Please give details to support your answer.

Clause 7

Clause 7 makes provision for the Department for Communities to make regulations (some time in the future) for the purposes of the Bill.

The Department for Communities will have the power to create new regulations to support the Sign Language Bill. These regulations are a different form of law, with working detail and may cover things like **how** public services provide sign language access and **how** organisations support sign language users. These future regulations would also need to come before the Assembly for scrutiny and agreement before they come into effect.

The Department for Communities must consult with the deaf community and relevant organisations before making changes. It can assign responsibilities to public bodies, charities, or groups working with the deaf community.

If needed, the Department for Communities can limit or adjust requirements for certain organisations based on their resources. Any changes must be approved by the Assembly before they become law.

Do you support the provision for the Department for Communities to make regulations detailed in Clause 7?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We welcome the provision for the Department for Communities to make regulations. It is important we are consulted and that our financial and resources implications are considered when drafting the regulations.

(210 characters)

Do you support the approach to consultation detailed in Clause 7?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We welcome the approach to be consulted on the drafting of the regulations.

(76 characters)

Clause 8

Clause 8 states that, before laying a draft of such regulations, the Department for Communities must consult everyone on whom the regulations confer functions, and at least one person or group appearing to the Department to be acting on behalf of the deaf community. Such regulations need to be laid before and approved by the Assembly.

Do you feel the level of consultation required in Clause 8 is sufficient?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We support this level of consultation which includes all listed prescribed organisations being involved in the process of drafting regulations.

(138 characters)

Clause 9

Clause 9 would require the Department for Communities to prepare a report evaluating the impact of the Bill within five years of the Bill's commencement and every five years thereafter.

Do you think evaluating the impact of the Bill in a report every five years is an appropriate length of time?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

We are supportive of an evaluation report being produced every five years showcasing the impact made.

(102 characters)

Clause 10

Clause 10 provides that the Department for Communities must make a scheme for, or connected to, the accreditation of (either or both) teachers of BSL or ISL, and/or interpreters of BSL or ISL.

Do you support the creation of a scheme for accrediting BSL and ISL teachers?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

An accreditation scheme for BSL and ISL teachers would assist in our on-going work within the Council's Language Strategy Action Plan. We will be able to identify, approach and supply accredited teachers to deliver Sign Language courses for council staff.

(245 characters)

Do you support the creation of a scheme for accrediting BSL and ISL interpreters?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer.

An accreditation scheme for BSL and ISL interpreters would assist the Council in making sure qualified interpreters are placed for required and requested

bookings made by Council staff. The scheme will also assist deaf employees in the Council by being able to book qualified interpreters for communication purposes in the workplace.

(334 characters)

Clause 11

Clause 11 defines, for the purposes of the Bill, the deaf community as all people falling within one or more of the following categories:

- (a) individuals who rely for communication on BSL or ISL;
- (b) deaf or deafblind people who normally use BSL or ISL for communication (including people who can obtain some or better levels of hearing when assisted by auditory devices); or
- (c) children of deaf or deafblind people who habitually or occasionally use BSL or ISL for communication (including children who have some or full hearing).

Clause 11 also provides that people who (whether or not they have some or full hearing) have little or no understanding of spoken or written language in English but are able to communicate effectively in BSL or ISL, are to be regarded as if members of the deaf community for the purposes of the Bill.

Do you agree with the definition of the deaf community provided for in the Bill?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer. Please outline what people or groups you think should be included or excluded and why.

We agree with the inclusion of the above categories as people belonging to the deaf community.

(95 characters)

Clause 12

Clause 12 defines, for the purposes of the Bill, BSL or ISL as either or both of the visual form of the Language as commonly used and understood by deaf people, and the common tactile or non-visual forms of the Language as used and understood by some deafblind people.

Do you agree with the definition of BSL and ISL provided for in the Bill?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer. If you think there are any aspects missing, please outline what you think should be included.

We agree with this definition of BSL and ISL.

(46 characters)

Clause 13

Clause 13 defines, for the purposes of the Bill, everyday reliance on BSL or ISL as relying (wholly or substantially) on BSL or ISL by necessity or for convenience in the course of everyday activities.

Do you agree with the definition of “everyday reliance” provided in the Bill?

Yes (tick)

No

Please give details to support your answer. If you think there are any aspects missing, please outline what you think should be included.

We agree with this definition of “everyday reliance” on BSL and ISL.

Any other comments

Is there anything which you expected the Bill to make provision for which has not been included in the Bill?

Yes (tick)

No (tick)

Please give details to support your answer.

If you have any other comments in relation to the Bill please tell us here.

Please note this is an officer response on behalf of Belfast City Council which will require ratification by full Council at their meeting in June

(Submit response)



Subject:	City Centre Governance
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Damien Martin, Strategic Director, Place & Economy
Contact Officer:	Cathy Reynolds, Director, City Regeneration & Development Stephen Leonard, Director, City & Neighbourhood Services Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth & Anti - Poverty

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

☐

1. Information relating to any individual
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7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐
☐
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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

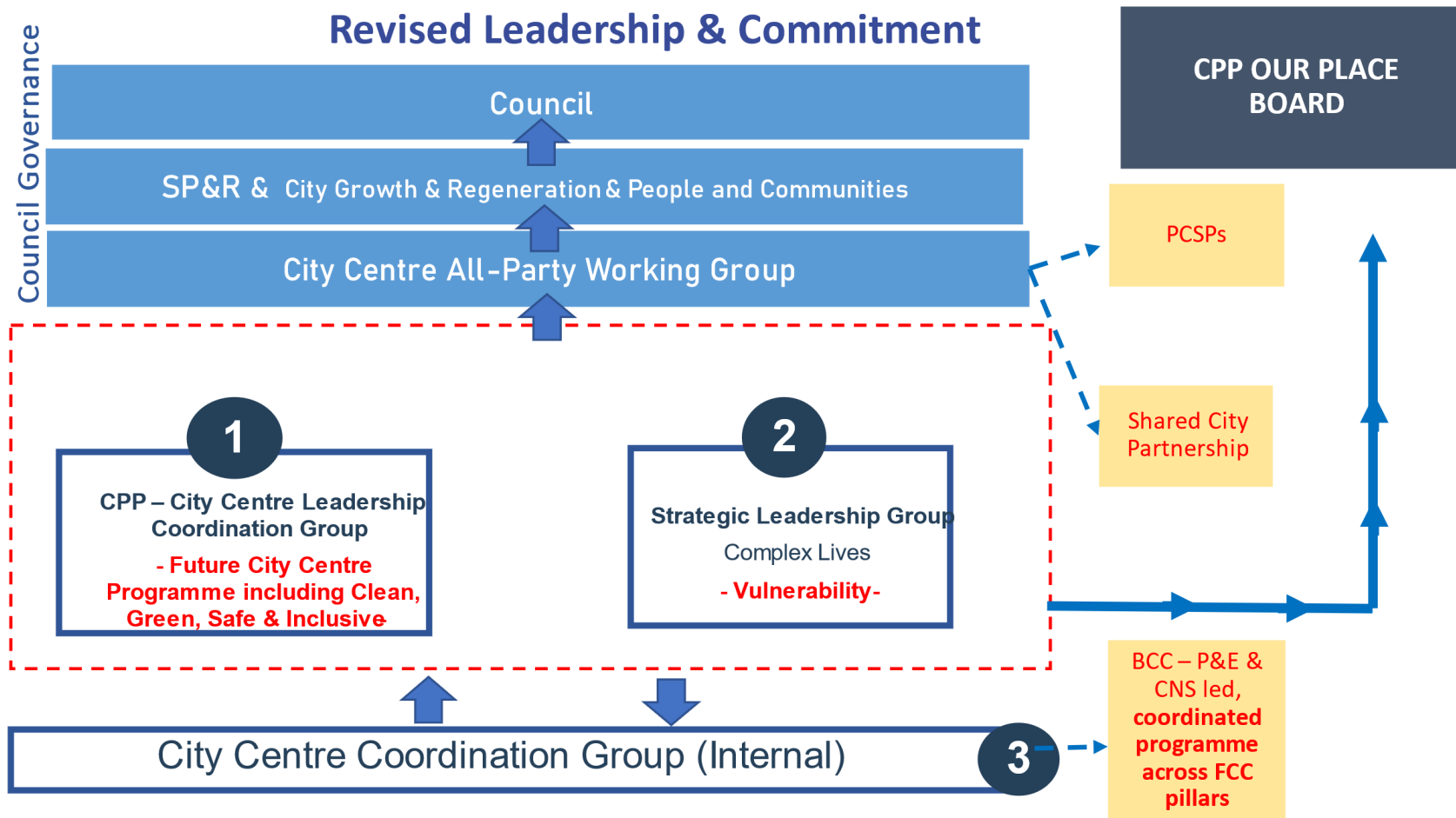
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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide proposals on a refreshed approach to city centre governance in the context of existing and established Community Planning structures.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to proposed refreshed approach to city centre governance in the context of existing and established Community Planning structures.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Members will be aware of the city centre governance arrangements agreed by this Committee in 2022. These were designed and implemented with relevance to a specific point in time which allowed responses to the emerging and often sensitive and difficult issues and anchored within established Community Planning Structures.
3.2	As the operating environment and circumstances have changed, and taking account of feedback on duplication from representatives in relation to the various groups that had been established, it is timely to revisit the governance and delivery arrangements which had been initially put in place for the city centre, with a view to streamlining, integrating and refocusing to ensure that they are fit for purpose and remain relevant to all involved. In addition, work on the stocktake of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) was completed last year and recommended “a multi-agency approach to place keeping and city management”.
3.3	This is line with the refresh of the Belfast Agenda, following which Community Planning Partnership partners agreed to revisit the associated governance arrangements to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose.
3.4	<p>Reflecting on the BCCRIS stock-take and status of initiatives, as well as engagement with and feedback from key stakeholders/partners, it is proposed that we seek to consolidate the Multi Agency Operational (Tasking) Group and FCC Leadership Group into one group “City Centre Leadership Coordination Group” (illustrated in Appendix 1). To ensure a cross sector shared partnership approach it is proposed that this is anchored as per the initial governance under the auspices of Community Planning. This will ensure a multi-agency approach with representation across the public, private and third and community sectors. The proposed draft TOR are set out below to provide Members with a sense of purpose to this proposed forum:</p> <p>a) The Group as anchored with Community Planning structures, will contribute to realising the shared vision and ambition as set out in the Belfast Agenda; encouraging greater coordination and collaboration across partners in relation to the city centre to deliver our shared vision of creating <i>“a vibrant, unique and thriving place where people spend time, live, work, visit and invest”</i>.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) To ensure that a fit-for-purpose vehicle exists to raise and expedite issues relating to the priorities for the city centre across the five pillars of Regeneration & Connectivity; Business Investment, Animation & Distinctive Offering, Clean, Green Inclusive & Safe and Vulnerability. c) To enable engagement, discussion and collaboration between key public and private stakeholders (including central and local government, anchor institutions, retail, business and umbrella organisations, developers, community, third sector and other relevant city centre stakeholders) to delivery activities aligned to these pillars. d) To support the delivery of priority projects that support the agreed vision for the City Centre. e) To provide a forum to develop shared messaging and joined up communications on matters pertaining to the Belfast City Centre. f) To be a vehicle for engagement with wider community interests. g) It would be expected that respective organisations filter updates and messaging as appropriate through their networks to ensure communication of relevant areas are understood across the board. h) The group will provide a forum to allow all stakeholders to feed in relevant workstreams / updates relevant to the ongoing and future success of the city centre. i) To monitor overall progress; and to review and update the objectives and priorities at least annually. j) Representatives on the group should be of sufficient level where they are able to convey issues, opportunities etc back into the relevant leadership / governance of their respective organisations as appropriate.
3.5	It is proposed that the meetings are organised and structured around the pillars of the Future City Centre (FCC) programme. This is aligned to the priority area under the Our Place thematic area of the Belfast Agenda, providing an opportunity for reporting into the City Centre All Party Working Group, relevant committees and the Community Planning Our Place Board.
3.6	It is not proposed to change arrangements in relation to Complex Lives, which are deigned to focus and coordinate multiagency support in relation to a specific group of vulnerable individuals who are experiencing very complex issues.
3.7	Positive discussions have taken place with officials in the Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure on the refreshed governance proposals for the city centre.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.8	None

	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.9	None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Refreshed City Centre Governance Diagram



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Belfast
City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	Discretionary Payments Framework
Date:	23 rd May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Contact Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To consider the reintroduction of the framework of the management of discretionary payment requests which do not fall within existing Council funding schemes.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed Discretionary Payments Framework detailed in this report. 2. On the basis of recommendation 1 being agreed, to set a discretionary payment limit of £431,972 for the 2025/26 budget.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will recall at the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 24 th November 2023, a new set of criteria for Discretionary Payments was agreed, based on the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
3.2	<p>Prior to this, the Council had a Discretionary Payment Framework in place to assist it in dealing with requests from external groups throughout the year for non-recurrent funding which does not fall within one of the Council's normal grant or other funding processes. This framework had been agreed at the SP&R meeting of 17th August 2018, attached at Appendix 1.</p>
3.3	In order to manage the discretionary payment requests which do not fall within existing Council funding schemes it is proposed that members agree to the re-instatement of the framework for the 2025/26 and future financial years.
3.4	<p>As part of the framework, and as part of the half year and year end position reporting of the Council to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Director of Finance will, after considering the level of financial risk and in discussion with the Chief Executive, recommend to the Committee the amount of underspend which could be re-allocated, together with areas of priority for such re-allocation and the amount of funding that could be applied to discretionary payments if the committee so wished.</p>
3.5	The calculation of the limit on total allocations allowable in any year, was based on a product of the domestic and non-domestic rate as detailed in Section 40 of the Local Government Finance (NI) Act 2011 and is included as Appendix 1.
3.6	Using the rate product calculation (appendix 2) a limit of £431,972 would be applicable for re-allocations from any under-spend arising from the 2025/26 revenue estimates.
	Next Steps if Framework is Agreed
3.7	If the reintroduction of the framework is agreed, then information on discretionary payments will be published on the Council website. It will be emphasised that there is no designated fund, but that if in year resources become available for re-allocation then an amount may

	be set aside by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for discretionary payments and that this will normally be considered at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June and November.
3.8	The application form used previously to be completed by those organisations wishing to submit a funding request, will be reviewed and updated if needed, which will allow the request to be assessed by officers against the agreed criteria.
3.9	A Committee report will be presented to the November (Half-Year) and June (Year-End) Committees outlining resources available, if any, up to the limit available for discretionary payments and a summary of applications received which meet the criteria.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.10	There are no implications associated with this report
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.11	There are no implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Discretionary Payments Committee Report SP&R 17 August 2018 Appendix 2: In Year Re-allocation Limit Calculation

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Subject:	<i>Discretionary Payments</i>
Date:	<i>17 August 2018</i>
Reporting Officer:	<i>Ronan Cregan; Director of Finance and Resources</i>
Contact Officer:	<i>Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance</i>

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To consider a proposed framework for the management of discretionary payment requests which do not fall within existing Council funding schemes.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to agree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the proposed Discretionary Payments Framework detailed in this report. 2. On the basis of recommendation 1 being agreed, to set a discretionary payment limit of £396,600 for the 2018/19 budget.
3.0	Main report

3.1	The Committee is reminded that this report was deferred at the meeting of the 22 June 2018 to allow time for consideration by Party Groups.
	Management of In-Year Under-spends
3.2	Belfast City Council has an annual net expenditure budget of over £155m and inevitably, given the range and complexity of the organisation and the influence of internal and external factors on income and expenditure plans, there will be some areas of underspend and other areas of budget pressure during any financial year. This normally results in an under-spend position which can be re-allocated either during the year or at the year end.
3.3	The major external factor affecting the year end position is the District Rate Finalisation and whether this will result in a surplus for the Council or a clawback by Land and Property Services (LPS).
3.4	The net financial position of the Council and the year-end forecast position is reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on a quarterly basis, with decisions on re-allocation of any in-year under-spend being made when the half year forecast is considered at the November Committee and the year-end outturn is considered at the June Committee.
3.5	An in-year underspend provides the opportunity for the reallocation of resources to a non-recurrent purpose. For example allocation to General Reserves, Specified Reserves, a Designated Fund, Non-Recurrent Expenditure or Discretionary Payments. These are briefly explained below
3.6	General Reserves: These reserves are held to provide a short term safeguard against the consequences of general risk facing the Council. To ensure compliance with the Local Government Finance Act NI (2011), the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources must advise the Committee on the adequacy of the level of General Reserves
3.7	Specified Reserves: These are reserves established for a specified purpose for example the Voluntary Redundancy (VR) Reserve which finances the redundancy and actuarial costs of the VR Programme or a reserve for a major event which is built up over a period of time e.g. Tall Ships.
3.8	Non-Recurrent Expenditure: These allocations support the non-recurrent costs of delivering Council priorities without generating a recurring rate impact. For example the Customer Focus Project.
3.9	Designated Funds: These allocations establish or increase capital or revenue funds. The funds are normally held on a cash basis and include an agreed process for public access

	to these funds. For example the Belfast Investment Fund, the Local Investment Fund or Community Development Grants Programme.
3.10	Discretionary Payments: These are payments agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in response to a request for non-recurrent funding from an external group which does not fall within one of the Council's normal grant or other funding process.
3.11	<i>As part of the half year and year end position reporting of the Council to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources will, after considering the level of financial risk, recommend to the Committee the amount of underspend which could be re-allocated, together with areas of priority for such re-allocation and the amount of funding that could be applied to discretionary payments if the committee so wished.</i>
3.12	<i>The following paragraphs outline a recommended framework for the management of such discretionary payments.</i>
	Previous Council Criteria for Discretionary Payments
3.13	Prior to April 2015, Section 37 of the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and previously Section 115 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, provided a framework for the consideration of requests which would bring direct benefit to the council; its district, or any part of its district; the inhabitants of its district, or any part of its district, within an overall annual financial spending limit. The Section 37 powers were repealed with the introduction of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 and replaced with the wider general power of competence.
3.14	It is important to note that the council does not set an annual discretionary spend budget, however the Section 37 authority was used by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider the application of any overall departmental underspend to discretionary payments, up to the Section 37 limit, and the Policy and Resources Committee, in June 2004, agreed a set of criteria for assessing such requests.
3.15	The criteria agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 18 June 2004 ensured that any payment met the legislative requirement, did not relate to other Committee funding streams and that the nature of the payment request was non-recurrent i.e. related to a specific event, activity or initiative as opposed to general funds or organisation running costs.
3.16	The calculation of the limit on total allocations allowable in any year, was based on a product of the domestic and non-domestic rate as detailed in Section 40 of the Local Government Finance (NI) Act 2011 and is included as Appendix 1.

3.17	Using the rate product calculation (appendix 1) a limit of £396,600 would be applicable for re-allocations from any under-spend arising from the 2018/19 revenue estimates.
	Proposed Discretionary Payment Assessment Criteria
3.18	Under the general power of competence, by virtue of the Part 11 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the Council still has the power to make such discretionary payments and it is proposed that the committee reintroduce the previous criteria for such payment as agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in June 2004.
3.19	<p>These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the total discretionary payments may not exceed the rate product limit calculated using the formula in Appendix 1 to this report. 2. That there are sufficient in year resources available for reallocation to meet the discretionary payment expenditure approved. 3. That the application for the discretionary payment links to one or more of the council's corporate priorities. 4. That there is direct benefit to be obtained to the council or its district or inhabitants. 5. That the activity or initiative in respect of assistance being sought is being promoted by a person or organisation living or operating, or otherwise having a direct connection with the City. 6. That the request for a discretionary payment does not relate to an event or initiative which falls within a funding stream established through the remit and statutory power of any other committee of the council (in which case it should be so referred). 7. That the request relates to a specific event, activity or initiative as distinct from a request for a contribution to general funds or organisational running costs. 8. That the benefit to be obtained will be commensurate with the payment to be made.
	Next Steps if Criteria are Agreed
3.20	If the above criteria are agreed then information on discretionary payments will be published on the Council website. It will be emphasised that there is no designated fund, but that if in year resources become available for re-allocation then an amount may be set aside by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for discretionary payments and that this will normally be considered at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June and November.

3.21	An application form will be developed to be completed by those organisations wishing to submit a funding request which will allow the request to be assessed by officers against the above criteria.
3.22	A Committee report will be presented to the November (Half-Year) and June (Year-End) Committees outlining resources available, if any, up to the limit available for discretionary payments and an summary of applications received which meet the criteria.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.23	There will be no established budget for discretionary payments and therefore these must be funded by re-allocation of in year underspends.
	<u>Equality Implications</u>
3.24	There are no equality implications with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – In Year Re-allocation Limit Calculation

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Calculation of the Annual Limit on Re-Allocations for Discretionary Payments

The total re-allocations in any one financial year shall not exceed the aggregate of:

- The product of the rate of 0.0596p in the pound on the rateable value of all hereditaments in a NAV list in the district and
- The product of a rate of 0.00082p in the pound on the rateable capital value of all hereditaments in a capital value list in the district.
- “capital value” means capital value for the purposes of the Rates (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 (NI 28) and shall be construed in accordance with Article 39 of that order.
- “NAV list” has the meaning given by Article 40(1)(a) of the Rates (Northern Ireland Order) 1977

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Belfast
City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:	Requests for Funding
Date:	23 rd May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Contact Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To ask the committee to consider three requests for funding.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A request from Shankill Juniors Football Club for funding of approximately £12,000 to support their participation in the Milk Cup in July. 2. A request from the NI Walking Football Federation to provide funding of £5,000 to support five individuals from Belfast who are competing in the International Federation World Championship in Malmo, Sweden on the 3rd to 7th July. 3. A request from the Irish Athletic Boxing Association for £25,000 towards the cost of hosting an elite boxing camp in Belfast in August 2025 in advance of the Elite World Championships in Liverpool in September.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	In the absence of a fund/grant stream to support sporting excellence the Committee is recommended to consider the requests.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Chief Executive has received three requests for funding.
3.2	Members are reminded that there is no established budget for these requests and if dealt with through discretionary funding they would have to be met through departmental underspends.
3.3	The first request is for Shankill Juniors who have been successful in qualifying for The Milk Cup. The 16 children are all from Greater Shankill. This prestigious tournament is normally reserved for higher levels clubs from NI and across the world. Juniors are the first Boys Club to have qualified, and as a Belfast team this is a hugely positive achievement for our City. They previously participated in the Foyle Cup, winning their category.
3.4	The issue for the team is how they manage the costs of participation, estimated at around £12,000. The tournament commences in July and so time for fundraising is a real difficulty.
3.5	The second request is from the NI Walking Football Federation to provide support to five individuals from Belfast who have been selected to represent Northern Ireland in the International Walking Football Federation World Championship in Malmo, Sweden on the 3 rd to 7 th July.
3.6	The amount requested is for £5,000 that will go toward the cost of travel and accommodation. Other participants are being supported financially by their local councils and the request is that Belfast City Council supports these five individuals all of whom are senior citizens of Belfast, rate paying residents and are actively involved in their local communities.

3.7	The third request is from the Irish Athletic Boxing Association to host an elite boxing camp in Belfast in August 2025 where the Irish Boxing team selected for the World Championships in September along with boxers from the Ulster High Performance team will host countries from across the world for a world class training and sparring camp in the city. It is envisaged this being USA, China, Brazil, Uzbekistan/ Kazakhstan, France & GB. This would be another unique first for the city in hosting such a high profiled camp ahead of the Elite World Championships in Liverpool in September.
3.8	This camp would bring between 150-200 guests from across the world to our city for a 12–14-day camp. This would increase bed nights in the city, bring a multitude of countries from a range of different cultures to the city, and increase visitors to the city. They would also like to host several open days to the camp where boxing clubs, community groups, summer schemes and general spectators can come and watch some of the world's best boxers in our own city.
3.9	They are asking Belfast City Council for funding of £25,000 that could be put towards running this phenomenal event that will feature Olympic, World, European, Asian and Commonwealth Champions to name a few.
3.10	The Committee is asked to consider the requests.
3.11	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> The requests fall under the Council's discretionary expenditure policy, however, members are asked to note that there is no established budget for this and would have to be met through departmental underspends.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.12	None.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

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Subject:	Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 12 th May 2025
Date:	23 rd May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
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After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To report to committee on the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 12 th May 2025.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	That the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 12 th April 2025 including:
2.2	<p><u>Good Relations Quarter 4 Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.
2.3	<p><u>Good Relations Action Plan Budget Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership noted the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report, including the proposal to proceed with the Good Relations Action plan as detailed in the body of the report
2.4	<p><u>Update from Partnership Members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership noted a number of verbal updates from various Members in relation to ongoing good relations issues across the Belfast
2.5	<p><u>PEACE IV – Secretariat Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership noted the contents of the report and recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.
2.6	<p><u>PEACEPLUS Belfast City Council Local Community Action Plan – Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting was inquorate at this stage, as such the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is requested to endorse the report recommendations, summarised as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the revised CRT Animation Timeframe subject to SEUPB approval; the cross community breakdown for participants as outlined in Option 2.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which consists of Elected members and representatives from various sectors across the city. The minutes from the Partnership are brought before the Committee for approval on a monthly basis.</p>
3.2	<p>The key issues on the agenda at the 12th May 2025 meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Papers of 7th April 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Relations Quarter 4 Update • Good Relations Action Plan Budget Update • Members Update • PEACE IV – Secretariat Update • PEACEPLUS Belfast Local Community Action Plan (LCAP) Update • AOB
3.3	<p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the following minutes of the meeting attached in Appendix 1 Minutes of the Shared City Partnership 12th May 2025.</p>
3.4	<p><u>PEACEPLUS Belfast City Council Local Action Plan Update</u></p> <p>As noted in the minutes, some elected members left the meeting due to conflict of interests, and the meeting was declared inquorate, as such the recommendations were not considered.</p>
3.5	<p>On this basis the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is requested to endorse the recommendations as outlined in PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan (LCAP) report, as detailed in the minutes.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All financial implications are covered through existing budgets, and the Good Relations Action Plan is included in the current estimates process.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The recommendations of the Partnership are to promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts for the City of Belfast.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Minutes of the Shared City Partnership 12th May 2025

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SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Monday 12th May, 2025

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY AND IN THE CONOR ROOM

Members present: Councillor J. Duffy (Chairperson) and
Councillors I. McLaughlin and Abernethy.

External Members: Ms. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Ms. L. Euler, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
Fr. M. Magill, Faith Representative;
Ms. T. Mimna, The Executive Office;
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;
Mr. G. Walker, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Ms. A. M. White, British Red Cross

In attendance: Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer;
MS. L. Dolan, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Mr. Naeem of the Interfaith Forum, together with Mr G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager.

A Member noted that the representatives of the PSNI had not attended meetings for several months. It was pointed out that the upcoming summer period was a time in Belfast when community relations could become strained and the Partnership agreed that its concerns in relation to the absence of the PSNI's representatives be conveyed onwards.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 18th April.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of the item 'PEACEPLUS - BCC Local Action Plan Update', declarations of interest were reported by Councillors Duffy and I. McLaughlin, as well as Independent Member Ms. B. Arthurs, in that they were associated with organisations which were in receipt of support under the terms of the plan. Mr. J. Girvan declared an interest also in the item in that he was related to a Member of the Council who was employed by an organisation in receipt of funding under the terms of the plan. They retired from the meeting whilst the matter was under discussion.

Good Relations Action Plan - Quarter 4 Update

The Partnership considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To update the Shared City Partnership on the delivery of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan during Quarter 4 which covers the period January – March 2025.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Council receives 75% of funding from The Executive Office (TEO) for the delivery of its annual Good Relations Action Plan.

The original total value of the Action Plan is £493,079.59. Within this the 75% contribution from TEO consists of £369,809.69 with the remaining 25%, or £123,269.90 being contributed by the Council. Of this overall total, £365,000 was allocated towards programmes.

- 3.2 In December, TEO offered the Council an additional resource of £38,170, at 100%. It was agreed that this be allocated towards programme activity. Therefore, the new Action Plan total for programme costs was £403,170.

- 3.3 Delivery of the Action Plan continued during quarter 4. In Q1, £181,714.48 was allocated. In Q2, a further £109,420 has been allocated. During Q3, £58,473 was allocated.

In Q4, £39,970 was allocated, giving a total allocation for programme during 2024/25 of £389,577.48. The small remaining amount of £13,592.52 will be reprofiled, along with any subsequent underspend as projects close, to offset the costs to the Council towards salaries and administration.

- 3.4 Members should also note that the Action Plan does not include the £128,700 allocated to the Council for work on refugee integration, or the Asylum Dispersal allocations totalling £406,228, all from TEO. These funds are in addition to the Action Plan as well as the delivery of actions within the Community Recovery Programme which is worth £600,000.

3.5 The following is a summary of update on activity and allocations within the Good Relations Action Plan during Q4:

Code	Project Summary	Budget	Progress in Quarter 3	Total allocated
BCC1	Good Relations Small Grants Programme.	£155,000	43 projects awarded funding in Q1. Projects closing.	£0
BCC2	St Patrick's Day Civic Events programme	£20,000	Programme completed	£0
BCC3	Positive Cultural Expression Programme	£20,000 (plus additional £13,170)	Beacon Demonstration event delivered in February.	£13,170 (from additional resource)
BCC4	Civic Engagement and Learning Programme	£20,000	Programme completed with small under-allocation.	
BCC5	Minority Ethnic Equality and Inclusion Programme	£60,000	March meeting of the Migrant Forum took place. Anti racism training Small under-allocation.	£300 £1,500
BCC6	Embedding Good Relations Programme	£0	This programme didn't proceed as a result of budget shortfall	£0
BCC7	Interface Engagement & tackling sectarianism and racism	£60,000	Programme completed	£0
BCC8	Shared Education Schools Programme	£20,000	Programme completed	£0
BCC 9	Strategic Connections and Support Programme	£10,000 (Plus an additional £25,000)	East Meets West Community Centre Programme Good Relations Strategy, Audit and Action Plan	£5,000 £20,000
	TOTAL	£403,170		£39,970

3.6 Financial and Resource Implications

All costs within the District Council's Good Relations Action Plan are covered within existing agreed budgets.

3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

All activity within the District Council's Good Relations Action Plan

The Partnership noted the information set out within the report and agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report also.

A general discussion ensued in relation to the prevalence of sectarianism across the City and the methodology used in evaluating the effectiveness of programmes funded through the action plan. It was noted that more qualitative data should be included in any future quarterly updates on the Action Plan, rather than just a report that dealt with financial issues. It was agreed also that consideration be given as to how the Interfaces Programme, as contained in the revised Good Relations Action Plan, could be delivered more effectively in order to focus particularly on sectarianism and the issues facing residents. It was noted also that there remained an onus on the Council and its Members to show greater leadership at a civic level to address the persistence of sectarianism in Belfast and other associated problems, such as racism.

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer also provided an update on this year's forthcoming Day of Reflection on 21st June, information in respect of which would be circulated to the Members.

Good Relations Action Plan - Funding Update

Mr. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer, reminded the Partnership that, at its previous meeting, it had noted that The Executive Office had indicated informally that the level of funding to be provided to oversee activity in 2025/26 would be sufficient to support the agreed programmes. However, since the previous meeting, the Good Relations Unit had been informed that the level of funding would, in fact, be £41,999.99 less than the figure originally communicated. Accordingly, the Acting Senior Good Relations Officer outlined a number of options for consideration and pointed out that, in previous years, the Council had received an additional in-year allocation as a result of monitoring rounds, which could be earmarked and reallocated to support the delivery of the programme in full in 2025/26.

The Partnership noted the comments of the Acting Senior Good Relations Officer and agreed that the programme for 2025/26 proceed as anticipated. The amount allocated towards programmes would remain the same and the deduction of the £41,999.99 would be taken from the salaries and administration element of the Action Plan programme.

The Partnership agreed that any in-year financial reallocation received would be reallocated towards salaries and administration, thus enabling the programme element to proceed as planned. It was noted that a report in relation to any reallocation received would be submitted for consideration and that an invitation be extended to representatives from The Executive Office to present to the Partnership in respect of the programme.

The Partnership agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to note and endorse the course of action agreed by the Partnership.

PEACE IV Programme - Secretariat Update

Ms. McKinney reported that confirmation had been received from the Audit Authority that the Article 27 Audit of the Council's Programme had been completed successfully, which would enable SEUPB to progress final payments. In addition, the Partnership was informed that reimbursement of final claims for Children and Young People (that being £123.5K) and Building Positive Relations (that being £221K) that is, 'Claim 36', for the Shared Spaces and Services theme of £1.069 million had been received and reconciliation and reimbursement of funds was currently being progressed.

Noted.

Partnership Members' Update

The Partnership noted a number of verbal updates from various Members in relation to ongoing good relations issues across the Belfast.

PEACEPLUS Belfast City Council Local Action Plan – Update

(Councillors Duffy and I. McLaughlin, Mr. J. Girvan and Ms. Arthurs, who had all declared interests in the matter, left the meeting prior to consideration of the recommendations within the report.)

The Partnership considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership members with an update on the mobilisation of PEACEPLUS 1.1. Co-designed Belfast Local Community Peace Action Plan (LCAP).

2.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of the report and agree

- i. the revised CRT Animation Timeframe subject to SEUPB approval;**
- ii. the cross community breakdown for participants as outlined in Appendix II Option 2**

3.0 Main report

3.1 Letter of Offer (LoO) - Data Sharing Agreement

Correspondence has been issued to SEUPB's Director regarding finalising and agreeing the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA), which is becoming critical. SEUPB has advised they are seeking advice from Counsel and will advise Council in due course.

3.2 Contract Awards

Contract awards are continuing to progress, with further awards made to successful bidders as follows:

- TPC2 - Health & Wellbeing to Ashton with community partners
- CCD3 - LGBTQIA+ - Community Engagement Programme to The Rainbow Project

As previously reported, members should note that delivery partners have been requested to realign the implementation timeframes to condense delivery, where necessary, to ensure achievement of targets by December 2027.

3.3 Procurement

Final procurement checks are progressing for CCD2 Community Connections and CCD4 Community Empowerment Ex-Politically Motivated Prisoners, with formal contract awards imminent.

Clarifications for TPC3 Lot 4 Youth Empowerment are underway, and assessment of Lot 2 of CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism is progressing.

Members should note that feedback requests on the Lot 1 of CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism are ongoing, with a view to re-tendering the project by May 2025.

3.4 Mobilisation of Community Regeneration and Transformation

Procurements for the PQQ stage of the Integrated Consultancy Services (Design) for all capital projects were recently issued.

As reported in April 2025, alignment of the capital and animation timeframe is required to enable the achievement of targets. Given that construction works is expected to continue to May 2027, delivery of the animation activity, even with an extension, will be challenging.

The PEACEPLUS Programme Board, has considered delivery of animation activity across three phases of pre, during and post construction, as outlined in Appendix I CRT Animation Timeframe and recommend that the Shared City Partnership agree the revised timeframe, subject to agreement with SEUPB.

3.5 Programme Extension

A preliminary approach has been made to SEUPB to formally submit the extension request. SEUPB has advised that the extension request should be submitted via SEUPB's Modification Template once Council is formally contracted on JeMS.

Discussions with SEUPB on progressing formal contracting is progressing.

3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

As referenced at 3.1 the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) between Council and the SEUPB has not yet been agreed and signed. Proposed amendments from Council to the DSA are being considered by SEUPB's Counsel. These impacts finalising the Schedules of Processing (SOP's) between Council and Delivery Partners.

The Programme Board has considered the sharing of participant data and the risk to Council and Delivery Partners. It is recommended that as an interim measure, Delivery Partners submit participant databases, with personal data anonymised. Members are requested note this approach.

3.7 Cross Community Breakdown

Members are reminded that the cross-community breakdown of participants outlined in the PEACEPLUS Action Plan submission reflects the religious breakdown for Belfast based the 2021 Census data, which is Catholic 43%, Protestant 30%, Other Religions 3%, and No Religion 24%.

It was highlighted during the co-design and pre-market engagement phases, that the cross-community breakdown for projects reflective of participant age groups and area of delivery was critical. As such each project has individual cross community targets based on these factors, with the exception of TPC5 Employability (Language Up), which is based on those who do not have English as a first language.

- 3.8 As mobilisation of the Community Regeneration & Transformation (CRT) projects is progressing, consideration of the cross-community breakdown for projects based on the above factors (Option 1) has been compiled. However, a key aspect of the CRT projects is to attract people from other areas to the regenerated locations, and on this basis a further cross community breakdown of those within a 2-mile radius of the delivery area (Option 2), has been compiled. (Refer to Appendix II). As the LGBTQIA+ Hub is centrally located, the cross community split for Belfast has been applied.

Members should note that as each project assigned individual cross community targets, there are some rounding issues when figures from all projects are collated together, as outlined in the variances.

- 3.9 A Letter of Offer condition states that the 'community background of each cohort of participants should be confirmed and not vary from that set out in the application and detailed on JeMs.' As such applying a consistent rationale to achieve as close to the cross-community targets outlined in the Action Plan is required.

- 3.10 The Programme Board has considered the cross-community breakdown options and recommend that the Shared City Partnership

agree Option 2 as the preferred approach. It should also be noted that these are minimum cross community targets that delivery partners should be aiming to achieve and will not exclude anyone from participating in projects.

3.11 Governance

implementation of operation tier of the Governance structure is progressing, with meetings of the Thriving and Peaceful Communities (TPC) and Celebrating Cultures & Diversity (CCD) Thematic Steering Groups (TSG) scheduled for the 7 and 8 May 2025, respectively. Members are advised that the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the TGSs and streamlining of the Capital and Community Regeneration and Transformation TSG is being considered by the Programme Board. A further report on the proposed amends of the TSG will be presented to members at the next meeting.

3.12 Delivery Partner Support

Contract initiation meetings with appointed delivery partners are progressing. Further training workshops on the requirements for Data Sharing, Monitoring and Evaluation, Communications and Finance are scheduled for 14 May and 17 June 2025.

3.13 Financial Controller

An approach for management verification services for both the PEACEPLUS Action Plan and Reconnected Belfast projects, has been submitted to KPMG, as the first ranked contractor on SEUPB's Management Verification / Financial Controller Framework. KPMG has completed their initial checks and confirmed they have capacity to deliver services. A preliminary meeting to discuss the next steps has taken place. KPMG has advised they are to complete their onboarding process and agree a budget for the works with SEUPB.

3.14 Programme Risk Register

Members are reminded that quarterly risk updates will be reported, with delivery partner risks considered and escalated, as necessary. To date, 5 delivery partners have submitted Risk Registers that have been reviewed in line with the Programme Risk Register, and to date no additional risks have been identified.

Financial & Resource Implications

All expenditure associated with the PEACEPLUS Action Plan is eligible from 1 January 2024. Once SEUPB complete the formal contracting on JeMS, claims submission will progress. Claims expenditure from January 2024 to March 2025 is valued at £488,344 and relate solely to Salary and Office / Admin costs, preparation for the submission of claims on JeMS is progressing, although as referenced above xxx

claims submission will progress once the formal contracting on JeMS has been progressed.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

The PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan has been screened for equality, good relations and rural needs assessment, and has been screened out.

The Partnership was provided with an overview of the report.

(Councillor Abernethy in the Chair.)

Prior to considering the recommendations, the Acting Chairperson's attention was drawn to the fact that the meeting was inquorate in that only one Elected Member remained in attendance.

Accordingly, the meeting was declared to be at an end and it was noted that the above-mentioned report would be submitted to the meeting of the Strategic Policy Resources Committee on Friday 23rd May, with a request that it endorse the recommendations as set out.

Chairperson

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Subject:	Equality & Diversity: Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Quarter 4 2024-25
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officers:	Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set out the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for Quarter 4 2024-25.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>It is recommended that Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report which will be published on the Council's website.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	<p>As Members will be aware, the Council has a duty to have, under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories; and • Regard to the desirability of promotion good relations
3.2	<p>In addition, under section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.
3.3	<p>To this end, the Council has a process to carry out equality screening and rural needs assessment of new and revised policies. This allows any impacts related to equality of opportunity, good relations or rural needs to be identified and addressed.</p>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.4	<p>An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment template is completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Unit. On a regular basis, the Unit collates all completed templates into a screening outcome report and publishes onto the Council's website along with the relevant completed templates. The current screening outcome report for Quarter 4 2024-25 is attached at Appendix 1.</p>
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.5	<p>None.</p>
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.6	<p>This report contributes to the Council's compliance with section 75 or the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Rural Needs Act 2016.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Screening Outcome Report for Quarter 4 2024-25.



Belfast
City Council

**Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment
from January – March 2025**

Introduction

Legislation – An Overview

Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Council, when carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland, to have due regards to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to its obligations above, the council must also have regards to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Council's Revised Equality Scheme was formally approved by the Equality Commission in March 2021. The revised Scheme outlines how we propose to fulfil our statutory duties under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the council gave a commitment to apply the screening methodology below to all new and revised policies and where necessary and appropriate to subject new policies to further equality impact assessment.

- What is the likely impact of equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy/proposal, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy/proposal likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

In keeping with the Council's commitments in its Equality Scheme, the Council has applied the above screening criteria to new policies and proposals. Screening identifies policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Screening identifies the impact of the policy/proposal as major, minor or none.

- If major – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out.
- If minor – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.
- If none – screen out and give reasons.
- Ongoing screening – for strategies/policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages – screen at various stages during implementation.

The council also committed within its Revised Equality Scheme to prepare and publish for information regular reports on its screening exercises. This is screening report providing details on all screenings undertaken from the period July - September 2024.

Rural Needs Impact Assessments

The Council also has a statutory duty under the Rural Needs (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions. The Council must therefore engage with rural stakeholders in relation to policy development when it is relevant and appropriate. The Equality and Diversity Unit is responsible for reporting to the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee and for ensuring that annual reporting returns are submitted to DAERA.

To further promote openness and transparency, there is a link to each completed screening and rural needs impact assessment template on the Council's website. www.belfastcity.gov.uk

The templates detail all policies screened over this period and includes decisions reached.

Consultation

The development of new policies and proposals will be supported by effective engagement processes to ensure that staff, service users and all interested parties are fully involved.

Planning for and delivering safe and cost-effective services requires close collaboration at many levels.

If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:-

Bridgeen O'Neill
Equality and Diversity Unit
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Direct Line 02890 270555
or 028 9032 0202 ext 6315

email: equality@belfastcity.gov.uk or oneillbridgeen@belfastcity.gov.uk

Screening Outcome

The screening outcomes are outlined in the table below. Three possible outcomes are recorded:

If **Major** – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out. **EQIA** - subject to further scrutiny under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 to determine the impact upon those directly affected, which in turn will require informal and formal consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

If **Minor** – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.

If **None** – screen out and give reasons.

Screening Outcome Options

Major= In

Minor= Out with mitigation

None= Out without mitigation

Rural Needs Impact Assessment Options

Does the policy, plan, strategy or service design/delivery impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

Belfast City Council Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

This report includes published screenings and Rural Needs Impact Assessments for the period Jan to March 2025. Copies can be found at:-

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/equality-screening-reports#711-3>

Description of Policy/Proposal	Rural Needs Impact Assessment Outcome	ECNI Screening Decision
Changing Places Toilet Policy	The Changing Places Toilet Policy applies across the entire area of Belfast City Council and aims to address the inequalities experienced by disabled people. Therefore, this Policy will have a positive impact on people throughout the council area, including the rural areas.	No EQIA necessary – no impacts
Regeneration Framework	No rural needs were identified	No EQIA necessary – no impacts
Language Strategy Action Plan	No rural needs were identified	No EQIA necessary – no impacts
Implementation of the Little York Street – Little Patrick Street Public Realm / Placemaking Project and Lancaster Street Improvement Works	No rural needs were identified	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme	No rural needs were identified	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)

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Belfast
City Council

Subject:	Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 – DAERA Annual Monitoring Report
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with the Council's annual monitoring return (the "Annual Return"), which provides evidence of how the Council has met certain duties under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (the "Act").

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the submission of the Council's Annual Return for 2024 – 2025 (attached to this report as Appendix 1) to DAERA, subject to ratification by the Council at its meeting on 2 June.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	As Members will be aware, the rural population of Belfast is comprised of the small settlements of Edenderry, Hannahstown and Loughview.
3.2	Section 1(1) of the Act requires public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.
3.3	As part of that duty, Council officers complete Rural Needs Impact Assessments.
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.4	Section 3(1) of the Act requires public authorities to: (i) compile information on the exercise of their functions, (ii) include that information in annual reports and (iii) send that information to DAERA.
3.5	The Annual Return is designed to inform stakeholders and other interested parties of how the Council has had due regard to rural needs in the exercise of its functions. The attached Annual Return shows how the Council has met this duty for 2024-25.
	<u>Next Steps</u>
3.6	Subject to Committee and Council approval, the Annual Return will be submitted to DAERA next month for inclusion in its Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report.
3.7	A copy of the Annual Return, together with a list of the completed Rural Needs Impact Assessments will be published on the Council's website, as the Council does not have an annual report.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.8	Officers from across the organisation are involved in completing Rural Needs Impact Assessments and the Equality and Diversity Unit have corporate responsibility for collating this information.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.9	The Annual Return provides evidence as to how the Council has met its duty under the Act to have due regard to Rural Needs.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Annual Monitoring Return to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Appendix 2 - Template for Information to be Compiled

Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).

Name of Public Authority:

Reporting Period: April 20 to March 20

The following information should be compiled in respect of each policy, strategy and plan which has been developed, adopted, implemented, or revised and each public service which has been designed or delivered by the public authority during the reporting period.

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016¹.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to².</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service³.</i>
Introduction of a kerbside recycling scheme for the collection of glass from additional households in outer Belfast	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Development and implementation of the Belfast Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy	N/A	No rural needs were identified

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016¹.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to².</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service³.</i>
Delivery of a Social Supermarket Support Fund	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Development of a Draft Changing Places Toilets Policy	Rural Tourism	The Changing Places Toilet Policy applies across the entire area of Belfast City Council and aims to address the inequalities experienced by disabled people. Therefore, this Policy will have a positive impact on people throughout the council area, including the rural areas.
Development of the Language Strategy Action Plan 2024 - 2026	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Implementation of the Little York Street / Little Patrick Street Public Realm / Placemaking Project and Lancaster Street Improvement Works	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Regeneration Framework	N/A	No rural needs were identified
Neighbourhood Tourism Investment Programme	N/A	No rural needs were identified

NOTES

1. This information should normally be contained in section 1B of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
2. This information should normally be contained in section 2D of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
3. The information contained in sections 3D, 4A & 5B of the RNIA Template should be considered when completing this section.

Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 15th May 2025

Attendance

Members:

Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Ryan Murphy
Councillor Sarah Bunting
Councillor Séamas de Faoite
Councillor Áine Groogan
Alderman Sonia Copeland

Apologies: Councillor Ciaran Beattie

Officers:

John Walsh, Chief Executive
Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services
Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Damien Martin, Strategic Director of Place & Economy
David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services (for Item 4)
Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer (for Item 4)
Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control (for Item 6, 9 & 10)
Stephen Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet & OSS (for Item 10)
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

1. Northern Ireland Hotels Federation

The Chief Executive welcomed Janice Gault from the Northern Ireland Hotels Federation. The representative body for hotels, guesthouses and other accommodation providers in Northern Ireland. She briefed Members on the work undertaken by the Federation and circulated a copy of a report on the hotel market in Belfast which the federation had compiled. There was detailed discussion on investment in the hotel sector in Belfast and the current opportunities and challenges involved in the market. In relation to enforcement of usage of Private Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) outside of the student market, it was noted that the Director of Planning & Building Control would follow up. The Director to also link in with the Federation in relation to them being added to the list of consultees for PBSA planning applications going forward. A query was raised by a Member in terms of current pricing structures in the City and it was noted that Janice could provide a summary of the data requested. Members also discussed the many challenges and potential opportunities in considering a Tourism Tax model and noted that this would require further discussion. An electronic copy of the report discussed to be circulated following the meeting.

2. West Wellbeing Funding Request

The Chief Executive referred to a request made for funding under a Notion of Motion for the West Wellbeing Suicide Prevention Centre proposed by Councillor Collins. It was noted that Officers had been unable to source a contact for representatives to attend this meeting and it was agreed Officers to follow up in order to invite representatives to attend a future meeting.

3. Discretionary Payments

The Director of Finance provided an update on the criteria for the June round of funding, under the Discretionary Payments Scheme to allocate funding from underspends to groups/organisations. He outlined the current funding requests received and the funding limit and advised a report with the detail discussed will be considered at May SP&R Committee.

4. Social Supermarket Fund

The Director of Neighbourhood Services provided an update following the decision agreed by April SP&R Committee to not proceed with the current process and to reissue the applications for the programme. Detailed discussion followed on the revised approach and the Director outlined three options for consideration. Members also discussed considering other data alongside multiple deprivation data when reviewing the criteria and weighting assessment. The Director to consider the feedback provided in advance of a report going to May SP&R for consideration.

Clarity was sought by a Member in relation to the allocation of the bridging funding and which organisations would receive this funding. The Director to follow up and confirm agreed approach and the update to be included in the May Committee report.

5. Freedom of the City

The Chief Executive outlined for Members a proposed request from a Member for the conferment of the Freedom of the City. The Member provided a subsequent update following the request made which was noted.

6. Overview of Eastern Transport Plan

The Director of Planning and Building Control presented an overview of the Eastern Transport Plan for the city and four of the surrounding Local Authority areas being developed by the Department for Infrastructure. She outlined the approach, delivery timescales along

with an overview of the vision, objectives and general principles. It was noted that the CG&R Committee had agreed to receive a presentation from the Department for Infrastructure in relation to the Plan and a special CG&R Committee has been arranged at the end of May. Members to contact the Director with any queries they may have in advance of the special CG&R Committee.

7. City Centre Leadership & Coordination

The Strategic Director of Place & Economy referred to a previous proposal put forward by the Belfast Chamber for a multi-agency task force in relation to the City Centre. He presented the revised proposed governance model and approach in the context of the City Centre following review and consultation with other key stakeholders. Members also considered the proposed Membership which included Belfast Chamber, and it was noted that representatives from the Community & Voluntary sector from inner city areas should also be included. It was also agreed that there is ongoing engagement with Belfast Harbour in relation to this programme of work. A copy of the proposed model is to be circulated to Members to further consider.

Discussion ensued on some of the current issues in relation to the City Centre and it was agreed that a City Centre walk would be organised for Party Group Leaders and representatives from the relevant statutory agencies to allow for collaborative discussions to take place on key issues currently affecting the City Centre.

In relation to a query raised around the challenges with Commercial Waste the City Solicitor to follow up.

8. Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026

The Strategic Director of Place & Economy presented an update in relation to the successful bid from Council in partnership with Ards CEE to host the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in 2026. The Director outlined the key priorities, which included an update on resourcing, communications & engagement, accommodation and regulatory issues to be considered. Members also considered the proposed governance structure and there was consensus given the significance of the event that consideration is given to establishing a Member Working Group. Updates will be brought back to the Forum as this work progresses.

9. Planning Update

The Director of Planning and Building Control updated the Forum on the live planning applications that had been considered at the May Planning Committee. In relation to a query raised by a Member the Director and City Solicitor to follow up and provide an update for the Member. Members also noted the year end performance for 2024/25.

10. AOB

Illuminate Requests

The City Solicitor outlined for Members a number of illuminate requests received. Members noted the following requests would be agreed under the City Solicitors delegated authority.

- **30th Anniversary of the Genocide at Srebrenica – 25 June 2025**
- **Female Gender Related Cancer awareness – 1 October 2025**
- **Black History Month & Show Racism the Red Card – 17 October 2025**

Lighthouse Building

The Chief Executive provided an update in relation to a proposed change of use from office use to residential use for the Lighthouse Building, in the Gasworks Estate which was deferred at April SP&R Committee. Members noted correspondence received following deferral and that this request would need to go back to SP&R for consideration.

Closed Bin Policy/Removal of Liners

The City Solicitor provided an update on the Closed Bin Lid Policy and the removal of liners recently agreed at April P&C Committee and highlighted the legislative requirements in order to ensure the Health and Safety of waste collection operatives as they carry out their collection duties. Members were supportive of the new policy but highlighted some areas of concern in relation to the new process for both staff and residents and outlined steps that could potentially be put in place in order to mitigate for those areas of concern. The importance of ongoing effective communication was also highlighted and the consideration to be given to visual communication products. The Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services to consider the points raised in advance of a report going to June P&C Committee. Members to contact the Strategic Director or the Director of Resources, Fleet & OSS with any specific concerns they may have in advance of June P&C Committee.

Land at Boucher

The Chief Executive provided a briefing on an issue that had arisen in relation to a piece of land at Boucher and advised that the Director of Property & Projects was currently reviewing and an update will be provided for Members in due course.

Council Assets

The Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services provided an update on the background around the operating model for a council owned asset. Members discussed the need to consider potential future use before progressing with any new operating model and it was agreed that this would be put on the agenda for the Efficiency/Consultancy workshop being arranged for Members in June.

Members also discussed the use of assets including vacant assets across the Council estate and how they may be better utilised. The Director of Finance advised that work was already ongoing in relation to some of the points raised and that this could also be considered at the upcoming workshop. A Member also made reference to the use of council owned cemeteries for historical tours and it was agreed that a tour would be arranged for Party Group Leaders.

Pilot Sunday City Animation Project

The Director of Planning and Building Control provided an update on the engagement work underway with key stakeholders in relation to the pilot Sunday city animation project and advised that a report will be brought to June SP&R Committee following the engagement process. Members also discussed other potential animation projects both in the City Centre and outside the City Centre and the benefit of looking at the approach by other Local Authorities. The Chief Executive advised that a visit to Dublin City Council was already being considered.

A Member also referred to some enforcement issues that had arisen and how they were being applied during the recent Belfast Marathon. The Director of Planning and Building Control advised that she is following up and arranging a meeting with the relevant statutory agencies to discuss. An update will be provided for Members at a future meeting.

Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure – Consultation

The Director of Planning and Building Control advised that the Department for Infrastructure is seeking comments on Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure. She outlined the content of the consultation document and provided a summary update on the proposed draft Council response. The draft response will be brought to May SP&R Committee in advance of submission for Members consideration.

Fly Tipping

A Member raised an issue in relation to fly tipping in South Belfast and given the complexities in relation to the site it was agreed that this would be considered at the next Bonfire Panel which was being arranged.

International Relations Framework

It was noted that the International Relations Framework would be added to the agenda for the Party Group Leaders meeting on 29 May. Consideration to be given to a number of issues raised by a Member for which the Strategic Director of Place & Economy to follow up.



Belfast
City Council

Subject:	Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
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Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	This paper, together with the attached appendix, contains the recommended approach in respect of each of the requests by external organisations for access to the City Hall function

	rooms received up to 9 May 2025.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Background Information</u>
3.1	The current criteria for use of the function rooms used to review external applications is set out below.
3.2	<p>Functions permitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functions which support other events in the city and which are of demonstrable economic benefit to Belfast whether organised by the council or not. • functions which demonstrably enhance the city's image nationally or internationally as a desirable commercial, business or tourist destination. • functions designed to celebrate or commemorate a notable achievement or significant anniversary (25, 50, 100 years) by an organisation or body with close links to the city or province. • functions organised by recognised local community or voluntary sector groups for non-profit and non-political purposes.
3.3	<p>Functions not permitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conferences, meetings, seminars, performances, wedding receptions, private parties or receptions and similar booking requests in the prestige function rooms. • functions, which have as their principal purpose the generation of commercial gain for the organisers. Charity-fundraising functions are managed by the Lord Mayor's Office. • functions which have no compelling links to the council or the city specifically and which could instead use local private sector facilities. • functions which have as their primary purpose the advancement of any political or religious cause or campaign or are otherwise potentially contentious or involve significant reputation risks for the council. • functions which involve exceptionally large or disruptive set-ups or pose a real and tangible risk to the fabric of the building or grounds.
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.4	Committee will recall that at its meeting on 24 th May 2024, it considered an update on the City Hall Income Generation Project. Committee was advised that charging for the use of the Council's function rooms will be considered as part of a later stage of this project. This will include looking at a review of the current pricing structure and the provision of hospitality.

	Pending this work being brought to Committee, delegated authority was given to the City Solicitor and Director of Legal & Civic Services to depart from the existing charging structure and negotiate room hire charges for commercial type events.
3.5	The standard charging structure will apply to the event listed in the Schedule at Appendix 1.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.6	None, any recommendations for hospitality will be met from existing budgets.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.7	None.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Schedule of function requests received up to 9 May 2025.

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MAY 2025 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED
Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC)	5 September 2025	NILGOSC's 75th anniversary lunch Reception, Lunch, Presentations, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 90	C	Room hire £450	Drinks Reception as significant anniversary
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	25 November 2025	Belfast Trust Chairman's Awards 2025 – Awards ceremony to recognise the contributions and achievements of the staff in the Belfast Trust. Numbers attending – 300	C	Room hire £1250	
Telugu Cultural Society of Northern Ireland (TCSNI)	4 April 2026	Celebration of Ugadi 2026 "Beginning of a New Age" an evening of food and entertainment to celebrate New Year's Day for the people of the Deccan region of India. Numbers attending – 300 - 400	C	Current rate free as Voluntary Community Group	Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as Voluntary Community Group
Queen's University Belfast on behalf of Civil Engineering Research Association of Ireland	18 June 2026	Conference Dinner and Awards Evening for CERA Conference for guests attending 3-day conference at Queens. Numbers attending: 220	A & B	Room hire £1250	
Sons of Ulster Shankill Road Flute Band	3 October 2026	60th Anniversary Celebration Drinks Reception, Dinner, Presentations, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 100	C	Current rate free as Voluntary Community Group	Drinks Reception as significant anniversary

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Subject:	Request for use of City Hall grounds for Belfast TradFest 2025
Date:	23 May 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

Restricted Reports									
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Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To consider request from TradFest for 5 day use of City Hall grounds between 28th July and 1 st August 2025.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to approve the use of City Hall grounds between 28th July and 1st August 2025 for TradFest subject to the submission of an event management plan, risk assessment and the appointment of an event controller to ensure delivery of a safe public events.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Background Information</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that requests for the use of City Hall are normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally however, it is necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee, and the request set out below falls into this category.</p> <p><u>The Proposed event – TradFest</u></p>
3.2	Belfast TradFest, described as “the pinnacle of world-class traditional music concerts, fiery pub sessions & Ireland’s fastest growing summer school of traditional music, is set to celebrate its 7th edition across Belfast UNESCO City of Music” from Sunday 27th July – Sunday 3rd August 2025.
3.3	TradFest is a registered charity and Belfast City Council funds the festival through it’s Cultural Multi-Annual funding, and organisers plan to use Belfast City Council branding for the site, if available.
3.4	As part of the festival, TradFest wish to host a 5-day family-friendly outdoor music stage on the grounds of Belfast City Hall from Monday 28th July to Friday 1st August, running daily from 1pm to 5pm. This vibrant stage will showcase the finest up-and-coming traditional music talent from Belfast and beyond. The event would take place from 1pm to 5pm each day and would be free to enter. There would be no catering, trading or sale of alcohol.
3.5	The proposed event would take place on the front west lawn only and areas such as the East Lawn, the Titanic Garden and Cenotaph will remain open to the public. Access to the City Hall building will not be affected. The organiser would provide an Event Management Plan, risk assessment, insurance, stewarding/marshalling staff & first aiders and would comply with the Council’s standard conditions for hire etc.
3.6	Sound levels from the outdoor stage would be monitored mindful of event proximity to the committee rooms, party rooms and Chief Executive’s offices.

	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.7	There would be no costs for the council as the various organisers would bear any/all stewarding and equipment costs etc themselves. The utilities costs on event day are of a very minor nature and the normal event support in the form of electrical and water provision in the grounds will be provided.
3.8	There are no concerns from an asset management point of view, although the organisers would be required to provide the usual insurances, indemnities, and obligations.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.9	There are no direct good relations, equality or rural needs implications arising from this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None

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