

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



**Belfast
City Council**

16th June, 2025

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall on Friday, 20th June, 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) 2024-25 Quarter 4 Finance Report (Pages 1 - 26)
- (b) Public Local Inquiry for Dalradian Gold Application²⁵ (Pages 27 - 108)
- (c) Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayoral Challenge (Pages 109 - 112)
- (d) Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25 (Pages 113 - 122)
- (e) Belfast Tartan
- (f) Community Support Plan

- (g) Leisure Transformation Programme - Update and proposed next steps
- (h) New Crematorium Update
- (i) Update on Fleadh Cheoil
- (l) Targeted Acquisition (Pages 123 - 128)
- 3. **Matters referred back from Council/Motions**
 - (a) Notice of Motions - Quarterly Update
- 4. **Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**
 - (a) Belfast Region City Deal – update (Pages 129 - 142)
 - (b) Belfast Stories Update
 - (c) Consultation on the Death, Still-Birth and Baby Loss Bill (Pages 143 - 152)
 - (d) Planning Information (Pages 153 - 168)
 - (e) City Regeneration Members' Working Group
 - (f) Social Value Levy Fund Update (Pages 169 - 172)
- 5. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**
 - (a) Physical Programme
 - (b) Asset Management
 - (c) Update on Area Working Groups (Pages 173 - 218)
- 6. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**
 - (a) Audit and Risk Panel Annual Report to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee including Annual Governance Statement
 - (b) Contracts Update (Pages 219 - 230)
- 7. **Equality and Good Relations**
 - (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 9th June 2025 (Pages 231 - 268)
 - (b) Maternity Pay Provisions (Pages 269 - 274)
 - (c) Diversity Action Plans (Pages 275 - 298)
- 8. **Operational Issues**
 - (a) Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 299 - 302)

- (b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality (Pages 303 - 308)

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Subject:	Belfast Region City Deal – update
Date:	20 th June 2025
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services

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"/>
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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	This report is to provide an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the progress on project development and delivery across the pillars of investment. • Note the update in respect of the BRCD Council Panel.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Deal Delivery</p> <p>Progress on the delivery of the deal continues with a total of 16 Outline Business Cases (OBCs) and 3 Full Business Cases (FBCs) approved with a combined approximate project value of £650m and 13 Contracts for Funding signed for projects. Studio Ulster and the UK Digital Twin Centres have been moving into full operations, there are 2 projects in construction/fit-out stage, 13 projects at design phase, 5 with planning approvals, and 4 skills assessments completed. All of which represents significant momentum since deal signing for the programme of investment.</p>
3.2	<p>Key highlights on progress across the pillars of investment since the last update in December include:</p>
3.3	<p>Innovation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Studio Ulster, specialist virtual production equipment worth almost £20m and funded by City Deal has been installed and filming has commenced over recent months. The official launch of the project has been scheduled for June at its site in Giant's Park in North Belfast. The project is engaged in a number of employability & skills programmes, both on site at Studio Ulster and further afield – providing training opportunities for young people in the creative sector.
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the official sod cutting ceremony in February 2025 for iREACH Health, the construction phase for the world-class clinical research centre continues. The demolition phase nears completion on the Lisburn Road site, adjacent to the City Hospital. The centre is scheduled to open in Spring 2027, it will accommodate up to 360 staff and bring together all the essential parts of the clinical trial ecosystem in one space.
3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to Momentum One Zero, QUB have now completed the tender evaluation for the Main Construction Contractor for the site in the Titanic Quarter. QUB are moving through the approvals phase for the Full Business Case ahead of a target construction commencement in September 2025. The project is part of a consortium which has recently been successful in attracting c.€10m for a One Health project bringing together experts in innovation in human, animal and environmental health.

3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction work continues at the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) at Global Point Park, due for completion in early 2026. The Economy Minister recently announced an investment of £1.8m which will see Angoka in partnership with AMIC and Invest NI develop a new COSMIC solution for the advanced manufacturing sector. The initiative will help to provide a solution to protect manufacturing systems from cyber attacks creating a market leading technology.
3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Contract for Funding was signed for the Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology in December and the project is progressing well. A demolition contract has been awarded and work will commence at Northland House over the summer period, following positive engagement with a local school.
3.8	<p>Digital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Digital Twin Centre project led by Digital Catapult was officially launched in May marking a major milestone in the UK's digital innovation landscape. The Centre's first six-month Accelerator Programme is now open for pre-application expressions of interest which will support partnerships between tech SMEs and industry to fast-track digital twin adoption. Significant interest in the accelerator programme has been noted. Use cases with founding industry partners in sectors such as maritime and aerospace have been progressing well and capabilities were showcased at the launch event for the centre, which is located in Belfast City Centre.
3.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Augment the City project has continued to successfully deliver through the SBRI model and is designed to provide City Deal partners with learning on the application of XR technologies in the tourism sector. Over 100 people attended the Augment the City Phase Two dissemination event at Belfast City Hall on 3rd April 2025. The six participating companies shared learning about their Proofs of Concepts and have been invited to apply to Phase 3 of the programme. A maximum of three will be chosen and will receive up to £100,000 R&D funding to turn their proofs of concepts into working prototypes – with the project completing early in 2026.
3.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learning from the delivery of Augment the City has informed the design of the larger c.£5m BRCD Regional SBRI programme which will support a series of SBRI competition calls each of which will focus on a unique challenge area that will be agreed between the six council partners. Each council will have the opportunity to lead on at least one challenge during the lifetime of the programme. A business case has been developed for the project and will be refined by BRCD partners in the coming weeks before formal submission to the Department for Economy. Depending on approval timescales it is envisaged that the first competition will launch in late 2025.

3.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals are also being developed for an AI Adoption Programme (c.£5m), which aims to accelerate the adoption of AI by organisations in both the private and public sectors. The work is being led by Belfast City Council's City Innovation Office in collaboration with other bodies including SIB and the AI Competency Centre. The programme is expected to offer grant funding and support via a series of competition calls aimed at both public and private sector organisations that are seeking to adopt AI solutions into their systems and processes. Funding would allow these organisations to lower the risk associated with the innovative adoption of AI. The solution providers would be expected to be based (or have a significant economic footprint) within the Belfast Region. Work has commenced in relation to a business case which is expected to be considered by BRCD partners in coming months.
3.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An OBC addendum has been completed for the i4C Cleantech Innovation Centre at St Patrick's Barracks with the Contract for Funding signed in May 2025. The addendum reflects planned scaling at the project in response to inflationary pressures in the construction sector. The centre will provide a physical base for businesses and will focus on the development of clean technology.
3.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good progress has been made in relation to finalising a draft Contract for Funding for the Ards & North Down Innovation Hub, a hub focused on the creative sectors with plans to integrate with Studio Ulster and South Eastern Regional College. Ards & North Down Borough Council continue to finalise plans in relation to the site for the project before it can be further progressed.
3.14	<p>Tourism and Regeneration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At Bangor Waterfront, the Operator for Pickie Fun Park has been appointed, marking an important milestone for this project as operator input is essential in the design development. The concept designs for both Pickie Fun Park and Ballyholme Yacht Club projects are being developed and the procurement of design teams for the Urban Waterfront and Public Realm and Marina projects are being progressed.
3.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key survey works and engagement with both the public and statutory bodies is being progressed at the Gobbins and Carrickfergus Regeneration to allow finalisation of concept designs and completion of RIBA Stage 2 reports. The Operator procurement process for both these projects is also being progressed, to ensure Operator input into key design stages.
3.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of professional services teams have now been appointed for Destination Royal Hillsborough, with the last appointment expected over the summer. Engagement

	<p>with statutory bodies to progress the planning application for the public realm element of this project is also ongoing. Following a change in business needs within Hillsborough since the development of the OBC, the proposed Social Enterprise Café within Hillsborough Forest is to be replaced with a Visitor Hub, and an OBC Addendum is being developed to address this change in scope.</p>
3.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following approval at the BRCD Executive Board, the Belfast Stories OBC was formally submitted to Departments for review in May, with the DfE Casework Committee scheduled for September. The professional services team continue to progress the development of the design throughout the OBC approval process.
3.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The procurement process for the contractors for the Theatre & Conference Centre and Civic Hub projects in the Newry Regeneration programme has concluded and the FBC has been formally submitted to DfC for approval. NMDDC await final planning approval for the Civic Hub project, to enable appointment of Contractors and commencement of works on site.
	<p>Infrastructure</p>
3.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Infrastructure Minister announced the next steps for Phase 2 of the Belfast Rapid Transit (BRT2) project in February, which will see the Glider service extended to north and south Belfast, with an additional £13m allocated from the Department of Infrastructure to deliver a park and ride on the O'Neill Road. The OBC is being finalised and following approval work is expected to begin on this first phase later this year.
3.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Infrastructure Minister also confirmed in April that the next stage of the procurement process for the Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge is now underway. A shortlist of contractors has been invited to bid for the contract to design and construct the scheme. This is the start of the second stage of the procurement process and it is anticipated that the scheme will commence in autumn 2025.
3.21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The statutory public consultation process for Newry Southern Relief Road commenced with the Orders exhibition on 21 January 25 and ran until 4 March 25. Following consideration of the feedback from this process, the Minister will determine whether to convene a public inquiry.
	<p>Employability and Skills (E&S)</p>
3.22	<p>Work continues to develop collaborative proposals from BRCD partners including councils universities and colleges to advance the recommendations and actions aimed at addressing the skills gaps identified through skills assessments. This has involved working across BCC</p>

	departments including Business and Enterprise and City Innovation to ensure alignment of programmes on skills activity.
3.23	The BRCD draft Benefits Realisation Framework is currently being refreshed to ensure that benefits are effectively delivered and captured in alignment with the overall programme objectives. Engagement has also taken place with other UK City Deals to explore their approach to developing benefits realisation frameworks. A visit from Cardiff City Deal's Employability and Skills Manager is planned for September providing an opportunity to share lessons learned on benefits realisation and explore potential for future collaboration with other city deals.
3.24	A number of events are being organised to support the effective delivery of social value and to promote upcoming opportunities across the BRCD programme. As more projects progress to the construction phase, a Social Value Training Workshop will be held in June for project leads, contract managers, and those involved in ongoing construction. The workshop will ensure that all participants are fully aware of, and up to date with, SIB social value reporting requirements, enabling them to effectively monitor contractor submissions. Additionally, the team is working with the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) to deliver a Contractor Market Engagement event. This will promote upcoming procurement opportunities within the BRCD programme and highlight the employability and skills support available through city deal partners.
	Mourne Mountain Gateway
3.25	Members will be aware that The Mourne Mountain Gateway Project (MMGP) was a proposal from Newry Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) for a gondola from Donard Park to a visitor centre at the former Thomas Quarry site in the Mourne. The Thomas Quarry site is owned by the National Trust and NMDDC require a lease from the National Trust to build the visitor centre.
3.26	On 1 May 2025, National Trust issued a media statement confirming that a lease for Thomas Quarry will not be granted for the MMGP project. The withdrawal of the support by the National Trust means that the project cannot go ahead. NMDDC are very disappointed by this decision, particularly as an Environmental Impact Assessment was being prepared to consider and address the specific concerns raised by the National Trust.
3.27	When the Deal was being developed the BRCD Partnership agreed principles that if a project does not go ahead the first option would be to allow the project sponsor (in this case NMDDC) to explore an alternative option within the region. This is to maintain regional balance and spread of the funding. The BRCD Executive Board have therefore agreed that NMDDC can explore alternative options for consideration, and they are in the first instance assessing a

	<p>similar proposal to the MMGP in Kilbroney Forest Park. The Council have been engaging with BRCD PMO, TNI and DfE and are aware that any new proposal will be subject to full business case approval.</p> <p>BRCD Council Panel</p>
3.28	The next meeting of the Council Panel will be held in September 2025 and will be hosted by Newry, Mourne & Down District Council
3.29	The minutes from the meeting hosted by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council on 25 September 2024 are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
3.30	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets. As outlined additional resources have also been leveraged from other funding sources to extend the impact of the deal.</p>
3.31	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that;</p> <p><i>‘BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.’</i></p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Minutes of the Council Panel Meeting 25 September 2024

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BRCD Council Panel

Subject:	Minutes of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Council Panel
Date:	12.30 pm, 25 September 2024
Councillors in attendance:	<p>Councillor Kurtis Dickson, Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council – Chair</p> <p>Alderman Alan McDowell, Ards & North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Alderman Allan Ewart MBE, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Alderman Amanda Grehan, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Councillor John Lavery, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Councillor Tim Mitchell, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Alderman Mark Cosgrove, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Matthew Magill, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Councillor Sarah Bunting, Belfast City Council</p> <p>Councillor Pete Byrne, Newry, Mourne & Down District Council</p> <p>Councillor Henry Reilly, Newry, Mourne & Down District Council</p>
Officers:	<p>Sharon McNicholl – Deputy Chief Executive, BRCD SRO, Belfast City Council</p> <p>David Burns – Chief Executive, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Marie Ward – Chief Executive, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council</p> <p>Susie McCullough – Chief Executive, Ards & North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Majella McAlister – Director of Economic Development and Planning, Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council</p> <p>Jonathan McGrandle – Programme Director, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Brian Dorrian - Acting Director of the Place Directorate, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Conor Mallon – Director of Economy, Regeneration and Tourism, Newry, Mourne & Down District Council</p> <p>Donal Rogan – Director of Regeneration and Growth, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Laura McCorry, Head of Hillsborough Castle and Gardens, Historic Royal Palaces</p> <p>Colin McKenna, Caroline Magee, Shelley Baldrick, Katrina Dornan, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council</p> <p>Stephen Wallace, Theresa Slevin, Clare Walls, Lorraine Beggs – BRCD Programme Office</p>

1.0	Welcome and Introductions
1.1	<p>Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Councillor Kurtis Dickson, acting as Chair, welcomed the members of the BRCD Council Panel to the meeting which was hosted in Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn and outlined the key areas of focus for the meeting.</p> <p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson also addressed the pause to City and Growth Deal Funding, announced on Friday 13th September and the uncertainty that was created and welcomed the clarification in relation to the continued commitment to the Belfast Region City Deal signed in December 2021, recognising the wide range of benefits this investment will bring to our region. The Belfast Region City Deal partners welcomed the positive news on the signing of the Derry City and Strabane District Council City Deal and stated their very clear support for our colleagues in the Mid-South West Growth Deal and the Causeway Coast & Glens Growth Deal – and urge the UK Government to lift the pause on commitments relating to those Deals as they together offer significant synergies and growth potential for Northern Ireland as a whole.</p>

2.0	Apologies
2.1	<p>Apologies were received from: Alderman Robert Logan, Mid & East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Apologies were received from the following Officers: John Walsh – Chief Executive, Belfast City Council Richard Baker – Chief Executive, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Emer Husbands – Head of Regional Programmes, BRCD Programme Office</p>
3.0	Declarations of Interest
3.1	Mayor Kurtis Dickson asked Councillors if they had any interests to declare in relation to the agenda. No interests were declared.
4.0	Minutes of Previous Meeting
4.1	<p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson asked if the Panel agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>Alderman Allan Ewart proposed that the minutes from the last meeting were agreed. Seconded by Councillor John Lavery Members agreed the minutes.</p>
5.0	Annual Report 2023-24
	<p>Sharon McNicholl (SMcN), Deputy Chief Executive of Belfast City Council and SRO for Belfast Region City Deal, delivered an overview of the Belfast Region City Deal 2023/24 Annual Report, which formed the basis of the successful 'Annual Conversation' with Government Departments in August. The report captures the significant progress that has been made across all the pillars of investment and is a testament to all our partners who continue to invest resources and upskill teams to take the various projects to delivery.</p> <p>Key highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 Outline Business Cases approved and two Final Business Cases approved • 9 Contracts for Funding and Funding Agreements signed • £5.5 m in claims paid to Partners • Projects in delivery with design teams appointed, planning applications submitted & approved and projects in construction and operation <p>Alderman Allan Ewart queried if the annual report targets had been met. SMcN confirmed that targets had been met and good progress has been made aided by the return of The Executive and Ministers.</p> <p>Alderman Ewart noted that despite the return of the Executive and Ministers, Destination Royal Hillsborough has not progressed as well as planned due to issues with DfI and queried if BRCD can support further progress.</p> <p>David Burns (DB), Chief Executive LCCC, confirmed that he shared this frustration with DfI and the issues preventing progress on Destination Royal Hillsborough project and noted that a number of meetings with DfI officials to discuss the issues had been cancelled. DB had written to the DfI Permanent Secretary and a meeting with the DfI Deputy Permanent Secretary has been arranged for 16th October and if issues remain unresolved after this meeting, DB will escalate to the DfI Permanent Secretary.</p> <p>DB noted that lessons in relation to engagement with Statutory Bodies during the planning process, will be shared with BRCD Partners and escalated to BRCD Executive Board if necessary.</p> <p>Alderman Cosgrove welcomed the very positive report following some of the recent negative and inaccurate reports in the media and requested that a Press Release is considered to reaffirm commitment and continuation of the projects within BRCD and include the support for other Deals.</p>

	<p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson confirmed that a Press Release will be issued following the meeting and will be considered later in the Agenda.</p> <p>Alderman Amanda Grehan requested an update on BRT Southern route.</p> <p>Theresa Slevin (TS) confirmed that following the request by the Minister, DfI were undertaking feasibility studies on the BRT routes and we await a decision from the Minister in relation to the preferred routes. A timeframe for this decision is unknown, but it is hoped that it should be imminent.</p> <p>Members noted the Annual Report 2023-24</p>
6.0	BRCD Programme Update
6.1	<p>David Burns (DB), Chief Executive, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC), presented an overview of the programme update which was circulated with the papers, which details the progress that is being made across the programme. DB also explained the process from Outline Business Case (OBC) and Contract for Funding (CfF) when BRCD Funding can be accessed by projects, to Full Business Case (FBC) approval which enables construction to commence on site. Highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 OBCs and 2 FBCs approved to date and positive progress has also been made in relation to a number of other business cases, with Full Business Case approval anticipated in the coming weeks for the iREACH Health project and Outline Business Case approval anticipated before the end of the calendar year for the Ards and North Down Innovation Hub • The signing of the CfF for Destination Royal Hillsborough in June, has brought the total number of CfFs signed across the programme to 12. The drafting of the CfF for I4C and CDHT is ongoing. • Construction has commenced on the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) at Global Point in Newtownabbey led by Queen's University Belfast. • Construction has been completed on the Studio Ulster Project and specialist virtual production equipment is being installed at the site as the project works towards the operational phase. • Momentum One Zero and Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge have reached a significant milestone and have commenced procurement of the Integrated Supply Team, to deliver these projects. • Five professional services teams have been appointed across a range of projects and a number of further procurements are out to market. • Four planning applications are in the planning system and projects are engaging directly with the relevant statutory bodies to resolve outstanding issues, to enable projects to progress to the next stage of project delivery. • The Augment the City Challenge Fund project has completed its first phase which has been successful in attracting significant interest from local innovators and entrepreneurs in the digital tourism sector. Phase two will now commence in the coming weeks. • Social Value delivery and reporting through the SIB portal has commenced across many projects • Community engagement is underway in Carrickfergus, Belfast Stories will commence a 12 week public consultation at the end of this month and other projects are working on the engagement plans. • A number of project Gateway Reviews have been completed to provide assurance on project deliverability and Gateway Action Plans have been developed to ensure recommendations are implemented. <p>Councillor John Laverty queried if the UK Government announcement would impact the £100m Complementary Fund and in particular the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF).</p> <p>Stephen Wallace (SW) confirmed that the Complementary Fund is funded through the Department of Finance (DoF) within the NI Executive and therefore not subject to the UK Spending Review and is a matter for the local Ministers. The DTFF project is progressing well and is preparing for Call 4 to launch in early 2025.</p>

	<p>Councillor Tim Mitchell queried how we will maximise the employment opportunities given there is no funding for the Employability and Skills pillar and if skills assessments will come after the implementation of projects.</p> <p>SMcN confirmed that Employability and Skills is a key element of the programme and Partners have committed to realign their resources to support the BRCD ambitions, for example Belfast Met are funding the Employability and Skills Programme Manager post which is to be recruited. All projects include Employability and Skills within their contracts through the Social Value requirements and cross deal skills assessments are being completed.</p> <p>TS further noted that the programme of skills assessments is aligned to programme development to ensure these are completed in advance of project implementation to ensure maximum impact and create a pipeline of appropriately skilled people to avail of the opportunities created. For example the Construction and Advanced Manufacturing skills assessments have been completed as these are the initial areas impacted by BRCD.</p> <p>Councillor Henry Reilly requested an update on the NMDDC Gateway to the Mourne project, clarification on the source of Complementary Funds and whether there is potential for further roads projects.</p> <p>Conor Mallon confirmed that the design team has been appointed for the Mourne Mountain Gateway Project and the design is progressing through RIBA Stage 2 and design development workshops are ongoing.</p> <p>SW confirmed that DoF are the source of the Complementary Fund.</p> <p>SW also confirmed that as the BRCD projects and funding is already allocated, there are no further infrastructure projects affordable within the current BRCD funding allocation.</p> <p>DB noted that the Executive Bd are reviewing priorities and infrastructure requirements in preparation for potential future funding opportunities.</p> <p>Members noted the progress of the programme.</p>
7.0	Destination Royal Hillsborough Update
7.1	<p>David Burns, Chief Executive, LCCC presented an update on Destination Royal Hillsborough, the flagship project for the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area and introduced Laura McCrory from Historic Royal Palaces, a key Partner in delivery of this project. The project aims to enhance this regionally significant tourist attraction by creating a world class heritage village experience which appeals to both domestic and out of state visitors, delivering significant economic benefit. LCCC have also invested £2m in Hillsborough Forest Park, which has increased visitor numbers to the town and will complement the BRCD investment.</p> <p>Since signing of the Contract for Funding in June both LCCC and HRP have progressed the procurement of professional support services including cost consultants, design teams and FBC consultants. Engagement is ongoing with DfI regarding the planning application for the public realm, which is currently programmed to commence on site in early 2026.</p> <p>DB outlined the key challenges which will continue to be managed throughout delivery of Destination Royal Hillsborough which include programme delivery, inflationary pressures, planning approval for public realm, monitoring outcomes and ensuring disruption to village life is minimised.</p> <p>Members noted the project update.</p>
8.0	Press Release
8.1	<p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson asked members if they were content to agree the draft press release which was circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor John Laverty Seconded by Alderman Allan Ewart</p> <p>Members agreed the press release.</p>

9.0	Date of next meetings
9.1	<p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson highlighted that a schedule of meetings has been circulated with the next meeting to be hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.</p> <p>Mayor Kurtis Dickson thanked the panel for their attendance.</p>

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Subject:	Consultation on the Death, Still-Birth and Baby Loss Bill
Date:	20 th June 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Joanne Murray, Civic Services Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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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

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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

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☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To bring to members attention correspondence from Mathew O'Toole, Chair of the Committee for Finance at the Northern Ireland Assembly, on the councils' views on the Deaths, Still-Birth and Baby Loss Bill. (Appendix 1)

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the officer submission (Appendix 2), as the Council's formal response.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Death, Still-Birth and Baby Loss Bill was introduced by the Finance Minister, John O'Dowd MLA, on 25th March 2025. The purpose of the Bill is to amend the law relating to the manner of notification of deaths and still-births and the manner of giving particulars relating to them. It will also provide a legislative basis for the introduction of a baby loss scheme and will address differences in registration processes for births and still-births between some same-sex female couples and opposite-sex couples.</p>
3.2	<p>The framework for the registration of deaths and still-births in Northern Ireland is defined within the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 ("the 1976 Order") and the Civil Registration Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 ("the 2012 Regulations").</p>
3.3	<p>The General Register Office for Northern Ireland is responsible for administering the registration of deaths and still-births in Northern Ireland. The local district councils are responsible for the provision of the registration service through 11 registration districts. There are on average 17,000 deaths and 75 still-births each year in Northern Ireland.</p>
3.4	<p>As required by the 1976 Order, all deaths in Northern Ireland must be registered, in any district in Northern Ireland, within 5 days of the date of death; and still-births must be registered within 42 days of the date of still-birth, also in any district in Northern Ireland.</p>
3.5	<p>Following discussions with Belfast City Council Registrar Team and the broader registrar network it is felt that the amendments to the bill are appropriate. However, the team would like to put forward to the Committee the following suggestions as mentioned in our formal response.</p>
3.6	<p>In the event of a Still Birth Registration, or the death of an infant under 1 year old, whilst short birth and death certificate and a still birth certificate is also provided to the family free of charge as per Art 40A of the Births and Deaths Registration (NI) Order 1976, families do ask for a long birth certificate, which requires the Council to charge the statutory fee of £8. As appears in the consultation response, officers are asking that this statutory obligation is removed.</p>

3.7	<p><u>Emergency Ceremonies</u></p> <p>Council officers have also suggested that marriage certificates should be issued for free if one of the parties to be married is terminally ill with a very limited life expectancy. Quite often these ceremonies are carried out in private homes, hospitals/hospices or if the couple are physically able to attend at City Hall.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There are no financial implications for the Council as the fee income goes directly to the General Registry Office.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Letter from Matthew O’Toole, Committee for Finance Chair, Northern Ireland Assembly</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Officer Response</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Summary of updates to the Bill from GRO</p>

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**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

Committee for Finance

Chief Executives of Councils

Issued via email

9th May 2025

Our Ref: 2025/032

Dear Chief Executive,

Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill

The NI Assembly Committee for Finance would like to hear your views on the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill. If you are not the most appropriate person to respond, the Committee would be grateful if you could forward this letter to the relevant colleague who would be able to respond.

The Bill was introduced by the Finance Minister, John O'Dowd MLA, on 25th March 2025. The purpose of the Bill is to amend the law relating to the manner of notification of deaths and still-births and the manner of giving particulars relating to them. It will also provide a legislative basis for the introduction of a baby loss scheme and will address differences in registration processes for births and still-births between some same-sex female couples and opposite-sex couples.

Further information on the Bill can be found below:

- A copy of the [Bill](#) and [Explanatory and Financial Memorandum](#).
- The Hansard report of the [Second Stage Assembly debate](#) on the principles of the Bill that took place on 7 April 2025.
- The [Hansard report of the briefing session with Department of Finance officials on the principles of the Bill on 7 May](#) 2025 (available when published)
- A [research paper](#) prepared by the Assembly's Research and Information Service on the Bill. (available when published)

How to submit your views

Your submission should be structured to address the specific clause of the Bill. If appropriate, it should include any amendments you wish to propose to the text of the Bill.

Written submissions should be sent electronically in Word format (not PDF) to: deathsstillbirthsbabyloss@niassembly.gov.uk. If you cannot submit electronically you may send in a hard copy written submission to: The Finance Committee Clerk, Room 382, Parliament Buildings, Ballymiscaw, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX.

Organisations or individuals responding to this call for views should note that their written submission (either in whole or part) may be published on the Committee webpage and may be quoted in the Committee's report or referred to in Committee meetings (which are public and are broadcast).

The Committee recognises that in some circumstances people may prefer for their evidence to be treated as confidential, or published anonymously. If you wish to do this, please make this clear when submitting your evidence.

Before sending us your views please read the [Northern Ireland Assembly Privacy Notice](#). This tells you how we process your personal data.

If you have any queries or require any further information about the call for evidence or the Committee Stage of the Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill The Committee Clerk, Peter Hall can be contacted via email: deathsstillbirthsbabyloss@niassembly.gov.uk or by phone: 028 9052 1799.

A response would be very much appreciated by **Monday 9th June 2025**.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew O'Toole MLA
Chairperson
Committee for Finance



Legal and Civic Services Department

Our Ref: NL/cc/jm/tg

Date: 2 June 2025

Mr Peter Hall
The Finance Committee Clerk
Room 382
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw,
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Via email only

deathsstillbirthsbabyloss@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Mr Hall,

Thank you on behalf of Belfast City Council for allowing the council the opportunity to review and comment upon the deaths, Still Births and Baby Loss Bill.

Council officers have reviewed the Bill and has no specific comment on the content of the legislation and is content with same. This response will have to be endorsed by our Elected Members, and I would be grateful if this response could be accepted subject to any proposed changes they may wish to make. We intend to bring this to our Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in June, with that decision being ratified by Council in July.

The Council would, however, like to take this opportunity to bring some further related suggestions to the Department's attention.

Currently when the Council registers a still-birth, a certificate is issued free of charge. When the birth and death of an infant under 1 year old is registered, a short form birth certificate and death certificate is issued to the family free of charge, as per Art 40A of the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976. If the family wish to obtain a long form certificate they have to pay for it. The Council would ask the Department to consider allowing for a long form death certificate being issued in these scenarios free of charge. The bereaved parents often want a long form certificate as



it states the cause of death. The parents are often in a highly distressed state when they register the death, and it is extremely difficult and upsetting for the parents, and the Council staff dealing with them, to ask for payment in these circumstances.

Another issue the Council would ask the Department to consider is whether the fee for marriage certificates could be waived in circumstances where one of the parties to be married is terminally ill with a very limited life expectancy. Again this is a scenario where Council staff find it very insensitive to ask for payment.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to make these representations.

Yours sincerely

Nora Largey

Nora Largey
City Solicitor/Director of Legal & Civic Services

Title: NIROS Registration Bulletin 15 2025 - Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill - NI Assembly Committee for Finance

Author: Aoife Rooney – GRO

Audience: District Registration Staff

Date: 16 May 2025

We have received some calls to GRO in relation to the letter received by Council Chief Executives from the Finance Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The letter sets out the detail of the Department of Finance's Deaths, Still-Births and Baby Loss Bill and seeks views from the Chief Executives on that Bill. Internally, how that is arranged is a matter for each Council and GRO is not involved in this evidence-gathering. This is a request from the Finance Committee to seek views on the Bill and you are of course free to provide your views, and we would encourage you to do so, as you see fit.

If it is helpful we have set out below in very general terms, the purpose of the Bill (the detail is in the links attached in the Letter to the Chief Executives):

- To make permanent the temporary remote registration procedures that we currently operate under the Coronavirus Act 2020, so that these are confirmed and permanent procedures which no longer need to rely on 6 monthly extensions to their expiry date.
- To make a power that will allow the Department of Finance to make regulations to create a Baby Loss Certificate Scheme for early pregnancy losses. So, the Bill will create a power to allow the Department to make regulations. The regulations setting up the scheme will come after the Bill has been enacted. It is anticipated that such a Baby Loss Certificate Scheme will be run online and through GRO, rather than through the DROs - as this will not be a formal registration service as the certificates will be commemorative. They will not be legal documents.
- Thirdly, the Bill will seek to widen the access to registration procedures to close some gaps that have been identified. The changes will only be in relation to attending offices jointly or separately. There will be no impact on who can go on a birth or stillbirth certificate. The changes are purely in relation to who can attend and when. Specifically:

Birth Registrations

1. Where a couple - who are neither married to each other nor in a civil partnership with each other – wish to register a birth, a same sex female couple cannot attend a registration office separately to effect a joint registration (but an opposite sex couple can). The Bill will make changes so that both same sex female couples and opposite sex couples will be able to attend separately to effect a joint registration.

Still-birth Registrations

2. Where a couple - who are neither married to each other nor in a civil partnership with each other – wish to register a still-birth, for same sex female couples the second female parent cannot register a still-birth on their own and include the mother's details, but a father in an opposite sex couple would be able to do this. The Bill will make changes so that a second female parent in this scenario will be able to register a still-birth on their own and include the mother's details, in the way that a father in an opposite sex couple can do.
3. Following on from this, the Bill will also provide that where a mother in a same sex couple - who are neither married to each other nor in a civil partnership with each other – wishes to re-register a still-birth where the original registration has been carried out by the second female parent, this can be done (as is currently the case for a mother in an opposite sex couple whom are not married to each other or in a civil partnership with each other).

The Bill is not finalised legislation and could be subject to amendment.



Subject:	Planning Information
Date:	20 June 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"/>								
<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 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. At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in May 2025, it was requested that further information is included within the tables on a revised target date to supplement the target date generated by reference to the 15 and 30 week target dates for local and major applications. Whilst the appendices to this report do not include this, officers are currently determining how best this can be included in future reports.
	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 June 2025
	Appendix 2 – Applications determined by Committee at June 2025

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Live Major Applications not previously considered by Committee @ 10.06.25

Number	Application No.	Category	Location	Proposal	Date Valid	Target Date	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	17-Nov-22	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	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	Under Consideration
Page 397	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	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	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	Under Consideration
7	LA04/2024/0570/F	Major	Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castleview 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	Under Consideration
8	LA04/2024/0569/O	Major	STORMONT HOTEL 587 UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD BALLYCLOGHAN BELFAST BT4 3LP	Outline planning permission with all matter reserved for independent living (Use Class C3) units and up to 62no. assisted living units (Use Class C1), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castleview Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping (amended description and plans).	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	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	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	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	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	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	Under Consideration
Page 10 of 10	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	Under Consideration
15	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	Under Consideration
16	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	Under Consideration

17	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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Removal of an existing parapet wall and embankment reinforcement at the Alexandra Park Lake reservoir.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	20-Dec-24	18-Jul-25	Under Consideration
18	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	Under Consideration
19	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	Under Consideration
20	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	Under Consideration
21	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	Under Consideration
22	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 approval LA04/2023/2390/F and LA04/2020/0804/F to facilitate removal of 31 previously approved dwellings and retaining structure along northern boundary of site adjacent to Upper Springfield Road. Retention of existing sloping ground levels and landscaping at this location.	27-May-25	09-Sep-25	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	Under Consideration

24	LA04/2025/0088/F	Major	Lands adjacent and south west of Monagh By-pass, north west of Nos. 17, 19 and 22 Black Ridge Gardens and c.150 metres south east of Nos. 38 to 70 (evens) Black Ridge View (part of the wider Glenmona mixed-use development), Belfast	Proposed mixed use development (in lieu of the previously approved employment zone under LA04/2020/0804/F) comprising 36 no. Category 1 (over 55's) social housing apartments and 7 no. Class B1/B2 Business/Light Industrial Units. Development includes 2 no. access points, car parking, landscaping and all associated site works	17-Feb-25	15-Sep-25	Under Consideration
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Planning Applications Discussed at Committee Between 01 Apr 2019 and 10 Jun 2025

Decision Description		Totals	
		16	
Consent Granted		2	
Consent Refused			
Permission Granted		7	
Permission Refused			
Total		25	

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
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	101	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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	82	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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	73	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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	64	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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 & amended plans).	MAJ	15-Apr-22	C	18/06/2024	113	51	49	Permission Granted	30 May 2025	10/06/2025	Decision Issued
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 and external refurbishment and alterations, and all associated site works.	MAJ	19-Mar-24	C	15/10/2024	30	34	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0480/DCA	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	34	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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 associated landscaping and site works	MAJ	21-Mar-24	C	12/11/2024	33	30	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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	30	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	Applicant required to provide updated land contamination information
Page 463 LA04/2024/1744/LBC	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	26	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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	26	24	Permission Granted	30 May 2025	10/06/2025	Decision Issued

LA04/2024/1141/DCA	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	26	24	Consent Granted	30 May 2025	10/06/2025	Decision Issued
LA04/2024/0754/F	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 description and plans)	LOC	26-Apr-24	C	21/01/2025	38	20	19	Permission Granted	04 Jun 2025	10/06/2025	Decision Issued
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	17	13	Permission Granted	13 May 2025	10/06/2025	Decision Issued
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 works (Amended site location plan / site layout)	LOC	04-Oct-24	C	11/02/2025	18	17	13	Permission Granted	13 May 2025	10/06/2025	Decision Issued

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	12	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
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	12	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
Page 485 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 parking (amended description).	LOC	04-May-22	C	15/04/2025	153	8	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	Deferred for Further Viability Information regarding options to retain original 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 description).	MAJ	13-May-24	C	15/04/2025	48	8	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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	8	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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	8	4	Permission Granted	14 May 2025	10/06/2025	Decision Issued
LA04/2025/0240/DCA	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	8	4	Consent Granted	14 May 2025	10/06/2025	Decision Issued
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	8	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	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	8	5	Permission Granted	20 May 2025	10/06/2025	Decision Issued

LA04/2024/0058/F	68 Fortwilliam Park, Belfast BT15 4AS	Demolition of existing 31 no. bed private nursing home and erection of 20 no. sheltered housing units (3 storey building) for the elderly; warden accommodation; communal facilities; landscaping; car parking and site works.	LOC	20-Dec-23	C	13/05/2025	72	4	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		10/06/2025	Outstanding consultation
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Subject:	Social Value Levy Fund Update
Date:	Friday 20 th June 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director, City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director, City & Neighbourhood Services

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.0	The purpose of the report is to update the committee following engagement sessions that took place with elected members in December 2024. It had been agreed at the May 2024

	meeting of the People and Communities committee that elected members from the respective DEA's would be engaged first to agree a suitable methodology for delivering projects funded by the social value levy and to also put forward project ideas that communities impacted by concerts and events have lobbied for.
1.2	From the member engagement sessions, a number of different methodologies for delivery at the three sites have emerged. This paper sets these out for members to consider.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of this report. • Note that this is in an interim position and that all works identified will be required to be taken through the Council's capital process.
	Main Report
3.0	Three meetings took place in December 2024 with councillors from Balmoral, Botanic, Lisnasharragh and Titanic DEA's. The agenda covered methodology for delivery and potential projects.
3.1	Social levy monies are to be spent on projects within the park where the events take place or the immediate area surrounding the park. Members are also reminded that the monies can be allocated to both capital and revenue projects.
3.2	It was also noted at the meetings that the amounts of money are unlikely to be as sizeable again in the future and that this opportunity should be maximised.
3.3	Members are reminded that Council officers have been working over a number of years to establish stakeholder forums at the key concert venues to assist and enable Event Promoters, Key Agencies and Council to improve the delivery of the events and to co-design mitigations that benefit those most impacted by the events. Members noted that these stakeholder forums have proved extremely valuable.
3.4	<p><u>Ormeau Park</u></p> <p>All Councillors from Botanic, Lisnasharragh and Titanic were invited to attend the engagement session in December 2024. The members present were confident that they could put forward projects based on prior engagement with their constituents and the general feeling was that once costings are available that projects can be narrowed down by elected representatives and progressed via the Council's Capital process. It was agreed that when projects are finalised that this will be communicated effectively with key stakeholders. Projects nominated for costing included:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dog off lead enclosure – Approx costings £45k-65k. Please note that costs may vary depending on the size and scale of the project) • Upgrade the outdoor basketball and tennis courts – The upgrade to the Basketball courts is to be delivered via the capital programme. • Upgrades to the bowling pavilion – still to be costed • Refurbish the bandstand – Still to be costed • Commission a feasibility study for the Nettlefield MUGA – approximately £10K
3.5	<p><u>Boucher Playing Fields</u></p> <p>Councillors from Balmoral and Botanic DEAs were invited. The members present felt that the residents and local stakeholders should firstly be engaged to determine what sort of projects would benefit those most impacted.</p>
3.6	<p>Members agreed that it was best to proceed by inviting local residents and established stakeholder groups to a public engagement session to brainstorm and discuss what they would like to see the money invested in. A resident's group has been established now for a number of years to work on the concerts and events, but it was agreed that invitations will also extend further via a letter drop to other established groups in the area.</p>
3.7	<p>It was noted that although Boucher Playing Fields might benefit from some investment that Musgrave Park was the more likely site to invest in that would benefit the local community.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Botanic Gardens</u></p> <p>Councillors from Botanic DEA were invited to attend the engagement session in December. It was recognised that the amount of money available is unlikely to support any capital investment in the gardens. It was felt that the monies could contribute to the ongoing work to support the 200-year anniversary of Botanic. There is an established Friends group for the park for over 30 years and in addition a number of other key groups such as Stranmillis Residents Association and Open Botanic. These groups represent the residents and businesses surrounding the park and elected representatives considered best placed to decide suitable projects. Council officers meet regularly with these groups and could pick this work up as part of those meetings.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Funds available are:</p> <p>Ormeau Park £71,148.00</p> <p>Boucher Road £60,742.00</p>

	Botanic Gardens £15,717.00
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There may be equality implications if decided that different methodologies for delivery can be adopted.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None



Subject:	Update on Area Working Groups
Date:	20 June 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager David Logan, Senior Programme Delivery 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> <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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To present to the Committee for approval the minutes of the most recent meetings of the Area Working Groups.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the minutes of the meeting of North AWG – 27 May, West AWG – 29 May, East AWG – 5 June 2025 as attached.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Area Working Group Minutes</u></p> <p>It was agreed in June 2016 that the minutes of the meetings of the Area Working Groups would be presented to the SP&R Committee for approval going forward, in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups. The Committee is asked to approve the minutes of the most recent meeting, as attached.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
3.3	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Minutes – Meeting – North Belfast Area Working Group 27 May 2025</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Minutes – Meeting – West Belfast Area Working Group 29 May 2025</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Minutes – Meeting – East Belfast Area Working Group 5 June 2025</p>

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 27th May, 2025

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Doran (Chairperson);
Alderman McCullough; and
Councillors Anglin, Cobain, Magee,
Maskey and Nelson.

In attendance: Mr. D. Logan, Physical Programmes Senior Delivery
Manager;
Ms. M. McKay, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. R. Weir, Estates Surveyor;
Ms. M. Wilson, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 25th February were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

The Chairperson (Councillor Doran) declared an interest in respect of the item under the heading of 'Physical Programmes Update' in that he was employed by Westland Community Group Ltd.

Councillor Maskey declared an interest in respect of the item under the heading 'Enterprise and Business Growth'.

Presentations

Community Navigators Programme – Ashton Community Trust Health and Wellbeing Team

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. I. Sherry and Mr. S. Barr to the meeting.

Ms. Sherry addressed the Working Group with a presentation on the Community Navigators Programme. She outlined the history of the programme, a multi-disciplinary service to provide support to those affected by the conflict and those experiencing poor physical and mental health, impacted by suicide, self-harm and those experiencing situational and emotional crisis.

She highlighted the following service impact indicators for 2024/25:

- 290 engagements to de-escalate violence/aggression within the Emergency Department;
- 327 engagements to de-escalate from suicide ideation;
- 89 engagements with 72 individuals impacted by domestic violence; and
- 2 assists with ligature removals.

She stated that there had been a growing demand for a place-based crisis de-escalation service within the city and explained that the service was comprised of a multi-disciplinary team that included community practitioners, mental health liaison teams, substance use practitioners and a health inclusion team.

She explained that any client over 18 years old who did not require immediate medical intervention could be referred to the service via a number of service providers, that included PSNI, GP out of hours service and political representatives.

She outlined the following service options:

- De-escalation and Risk management;
- Therapeutic support/psycho-social engagements;
- Mental Health Assessment pathway review;
- Onward Referral/s;
- Hardship Support (e.g. food and fuel poverty); and
- Transport/Taxi.

Ms. Sherry concluded by summarizing the next steps in the programme implementation, that included an independent analysis by Impact Research Centre, building upon evidence based need and defining the required resources and financial backing.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to a fixed location, Ms. Sherry stated that options were being considered for a location in north Belfast and explained that although the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust had offered support for resourcing the programme, financial capital would need to be sourced to provide a permanent locations for the service.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Sherry and Mr. Barr for the presentation

Noted.

Enterprise and Business Growth

The Enterprise and Business Growth Manager outlined the following report to the Working Group:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to update members on the business support available to constituents and businesses in their areas including Go Succeed – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth that is being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 councils.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in North Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses
- Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate
- Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the North Belfast area

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Go Succeed (Enterprise Support Service)

The Go Succeed service has now been operational for around eighteen months and has reached thousands of potential entrepreneurs and businesses across Northern Ireland.

By way of background, Belfast City Council led on a successful funding application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This provided £17 million of support for the period November 2023 to March 2025; £12 million programme delivery and £5 million for small grants. Following receipt of the funding agreement in September 2023, the service became operational in November 2023.

Belfast City Council, as lead for the service, has now secured additional funding via an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) of £9.2 million for the 2025/2026 financial year, ensuring continuity of the service. The focus over the next year, alongside delivery of the service, will be working to secure a more permanent funding source.

The service aims to be the go-to source for expert business advice across the region. It represents the councils' collective response to our statutory responsibility and offers a set of connected enterprise support services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, depending on their stage of development.

The key objectives of the model are to:

- Nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a viable career option and/or a route out of economic inactivity
- Enable a vibrant and productive business base across Northern Ireland
- Increase the proportion of 'innovation-active' businesses in NI and embed this more firmly with enterprise/ start-up agenda
- Diversify the representation amongst those supported by the enterprise and innovation ecosystem
- Delivery a service designed with the user in mind
- Focus on adding value to existing support available in the ecosystem

- Providing regional coverage while ensuring that delivery reflects local differences/nuances.

Go Succeed provides a continuum of support from early-stage enterprise awareness through to starting, growing, and scaling a business. The concept was that the service would help people get the right support at the right time – and would also help maximise other available funding streams by helping businesses to navigate the complex support ecosystem.

The service has been established to deliver across three core areas – **Start, Grow and Scale** – with tailored support for clients aligned with their growth ambitions.

- **Start**: this element of the service aims to identify individuals with entrepreneurial intentions as well as reaching those individuals who do not have an intention to start a business but could be encouraged to do so. There is specific, targeted support for a range of underrepresented groups. The menu of support available includes masterclasses, peer support networks and 1-1 mentoring
- **Grow**: this element of the service provides support for existing businesses. 1-1 mentoring is allocated based on the business' potential to grow and innovate. Masterclass and peer support network activity are also provided to support existing businesses to make key decisions on issues such as entering new markets or accessing finance for growth
- **Scale**: this part of the service is geared to supporting start-ups that have the potential to go on and generate at least £1m in revenue after 3 years. Support is delivered through 1-1 mentoring which aims to enable access to finance or further support through Invest NI, Catalyst or others.

In addition to the tiered menu of support, small grants of up to £3,000 (up to 50% of capital costs) are available to entrepreneurs or businesses accessing support through the service who demonstrate growth potential.

The delivery is underpinned by investments such as a wide-reaching marketing and communications campaign; a call handling service to deal with phone enquiries as well as an online portal to deal with online requests for support and a regional CRM system to enable tracking of client engagement across the service.

Belfast Performance Update

Since the service launched in November 2023, we have achieved the following by way of Belfast performance:

- 4,059 individuals 'reached' through a range of community outreach activities. This has included:
 - Sector specific events and self-employment academies for those in the hair and beauty industry including

delivery of aspirational workshops and hands-on mentoring support for over 80 newly qualified individuals.

- Delivery of a female-focused 'inspiring enterprise' event for a group of 100 female entrepreneurs providing practical support to starting or growing their enterprise.
 - Working with apprenticeship providers across Belfast to deliver aspirational workshops to 100s of 16–18-year-olds encouraging entrepreneurship as a very real and achievable pathway for consideration.
 - Facilitation of the '22 under 22' initiative, designed to unearth, recognise and fast track 22 exceptional potential entrepreneurs in the City.
 - Increasing awareness of enterprise among young people at the Young Enterprise Big Market event in St George's Market in December 2025.
- 1528 Belfast entrepreneurs supported through start up activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 367 (24%) of these entrepreneurs being from the North Belfast area
 - 888 Belfast businesses supported through growth activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 237 (27%) of these businesses being based in the North Belfast area.

315 Belfast businesses have accessed Go Succeed Grants since the launch in February 2024, drawing down over £1 million. These grants have enabled businesses to purchase capital and/or revenue items which will support their future growth plans.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the North Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.2 Go Social (Social Economy Support)

Developing the social economy sector has been a priority of the NI Executive for some time and Belfast City Council is aware of the important and unique contribution which the sector can, and does, make to the local economy. In the 2024/25 year the demand for Belfast City Council's 'Go Social' programme, aimed at encouraging more start-ups within the local Social Economy, has increased with over 60 individuals starting their social enterprise/cooperative.

Via our dedicated 'Go Social' service we offer enhanced support to those thinking of starting up a new business as a social enterprise or co-operative and we encourage existing SE businesses to join our social economy register to help us on our journey to grow the sector. Go Social support is open to individuals, groups and existing organisations seeking to set up, or transition to, a social enterprise or cooperative model.

We recognise setting up a social enterprise or cooperative can be difficult due to navigating complex legal structures and governance along with tackling a social cause or issue. Our Go Social support helps clients via specialist 1-1 mentoring support, access to networking opportunities and best practice visits as well as peer to peer support.

As part of our investment in the sector, Belfast City Council also deliver the Social Economy Incentive Fund which provides grants to new or developing social economy businesses in early growth stages. Each year we launch the fund in September with grants provided for up to £10,000, applications are assessed by a panel with shortlisted applicants invited to pitch. The fund is available to Belfast-based social enterprises and co-operatives, we would encourage anyone interested to sign up to our enterprise and business growth newsletter to be the first to hear about the fund launching again in September.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the North Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.3 Test trading

The Enterprise and Business growth team also offer fully funded opportunities for those receiving support through our services to test their products or services at St George's Market.

This opportunity gives businesses starting out, or those who have been in business for less than two years, the opportunity to test trade their products at our thriving, award winning St George's market.

Taking part is free of charge, and businesses have the opportunity to test trade up to six times – a fantastic opportunity to gain real customer feedback, insights from other traders and hone their sales pitch.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the North Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications for members to consider.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

Equality impact assessments for all of the above services have been completed.”

The Working Group agreed to:

- Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in North Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses;
- Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate; and
- Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the North Belfast area.

Physical Programmes Update

The Physical Programmes Senior Delivery Manager provided an overview of the undernoted report:

“1. Introduction

- The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the Physical Programme update for North Belfast including the recently completed project – Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road LIF project at Appendix 1; and
- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities.

3. Local Investment Fund

LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation with the North being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £800,000 under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 43 projects in total have received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 38 have been completed; 2 are at delivery stage; 1 is at pre-construction stage, and 1 remains at due diligence/ initial stage.

LIF breakdown – North	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Value (£)	Projects	Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	23 (92%)	£996,500	16 (89%)	£708,201

Number of Projects On-going Delivery	1 (4%)	£66,000	1 (6%)	£75,000
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (4%)	£65,000	1 (6%)	£15,000
Total Number of Approved Projects	25 *	£1,127,500	17 **	£798,201

****This includes additional funding for a LIF 2 project, Ballysillan Youth for Christ.***

***** This includes additional funding for two LIF 1 projects, Marrowbone Parochial Hall and Jennymount Church.***

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects. Members are asked to note the status of the current LIF projects and the ongoing actions.

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
NLIF2-05	Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road	£15,000	Complete	Project completed.	Continue engagement with school re post monitoring.
NLIF2-22	Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment	£75,000	On Ground	On ground. Construction works ongoing on the gallery.	Continue engagement with group and HED.
NLIF057	Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club (UV – ABC Trust Hub)	£66,000	On Ground	On ground. The overall Urban Villages scheme will also incorporate this LIF scheme. Phase 2 of the project is underway and due to complete over the summer. The final phase, installation of sports hall is due to be completed by Autumn 2025.	Continue engagement with Group and with UV
NLIF014	Westland Community Centre - new building (Link to UV Project)	£65,000	Due Diligence stage	Due diligence ongoing including on part of site owned by NIFRS. Consultant team ready to be appointed once funding is confirmed.	Continue engagement with Group and TEO
NLIF2-23	Ardoyne Youth Club and Benview Community Centre	£15,000	Initial stage	Approved at SP&R Committee in December 2024. Officers have engaged with both Ardoyne Youth Club and Benview Community	Continue engagement with Groups.

				Centre to progress the proposal and agree scope of works.	
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4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded that BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – North Belfast was allocated £5.5m. In North Belfast, 7 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m: and 2 projects are on the longer BIF list. Each of the ‘In Principle’ projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

Members are asked to note the status update of these projects provided below. The table provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects.

North	Stage 3 - Cavehill Tennis Club- £71k, Malgrove -£950k, Cultural Community Hub - £350k Stage 1 - Cliftonville Community Forum, Sunningdale Community Centre - no commitment
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BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF15	Malgrove	£1,758,607	Stage 3 - Committed	Awaiting a Planning decision. Planning is awaiting statutory consultee responses.	Continue engagement with planners.
BIF43	Cultural Community Hub	£350,000	Stage 3 - Committed	Discussions with potential funder have progressed and should secure the additional budget required in order to begin works, subject to business case.	Continue engagement with the group and stakeholders.

5. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for North was £2,503,158. Five projects received an In Principle funding commitment and a contingency sum of £68,179 has also been retained. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a

rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

North Belfast – NRF overview

North	<p>Stage 3— Belfast Orange Hall, Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL), Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Sailortown Regeneration Group, Ardoyne Youth Enterprises,</p> <p>Stage 1 (Reserve)— <i>Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain, Indian Community Centre, North Belfast Working Men's Club, North City Business Centre, Quaker Service, Belfast Charitable Society, Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian Church, Arts for All, Ligoniel Improvement Association</i></p>
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North Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3- Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
USEL - Green Growth & The Circular Economy	£518,191	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Procurement exercise carried out for contractor and tender returns being assessed. Discussed at Due Diligence on 15 May. Draft funding agreement is being prepared.	Continue engagement with the group.
Cliftonville Community Enterprise	£1,452,700	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Land boundary issue being addressed. DfC await an LPS valuation for both plots of land to enable them to proceed with a Business Case appraisal for the proposal.	Continue engagement with the group.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises – Community Hub <i>(Link to UV Project)</i>	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Updated business case approved by TEO and Letter of Offer to be updated. Outcomes from additional funding applications are expected in Summer. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed.	Continue engagement with the group.
Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Tender significantly exceeds the budget. The procurement is being rerun with a	Continue engagement with the group.

			further reduction of the scope of works to include external improvements to the roof, walls and windows to optimise the NRF budget. The project remains subject to final due diligence.	
St Joseph's Restoration project	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Design team preparing tender for contractor. Scope of works reduced to accommodate the current budget.	Continue engagement with the group.

6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new ones. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on the council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in the North Belfast area.

Members are asked to note the updates on the Physical Programme.

North Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
Playground Improvement Programme 24/25	On ground. Stage 3 Committed. City-wide playground improvements. Works have been undertaken at three sites across the city including the Michelle Baird Memorial Playground. Works were delayed for a number of weeks due to issues around contractor resources. Handover is now expected by early June 2025.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	On ground. Stage 3 Committed. Works being undertaken at various sites across the city including Mallusk Playing Fields. Final elements of work now being completed including installation of ballstop nets and GAA goal posts with handover expected by end May 2025. Shale pitch conversion to grass GAA is almost complete and turfing works will be completed when weather conditions are more favourable as a sustained period of rain is required. Two synthetic cricket wickets have been relocated to middle terrace and are now operational. Additional land drainage and hedge planting along site boundary with Park Mews is complete.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	On ground. Stage 3 Committed. Foul Pumping Station contractor appointed. NIE upgrade connections to fully service the site development have started (with completion anticipated at end of 2026).
Reservoir Safety Programme (links to PEACEPLUS)	Stage 3 Committed. Reservoir improvements at Waterworks and Alexandra Park. SEUPB PEACEPLUS funding of €13.5m to enhance shared space and connectivity. The technical design is currently in development.

Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Procurement stage. Technical design stage work ongoing. Planning approval granted. Belfast Blitz memorial forms part of the overall scheme. First stage of contractor procurement is underway.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the installation for Phase 5a. Members agreed in February to proceed with the gating order for Phase 5b, with an estimated completion timeline following the enactment of four to six months.
LTP - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. DfC partnership project. Design team continues to develop designs to Planning Stage. Officers continue to respond to queries from DfC regarding the business case.
Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design complete. The exterior layout and red line boundary is to be finalised ahead of a planning application being submitted.
Waste Plan – Waste Transfer Station Upgrade	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Link to Duncrue Masterplan and citywide kerbside scheme.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Progressing.
Access to the Hills - Glencairn Park/ Ligoniel Park	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case stage. Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan to develop connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. The procurement for the design team is underway and anticipate that a design team will be appointed by early Summer 2025.
Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mtn	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries including Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush and Balmoral Cemetery. Scoping work underway. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital restoration programme for the historic Belfast tiled street signs across the city. Scoping of signs is continuing along with opportunities for external funding. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Loughside Playing Fields	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Creation of a modular changing and flexible space facility. Early stage design works underway.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed.
Communications Boards in Playgrounds	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Initial capital funding secured via UKSPF recouped monies for first phase of installation at 29 playground sites. Strategic case prepared for overall rollout and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Duncrue Masterplan	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Redevelopment of the whole Duncrue site which aims to improve the efficiency of the site.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Feasibility stage.
North Foreshore - Giant's Park	A complex development agreement is in place with Giant's Park Belfast Limited (GPBL). This agreement commits GPBL to deliver over 250 acres of phased development over a number of years in four distinct hubs: Adventure Hub,

	Welcome Hub, Pit Stop Hub, Distributions and Logistics Hub. The first planning application for the Adventure Hub was submitted in December 2024. Construction works are expected to commence on site in late 2025.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	A new provider/ operator has been appointed. Currently in transition phase. The new scheme will be launched in Autumn.

7. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government departments on key capital investment programmes, including Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office and PEACE under SEUPB. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to North Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in North Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined North Belfast geography (Ardoyne and Greater Ballysillan).

North Belfast – Urban Villages Initiative overview

Project	Status and update
ABC Trust Health & Leisure Hub (links to LIF programme)	On ground. Partnership project with DfC, DfI, Flax Trust, and UV. Phase 2 of the project is due to complete over the summer. The final phase, installation of sports hall is due to be completed by Autumn 2025.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	On ground. Partnership project with UV, DfC and DfI. Completion of tree clearance works. Awaiting review of construction environmental management plan by NIEA for discharge of planning conditions and commencement of works.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project (links to NRF programme)	Business case stage. Updated business case approved by TEO and Letter of Offer to be updated. Additional funding applications have been submitted and outcomes are expected in Summer 2025. Outstanding legal issues are being progressed.
Sunningdale Community Centre (links to BIF programme)	Business case stage. Planning application withdrawn. UV remain committed to supporting the project. Currently working with the group and UV to identify an alternative site for development.
Westland Community Centre (links to LIF programme)	Business case stage. Due diligence ongoing including on part of site owned by NIFRS. Consultant team ready to be appointed upon receipt of Letter of Offer.

PEACEPLUS – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on capital projects under the PEACEPLUS Programme.

North Belfast – Capital Projects overview

Project	Status and update
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Reconnected Belfast - Waterworks and Alexandra Park €13.5m SEUPB PEACEPLUS	Enhancements to shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park. A total of 3 Design Information Sessions held with a further session to be arranged. Project Launch was held in April. Procurement of design team for next stage is underway.
Access to the Hills – Glencairn/ Ligoniel <i>Link to Capital Programme</i>	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Plan to develop connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. The procurement for the design team is underway and anticipate that a design team will be appointed by early Summer 2025.

9. Capital funding opportunities

Members are asked to note the updated version of the list of external capital funding and finance opportunities attached at Appendix 2 which may be of assistance to groups and clubs.”

The Working Group agreed to:

- Note the Physical Programme update for North Belfast including the recently completed project – Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road LIF project; and
- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities.

At the request of Councillor Anglin, the Working Group agreed to undertake a site visit to the Floral Hall and extend an invitation to all Elected Members.

Update on EV Charging Point Network Project

The Climate Programme Manager outlined the following four steps of the Council’s draft Low Emission Vehicle Strategy:

- Step 1 – Land Assets Assessment (Council Sites);
- Step 2 – Commercial Agreements;
- Step 3 – Working with Staff and Partners; and
- Step 4 – Fleet Transition.

She explained that the Strategy aimed to assist the Council with procuring public charge points to enable residents, visitors and businesses to transition to electric vehicles in order to reduce emissions, she stated that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed at its meeting in August, 2024, that the first two steps of the strategy be progressed initially.

She outlined the transport hierarchy in reducing the carbon impact of transport and referred to the Belfast targets to achieve net zero emissions and to be climate resilient by 2050, that included the installation of at least 800 vehicle charging points for public use by 2027 in the Belfast Agenda and 4400 public electric vehicle charging points by 2050, in the Local Area Energy Plan.

She provided the Working Group with an update on the current numbers and types of public chargers in Belfast and on Council owned sites and outlined the actions required by the Council to increase public availability of Electric Vehicle Charging that included an understanding of the challenges and opportunities in operationalising the LEV Strategy, an assessment of the viability and interdependencies of Council sites for chargers, engagement

with key external stakeholders and to progress the actions required to implement step one and step two of the strategy.

The Climate Programme Manager explained that, 44 sites had been suggested as suitable in principle, as part of Phase 1 of the charging network roll out and that there was the potential for 132 to 170 connections across the 44 sites, five of the sites were located in north Belfast and most of the sites had the potential for at least six charge points with 12 spaces. Members were asked to note that sites, spaces, and overall progress on the EV network is dependent on further engagement with stakeholders including ChargePoint operators and NIE.

She stated that there were 30 potential sites to be reconsidered during Phase 2 which were currently not suitable and that 26 sites had been ruled out.

She concluded by providing the Working Group with an overview of the undernoted next steps:

- Exploration of operating models and recommendations;
- Engaging with NIE regarding wide ranging cost variables per site;
- Potential charge point operators;
- Preliminary market engagement exercise;
- Charge Point Operator engagement to assess site viability and revenue forecasts; and
- Equality and rural needs screening;

The Estates Surveyor displayed a site map for the Working Group and pointed out the locations of existing and proposed sites located on Council properties.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the costs of the EV charge points, the Climate Programme Manager stated that if a charge point operator were to be appointed, depending on the operating model agreed by Council, it could absorb many of the upfront costs, and that following the marketing and engagement stage, a report would be brought to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee outlining the preferred operating model options.

Noted.

Chairperson

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West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 29th May, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor McCann (Chairperson),
Councillors Beattie, Black, Carson, Doherty,
M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett,
McCoubrey, McCallin, McDowell, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin and Verner.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. M. McKay, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager;
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. A. O' Neill, Assistant Estates Surveyor;
Ms. F. Dennison, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Canavan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27th February were approved and adopted.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Presentations

It agreed that invitations be extended to representatives of Spórtlann na hÉireann and the Lenadoon Community Forum to present at a future meeting on projects which they are overseeing.

Physical Programme Update

The Working Group considered the following report:

“1. Introduction

The Council's Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf

of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the physical programme update for West Belfast including recently completed project – Sporting Pitches Improvements 24/25 - Falls Park GAA pitch at Appendix 1;
- Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2.

3. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded that BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment. The West AWG had a total allocation of £9m comprising £5.5m from the original allocation, an additional £1.2m which was ring-fenced for projects in the Shankill area when this became part of the West AWG following the Council elections in 2015, and £2.5m which was ringfenced for projects in the Colin area following LGR. The table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects.

Summary of BIF allocated projects

West	Stage 3—Davitt's GAC—£1m; Raidió Fáilte—£950k; St Comgall's- £3.5m; Colin Glen Forest Park—£2.5m; Greater Shankill Community Council - RBL project- £300k, Glencairn Community Project— £700k Stage 2— St Mary's CBS— no commitment Stage 1— An Sportslann; Suffolk Community Forum; Belfast Hills- Black Mountain Access—no commitment
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The table below shows an overview of the remaining BIF project –

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF09	Glencairn Community Project	£900,000 <i>BIF- £700,000; NRF- £200,000</i>	Committed; Due Diligence	The Design Team has been appointed. Revised concept design has been prepared and drawings will be updated for Planning application. Awaiting updated costs.	Continue engagement with the group.

4. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for West was £3,446,654

(West - £2,721,133 and Shankill - £725,521) and 6 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

West Belfast – NRF overview

West	<p>Stage 3— Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre- £684,058; Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1- £537,058; The Mountainview Hotel- £1,500,000; The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors' Centre- £295,000; Glencairn Community Project (Hub)- £200,000, The Road- £210,759; <i>Shankill contingency- £19,762.</i></p> <p>Stage 1— <i>Improving the Environment at Patrick Sarsfield's GAC, Corrigan Park Redevelopment Project, WCC New Purpose-Built Childcare and Family Support Centre, Curam Leanaí na Fuisgeoige, Conway Mill - redeveloping for the future, Westcourt Uplift Project, Lamh Dhearg Renewable Energy & External Lighting Improvement scheme, St. Gall's Milltown Community Development, Colin Glen Eco Air-Cruizer, CNP Regeneration of Cloona House</i></p>
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West Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre	£1.1m NRF £684,058 Group - £463,490	Stage 3- Committed	On ground. Contractor appointed and works started onsite in April. Site progress meeting took place on Monday 19 May 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.
Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1	£787,058 NRF-£537,058 An Ciste- £250,000	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Design team is progressing work and cost estimates are now in place. Some match funding already in place. Fundraising activities are continuing along with engagement with other funders.	Continue engagement with the group.
The Mountainview Hotel	£1.5m	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. Officer is in contact with the group to discuss next steps. Clarification on the site boundary is necessary to make any further progress with this project.	Continue engagement with the group.
The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors' Centre	£295,000	Stage 3- Committed	On ground. Contractor appointed for heating element of contract and preparing to start on site. Exhibition works due to complete in early 2026.	Continue engagement with the group.
Glencairn Community Project	£900,000 NRF- £200,000; BIF- £700,000	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. As above at BIF09. The Design Team has been appointed. Revised concept design has been prepared and drawings will be updated for Planning application. Awaiting updated costs.	Continue engagement with the group.

The Road	£210,759	Stage 3- Committed	Development stage. The group is continuing to work with a consultancy on funding opportunities. No further funding secured to date. Planning Permission has expired and group submitted a new application in March 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.
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5. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building/buying new ones. The table below provides an update on current live projects on the Council's Capital Programme in the West Belfast area. Members are asked to note status and update.

West Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
City Cemetery Visitor Centre – Heritage Fund/ DfC	Project complete. <i>Members will continue to receive reports on this project until the other external works are completed.</i> CNS is undertaking a re-procurement exercise for an operator for the Visitor Centre due to no replies to original advertisement. Victorian Fountain and landscaping works are progressing. Railings for central steps are due to be installed and completed by end of May which will enable security fencing to be removed.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	<i>Stage 3 – Committed. Project completed.</i> Agreed at P&C Committee in June 2024. Works at four sites across the city including Falls Park. Spectator fencing and hard-standing installation is now complete.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the installation for Phase 5a. Members agreed in February to proceed with the gating order for Phase 5b, with an estimated completion timeline following the enactment of four to six months.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Progressing.
Access to Hills - Black Mountain/ Upper Whiterock Pathway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Design stage. Design team is continuing to develop the project. Ongoing engagement with DfI as key partner. Full Planning application has been lodged and is in process. Application to DAERA Challenge Fund has been unsuccessful. Project continues to be developed despite this outcome.
Colin Greenway	Meetings are continuing between the Council and key stakeholders DfI, DfC and NIHE on the Colin Active Travel Plan. Lagmore Avenue cycle scheme works has commenced and will be completed in late September 2025.
Access to the Hills - connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> This is being considered within the wider study as below.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Feasibility study presented to Members. Ongoing engagement with other stakeholders such as the National Trust and Belfast Hills Partnership.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries including Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush, Balmoral

	Cemetery and Shankill Graveyard. Scoping work underway. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital restoration programme for the historic Belfast tiled street signs across the city. Scoping of signs is continuing along with opportunities for external funding. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed.
Communications Boards in playgrounds	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Initial capital funding secured via UKSPF recouped monies for first phase of installation at 29 playground sites. Strategic case prepared for overall rollout and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
West Basketball courts	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> New facilities at Blacks Road and Páirc Nua Chollan – designs being prepared and engagement with key stakeholders.
Woodvale Park Sensory Garden	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> New sensory facility. Next step is to appoint the design team to take the scheme forward.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	A new provider/ operator has been appointed. Currently in transition phase. The new scheme will be launched in Autumn 25. DfI funding received on Belfast Bikes e-Bikes.
Lidl, Stewartstown Road Suffolk 3G Pitch and Lenadoon Park Pitch Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. <i>Suffolk pitch</i> - Planning application approved and awaiting decision notice. Will require additional funding. <i>Lenadoon Park</i> – Grass soccer pitch improvement works complete; includes spectator hard-standing, extension to height of boundary fence, including extended dugout areas; land drainage, new pedestrian access gate and path connections. MUGA improvements programmed for Summer 2025.

6. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government departments on key capital investment programmes, namely Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office, PEACEPLUS, DfI, DfC, DoJ as well as schemes with IFI. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to West Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in West Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined West Belfast geography (Colin area).

West Belfast – UV overview

Project	Status and update
Colin Community Health and Wellbeing Hub	Business case stage. TEO advise that the completion of the business case is scheduled for late 2025.

PEACEIV/ PEACEPLUS – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on the capital projects that are related to the PEACE Programmes.

West Belfast – Capital Projects overview

Project	Status and update
Forth Meadow Community Greenway	Project completed. Signage being progressed.
Distillery Street Redevelopment Project	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. The project includes creation of a cross-community Peace and Reconciliation Park providing sustainable drainage and flood risk management as an integral part of urban renewal. The procurement for the design team is underway and a design team should be appointed by early Summer 2025. Project Steering Group established, first meeting held with regular programme of meetings going forward.

Other externally funded projects

Below is the status update on capital projects funded by other partners in West Belfast. *Other external funders – West Belfast projects overview*

Project	Status and update
Black Mountain Shared Space Project – Phase 2	Via IFI, DoJ, DfC On Ground. Contractor works progressing on site. Estimated completion in Summer 2025.

9. Capital funding opportunities

Members are asked to note the updated version of the list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2 which may be of assistance to groups and clubs.”

In response to a Member’s question regarding the Glencairn Community Project, the Director reported that the design team had been appointed and that revised concept designs and drawings had been prepared in advance of the submission of a planning application. The Director added that engagement was ongoing with the group and that she would be willing to discuss the project further with the Member should he wish to do so.

After further discussion, the Working Group agreed to note the contents of the physical programme update for West Belfast, together with the associated appendices, and a list of external capital funding opportunities for information.

The Working Group agreed also to undertake a site visit to view a range a projects across West Belfast at a future date.

Electric Vehicle Charging Point Network Project - Update

(The Climate Programme Manager, along with the Assistant Estates Surveyor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Working Group was informed in the work undertaken to identify potential sites within the Council's estate where EV charging stations could potentially be installed. It was explained that 44 sites had been identified as suitable as part of Phase 1 of the charging network roll out and that there was the potential for 132 to 170 connections across the 44 sites. She stated that there were 30 potential sites to be reconsidered during Phase 2 which were currently not suitable and that 26 sites had been ruled out. She concluded by providing the Working Group with an overview of the next steps of the project, which are set out below:

- Exploration of operating models and recommendations;
- Engaging with NIE regarding wide ranging cost variables per site;
- Potential charge point operators;
- Preliminary market engagement exercise;
- Charge Point Operator engagement to assess site viability and revenue forecasts; and
- Equality and rural needs screening.

The Working Group thanked the officers for the update which had been provided.

Presentation from Enterprise and Business Growth

The Working Group considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the business support available to constituents and businesses in their areas including Go Succeed – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth that is being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 councils.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in West Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses**
- **Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate**
- **Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the West Belfast area**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Go Succeed (Enterprise Support Service)

The Go Succeed service has now been operational for around eighteen months and has reached thousands of potential entrepreneurs and businesses across Western Ireland.

By way of background, Belfast City Council led on a successful funding application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This provided £17 million of support for the period November 2023 to March 2025; £12 million programme delivery and £5 million for small grants. Following receipt of the funding agreement in September 2023, the service became operational in November 2023.

Belfast City Council, as lead for the service, has now secured additional funding via an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) of £9.2 million for the 2025/2026 financial year, ensuring continuity of the service. The focus over the next year, alongside delivery of the service, will be working to secure a more permanent funding source.

The service aims to be the go-to source for expert business advice across the region. It represents the councils' collective response to our statutory responsibility and offers a set of connected enterprise support services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, depending on their stage of development.

The key objectives of the model are to:

- Nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a viable career option and/or a route out of economic inactivity
- Enable a vibrant and productive business base across Western Ireland
- Increase the proportion of 'innovation-active' businesses in NI and embed this more firmly with enterprise/ start-up agenda
- Diversify the representation amongst those supported by the enterprise and innovation ecosystem
- Delivery a service designed with the user in mind
- Focus on adding value to existing support available in the ecosystem
- Providing regional coverage while ensuring that delivery reflects local differences/nuances.

Go Succeed provides a continuum of support from early-stage enterprise awareness through to starting, growing, and scaling a business. The concept was that the service would help people get the right support at the right time – and would also help maximise other available funding streams by helping businesses to navigate the complex support ecosystem.

The service has been established to deliver across three core areas – Start, Grow and Scale – with tailored support for clients aligned with their growth ambitions.

- Start: this element of the service aims to identify individuals with entrepreneurial intentions as well as reaching those

individuals who do not have an intention to start a business but could be encouraged to do so. There is specific, targeted support for a range of underrepresented groups. The menu of support available includes masterclasses, peer support networks and 1-1 mentoring

- **Grow**: this element of the service provides support for existing businesses. 1-1 mentoring is allocated based on the business' potential to grow and innovate. Masterclass and peer support network activity are also provided to support existing businesses to make key decisions on issues such as entering new markets or accessing finance for growth
- **Scale**: this part of the service is geared to supporting start-ups that have the potential to go on and generate at least £1m in revenue after 3 years. Support is delivered through 1-1 mentoring which aims to enable access to finance or further support through Invest NI, Catalyst or others.

In addition to the tiered menu of support, small grants of up to £3,000 (up to 50% of capital costs) are available to entrepreneurs or businesses accessing support through the service who demonstrate growth potential.

The delivery is underpinned by investments such as a wide-reaching marketing and communications campaign; a call handling service to deal with phone enquiries as well as an online portal to deal with online requests for support and a regional CRM system to enable tracking of client engagement across the service.

Belfast Performance Update

Since the service launched in November 2023, we have achieved the following by way of Belfast performance:

- 4,059 individuals 'reached' through a range of community outreach activities. This has included:
 - Sector specific events and self-employment academies for those in the hair and beauty industry including delivery of aspirational workshops and hands-on mentoring support for over 80 newly qualified individuals.
 - Delivery of a female-focused 'inspiring enterprise' event for a group of 100 female entrepreneurs providing practical support to starting or growing their enterprise.
 - Working with apprenticeship providers across Belfast to deliver aspirational workshops to 100s of 16–18-year-olds encouraging entrepreneurship as a very real and achievable pathway for consideration.
 - Facilitation of the '22 under 22' initiative, designed to unearth, recognise and fast track 22 exceptional potential entrepreneurs in the City.

- Increasing awareness of enterprise among young people at the Young Enterprise Big Market event in St George's Market in December 2025.
- 1528 Belfast entrepreneurs supported through start up activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 383 (25%) of these entrepreneurs being from the West Belfast area
- 888 Belfast businesses supported through growth activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 185 (21%) of these businesses being based in the West Belfast area.

315 Belfast businesses have accessed Go Succeed Grants since the launch in February 2024, drawing down over £1 million. These grants have enabled businesses to purchase capital and/or revenue items which will support their future growth plans.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the West Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.2 Go Social (Social Economy Support)

Developing the social economy sector has been a priority of the NI Executive for some time and Belfast City Council is aware of the important and unique contribution which the sector can, and does, make to the local economy. In the 2024/25 year the demand for Belfast City Council's 'Go Social' programme, aimed at encouraging more start-ups within the local Social Economy, has increased with over 60 individuals starting their social enterprise/cooperative.

Via our dedicated 'Go Social' service we offer enhanced support to those thinking of starting up a new business as a social enterprise or co-operative and we encourage existing SE businesses to join our social economy register to help us on our journey to grow the sector. Go Social support is open to individuals, groups and existing organisations seeking to set up, or transition to, a social enterprise or cooperative model.

We recognise setting up a social enterprise or cooperative can be difficult due to navigating complex legal structures and governance along with tackling a social cause or issue. Our Go Social support helps clients via specialist 1-1 mentoring support, access to networking opportunities and best practice visits as well as peer to peer support.

As part of our investment in the sector, Belfast City Council also deliver the Social Economy Incentive Fund which provides grants to new or developing social economy businesses in early growth

stages. Each year we launch the fund in September with grants provided for up to £10,000, applications are assessed by a panel with shortlisted applicants invited to pitch. The fund is available to Belfast-based social enterprises and co-operatives, we would encourage anyone interested to sign up to our enterprise and business growth newsletter to be the first to hear about the fund launching again in September.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the West Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.3 Test trading

The Enterprise and Business growth team also offer fully funded opportunities for those receiving support through our services to test their products or services at St George's Market.

This opportunity gives businesses starting out, or those who have been in business for less than two years, the opportunity to test trade their products at our thriving, award winning St George's market. Taking part is free of charge, and businesses have the opportunity to test trade up to six times – a fantastic opportunity to gain real customer feedback, insights from other traders and hone their sales pitch.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the West Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications for members to consider.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

Equality impact assessments for all of the above services have been completed."

After discussion, the Working Group adopted the recommendations within the report.

Chairperson

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East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 5th June, 2025

MEETING OF THE EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Lawlor (Chairperson);
Aldermen Copeland and Rodgers;
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer;
Councillors Bower, R. Brooks, de Faoite,
P. Donnelly, Ferguson, Flynn, Hanvey,
Long, Maghie and McCormick.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Ms. M. McKay, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager;
Ms. A. Diver, Climate Programme Manager;
Mr. A. O'Neill, Assistant Estates Surveyor;
Mr. S. McBride, City Protection Manager; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Area Working Group noted that it was required to elect a Chairperson for the coming year.

Moved by Councillor R. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson and

Resolved – that Alderman Lawlor be elected to serve as Chairperson
of the East Belfast Area Working Group until the date of the Annual
Meeting of the Council in 2026.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Abernethy,
S. Douglas and Smyth.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 6th March were an
accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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Presentation

EastSide Early Learning Community

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. M. Vielman, Save the Children and Ms. G. Hamilton, EastSide Learning to the meeting.

Ms. Vielman and Ms. Hamilton presented the Working Group with an overview of the work and activity of the EastSide Early Learning Community (ELC) including:

- **EastSide ELC** – a collaboration of partners working in a systems change approach to improve early learning outcomes for children in East Belfast;
- **Partners** – Government departments, schools and nurseries, statutory services, community organisations, and children and families;
- **ELC toolkit** - created by the Dartington Service Design Lab and associates, Save the Children and its partners to enable ELC partnerships to improve early learning outcomes for children growing up in poverty across their area, and to support partnerships to develop and implement a strategy. The toolkit is underpinned by evidence and provides guidance and resources to inform an effective approach to improving children's early learning outcomes;
- **EastSide ELC Framework** – two high-level outcomes identified by partners based on the evidence, improved speech language and communication and improved social and emotional development; and
- **ELC Project Planning Group** – focused on local partners working directly with children and their families in East Belfast, promoting opportunities for relationship building and collaboration, test-and-learn initiatives and sharing with wider system, development of tools to support cohesive approach, securing funding to develop work, evaluation and strengthening the maturity of Early Years system in East Belfast.

The representatives concluded the presentation by providing the Working Group with an overview of the EastSide ELC's activities over recent years and its alignment with the Belfast Agenda.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to referral pathways for children experiencing poverty, engagement with educational bodies, funding, summer activities and support for parents.

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

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After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Physical Programme Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1. Introduction

The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Note the physical programme update for East Belfast including recently completed project at Appendix 1 - Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25- Henry Jones Playing Fields GAA Pitch and Playground Improvement Programme 24/25 - Grampian Avenue playground and Hosford Community Homes Inclusion Hub (UV);**
- **Consider request for site visit on the Strand Arts Centre project and to agree to invite the DfC Minister to visit; and**
- **Note the updated list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2.**

3. Local Investment Fund

LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation with the East being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £1.2m under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 22 projects received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 19 have been completed and 1

East Belfast Area Working Group
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project is at delivery stage and 1 project is at due diligence stage.

LIF breakdown – East	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	8 (80%)	£931,902	12 (100%)	£1,161,589
Number of Projects in Delivery	1(10%)	£30,000		
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects at Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (10%)	£70,000		
Total Number of Approved Projects	10	£1,031,902	12	£1,161,589

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects.

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / Recommendation
ELIF31	Bloomfield FC, Clonduff FC, East Belfast FC and Dundela FC, Tullycarnet, Cregagh Wanderers, Nettlefield Multi-Sports and Bredagh GAC – storage facilities	£65,000 (£30k plus £35k reallocation)	On Ground <i>Phase 1- complete</i> <i>Phase 2- ongoing</i>	Phase 1 – Complete - Bloomfield FC, East Belfast FC, Tullycarnet FC and Cregagh Wanderers projects completed. Phase 2 - Bredagh GAC - completed. Clonduff FC – awaiting to sign the funding agreement to enable delivery of the container. Nettlefield Multi-Sports – awaiting information, to be discuss/ sign-off at DD on 26 June. Dundela FC –funding agreement to be finalised. Club preferred that container will be delivered after the NRF pitch work is complete.	Continue engagement with the groups.
ELIF29	Cycling Ireland	£70,000	Due Diligence	Due Diligence stage ongoing. Proposed licence arrangements have been discussed (subject to group confirming proposed usage requirements). Group is currently reviewing the suitability of the site and Council awaits an update from the group on this matter.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250,000 investment from Council. In East Belfast, 9 projects have

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received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF. There are 5 projects on the longer BIF list. Each of the In-Principle projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. The table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and the funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects:

East	Stage 3—Willowfield—£560k; H&W Welders—£2.37m; Strand—£1.5m; Bloomfield—£655k Stage 2—Lagan Village Youth & Community—no commitment Stage 1—East Belfast Mission; Belmont Bowling Club; Bloomfield Presbyterian Church; St. John's Orangefield, Church of Ireland, Tullycarnet Community Support Services—no commitment / on long list
Outer East	Stage 3 —TAGIT- £434k; Hanwood—£396k; Lisnasharragh Community Schools—£398k; Braniel—£390k; Castlereagh Presbyterian Church—£382k

The table below provides an overview of the remaining projects. Members are asked to note the actions and recommendations.

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF12	Strand Arts Centre	£6,782,069 LUF- £4,094,000 BIF- £1,550,000 HF- £255,000 (Development Grant), £768,069 (Delivery Grant) Several Trusts- £115,000	On Ground	On Ground. Works began on site in early January 2025 and are progressing well, with completion due 2nd quarter 2026. Discussion ongoing with DfC regarding potential additional funding. Group requested/ offered on possible site visit to the Strand Arts Centre.	Continue engagement with the group and funders. AWG is asked to consider request for site visit on the project and to agree to invite the DfC Minister to the project.
BIF13	Bloomfield Community Association	£715,009 BIF - £655,000 LIF - £60,009	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	The group is continuing to explore additional funding opportunities to meet the shortfall. An updated application to DfC has been prepared on the basis of updated costs. DfC Minister has visited the site on 15 May 2025. DfC funding commitment announced on 2 June 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.

Outer East BIF Projects

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Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/Recommendation
BIF38	Castlereagh Presbyterian Church	£382,000	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	On Ground. Works on site and progressing well, with completion due end July 2025.	Continued engagement with the group.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. There is one project under SOF for East Belfast - Eastside Visitor Centre – with an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

Project	SOF Award	Status	Action/Recommendation
EastSide Hotel & Visitor Centre <i>(links to NRF project)</i>	£2,050,000 <i>Comprising:</i> SOF- £700,000 NRF- £950,000 Group- £400k	An agreed combined project for the construction of a new hotel and extension of the current Eastside Visitors Centre. Design Team appointed and pre start meeting held on 15th May. Progressing with detailed design.	Continued engagement with the group.

6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for East was £2,351,551 and 4 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Projects remaining at Stage 2 continue to have the support of a Client Manager for their proposals.

East Belfast – NRF overview

East	Stage 3 - Eastside Container Hotel, Portview Exchange, Development of sporting hub at Wilgar Park, Hosford Community Homes: 335 Newtownards Road Stage 2 - Impact Belfast, Nevin Spence Centre Visitor Experience
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East Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project name	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/Recommendation
EastSide Hotel & Visitor Centre	£2,050,000 <i>Comprising:</i> SOF- £700k	Stage 3- Committed	An agreed combined project for the construction of a new hotel and extension of the current	Continued engagement with the group.

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(links to SOF project)	NRF- £950k Group- £400k		Eastside Visitors Centre. Design Team appointed and pre start meeting held on 15th May. Progressing with detailed design.	
Portview Exchange	£600,000	Stage 3- Committed	Link to UV project. Awaiting decision on the business case from The Executive Office.	Continue engagement with the group.
Development of sporting hub at Wilgar Park	£500,000	Stage 3- Committed	New planning application in process. The group submitted a funding application in March to secure the remaining budget required. Awaiting response until mid-summer.	Continue engagement with the group and integrated design team.
Hosford Community Homes: 335 Newtownards Road	£300,000	Stage 3- Committed	Design team procurement planned for September 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.

7. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new assets. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in East Belfast. Members are asked to note the status and update.

East Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
New Crematorium	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Technical Design is complete. Procurement exercise for the main contractor has been completed. A review of the business case is being undertaken. A paper will be brought SP&R Committee outlining the current status and with key issues for Members consideration.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	<i>Stage 3 Committed. Project completed.</i> Agreed at P&C Committee in June 2024. Works at various sites across the city including Henry Jones Playing Fields GAA Pitch.
Playground Improvement Programme 2024/25	<i>Stage 3 - Committed. Project completed.</i> The Programme for 2024/25 included improvement works at Grampian Avenue playground. The refurbished playground was opened on 3rd April 2025.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. Progress made with the commencement of the installation for Phase 5a. Members agreed in February to proceed with the gating order for Phase 5b, with an estimated completion timeline following the enactment of four to six months.
Cremated Remains Burial Plots	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Feasibility study has been completed. An Outline Business Case is being prepared.

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Sydenham Greenway	<i>Stage 2 - Uncommitted.</i> Business case to be worked up with DfI who are at design development stage for the greenway. Ongoing discussion with DfI regarding a partnership approach. DfI plan to deliver Phase 1A (Victoria Park to Inverary Community Centre) in current financial year. DfI are developing design options for the entrance to Victoria Park and asking to present these options to the next AWG. Suggestion for Council to deliver the 'feeder path' through Tommy Patton Millenium Park with DfI funding.
Electric Vehicle Charging Network	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Land Asset Assessment underway to identify a long list of sites suitable in principle. Progressing. Presentation at AWG.
Historic Cemeteries	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Restoration programme for heritage cemeteries including Knock Cemetery, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush, Balmoral Cemetery and Shankill Graveyard. Scoping work underway. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Historic Tiled Street Signs	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Capital restoration programme for the historic Belfast tiled street signs across the city. Scoping of signs is continuing along with opportunities for external funding. Strategic case prepared and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This facility will be for use across the city. Specification developed and project now moving to procurement.
Communications Boards	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds. Initial capital funding secured via UKSPF recouped monies for first phase of installation at 29 playground sites. Strategic case prepared for overall rollout and request at May SPR to move to Stage 2.
Victoria Park – Basketball court upgrade	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Upgrade to existing court. Meetings held with stakeholders and Elected Representatives to feed into design. Design work ongoing.
Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Link to Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan. Education Authority (EA) is continuing to develop a business case for capital funding for youth provision at the council owned Ballymacarrett site. Officers are continuing to liaise with EA on the way forward.
Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Link to the Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East project.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	A new provider/ operator has been appointed. Currently in transition phase. The new scheme will be launched in Autumn.
Parklands, Knocknagoney Dale - Knocknagoney Park Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. Tree planting and installation of additional park seating is programmed for summer 2025.
Lands at Castlehill Manor - Belmont Park Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. Additional sensory play equipment to be installed at Belmont Park playground in Autumn 2025.

8. Externally Funded Programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for a number of government departments on significant capital investment

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programmes, namely the Urban Villages Initiative (UV) funded by the Executive Office, and number of schemes with DfC. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to East Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

Project	Status and update
Hosford Community Homes Inclusion Hub	Project completed. Official launch completed 14 May 2025.
Titanic People Exhibition	<i>Project underway.</i> The project is expected to complete in late Summer 2025 (September), launch expected in Autumn 2025.
Portview Exchange <i>Link to NRF 'Portview Exchange'</i>	<i>Business case stage.</i> Awaiting decision on the business case from The Executive Office.

PEACEPLUS – Capital Project

Members are asked to note updates on the capital project under the PEACEPLUS Programme.

East Belfast – PEACEPLUS LAP Capital Project overview

Project	Status and update
Sanctuary Theatre	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Refurbishment of the Sanctuary Theatre at Castlereagh Street. The procurement for the design team is underway and anticipate that a design team will be appointed by early Summer 2025.

9. Capital Funding Opportunities

Members are asked to note the updated version of the list of external capital funding opportunities attached at Appendix 2 which may be of assistance to groups and clubs.”

The Director of Property and Projects highlighted the following recently completed projects:

- Henry Jones Playing Fields GAA Pitch (Sporting Pitches Investment 2024/25);
- Grampian Avenue Playground (Playground Improvement Programme 2024/25); and
- Hosford Community Homes and Inclusion Hub.

She provided the Working Group with further detail in relation to the remaining live projects under the Local Investment Fund and the Belfast Investment Fund and highlighted a recent announcement by the Minister for Communities that the Department

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for Communities had committed to provide funding in relation to the Bloomfield Community Association redevelopment project.

In relation to the Strand Arts Centre, the Director advised that officers continue to engage with the Department for Communities in respect of potential funding towards the project and suggested that the Working Group undertake a site visit to the Strand Arts Centre, and to extend an invitation to the Minister for Communities.

The Director of Property and Projects further suggested that it would be beneficial to Members for the Working Group to undertake site visits to some of the other completed and ongoing projects and to consider the potential to hold a future meeting at an appropriate site within East Belfast.

She drew Members attention to the External Funding and Social Investment Opportunities for Capital Projects as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report and encouraged Members to share the information provided with relevant groups.

In response to a Member's question on the Bloomfield Community Association project, the Director advised that the funding recently announced by the Department for Communities would be additional funding.

The Working Group:

- i. noted the Physical Programme update for East Belfast;
- ii. noted the updated list of external capital funding opportunities, as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report;
- iii. agreed to undertake a site visit to the Strand Arts Centre and to extend an invitation to the Minister for Communities; and
- iv. agreed that officers would explore the potential to hold a future meeting of the Working Group at an appropriate site within East Belfast.

Enterprise and Business Growth Support Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to update members on the business support available to constituents and businesses in their areas including Go Succeed – the regional initiative to support business start-up and growth that is being led by Belfast City Council on behalf of the 11 councils.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- **Note and endorse the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in East Belfast and beyond, with the objective of driving more and better businesses**
- **Promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate**
- **Provide recommendations to Enterprise and Business Growth team on community and stakeholder engagement in the East Belfast area**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Go Succeed (Enterprise Support Service)

The Go Succeed service has now been operational for around eighteen months and has reached thousands of potential entrepreneurs and businesses across Eastern Ireland.

By way of background, Belfast City Council led on a successful funding application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This provided £17 million of support for the period November 2023 to March 2025; £12 million programme delivery and £5 million for small grants. Following receipt of the funding agreement in September 2023, the service became operational in November 2023.

Belfast City Council, as lead for the service, has now secured additional funding via an application to UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) of £9.2 million for the 2025/2026 financial year, ensuring continuity of the service. The focus over the next year, alongside delivery of the service, will be working to secure a more permanent funding source.

The service aims to be the go-to source for expert business advice across the region. It represents the councils' collective response to our statutory responsibility and offers a set of connected enterprise support services where individuals, entrepreneurs or businesses can access a continuum of support to meet their needs, depending on their stage of development.

The key objectives of the model are to:

- **Nurture a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognising enterprise as a viable career option and/or a route out of economic inactivity**
- **Enable a vibrant and productive business base across Eastern Ireland**

- Increase the proportion of ‘innovation-active’ businesses in NI and embed this more firmly with enterprise/ start-up agenda
- Diversify the representation amongst those supported by the enterprise and innovation ecosystem
- Delivery a service designed with the user in mind
- Focus on adding value to existing support available in the ecosystem
- Providing regional coverage while ensuring that delivery reflects local differences/nuances.

Go Succeed provides a continuum of support from early-stage enterprise awareness through to starting, growing, and scaling a business. The concept was that the service would help people get the right support at the right time – and would also help maximise other available funding streams by helping businesses to navigate the complex support ecosystem.

The service has been established to deliver across three core areas – Start, Grow and Scale – with tailored support for clients aligned with their growth ambitions.

- **Start:** this element of the service aims to identify individuals with entrepreneurial intentions as well as reaching those individuals who do not have an intention to start a business but could be encouraged to do so. There is specific, targeted support for a range of underrepresented groups. The menu of support available includes masterclasses, peer support networks and 1-1 mentoring
- **Grow:** this element of the service provides support for existing businesses. 1-1 mentoring is allocated based on the business’ potential to grow and innovate. Masterclass and peer support network activity are also provided to support existing businesses to make key decisions on issues such as entering new markets or accessing finance for growth
- **Scale:** this part of the service is geared to supporting start-ups that have the potential to go on and generate at least £1m in revenue after 3 years. Support is delivered through 1-1 mentoring which aims to enable access to finance or further support through Invest NI, Catalyst or others.

In addition to the tiered menu of support, small grants of up to £3,000 (up to 50% of capital costs) are available to entrepreneurs or businesses accessing support through the service who demonstrate growth potential.

The delivery is underpinned by investments such as a wide-reaching marketing and communications campaign; a call handling service to deal with phone enquiries as well as an online portal to deal with online requests for support and a regional CRM system to enable tracking of client engagement across the service.

Belfast Performance Update

Since the service launched in November 2023, we have achieved the following by way of Belfast performance:

- **4,059 individuals 'reached' through a range of community outreach activities. This has included:**
 - **Sector specific events and self-employment academies for those in the hair and beauty industry including delivery of aspirational workshops and hands-on mentoring support for over 80 newly qualified individuals.**
 - **Delivery of a female-focused 'inspiring enterprise' event for a group of 100 female entrepreneurs providing practical support to starting or growing their enterprise.**
 - **Working with apprenticeship providers across Belfast to deliver aspirational workshops to 100s of 16–18-year-olds encouraging entrepreneurship as a very real and achievable pathway for consideration.**
 - **Facilitation of the '22 under 22' initiative, designed to unearth, recognise and fast track 22 exceptional potential entrepreneurs in the City.**
 - **Increasing awareness of enterprise among young people at the Young Enterprise Big Market event in St George's Market in December 2025.**
- **1528 Belfast entrepreneurs supported through start up activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 419 (27%) of these entrepreneurs being from the East Belfast area**
- **888 Belfast businesses supported through growth activity (1-1 mentoring, masterclasses, peer support networks) with 306 (34%) of these businesses being based in the East Belfast area.**

315 Belfast businesses have accessed Go Succeed Grants since the launch in February 2024, drawing down over £1 million. These grants have enabled businesses to purchase capital and/or revenue items which will support their future growth plans.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the East Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.2 Go Social (Social Economy Support)

Developing the social economy sector has been a priority of the NI Executive for some time and Belfast City Council is aware of the important and unique contribution which the sector can, and does, make to the local economy. In the 2024/25 year the demand for Belfast City Council's 'Go Social' programme, aimed at encouraging more start-ups within the local Social Economy, has increased with over 60 individuals starting their social enterprise/cooperative.

Via our dedicated 'Go Social' service we offer enhanced support to those thinking of starting up a new business as a social enterprise or co-operative and we encourage existing SE businesses to join our social economy register to help us on our journey to grow the sector. Go Social support is open to individuals, groups and existing organisations seeking to set up, or transition to, a social enterprise or cooperative model.

We recognise setting up a social enterprise or cooperative can be difficult due to navigating complex legal structures and governance along with tackling a social cause or issue. Our Go Social support helps clients via specialist 1-1 mentoring support, access to networking opportunities and best practice visits as well as peer to peer support.

As part of our investment in the sector, Belfast City Council also deliver the Social Economy Incentive Fund which provides grants to new or developing social economy businesses in early growth stages. Each year we launch the fund in September with grants provided for up to £10,000, applications are assessed by a panel with shortlisted applicants invited to pitch. The fund is available to Belfast-based social enterprises and co-operatives, we would encourage anyone interested to sign up to our enterprise and business growth newsletter to be the first to hear about the fund launching again in September.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the East Belfast area. Constituent referrals or

enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

3.3 Test trading

The Enterprise and Business growth team also offer fully funded opportunities for those receiving support through our services to test their products or services at St George's Market.

This opportunity gives businesses starting out, or those who have been in business for less than two years, the opportunity to test trade their products at our thriving, award winning St George's market.

Taking part is free of charge, and businesses have the opportunity to test trade up to six times – a fantastic opportunity to gain real customer feedback, insights from other traders and hone their sales pitch.

The Enterprise and Business Growth team would welcome any guidance from working group members to increase engagement in the East Belfast area. Constituent referrals or enquiries can be sent to the Enterprise and Business Growth team via gosucceed@belfastcity.gov.uk

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications for members to consider.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

Equality impact assessments for all of the above services have been completed."

The Working Group:

- i. noted and endorsed the progress to date on the delivery of the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) in East Belfast and beyond with the objective of driving more and better businesses;
- ii. agreed that Members would promote opportunities for business support to constituents where relevant and appropriate; and
- iii. agreed that Members would engage further with the Enterprise and Business Growth team in relation to increasing community and stakeholder engagement in East Belfast.

East Belfast Area Working Group
Thursday, 5th June, 2025

EV Charging Point Network Project Update

The Climate Programme Manager, along with the Assistant Estates Surveyor, presented the Working Group with an overview of the work which had been undertaken to date in relation to potential sites within the Council's estate where Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations could be installed.

The Climate Programme Manager reminded the Working Group that, at its meeting in August, 2024, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee agreed that officers progress with phase 1 (Land Assets Assessment) and phase 2 (Commercial Agreements) of the draft Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) Strategy, with the aim of assisting the Council in procuring public charge points to enable residents, visitors, and businesses to transition to electric vehicles.

She provided the Working Group with an update in relation to existing EV charging points currently in operation on Council sites and the work that had been undertaken to assess Council sites in order identify suitable locations for further charging points. She reported that 44 sites had been identified overall in phase 1 as suitable in principle, however, those identified sites and the progress in respect of the EV network would be dependent on further engagement with stakeholders.

She outlined the next steps for the EV Charging Point Network Project which included exploring operating models, financial modelling, market testing for potential charge point operators, and equality and rural needs screening.

The Assistant Estates Surveyor concluded the presentation by outlining the 20 sites that had been identified as suitable in principle within East Belfast.

The Working Group thanked the officers for the presentation and noted the update which had been provided.

Ballyhackamore Parklet Update

The City Protection Manager provided the Working Group with an update on the work that had been undertaken to date in respect of the proposal by Councillor Flynn for the installation of a parklet on vacant Council land in the Ballyhackamore area.

He advised the Working Group that the project was currently at a concept stage and presented, for the Members information, two concept designs for a potential parklet.

It was reported that the proposal would be considered by officers at a Council Assets Board meeting in June, 2025 to identify potential costings and feasibility, and that any project relating to capital would be subject to the Council's capital processes including Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approval.

The Working Group welcomed the update which had been provided and agreed to endorse the proposal for a parklet in line with the draft layout 1 design.

Chairperson



Subject:	Contracts Update
Date:	20 June 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sharon McNicholl Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input 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: 30px;" 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;"> <div style="width: 70%;"> <p>After Committee Decision</p> <p>After Council Decision</p> <p>Sometime in the future</p> <p>Never</p> </div> <div style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> </div> </div>	

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek approval from members for tenders, contract modifications to contract term and Single Tender Actions (STA) over £30,000 <p>And to ask members to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note retrospective Single Tender Actions (STAs) and non-procurement expenditure
2.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1) • Approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 2) • Approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 3) • Note the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 4)
3.0	Competitive Tenders
	<p>Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states Chief Officers have delegated authority to authorise a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works over the statutory limit of £30,000 following a tender exercise where the council has approved the invitation to tender.</p> <p>Standing Order 60(a) states any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000) shall be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b) the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council.</p> <p>Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1).</p>
4.0	Single Tender Actions (STAs)
	<p>The Council's current Single Tender Action (STA) process, which has been in place since 2020, provides assurance that the Council continues to comply with its obligations under</p>

	<p>the Procurement Act 2023 'the Act' and internal governance arrangements including required controls and approvals. It mirrors the Act setting out the exceptional and specific circumstances when a STA can be used (see STA/ Direct Award Reasons Table in Appendix 1).</p> <p>To support Officers understanding and to build capability, CPS offer support training and guidance on the STA process.</p> <p>In line with Standing Order 55 the Committee is asked to approve the award of the STAs in Appendix 1 (Table 2).</p> <p>In line with Standing Order 55 the Committee is asked to note the award of the retrospective STAs Appendix 1 (Table 4).</p>
5.0	Modification to Contract
	<p>The Committee is asked to approve the following modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a as set out in Appendix 1 (Table 3).</p>
6.0	Financial & Resource Implications
	<p>The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets</p>
7.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
	None
8.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 1 - Competitive Tenders • Table 2 - Single Tender Actions • Table 3 - Modification to Contract • Table 4 - Retrospective Single Tender Actions

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Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
VAT Consultancy Services	Up to 3 years	£45,000	T Wallace	Evolving VAT legislation and transactions requiring expert VAT advice
Crematorium Café	Up to 3 years	Income based contract	S Toland	Requirement for a franchise contractor for the crematorium café.
Supply of forcing and bedding bulbs	Up to 3 years	£90,000	S Leonard	Forcing and bedding bulbs are required for planting in parks, cemeteries and open spaces
Provision of artist-led community resources Tool for Togetherness	Up to 9 months	£100,000	K Forster	Provision of artist-led community resources to activate public spaces, including idea conception, co-design with communities, resource development and delivery, testing in community settings and implementation of feedback.
Facilities management service at the Mary Peters Track	Up to 5 years	£800,000	D Sales	Contract for the operation and management of the Mary Peters Track which will end in March 2026.
Hire of ancillary equipment for Council Events	Up to 4 years	£375,000	D Martin	Hire of a range of equipment to support the delivery of Council run events
Production management service	Up to 4 years	£500,000	D Martin	Provision of production management to support the delivery of City events and activities
Public address, staging and lighting equipment	Up to 4 years	£1.1m	D Martin	Hire of specialist PA, staging and lighting equipment to support the delivery of Council run events. Includes contingency for Fleadh in 2026
Provision of dog kennelling facilities and related services	Up to 4 years	£320,000	D Sales	The Dog Warden Service requires a provider to supply dog kennel facilities to keep, return and rehome stray and other dogs which come into the care of the Council. This would

				include kennelling of illegal breeds and other related services such as provision of veterinary care to dogs housed at the facilities
Purchase PCSP crime prevention Equipment	Up to 3 years	£90,000	D Sales	The equipment aims to provide a tool to improve policing and community safety and help people to feel safer. The Community Safety Unit's Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and PSNI have in the past welcomed the availability of such community resources as an engagement tool, offering practical support for residents and community groups across Belfast.
Removal, transportation and emptying of skips and hook lift containers	Up to 5 years	£3,600,000	D Sales	This is a critical service that ensures filled skip containers are transported and emptied in a timely manner ensuring there is no downtime or closures of household recycling centres or other operational OSS sites due to skip availability.

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason
Provision of specialist cremator maintenance service to crematory plant in City of Belfast Crematorium	Up to 34 months	£661,000	D Sales	<p>Due to the specialist nature of the maintenance support including technical and operational support Facultatieve Technologies are the only supplier capable of providing this essential maintenance support.</p> <p>Note retrospective STA for 2 months (May & June 2025) – see Table 4 below.</p> <p>See additional information below</p>	Facultatieve Technologies (FT)	3.

Appendix 1

Hire of the vessel, 'Galleon Adulucia' for the 2025 Belfast Maritime Festival	Up to 5 days	£35,000	K Forster	Attraction for the 2025 Belfast Maritime Festival	European Maritime Events	3.
Advertising space at Belfast City Airport	Up to 3 years	£137,505	E McConville	There is only one airport within the Belfast City Council area and all advertising requests are managed by the airport's sales team and charged directly to George Best Belfast City Airport.	George Best Belfast City Airport	3

Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Original Contract Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
Measured term contract for installation of new soft floor covering for repairs, maintenance & minor works at various Council properties and locations - ITT35380	Up to 51 months	Additional 3 months and £30,000	S Grimes	3-month extension required to allow for additional time for the re-tender exercise to be completed and ensure continuity of services. Note - Original expiry on 31/03/25 and contract modification approved for 3 months in January 25 due to resourcing issues within the unit to allow procurement to take place. These issues have not been resolved which has led to further delays in procurement.	JJ Hennebry & Sons Ltd
Measured term contract for swimming pool filtration systems, maintenance & minor works at various Council properties and locations - ITT35297	Up to 53 months	Additional 3 months and £50,000	S Grimes	3-month extension required to allow for additional time for the re-tender exercise to be completed and ensure continuity of services. Note - Original expiry on 14/02/25 and contract modification approved for 5 months in January 25 due to resourcing issues within the unit to allow procurement to take place. These issues have	WJM Building Services Ltd

Appendix 1

				not been resolved which has led to further delays in procurement.	
T2015 – Supply and delivery of paints & sundries	Up to 52 months	Additional 3 months and £6,000	S Grimes	3-month extension required to allow for additional time for the re-tender exercise to be completed and ensure continuity of supplies. Note - Original expiry on 28/2/25 and contract modification approved for 4 months and £6k in Feb 25 SP&R. The new tender, T2517, is at evaluation stage and this approval is sought for 3 months to allow the evaluation and award to take place.	PPG Architectural Coatings UK Ltd
T2034 - Supply of SCARAB Vehicles approved Parts	Up to 3 years	Additional 1 year and £30,000	D Sales	1 year extension required to allow for additional time to research and engage with the market to see if other manufacturers can supply the equivalent OEM part at a more competitive cost and a quicker lead time.	McCreath Taylor Ltd
T2312 - Supply of DAF Vehicles approved Parts	Up to 3 years	Additional 1 year and £30,000	D Sales	1 year extension required to allow for additional time to research and engage with the market to see if other manufacturers can supply the equivalent OEM part at a more competitive cost and a quicker lead time.	TBF Thompson (Garvagh) Ltd
T2284 - Supply of IVECO Vehicles approved Parts	Up to 3 years	Additional 1 year and £30,000	D Sales	1 year extension required to allow for additional time to research and engage with the market to see if other manufacturers can supply the equivalent OEM part at a more competitive cost and a quicker lead time.	NI Trucks
T2211 - Supply of Dennis Eagle and specialist Refuse Collection Vehicle approved parts	Up to 4 years	Additional 1 year and £100,000	D Sales	1 year extension required to allow for additional time to research and engage with the market to see if other manufacturers can supply the equivalent OEM part at a more competitive cost and a quicker lead time.	Manvik Plant Hire
T2212 - Supply of Holder and Schmidt specialist Cleaning / Sweeper machine approved parts	Up to 4 years	Additional 1 year and £30,000	D Sales	1 year extension required to allow for additional time to research and engage with the market to see if other manufacturers can supply the	RD Mechanical

Appendix 1

				equivalent OEM part at a more competitive cost and a quicker lead time.	
<p>T1974 – Security Guarding Services</p> <p>Lot 1 – Manned security guarding Lot 2 – Event stewarding Lot 4 – Keyholding Lot 5 – Mobile Patrol</p>	Up to 4 years	Additional 3 months and £330k	N Largey	<p>3-month extension required to allow for additional time for the re-tender exercise to be completed and ensure continuity of services.</p> <p>Replacement tender has been advertised with evaluation and award due to be completed during July 25. Additional time may be required to allow for potential TUPE handover to new provider.</p>	<p>Cobra Security Services (Lots 1, 4 & 5)</p> <p>Eventsec (Lot 2)</p>

Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Page 227	Title of Contract	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason
	Provision of specialist cremator maintenance service to crematory plant in City of Belfast Crematorium	Up to 2 months	£39,000	D Sales	<p>Due to the specialist nature of the maintenance support including technical and operational support Facultatieve Technologies are the only supplier capable of providing this essential maintenance support.</p> <p>Note Retrospective STA for 2 months (May & June 2025)</p> <p>See additional information below</p>	Facultatieve Technologies (FT)	3.

Additional information re the Cremator Maintenance STA

The breakdown of the £700,000.00 total contract value over the three-year period of the STA is as follows based on quotations provided by the supplier, Facultatieve Technologies: -

Appendix 1

Non-inclusive annual maintenance £118,000 x 3 years = £354,000.00

Refractory costs in FY 25/26 for 3x cremators = £145,000.00

Crematory major component parts price cost estimate for 3 years = £200,000.00

The non-inclusive annual maintenance includes the following: -

- Scheduled bi-annual cremator maintenance shutdown
- Service labour (2 visits per year)
- Technical Support
- Service consumables
- Supply, collection & disposal of reagent
- Emissions testing to PG 5/2 (One test annually)
- Breakdown labour
- Spares for repairs
- Provision of 18 Rake heads, 18 brush heads & 1 Infant tray & 3 Ash pans (total)

STA/ Direct Award Reasons

STA Number	Full description
1. Switching to a Direct Award	Switching to a Direct Award: No response or no suitable response following advertised procurement exercise.
2. Single Supplier for Art or Artistic Performance	Single Supplier for Art or Artistic Performance: the creation or acquisition of a unique work of art or artistic performance
3. Single Supplier Absence of Competition for Technical Reasons	Single Supplier Absence of Competition for Technical Reasons: only a particular supplier can supply the goods, services or works required and there are no reasonable alternatives to those goods, services or works

Appendix 1

4. Single Supplier Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	Single Supplier Intellectual Property Rights (IPR): only particular supplier can supply the goods, services or works required due to that particular supplier having IPR or other exclusive rights and there are no reasonable alternatives to those goods, services or works.
5. Urgency	Urgency: Where the goods, services or works to be supplied under the public contract are strictly necessary for reasons of extreme and unavoidable urgency which is not attributable to any act or omission of and could not have been foreseen by the council, and as a result the public contract cannot be awarded on the basis of a competitive tendering procedure using the reduced 10 day period for 'urgent procurements'
6. Prototypes and Development	Prototypes and Development: the production of a prototype, or supply of other novel goods or services (i.e. goods or services designed or developed at the request of BCC), for the purpose of testing the suitability of the goods or services, researching the viability of producing or supplying the goods or services at scale and developing them for that purpose, or other research, experiment, study or development.
7. Additional or Repeat Goods Services or Works	Additional or Repeat Goods Services or Works: Extension or Partial Replacement concerns the supply of goods, services or works by the existing supplier (includes supplier that the council no longer has a contract with) which are intended as an extension to, or partial replacement of, existing goods, services or works in circumstances where a change in supplier would result in the council receiving goods, services or works that are different from, or incompatible with, the existing goods, services or works, and the difference or incompatibility would result in disproportionate technical difficulties in operation or maintenance.
8. Commodity	Commodity: Supplies quoted and purchased on a commodity market
9. Advantageous time-limited	Advantageous time-limited: Supplies or services on particularly time-limited advantageous terms e.g. supplier winding up its business activities
10. Additional or Repeat Goods Services or Works	Additional or Repeat Goods Services or Works: Similar to Existing Goods Services or Works, concerns the supply of goods, services or works by the existing supplier (includes supplier that the council no longer has a contract with) that are similar to existing goods, services or works where the existing goods, services or works were supplied under a public contract that was awarded following a competitive procedure within the period of five years ending with the day on which the transparency notice is published, and the tender notice or any tender document in respect of the earlier contract set out the Council's intention to carry out a subsequent procurement of similar goods, services or works in reliance on this direct award justification, and any other information specified in Section 95.
11. Other	Other: Reason not in line with Procurement Act 2023

Appendix 1

12. To Protect Life	To Protect Life: where a Minister of the Crown has by Regulations provided that specified contracts may be awarded to protect human animal or plant life or health or protect public order or safety
13. Schedule 2– Exempted Contract	Schedule 2– Exempted Contract: Requirement not considered procurement spend but use of STA process to document and approve spend. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/54/schedule/2



Belfast
City Council

Subject:	Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 9 th June 2025
Date:	20 th June 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations 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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To report to committee on the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 9 th June 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 9 th June 2025 including:

2.2	<p><u>Presentation on The Climate Action Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shared City Partnership noted the presentation and recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the presentation.
2.3	<p><u>Asylum Dispersal Programme Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shared City Partnership noted the update regarding the funds and agreed the proposal for use of the underspend, Shared City partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it agrees the approach outlined in the report.
2.4	<p><u>Community Recovery Fund – Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared City Partnership noted the contents of the report and approved the proposed allocation of the Community Recovery Fund – Open Call Projects, as outlined in the accompanying report, including the proposed approach for distributing funds from the Good Relations Action Plan and the TEO Asylum Dispersal Fund to support a further six eligible applications that align with the objectives of these funding streams, and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report and approves allocation of the said funds as outlined in the detail of the report.
2.5	<p><u>PEACE IV – Secretariat Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shared City 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 Shared City Partnership noted the contents of the report and agreed that Route 1F for the CRT4 – ‘Access to the Hills’ path development will start at Fernhill House, subject to SEUPB approval and delivery within the existing budget and recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report and agree the above recommendation.
2.7	<p><u>Update from Partnership Members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership noted that a number of upcoming PEACEPLUS and refugee awareness events would be taking place in Belfast over the coming weeks. The Committee Services Officer undertook to circulate details of the events to Members.
2.8	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shared City Partnership agreed to hold a workshop for its members following the summer to consider the strategic aims and objectives for the forthcoming year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chairperson, on behalf of the Partnership, pointed out that the meeting was the last that would be attended by independent members Fr. Magill and Mr. Briggs and he thanked the representatives for their contributions throughout their term.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	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.
3.2	<p>The key issues on the agenda at the 9th June 2025 meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Papers of 12th May 2025 Presentation on The Climate Action Plan Asylum Dispersal Programme – Update Community Recovery Fund – Update PEACE IV – Secretariat Update PEACEPLUS Belfast Local Community Action Plan (LCAP) Update Members Update AOB
3.3	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 9 th June 2025, Appendix 2 Presentation on the Climate Action Plan, and Appendix 3 Update on the Community Recovery Fund.
3.4	<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>
3.5	<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
	<p>Appendix 1 – Minutes of the Shared City Partnership 9th June 2025</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Presentation on the Climate Action Plan</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Update on the Community Recovery Fund</p>

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SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Monday 9th June, 2025

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

Members present: Councillor J. Duffy (Chairperson);
Alderman Copeland; and Councillors Abernethy,
I. McLaughlin and Smyth.

External Members: Mr. M. Briggs, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Ms. L. Euler, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
Mr. L. Gunn, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council;
Fr. M. Magill, Faith Representative;
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;
Mr. W. Naeem, Interfaith Forum;
Mr. G. Walker, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Mr. A. M. White, British Red Cross.

In attendance: Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager;
Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer;
Ms. L. Dolan, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer;
Ms. M. Watson-Holmes, Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson

It was proposed by Councillor Smyth, seconded by Councillor Abernethy, and agreed that Councillor Duffy be elected as the Chairperson; and Councillor I. McLaughlin as the Deputy Chairperson of the Shared City Partnership until the date of the 2026 Annual Meeting of the Council.

(The Chairperson (Councillor Duffy) in the Chair.)

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Ms. B. Arthurs, Mr. J. Donnelly and Ms. C. Guinness.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th May were taken as read and signed as correct, subject to the inclusion of Mr. Briggs as having forwarded apologies. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23rd May.

Declaration of Interest

The Chairperson declared an interest in item 5 viz., 'Community Recovery Fund – Update' in that he worked for an organisation which had applied for funding under the terms of the programme. He left the meeting whilst the matter was under discussion.

Climate Action Plan – Presentation

(Ms. D. Caldwell, the Council's Climate Commissioner, attended in connection with this item.)

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. D. Caldwell to the meeting who was in attendance to deliver a presentation on to the Council's Climate Action Plan. Ms. Caldwell explained that the plan sought to create a 'net zero' and resilient Council through a range of measures to be delivered in the short-term (by 2025), medium-term (by 2030) and longer-term (2030+). The plan contained 71 actions spread across five separate themes viz., Tools for Transition, Adaptation, Energy and Building, Transport and Waste Management.

Ms. Caldwell informed the Partnership that all of the short-term actions had been included within the Council's Corporate Annual Delivery Plan for 2025/26 and that the plan would be reviewed annually. The short-term actions would include the launch of an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions taken. In addition, the development of a sustainable/low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance would form part of a revised corporate procurement policy. She added that a sustainable food policy for the Council was being developed to address waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol.

Ms. Caldwell answered a range of questions from Members relating to how the action plan related to the work of both elected and independent Members and across the community sector in Belfast.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. Caldwell for attending the meeting and the Partnership noted the information which had been provided.

Asylum Dispersal Programme – Update

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Issues

- 11 To provide members with an update on the Asylum Dispersal Fund and Refugee Integration Fund and for members to note the proposed use of the underspend within these funds.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the update on the funds and the proposal for use of the underspend.**

Background

- 3.1 Members will be aware from previous updates papers, that the Executive Office has provided Council with Asylum Dispersal Funding (£302,759) and Refugee Integration Funding (£128,000), with most of the money now allocated. The table and summary below provide an update in relation to the current mobilisation of Asylum Dispersal projects; most of the projects funded through the Refugee Integration Fund are now completed.

Table 1: Overview of project proposals funded through asylum dispersal funding.

Proposal	Procurement method
<p><u>Proposal 1:</u> Organisational Development and Capacity Support Programme</p> <p>The proposal aims to develop the capacity of organisations currently providing advice to asylum seekers or organisations that are new to this area of provision. It will do this through the provision of a training programme, supported by the development of a Knowledge and Learning Network to strengthen the capacity of organisations to provide quality advice to people in the asylum process.</p>	<p>Proposal was procured in February through an open tender process and has been awarded to the Law Centre, with delivery occurring between May 25-March 26.</p>
<p><u>Proposal 2:</u> Place Based Community Asylum Support Link Advisers</p> <p>The purpose of this proposal is to increase the spread of advisors that can provide advice and case work support to asylum seekers in their community settings.</p> <p>This proposal, led by an organisation / consortium with specialised knowledge of providing asylum advice and case work support, will support the development of a minimum of 2 Community Outreach</p>	<p>Following a tendering process, this proposal is still with Legal and an award should be made imminently</p>

<p>Advisors who will provide case work support and advice for asylum seekers in community settings across Belfast.</p>	
<p><u>Proposal 3:</u> Open Call Integration and inclusion outreach, projects procured through an open call.</p> <p>Following an open call 9 smaller scale projects supporting the integration and inclusion of people seeking asylum have been awarded funding.</p>	<p>The following small-scale projects were awarded funding following the closure of an open call in February.</p> <p><u>Ashton Community Trust:</u> This project will build a network of supporting organisations and activities in North Belfast, allowing spaces for asylum seekers and refugees to access support.</p> <p><u>Diverse Youth</u> This project will deliver workshops to schools and youth organisations, across Belfast, focused on building relationships, understanding, and shared experiences between young people from asylum-seeking backgrounds and the host community.</p> <p><u>Artsekta</u> This project will provide opportunities for social interaction, skills development, well-being and integration for women in the Asylum Process, providing weekly engagement activities.</p> <p><u>I -Assist NI</u> This project will provide, health and well-being workshops: on mental health, chronic disease management, and healthy lifestyle practices, tailored to the</p>

	<p>needs of asylum seekers. Awareness training sessions around health and well being will be delivered as well as outings to reduce isolation.</p> <p><u>Acacia Path</u> This project will deliver an ESOL Integration Programme. It aims to support asylum seekers by providing language and cultural integration courses. The courses will focus on improving English language skills, particularly in the context of healthcare, personal safety, and understanding local systems. Participants will learn how to navigate the healthcare systems, access mental health support, understand personal safety rights, and respond to domestic violence or hate crimes.</p> <p>Local professionals, including healthcare providers, social workers, and law enforcement, will lead the sessions, ensuring that the content is both practical and culturally relevant.</p> <p><u>Conway Education</u> This project will use a blend of language education, practical information, and community connections and befriending to empower participants to navigate life in Belfast more confidently, engage actively with local services, and take steps toward further</p>
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	<p>education, employment, and social inclusion.</p> <p><u>Horn of Africa</u></p> <p>This project brings together asylum seekers and refugees from East African and the Horn of Africa with communities from wider backgrounds, through a summer series of outdoor community lunches, barbecues and opportunities to meet other communities. The events will provide a platform for cultural exchange, personal storytelling, and community dialogue. Attendees will hear firsthand experiences of displacement, engage in facilitated discussions, and connect with local support organisations.</p> <p><u>Belfast City of Sanctuary</u></p> <p>This project aims to run events and opportunities through Refugee Week, the project aims to bridge cultural divides, enhance understanding, and build strong, supportive relationships between newcomers and established residents. Activities will include interactive "Understanding Northern Ireland" workshops across multiple community venues, designed to familiarize participants with local culture, history, and societal norms. The project will culminate in a vibrant "Celebrating Culture and Heritage" event, highlighting diverse traditions and fostering appreciation among participants from varied backgrounds.</p>
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	<p><u>Family Comfort</u></p> <p>This project will run a range of opportunities to engage people in programmes including knitting and crocheting, cuisine exploration, digital empowerment. It aims to link communities through joint cultural and educational opportunities.</p>
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3.3 It is now proposed that an underspend of £20,000, within the Asylum Dispersal is used to support the funding of an additional Asylum related support project that was submitted to the oversubscribed Community Recovery Open Call.

3.4 In relation to the Refugee Integration Fund not all of the 14 projects that were funded claimed their full allocation, leaving an underspend within the fund of around £10,000. It is proposed that this underspend is used to provide support costs for the delivery of the Council's Academy Programme for Refugee Medics. This training and support programme is providing Refugee Medics, with language skills and training to enable them to access the necessary exams and work placements, to have their qualifications recognised here."

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided within the report and adopted the recommendations therein regarding the allocation of the financial underspend. It was agreed also to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it endorse the aforementioned course of action.

Arising from discussion, it was noted that an invitation be extended to representatives from the Education Authority to present on its 'Schools of Sanctuary' initiative.

Community Recovery Fund – Update

(The Deputy Chairperson (Councillor I. McLaughlin) in the Chair.)

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Issues

1.1 To update members on the status of the Community Recovery Fund, previously approved by the Council.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and approve the proposed allocation of the Community Recovery Fund – Open Call Projects, as outlined in the accompanying report, including

the proposed approach for distributing funds from the Good Relations Action Plan and the TEO Asylum Dispersal Fund to support a further 6 eligible applications that align with the objectives of these funding streams, and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R) that they note the contents of the report and approve allocation of the said funds as outlined in the detail of the report.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

3.2 The Community Recovery Fund was delivered through a cross-departmental approach approved and agreed by Council. This involved close collaboration between Officer across internal departments particularly across Neighbourhood Services and external community partners. Neighbourhood Integration Managers led the engagement on consortium bids, ensuring that each project was tailored to meet the specific needs of local areas across the city. Community Development teams also played a vital role by designing inclusive events at community centres that celebrate the city's diversity.

3.3 Community Recovery Fund Update

**3.4 Detailed Community Recovery Report
CRF001 – PCSP - Safer Neighbourhood Officer Community Engagement Project**

This project supports communities affected by the 2024 public disorder by enhancing safety, reducing harm, and fostering social cohesion across Belfast. It deploys Safer Neighbourhood Officers, addresses antisocial behaviour and hate crimes, and promotes inclusion through community engagement, events, and leadership workshops. Special focus is given to ethnic minority, migrant, and refugee communities, with strong collaboration among local partners to build trust and resilience.

**3.5 CRF002 - Integration and Inclusion
Awarded to: Wheelworks**

The programme aims to promote diversity awareness, challenge stereotypes and misinformation, and support integration within communities. It targets teachers, Boards of Governors, community youth leaders, and young people, equipping them with tools to foster inclusion and counter hate. Key components include training programmes, interactive toolkits, workshops, and youth-led initiatives. The content focuses on understanding prejudice, critical thinking, cultural awareness, hate crime prevention, and relationship-building. Overall, it seeks to build cohesive, informed, and inclusive communities through education and engagement.

3.6 CRF003
Council Community Centre Programme – Reaching Out

Funds have been allocated to the Community Development Department, who are currently planning local neighbourhood projects across both Council-run and independent community centres in Belfast. These initiatives and projects will be supported by a comprehensive communication campaign on the Belfast City Council website to promote inclusion and celebrate community engagement across all diverse communities.

3.7 CRF004 - Challenging the Narrative

Quotations are sought for '*Challenging the Narrative*' a Belfast-based programme to be delivered by March 2026. It will train key groups on migration and integration, with migrant-led input and a focus on reducing hate and misinformation.

3.8 CRF005 - Expansion of Schools of Sanctuary

The project aims to expand Schools of Sanctuary in South and North Belfast, especially in areas impacted by racism. It promotes social cohesion by making schools more welcoming for refugees and asylum seekers. School communities will be supported in adopting inclusive practices and anti-racism education. The initiative also builds partnerships with local stakeholders and offers leadership training. Family support services, including multilingual clinics, will aid integration and community relations.

3.9 CRF006 – Belfast City Council, Economic Development - Business Mentoring, Engagement, and Integration Programme

The initiative aims to boost enterprise and business growth in the WULO area using £20,000 from the Community Recovery Fund. It focuses on engaging the community, promoting entrepreneurship, and supporting existing businesses through drop-in sessions, promotional outreach, and tailored resources, ensuring inclusive access to mentoring and development programs.

4.0 CRF007 - WULO – LORAG
Engaged Citizens

The Engaged Citizens project fosters community cohesion and trust in Belfast's Wider University and Lower Ormeau area. It supports those affected by hate crime through inclusive dialogue and cultural celebration. Residents are trained as ambassadors to welcome newcomers and counter harmful narratives. Creative programs and exhibitions highlight shared identities and experiences. The project partners with local groups to ensure sustainable, community-led solutions.

4.1 WULO - Forward South

Creating a shared vision through building a Shared Space

This project, led by Forward South Partnership, aims to build community cohesion and resilience in South Belfast in response to recent racist hate crimes. It will include storytelling workshops, community dialogues, and discussions with unionist women to address prejudice and misinformation. Activities will take place in an inclusive space supporting services like the Roma Support Hub, with a focus on engaging minoritised and migrant communities through culturally sensitive programming and translation support. The goal is to foster trust, counter disinformation, and promote a shared, inclusive future.

4.2 CRF008b - Focused Consortium Projects

4.3 North Belfast - Greater Shankill Alternatives - Community Navigator Support Programme

To support migrant and ethnic minority communities, a Community Navigator will link newcomers to vital services. Workshops and outreach will promote inclusion, safety, and awareness of rights. Hate crime prevention materials and youth engagement will help reduce tensions. Collaboration with local agencies will strengthen community ties and amplify lived experiences.

4.4 South Belfast Consortium - Application is still pending.

4.5 West Belfast - Blackie River - Newcomer Family Liaison Project

This initiative aims to support and integrate migrant communities in West Belfast, especially those impacted by the racist hate crime and unrest of July–August 2024. It seeks to foster social cohesion and rebuild trust among migrant, refugee, asylum-seeking, and host communities in the Greater Falls area. By addressing root causes of tension through proactive engagement, the project hopes to prevent future disorder. Key actions include hiring a part-time Liaison Officer, distributing welcome packs, and serving as a bridge between new families and local services.

4.6 East Belfast - East Belfast Alternatives - Connswater Community Recovery Project

This initiative fosters healing and unity in East Belfast by bridging divides between host and migrant communities. Through dialogue, cultural exchange, and youth engagement, it addresses the root causes of unrest. It empowers minority leaders, promotes trust in public services, and strengthens community networks.

4.7 CRF008 – Open Call

Please refer to Appendix 1 for a detailed progress report on the delivery of the Community Recovery Fund.

The high calibre of applications received aligns strongly with the objectives of both our Good Relations Plan and the Asylum Dispersal Fund. As outlined in Appendix 2, six additional projects have been strategically aligned with these funding streams:

- 12 projects supported through the Community Recovery Fund this can be achieved via a combined programme underspend and by reducing both CRF 001 and CRF 009 by £5,000 each.
- 4 projects aligned with the Good Relations Action Plan (BCC5)
- 2 projects aligned with The Executive Office – Asylum Dispersal Fund

We respectfully seek your consideration and approval of this approach, which will enable a broader range of organisations to deliver vital community initiatives. For a full breakdown of all applications, including their status and awarded amounts by funding stream.

Please note that 17 organisations were not selected for funding due to funding limits.

4.8 CRF009 – Hate Crime Hardship Programme Belfast City Council – PCSP

The initiative aims to provide practical support to victims of hate crime through the Belfast PCSP's Home Security Service. It is developing sensitive referral pathways with partners like PCSP, PSNI, and Bryson to ensure victims receive both emotional support and home safety measures. Key community groups involved include Association Darfur NI, Afghan Community, and NI Somali Association, among others. This collaborative effort seeks to enhance personal safety and foster trust within diverse communities.

4.9 Financial & Resource Implications

The proposals in this report are 100% funded through Community Recovery Fund with the exception of the 6 projects we wish to seek approval to be allocated funding from the Good Relations Action Plan and TEO Asylum Dispersal Fund. The main resource is a significant amount of Officer time around the management and governance of the funds as well as time spent procuring projects.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications

These proposals have strong good relations outcomes and complement the work being delivered through the Council's Good Relations Action Plan and the Belfast Agenda.

5.0 Evaluation and Monitoring Reporting Requirements

Internal projects are required to submit Belfast City Council Evaluation and Monitoring Forms. These forms must clearly demonstrate alignment with the aims and objectives of the Community Recovery Fund.

External projects must provide the following:

- **A Mid-Project Update**
- **A Final Project Report**

Both submissions are required to include Belfast City Council Evaluation and Monitoring Forms, which should reflect alignment with the aims and objectives of the Community Recovery Fund.”

After discussion, the Partnership noted the contents of the report and approved the proposed allocation of the funding relating to the ‘Community Recovery Fund – Open Call Projects’, which included the approach proposed for distributing funds from the Good Relations Action Plan and the TEO Asylum Dispersal Fund; and to support a further six eligible applications which were aligned with the objectives of the funding streams.

It was agreed also to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it endorse the aforementioned course of action.

(The Chairperson (Councillor Duffy) in the Chair.)

PEACE IV - Secretariat Update

Ms. McKinney reported that a reimbursement of £1,069,420 had been received in respect of the PEACE IV Period 36 claim for the ‘Shared Space and Services’ element. She added that no further claims remained outstanding from SEUPB, but that clarity was being sought regarding a financial correction applied previously to the Forth Meadow Community Greenway Artworks contract. As such, she advised that the formal closure of the programme had been paused until the aforementioned matter had been resolved.

Noted.

PEACEPLUS - BCC Local Action Plan – Update

The Partnership considered the undernoted 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 Belfast Local Community Peace Action Plan (LCAP).

2.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of the report and agree that Route 1F for the CRT4 – Access to the Hills path development starts at Fernhill House, subject to SEUPB approval

and delivery within the existing budget and recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report and agree the above recommendation.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Mobilisation

Mobilisation of the PEACEPLUS Action Plan is continuing, with progress and key actions summarised below.

3.2 Letter of Offer (LoO) and Project Implementation Conditions

Following SP&R agreement of the community breakdown in May 2025, the response to the Commencement Conditions has been submitted to the SEUPB. To progress formal contracting, SEUPB is to agree the Data Sharing Agreement (DSA), and a timeframe for agreement has been requested.

3.3 Programme Extension

As reported in May 2025, a preliminary approach has been made to SEUPB, however a formal modification request is to be submitted and can only be progressed once the formal contracting is completed.

3.4 Financial Controller

Details of Chief Officers are being collated to complete KPMG's onboarding process. Once completed, KPMG is to provide a proposal for the delivery of financial verification services.

Discussions with SEUPB on the framework, tender documentation and Council's contractual obligations are progressing.

3.5 Contract Awards

The contract for CCD2 Community Connections has been awarded to Gems NI. A realigned implementation timeframe, to address the delay in award, is to be submitted to Council.

3.6 Procurement

The self-declaration checks for CCD4 Community Empowerment Ex-Politically Motivated Prisoners and TPC3 Lot 4 Youth Empowerment are progressing. Clarifications associated with the assessment of Lot 2 of CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism is progressing, and the contract award is anticipated over coming weeks.

3.7 Feedback from the market on Lot 1 (Ulster Scots Heritage, Irish Language and Minority Languages) of the CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism project element, has now concluded. Feedback

indicates that the need for the project remains, and the content is relevant. As such, planning for the re-issue of the tender is progressing. Pre-market engagement is scheduled for 11 June 2025, and the tender to be advertised by 20 June 2025 with the contract award estimated in September 2025. Members should note this timeline is subject to confirmation with SEUPB, given their guidance to hold all above OJEU threshold procurements.

3.8 Mobilisation of Community Regeneration and Transformation (CRT)

The PQQ procurements for the Integrated Consultancy Services (Design) for all five projects have now closed and assessments are progressing. It is anticipated that the ITTs for all projects will be issued in June 2025.

Stakeholder meetings with local community organisations at each of the five project locations are progressing.

The revised animation timeline is being considered by SEUPB, which should enable a procurement strategy and timeline to be confirmed.

3.9 A minor modification to the proposed route for CRT4 Access to the Hills has been submitted for consideration:

CRT4 – Access to the Hills

The Feasibility study for the project identified a field boundary between Council and the National Trust (NT). This issue has been resolved and resulted in the NT taking on the development of the section.

This provides Council with scope to better develop route 1F from Fernhill House, which will help link Fernhill House to existing pathways along Forth Meadow Community Greenway. The Programme Board has considered this request and agreed that the route should start at Fernhill House. As such, the Shared City Partnership is requested to agree the start point in principle, subject to SEUPB approval and delivery within the existing budget.

3.10 Project Delivery

Delivery partners and projects are at various stages of implementation, and confirmation of delivery approaches have been submitted.

An overview of project progress was discussed at the Thriving and Peaceful Communities and Celebrating Culture and Diversity Thematic Steering Groups (TSG). Members should note that thematic reports on project delivery will be provided at future meetings.

Members are requested to note the approaches for delivery of the following projects:

- **CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism - Lot 4 Culture and Building Heritage** Concept plan for tours and events to be delivered as part of the project are outlined in Appendix 1 CCD5 Delivery Phase 1. The Programme Board has reviewed the concept plan and have recommended that the delivery partner considers activity to be delivered along Forth Meadow Community Greenway.
- **TPC1 Community Empowerment Programme**. The target areas for delivery of the 10 Local Community Empowerment Programmes (LCEPs) are outlined in Appendix 2. Delivery will focus on areas of deprivation with 7 programmes delivered in North/West and 3 in South/East of the city, which is reflective of the project and tender requirements, and the bid submission. The LCEPs are a 3-stage programme of facilitated support including a baseline of local community strengths and needs and the development and delivery of a local empowerment plan to build community capacity.

3.11 Governance

As referenced at 3.9 above, Thematic Steering Group (TSG) meetings took place 7 and 8 May 2025, respectively. The Terms of Reference for the TSG were agreed, and opportunities for collaboration, including linking with Council departments, such as Sports Development were highlighted and will be progressed.

As reported in May 2025, the governance of the Capital Project Board and Stakeholder Steering Groups for the CRT theme are being finalised and a further report will be submitted to members in due course.

3.12 Programme Communications

Project launches by delivery partners have progressed for TPC1 Community Empowerment (NICVA) and CCD5 Multiculturalism to Interculturalism Lot 4 – Shared Built Heritage (Arts Ekta) and TPC3 Youth Empowerment Lot 1 (Giga Training). The photocall launches were attended by members of the Shared City Partnership.

An article to promote the appointment of PEACEPLUS delivery partners and opportunities for residents to get involved in projects will be included in City Matters due for circulation in June 2025.

CCD5 Lot 4 – Culture & Building Heritage Delivery – Phase 1 Tours and Events

				Direct Participants		Wider Beneficiaries	
	Project Element		Month	No of participants	No of participants cumulative	No of wider beneficiaries	No of wider beneficiaries cumulative
EVENT SERIES	The Old Museum Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Herschel Print Lab Points, Puffs & Petticoats The History of High Tea 	June 25	30	30	40	40
TOURS SERIES	June Heritage Day Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast Alleyway Tour Belfast Beginnings North Belfast Heritage Trail Conway Mill Tour 	June 25	20	50	60	100
EVENT SERIES	Old Carnegie Library (Falls Road)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angels in Stone: A Gothic-Victorian Illustration Experience Mosaic Memories in Clonard Gardens Little Palaces 	Aug 25	30	80	20	120
TOURS SERIES	August Heritage Day Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rivers of Belfast Templemore Baths Sip & Stroll Baile Bhaile na mBráthar 	Aug 25	20	100	60	180
EVENT SERIES	Riddel's Warehouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metalworks & Memories Secrets of Riddel's Warehouse Maritime Market 	Sept 25	30	130	150	330
TOURS SERIES	September Heritage Day Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast Placenames Sailortown Tour Mary Ann McCracken: Forgotten Sister Tour Belfast Entries: Explore the Labyrinth 	Sept 25	20	150	60	390

EVENT SERIES	Craigavon House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventors of Belfast Preserves and Perseverance Forage and Feast 	Oct 25	30	180	90	480
TOURS SERIES	October Heritage Day Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding Foundries The Half Bap Crumlin Road Gaol Tour CS Lewis Walking Tour 	Oct 25	20	200	60	540
EVENT SERIES	Carlisle Memorial Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Echoes of a Victorian Christmas Candlelight Connections Victorian Winter Fayre 	Dec 25	30	230	290	830

Appendix 2 –

TPC 1- Local Community Empowerment Programme – Target Areas

Programmes	DEA	Wards	Lead Organisation
Programme 1	Court	Shankill/Highfield/Glencairn	Greater Shankill Partnership
Programme 2	Blackmountain	Whiterock/Upper Springfield/Beechmount	Falls Community Council
Programme 3	Colin	Colin Glen Twinbrook/Poleglass/Ladybrook	West Belfast Partnership Board
Programme 4	Court	Falls/Clonard	Falls Community Council
Programme 5	Oldpark	Crumlin/Cliftonville/Waterworks/New Lodge, Ardoyne, Ligoniel	Marrowbone Community Association
Programme 6	Castle	Duncairn	Marrowbone Community Association
Programme 7	Court	Woodvale/Crumlin	Greater Shankill Partnership
Programme 8	Balmoral/Botanic	Blackstaff/Shafesbury/Botanic	Forward South Partnership
Programme 9	Lisnasharragh/Ormiston/Titanic	Ballymacarrett/The Mount/Woodstock	East Belfast Community Development Agency
Programme 10	Balmoral/Botanic/Lisnasharragh/Ormiston/Titanic	Blackstaff/Shafesbury/Botanic/Ballymacarrett/The Mount/Woodstock	Forward South Partnership

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided within the report and adopted the recommendation therein regarding the 'Access to the Hills' project, with 'Route 1F' commencing at Fernhill House. It was agreed also to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it endorse the aforementioned course of action.

Update from Partnership Members

The Partnership noted that a number of upcoming PEACEPLUS and refugee awareness events would be taking place in Belfast over the coming weeks. The Committee Services Officer undertook to circulate details of the events to Members.

Any Other Business

- **PSNI Attendance at Meetings**

A Member referred to the minutes of the previous meeting when it had been noted that representatives of the PSNI had not attended meetings for several months. The Member stated that the summer period was a time when community relations could become strained and he sought an update in the matter.

The Good Relations Manager indicated that he had corresponded with the PSNI in relation to their attendance highlighting the importance of their role on the Partnership, but, as yet, he had not received a response and undertook to provide an update in due course.

- **Presentation by The Executive Office**

The Good Relations Manager reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 7th April, it had been agreed that an invitation be extended to representatives from The Executive Office to provide a presentation in respect of the Asylum Dispersal Funding and Refugee Integration Funding programmes. He reported that the representatives would attend the meeting scheduled to take place on Monday, 8th September.

- **Shared City Partnership – Members' Workshop**

The Good Relations Manager suggested that it would be beneficial if the Partnership agreed to meet at an outside venue to discuss and consider its strategic aims and objectives for the forthcoming year.

The Partnership agreed to the course of action outlined and noted that the workshop would be scheduled for after the summer period.

- **Last Meeting**

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Partnership, pointed out that the meeting was the last that would be attended by independent members Fr. Magill and Mr. Briggs and he thanked the representatives for their contributions throughout their term.

Chairperson



Page 253

Council's Climate Action Plan



Belfast
City Council



Climate Action Plan



- Context
- Purpose
- Structure and content
- Tracking progress

Page 254

Climate Action Plan



Aims to close the gap between BCC's current climate action and its ambition to be a net zero¹ and resilient Council

Includes actions to be delivered in the short term (by 2025), medium term (by 2030) and longer term (2030+)

All short-term actions have been mainstreamed into the Corporate Annual Delivery Plan for 2025-26

Going forward, the plan will be reviewed annually with priority actions brought forward by Departments for inclusion in the Council's Annual Delivery Plan

Ensures that the Climate Action Plan supports the delivery of the Annual Delivery Plan and that climate actions are resourced as part of the annual planning cycle

1 Net zero includes scope 1, 2 and 3, and focuses on the Council's own operations

71 climate actions

across

5 themes



Tools for Transition



Adaptation



Energy and Buildings



Transport



Waste Management

N. Ireland Climate Change Act 2022 – Public Body Reporting

The Northern Ireland Assembly passed its first ever climate change legislation in March 2022. The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 received Royal Assent on 6 June 2022 and sets out the legal framework for tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions for decades to come in Northern Ireland.

The Climate Change (Reporting Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024, which came into operation on the 3rd May 2024, set climate change reporting duties on specified public body organisations, which are listed within its Schedule. There are 40 public bodies listed in the Schedule and Belfast City Council is one of them. The regulations place reporting duties on the specified public bodies. These duties cover both adaptation and mitigation.

Mitigation – every 3 years

The first mitigation report is due first – **31st October 2025** and will include:

- a statement, in respect of each of the three preceding financial years, of the amounts and the sources of the Council's greenhouse gas emissions;
- a statement of the Council's proposals and policies for reducing those amounts and otherwise for mitigating the effects of climate change in the exercise of its functions;
- a statement of the time-scales for implementing those proposals and policies; and
- an assessment of the progress made towards implementing the proposals and policies set out in any previous climate change mitigation report.






Adaptation – Every 5 years

The first adaptation report is due first – **31st March 2025** and will include:

- an assessment of the current and predicted impact of climate change in relation to its functions;
- a statement of Council's proposals and policies for adapting to climate change in the exercise of its functions;
- a statement of the timescales for implementing those proposals and policies; and
- an assessment of the progress made towards implementing the proposals and policies set out in any previous climate change adaptation report.

Key climate actions to be delivered in the short-term

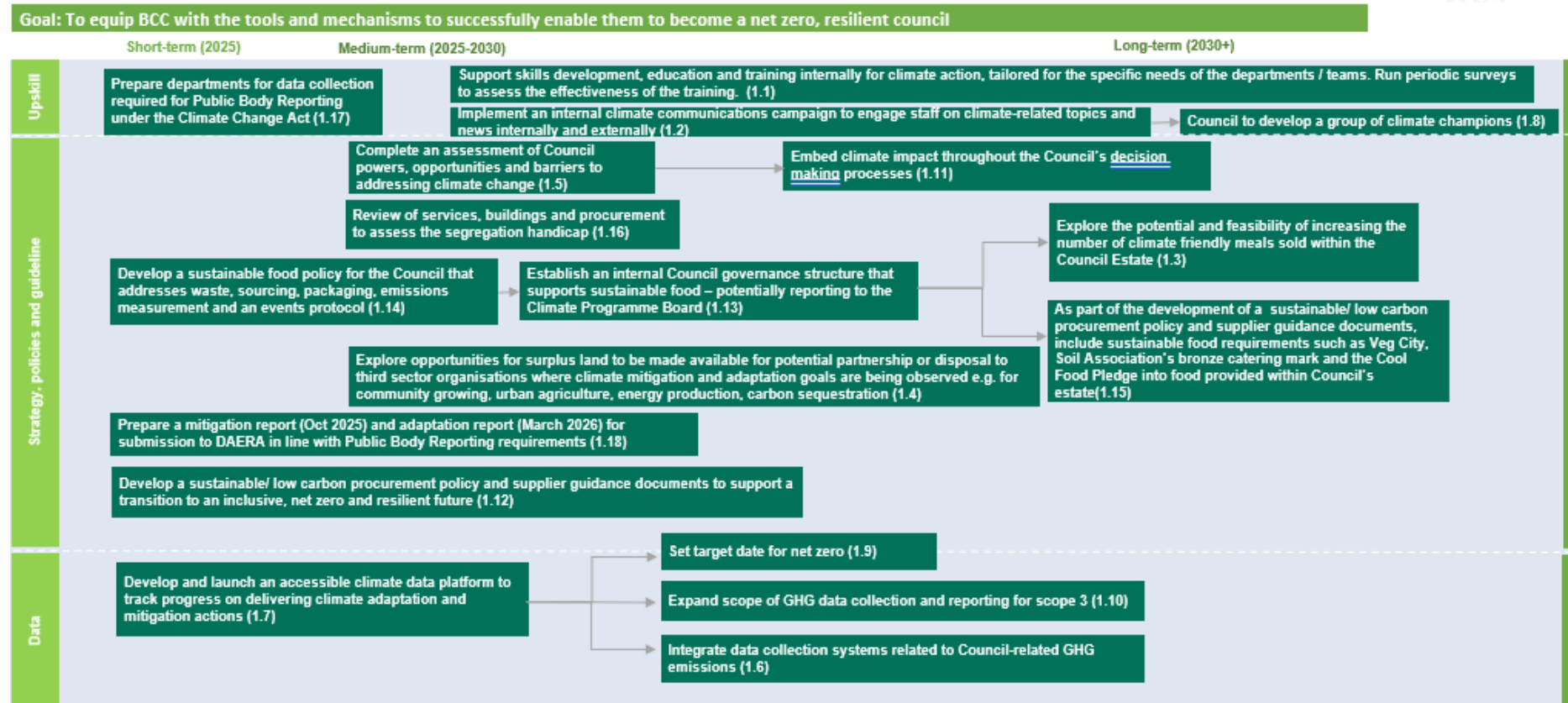
The CAP identifies priority short-term actions for each of the 5 themes which have been integrated into the draft Council’s Corporate Annual Delivery Plan 2025/26

<div><div>Tools for Transition</div><div></div><div><div>1. Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol (1.14)</div><div>2. Develop a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents to support a transition to an inclusive, net zero and resilient future (1.15)</div><div>3. Develop and launch an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions (1.7)</div><div>4. Prepare departments for data collection required for Public Body Reporting under the Climate Change Act (1.17)</div><div>5. Prepare mitigation report (Oct 2025) and adaptation report (March 2026) for submission to DAERA in line with Public Body Reporting requirements (1.18)</div></div></div>	<div><div>Adaptation and Resilience</div><div></div><div><div>1. Update the BCC Climate Risk Assessment in line with the new mandatory Public Body Reporting requirements (under the Climate Change Act) (2.2)</div><div>2. Apply SUDs policy and guidance (SUDS Manual C753) as standard practice in the Capital Programme (2.3)</div><div>3. Start to deliver the Tree Establishment Strategy and continue the One Million Trees Programme (2.19)</div></div></div>	<div><div>Energy and Buildings</div><div></div><div><div>1. Complete a second phase of building energy audits (3.3, 3.4)</div><div>2. Develop the integration of whole life carbon assessments as standard practice in the Capital Programme (3.8)</div><div>3. 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 (3.11)</div><div>4. Scope out a strategy to increase renewable and low-carbon energy use through corporate power purchase agreements (3.15)</div></div></div>	<div><div>Transport</div><div></div><div><div>1. 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 (4.1)</div><div>2. 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 (4.4)</div><div>3. Conduct a commercial assessment of Council land suitable for installing low emission vehicle (LEV) charging points (4.9)</div><div>4. Repurpose parking spaces for car clubs and cycle parking and integrate appropriate facilities to support active travel e.g. shower and changing facilities (4.10)</div></div></div>	<div><div>Waste Management</div><div></div><div><div>1. Continue to progress the proposal for a single use plastics policy for the Council (5.4)</div><div>2. Initiate an internal Council-level Waste Management Plan which aligns with the Waste Management Hierarchy and with an emphasis on green waste (5.3)</div><div>3. Develop a mechanism to track and report on internal Council generated waste (5.7)</div></div></div>
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1. Develop and launch an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions (1.7)
2. Develop a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents to support a transition to an inclusive, net zero and resilient future (1.12)
3. Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol (1.14)
4. Prepare departments for data collection required for Public Body Reporting under the Climate Change Act (1.18)
5. Prepare mitigation report (Oct 2025) and adaptation report (March 2026) for submission to DAERA in line with Public Body Reporting requirements (1.19)

Tools for Transition



Belfast City Council
Climate Action Tracker

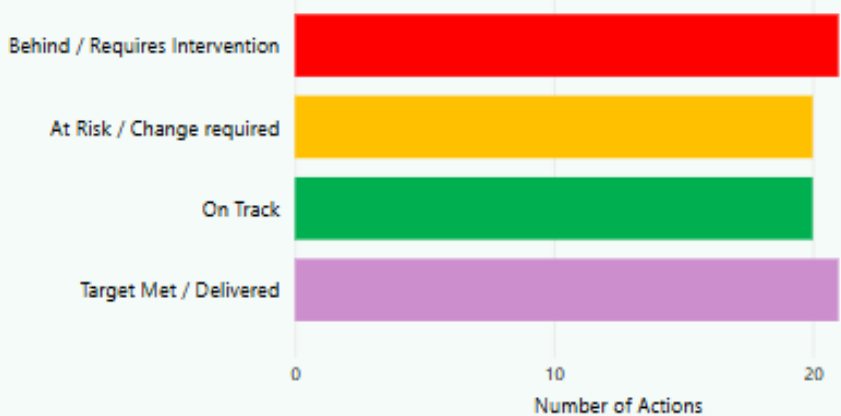


- Select all
- Adaptation Extreme Heat
- Adaptation Flooding
- Buildings
- Tools for the Transition
- Transport
- Waste

Number of Actions by Department



Number of Actions by Status



Action No.	Proposed Action	Status	Department	Comment
1.1	Support skills development, education and training internally for the net zero transition, tailored for the specific needs of the departments / teams. Run periodic surveys to assess the effectiveness of the training.	Behind / Requires Intervention	City and Organisational Strategy	No Comment
1.10.	Expand scope of GHG data collection and reporting for scope 3	On Track	City and Organisational Strategy	No Comment
1.11	Embed climate impact throughout the council's decision making processes	Target Met / Delivered	City and Organisational Strategy	No Comment
1.12	Update and align procurement policy and supplier guidance documents with the Net Zero transition and including a focus on circular economy (aligned with action 4.5)	At Risk / Change required	Finance and Resources	No Comment
1.13	Establish an internal Council governance structure that supports sustainable food, potentially reporting to the	Behind / Requires Intervention	City and Organisational Strategy	No Comment

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APPENDIX 3

Shared City Partnership

Community Recovery Fund – Update – June 2025

CRF001 – PCSP - Safer Neighbourhood Officer Community Engagement Project

Amount Allocated: £20,000

To support communities affected by the 2024 public disorder by providing direct assistance that safeguards life and property, alleviates suffering, and prevents future unrest, while fostering social trust, inclusion, and cohesion across Belfast.

Aims and Objectives

- Deploy Safer Neighbourhood Officers to provide visible reassurance in key areas.
- Tackle antisocial behaviour and hate crimes through community engagement and responsive policing.
- Support ethnic minority events to build trust and enhance safety.
- Promote social cohesion in diverse areas like the Wider University and Lower Ormeau.
- Encourage integration through targeted outreach.
- Deliver leadership and anti-racism workshops for ethnic minority groups.
- Strengthen relationships with Muslim, migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking communities.
- Collaborate with partners like PSNI, EMSONI, and Belfast City of Sanctuary for coordinated responses.
- Co-design inclusive community events that foster intercultural understanding.

Start Date of Project: Developmental work is ongoing, and it is anticipated that delivery will commence from July 2025

Completion: March 2026

CRF002 - Integration and Inclusion

Awarded to: Wheelworks

Amount Awarded: £29,400

The programme aims to promote diversity awareness, challenge stereotypes and misinformation, and support integration within communities. It targets teachers, Boards of Governors, community youth leaders, and young people, equipping them with tools to foster inclusion and counter hate. Key components include training programmes, interactive toolkits, workshops, and youth-led initiatives. The content focuses on understanding prejudice, critical thinking, cultural awareness, hate crime prevention, and relationship-building. Overall, it seeks to build cohesive, informed, and inclusive communities through education and engagement.

Start Date of Project: June 2025

Completion: March 2026

CRF003**Belfast City Council Community Centre Programme – Reaching Out****Amount Allocated: £30,000**

Funds have been allocated to the Community Development Department, who are currently planning local neighbourhood projects across both Council-run and independent community centres in Belfast. These initiatives and projects will be supported by a comprehensive communication campaign on the Belfast City Council website to promote inclusion and celebrate community engagement across all diverse communities.

Start Date of Project: Developmental work is ongoing, and it is anticipated that delivery will commence from August 2025

Completion: March 2026

CRF004 - Challenging the Narrative**Amount Allocated: £29,800****No submission for first quotation – Has been re-released with close date of 6 June 2025**

Quotations are required to outline a proposed programme titled "*Challenging the Narrative: Understanding Migration and Immigration*", to be delivered by March 2026 for beneficiaries in the Belfast City Council area. The programmes focus is to educate community leaders, statutory services, educators, and grassroots organisations on migration and immigration, aiming to reduce tensions, challenge hate and stereotypes, and foster integration—particularly in areas affected by hate crime following the July–August 2024 violence. It must include a comprehensive training package covering migration patterns, asylum journeys, forced migration, and the contributions of immigrants, while addressing trauma, bias, and misinformation. Migrant organisations must be actively involved in the design and delivery of the training, with clear roles outlined within the application.

CRF005 - Expansion of Schools of Sanctuary**Amount Awarded: £20,000**

The project has been awarded and the objective is to expand the number of Schools of Sanctuary in South and North Belfast, particularly in areas affected by recent racist incidents. The project seeks to:

- Promote social cohesion by making schools safer and more welcoming for asylum seekers, refugees, and other newcomers.
- Support school communities—including leaders, governors, parents, and students—in developing inclusive practices and anti-racism curriculum content.
- Foster partnerships between schools and local stakeholders to rebuild social trust and reduce the risk of future disorder.
- Provide leadership training and community engagement opportunities to ensure broad participation in the programme.
- Deliver family support services, including multilingual drop-in clinics, to assist with integration and community relations.

Start Date of Project: May 2025

Completion: March 2026

CRF006 – Belfast City Council, Economic Development - Business Mentoring, Engagement, and Integration Programme
Allocated Amount: £20,000

The aim of this initiative is to stimulate enterprise and support business growth in the WULO area through targeted investment from the Community Recovery Fund. With £20,000 available, the Enterprise and Business Growth Team seeks to engage the local community, encourage entrepreneurship as a pathway to employment, and provide tailored support to existing businesses. Objectives include delivering at least three business drop-in sessions, distributing promotional materials, and leveraging existing funded programmes while offering additional support to those not eligible for current services. This approach ensures inclusive access to mentoring, workshops, and business development resources.

Start Date of Project: April 2025
Completion: March 2026

CRF007 – WULO
Amount Allocated: £40,000

CRF007 - WULO – LORAG
Engaged Citizens
Amount Awarded - £15,000

The *Engaged Citizens* project seeks to enhance community cohesion, restore trust, and promote meaningful integration in the Wider University and Lower Ormeau area of Belfast. It aims to support communities impacted by racist hate crime and public disorder by creating inclusive spaces for dialogue, empowering residents to challenge harmful narratives, and celebrating cultural diversity through creative and participatory engagement.

Aims and Objectives

- Facilitate inclusive conversations on racism, hate speech, and extremism to build mutual understanding and respect among diverse community members.
- Train residents to serve as community ambassadors who actively welcome and support newcomers, fostering inclusive and resilient neighbourhoods.
- Develop and implement a community-led strategy to identify and counter misinformation and far-right narratives.
- Engage participants in a creative programme that highlights cultural identities and culminates in a public exhibition to showcase shared experiences.
- Partner with local organisations to ensure the project reflects lived experiences and addresses the needs of both migrant and host communities.
- Facilitate co-designed planning sessions to develop sustainable approaches for promoting inclusion and preventing future unrest.

Start Date: June 2025
Completion Date: March 2026

WULO - Forward South
Creating a shared vision through building a Shared Space
Amount Awarded - £15,000

Aims

This project seeks to build community cohesion, inclusion, and resilience in South Belfast in response to recent racist hate crimes and unrest. Forward South Partnership will lead:

- Storytelling workshops for children
- Community dialogue sessions
- Interactive discussions with unionist women on prejudice and misinformation

Objectives

Activities will take place in a new inclusive space, supporting services like the Roma Support Hub and social supermarket. The project will engage minoritised and migrant communities—especially in the Wider University and Lower Ormeau areas—through:

- Culturally sensitive programming
- Translation and interpretation support
- Collaborative planning with local partners

The goal is to foster dialogue, counter disinformation, and promote trust, empowerment, and a shared vision for an inclusive South Belfast.

Start Date: June 2025

Completion Date: March 2026

CRF008b - Focused Consortium Projects
Amount Allocated: £160,000

North Belfast
Greater Shankill Alternatives
Community Navigator Support Programme
Amount Awarded: £39,500

Aims

- Appoint a Community Navigator to connect newcomers with services.
- Run diversity and inclusion workshops in schools and communities.
- Distribute hate crime safety packs and awareness materials.
- Provide training on rights and responsibilities for newcomers and professionals.
- Conduct youth outreach during tense periods to promote safety.
- Foster ongoing support between host and migrant communities.

Objectives

- Support integration of ethnic minority and migrant communities.
- Raise awareness of rights, responsibilities, and services.
- Improve safety through hate crime prevention and support.
- Strengthen ties with agencies like PSNI, NIHE, and schools.
- Reduce tensions through targeted outreach.
- Amplify local voices, especially those with lived experience.

Start Date: June 2025

Completion Date: March 2026

South Belfast Consortium

Application is still pending.

West Belfast

Blackie River

Newcomer Family Liaison Project

Amount Awarded: £40,000

Aims

- Support and integrate migrant communities—particularly those affected by the racist hate crime and public disorder in West Belfast during July–August 2024.
- Promote social cohesion and rebuild trust between migrant, refugee, asylum-seeking, and host communities in the Greater Falls area.
- Prevent future disorder by addressing root causes of tension and misunderstanding through proactive community engagement.

Objectives

- Employ part-time Liaison Officer to engage with newly arrived families.
- Provide welcome packs with essential local information (e.g., services, bin collection, sports groups).
- Act as a point of contact between new families and community/statutory organisations.

Start Date: June 2025

Completion Date: March 2026

East Belfast

East Belfast Alternatives

Connswater Community Recovery Project

Amount Awarded: £39,400

Aims

- Promote dialogue, understanding, and collaboration across communities.
- Heal divisions from the 2024 unrest and foster community cohesion.
- Encourage shared experiences and mutual respect.
- Strengthen ties between host and migrant communities.
- Tackle root causes of conflict like racism, inequality, and misinformation.

Objectives

- Engage communities affected by the 2024 unrest, including Muslim, migrant, refugee, asylum, and host groups in East Belfast.
- Run community conversation courses on cultural exchange and public services.
- Revive the East Belfast Race Relations Network with better planning and representation.
- Support emerging leaders from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Use restorative youth programs and joint activities to build empathy.
- Offer welfare and housing support clinics.
- Host multi-sport sessions to promote integration.
- Partner with PSNI for hate crime awareness and trust-building.
- Organise educational visits across Northern Ireland for cultural learning.

Start Date: June 2025

Completion Date: March 2026

CRF008 – Open Call
Allocated Budget: £160,000

The recent Open Call received a total of 35 applications, requesting a combined amount of £558,819.00. All applications have been scored and reviewed, and funding allocations have been slightly reduced across the board to ensure better value for money and to enable support for a greater number of projects.

Please refer to Appendix 1, which outlines the 12 organisations we propose to fund through the Community Recovery Fund.

The high quality of received applications aligns well with our Good Relations Plan and the objectives of the Asylum Dispersal Fund. As detailed for your review in Appendix 2, we have aligned an additional six projects to these funding streams:

- 4 projects aligned with the Good Relations Action Plan (BCC5)
- 2 projects aligned with The Executive Office – Asylum Dispersal Fund

We respectfully request your consideration and approval of this approach, which will allow more organisations to deliver this essential work.

Please note that 17 organisations were not selected for funding due to funding limits.

CRF009 – Hate Crime Hardship Programme
Belfast City Council – PCSP
Amount Allocated: £20,000

The initiative's aim is to offer practical support to people who have been victims of hate crime. Working through the Belfast PCSP's Home Security Service, sensitive referral mechanisms are being developed with appropriate organisations, PCSP, PSNI and Bryson to ensure victims are offered support services and practical measures to improve their personal safety at home.

Groups to be engaged include:

- Association Darfur NI
- Sudanese Community Association NI
- Flowers of Belfast
- Afghan Community
- Eritrean Community
- Happy Women's Group
- Belfast City of Sanctuary
- NI Somali Association

Start Date of Project: Developmental work is ongoing, and it is anticipated that delivery will commence from July 2025
Completion: March 2026

CRF - Total Number of Application Received and Allocation after Assessment

<u>TOTAL CRF Application</u>				
<u>558,819.17</u>				
<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Amount Awarded</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Fund</u>
ACSONI	20,000.00	17,900.00	Belfast Wide	CRF
Annadale Community Centre	18,900.00	18,400.00	S Belfast	CRF
Voicing the Void	20,000.00	19,600.00	Belfast Wide	CRF
Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum	12,730.00	11,900.00	N Belfast	CRF
Include Youth	20,000.00	18,800.00	Belfast Wide	CRF
Dreamscheme NI	8,160.00	8,160.00	S Belfast	CRF
NI Food to Go	20,000.00	16,400.00	Belfast Wide	CRF
West Belfast Partnership Board	20,000.00	16,000.00	W Belfast	CRF
NISA	12,885.00	11,385.00	Belfast Wide	CRF
Market Development Association	18,844.00	16,000.00	S Belfast	CRF
Rosario Youth Club	17,868.44	17,668.44	S Belfast	CRF
Feile an Phobail	20,000.00	18,500.00	W Belfast	CRF
<u>TOTAL CRF</u>	<u>209,387.44</u>	<u>190,713.44</u>		
-	-	-		
<u>Proposed fund ADF</u>				
Upper Andersonstown Community Forum	9,545.00	7,150.00	W Belfast	ADF
Donegal Pass Community Enterprises	18,400.00	16,600.00	S Belfast	ADF
-	<u>27,945.00</u>	<u>23,750.00</u>		
<u>TOTAL ADF</u>	-			
-	-			
<u>Proposed fund GR</u>				
Ashton Centre	20,000.00	17,250.00	N Belfast	GR
Belfast City of Sanctuary	17,766.00	13,300.00	Belfast Wide	GR
Artsektra	17,800.00	14,900.00	Belfast Wide	GR

The Commons - Ballynafeigh	14,680.00	12,448.00	S Belfast	GR
TOTAL GR	70,246.00	57,898.00		
-	-			
-	-			
Not funded				
Diverse Youth	20,000.00	0.00	Belfast Wide	N/A
Refuge Language	13,943.75	0.00	Belfast Wide	N/A
Whiterock Children and Family Centre	3,262.00	0.00	W Belfast	N/A
Migrants at Work	20,000.00	0.00	Belfast Wide	N/A
Falls Community Council	20,000.00	0.00	W Belfast	N/A
Family Comfort NI	12,765.00	0.00	W Belfast	N/A
Cliftonville Community Centre	10,420.00	0.00	N Belfast	N/A
EBM	19,999.98	0.00	E Belfast	N/A
Rangers FC	18,120.00	0.00	S Belfast	N/A
Castle Community Trust	2,800.00	0.00	N Belfast	N/A
I Assist NI	20,000.00	0.00	Belfast Wide	N/A
Connswater Community and Leisure Services	17,550.00	0.00	E Belfast	N/A
174 Trust	13,740.00	0.00	N Belfast	N/A
BCT NI - Ardoyne Youth Club	7,950.00	0.00	N Belfast	N/A
Afghan Community	20,000.00	0.00	Belfast Wide	N/A
EMSONI	19,750.00	0.00	Belfast Wide	N/A
Black and Minority Ethnic Women's Network	10,940.00	0.00	Belfast Wide	N/A
	251,240.73	-	-	



Subject:	Maternity Pay Provisions
Date:	20 June 2025
Reporting Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources
Contact Officer:	Eamonn Neeson, Principal HR Advisor (Employee Relations)

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%; 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 type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	At the SP&R committee on 23 August 2024, the Committee requested that a paper be brought back setting out the Council's maternity pay provisions and benchmarking undertaken against other organisations in the public and private sectors.

1.2	This report informs Committee of the Council's maternity pay provisions and comparisons with a selection of organisations as outlined at Appendix 1.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Statutory Maternity Leave and Pay</p> <p>Maternity leave and pay provisions are a statutory entitlement for any pregnant employee. All employees are entitled to 52 weeks maternity leave. This consists of 26 weeks ordinary maternity leave and 26 weeks additional maternity leave. Entitlement to maternity leave is not dependent upon length of service of an employee.</p> <p>Employees are entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) provided they have at least 26 weeks service with their employer prior to the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) and they are earning, on average, an amount which at least equals the lower earnings limit which applies on the Saturday at the end of your qualifying week. The lower earnings limit is currently £125 a week.</p> <p>Provided an employee meets the criteria above Statutory Maternity Pay is paid for the first 39 weeks of maternity leave only and comprises of the following payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the first six weeks at 90 per cent of average gross weekly earnings with no upper limit. • for the remaining 33 weeks at the lowest of either the standard rate of £187.18* or 90 per cent of your average gross weekly earnings. <p>(Average weekly earnings are an employee's average earnings for the eight weeks prior to the qualifying period. The qualifying period is the 15th week before the baby is due).</p> <p><small>*this is the lower limit SMP and is set by government on an annual basis</small></p>
3.2	<p>BCC Occupational Maternity Pay</p> <p>While statutory maternity pay is the minimum an employee is entitled to, many organisations provide additional Occupational Maternity Pay. In the Council the rates of occupational maternity pay are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the first six weeks of maternity leave the employee will be entitled to 9/10ths of a week's pay offset against payment made by way of SMP.

- For the subsequent 12 weeks the employee will be entitled to half a week's pay plus SMP. If this figure exceeds an employee's normal pay, they will be paid full pay.
- For the subsequent 21 weeks the employee will be paid SMP only.
- Any maternity leave extending beyond the 39 weeks and up to 52 weeks will be unpaid.

It should be noted that the Council affords the employee an opportunity to have these payments spread across the period of maternity leave.

Therefore, the Council enhances the statutory maternity pay by providing the higher amount for the first six weeks where 9/10ths of a weeks' pay exceeds SMP and further additional payments at a rate of half a weeks pay plus the SMP for the subsequent 12 weeks. This is in line with the current conditions as set out in the NJC National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (Green Book).

3.3

Comparisons with Other Organisations

Benchmarking was undertaken against a number of other organisations' maternity pay provisions and a summary of these is included at appendix 1.

All organisations benchmarked had an occupational / company maternity scheme which provided enhanced payments for some period of time during the 39 weeks of maternity pay.

Local Councils, (seven of whom, provided maternity policies for this benchmarking exercise), the Education Authority, the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service and the NI Housing Executive are like the Council, governed by NJC terms and conditions of service and provide the same enhanced provisions as Belfast City Council.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service provides maternity pay at a rate of full pay for the first 18 weeks of maternity leave, with the remaining 21 weeks paid at SMP only. Weeks 40 – 52 are unpaid.

Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, provide the same maternity pay provisions as per the Civil Service.

	<p>With regard to private sector companies, KPMG, provide 18 weeks normal monthly salary, while Marks and Spencer and Tesco both provide 26 weeks at full pay followed by 13 weeks at SMP only.</p> <p>Local organisation, Kainos, provide an enhanced company maternity pay of 13 to 20 weeks full pay. Details of the criteria used to determine how many weeks full pay an individual may receive were not available.</p> <p>The benchmarking indicates that some organisations provide an enhanced maternity pay packages to qualifying employees. All organisations provide payment over and above the statutory rate for the first 39 weeks of maternity leave.</p> <p>It should be noted that during the half pay period (weeks 7 – 18), Council do continue to pay normal pay to the employee and this will include any contractual allowances an employee receives as a part of normal pay, e.g. shift allowance, weekend enhancements, essential car user allowance etc.</p> <p>Furthermore, given that SMP is not paid pro-rata to hours worked, some employees who may work part-time and/or be on lower income can receive an amount equivalent to or close to full pay for this period.</p>
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.4	There are no additional finance or resource implications relating to this report.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.5	There are no equality or good relations implications relating to this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Maternity Pay Provisions Benchmarking outcomes

Appendix 1.

Maternity Pay Provisions – benchmarked organisations

ORGANISATION	MATERNITY PAY PROVISIONS
Belfast City Council	As outlined at 3.1 in main report
Derry City and Strabane District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
Ards and North Down Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
NI Fire & Rescue Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
NI Housing Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
Education Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per Belfast City Council
NI Civil Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 weeks at full contractual rate of pay 21 weeks at SMP only
Queen's University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeks 1 – 18, full pay Weeks 19 – 39, lower rate SMP Weeks 40-52, unpaid
Ulster University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normal pay / salary for a period of 18 weeks SMP for next 21 weeks No pay for 13 weeks
Marks and Spencer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeks 1-6: either full pay or 90% of average earnings (whichever is the highest) Week 7-26: full basic pay Weeks 27-39: either SMP or 90% of average earnings (whichever is the lowest) Weeks 40-52: No pay entitlement
Tesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 weeks at full pay followed by 13 weeks at the lower rate of Statutory Maternity Pay
KPMG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normal monthly salary for the first 18 weeks SMP for the next 21 weeks

Kainos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced company maternity and paternity pay on completion of probationary period – 13 to 20 weeks full pay for maternity
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Subject:	Diversity Action Plans
Date:	20 June 2022
Reporting Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Head 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"/>								
<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: 50px;" 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	To agree the budget and appropriate resources for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) and LGBTQIA+ Action Plan year 2 activities.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree the proposed diversity action plans and associated year 2 costs.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Our Equality and Diversity Action Plan outlines how we will promote equality and diversity in our ambitions to create a city in which people love to live, learn, invest, work and visit. It also contributes to our compliance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Actions are categorised under the following corporate plan priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing an inclusive economy • Living here • Cross cutting • Organisational priorities
3.2	<p>As part of the Equality and Diversity Action Plan the Council has committed to developing and delivering a Gender Action Plan, LGBT+ Action Plan and a Race Equality Action Plan. The three year Gender Action Plan and LGBTQIA+ Action Plan were approved at SP&R Committee in October 2024. Actions for Year 2 (2025/26) for both plans have been costed and are being presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval.</p>
3.3	<p>Gender Action Plan (GAP)</p> <p>Gender inequalities are deeply embedded in our social, economic and cultural systems. There is overwhelming evidence that women disproportionately experience disadvantage and discrimination, a reflection of historical unaddressed inequality, but also that inequalities have been exacerbated by austerity, welfare reform and by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics affirm the persistence of gendered inequalities, which continue to inhibit women's life opportunities in Northern Ireland. Men will benefit from gender equality as they too face gender-specific issues such as lower life expectancy, bad health, lower education levels and are impacted negatively by rigid gender norms.</p>
3.4	<p>The GAP 24-27 was agreed following consultation with the Women's Steering Group and the Women's Network Group. Achievements in 2024/25 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the annual International Women's Day event for staff in City Hall with a focus on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls • Ongoing financial support to raise awareness of the Raise Your Voice to help address misogyny, sexual harassment and violence • Funding and delivery of a programme of development for the Women's Network Group covering leadership and development, resilience, leading meetings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing in a Political Environment Training - for all relevant officers • Retention of the NI Gender Diversity Chartermark - Silver level (work continues towards Gold level) • Onus Domestic Violence Charter (employer award) – retained Platinum level • Onus Safe City Accreditation - retained • Funding provided for external International Women’s Day event in city centre • Women’s Spaces event to promote work of WSG and the Gender Action Plan • Targeting of Employment and Upskilling Academies to women in low paid (female dominate) sectors including the provision of childcare
3.5	<p>Year 2 actions are set out in Appendix One. In addition to the financial resources required, the plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan. Chief officers are asked to allocate the necessary resources to ensure delivery of the actions or ensure where appropriate that actions are incorporated into existing projects and work plans.</p>
3.6	<p>LGBTQIA+ Action Plan</p> <p>The LGBTQIA+ Action Plan for 2024-27, was developed in collaboration with the staff network “Proud” and this is also being presented, with costs for Year 2, for approval. Please see Appendix Two. The plan has been developed to ensure that our organisational culture and working environment allows staff to feel comfortable to be their whole selves at work and that policies and practices empower talent development at all levels and the removal of any form of discrimination. It also aims to increase the understanding of the wider workforce of issues facing the LGBTQIA+ communities.</p>
3.7	<p>Achievements in 2024/25 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQIA+ inclusion and awareness training • LGBTQIA+ awareness training for senior leaders • Delivery of unconscious bias training • Fundraising bake sale with WNG and ABLE staff network • Transgender Day of Remembrance • Collaboration with staff network groups in other employers - lunch and learn session • Mental Health First Aid for Proud network members • Continued promotion, visibility and growth of staff network • Participation in Belfast Pride

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Planning Day • LGBTQIA Heritage walk • The display of Rainbow and Trans flags and lighting up of City Hall.
3.8	<p>Disability Action Plan</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (“DDA”) Section 49 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons, and to the need to encourage participation by disabled persons in public life. Our current Plan runs, approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and reported on annually, runs from 2022 until 2025.</p>
3.9	<p>There are many ‘live’ actions still being delivered which fall under the Disability Action Plan 2022-25. Engagement with key stakeholder groups on the new Disability Action Plan from 2025 has also commenced. Central to this engagement is understanding the needs of disabled people in Belfast. This information will be combined with statistical data to develop an increased understanding of the actions Council can take, both strategically and operationally. The improvements being made will inform closer alignment of the statutory duties with the corporate planning cycle through establishing more defined outcomes for all nine equality groups including disability.</p>
3.10	<p>Members will be aware of the approval for a workshop to explore options for an Accessible City by 2025, with a key focus being inclusion of disabled people. The workshop is scheduled to take place in Autumn 2025, to align with the formal public consultation on the Disability Action Plan, as required by our statutory duties.</p>
3.11	<p>Detail on all of the actions delivered as part of the Disability Action Plan, the Gender Action Plan and the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan are included in the annual report to the Equality Commission due in August 2025.</p>
3.12	<p>Race Equality Action Plan</p> <p>Following one-to-one coaching facilitated by Dr Lucy Michael to identify and develop appropriate departmental actions, CMT has now agreed Race Equality Actions for 2025/26. The director of City and Organisational Strategy, SRO for the Race Equality Action Plan is working with Dr Michael to finalise a full report for Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p>

	Financial & Resource Implications
3.13	The cost of delivery of the proposed Gender Action Plan year 2 activities is estimated at £35,500. The cost of delivery of the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan year 2 is estimated at £9600. Both plans will be met from the existing Organisational Development budget.
3.14	The plan also identifies the role that individual business units and departments have in delivery of the plan.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.15	The delivery of the Gender and the LGBT+ Action Plans will result in positive outcomes. The promotion of equality and diversity entails more than the elimination of discrimination, it requires proactive action. The actions contained within both plans will not only impact on internal operations but also have a positive impact externally on women and men and the LGBT+ community in our city.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix One - Gender Action Plan for 2024-27 - Year 2
	Appendix Two - LGBTQIA+ Action Plan 2024-27 -Year 2

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Appendix One

GENDER ACTION PLAN 2024 – 2027 (Year 2) - DRAFT

Year 2 April 2025 to March 2026

Year 3 April 2026 to March 2027

Gender inequalities are deeply embedded in our social, economic, and cultural systems. There is overwhelming evidence that women disproportionately experience disadvantage and discrimination. Please see attached Appendix A. This is a reflection of historical unaddressed inequality, but inequalities have also been exacerbated by austerity, welfare reform and by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the 25 years since the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement's commitment to the 'full and equal participation of women in public life', statistics affirm the persistence of gendered inequalities, which continue to inhibit women's life opportunities in Northern Ireland. Men will also benefit from gender equality as they too face gender-specific issues including lower life expectancy, bad health and lower education levels and are impacted negatively by rigid gender norms.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE COUNCIL to ensure that Belfast City Council organisational culture, policies and practices empower talent development at all levels, for elected members and officers alike, and remove any form of discrimination			
Action	Year	Who	Budget year 2
Fund and develop a programme of events for Women's Network Group	2, 3	WNG	£4,000
Hold annual IWD and IMD events/celebrations for staff	2, 3	HR WNG	£6,000
Prepare for NI Diversity Chartermark assessment with the goal of attaining Gold level accreditation	2	HR	£3,500
Ensure effective promotion of Belfast City Council as an employer that values and supports equality and diversity (interlink, external website, job information for potential applicants, media releases, City Matters, social media.)	Ongoing	HR P&E MarComms Staff networks	Staff resources
Retain Onus Domestic Violence Charter 'platinum level' status by continuing to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse issues, support staff	2,3	HR	£2,000

experiencing domestic violence and abuse and ensure employees know what support is available			
Increase awareness of sexual harassment and violence against women and girls through promotion of the Raise Your Voice campaign and in particular for male employees	2,3	Corporate HR	£3,000
Review and relaunch and recommunicate gender /family friendly policies.	2, 3	HR	Staff resources
Deliver activity to develop skills for working in a political environment - e.g., mock committee, CMT and DMT sessions, Managing in a Political Environment course	2, 3	HR Democratic Services	Staff resources
Clarify criteria and better promote women's development opportunities and programmes.	2, 3	Corporate HR	Staff Resources
PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE COMMUNITY with the purpose of increasing the representation of women in leadership positions throughout communities across Belfast by ensuring that processes are in place to increase women's involvement in decision making in communities			
Fund annual external IWD event.	Ongoing	CHR	£10,000
Hold a series of events for female elected members to promote work of WSG, GAP and engage with women in their constituencies.	2,3	HR Depts	£2,000
Work with TEO to deliver Strategic Framework to EVAWG	2,3	All depts	Staff resources
Hold an event for WSG/ WNG to engage with the Youth Council and to identify opportunities for future collaboration on gender issues	2,3	HR WSG CNS / YF	£1,000
PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECONOMY to ensure all council policies and strategies influence and facilitate the active and fair participation of both women and men in the economy			
Review frontline job opportunities including apprenticeships, and associated working arrangements and facilities, to make these opportunities more attractive to female applicants.	Ongoing	CNS HR Place and Economy MarComms	Staff resources / Employment Academies

Deliver targeted employability outreach to get more women into work by promoting Belfast City Council role models			
<p>Enterprise support for underrepresented groups – Belfast City Council offers a programme of support to enable underrepresented groups (including women) to overcome the barriers to starting a business or accessing employment opportunities.</p> <p>Working in partnership with a range of organisations across the city we will put in place targeted interventions to engage women in this support and engage female entrepreneurs in business start-up activity, helping them to develop ideas and create networks to support them to start a business.</p> <p>Through the Enterprise Support Service (Go Succeed) we are working towards a target of 50% of female led organisations supported through the service. If successful, this will equate to 419 female start-ups and 190 growth potential female-led businesses supported in 25/26.</p>	2	Enterprise and Business Growth	£207,207 (indicative pro-rata spend based on female engagement through community outreach and mentoring)
<p>Employability support for underrepresented groups – Belfast City Council programme of support to enable underrepresented groups (including women) to overcome the barriers to accessing employment opportunities through the delivery of Employment and Upskilling Academies.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement with women-specific provision to encourage and actively support women into under-represented sectors through access to Employment Academies in fibre, tech, logistics/transport and construction as well as business services, health and social care and working with children. - Upskilling Academies for those in low paid employment in female-dominated sectors (education, health and social care, working with children sectors) which include Level 2 through to Level 5 qualifications to enable people to access better jobs within these sectors. - Active barrier-removal to participation on Employment Academies – such as embedding childcare provision, travel and subsistence expenses etc. 	2,3	Employability and Skills	£450,000 (indicative spend pro rata, based on female engagement in Employment Academies)

Develop understanding of gender budgeting and how it might be applied in BCC - for directors, finance officers and Belfast Agenda team	2	HR Finance CMT	£1000
PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CITY to ensure that the needs of women across the city are identified and used to influence and impact upon the regeneration of the city including social infrastructure design and community facilities provision			
As part of the ongoing baseline audit of all council assets, determine if our assets meet the needs of all genders and that gender needs are considered as part of the development of any new council asset.	2, 3	Property and Projects Department C&NS Place & Economy Dept	Staff resources Potential cost if additional works required
Working in partnership Queen's University Belfast and other stakeholders, we will design and develop interventions that help to end Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in public spaces in Belfast and help change attitudes, behaviours and social and cultural norms. Included in this initiative is data collection on users, development of gender inclusive engagement practices and embedding co-design at the earliest stages. We will work together to host workshops with women girls and other stakeholders to 'sense check' the proposed policies and interventions and develop an action plan with stakeholders to end VAWG in public spaces in Belfast.	2	Property and Projects Department C&NS Place & Economy Dept	Externally funded project
Work with city partners to retain Onus Safe City status by funding training and awareness raising across the city.	2,3	HR CNS ONUS and other external partners	£3,000 + PCSP resource
Work with the TEO to implement The Period Products (Free Provision) Act 2022	2,3	Facilities	TEO funded
Enhance our engagement process to ensure that women and girls are given the opportunity to participate in the consultation on capital projects from the earliest stage to ensure better outcomes.	Ongoing	Property and Projects Department	Staff resources

Carry out research into developing a set of guidelines with women and girls in mind in relation to the design of capital projects.	2,3	Property and Projects Department	Staff resources
Total draft plan for Year 2			£35,500

Appendix A - Gender Inequality in N Ireland 2024

1. Women's Employment, Austerity, Poverty and the Gender Pay Gap

- In the most recent NISRA statistical bulletin, which covers 2020-21, statistics show that women are more than 2.5 times less likely to be **self-employed than men**. Women are also more likely to be **part-time workers** than men and this gap is particularly pronounced when they are parents, with 60% of mothers and 94% of fathers working full time. This is further reflected in the **relative earnings and career progression** of women; fewer women than men received earnings above the Real Living Wage (by 5 percentage points) and women also reported lower levels of opportunities for career progression (by 9pps).ⁱ This gap is due in part to women accounting for three quarters of all part-time workers, as part-time work tends to be low paid.ⁱⁱ
- A NISRA survey of employee earnings in Northern Ireland in 2022 reported that “The **gender pay gap** for all employees (regardless of working pattern) in NI is in favour of males. Median hourly earnings (excluding overtime) for females (£12.82) was 4% below those for males (£13.99).ⁱⁱⁱ
- The majority of complaints of discrimination received by the Equality Commission NI relate to **sex discrimination**; with many relating to **pregnancy or maternity**. Complaints to the Commission of **sexual harassment in the workplace** have risen significantly from an average of 14% of complaints per year to 22% in 2022.^{iv}
- Women are 7 times as likely to be **economically inactive due to looking after the home or family**. This rises to 10 times more likely when comparing women and men in their 30s.^v 81% of carers in Northern Ireland are women.^{vi}
- Only **7%** of disabled people are in **employment** and **disabled** women earn **22.1% less** than able-bodied men, and 11.8% less than disabled men^{vii}. Covid significantly worsened this data, with a disproportionate number of disabled women being furloughed or laid off and **58% of disabled mothers reported struggling to make ends meet** (compared to 38% of non-disabled mothers).^{viii}
- Women have **70%** chance of providing **care** in their adult life; compared to 60% for men. By the time they are 46, **half of all women** have been a carer (11 years before men)^{ix x}

- In 2020 it was estimated that **austerity** since 2010 will have cost **women** a total of **£79bn**, against £13bn for men. It showed that, by 2020, men will have borne just 14% of the total burden of welfare cuts, compared with **86% for women**^{xi}. While these statistics have not yet been updated, they are indicative of the state of affairs before the impact of Covid and the cost of living crisis were factored in.
- The group with the highest poverty throughout and worst impacted by welfare reform and the Cost of Living Crisis have been **lone parents**^{xii} in Northern Ireland; of which **93% are women**^{xiii} an increase since 2020.
- Hunger and **foodbank** use disproportionately impacts women, as women are twice as likely to be food insecure as men and **lone parent households account for 18% of referrals to food banks**, as opposed to 8% of the population as a whole^{xiv}.
- **Disabled single mothers** are losing the most from these tax and benefit changes since 2010. By 2021, they had **lost 21%** of their net **income** if they did not have a disabled child and 32% if they did have a disabled child too. 1/3 of this loss is due to **Universal Credit**^{xv}.
- Women are more likely to need access to **Discretionary Support grants** and accounted for 67% of recipients; this is going to be harder to access due to budget cuts in the year 2023-24 and will have a knock-on effect on poverty.^{xvi}
- Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK without a government-funded **Childcare** Provision. **Lone parents** and families with a **disabled child** are less likely to be able to afford formal childcare and face further barriers to employment.^{xvii}
- **Rural** women suffer further due to the centralisation of services and access poverty; only **1.3%** of government funding for women's groups goes towards rural women, a decrease of 10% from 2006.^{xviii}

2. Violence Against Women & Girls

- From Jan 2023 – Dec 2023 there were 33, 071^{xix} recorded **domestic abuse incidents** in Northern Ireland. This represents an increase on the previous 12 months of 0.4 % (or 144 incidents).
- From Jan 2023 – Dec 2023 there were 20, 691^{xx} recorded **domestic abuse crimes** recorded in Northern Ireland. This represents a decrease on the previous 12 months of 7.1 % (or 1,590 incidents).
- In 2022/2023 there were 8^{xxi} domestic abuse related homicides in Northern Ireland.
- In 2022/23 **crimes with a domestic abuse motivation** represented 20%^{xxii} of all recorded crime.

To contextualise these figures, statistical trends for domestic violence have been on an upwards trajectory since 2004. For example, domestic abuse crimes were more than two and a quarter times higher in 2022/23 than in 2004/05.

- From Jan 2023 – Dec 2023 there were 4,184^{xxiii} **recorded sexual offences** in Northern Ireland. Of this total number of sexual offences, 1,186^{xxiv} were **reports of rape**.
- From Jan 2023 – Dec 2023 there were 4,153 **recorded offences of stalking and harassment in Northern Ireland**. The new offences below above have contributed to a rise in stalking and harassment statistics.

- **New offences:** The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceeding Act (Northern Ireland 2001) was amended to **include coercive and controlling behaviour**, emotional and economic abuse. These offences are recorded as part of the stalking and harassment classification and recording began in Feb 2022. The Protection from Stalking Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 created offences to provide protection from stalking and threatening behaviour. These offences are recorded as part of the stalking and harassment classification and recording began in April 2022.

3. *Politics, Public Life, Peacebuilding and Decision-Making*

- In NI politics, women represent **45% of Lord Mayors^{xxv}** in the year 2023-24, **31% of Local Councillors^{xxvi}**, **37% of MLAs^{xxvii}** and just **22% of MPs**.
- In Public Appointments, the most recent statistics from 2022 show that women represent **23% of Chairs** and **38% of all Public Appointments** – a lower figure than when these statistics were last gathered.^{xxviii}
- Following the appointment of Lady Chief Justice Siobhán Keegan, women represent **100% of Lady Chief Justice** but **0% of Lord Justices of Appeal**, just **9% of High Court Judges** and **26% of County Court Judges**.^{xxix} Aside from the highest position being held by a woman, all of these statistics are remarkably lower than when this data was last gathered.
- In the PSNI, **zero women** hold the position of **Chief or Deputy Chief Constable** and only **20% are Assistant Chief Constables^{xxx}**. Women represent **32% of police officers** and **57% of all PSNI staff^{xxxi}**.
- In the Civil Service, although a woman is now the head of the NI Civil Service women represent **11% of Permanent Secretaries**; **35% of Senior Civil Servants** and **50% of the total NICS workforce**.^{xxxii}
- In the Education Sector, women represent **25% of University Chancellors** or Pro/Deputy Vice Chancellors, **33.33% of FE College Principals** and **61% of School Principals**; despite **77% of all teachers** being women^{xxxiii}.
- In the Health and Social Care Sector, women make up **78% of all staff** as of 2023^{xxxiv} but just **40% of Trust Chairs** and **80% of Trust CEOs** which represents a considerable improvement on the last time this data was gathered.
- In Local Government, women are just **27% of Council CEOs** although, in the most recently available statistics, they represent **42% of the workforce^{xxxv}**.

4. *Equality*

Given the statistics outlined above, it is necessary that these hard-fought rights currently at risk are protected *and* enhanced. Some of the rights achieved through EU membership include **equality** between men and women^{xxxvi}, the right to **equal pay** for equal work^{xxxvii}, protection against **discrimination** on the ground of **pregnancy** and **maternity^{xxxix}**, creating measures to provide specific advantages to the **underrepresented gender^{xl}**, prohibition of discriminations on the **grounds of sex^{xli}** and the introduction of **paid holidays^{xlii}**.

Thankfully, **Article 2 of the Windsor Framework** is set up to ensure no diminution of rights, and a **Dedicated Mechanism Unit** has been set up jointly by the

Equality Commission and the Human Rights Commission to monitor this. Despite this, the erosion and potential further erosion of rights across the UK does put rights at risk everywhere in the UK and the fears and **concerns of women in Northern Ireland around the outworkings of Brexit** are catalogued in a recent report by the Equality Commission^{xliii}.

Further rights at risk include:

- The **removal** of the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** from all applications in UK law and judiciary systems. Whilst the UK government would still be required to abide by the **European Convention of Human Rights** (ECHR), the removal of the EU Charter is deeply worrying as it has a much broader level of protection for human rights^{xliiv}.
- Existing EU case law through the **Court of Justice of the European Union** can now be **overturned** in future cases in UK courts and a department from current jurisprudence may lead to a divergence on human rights standards on either side of the border in NI.
- The EU human rights framework is much more robust than the **UK Human Rights Act**, however, the **removal** of both the **Human Rights Act** and the **EU Charter** will make it much more difficult for people to access their rights through the courts, as the **ECHR** is nowhere near as broad or strong as a standalone human rights framework.
- The **Retained EU Law Bill** has already impacted the rights of many in Britain and there have been recent discussions by politicians including the Prime Minister about the possibility of leaving the **European Convention on Human Rights**. This would have a devastating impact on all citizens in the UK, not least because it is the basis upon which the **Belfast/Good Friday Agreement** is built.

In the context of the devolved NI Assembly which has not been operational during 5 of the last 7 years and which has still not adopted a Programme for Government for this term following its return, 'New Decade, New Approach'^{xliiv} (NDNA) represents the most recent plan of action for the Assembly. In that document, there are zero references to women throughout the entire agreement. Further rights that need to be addressed through the Northern Ireland Assembly include:

- Further legislation to implement all Gillen Review recommendations;
- Tackling gender pay gaps and discrimination;
- Implementing the Social Inclusion Strategies that are currently in draft form, including the Gender Equality Strategy;
- Scrapping the Universal Credit Two-Child Limit;
- Addressing the historic underinvestment in rural women;
- Rectifying the under-representation of women in politics, public life and decision-making;
- Tackling the rise of misogyny as a hate crime, particularly towards trans women, BME women and disabled women;
- Improving RSE and tackling rape culture;
- Updating and unifying Equality Legislation;
- Fully supporting and financing perinatal mental health services and much more.

A full list of Women's Policy Group NI recommendations to each Government Department is [available on WRDA's website](#).

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- ⁱ NISRA, Women in Northern Ireland, 2022, <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/news/women-in-northern-ireland-2020-2021>
- ⁱⁱ TUC, Jobs & Recovery Monitor: Gender and Pay, 2023, <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/jobs-and-recovery-monitor-gender-and-pay>
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Appendix Two - Belfast City Council – LGBTQIA+ Action Plan 2024-2027 - Year 2 draft

Actions	Expected Outcomes	Themes	Year	Activity Lead	Indicative (year)
Deliver LGBTQIA+ awareness raising training including on Bi and Trans identities in the annual corporate training schedule, and make available to all staff	Increased awareness of LGBTQIA+ issues including bias and its impact on staff and service delivery	<i>Training and Development</i>	2,3	Corp HR	£600
Fund 4 places for network at appropriate conferences	Increased awareness of emerging issues within the community for network to address	<i>Training and Development</i>	2,3	Corp HR/ Network	£ 800
Deliver LGBTQIA+ awareness training to target groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • senior leadership • procurement team • customer hub • births, deaths, marriages • community centres • play staff • front of house staff 	Increased awareness of LGBTQIA+ issues including bias and its impact on staff and service delivery	<i>Training and Development</i>	2,3	Corp HR	£600

Prepared	June 2024
Date agreed by Proud Network	4 September 2024
Date agreed by CMT	
Date agreed by Committee	



Belfast
City Council

Actions	Expected Outcomes	Themes	Year	Activity Lead	Indicative (year)
Sign up to Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme	Best practice research and resources available to source/ access	<i>Senior Leadership and training and development</i>	1		£2500
Develop peer mentoring and reverse mentoring with senior champion, Kate Bentley and other members of CMT, including development of guide for this activity	Increased awareness of LGBTQIA+ issues Including bias and its impact on staff and service delivery	<i>Training and Development</i>	2,3	Senior Champion/ Corp HR/ Network/ Senior Staff	Staff Resource
Allocate 5 places each year on Mental Health First Aider course to Proud members. Participate in Mental Health Awareness Week and LGBTQIA+ Awareness Weeks each year (cross sectional with other Diversity Networks)	Better mental health awareness	<i>Training and Development</i> <i>Health and Wellbeing</i>	2,3	Corp HR Corp HR	Corporate Training Programme Staff resource
Review any relevant existing policies in terms of language, terminology and gender neutrality and inclusion including an effective consultation mechanism for all staff	Inclusive policies with appropriate language	<i>Promoting positive attitudes and behaviours</i>	2,3	Corp HR	Staff resource

Prepared	June 2024
Date agreed by Proud Network	4 September 2024
Date agreed by CMT	
Date agreed by Committee	



Actions	Expected Outcomes	Themes	Year	Activity Lead	Indicative (year)
Continue to use online, Intranet, and all promotional aids (posters, pop up stands etc) as channels to promote Proud activities and membership and in particular the importance of allyship	Increase Proud Membership	<i>Visibility and Network Growth</i>	2,3	Network	Staff Resource
Provide promotional materials e.g. pens, lanyards and reusable water bottles for example	Improve awareness and accessibility to Network	<i>Visibility and Network Growth</i>		Network	£700
Joint event addressing a cross-sectional issue or event e.g. Disability/Race	Collaborate with other Diversity Networks in BCC to promote the wider Diversity and Inclusion message	<i>Visibility and inclusive growth of all Networks</i>	2	Network	£300
Participate in Belfast Pride including BCC vehicles and staff as part of the official parade. Use opportunity to communicate other important messages around sustainability / looking after our city etc. Flying of LGBTQIA+ flag on City Hall	Fully participate in Belfast Pride demonstrating BCC as an inclusive service provider and employer in the community Visible and practical support for local LGBTQIA+ charity/organisation.	<i>Community engagement and visibility</i>	2,3	All Network	£1500

Prepared	June 2024
Date agreed by Proud Network	4 September 2024
Date agreed by CMT	
Date agreed by Committee	



Actions	Expected Outcomes	Themes	Year	Activity Lead	Indicative (year)
Promote early to build participation with Network members and wider workforce to increase ally and senior management support	Communication of positive impacts	<i>Community engagement and visibility</i>		Network	
Hold annual Pride Walk at an agreed location open to all staff	Networking, group social activity				
Hold a fundraiser internally to support LGBTQIA+ organisations bake sale or sponsored event and feedback from charitable cause on how the fundraising is used to improve LGBTQIA+ lives	Visible and practical support for local LGBTQIA+ charity/organisation. Communication of positive impacts	<i>Community engagement and visibility</i>	2,3	Network	Staff resource
Host the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance event in November each year. Use of City Hall for the event. Flying Trans flag to demonstrate support	Increased awareness of issues specifically affecting Transgender community Celebration of LGBTQIA+ contributions	<i>Community engagement and visibility</i>	2,3	Network/ Corp HR	£1500
Hold an annual engagement event with the sector e.g. lunch and learn event	Increased knowledge of sector needs, increased knowledge of	<i>Community engagement and visibility</i>	2,3	CNS P&E Staff network	£500

Prepared	June 2024
Date agreed by Proud Network	4 September 2024
Date agreed by CMT	
Date agreed by Committee	



Actions	Expected Outcomes	Themes	Year	Activity Lead	Indicative (year)
	potential opportunities for sector				
Determine if feasible to expand existing gender neutral facilities provision in BCC workplaces	Explore option for expansion of gender neutral facilities in BCC buildings	<i>Visible inclusivity in the workplace and as a service provider.</i>	2,3	Corp HR/Facilities/F&R /WM	Existing PMU/WM budgets
Contribute to and host events facilitated by local LGBTQIA+ service providers and other Networks across NI	Improved visibility, networking and learning	<i>Social Networking and community engagement.</i>	2,3	Network Chair	£600
Explore opportunities for collaboration with suppliers on Employability and Diversity issues i.e. Matrix, Bryson, OH/EC	Understanding needs of LGBTQIA+ community and service users	<i>Clients, customers and service provision.</i>	2	Corp HR	Staff Resource
Explore options to improve monitoring of service users	Understanding needs of LGBTQIA+ community and service users	<i>Clients, customers and service provision</i>	3	EDU Depts Customer Hub	Staff resource

Prepared	June 2024
Date agreed by Proud Network	4 September 2024
Date agreed by CMT	
Date agreed by Committee	



Actions	Expected Outcomes	Themes	Year	Activity Lead	Indicative (year)
Use BCC social media more to promote BCC as an inclusive service provider e.g. Pride/TDOR/TDOV/LGBTQIA+ History month (profile local LGBTQIA+ Champion)	Understanding needs of LGBTQIA+ community and service users	<i>Clients, customers and service Provision, visibility</i>	2,3	Corp Comms	Staff Resource
Develop a legacy/ oversight document	Insight for new members and committee	<i>Visibility and Network Growth, Sustainability</i>	2	Network	Staff Resource

Total budget Year 2 is
£9600.

Prepared	June 2024
Date agreed by Proud Network	4 September 2024
Date agreed by CMT	
Date agreed by Committee	



Belfast
City Council

Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 12th June 2025

Attendance

Members:

Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Sarah Bunting
Councillor Séamas de Faoite
Councillor Brian Smith
Councillor Ryan Murphy

Apologies:

Councillor Natasha Brennan
Alderman Sonia Copeland
Councillor Ciaran Beattie

Officers:

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
Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
David Sales, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Lesley-Ann O'Donnell, Senior Manager - Culture and Tourism
Geoff Dickson, Strategic Planning & Policy Manager (secretariat)

1. Finance Update

The Director of Finance updated Members on the current financial position of the Council. Members noted the update and that further discussions will be necessary at Committee to agree further expenditure decisions.

The Director of Finance also updated Members on the options for managing discretionary payment requests in the future and agreed that a report would be brought to Committee in August for consideration.

2. Community Support Plan

The Director of Neighbourhood Services presented the work undertaken to develop the Community Support Plan and the options for taking forward. During discussions questions were raised about how best to determine the optimum level of funding going forward. It was agreed that the Community Support Plan would be brought to SP&R Committee in June.

3. Fleadh Cheoil

The Senior Manager, Culture & Tourism updated Members on the preparations to date for hosting Fleadh Cheoil in 2026. Members noted the intent to bring the full Outline Business Case to Committee in August. Following a query from a Member, the Senior Manager, Culture & Tourism informed Members that work is currently underway regarding the animation of the vacant units on Royal Avenue during Fleadh Cheoil and agreed to arrange for an update on this to be brought to Members.

4. Leisure Update

The Director of Property & Projects informed Members that a paper will be brought to Members on the proposed next steps for leisure transformation, including looking at the centres not taken forward to date during the Leisure Transformation Programme. The outstanding completion of Girdwood was raised as a priority that needs completed in advance of any further phases of leisure transformation commencing. The Director of Property & Projects agreed to go back to DfC and provide a further update to Members.

The Forum noted the intent to involve Members in the process through party group briefings and Area Working Groups. When centre catchment areas straddled two areas, such as the Ozone Complex straddling south and east AWG constituencies, the Director of Property & Projects agreed to consider joint engagement sessions.

5. Update on the new Crematorium Development

The Director of Property & Projects provided the background to the consideration of a new Belfast crematorium and the changing context since the original decision. Members noted that a report be brought to SP&R Committee seeking a workshop in August to work through the options in detail before progressing.

6. Planning Update

The City Solicitor updated the Forum on the live planning applications that had been considered at Planning Committee. In relation to queries raised the City Solicitor and Director of Property & Projects agreed to follow up and provide updates.

7. Request to Attend

Members agreed to the attendance of John McDonald and Ed McGinley of GRAHAM at a future meeting in relation to Housing Led Regeneration. It was also noted that Queen's University would be attending the September meeting.

8. AOB

Event in Victoria Park - Legacy Network

PGLCF noted that the event should be granted under delegated authority, following consultation with the Chair of SP&R Committee in order for the event to be undertaken on 1st July.

Request for use of Woodvale Park

Members noted the update and that the Strategic Director will grant use of Woodvale Park under his delegated authority.

Lord Mayor's Car

The Director of Property & Projects informed the Forum of the intent to bring a proposal to SP&R Committee regarding the lease of the Lord Mayors Car.

Dual Language Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre

The Director of Property & Projects outlined the timelines for dual language signage at Olympia Leisure Centre and Forth Meadow Community Greenway. Members noted that it will be brought to SP&R Committee in June.

Lower Oldpark Community Association - Summer Community Diversionary fund

The Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services updated the Forum on the Summer Community Diversionary Fund for the Lower Oldpark Community Association and that a report will be brought to SP&R Committee.

Asbestos

The Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services updated the Forum regarding the asbestos reported in south Belfast.

Belfast Vital

The City Solicitor updated the Forum regarding the legal opinion being sought. The Director of Property & Projects informed the Members that the access issue in respect of the Boucher Road Playing Fields, previously highlighted, had been resolved.

Paisley Park

The Director of Property & Projects informed Members of ongoing discussions regarding the potential transfer of the asset to the Council. Members emphasised the importance that any transfer of asset must be in line with the agreed policy of the transfer of assets.

Bloomberg Philanthropy

The Strategic Director of Corporate Services updated Members on this issue and said that a report would be brought to the next SP&R meeting.

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 Solicitor's delegated authority.

- **World Refugee Day** – 20th June
- **Greek National Day** – 25th March 2026

GLL

Following a request from a Member, the Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services updated the Forum regarding potential industrial action at GLL sites.



Belfast
City Council

Subject:	Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality
Date:	20 June 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 									
<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/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 6 June 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 6 June 2025.

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JUNE 2025 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED
Belfast Asian Women's Academy	9 August 2025	South Asian Cultural Celebration of the rich cultures, histories and contributions of South Asian communities living in Northern Ireland. Awards, speeches, performance and lunch. Numbers attending – 150	C	Current rate free as Voluntary Community Group	Tea and Coffee Reception as Voluntary Community Group
1 st Battalion Irish Guards	5 September 2025	Irish Guards 125th Anniversary Reception following Remembrance Service at Belfast City Hall Garden of Remembrance Numbers attending – 150/200	C	Current rate free as Not for Profit Group	Tea and Coffee Reception as significant anniversary
Greater Shankill Partnership (GSP)	9 September 2025	GSP 30th Anniversary Celebration Drinks Reception, Dinner, Presentations, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 150	C	Current rate free as Not for Profit Group & Charity	Drinks Reception as significant anniversary
NI Veterans' Commission	25 September 2025	NI Veterans' Commissioner Reception for Iraq/Afghan Veterans Guided Tour, Dinner and speeches Numbers attending – 125	C	Current rate free as Not for Profit Group Tour Free	
Centre for Competitiveness	9 October 2025	C for C 25th Anniversary Celebrations Reception, Dinner and entertainment to recognize the work of C for C helping organisations improve their productivity and growth through the provision of recognised training certifications and bespoke in-house staff and process development. Numbers attending – 200	C	Current rate free as Not for Profit Group	Drinks Reception as significant anniversary
Rhythms of India Dance and Performing Arts	10 October 2025	Award Ceremony and Cultural Celebration of NI October Mahotsav a multicultural celebration with singing and dancing designed to highlight Belfast's growing cultural richness fostering Indo-NI friendship. Numbers attending – 50	C	Room hire £450 <i>(getting support from QUB/ UUI)</i>	
Guide Dogs NI	18 October 2025	40th Anniversary Celebration	C	Current rate free as Charity	Drinks Reception as

JUNE 2025 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

		Drinks Reception, Dinner, Presentations of Long Service Volunteers and entertainment to recognize the work and achievements of Guide Dogs NI service. Numbers attending – 250/300		and Charitable event	significant anniversary
Belfast School of Theology (formerly Belfast Bible College)	19 December 2025	Graduation and Post-Graduation Reception –to make the achievements of the students at the college. Numbers attending - 80	C	Room hire £450	
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful	19 February 2026	Live Here, Love Here Community Awards – Drinks reception, dinner and awards ceremony to celebrate the work of volunteers and groups who participate in Live Here Love Here campaign. Numbers attending - 130	B&C	Current rate free as Charity/ Not for Profit Group & Linked to Council projects.	
Young Enterprise NI	30 April 2026	YEA NI Awards 2026 Drinks reception, dinner and Awards Ceremony to celebrate the achievements of people across NI who completed YE Programmes. Numbers attending – 300	C	Current rate free as Charity and Charitable event	
FG Wilson	21 May 2026	FG Wilson Global Diamond 60th Anniversary Celebration Drinks Reception, Dinner, Presentations, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 150/ 200	C	Room hire £1250	
Abbey Conferences	22 June 2027	Belfast Pathology 2027 Conference – Welcome Reception for guests attending 3-day conference Numbers attending - 200	A &B	Room hire £1250	