

Public Document Pack

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

TO: THE LORD MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND THE COUNCILLORS OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber and remotely via Microsoft Teams, on Monday, 2nd June, 2025 at 6.00pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 10)
5. Official Announcements
6. Request to Film Proceedings
7. Appointment of Positions of Responsibility 2025/2026 (Pages 11 - 12)
8. Installation of Lord Mayor
9. Installation of Deputy Lord Mayor
10. Appointment of Members to Committees 2025/2026 (Pages 13 - 16)
11. Minutes
12. Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 17 - 56)
13. People and Communities Committee (Pages 57 - 66)
14. City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 67 - 82)
15. Licensing Committee (Pages 83 - 92)
16. Planning Committee (Pages 93 - 98)
17. Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 99 - 106)
18. Standards and Business Committee (Pages 107 - 108)
19. Ad Hoc Committee (Pages 109 - 112)
 - a) To reconsider the motion on the Armed Forces Covenant (Pages 113 - 114)

20. Notice of Motion

- a) Voting Rights for the Election of the President of Ireland (Pages 115 - 116)

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

John Walsh
Chief Executive

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall,
on Thursday, 1st May, 2025 at 6.00 p.m., pursuant to notice.

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

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Cobain, Maghie and McCusker.

Declarations of Interest

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Alderman Copeland and Councillors Carson, R-M Donnelly, Duffy and Groogan declared interests in the 'Shared City Partnership' item in that they worked for, or were associated with, organisations which had applied for PEACEPLUS funding. Since the item did not become the subject of debate, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in the item 'Update on Hardship Fund' in that she worked for an organisation which had applied for funding under the terms of the fund. As the item did not become the subject of debate, she was not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor Long declared an interest in the item 'Support for Businesses Affected by the August Riots' in that his wife was the Justice Minister. He was not required to leave the meeting as the item did not become the subject of debate.

Councillor Brennan declared an interest in the item 'Summer Community Diversionary Programme Assessments and Asset Management' in that she worked for

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st May, 2025**

an organisation that was in receipt of funding under the project. In addition, regarding the item 'St. John Vianney Youth Club: Lease Arrangement' she reported that she worked for an organisation that was involved in the leasing of the property. She was not required to leave the meeting for either item since they did not become the subject of debate.

Councillors Beattie, Carson and Duffy declared interests in the 'Social Supermarket Fund' item in that they were associated with organisations which had applied for support under the fund. Since the item did not become the subject of debate, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

People and Communities Committee

Regarding the item 'Integrated Advice Partnership Fund', Councillors M. Donnelly and Bradley declared interests in that they worked for organisations which had been referenced within the report. In respect of the item 'Denmark Street Community Centre' Councillor I. McLaughlin declared an interest in that he was a member of the associated management committee which had been referenced within the report. Since the aforementioned items did not become the subject of debate, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor McKeown reported an interest in the item 'Installation of Sharps Bin' in that his employer was referenced within the report. Since the item did not become the subject of debate, the Member was not required to leave the meeting.

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Councillor Maskey declared an interest in the item 'Go Succeed Enterprise Support Service Update', in that he had received support through the service. Since the item did not become the subject of debate, Councillor Maskey was not required to leave the meeting.

Minutes of the Council

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the monthly meeting of the Council of 1st April, 2025, and the special meeting of the Council of 24th April, 2025, be taken as read and signed as correct

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor and members representing each of the political parties on the Council conveyed congratulations to Councillor Jenna Maghie on the birth of a daughter on Tuesday, 29th April. The Lord Mayor agreed to write to Councillor Maghie to extend congratulations on behalf of the Council.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st May, 2025**

The Lord Mayor, on behalf of the Council, expressed condolences to staff member Mr. Christopher Hackett on the sudden passing of his son Diolain on 4th April 2025. The Lord Mayor agreed to write to the Hackett family to convey the Council's condolences.

The Lord Mayor welcomed Ms. Sinead Grimes, Director of Property and Projects, to her first meeting of the Council since the passing of her mother.

The Deputy Lord Mayor on behalf of the Council conveyed congratulations to Mr. Rory McIlroy on his winning of the U.S. Masters in Augusta and paid tribute to him for making history by achieving the 'grand slam' in world golf. In addition, the Deputy Lord Mayor congratulated Bangor Football Club on winning the Northern Ireland Football League Championship and referred specifically the role played by Councillor Bradley Ferguson as a key member of the team's backroom staff.

Councillor Groogan congratulated the Golden Thread Gallery in Queen Street on being shortlisted as one of the five finalists in the 2025 Art Fund Museum of the Year and wished them well in the final.

Councillor Long congratulated Mr. Mark Carney on his victory in the recent Canadian general election and requested that the Lord Mayor write to Mr. Carney to congratulate him and invite him to visit the City of Belfast during his time in office. The Lord Mayor acceded to the request.

The High Sheriff (Councillor McAteer) congratulated the Council on being awarded 'Ambassador Status' under the Belfast Business Promise initiative and thanked Members and officers for the work which had been undertaken in achieving the award.

Councillor T. Brooks congratulated Councillor Bower on passing her PhD '*with minor corrections*' with a thesis on the subject of '*Friendships for young people with a learning disability and/or who are autistic: a participatory action research project*'.

Alderman Lawlor referred to the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, which would occur on 8th May. He paid tribute and expressed gratitude to all those who had served in the armed forces for their dedication and sacrifice during World War II. Councillor McDowell echoed the sentiments expressed by Alderman Lawlor and paid tribute to those former members of the services who were part of the 'Golden Generation'.

Councillor Ferguson thanked the Deputy Lord Mayor for hosting an event for the Simon Community the previous evening. He congratulated Cregagh Wanderers Football Club on winning the Cochrane Corry Cup when they defeated Clonduff in the final. In addition, Councillor Ferguson referred to the recent retirement of Mr. Terry Hayes, who had completed 50 years' service with Linfield Football Club, as both a player and medical staff team member. In response to a request by Councillor Ferguson, the Lord Mayor agreed to write to both Cregagh Wanderers and Mr. Hayes to congratulate them on their achievements.

Councillor Abernethy, in the absence of Councillor Maghie, congratulated CIYMS Ladies' Hockey Team on their recent victory in the Irish Challenge Cup and on their achievement in bringing the cup back to Belfast for the first time in 22 years.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st May, 2025**

Councillor McCallin reminded the Council that the date of the meeting coincided with the '12 Days of M.E.' campaign, which ran concurrently with M.E. Awareness Week, observed annually in May. She thanked those officers and Members who had assisted in promoting the campaign prior to the meeting. Councillor R. Brooks concurred with the comments of Councillor McCallin.

Alderman Rodgers wished good luck to both Dungannon Swifts F.C. and, in particular, to Cliftonville F.C., who were representing Belfast, in the Irish Cup Final at Windsor Park on Saturday, 4th May.

Councillor S. Douglas congratulated Bloomfield Football Club's Under-9's team in their recent league and cup double success and paid tribute to the team's promising young goalkeeper, Thomas Douglas esquire.

Councillor R. Brooks pointed out that Saturday, 10th May, was Cornelia de Lange Syndrome Awareness Day. She outlined how the day sought to increase understanding and promote early diagnosis of the rare condition. She referred particularly to her constituent, Ms. Andrea Poxon, who lived with the condition, and paid tribute to both Andrea and her family for their strength and resilience.

Alderman D. McCullough, on behalf of the Council, expressed best wishes for a speedy recovery to Mr. Jay Millar of Jay's Barber Club in Seaview Street, who had been taken ill over the previous weekend. The Council concurred with the sentiments expressed.

Requests to Address the Council

Cairde Palestine (Friends of Palestine)

The Chief Executive reported that a request to address the Council had been received from Cairde Palestine regarding the motion on the agenda entitled, 'U.S. War Planes Out of Belfast'. The Council acceded to the request and Ms. C. Ferrari was admitted to the meeting.

Ms. Ferrari informed the Council that Cairde Palestine was a diverse community of activists which was opposed the use of Belfast International Airport and RAF Aldergrove by the United States military for operations linked to the conflict between Israel and Hamas-led Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip. She informed the Council that Cairde Palestine had monitored U.S. military aircraft and cargo at both airports and had identified over 60 military flights, a dozen of which had travelled to the Al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar, which was a transfer point for large-scale munitions. She indicated that support by the Council for the motion would be a small but public shift of support by a local institution.

Ms. Ferrari concluded by urging Members to support the motion to be moved by Councillor Collins and thanked the Council for receiving her.

Stranmillis Neighbourhood Association

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st May, 2025**

The Council acceded to a request which had been received from Mr. J. Harris on behalf of the Stranmillis Neighbourhood Association to address the meeting regarding the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 8th April under the heading 'Requests for the Use of Botanic Gardens'.

Mr. Harris advised the Council that the neighbourhood association had been 'surprised' and 'dismayed' that the applications had been approved by the Committee. He referred to the Victorian amenity of the Botanic Gardens and the vital open space it provided within south Belfast. He stated that the open green in the gardens was not primarily an events' venue, nor a commercial facility. He pointed out that green spaces were valued by both families and local communities and to close off such an area for exclusive commercial use would impact across the local community.

Mr. Harris thanked the Council for receiving him.

Retail NI and USDAW

The Council acceded to a request which had been received from Mr. G. Roberts, representing Retail NI, together with Mr. L. English, representing the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), who wished to address the meeting regarding the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th April under the heading 'Pilot Sunday City Animation Project'.

Mr. English informed the Council that his trade union was opposed to any extension to the current Sunday trading hours, which, he added, would have a negative impact on retail workers and their families. He suggested that longer Sunday trading hours would take a heavy toll on staff, who might feel obliged to work additional hours, rather than spend time with their families or engage in leisure activities.

Mr. Roberts suggested that 'new thinking' was required to transform the Sunday morning offering in Belfast for both shoppers and visitors. The proposal, if carried, he suggested, would provide larger multinational stores with additional trading time, which would impact directly on smaller and independent retailers who relied on Sunday mornings to sustain their businesses.

The deputation thanked the Council for receiving them.

Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Murphy,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th and 28th April, 2025, omitting the decision of the Committee of 18th April under the heading 'IFA DCMS Grassroots Funding Applications' which had been called-in, be approved and adopted.

Pilot Sunday City Animation Project

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st May, 2025**

Amendment

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

That the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th April under the heading 'Pilot Sunday City Animation Project' be referred back to the Committee for further consideration with a view that a letter be forwarded to the Minister for Communities seeking his opinion on the proposed pilot project and also to engage with the stakeholders as set out in the minute.

On a vote, twenty-five Members voted for the amendment and thirty-two against and it was declared lost.

Assets Report

Amendment

At the request of Councillor Brennan, the Council agreed that the minute of the meeting of 18th April, under the heading 'Assets Report', specifically in relation to The Lighthouse Building, be amended to reflect that a masterplan of the Gasworks Estate be undertaken.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the above-mentioned amendment and the omission of the item which had been called-in, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 18th and 28th April, 2025, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of the People and Communities Committee

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

That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th April, 2025, be approved and adopted.

Requests for the Use of Botanic Gardens

Amendment

Moved by Councillor McKeown,
Seconded by Councillor Groogan and

Resolved - that the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 8th April, 2025, under the heading 'Requests for the Use of Botanic Gardens' be rejected and, accordingly, permission not be granted to the applicants for the hosting of the events.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st May, 2025**

Closed Bin Lid Policy/Removal of Bin Liners

Amendment

Moved by Councillor M. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy and

Resolved - that the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 8th April, 2025, under the heading 'Closed Bin Lid Policy/Removal of Bin Liners' be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.

**Dual Language Street Signs
Potential Adverse Impacts**

Amendment

Moved by Councillor D. Douglas,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough,

That the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 8th April, 2025, under the heading 'Dual Language Street Signs – Potential Adverse Impacts' be amended to provide that no surveys be undertaken of residents in Mount Merrion Avenue, Loopland Drive and Isoline Street and the applications for a second street sign, in Irish, be closed.

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

**Requests to Host Events
in Parks and Open Spaces**

Amendment

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

That the decision of the People and Communities Committee of 8th April under the heading 'Requests to Host Events in Parks and Open Spaces' be amended to provide that, once the legal opinion be received in respect of the issues raised regarding the line-up for the proposed event at the Boucher Road Playing Fields in August, 2025, that a special meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be convened to consider the matter.

On a vote, twenty-six Members voted for the amendment and thirty-one against and it was declared lost.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st May, 2025**

Further Amendment

Moved by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons,

That the Council agrees that the decision under the heading 'Requests to Host Events in Parks and Open Spaces' be amended to reflect the addition of the following wording to end of the decision:

"That this Council condemns sectarianism in all its forms and is committed to create and develop a shared, peaceful and reconciled City; condemns all threats and acts of violence against political and elected representatives, who should be free to participate in the democratic process without fear of interference; rejects support of proscribed organisations promoting violence or hate; and believes that no one should be prevented from speaking out in defence of human rights, or against human rights abuses occurring during the ongoing genocide in Gaza and all other conflicts across the globe".

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

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 8th April, 2025, were approved and adopted.

Minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Moved by Councillor Nelson,
Seconded by Alderman Lawlor and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 9th April, 2025, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of the Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Alderman Rodgers,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 16th April, 2025, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of the Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor Carson,

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st May, 2025**

Seconded by Alderman Lawlor and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 15th April, 2025, omitting matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of the Climate and City Resilience Committee

Moved by Councillor R-M Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor Murphy and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 10th April, 2025, be approved and adopted

Minutes of the Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 25th April, 2025, be approved and adopted.

Notice of Motion

U.S. War Planes Out of Belfast

In accordance with notice on the agenda, it was

Moved by Councillor Collins,
Seconded by Councillor Flynn,

“That this Council notes its alarm that Belfast Aldergrove Airport has been used as a transit point for US military aircraft and cargo en route to Europe and the Middle East. As reported by the Irish News, over 60 military flights have been detected using Aldergrove airport as a transit point during the 18 months of Israel's assault on Gaza. Over a dozen of these flights were found to have travelled to Al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar: a key transfer point for large-scale munitions between the US and Israel.

“The Council notes its grave concern that these flights were, therefore, likely carrying weapons and munitions which were used in the Israeli genocide in Gaza. This will cause considerable distress to the Palestine community living here in Belfast, as well as the many thousands of people in the city who have publicly demonstrated to demand an end to Israeli occupation and apartheid. Allowing this to continue without a robust challenge from our political institutions would signify a complicity on the part of our own devolved government with Israel's genocide, and the wider US imperial project.

**Meeting of Council,
Thursday, 1st May, 2025**

“The Council resolves to write to the Stormont Executive, the Westminster Government, and management of Aldergrove Airport to express its disgust at this complicity. The Council reiterates its opposition to war and demands that Irish soil, be it Shannon or Aldergrove, refuses to handle US military cargo in solidarity with the millions of people killed or displaced as a result of US imperialism.”

Amendment

Moved by Councillor McDonough-Brown,
Seconded by Councillor Long,

“That the motion standing in the name of Councillor Collins and seconded by Councillor Flynn be amended to provide that - in the second paragraph, sixth line down - delete everything after “...‘apartheid’ ...” and insert the following: *This Council recognises that defence is a reserved matter and resolves to write to the Westminster Government to seek clarity on the use of Belfast Aldergrove Airport by U.S. military aircraft. This Council reiterates its concern about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and calls for an end to the conflict and for both Israel and Hamas to be held accountable for breaches of international law.*”

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

The original motion was thereupon put to the meeting.

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

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

Civic Dignitaries

Lord Mayor	Councillor Tracy Kelly
Deputy Lord Mayor	Councillor Paul Doherty

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Natasha Brennan
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Joseph Duffy

People and Communities Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Ruth Brooks
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Fred Cobain

Licensing Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Jordan Doran
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Arder Carson

Planning Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Ryan Murphy
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Sammy Douglas

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Micheal Donnelly
Deputy Chairperson	Alderman Frank McCoubrey

Standards and Business Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Anthony Flynn
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Davy Douglas

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

Chairperson	Councillor Eric Hanvey
Deputy Chairperson	Councillor Bradley Ferguson

(D)PCSP Political Members

Chairs

PCSP	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
North DPCSP	Alderman Dean McCullough
South DPCSP	Councillor Gary McKeown
East DPCSP	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
West DPCSP	Councillor Claire Canavan

Other Changes

	Outgoing	Incoming
South DPCSP	Councillor Tracy Kelly	Councillor Sarah Bunting
West DPCSP	Councillor Nicola Verner	Alderman Frank McCoubrey

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

1	Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Natasha Brennan
2	Deputy Chairperson Alliance	Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ciaran Beattie
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Christina Black
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Matt Garrett
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ronan McLaughlin
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ryan Murphy
9	Sinn Féin	Councillor Tomás Ó Néill
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Frank McCoubrey
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Fred Cobain
13	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bradley Ferguson
14	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
15	Alliance	Councillor Michael Long
16	Alliance	Councillor Jenna Maghie
17	Alliance	Councillor Sam Nelson
18	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Séamas de Faoite
19	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Carl Whyte
20	Green Party	Councillor Brian Smyth

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

1	Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
2	Deputy Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Joe Duffy
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Christina Black
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Conor Maskey
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Áine McCabe
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Siobhán McCallin
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Conor McKay
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ronan McLaughlin
9	Sinn Féin	Councillor Tomás Ó Néill
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman James Lawlor
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sammy Douglas
13	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Andrew McCormick
14	Alliance	Councillor Eric Hanvey
15	Alliance	Councillor Fiona McAteer
16	Alliance	Councillor Micky Murray
17	Alliance	Councillor Sam Nelson
18	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Séamas de Faoite
19	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Dónal Lyons
20	Green Party	Councillor Áine Groogan

People and Communities Committee

1	Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ruth Brooks
2	Deputy Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Fred Cobain
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Christina Black
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Nichola Bradley
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Claire Canavan
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Micheal Donnelly
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Matt Garrett
9	Sinn Féin	Councillor JJ Magee
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Jordan Doran
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Nicola Verner
13	Alliance	Councillor Hedley Abernethy
14	Alliance	Councillor Micky Murray
15	Alliance	Councillor Christine Bower
16	Alliance	Councillor Jenna Maghie
17	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Gary McKeown
18	Green Party	Councillor Anthony Flynn
19	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Sonia Copeland
20	People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Michael Collins

Licensing Committee

1	Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Jordan Doran
2	Deputy Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Arder Carson
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Brónach Anglin
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Nichola Bradley
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Micheal Donnelly
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Caoimhín McCann
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Conor McKay
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman McCullough
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Davy Douglas
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sarah Bunting
12	Alliance	Councillor Hedley Abernethy
13	Alliance	Councillor Tara Brooks
14	Alliance	Councillor Fiona McAteer
15	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Gary McKeown
16	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Carl Whyte
17	Green Party	Councillor Brian Smyth
18	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Jim Rodgers
19	Traditional Unionist Voice	Councillor Ron McDowell
20	Independent	Councillor Paul McCusker

Planning Committee

1	Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Ryan Murphy
2	Deputy Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sammy Douglas
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Brónach Anglin
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Natasha Brennan
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Arder Carson
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Matt Garrett
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor JJ Magee
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Áine McCabe
9	Sinn Féin	Councillor Caoimhín McCann
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman James Lawlor
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Dean McCullough
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Jordan Doran
13	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Davy Douglas
14	Alliance	Councillor Hedley Abernethy
15	Alliance	Councillor Tara Brooks
16	Alliance	Councillor David Bell
17	Alliance	Councillor Eric Hanvey
18	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Carl Whyte
19	Green Party	Councillor Áine Groogan
20	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Jim Rodgers

Climate and City Resilience Committee

1	Chairperson Sinn Féin	Councillor Micheal Donnelly
2	Deputy Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Frank McCoubrey
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Brónach Anglin
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor JJ Magee
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Conor Maskey
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Caoimhín McCann
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Séanna Walsh
9	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ruth Brooks
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Sammy Douglas
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bradley Ferguson
12	Alliance	Councillor Micky Murray
13	Alliance	Councillor Tara Brooks
14	Alliance	Councillor David Bell
15	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Paul Doherty
16	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Dónal Lyons
17	Green Party	Councillor Áine Groogan
18	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Sonia Copeland
19	People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Michael Collins
20	Independent	Councillor Paul McCusker

Standards and Business Committee

1	Chairperson Green Party	Councillor Anthony Flynn
2	Deputy Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Davy Douglas
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Nichola Bradley
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Arder Carson
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Pádraig Donnelly
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Siobhán McCallin
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor JJ Magee
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ronan McLaughlin
9	Sinn Féin	Councillor Ryan Murphy
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman James Lawlor
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Alderman Dean McCullough
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Andrew McCormick
13	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ian McLaughlin
14	Alliance	Councillor Fiona McAteer
15	Alliance	Councillor Christine Bower
16	Alliance	Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown
17	Alliance	Councillor Michael Long
18	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Séamas de Faoite
19	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Dónal Lyons
20	Traditional Unionist Voice	Councillor Ron McDowell

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee

1	Chairperson Alliance	Councillor Eric Harvey
2	Deputy Chairperson Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Bradley Ferguson
3	Sinn Féin	Councillor Natasha Brennan
4	Sinn Féin	Councillor Claire Canavan
5	Sinn Féin	Councillor Áine McCabe
6	Sinn Féin	Councillor Caoimhín McCann
7	Sinn Féin	Councillor Conor McKay
8	Sinn Féin	Councillor Tomás Ó Néill
9	Sinn Féin	Councillor Séanna Walsh
10	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Ruth Brooks
11	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Andrew McCormick
12	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillor Nicola Verner
13	Alliance	Councillor Christine Bower
14	Alliance	Councillor David Bell
15	Social Democratic and Labour Party	Councillor Séamas de Faoite
16	Green Party	Councillor Anthony Flynn
17	Ulster Unionist Party	Alderman Sonia Copeland
18	People Before Profit Alliance	Councillor Michael Collins
19	Traditional Unionist Voice	Councillor Ron McDowell
20	Independent	Councillor Paul McCusker

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 23rd May, 2025

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Brennan, Bunting, Cobain,
de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett,
Groogan, Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown,
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Nelson and Whyte.
- In attendance: Mr. J. Walsh, Chief Executive;
Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director
of Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance
Manager.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 18th and 28th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that the minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st May.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors Beattie, Duffy and Groogan declared an interest in item 2(a) Social Supermarket Fund in that they were associated with organisations which applied for funding and left the meeting while this item was under discussion.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

Councillors Groogan, R-M Donnelly and Duffy declared an interest in item 7(d) Minutes of the Shared City Partnership in so far as it related to PEACEPLUS in that they worked for organisations which had applied for funding. As the item did not become the subject of debate, they were not required to leave the meeting.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

Social Supermarket Fund 25/26

The Committee considered a report with suggested options in relation to the approach to provide funding for social supermarkets in 2025/26 following its decision in April not to proceed with the current process.

Proposal

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

That the Committee agrees:

- to adopt option 1 for funding social supermarkets in 2025/26;
- that the criteria for funding be reviewed by September, 2025; and
- not to fund organisations which received funding in 2024/25 but did not apply for funding in 2025/26.

Amendment

Moved By Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson,

That the Committee agrees to proceed with option 3 for the funding of social supermarkets for 2025/26.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

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

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor R. McLaughlin was put to the meeting and passed.

The Committee agreed also to:

- grant delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make further allocations based on the agreed option, if further funding becomes available; and
- approve that the Council provide any additional funds required to provide 25% bridging support to 2024/25 funded groups, up to a maximum amount of £13,738 per group.

City Hall Income Generation Project

The City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services submitted for the Committee's consideration a report providing an update on the City Hall Income Regeneration Project and which sought approval for the introduction of the charges set out in the next phase of the project.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed a £4 entrance fee for visitors to the City Hall Ground Floor Exhibition, except for under 18s and community visits organised via elected members, with a review to undertaken after 1 year.

Asset Management

The Committee:

- i) **Glenbryn Park – Licence to Groundwork NI** - Approved a Licence agreement from Belfast City Council to Groundwork NI for the purpose of a community garden.
- ii) **Requests For Council to act as Sponsoring Body** – Approved the Council granting in principle approval to act as Sponsoring body in the acquisition of surplus assets available through the D1 trawl at Northgate Business Park, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast to North City Business Centre and Dill Road DVA centre Belfast to East Belfast Enterprise and The Turnaround Project.

City Centre Regeneration Scheme

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the matter to enable further information to be submitted to a special meeting.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

**Corporate Plan 2025-28 and
Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present Committee with the Corporate Plan 2025-2028 and the accompanying annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26 for consideration and approval.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i. agree the draft Corporate Plan (2025-28) as attached at Appendix 1, for publication, subject to minor edits based on Member comments;
- ii. agree the draft annual Corporate Delivery Plan (2025- 26) as attached at Appendix 2.

3.0 Key Issues

Background

- 3.1 Members will be aware of the challenging environment within which the Council currently operates. The escalating fiscal strain, fuelled by rising prices, a cost-of-living crisis and economic challenges are having significant adverse impacts on individuals, families and services across the city and widening inequalities.
- 3.2 Members have set the challenge to the Council of pivoting its focus and resources to meet the challenges and opportunities which emerge over this Council term. The process through which the new three-year corporate plan has been co-designed with elected members was essential and provided a platform to help inform and connect the Council’s resource planning cycles (budgets, people, capital and assets) and the development of a Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 3.3 Members will be aware of the discussions which has taken place since the election of the new Council through Standing Committees, Party Group Leaders meetings and all Member workshops in relation to the emerging draft Corporate Plan and proposed priorities for future investment.

- 3.4 In December 2024, SP&R Committee agreed that a draft Corporate Plan be published for a public consultation exercise between January – March 2025. Whilst response numbers were small, most comments received were supportive of the priorities outlined in the corporate plan. Minor changes to language have been made to the draft corporate plan where feedback highlighted the need for greater clarity in some areas.

Corporate Plan 2025-2028

- 3.5 Members will be aware of the importance of the corporate plan as a key governance document, cited in the Council's constitution as the means by which the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee sets the strategic direction of the council. It sets out what the council wants to achieve for the city and the key priority actions to make this happen. These priorities are then used as the basis for informing any emerging medium-term financial plan.
- 3.6 The corporate plan is also a key communication tool for staff across the organisation in understanding the strategic importance of their work in terms of helping to shape the city and improving people's lives. This contribution and impact ranges from cleaning our streets, lifting bins, maintaining our excellent parks, delivering key strategic programmes such as our employability schemes, delivering large scale events or providing essential back office support.
- 3.7 Subject to Committee consideration and approval, it is proposed that the members approve the draft Corporate Plan 2025-28 for publication (subject to Full Council). Should Members do so, it will be published online, and an underpinning communications plan will commence in June that articulates the Members ambitions for the Council, as laid out in our corporate plan.

Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-2026

- 3.8 As the 3 year corporate plan is strategic in nature, it is accompanied by an annual Corporate Delivery Plan (2025-16). This gives Members greater detail on what will be delivered against each priority with the resources allocated for 2025-26. It also contains a series of performance indicators for 2025-26 and associated targets. This give Members greater oversight of what is being delivered within the financial year and articulates the scale of work which continues to be delivered by Council and the impact of this within communities across the city. Members are asked to endorse this

draft Delivery Plan, which will form the basis of progress updates to Committee throughout the year and accompanied by a year-end report to SP&R Committee.

3.9 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no immediate resource implications. However, the priorities agreed in the corporate plan will form the basis of the rate setting process over the coming years. Members are also asked to note that a financial planning workshop for Members is currently being arranged that will discuss the financial needs of the priorities contained within the corporate plan.

**3.10 Equality of Good Relations Implications /
Rural Needs Assessment**

Equality screening has been completed as part of the plan development process.”

The Committee agreed:

- i. the draft Corporate Plan (2025-28) as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, for publication, subject to minor edits based on Member comments which had been raised at the meeting; and
- ii. the draft annual Corporate Delivery Plan (2025-26) as attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy submitted the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

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

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Committee is asked to:

- **Approve the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2025-26 attached in Appendix 1, for publication on the Council’s website, subject to minor edits and formal ratification by the Full Council on 2 June 2025.**

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1** Part 12 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires councils to consult residents on proposed improvement objectives and to publish an annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) by the 30 June. The PIP identifies the agreed improvement objectives for the year ahead, the actions to be delivered and the measures of success to be achieved. The PIP helps to meet the outcomes and objectives of the Community Plan and the Corporate Plan 2025-28. The PIP doesn't include everything that the Council plans to do in a given year, it focuses specifically on areas for improvement and feeds into the Annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26. The performance improvement objectives are aligned to the key themes and priorities identified within the new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and the Belfast Agenda 2024-28.

Consultation exercise and findings

- 3.2** Members will be aware that we carried out an eight-week public consultation in relation to Council's draft improvement objectives 2025-26 and associated actions between 17 February - 14 April 2025. The public consultation process included an online survey via Council's Your Say Belfast consultation and engagement website and two targeted focus groups. The survey was promoted using a range of communication methods including social media posts, posters in community buildings, email marketing to existing mailing lists, intranet promotion and websites.
- 3.3** Out of the 88 people that completed the survey, it should be noted that:
- there was broad consensus across majority of respondents supporting the improvement objectives.
 - the highest level of 86.3% was received from respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with 'Our people and communities' improvement objective based on supporting our residents to become healthier and engaged.
 - the lowest of level of 73.9% was received from respondents who strong agreed or agreed with the 'Compassionate city' improvement objective based on supporting our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe and inclusive city.

- 3.4 In addition, two focus groups with 62 young people and 9 older people were facilitated to enable participants to reflect their priorities and areas for improvement. A detailed summary of the feedback received is included in the consultation report in Appendix 2.
- 3.5 The qualitative feedback and comments received was shared and considered internally by key officers from the relevant departments to action where relevant and help inform future delivery and/ or amend current activity. Some minor amendments were made to realign actions within the PIP. Members will also be aware that some of the areas suggested are being progressed through existing strategies, plans and programmes of work, and in partnership as part of the Belfast Agenda 2024-28 including addressing key issues across the city such as housing provision, homelessness, mental health and addiction.

Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26

- 3.6 The updated Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 is attached in Appendix 1 which reflects public consultation feedback and engagement with key Council officers.
- 3.7 Members are asked to approve the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 in Appendix 1 and to authorise its publication on the Council website by 30 June 2025. In order to meet our statutory deadline, the plan will be published subject to formal ratification by the Full Council on the 2 June 2025.

3.8 **Financial and Resource Implications**

The improvement plan has already been reflected in the formal planning and budgeting processes of council; there are no resource implications contained in this report.

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

There are no direct equality, good relations or rural needs implications of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.”

The Committee approved the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2025-26 attached in Appendix 1 to the report, for publication on the Council’s website, subject to formal ratification by the Full Council on 2 June 2025.

**Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership
Project – sponsorship**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Committee of a proposal by the non-profit Management and Leadership Network (MLN) to host a prominent climate leadership event ‘Sustain Exchange’ with up to 300 decision-makers. To request approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between Belfast City Council and the event organiser with the value of £8,450+vat. The event will put the challenges, opportunities and absolute need for positive action associated with climate change, on the agenda for local organisations and leaders.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Support this climate leadership conference by approving a funding agreement to the value of £8450+vat be entered into with the event organiser.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background

It is now beyond doubt that organisations of all shapes, sizes and sectors need to radically reduce their environmental impact both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. The extreme weather experienced across the globe over the past 12 months has further evidenced the reality that the effects of climate change are being felt now and the need for decisive action from organisations, championed by their leaders, is now. We are fast approaching the point of no return.

It is a truly transformative time for organisations as they address climate risks and identify new opportunities in the green economy. The transition is not straightforward. Organisations need help in developing planet positive practices, securing cleaner power, heat and transport solutions. They need help in navigating new markets to find more environmentally sustainable solutions in their supply chain, and they need to do it fast. There has never been a more important time to find specialist help to navigate the transition, and to educate, inform and engage by sharing

the existing knowledge and exemplar experience of those at the forefront of the transition.

3.2 Purpose and format of event

The Sustain Exchange Summit will deliver on the objectives above and will connect local decision-makers with international thought leaders as well as those at the forefront of the transition locally.

The event is expected to attract some 300 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB and third sectors) to a Belfast City Centre venue with strong public transport links to ensure the carbon footprint of the event is kept to a minimum. The Sustain Exchange project will ensure the messages, around the need and importance of positive climate action are heard, and the Council's proactivity in this area will be strongly profiled before and during the event.

3.3 Content

Previous speakers at this event have included the eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator Sir Jonathan Porritt CBE, Norman Crowley (global entrepreneur and founder of CoolPlanet) and Sit Tim Smit KBE (Founder of The Eden Project and world-renowned thought leader in sustainability) and John Elkington (the global godfather of sustainability and creator of the triple bottom line concept). The 2025 Sustain Exchange Summit will again be delivered to a world-class standard and will feature globally-renowned speakers (Mary Robinson is the first in-person speaker to be confirmed). The speakers will encourage and empower attending organisations to consider their own climate impact and take the first (or next) steps in their quest to become 'planet positive'. Previous local speakers at this event have demonstrated how leaders from humble beginnings in Belfast have become game-changers in their respective fields. These include the likes of Dr Andrew Woods from Catagen (Sustain Exchange 2022), Eddie McGoldrick from The Electric Storage Company (Sustain Exchange 2021), Philip Rainey from Weev (Sustain Exchange 2023) and Dr Katrina Thompson from Artemis Technologies (Sustain Exchange 2024). The 2025 event will once again showcase how leaders from Belfast are leading the charge when it comes to the quest to avoid what is now a 'code red for humanity'. In doing this MLN plans to galvanise existing businesses to act and to inspire the next cohort of planet positive pioneers to emerge from our city.

The event will also provide the opportunity to make the broader leadership community in NI aware of the proactive work of Belfast City Council when it comes to the climate emergency.

3.4 Management and Leadership Network Experience

The Management and Leadership Network (MLN) is a non-profit which exists to connect decision-makers in NI with the insights of thought-leaders and world-class performers. The rationale is that by enhancing our leadership competence we will, empower local organisations, strengthen our economy, enrich our society and ultimately improve lives.

MLN has worked with some of the most respected leaders on the planet and is vastly experienced in creating and delivering truly world-class events that engage, enrich and elevate attendees. As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. Belfast City Council would once again be invited to participate and profile its extensive climate work i.e the Mini Stern Report, Resilience Strategy, Climate Commission, One Million Trees etc.

3.5 Date, Venue & Contingence

The Sustain Exchange Summit will take place on 20th October 2025. The total cost of the project will be in excess of £75k. Belfast City Council has been a key partner in the Sustain Exchange Summit since its inception in 2021 and its support has been crucial in the growth of the initiative and its impact. In order to reduce the financial cost to Belfast City Council and increase collaboration MLN will seek financial support from additional sources to include the private sector. MLN will give previous sponsors the opportunity to remain as partners. They have included Belfast-based organisations such as Danske Bank, AAB, CarbonFit, International Synergies (circular economy specialists), Belfast Harbour and Mills Selig Solicitors. As well as demonstrating real collaboration, these partnerships have allowed MLN to reduce Belfast City Council's financial contribution from £10,000+vat in 2021 to £8,450+vat in 2025.

3.6 Partner Contribution & Profile Benefits

If Belfast City Council chooses to support the Summit, it would be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners (examples given in 3.5). The Council brand would be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as

‘at-event’. A Council representative would be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN would be delighted for the Lord Mayor of Belfast to speak at the event. Council would also promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.7 £8,450+vat to support this initiative has been allocated from within the existing Climate programme budget.

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

- 3.8 There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications.”

The Committee agreed to support the climate leadership conference by approving a funding agreement to the value of £8450+vat to be entered into with the event organiser.

Planning Information

The Committee noted the contents of a report which provided an update on major planning applications and applications which had been determined by the Planning Committee and agreed that revised target dates be included in future reports.

Smart Belfast: Inclusive Innovation programme

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services submitted the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

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

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

1. To approve the Inclusive Innovation public dialogue series at City Hall as part of the development of an Inclusive Innovation programme.
2. To note that the £85,000 proposal by Newcastle University to work with Belfast and three other cities to develop tools and techniques for inclusive innovation,

has been accepted by the Economic and Social Research Council and that the project will commence in June 2025 with a planning workshop with partners in Newcastle Upon Tyne.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1** The innovative adoption of technology by all sectors of the economy is a core element of the Government's strategy for increasing productivity, generating new jobs and businesses. By way of example, in the realm of AI tech adoption alone the Government is projecting a boost to UK's GDP by over 10% by 2030. To support this approach the Government is encouraging cities and regions to build the conditions that will encourage collaborative innovation by all actors including industry and business, government, academia and communities.
- 3.2** The Government's approach is echoed in the strategic rationale for the Innovation, Digital and Skills pillars of the Belfast Region City Deal. These investments are designed to foster a regional innovation ecosystem that encourages R&D, innovation, tech adoption in ways that generate inclusive benefits for SMEs, communities and individuals.
- 3.3** However, an innovation-driven economy offers both opportunities and challenges for city leaders committed to inclusive growth. While such an economy will generate significant growth and wealth for a region, there is evidence that without well-planned, citizen-focused interventions, such an economy can actually widen inequalities and generate new barriers to jobs, services, and business opportunities.
- 3.4** 'Inclusive innovation' is an increasingly popular term for the types of interventions that are required to address such risks. While there is no settled opinion as to which interventions are likely to be the most effective, there is important, current research in this area by institutions including King's College, Cardiff University, Newcastle University, Nesta, and locally at Queen's University. Much of this research is being considered by UK Government as it seeks to ensure an inclusive approach to the national economic strategy.
- 3.5** Locally, the Belfast Innovation Commissioner recently co-authored a new paper with Robyn Klingler-Vidra and Alex Glennie of King's College on measuring inclusive innovation.

The research draws on the Belfast experience and will be published in Global Policy Journal¹ on 16 May.

- 3.6 Working with the Belfast Innovation Commissioner, and City Deal partners, the Council's City Innovation Office is aiming to unlock this research and practice to generate new inclusive growth opportunities through the Belfast Region City Deal investments. While there is recognition nationally about the inclusion risks and challenges of an innovation-driven economy, there has been only limited local discussion on the mitigations that need to be put in place to address them.
- 3.7 As a first step the City Innovation, Office working with the Commissioner, is therefore proposing an initial series of public engagements at City Hall aimed at politicians, leaders and policy makers to build shared understanding about the challenges that inclusive innovation represents, and work towards a series of interventions and programmes at scale. (It's proposed that this would take a similar format to the Council's influential '*Belfast: State of the City*' dialogue that sought to engage on urban policy in the period leading up to the Review Public Administration.)
- 3.8 Co-chaired by the Council's Chief Executive and the Belfast Innovation Commissioner, each session would bring leading thinkers to bear on the critical elements of any future Belfast inclusive innovation programme. A small steering group working with ICB would establish the final programme themes such as:
- Activating community infrastructure to realise the benefits of inclusive innovation
 - The impact of AI on education and learning
 - Skills for Good Jobs in a rapidly changing economy
 - New models of entrepreneurship in the era of AI
 - Measuring inclusive innovation
- 3.9 The series would support a number of outcomes:
- Help shape a shared understanding and approach to inclusive amongst Belfast partners.
 - It would ensure a framework for citizen co-design and collaboration is informed by thought leaders across inclusive skills, economies and innovation.

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

- Shape the inclusive innovation programme of Belfast City Council and partners including the work of Innovation City Belfast
- Inform decision-making on projects associated the Skills, Innovation and Digital pillars of BRCD.
- Support Belfast in engaging with potential funders of inclusive innovation initiatives at both the national and European levels.

3.10 Members are asked to approve the Inclusive Innovation dialogue series as part of the development of the inclusive innovation programme.

3.11 Current inclusive innovation initiatives

While a full inclusive innovation programme is still to be developed, the City Innovation Office has been working on a number of 'pilot' inclusive innovation projects. These include a one-year 'citizen science' project in collaboration with Queen's University's QCAP team that will work with two inner city communities and is due to begin this Spring. The City Innovation Office is also working with Ulster University on a new £2.5 million EPSRC funded project that is seeking to maximise the place-based social and economic impact of the new Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology (CDHT).

3.12 Finally, Members will recall that the Council was approached by 'i30' a research collaboration between Newcastle University, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Oslo and EAFIT University. i30 has been particularly interested in how 'City Deal'-type investments have supported inclusive innovation ambitions in cities in the UK and elsewhere. Their work is helping Newcastle City Council to shape its social inclusion strategy, while their work with Pittsburgh is ensuring that that their city's innovation district is having wider social impact. Belfast has been invited to be the fourth city in this inclusive innovation project.

3.13 Members should note that the £85,000 proposal has been accepted by the Economic and Social Research Council and the project will commence in June 2025 with a planning workshop with partners to which officers have been invited to attend. The project will build on i30's existing work to deliver a range of tools, policy guidance and practice that can support cities in delivering their inclusive innovation outcomes.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.14 Resources for these initiatives have been identified within the existing departmental budgets.**

Based on costings for similar events it's estimated that the series would require a budget of approximately £40,000 (This would include travel, AV, promotional materials, write-ups, catering, etc). The series would be organised in-house.

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

- 3.15 None at this stage."**

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Diversity Mark Sponsorship

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 21st June 2024, it had approved sponsorship of the 2024 Diversity Mark Summit. Diversity Mark was an independent not-for-profit Diversity and Inclusion Accreditation in Northern Ireland and had, to date, accredited almost 200 organisations across the UK and Ireland on their path to a more inclusive workplace. Membership provided support to employers to make and demonstrate progressive improvement in creating an inclusive and diverse workplace. The Council holds the Silver Diversity Mark Accreditation and was currently working towards attaining Gold Accreditation. The Council continued to work closely with Diversity Mark on a number of initiatives and forums aimed at sharing and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion best practice.

The Council had been invited again, along with a small number of other organisations, to contribute to the 2025 summit as a supporting sponsor. The main sponsor of the event was Allstate.

The benefits for sponsoring organisations are as follows:

- **Strategic Involvement:** Continued involvement in the EDI Forum. The forum will support on shaping the strategic direction of this annual summit and meet to explore best practice and global trends in EDI as identified by Diversity Mark.
- **Prominent Recognition:** Elevate your organisation's profile with extensive recognition and promotional opportunities throughout the summit as a valued supporting sponsor, ensuring visibility among industry leaders and decision-makers.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

- **Exclusive Attendance:** Secure up to 15 in-person summit passes for employees, promoting diversity from senior levels throughout, with the flexibility to invite guests or donate tickets to charitable organisations.
- **Thought Leadership Platform:** Opportunity to showcase your expertise by speaking at the summit or suggesting influential speakers.
- **Comprehensive Branding:** Benefit from extensive branding across all promotional materials, advertisements, and the website, with logo prominently displayed throughout the summit venue as a supporting sponsor, reinforcing your organisation's commitment to EDI and its pivotal role in driving economic growth and inclusivity

The investment required for this sponsorship was £2,250. This included 15 places at the summit and a seat at the Steering Committee and would be met from the existing Organisation Development budget.

The Committee agreed to the sponsorship of the Diversity Mark Summit 2025.

Sign Language Bill - response to Call for Evidence

The following report was submitted for the Committee's consideration:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek retrospective approval from Members for the attached officer response to the Call for Evidence for a Sign Language Bill which was submitted to the Northern Ireland Assembly prior to the deadline of 9th May 2025.**

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:**

- 1. Note the contents of this report.**
- 2. Provide retrospective approval for the officer response to the Call for Evidence which was submitted on 2nd May 2025.**

3.0 Main report

Background

- 3.1 In March 2004, the then British Secretary of State, Paul Murphy, formally recognised British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL) as languages in their own right. This recognition does not provide any statutory protection for the languages.**

- 3.2 The Sign Language Partnership Group (SLPG) led by the Department for Communities (DfC) was established as a forum in 2007 to bring together the government Departments and key organisations and representatives representing the Deaf community to improve access to public services for sign language users. The Council's Language Officer sits on the SLPG.
- 3.3 In 2016, a Sign Language Framework was launched by DfC, which provides details to address the lack of support and historical under investment for ISL and BSL, including proposals for legislation to officially recognise, promote and protect both languages and to provide support for the parents and families of deaf children.
- 3.4 On 23rd January 2025, Communities Minister Lyons announced at the Executive that he was introducing the draft Sign Language Bill to the Assembly. This took place on 18th February 2025. The Sign Language Bill has been referred to the Assembly's Committee for Communities so that the Committee can consider and take evidence on the Bill and report its opinion to the Assembly.

Call for Evidence – Sign Language Bill

- 3.5 The Committee is seeking views from stakeholders on the objectives, proposals and potential consequences of the Bill. [Link to Sign Language Bill.](#)
- 3.6 The Bill has 15 clauses. Clauses in Chapter 2 of the Bill requires prescribed organisations, which includes Councils, to carry out duties to ensure information and services provided are as accessible to individuals in the deaf community as they are to individuals who are not in the deaf community and to offer or facilitate the use of British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language for the benefit of the individuals in the deaf community in accessing information and services provided by the organisation. Prescribed organisations will be required to develop and implement five-year Sign Language Action Plans and to submit updates to the Department for Communities.
- 3.7 The Council has prepared and submitted a response to each clause by the submission deadline, Friday 9th May 2025.
- 3.8 Committee will note that the Council has already committed to the proposed obligations in the Sign Language Bill. We have a Language Strategy which includes Sign Languages as one of the language strands. We have a Language Action Plan which

covers actions to improve Sign Language provision within the Council. Our work to date in relation to Sign Languages is set out below.

British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language Charter - In March 2019, the Council signed up to the British Deaf Association's British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language Charter and one of the pledges made was to ensure council staff working with Deaf people can communicate effectively using British Sign Language and/or Irish Sign Language.

Sign Language Users' Forum - A Sign Language Users' Forum consisting of local Sign Language users was established in June 2019 and meets twice a year to advise, guide and support the Council to respond better to the needs of Sign Language Users in Belfast.

Staff training - Sign Language courses are provided to council staff.

Video Relay Service/Video Remoting Interpreting Service - The Council established a contact with SignVideo in 2020 to deliver interpreting support for Sign Language customers contacting the Customer Hub and visiting council venues.

City Hall Visitor Exhibition & Tropical Ravine Sign Language Videos - Sign Language visitors can access translated videos via the Council's YouTube channel when visiting the Visitor Exhibition at the City Hall and at Tropical Ravine, Botanic Gardens.

Public events - Sign Language interpreters are present at Council public events during the year e.g. Christmas and St Patrick's Day.

Communication Support - Sign Language users can request a Sign Language interpreter for appointments/meetings. Documents/leaflets can also be requested in British Sign Language and/or Irish Sign Language.

3.9 Financial and Resource Implications

None at this time.

3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Implications

The Sign Language Bill if passed will promote equality of opportunity for Deaf Sign Language Users."

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

The Committee granted retrospective approval for the officer response to the Call for Evidence which was submitted on 2nd May 2025.

City Centre Governance

The Strategic Director, Place and Economy submitted the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide proposals on a refreshed approach to city centre governance in the context of existing and established Community Planning structures.**

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:**

- **Agree to proposed refreshed approach to city centre governance in the context of existing and established Community Planning structures.**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 Members will be aware of the city centre governance arrangements agreed by this Committee in 2022. These were designed and implemented with relevance to a specific point in time which allowed responses to the emerging and often sensitive and difficult issues and anchored within established Community Planning Structures.**

- 3.2 As the operating environment and circumstances have changed, and taking account of feedback on duplication from representatives in relation to the various groups that had been established, it is timely to revisit the governance and delivery arrangements which had been initially put in place for the city centre, with a view to streamlining, integrating and refocusing to ensure that they are fit for purpose and remain relevant to all involved. In addition, work on the stocktake of the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS) was completed last year and recommended ‘a multi-agency approach to place keeping and city management’.**

- 3.3 This is line with the refresh of the Belfast Agenda, following which Community Planning Partnership partners agreed to revisit the associated governance arrangements to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose.**

3.4 Reflecting on the BCCRIS stock-take and status of initiatives, as well as engagement with and feedback from key stakeholders/partners, it is proposed that we seek to consolidate the Multi Agency Operational (Tasking) Group and FCC Leadership Group into one group 'City Centre Leadership Coordination Group' (illustrated in Appendix 1). To ensure a cross sector shared partnership approach it is proposed that this is anchored as per the initial governance under the auspices of Community Planning. This will ensure a multi-agency approach with representation across the public, private and third and community sectors. The proposed draft TOR are set out below to provide Members with a sense of purpose to this proposed forum:

- a) The Group as anchored with Community Planning structures, will contribute to realising the shared vision and ambition as set out in the Belfast Agenda; encouraging greater coordination and collaboration across partners in relation to the city centre to deliver our shared vision of creating '*a vibrant, unique and thriving place where people spend time, live, work, visit and invest*'.
- b) To ensure that a fit-for-purpose vehicle exists to raise and expedite issues relating to the priorities for the city centre across the five pillars of Regeneration & Connectivity; Business Investment, Animation & Distinctive Offering, Clean, Green Inclusive & Safe and Vulnerability.
- c) To enable engagement, discussion and collaboration between key public and private stakeholders (including central and local government, anchor institutions, retail, business and umbrella organisations, developers, community, third sector and other relevant city centre stakeholders) to delivery activities aligned to these pillars.
- d) To support the delivery of priority projects that support the agreed vision for the City Centre.
- e) To provide a forum to develop shared messaging and joined up communications on matters pertaining to the Belfast City Centre.
- f) To be a vehicle for engagement with wider community interests.
- g) It would be expected that respective organisations filter updates and messaging as appropriate through their networks to ensure communication of relevant areas are understood across the board.
- h) The group will provide a forum to allow all stakeholders to feed in relevant workstreams / updates relevant to the ongoing and future success of the city centre.

- i) To monitor overall progress; and to review and update the objectives and priorities at least annually.
 - j) Representatives on the group should be of sufficient level where they are able to convey issues, opportunities etc back into the relevant leadership / governance of their respective organisations as appropriate.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the meetings are organised and structured around the pillars of the Future City Centre (FCC) programme. This is aligned to the priority area under the Our Place thematic area of the Belfast Agenda, providing an opportunity for reporting into the City Centre All Party Working Group, relevant committees and the Community Planning Our Place Board.
- 3.6 It is not proposed to change arrangements in relation to Complex Lives, which are deigned to focus and coordinate multiagency support in relation to a specific group of vulnerable individuals who are experiencing very complex issues.
- 3.7 Positive discussions have taken place with officials in the Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure on the refreshed governance proposals for the city centre.
- 3.8 **Financial and Resource Implications**
- None
- 3.9 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**
- None associated with this report.”

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Developer Contributions for Wastewater
Infrastructure – Consultation**

The Director of Planning and Building Control submitted the following report for the Committee’s consideration:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

To update the Committee on the consultation published by the Department for Infrastructure on 21 March 2025 on Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure and to agree a draft response to the consultation.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is asked to

- Note the contents of the consultation and agree the draft response set out in Appendix 2.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 Long term underinvestment in wastewater infrastructure continues to have a significant effect on development in NI and in Belfast. Upgrades to the system haven't been able to proceed at the pace required and much of the infrastructure is aging and needs upgrading. There are now areas across Belfast that have limited or no capacity to allow for new connections to the NI Water sewerage network.**
- 3.2 The Living with Water Programme provided a route through which to implement improvements to the wastewater infrastructure across Belfast. Whilst projects were progressed, the funding required to deliver improvements has been cut and the programme itself has effectively been paused.**

Consultation

- 3.3 A consultation on Developer Contributions for Wastewater Infrastructure was published on the 21 March. The document sets out that DfI are taking a three-pronged approach to resolving the current issue:**
- 1. Working with Executive colleagues to try and increase wastewater investment**
 - 2. Exploring options for developer contributions and**
 - 3. Introducing the Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Bill to the Assembly to enable the Department to issue future guidance on the design, maintenance and adoption of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**
- 3.4 DfI are also working at a strategic level with colleagues in DfC and DAERA to identify steps which can be taken to maximise the building of houses and with NI Water to identify projects that can release capacity. No further information is given on the other workstreams within the consultation document.**

The proposals

- 3.5 The consultation document recognises that there is no expectation that developer contributions will provide all, or even most, of the significant funding needed to address the full capacity challenges within the existing wastewater infrastructure network.
- 3.6 There is also recognition that any contribution towards upgrading or replacing wastewater infrastructure would increase the costs to the developer of building new houses, that this could be passed on to the purchaser and that this could be the case for both private and social housing developers.
- 3.7 Whilst the consultation considers ‘developer contributions’, it is clear that what is being proposed under the two options contained within the report is not what is currently considered as a planning agreement under s76 of the 2011 Planning Act (commonly referred to as developer contributions). Neither option would be operated by the local planning authority (although the consultation asserts that a payment made under the first option could be considered to be a material consideration in decision making).
- 3.8 A synopsis of the two options is set out below:

Option 1 – Voluntary Contributions	Option 2 – Compulsory Levy
<p>Developers could opt to pay to offset the costs of upgrading or replacing infrastructure.</p> <p>Legislation required – to make financial contribution directly to NI Water to pay some or all of the costs.</p> <p>Developers could pool contributions to meet the required level of funding.</p>	<p>Requires a financial contribution from developers with the money then used on a prioritised needs basis across NI.</p> <p>Creates a ring-fenced fund which would help to offset the funding gap between the amount that NI Water receive from the Executive and the amount needed to address constraints.</p>

<p><i>‘Allows developers to decide whether and how much to contribute in consultation with NI Water’</i></p> <p>Secured through an upfront payment or bond.</p> <p>Planning authorities would not be party to the agreement nor the transfer of funds, but the existence of the agreement would be a material consideration in determining a planning application (may require negative condition). If developer pays for infrastructure that others then benefit from, a reimbursement scheme could be introduced.</p>	<p><i>‘Consistent and predictable source of funding’</i></p> <p>Automatically increases the cost of all development but seems to be limited to housing.</p> <p>Legislation required & administratively complex.</p> <p>Wouldn’t provide immediate solution – the fund cannot grow until houses are built, but houses cannot be built without the funding to improve infrastructure. The levy calculation and methodology as well as how the funds would be allocated and prioritised would need to be the subject of consultation.</p> <p>Possible exemptions (rural housing) are suggested.</p>
--	---

- 3.9 The consultation also considers that it is possible to combine options 1 & 2 by allowing voluntary contributions in the short term whilst working on introducing the levy in the longer term.

BCC consultation response

- 3.10 A draft response to the consultation is set out in Appendix 2. The questions posed in the consultation are very focused, so additional commentary has been drafted to consider a number of issues around the proposals outlined.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

- 3.11 If the response is agreed and the decision ratified at Council on the 3 June, it will be submitted in time to meet the deadline for consultation responses on the 27 June 2025.**

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.12 There are no finance or resource implications as a result of the consultation, however there may be financial implications should a compulsory levy be introduced on Council projects.**

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

- 3.13 The consultation has been subject to its own s75 screening, Human Rights Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Impacts Assessment.”**

The Committee noted the contents of the consultation and agreed the draft response set out in Appendix 2, subject to amending the response to question 1 to “agree” and including commentary on developer contributions being part of an overall funding package for wastewater infrastructure and the need for NIW to consider their blanket approach to objecting to development.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Physical Programme

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 The Council’s Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council’s Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report presents requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme and an update on Wilmont House.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to –**
- Capital Programme Movements –**

- Historic Tiled Street Signs - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up.
 - Historic Cemeteries Phase 1 - Agree that a first phase is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up.
 - Bridges Improvement Programme Phase 1 - Agree that the first phase is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up.
 - Beacon Programme - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up.
 - Communications Boards - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up.
 - Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up.
 - Corporate Accommodation CWB and Duncrue Complex – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.
- Note the update on Wilmont House and that funding has been secured by Golden Thread Gallery from National Lottery Heritage Fund for a feasibility study which will be carried out in partnership with the Council.

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

Physical Programme

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.

Capital Programme - Proposed Movements

- 3.2 As outlined above Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Members are asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

Project	Overview	Stage movement
Historic Tiled Street Signs	Restoration of historic tiled street signs.	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>
Historic Cemeteries Phase 1	Conservation and restoration improvements at listed graveyards.	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>
Bridges Improvement Programme Phase 1	Programme of remedial works on bridges across the Council estate.	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>
Beacon Programme	Provision of beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires.	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>
Communications Boards	Inclusive communications boards in playgrounds.	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>
Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme	Feature lighting to exterior of Ulster Hall.	Move to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>
Corporate Accommodation - CWB and Duncrue	Enhancements to office accommodation at Cecil Ward Building and Duncrue Complex.	Add as <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>

3.3 Historic Tiled Street Signs

This project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* in November 2024. Belfast's iconic black and white tiled street signs have long been a unique and instantly recognisable feature of the city's architectural heritage, believed to date from c 1880 through to 1950's. The signs are either mounted on posts or are fixed to the gable walls of buildings. The survey of the first tranche of 32 signs by conservation architects, 24 of which are listed, showed that many are severely damaged, with fragments missing, and the lettering and blank field tiles also show significant damage. The initial research was carried out in conjunction with DfC's Historic Environment Division. An application for funding to the Pilgrim Trust for this first phase is being submitted this month. Officers are continuing to collate a database of other historic tiled street signs across the city, in order to prepare for further phases of survey work. Members are asked to agree that 'Historic Tiled Street Signs' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.

3.4 Historic Cemeteries

This project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* in November 2024. Members will be aware that the

Council owns five historic graveyards, four of which are currently closed namely Balmoral, Clifton Street, Friar's Bush and Knock. Surveys have identified a programme conservation and health and safety works which are required to improve the condition of the graveyards. Conservation and restoration improvements will allow the graveyards to be more accessible to the public and contribute to neighbourhood tourism. Safety works to monuments are being brought forward within a first phase of works. Members are asked to agree that 'Historic Cemeteries Phase 1' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.

3.5 **Bridges Improvement Programme**

Development of a multiyear approach to bridge improvements is continuing for 50+ bridges across the Council estate, following on from the initial surveys that have already been carried out. A programme of remedial work is now being finalised for the first phase. Members are asked to agree that 'Bridges Improvement Programme Phase 1' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.

3.6 **Beacon Programme**

Members will be aware that demand is increasing for beacons as a managed, environmentally more acceptable alternative to traditional bonfires. Members are asked to agree that 'Beacon Programme' is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow the options to be fully worked up.

3.7 **Communication Boards**

This project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* in April. As agreed by Council, officers are exploring options in respect of funding the provision of communication boards for Council playgrounds in 2025/26, in addition to the recouped monies made available following the UKSPF funding last year. Members are asked to agree that 'Communication Boards' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.

3.8 **Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme**

This project was added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* in April. The project involves the installation of an LED lighting display on the façade of Ulster Hall capable of changing colour similar to City Hall's Illuminate scheme and will be in keeping with the building's listed status. An offer of

funding to the Council is being finalised from Linen Quarter BID for the design phase. Members are asked to agree that 'Ulster Hall Lighting Scheme' is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up.

3.9 Corporate Accommodation - CWB and Duncrue

This project will include upgrades to staff accommodation on the first floor CWB and in Duncrue to include office and staff welfare facilities such as canteens, kitchens, toilets and locker rooms. Members are asked to agree that 'Corporate Accommodation – CWB and Duncrue' is added to the Capital Programme as a Stage 1 – Emerging project to allow a business case to be developed.

3.10 Wilmont House – Update

This project was added at *Stage 1 – Emerging* on the Capital Programme in November 2024. Wilmont House is a Grade B+ Listed property in the grounds of Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park. The house has had various uses over the years and has now fallen into a serious state of disrepair. HED have assessed Wilmont House as 'at risk' and officers have been in close liaison with HED officials on the condition of Wilmont House. In order to look at bringing forward a sustainable end use for the building and restoring it back to its original condition officers have been working with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Golden Thread Gallery. Members are now advised that the Golden Thread Gallery has recently secured initial funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a feasibility study on the restoration of the building. This study will explore the transformation of Wilmont House into a cultural venue to house the Golden Thread Gallery's Collection of Northern Irish Art. Members are asked to note the update on Wilmont House and that funding has been secured by Golden Thread Gallery from National Lottery Heritage Fund for a feasibility study which will be carried out in partnership with the Council.

3.11 Financial and Resource Implications

Financial Implications – None at this time.

Resource Implications – Officer time to deliver.

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

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

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

The Committee adopted the recommendations and noted that the Shankill cemetery should have been included in the list of historic cemeteries and agreed also that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the City Cemetery Visitor Centre.

Area Working Groups Update May 2025

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the South Area Working Group of 19 May 2025.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Discretionary Payments Framework

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the matter.

Requests for Funding

The Committee was advised that the following requests for funding had been received:

1. Shankill Juniors Football Club for funding of approximately £12,000 to support their participation in the Milk Cup in July.
2. NI Walking Football Federation to provide funding of £5,000 to support five individuals from Belfast who are competing in the International Federation World Championship in Malmo, Sweden on the 3rd to 7th July.
3. Irish Athletic Boxing Association for £25,000 towards the cost of hosting an elite boxing camp in Belfast in August 2025 in advance of the Elite World Championships in Liverpool in September.

The Committee approved the requests.

The Committee agreed also that a request from Antrim Ladies Gaelic Football and Camogie Club for funding of £20,000 to jointly promote the two associations as well as provision of kit, physical and nutritional advice, which had previously been deferred by the Committee, be approved.

Contracts update

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1);
- approved the award of Single Tender Actions (STAs) in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 2);
- approved the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 3); and

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

- noted the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 4).

Commercial and Procurement Services
Social Value Working Group

The Committee noted the attached 3 papers presented to the SPWG:

1. *SPWG Report - Sustainable Procurement Policy* which provides an update on proposed amendments to the current Social Value Procurement Policy 'SVPP' and asks Members to approve and/or provide further feedback on the proposed approach i.e. publish a new Sustainable Procurement Policy.
2. *SPWG Report - Short duration projects (including Appendix 1)* which asked Members to approve an amendment to the SVPP to allow for additional flexibility so that Officers can include a simpler/ more flexible social value scoring approach in tenders that are <6 months (approx.) in duration.
3. *SPWG Report - SVPP Delivery Report May 25 (including Appendix 1)* which provides an update on the delivery of social value outcomes via open tender competitions awarded in accordance with the 'SVPP'

Equality and Good Relations

Minutes of Shared City Partnership
Meeting on 12th May 2025

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 12th April 2025 including:

Good Relations Quarter 4 Update

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

Good Relations Action Plan Budget Update

- The Partnership noted the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report, including the proposal to proceed with the Good Relations Action plan as detailed in the body of the report

Update from Partnership Members

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

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

PEACE IV – Secretariat Update

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

**PEACEPLUS Belfast City Council
Local Community Action Plan – Update**

- The meeting was inquorate at this stage, as such the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is requested to endorse the report recommendations, summarised as follows:
 - the revised CRT Animation Timeframe subject to SEUPB approval;
 - the cross-community breakdown for participants as outlined in Option 2.

**Equality and Diversity: Equality Screening and
Rural Needs Outcome Report Quarter 4 2024-25**

The Committee was reminded that the Council had a duty to have, under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

- Due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories; and
- Regard to the desirability of promoting good relations.

In addition, under section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:

- Due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.

To this end, the Council had a process to carry out equality screening and rural needs assessment of new and revised policies. This allowed any impacts related to equality of opportunity, good relations or rural needs to be identified and addressed.

An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment template was completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Unit. On a regular basis, the Unit collates all completed templates into a screening outcome report and publishes it onto the Council's website, along with the relevant completed templates.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

The Committee noted the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report which would be published on the Council's website.

**Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 – DAERA
Annual Monitoring Report**

The Committee was reminded that the rural population of Belfast was comprised of the small settlements of Edenderry, Hannahstown and Loughview.

Section 1 (1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 required public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services. As part of that duty, Council officers complete Rural Needs Impact Assessments.

Section 3 (1) of the Act required public authorities to:

- i) Compile information on the exercise of their functions;
- ii) Include that information in annual reports; and
- iii) Send that information to DAERA.

The Annual Return was designed to inform stakeholders and other interested parties of how the Council had had due regard to rural needs in the exercise of its functions. The Annual Return showed how the Council had met this duty for 2024-25.

Subject to Committee and Council approval, the Annual Return would be submitted to DAERA next month for inclusion in its Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report in order to meet DAERA's deadline for publication.

A copy of the Annual Return, together with a list of the completed Rural Needs Impact Assessments would be published on the Council's website as the Council does not have an annual report.

The Committee approved the Annual Monitoring Return to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for 2024-25, which provided evidence of how the Council had met certain duties under the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Operational Issues

**Minutes of Party Group Leaders
Consultative Forum**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 15th May 2025.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

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

The Committee approved the recommendations as set out below:

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED
Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC)	5 September 2025	NILGOSC's 75th anniversary lunch Reception, Lunch, Presentations, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 90	C	Room hire £450	Drinks Reception as significant anniversary
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	25 November 2025	Belfast Trust Chairman's Awards 2025 – Awards ceremony to recognise the contributions and achievements of the staff in the Belfast Trust. Numbers attending – 300	C	Room hire £1250	
Telugu Cultural Society of Northern Ireland (TCSNI)	4 April 2026	Celebration of Ugadi 2026 "Beginning of a New Age" an evening of food and entertainment to celebrate New Year's	C	Current rate free as Voluntary Community Group	Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as Voluntary Community Group

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED
		Day for the people of the Deccan region of India. Numbers attending – 300 - 400			
Queen's University Belfast on behalf of Civil Engineering Research Association of Ireland	18 June 2026	Conference Dinner and Awards Evening for CERA Conference for guests attending 3-day conference at Queens. Numbers attending: 220	A &B	Room hire £1250	
Sons of Ulster Shankill Road Flute Band	3 October 2026	60th Anniversary Celebration Drinks Reception, Dinner, Presentations, and entertainment. Numbers attending – 100	C	Current rate free as Voluntary Community Group	Drinks Reception as significant anniversary

Use of City Hall Grounds - Trad Fest July 2025

The Committee was reminded that requests for the use of City Hall were normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally, however, it was necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee, and the request set out below fell into this category.

Belfast TradFest, described as “the pinnacle of world-class traditional music concerts, fiery pub sessions and Ireland’s fastest growing summer school of traditional music, was set to celebrate its 7th edition across Belfast UNESCO City of Music” from Sunday 27th July – Sunday 3rd August 2025.

TradFest was a registered charity and Belfast City Council funded the festival through its Cultural Multi-Annual funding, and organisers plan to use Belfast City Council branding for the site, if available.

As part of the festival, TradFest wished to host a 5-day family-friendly outdoor music stage on the grounds of Belfast City Hall from Monday 28th July to Friday 1st August. The event would take place from 1pm to 5pm each day and would be free to enter. This vibrant stage would showcase the finest up-and-coming traditional music talent from Belfast and beyond. There would be no catering, trading or sale of alcohol.

The proposed event would take place on the front west lawn only and areas such as the East Lawn, the Titanic Garden and Cenotaph would remain open to the public. Access to the City Hall building would not be affected. The organiser would provide an Event Management Plan, risk assessment, insurance, stewarding/marshalling staff and first aiders and would comply with the Council’s standard conditions for hire etc. Sound levels from the outdoor stage would be monitored mindful of event proximity to the committee rooms, party rooms and Chief Executive’s offices.

The Committee approved the use of City Hall grounds between 28th July and 1st August 2025 for TradFest, subject to the submission of an event management plan, risk assessment and the appointment of an event controller to ensure delivery of a safe public events.

**The installation of dual-language signage
in Olympia, including GLL/BETTER
information signage - Councillor Beattie to raise**

The Committee agreed a report be submitted to the next monthly meeting.

**The installation of dual-language signage
on the Forth-Meadow Greenway –
Councillor Beattie to raise**

The Committee agreed a report be submitted to the next monthly meeting.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 23rd May, 2025**

**An update on the next stage in the
development of the Irish Language Policy –
Councillor Beattie to raise**

The Committee agreed a report be submitted to the next monthly meeting.

Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 30th May, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Brennan, Bunting, Cobain,
de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Ferguson, Garrett,
Groogan, Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown,
R. McLaughlin, Nelson and Whyte.
- In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. P. Hamilton, Lead Officer – Community Safety; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor I. McLaughlin.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

Bonfire Update (verbal update)

The Committee was provided with an update in respect of a number of bonfires which were being built across the City:

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 30th May, 2025**

Meridi Street

The Committee was informed that the Bonfire Panel had requested that the site located at Meridi Street, Belfast be referred to the Committee for its consideration.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to delegate authority to officers to undertake legal action and the necessary steps to secure the site. The Committee also noted that further information would be submitted to a Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, if required.

Annadale

It was reported that engagement had been undertaken with the community in relation to a potential bonfire located at Annadale Embankment and it would now be replaced with a beacon.

The Committee agreed that the Council would work with the contractor to remove bonfire material which had accumulated on at the site.

Lower Oldpark

The Committee was reminded that the Committee, at its meeting in April, had agreed a funding award to the Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) under the Summer Community Diversionary Programme.

The Committee was informed that a variation request to the application had been received.

During discussion, the City Solicitor confirmed that funding letters of offer had not yet been sent.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that officers would review the application and that engagement be undertaken with the applicant. The Committee also noted that further information would be submitted to a Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, if required.

Standing Order 14 - Submission of minutes to Council

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

Chairperson

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 6th May, 2025

MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor R. Brooks (Chairperson);
Councillors Abernethy, Bell, Black, Bower, Bradley,
Bunting, Canavan, Cobain, Doherty, M. Donnelly,
R-M Donnelly, Flynn, Garrett, Magee, Maskey,
McKeown, I. McLaughlin and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and
Neighbourhood Services;
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;
Mr. S. Leonard, Director of Resources, Fleet,
Open Spaces and Streetscene;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apology

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Maghie, who had recently given birth to a daughter. The Committee agreed to send a letter of congratulations to Councillor Maghie and her family.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st May, subject to the following amendments:

- that the Committee's decision under the heading 'Requests for the Use of Botanic Gardens' was rejected and, accordingly, permission was not granted to the applicants for the hosting of the associated events;
- that the Committee's decision under the heading 'Closed Bin Lid Policy/Removal of Bin Liners' was referred back to the Committee for further consideration; and
- that the Committee's decision under the heading 'Dual Language Street Signs – Potential Adverse Impacts' was amended to reflect the addition of the following wording to the decision: *"That this Council condemns sectarianism in all its forms and is committed to create and develop a shared, peaceful and reconciled City; condemns all threats and acts of violence against political and elected representatives, who should be free to participate in the democratic process without fear of interference; rejects support of proscribed organisations promoting violence or hate; and believes that no one should be prevented from speaking out in defence of*

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 6th May, 2025**

human rights, or against human rights abuses occurring during the ongoing genocide in Gaza and all other conflicts across the globe.”

Declarations of Interest

Regarding item 4 (g) 'Integrated Advice Partnership Fund', Councillors M. Donnelly and Bradley declared interests in that they worked for organisations which had been referenced within the report. Both Members retired from the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

Councillor I. McLaughlin declared an interest in item 4 (d) 'Girdwood Hub Progress Update' in that he worked for an organisation which had been referenced within the report. He retired from the meeting whilst the matter was under consideration.

Restricted Items

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

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

The Members were advised that the content of the 'restricted' reports and any associated discussion must be treated as 'confidential information' and that such information should not be disclosed as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Dog Warden Service

(Ms. K. Jackson, Dog Warden Supervisor, attended in connection with this item.)

At its meeting on 8th April, the Committee had agreed that an update be provided to a future meeting which would outline the work of the dog warden service and provide information on its activity and volume of work. Accordingly, the Chairperson welcomed Ms. K. Jackson, Dog Warden Supervisor, who provided an update in this regard.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Verner,
Seconded by Councillor Canavan and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees that a review of the Council's Dog Warden Service be undertaken as a matter of priority with a view to examining current resourcing levels, shift patterns and identifying any future requirements. It was agreed also that the review would re-examine fines/penalties currently levied and the Council's powers to address dog fouling within byelaws. It was

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 6th May, 2025**

noted that any additional resourcing requirements identified would be considered as part of the overall rate-setting process for 2026/27.

Belfast City Tribunal Service

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 4th March, it had considered a request for funding from the Belfast Advice Group, in the sum of £242,000, to enable that organisation to oversee the delivery of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service in 2025/26. The Committee, at that meeting, had agreed to defer the request to enable further consideration of the request to be undertaken by the Party Group Leaders.

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services outlined the principal aspects of a further report which had been circulated and recommended that the Committee consider a revised approach in the delivery of the service until the end of September, 2025, in which the Council would contribute 50% of the amount requested by the Belfast Advice Group, that being, £121,000.

In addition, the Director sought permission for officers to undertake a procurement exercise with a view to appointing an organisation to deliver, at a cost of up to £270,000 per annum, the service from 1st October, 2025, until 31st March, 2028. Such a contract would include an annual review with an in-built break clause should the delivery of the service not meet agreed targets.

The Committee endorsed the course of action outlined by the Director for the delivery of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service until the end of September, 2025; and for the undertaking of a procurement exercise for the future delivery of the service.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Committee Plan 2024/25

The Committee noted the contents of the end-of-year report relating to the Committee Plan for 2024/25.

Committee Plan 2025/26

The Committee approved the Committee Plan for 2025/26.

Greenwich Leisure Limited - Service Report 2024

The Committee noted the contents of Greenwich Leisure Limited's Service Report for 2024/25.

**Greenwich Leisure Limited Community
Engagement re: Underrepresented/Target
Groups**

The Committee noted the contents of the above-mentioned report.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 6th May, 2025**

Arising from discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Abernethy, seconded by Councillor Bell, and agreed that officers would engage with representatives of Greenwich Leisure Limited regarding the feasibility of providing one free activity within the Council's leisure centres for every Belfast resident and that a report in this regard, to include projected costs, be submitted for consideration.

**Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) –
Annual Policy Alignment Statement**

The Committee noted the contents of Greenwich Leisure Limited's Statement of Policy Alignment for 2024/25.

Girdwood Hub - Progress Update

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

The Committee noted that a proprietary funding agreement regarding the Collaborative Shared Space Programme would be agreed, through delegated authority, for a period of up to two-years (to 31st March, 2027) and endorsed the emerging business case to support the proprietary use of the site by local community organisations to deliver a youth engagement and activity programme.

Resources and Fleet Waste – Update

(Mr. J. McConnell, City Services Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered a report which provided details on waste collections, management and performance, which included information on the ongoing pilot schemes relating to the 'Park with us in Mind' and 'Small Vehicles for Difficult to Access Streets'. An extract of the report regarding the above schemes is set out hereunder:

Restricted Access Streets Pilots Updates

- 3.1 Members will be aware that this pilot was launched on 6th May 2024, the overall scheme envisaged three 'cycles' in these areas over a period of approximately 18 months. A report was presented to People and Communities Committee in December 2024 after the first cycle.**
- 3.2 Since then, the second cycle was planned as follows and is now complete.**

Area	Start Date
Stranmillis Rd Area	21/10/2024
Donegall Road / Village Area	18/11/2024
Cregagh / Loopland Area	16/12/2024
Springfield Road Area	13/01/2025
Lower Ormeau Road/ Park Road Area	10/02/2025
Iveagh / Broadway Area	10/03/2025

- 3.3 Officers are now in a position to provide some analysis and data to compare both crew reports and customer contact levels covering the 6 weeks prior to intervention, the results from the first cycle and now the results from the second cycle.

As before, the data comes from two sources

- Operational crew reports of not being able to access streets or blocked alleyways, entrances etc.
- Customer contact data in relation to residents in the relevant streets reporting non collections

- 3.4 From this set of data it would seem that the improvements in relation to both crews reporting issues and from customer contacts has been maintained during the second cycle of monitoring and enforcement by DFI.

- In 5 of the 6 areas crew have reported less instances of non-access with an overall reduction of 37% compared to the 6 week period prior to pilot launch. There has been an improvement in the Iveagh/ Broadway area but there has been a slight increase in the Springfield Road area.
- In 4 of the six areas there was a reduction of customer contacts with an equivalent overall reduction of reports by 47% against baseline. There was again an improvement in the Iveagh / Broadway area, exceptions to this are in the Stranmillis and Donegall Road / Village areas.

- 3.5 An officer review meeting with BCC and DFI will take place at the in May to discuss the data and to see if any improvements can be introduced to improve on the first cycle.

Introduction of Small Vehicles for Difficult to Access Streets

- 3.6 Members will be aware that the pilot for this initiative, consisting of two leased 18 tonnes Dennis Eagle Refuse Collection Vehicles and temporary crews, commenced collection in identified and agreed difficult to access streets on 12th August 2024. The pilot has been full rolled out since December 2024.
- 3.7 Following the initial success of the first three months of the pilot, reported to the Committee in December 2024, officers submitted a growth proposal for the addition of two additional crews and vehicles to make this scheme permanent, and members approved this proposal as part of the 2025/26 rate setting process. Resources

and Fleet are now working through the financial governance process to procure vehicles and recruit staff on a permanent basis.

- 3.8 In all, the number of streets being serviced by the two smaller vehicles is as follows:

Bin Type	Streets with Bin Type
Black/Grey Non-recyclable	126
Brown Food/ Garden Compostables	84
Blue Dry Mixed Recyclables	77

- 3.9 The latest data is outlined below in Table 3. The table shows the performance of the pilot in the last three months against the three months before pilot launch and the equivalent three months of the prior year. Again, two measures are captured in relation to this; crews reporting issues via Report It App and customers raising service requests received via the Customer Hub.
- 3.10 Data has been produced comparing the amount of crew reports and customer contacts in relation to missed collections as follows
- The latest three months of small vehicles in operation against the three months immediately prior to their introduction
 - The latest three months in operation against the same period the previous year (Jan-Mar 24 vs Jan-Mar25)
- 3.11 A Member requested information in relation to the legislative powers the Council has in relation to enforcing the (non) retrieval of bins after waste collection.
- 3.12 In relation to this matter, relevant legislation outlines several powers the council has in relation to the collection of Waste from Households (and Commercial entities). They include
1. the council may require the occupier to place the waste for collection in receptacles of a kind and number specified. Separate receptacles or compartments of receptacles may be required to be used for waste which is to be recycled and waste which is not.
 2. In making requirements as respect to receptacles, the placing of the receptacles for the purpose of facilitating the emptying of them, and access to the receptacles for that purpose including the placing of the receptacles for that purpose on roads.

- 3.13 It can be seen that the Council can ask for receptacles (bins) to be placed on roads for collection purposes. Specifically, however, in relation to the retrieval of receptacles from the street, the legislation does not give the Council any powers of enforcement.**
- 3.14 It is our understanding that enforcement powers in relation to the removal of obstructions from the pavement or from roads the public are under the remit of the Department for Infrastructure.**
- 3.15 As the Council has no powers to enforce retrieval, the service has for many years tried to engage with residents on a local basis, through the use of tags and stickers on bins, leafleting and lettering households. On occasions where it has finally been determined that a bin has been abandoned, then arrangements may be put in place to remove it permanently.**

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Arising from discussion, the City Services Manager undertook to consult with representatives of the Department for Infrastructure and the Police Service of Northern Ireland regarding the levels of awareness raising, monitoring and enforcement conducted in relation to the 'Park with us in Mind' and 'Small Vehicles for Difficult to Access Streets' schemes with a view to providing an update at a future meeting.

Port Health – Annual Update

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

Integrated Advice Partnership Fund

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services reminded the Committee that, at its meeting on 8th April, it had approved the funding of bids received from organisations within an existing advice consortia to provide independent debt advice in 2025/26. In addition, the Committee had agreed, in principle, that any in-year underspend be redistributed equally across the four providers identified within the report, subject to officers ascertaining that capacity existed within the aforesaid organisations to deliver the service in 2025/26. The Director advised the Committee that, on reconsulting with the organisations, it had been established that capacity existed to deliver the anticipated services in 2025/26.

The Committee noted the update provided and affirmed its decision of 8th April in respect of the redistribution of any financial underspend in 2025/26.

Play Service Rental Agreement

The Committee considered a report in respect of the existing play service agreement with the Benview Residents Association at the Benview Community Centre.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 6th May, 2025**

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Maskey,
Seconded by Councillor R-M Donnelly,

That the Committee agrees to defer, for a period of one-month, consideration of the report to enable further engagement to be undertaken between officers and locally Elected Members in respect of the rental agreement.

Amendment

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

That the Committee agrees to extend the current play service rental agreement with the Benview Residents Association for a further period of five-years.

On a vote, nine Members voted in favour of the amendment and ten against and it was declared lost.

Accordingly, after discussion, the Committee agreed to adopt the proposal.

It was noted that a report on the Council's current play service agreements would be submitted for consideration.

Requests to Host Events in Parks and Open Space

The Committee granted authority to the applicants for the hosting of the undernoted events, subject to the stipulations as set out within the report:

- Bullapalooza – C.S. Lewis Square;
- Live at C.S. Lewis Square – C.S. Lewis Square;
- Finaghy Cultural Festival – Wedderburn Park; and
- North Belfast Lantern Festival – Alexandra Park.

Dual Language Street Signs Applications

The Committee agreed to the erection of a second street nameplate, in Irish, at Friendly Place, Stanfield Place, Stanfield Row, Friendly Row, Veryan Gardens, Thornberry Mews, Bearnagh Glen, Meadowhill Grange, Willowbank Gardens and Rossmore Drive.

Playground Improvement Programme 2025/26

The Committee approved the undertaking of refurbishment works at the following sites as part of the Playground Improvement Programme 2025/26, viz., White Rise, Ohio Street, Roddens Crecent and Finvoy Street.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 6th May, 2025**

Issue Raised in Advance

Use of Dundonald Cemetery

The Chairperson sought the Committee's indulgence to consider a late request she had received from Alderman Lawlor, seeking permission for the Dundonald Browning Club Apprentice Boys of Derry to host its annual Somme commemoration service at Dundonald Cemetery on the evening of Thursday, 26th June.

The Committee agreed to consider the request and granted permission for the hosting of the event, subject to the organisers resolving all operational issues to the Council's satisfaction.

Committee Matters

Future Committee Meetings

The Committee agreed that special meetings would be held on Monday 23rd June and on Monday 8th December at 5.15pm to receive the Belfast Youth Council; and on Tuesday 18th November to receive representatives of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive regarding its Housing Improvement Plan for Belfast.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 7th May, 2025

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. K. Forster, Director of Economic Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;
Ms. L. O'Donnell, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism;
Ms. C. Persic, Development Manager; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st May.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Smyth declared an interest in relation to item 2(c) 'Coach Operators Update' in that his wife was employed by an organisation referenced in the report and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Councillor R. McLaughlin declared an interest in relation to item 3(a) 'Request to Present – Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP)' in that he was a member of the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and left the meeting whilst the item was under consideration.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

Vacant to Vibrant Programme

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided the Committee with an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Scheme and outlined the recommendations from the Vacant to Vibrant Assessment Panel following the receipt and assessment of recent applications.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update in relation to the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and that it would be supporting up to 58 businesses/organisations to locate or expand into long term vacant units; and
- ii. agreed the recommended city-wide grant award as outlined within Section 3.19 of the report.

**Sandy Row/Grosvenor Road
Revitalisation Fund Update**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the ongoing work strands in relation to revitalisation funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) for the Sandy Row and Grosvenor Road areas.

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised the Committee that a formal application would be submitted to DfC in respect of funding for the proposed Grosvenor Road Revitalisation Scheme and outlined the potential eligibility criteria, subject to DfC approval.

Several Members thanked the officers for the work that had been undertaken to date in relation to support for the areas of Sandy Row and Grosvenor Road.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 7th May, 2025**

The Committee:

- i. noted the update on the DfC funded Sandy Row Revitalisation Scheme;
- ii. noted the update on the potential DfC funded Grosvenor Road Area Revitalisation Scheme; and
- iii. agreed the potential eligibility criteria for the Grosvenor Road Area Revitalisation Scheme, as outlined within the report, subject to DfC approval.

Coach Operators Update

The Senior Manager Culture, Tourism and Events provided the Committee with an update in relation to hop-on hop-off coach provision within the city centre and the development of a Voluntary Code of Conduct for tour operators.

She reminded the Committee that, at its meeting in May, 2024, it had agreed, in principle, to sign up to a draft Code of Conduct along with Visit Belfast, other statutory agencies and operators.

It was reported that there had been continued engagement with operators and partners through a Visit Belfast coordinated forum to develop the Voluntary Code of Conduct and associated endorsement mark for operators.

The Committee approved;

- i. the continued engagement of Council officers with the Visit Belfast coordinated forum;
- ii. that the Council be a signature on the Voluntary Code of Conduct for hop-on hop-off coach operators; and
- iii. the use of an endorsed quality mark by compliant operators.

Requests to Present

**Request to Present - Belfast City and
Region Place Partnership (BCRPP)**

The Committee considered a request from the Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) to present at a future meeting an update on its current programme of work, proposed activities for 2025/26 and its priority issues and objectives for moving forward.

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from BCRPP representatives at its meeting in June, 2025.

Regenerating Places and Improving Infrastructure

**A Bolder Vision Connectivity and
Place Making Projects Update**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report / Summary of Main Issues

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on funding received from the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) to support connectivity, placemaking and active travel projects aligned with A Bolder Vision Key Move of Embracing the River. This paper also provides an update on three public realm improvement works schemes, currently under design development and funded or part funded utilising Developer Contributions: Blackstaff Square, 5Cs and Little Patrick/Little York Street.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- I. Note the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) funding received to support the development of the Under the Bridges project and Sailortown-Titanic Quarter Bridge proposals and the timeframes associated with the next steps.
- II. Note the update on progress in relation to the Little Patrick/Little York Street, 5Cs and Blackstaff Square Developer Contributions schemes and the timeframe for the associated planning applications.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Dfi Active travel funding

In January 2025 Members were advised that Council submitted applications for the Dfi Greenways and Active Travel Enabling funding to avail of within the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years and, subject to funding approval, approved the progression of the projects outlined below.

- 3.2** The Letters of Offer were received from Dfi on 21 March 2025 for the three projects, Under the Bridges, Sailortown-Titanic Quarter Bridge and the Belfast Bikes expansion, with full expenditure required by 31 March 2026.

- **Under The Bridges (UTB):** Expanding on the 'North-South Spine' project following the Waterfront Framework, UTB seeks to improve connectivity provision including new public realm, active travel infrastructure and reimaging open spaces under the M3 bridges.
- **Sailortown-Titanic Quarter Bridge:** Improving connectivity provision with a focus on active travel infrastructure and associated public realm provision.
- **Belfast Bikes:** Introduction of e-bikes into the scheme; supply and commissioning of 300 new pedal bikes and 100 e-bikes

3.3 Under The Bridges (UTB)

Expanding on the 'North-South Spine' project following the Waterfront Framework, the UTB project seeks to provide a safe connectivity between the City Centre and the Sailortown / City Quays area including new public realm, active travel infrastructure and reimaging underutilised spaces under the M3 bridges to improve safety and to bring forward innovative outdoor leisure uses that can provide amenity space for local residents and users of the area. This project is being brought forward in conjunction with the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, as a co-client for the delivery of the project. As detailed in January 2025, the funding will build upon the initial feasibility study and progress the technical design development for Under the Bridges placemaking and connectivity project to RIBA Stage 3, including Planning approval of a viable proposal that can be used to seek future capital funding. In line with the RIBA Plan of Work, preparation of design information to Stage 3 would include:

- RIBA Stage 3 Report
- Outline Specification
- Cost Plan
- Planning application submitted

- 3.4** In order to meet the DfI spend deadlines, procurement for the UTB commenced in December 2024 and Atkins Réalis has been appointed as the design team. In the coming months there will be consultation with community representatives, local stakeholders, and landowners to inform the design process with regular updates to be brought to the CG&R Committee for information.

3.5 Sailortown-Titanic Bridge

As reported and agreed at the CG&R Committee meetings in August and October 2023, and in January 2025, the Sailortown to Queen's Island Bridge was identified as a major element of active travel infrastructure that will deliver a much-needed high quality active travel corridor, enhanced public realm and amenity space and aligns with key city strategies including the Belfast Agenda, A Bolder Vision, the emerging Eastern Transport Plan and the Belfast Cycling Network.

3.6 The proposed bridge would provide a new iconic and distinctive cross harbour cycle and walking swing bridge that could complete the Harbour Loop and provide connections between Sailortown and North Belfast to economic, educational and opportunities on Queen's Island as well as providing a critical active travel connection to the newly completed Yorkgate Train Station.

3.7 Members were advised that the proposal for funding from DfI would develop the project to RIBA Stage 2 which will include concept design, technical requirements, cost plan and outline specification and provide the feasibility information, including capex and opex requirements that will clarify the long-term asset owner and the optimum route to long term operation and maintenance.

3.8 At the time it was proposed that under the existing BCC/Belfast Harbour Commissioners Memorandum of Understanding the BHC would undertake the procurement and project management of the project, overseen by BCC/BHC Client Team. However, due to operational and procurement constraints it has been agreed that Council will take up the role of the contracting authority and oversee the procurement and project management. A joint BCC/BHC Client Team will remain in place throughout the duration of the project and the scope of services has been drafted and procurement will commence in the coming weeks.

3.9 Belfast Bikes: Introduction of e-bikes into the scheme

The DfI funding for the Belfast Bikes will enable the introduction of eBikes into the scheme. The update on the DfI Letters of Offer for the Belfast Bikes as well as UTB and the Sailortown-Titanic Bridge were brought to SP&R on 18 April 2025 where it was agreed to add the Belfast eBikes project to the Capital Programme at Stage 1—*Emerging* to allow the business case to be developed.

3.10 Developer Contribution Led Schemes

Members will be aware that there are a number of public realm improvement schemes coming forward in the city centre that are aligned with historical Developer Contributions. In June 2023 Members agreed to progress with the Five Cs, Little Patrick/Little York Street and Blackstaff Square schemes that would see the Developer Contributions combined with funding from the Department for Communities to deliver public realm schemes aligned to the parameters outlined within the Section 76 Legal Agreements. In June 2024, Members received an update that outlined progress to date on these Public Realm Improvement Works delivered via Developer Contributions.

3.11

I. The Five Cs Project update

The Five Cs Public Realm Environmental Improvement scheme (c£2.4m), in the core of the city centre is being progressed in partnership with DfC, with DfC undertaking the delivery of the scheme. Council have committed £746,610 of Developer Contributions with DfC providing the remainder of the funding.

3.12 The planning application was submitted on 03 April 2025 LA04/2025/0609/F for the College Street and College Court areas of the scheme. Integrated Consultant Team (ICT) is due to submit the planning application for Callendar Street mid-May 2025 and once both planning applications are approved detailed design and construction procurement will commence, with construction works due to commence in Summer 2026. As previously reported, the Chichester Street element of this scheme will come forward at a future date following the completion of the Eastern Transport Plan Belfast City Centre Chapter.

3.13

II. Little Patrick Street & Little York Street Public Realm Improvement Works

As previously agreed, the Little York Street/Little Patrick Street Scheme is being brought forward to deliver Section 76 Developer Contributions secured, specifically for public realm, (£1,298,101) within the area. This scheme is located within the University Quarter of the Greater Clarendon and Sailortown area, with the Developer Contributions secured from a number of Purpose-Built & Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) Blocks within the area. The scheme is adjoining a number of the PBMSA blocks, existing local

businesses and adjacent to existing communities in the Lancaster Street area. The scheme will see the development of a high-quality placemaking public realm and environmental improvement scheme that will address road safety issues connected with 'rat runs' through the area and safety issues in general that exist due to the environment surrounding these student blocks.

3.14 Planning approval for the scheme was granted in December 2024 and there has been ongoing engagement with DfI Eastern Division in relation to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process. In April the TRO Scheme Stages Report was submitted, including an Application for the Amendment to Traffic Regulation Orders to enact the reconfiguration of Little Patrick Street to a single lane carriageway, introduce traffic calming and restricted access to enable servicing and emergency access, and other works to include installation of planters with integrated seating, tree planting, rain gardens, bespoke lighting pillars, catenary lighting, and surface improvements.

3.15 The next stage in the TRO process would require the Department to undertake a review of transport legislation and preparation of a draft order ahead of public advertising Notices of Intention of the discrete TROs. Pending confirmation of timeframes of this process detailed design and construction procurement will commence.

3.16

III. Blackstaff Square & surrounding streets Public Realm Improvement Works

As per agreement in January 2023, Developer Contributions (for public realm) within the Blackstaff Square area (£615,315) are being taken forward in conjunction with DfC to progress public realm improvement works at Blackstaff Square and surrounding streets.

3.17 The project scope includes Blackstaff Square, Brunswick Street, Amelia Street, Bain Place, James Street South (up to Bedford St. junction), Franklin Street (up to Bedford St. junction), McClintock Street and Clarence Street West.

3.18 McAdam Design is the ICT taking forward the Blackstaff Square scheme as the first part of the Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 5 (BSA 5) project. The project is at RIBA Stage 2, Concept Design, with a planning application expected to be submitted in Summer 2025 pending feedback from DfI on the movement framework that is aligned to the Belfast Cycling Network.

- 3.19 The Blackstaff Square and the surrounding streets were identified as a catalyst project within the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Strategy (BCCRIS), and the Council's Linen Quarter Masterplan. This is a key public space, but it is often subject to anti-social behaviour and consists of low-quality public realm, often subject to utilisation as bin and keg storage by local businesses. The area has been subject to some short-term interventions in recent years although these have been delivered by different organisations and resulted in disparate designs and uses within the area.**
- 3.20 With the opening of Grand Central Station footfall has increased through the area and bringing forward designs for Blackstaff Square and the connecting streets will complement and enhance the public realm improvement works that will be undertaken by the Belfast Grand Central Station scheme on Great Victoria Street, Grosvenor Road, Durham Street and Glengall Street.**

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

The financial requirements associated within this paper are met from externally funded, or previously approved budgets.

The Capex and Opex requirements for the UTBs and the Sailortown-Titanic Bridge will be reported to this Committee and to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committees as appropriate pending the completion of the staged design work outlined within this paper.

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

Equality, good relations and rural needs screening will be carried out as part of capital project development."

During discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development and the Development Manager advised the Committee that the funding received from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to support the development of the 'Under the Bridges' project to RIBA Stage 3 and 'Sailortown-Titanic Bridge' project to RIBA Stage 2 would require full expenditure by 31st March, 2026.

In response to a Member's query in relation to Castle Street, it was suggested that a report be submitted to the Committee that would provide an update on the animation and regeneration of the area.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 7th May, 2025**

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted that funding had been received from DfI to support the development of the Under the Bridges and Sailortown-Titanic Quarter Bridge projects, and the timeframes associated with the next steps;
- ii. noted the progress update in relation to the public realm improvement works developer contribution schemes of Little Patrick Street and Little York Street, the Five Cs and Blackstaff Square, and the timeframes associated with the planning applications; and
- iii. agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to provide an update in relation to the animation and regeneration of Castle Street and the steps to address the wider issues within the area.

Strategic and Operational Issues

**Committee Plan 2025/26 and
End of Year Report 2024/25**

The Strategic Director, Place and Economy submitted for the Committee's consideration a report and associated appendices in relation to the Committee's End of Year Report for 2024/25 and the draft Committee Plan for 2025/26.

During discussion, in relation to the draft Committee plan for 2025/26, a Member suggested that the plan should include a focus on progressing proposals in respect of commercial assets, including Belfast Zoo, Belfast Castle and Malone House, with a plan to move them toward more sustainable models.

The Member highlighted that, given the Committee's role in relation to regeneration and the updates provided to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and the City Regeneration Members' Working Group, it should receive more regular updates on regeneration and development issues.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the End of Year Report for 2024/25;
- ii. approved the draft Committee Plan for 2025/26, subject to additional performance information being brought to the Committee meeting in June and provision being made in relation to consideration of the long-term sustainability of commercial assets;
- iii. approved the priority work areas and budget allocations as set out in the Culture Development and Tourism and Events Workplans for 2025/26; and

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 7th May, 2025**

- iv. approved the contribution to support the ongoing development of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (work to be coordinated through Newry, Mourne and Down District Council) up to a maximum of £35,000; and
- v. agreed that it should be provided with more regular updates in relation to city regeneration and development issues and to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the requirement for the City Regeneration Members' Working Group be reconsidered.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

**Proposed US Tariff on Films Made Outside
of the US (Councillor de Faoite to raise)**

Councillor de Faoite raised concern in relation to a recent announcement by the US President that he would authorise the US Department of Commerce and the US Trade Representative to immediately begin the process of imposing a 100 percent tariff on films produced outside of the US.

At the request of Councillor de Faoite, the Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister, the Minister for the Economy, the UK Minister of State for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism and the Irish Minister for Arts, Culture, Communications, Media and Sport to highlight the importance of the local film and creative industries to Belfast and its concern in relation to the potential impact of any proposed US tariff on films produced outside of the US.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 28th May, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor I. McLaughlin (Deputy Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCormick;
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer;
Alderman Lawlor; and
Councillors Black, de Faoite, D. Douglas, Duffy,
Hanvey, Lyons, Maskey, McCabe,
McDonough-Brown, McKay, R. McLaughlin,
O'Neill and Smyth.

Also attended: Councillor Magee.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of the Chairperson, Councillor Nelson.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Presentations (Restricted)

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

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

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

**Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 28th May, 2025**

**Department for Infrastructure - Eastern Transport
Plan/Belfast Cycle Network**

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Mr. A. Rafferty, Department for Infrastructure, and Mr. D. Murray, AtkinsRéalis, to the meeting.

Mr. Rafferty presented to the Committee an update on the development of the Department for Infrastructure's Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035, which included:

- **ETP overview** - transport context, Belfast city centre transport challenges, vision and objectives, and public and stakeholder engagement;
- **Belfast City Centre Transport Plan** - proposals in relation to walking and wheeling, cycling, buses, rapid transit and traffic management;
- **Metropolitan Area Transport Plan** – vision and option development;
- **Belfast Cycling Network** – delivery and short-term schemes under development; and
- **Next steps.**

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to the Belfast Cycling Network, Phase 2 of the Belfast Rapid Transit project, city centre pedestrianisation, commuter parking, sustainable urban drainage, the Climate Change Act, collaboration between Executive departments and the Council, and the ETP's alignment with the Council's 'A Bolder Vision for Belfast'.

In response to Members' questions in respect of the Annadale Embankment, improvements to existing facilities on the Stranmillis Embankment, Sydenham Greenway and Residents' Parking Zones, Mr. Rafferty advised that the Department for Infrastructure would provide the Committee with further information on the issues raised.

In response to a Member's suggestion, Mr. Rafferty welcomed the opportunity to facilitate potential site visits with Members in relation to the city centre plans.

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

After discussion, the Committee noted the contents of the presentation and that, where relevant, the Department for Infrastructure would provide further information on the issues raised.

**Department for Infrastructure –
York Street Interchange**

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Mr. B. Hassard, Department for Infrastructure, Mr. J. McBride, AECOM, and Mr. P. Clarke, AECOM, to the meeting.

**Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 28th May, 2025**

The representatives presented to the Committee an update on the York Street Interchange Placemaking and Active Travel Development (PATD).

Mr. McBride highlighted the purpose of the proposed York Street Interchange to alleviate existing traffic bottlenecks and deliver journey time savings to road users.

He emphasised that the Department for Infrastructure's priority remained to ensure the safety of road users and deliver improvements for the busiest junction on the Strategic Road Network.

The Committee was reminded that, in 2021, the Minister for Infrastructure commissioned AECOM to conduct a Placemaking and Active Travel Review of the scheme which was completed and published in October, 2022. It was reported that three of the six scenarios considered in the review were shortlisted for further development.

The representatives outlined:

- the placemaking themes, principles and desired outcomes;
- the development of the three scenarios shortlisted, including stakeholder and public engagement; and
- the development of an Active Travel Network.

The representatives then presented to the Committee a detailed overview of the three developed scenarios which included illustrations of indicative views.

Following the presentation, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to placemaking, public realm schemes, cost estimate for the scheme, community severance, greenspaces and the environmental impact.

In response to Members' questions in respect of the M2 to Westlink interchange link, Road Safety Audit and the potential availability of land parcels following completion of the scheme, Mr. Hassard advised that the Department for Infrastructure would provide the Committee with further information on the issues raised.

The Deputy Chairperson advised the Committee that a report, which would include the feedback provided by Members on the presentation, would be submitted to a future meeting for its consideration, prior to a formal response from the Council to the Department for Infrastructure.

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

The Committee noted:

- i. the contents of the presentation and that, where relevant, the Department for Infrastructure would provide further information on the issues raised; and
- ii. that a report on the Council's response to the Department for Infrastructure's York Street Interchange Placemaking and Active Travel Development (PATD) presentation, would be submitted to a future

**Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 28th May, 2025**

meeting for its consideration, prior to a formal response to the Department for Infrastructure.

Belfast Culture Forum Event

The Committee considered a report in relation to a proposed Belfast Culture Forum event to provide a platform for engagement with stakeholders from the cultural sector at the mid-way point of the Council's ten-year cultural strategy "A City Imagining 2020-2030".

In response to Member's query on stakeholder engagement in relation to the notice of motion 'Belfast City Nightlife and Night-time Economy', the Strategic Director of Place and Economy advised that further information could be brought back to the Committee in due course.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted the proposed Belfast Culture Forum event, scheduled for 13th June, 2025 in the Great Hall, City Hall;
- ii. approved hospitality of up to £1700 for the event; and
- iii. agreed that an update report be submitted to a future meeting on the notice of motion 'Belfast City Nightlife and Night-time Economy'.

Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, that the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 2nd June, 2025, for ratification.

Chairperson

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 21st May, 2025

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

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

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

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from the High Sheriff (Councillor McAteer) and Councillors Abernethy and Collins.

Minutes

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

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Delegated Matters

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

Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

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

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licenses Issued Under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of applications which had been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation during April, 2025.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 21st May, 2025**

**Application for a New Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for Flat 3, 27
Cromwell Road**

The HMO Unit Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the application.

He outlined that the property had had the benefit of an HMO licence issued by the Council with a start date of 11th March, 2020, and an expiry date of 11th March, 2025, in the name of Mr. Derek Blundell. Mr. Blundell had died on 12th April 2023.

In accordance with Section 29 “Death of sole license holder: effect on licence” of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, where a sole licensee died, the HMO licence was to be treated as being held, from the date of death, by the licensee’s personal representatives, but ceased to have effect three months after that date.

The Committee was advised that the Council may, on application from the personal representatives of the licensee, extend the period for which the licence had effect beyond the three month period if the Council considered that it was reasonable to do so for the purpose of winding up the licensee’s estate.

The Council had not been made aware of Mr. Blundell’s death at the time, nor did it receive an application to extend the period for which the licence has effect and, as such, the licence ceased to have effect on 12th July, 2023. An application for a new HMO licence was received from Mrs. Barbara Blundell on 31st October, 2024.

Following the submission of the HMO licence, officers had established that ownership of the property had transferred to Mrs. Blundell via a deed of family arrangement in November 2023.

A temporary exemption notice “TEN” was applied for on 9th March, 2025, and subsequently granted on 22nd April, 2025.

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

- a) the occupation of the living accommodation as an HMO would not constitute a breach of planning control;
- b) the owner, and any managing agent of it, were fit and proper persons;
- c) the proposed management arrangements were satisfactory;
- d) the granting of the licence would not result in overprovision of HMOs in the locality;
- e) the living accommodation was fit for human habitation and—

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 21st May, 2025**

- i. was suitable for occupation as an HMO by the number of persons to be specified in the licence, or
- ii. could be made so suitable by including conditions in the licence.

The Committee was advised that, as it was a new application, the Council's Planning Service was consulted. It had confirmed that no planning permission or a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use of Development "CLEUD" had been granted for the property, however, following an assessment of tenancy agreements submitted by the applicant, officers were satisfied that the occupation of the living accommodation as an HMO would not constitute a breach of planning control.

It was reported that the NIHMO Unit had consulted with the Environmental Protection Unit in relation to daytime noise; the Public Health and Housing Unit in relation to rubbish accumulation/filthy premises; and the Enforcement Unit in relation to litter and waste and all had confirmed that there had been no relevant enforcement action required in respect of any of the issues in the HMO in the last 5 years.

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

The officers had had regard to:

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

To inform the Council in its consideration of the above provisions, the Council had taken account of the 2023 Strategy given that "Nurturing sustainable and balanced communities was a fundamental aim of the LDP's housing policies." In particular, the Council had considered Policy HOU10, which stated:

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

The Committee was advised that, on the date of assessment, 5th March 2025, 88% of all dwelling units in policy area HMA 2/22 were made up of HMOs and flats/apartments, which in turn exceeded the 20% development limit as set out in Policy HOU10. There were 1142 (46%) licensed HMOs with a capacity of 4795 persons in that HMA.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 21st May, 2025**

It was outlined that there were a total of 2476 dwelling units in HMA 2/22. The Members were advised that, on 5th March, 2025, out of 281 premises available for rent within the BT7 area, there were 162 licensed HMOs which represented 688 bed spaces.

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

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

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

The Committee was advised that it might consider that, in the circumstances, namely that the premises had previously operated as a licensed HMO and remained occupied as an HMO until 22nd July, 2025, in accordance with the provisions of the temporary exemption notice which was in place, that the granting of the licence would not result in overprovision notwithstanding the proposed refusal by officers.

The Committee was advised that no objections had been received in relation to the application. It was also reported that the accommodation had been inspected by the NIHMO service, on 14th January, 2025, at which time it complied with the physical standards for an HMO for three persons.

On 21st March, 2025, pursuant to Paragraph 9 of Schedule 2 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, officers had issued a Notice of Proposed Decision to the applicant, stating that it proposed to refuse the licence on the grounds of over provision.

The HMO Unit Manager advised the Committee that Section 29 of the 2016 Act transferred the licence of a deceased sole licence-holder to that person's executor. The licence expired three months after the date of death, unless the Council was satisfied that it was reasonable to extend it in order to wind up the holder's estate.

The restricting factor in section 29 was the requirement for the Council to be notified of the death of the sole licence-holder. Counsel's advice was sought and obtained on the issue, and Legal Services had confirmed that there might be some scope to grant an extension to the three-month period that was triggered by the death of an owner under section 29. While Section 29(3) provided that any application for an extension "must be made within the [three-month] period", there was authority to suggest that mandatory

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 21st May, 2025**

time-limits could be read flexibly where the balance between public and private interests merited such an approach. He advised that it was a matter for the Committee to determine where the balance was to be struck between those interests in the circumstances of the particular matter.

Mrs. Blundell's legal representative, McCann and McCann Solicitors, had submitted correspondence citing that Mr D. Blundell's Will could not be found and his wife, the applicant, had to go through intestacy rules with her Solicitor to obtain a Grant of Probate. The correspondence had also referenced that the Committee had taken a decision to grant an HMO licence in similar circumstances in June 2022.

The HMO Unit Manager outlined that, should the Committee consider it reasonable in the circumstances, it might be minded to exercise its discretion and extend the three-month period under section 29. In that case, the licence would remain extant and granting the application would not amount to overprovision.

He also pointed out that the Department for Communities had confirmed in its June 2023 review that it proposed to extend the three-month time period to one year.

In response to a Member's query, the HMO Unit Manager confirmed that the application before Members had been solely in the name of Mr. Blundell, whereas the other HMO properties were all held in joint names.

The Chairperson welcomed Mrs. B. Blundell, the applicant, to the meeting.

She outlined that the matter had only been brought to her attention when she was applying to the Council for the Licence and she was asked for proof of ownership of the flat. She stated that the HMO complied with all standards and regulations. She added that she was sorry that she had not informed the Council within three months of her husband's death but that, unfortunately, the situation had been exacerbated when his Will could not be found, thereby meaning that she had had to go through intestacy rules to obtain a Grant of Probate.

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, expressed his sympathy to Mrs. Blundell on the loss of her husband.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Doran
Seconded by Alderman McCullough

That, given the circumstances outlined regarding the death of the former HMO licensee and the difficulties associated with the intestacy rules, that the Committee agrees to extend the time period on this occasion, under Section 29, and to grant the licence to Mrs. Blundell, forming a continuation of the extant licence.

During discussion, a Member stated that, while he had sympathy for the applicant, he had concerns about the Committee exercising its discretion.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 21st May, 2025**

A further Member asked if the applicant owned any other licenced HMOs. The HMO Unit Manager advised the Committee that she had 12 other HMOs in her name. A Member proposed that the Committee should adhere to the original decision and not exercise its discretion in extending the time period under Section 29 stating that, as the application was not the sole HMO in her name, it would not greatly affect her livelihood.

After discussion, Councillor Doran subsequently withdrew his proposal.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks
Seconded by Councillor Ó Néill and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to refuse the application as, in accordance with Section 12 of the Houses in Multiple Occupation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, it could not be satisfied that the granting of the HMO licence would not result in overprovision of HMO accommodation in the locality of the accommodation, as determined under section 8(2)(d) of the Act.

**Competing Stationary Street Trading Licence
applications for Duncrue Link 50ft from the
junction with Duncrue Road**

The Senior Licensing Officer advised the Committee that it was being asked to consider two competing Stationary Street Trading Licence applications to trade at a designated site in Duncrue Link. The site was designated to allow for the sale of hot food and non-alcoholic beverages and both applications complied with the designating resolution for the site.

The first application was received from Ms. Vanessa Kemp. She had applied to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from a catering van measuring 5.5m by 2.15m. Her proposed hours of operation were Monday to Friday, 7.00am to 5.00pm. Miss. Kemp had not previously held a street trading licence with Belfast City Council but was registered with the Council's Environmental Health Food Safety and had a food hygiene rating of 5.

The second application was from Mr. Daniel Smith. He had applied to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from a catering van measuring 7.92m by 2.44m. His proposed hours of operation were Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 2.30pm. Mr. Smith had not previously held a street trading licence with Belfast City Council. He was registered with the Council's Environmental Health Food Safety and was awaiting initial inspection.

The PSNI and DFI Roads had been consulted and had no objections to either application, subject to correct vehicle positioning.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 21st May, 2025**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the two applicants were in attendance to outline their proposals for the site. He invited Ms. Kemp and her father, Mr. A. Kemp, to address the Committee first.

Mr. Kemp outlined that his daughter had been working in the catering trade for 15 years and that he had a Street Trading Licence with the Council. He queried why, after her application, which had been lodged in January 2025 and subsequently marked as “pending approval”, was a further application accepted for the same site, in March 2025.

In regards to the process, the Senior Licensing Officer explained that the Council had no power to refuse an application and it had to be considered.

In response to a further Member’s query regarding the process, he further explained that there was no time limit for a street trading licence application and, had the consultation been completed on the first application received, with no objections, it would most likely have been processed and issued. He added that officers published the term “pending” beside any live applications on the website to try and discourage additional applications from being submitted and that applicants were advised if they were the second or third applicant, for example.

The Chairperson then welcomed Mr. D. Smith to the meeting.

Mr. Smith advised the Committee that he had purchased the van off the trader who had previously operated at the site for around forty years, as the previous trader’s wife had become unwell. Mr. Smith stated that the previous trader’s niece had continued to work for him, along with the same menu offering, staff and suppliers.

A Member requested information from both traders in respect of their food receptacles and their waste products.

During discussion, some Members stated that they felt that the licence should be given to Mr. Smith, as he had stated that he would be operating at the site with the same menu and staff that had been trading in the area for 40 years.

In response to Members’ comments, the Solicitor advised the Committee that the two applications before the Committee were both new applications, as the previous business which had been operating from that site had ceased trading in December 2024.

Other Members stated that they felt that the licence should be granted to Ms. Kemp, given that her application had been lodged with the Council first.

A further Member stated that one of the applicants had a food safety rating. A further Member added that you could only get a rating when you began trading and to use that reasoning would be unfair to any new business.

A number of Members stated that they felt that the process was somewhat confusing.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 21st May, 2025**

The Director agreed to bring a report to a future meeting in order to further clarify and, where possible, simplify the process for the Committee's consideration of competing Street Trading Licence applications.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Ó Néill,
Seconded by Councillor T. Kelly,

That the Committee is minded to grant and approve the licence to Mr. Smith and minded to refuse the licence application to Ms. V. Kemp under the discretionary grounds within Section 9 of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001.

Amendment

Moved by Councillor D. Douglas,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

That the Committee is minded to grant and approve the licence to Ms. V. Kemp and given the fact that there is only one designated site available, is minded to refuse the licence application to Mr. D. Smith on the grounds set out in Section 9 (a) (i) and (iv) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, namely, that the location at which the applicant wishes to trade as a stationary trader is unsuitable and there are sufficient traders trading in the street, or at premises adjoining it, in the articles, things or services in which the applicant wishes to trade.

On a vote on the Amendment, standing in the name of Councillor Douglas, eight Members voted for it and seven Members against and it was accordingly declared carried.

**Competing Stationary Street Trading Licence
applications for Boucher Crescent at lamp post
number 16**

The Senior Licensing Officer advised the Committee that it was being asked to consider two competing Stationary Street Trading Licence applications to trade at a designated site in Boucher Crescent. The site was designated to allow for the sale of hot food and non-alcoholic beverages and both applications complied with the designating resolution for the site.

The first application was received from Mr. Ajithjosedaniel Arputharaj. He had applied to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from a trailer measuring 5.5m by 2.1m. His proposed hours of operation were Monday to Sunday, 7.00am to 9.00pm. He had not previously held a street trading licence with Belfast City Council. He was registered with the Council's Environmental Health Food Safety and was awaiting initial inspection.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 21st May, 2025**

The second application was from Mr. Aaron Smallwood. He had applied to sell hot food and non-alcoholic beverages from a trailer measuring 3m by 2m. His proposed hours of operation were Monday to Saturday, 9.00am to 3.30pm. Mr. Smith had not previously held a street trading licence with Belfast City Council. He was registered with North Down and Ards Borough Council's Environmental Health Food Safety where he had a five star food hygiene rating.

The PSNI and DFI Roads had been consulted and had no objections to either application, subject to correct vehicle positioning.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that the two applicants were in attendance to outline their proposals for the site. He invited Mr. Arputharaj and his wife Mrs. Vinoliya Sahayaraj to address the Committee first.

Mrs. Sahayaraj explained that she was the co-owner of the business and was also a nurse. She stated that a healthy gut made a healthy mind and they wanted to offer something different to the local area, including Indian dosas and fresh fruit juices.

The Chairperson then welcomed Mr. Smallwood. He advised the Committee that he had an airstream-style trailer which had been custom built for his business. He proposed to sell sourdough toasties, locally roasted coffee and locally made traybakes. He also proposed to employ people in the local area.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised the Members that the first application, from Mr. Arputharaj, was received six days before Mr. Smallwood's application.

In response to a Member's query, he clarified that a Food Hygiene rating was awarded after an inspection of the area/vehicle used for food preparation and serving, and was not awarded to a person.

A further Member stated that it was, again, hard to determine which business should be awarded the pitch as both seemed like good businesses. However, he stated that he felt that the Committee should consider awarding the licence to Mr. Smallwood, given that he had invested significant money into the trailer, that it was his intention to use local produce and that he had previously been awarded a five-star food hygiene rating by another Council.

A further Member stated that, in order to be consistent with the previous application, that the licence be granted to the application which had been received first.

Moved by Councillor Ó Néill
Seconded by Councillor T. Brooks and

Resolved - That the Committee is minded to grant and approve the licence to Mr. Arputharaj and, given the fact that there is only one designated site available, is minded to refuse the licence application to Mr. A. Smallwood on the grounds set out in Section 9 (a) (i) and (iv) of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, namely, that the location at which the applicant wishes to trade as a stationary trader is unsuitable and

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 21st May, 2025**

there are sufficient traders trading in the street, or at premises adjoining it,
in the articles, things or services in which the applicant wishes to trade.

Chairperson

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 13th May, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor Carson (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bell, Brennan,
T. Brooks, Doran, S. Douglas, Ferguson, Garrett,
Groogan, Hanvey, Magee, McCabe, McCann,
Murphy and Whyte.
- In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning);
Mr. E. Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management),
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Ms. L. Walshe, Principal Planning Officer;
Mr. P. O'Reilly, Senior Planning Officer;
Mr. M. McErlean, Senior Planning Officer; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 15th April were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st May.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Withdrawn Item

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

- LA04/2024/1865/O - 3no. detached dwellings - Land between No 22 Squires View and Nos 57 and 59 Squires Hill Road.

Deferred Items

The Committee agreed to defer considerations of the following items in order that site visits be undertaken to the application sites:

- LA04/2024/1466/F - Ground floor extension and alterations to provide 1 No. retail unit. Side extension for new coffee shop. Two storey rear extension. Change of use at first and second floor level

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 13th May, 2025**

to 8-bed HMO and part change of use of ground floor to HMO.
Front and rear dormers and landscaping. - 41 Rosetta Road;

- LA04/2024/1584/F - Subdivision of 6No. bed shared dwelling to provide 3No. self contained flats, with demolition of single storey rear return and erection of two storey rear extension to provide 1no self contained flat. - 21 Skegoneill Avenue;
- LA04/2024/0267/F - Change of Use from Dwelling to 6no bed/6 person HMO (amended description) - 11 Friendly Way; and
- LA04/2024/0095/F - Change of use from Dwelling to Short term holiday letting (retrospective) – 3 Broadway Link.

Committee Site Visits

The Committee noted the site visits.

Notification of Abandonment and Extinguishment

Notifications from Statutory Bodies - Law Courts

The Committee noted the proposed abandonment at the Law Courts.

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in April, 2025.

Live Applications for Major Development

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

Committee Decisions yet to issue

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

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 13th May, 2025**

Miscellaneous Items

**Advance Notice of Listed Buildings:
19 Wellington Park**

The Committee noted the report and supported the proposed listing.

Local Applications subject to NI Water Objections

The Committee agreed to delegate to the Director of Planning and Building Control those Local planning applications to which NI Water had objected.

New Planning Applications

LA04/2024/2026/RM - 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 - Royal Ulster Agricultural Society the Kings Hall, 488-516 Lisburn Road

The Principal Planning Officer provided an overview of the application. She informed the Committee that outline planning permission had been granted in December 2021 for a mixed-use regeneration of lands at The King's Hall.

She explained that the application sought approval of the following reserved matters for Plot 8:

- siting,
- design: including height, scale, massing, form of buildings and floor plans;
- external appearance;
- means of access; and
- landscaping.

She reported that the design of the building and plaza complied with the approved Design Code and would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and safeguard the setting of the listed King's Hall building.

The Principal Planning Officer stated that there had been no objections received from statutory or non-statutory consultees, DfC HED or third parties.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan and other material considerations, the proposal was considered acceptable, and it was recommended that the reserved matters application be granted permission, subject to conditions.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 13th May, 2025**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. N. Salt and Mr. A. Murray, attending on behalf of the applicant, to the meeting.

Mr. Salt stated that the application sought reserved matters approval for a multistorey car park and details of the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the new public realm

He stated that the development represented a further phase of works in the redevelopment of the King's Hall site and that the delivery of the car park was required to enable completion of the final phases of the development.

He informed the Committee that the car park would provide 552 spaces over seven floors and five commercial units on the ground floor that would open up to the public plaza and provide active spill out areas.

He stated that the building had been designed to provide visual interest and relate to the wider development through the careful use of façade treatment and suitable scale.

Mr. Salt explained that the public realm area would connect the wider development by providing seating areas integrated with planting that would provide an open appearance and attractive area for people to walk through, meet or relax in.

He concluded by stating that the applicant had proactively worked with Planning officers and DfI Roads, there had been no objections to the application from any statutory consultees and that the recommendation for approval had been welcomed.

The Committee approved the reserved matters, subject to conditions, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any issues that might arise from the outstanding consultee response from the Environmental Health, provided they were not substantive.

LA04/2024/1121/F - 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. - The Kings Hall And RUAS Site South Of Upper Lisburn Road/Balmoral Avenue West Of Harberton Park And North-east Of Balmoral Golf Club

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application to vary conditions 6 and 7 of LA04/2020/0747/F to amend the approved drawings to reflect design changes for the King's Hall building and to extend the period of delivery of renovations to the external elevations in order to match that of the roof renovation.

She highlighted the following key issues relevant to consideration of the application:

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 13th May, 2025**

- The principal of the alterations to the listed building from the previous approval;
- The time period for delivery of the renovations;
- HED and EHO offered no objections to the proposed variation; and
- One objection had been received that raised concern about the impact of visual nuisance and prolonged disrepair of the Kings Hall building on the amenity of the area.

She stated that, having regard to the development plan, relevant planning policies and consultations responses, it was considered that the variation of the conditions should be approved.

The Committee agreed to the variation of conditions 6 and 7, to extend timing of works from three years to five years, to accommodate design changes to elevations and to accommodate design changes to the roof.

The Committee delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the conditions and deal with any other matters which might arise provided they were not substantive.

LA04/2024/0058/F - 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. - 68 Fortwilliam Park

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application. She summarised the following main issues for consideration:

- Principle of sheltered housing units in this location;
- Design and Placemaking;
- Impact on amenity;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Climate change;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection
- Natural heritage;
- Trees and landscaping; and
- Waste management.

She reported that three third-party objections had been received, NI Water had objected on the grounds of sewer network capacity issues and that no objections had been received from any other consultees.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 13th May, 2025**

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the application met the internal space standards as per appendix C of the Belfast LDP and she recommended that the application be approved, subject to conditions.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. T. Stokes, TSA Planning, Mr. K. Strathern, Architect, and Mr. P. Steele, Applicant, to the meeting.

Mr. Stokes stated that the proposal would redevelop the existing nursing home to provide independent sheltered living accommodation to allow residents to live in self-contained apartments that would provide independence and social interaction through the inclusion of communal living spaces.

He stated that there would be on site staff and warden accommodation that would provide the residents with a safe and secure facility. He informed the Committee that the existing building only just met current nursing home standards due to the outdated nature of the existing building and facilities on offer and that the current overall occupation of the 31 bed home was 26 residents and that this was reflective of the demand for the current accommodation.

He reported that the applicant had a three-year plan to commence development and was committed to continue engagement with the existing residents and their respective families to provide alternative accommodation in the local area.

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

Chairperson

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 8th May, 2025

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

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

In attendance: Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner;
Ms. C. Shortt, Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer; and
Mrs. L McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors Hanvey, Long and Walsh.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th April, 2025 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st May, 2025.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Council Climate Action Plan

Together, the Climate Commissioner and the Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer presented the undernoted report to the Committee:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To present the draft Climate Action Plan to members and seek approval for the short-term actions in the Climate Action Plan to be adopted via the Corporate Annual Delivery Plan for 2024-25. The actions for subsequent years will be brought forward for approval in line with the annual financial planning and corporate planning cycle.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- I. Note the purpose of the plan - to close the gap between BCC's current climate action and its ambition to be a net zero and resilient Council as well as its five themes: Tools for Transition, Adaptation, Energy and Buildings, Transport and Waste Management;
- II. Note that 'Commencing the delivery of the Council Corporate Climate Action Plan to increase the climate resilience of Council assets and services and progress towards Council net zero emissions' is a key action in the Council's Performance Improvement Plan;
- III. Note that all of the short-term actions in the CAP have been mainstreamed into the draft Corporate Annual Delivery Plan for 2024-25;
- IV. Note that the adoption of the Climate Action Plan will enable the Council to fulfil its legal obligations under the Public Body Reporting requirements (under the NI Climate Change Act), specifically in preparing the Mitigation report for submission to DAERA in Oct 2025 and the Adaptation report in March 2026;
- V. Note that the Climate data platform will collate all of the Council's climate data and track delivery of the Climate Action Plan which will enable CMT to obtain regular progress reports and demonstrate progress externally to DAERA;
- VI. Note the proposed governance arrangements via the Climate and City Resilience Committee; and
- VII. Provide approval for the short-term actions in the Climate Action Plan to be adopted via the Corporate Annual Delivery Plan for 2024-25 and note that the actions for subsequent years will be brought forward for approval in line with the annual financial planning and corporate planning cycle.

2.2 Background

The work started in 2021 with an initial analysis of the Council's scope 1 and 2 emissions followed by the commissioning of KPMG to undertake a Climate Risk Assessment (in 2023). This work combined with a series of workshops led by KPMG informed the development of an initial draft Climate Action Plan. An internal review of the plan by the climate team and further consultation with departments has resulted in the revised draft plan included in this report.

2.3 Purpose of the Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The purpose of the plan is to close the gap between BCC's current climate action and its ambition to be a net zero and resilient Council. It includes actions to be delivered in the short term (by 2025), medium term (by 2030) and longer term (2030+). The actions are grouped under five themes:

- Tools for Transition
- Adaptation
- Energy and Buildings
- Transport
- Waste Management

2.4 Alignment of the plan with the draft Corporate Annual Delivery Plan

'Commencing the delivery of the Council Corporate Climate Action Plan to increase the climate resilience of Council assets and services and progress towards Council net zero emissions' is a key action in the Council's Performance Improvement Plan.

In consultation with departments, all of the short-term actions in the CAP have been mainstreamed into the draft Corporate Annual Delivery Plan for 2024-25 with identified SROs for each action. Going forward, it is proposed that the plan will be reviewed annually with priority actions brought forward by Departments for inclusion in the Council's Annual Delivery Plan. This will ensure that the Climate Action Plan supports the delivery of the Annual Delivery Plan and that climate actions are properly resourced as part of the annual planning cycle.

Draft Corporate Annual Delivery Plan – Climate Actions for 2025-26 *PIP
Tools for Transition: ensuring BCC is equipped with the tools and mechanisms to successfully enable it to become a net zero, resilient council <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and launch an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions (1.7) *• 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)• Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol (1.14) *

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 8th May, 2025**

- Prepare departments for data collection required for Public Body Reporting under the Climate Change Act (1.18)
- Prepare mitigation report (Oct 2025) and adaptation report (March 2026) for submission to DAERA in line with Public Body Reporting requirements (1.19) *

Adaptation: ensuring BCC is future proofed and resilient to flood and heat related risk

- Update the BCC Climate Risk Assessment in line with the new mandatory Public Body Reporting requirements (under the Climate Change Act) (2.2)
- Apply SUDs policy and guidance (SUDS Manual C753) as standard practice in the Capital Programme (2.3)
- Start to deliver the Tree Establishment Strategy and continue the One Million Trees Programme (2.19)

Energy and Buildings: achievement of a low-carbon and sustainable energy system and Council estate

- Complete a second phase of building energy audits - (Andersonstown LC, Lisnasharragh LC, Templemore Av LC, Brook LC) and the Waterfront Hall (3.4) *
- Develop the integration of whole life carbon assessments as standard practice in the Capital Programme (3.8)
- 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) *
- Scope out a strategy to increase renewable and low-carbon energy use through corporate power purchase agreements (3.15)

Transport: achievement of net zero and sustainable Council-related transport

- 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)
- 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)
- Conduct a commercial assessment of Council land suitable for installing low emission vehicle (LEV) charging points (4.9)
- Commence work on repurposing staff parking spaces for cycle racks and integrate appropriate facilities to support active travel e.g. shower and changing facilities (4.10)

Waste Management: enabling the Council and its operations to support the transition to a more circular economy

- Initiate an internal Council-level Waste Management Plan which aligns with the Waste Management Hierarchy and with an emphasis on green waste (5.3)
- Continue to progress the proposal for a single use plastics policy for the Council (5.4)
- Develop a mechanism to track and report on internal Council generated waste (5.7)

2.5 Public body reporting

The adoption of the Climate Action Plan will position the Council well with regard to its legal obligations under the Public Body Reporting requirements (Climate Change Act) as it will demonstrate ongoing activity within the Council to address climate change and its longer term plans to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The timely adoption of the plan will enable the Climate team to prepare the Mitigation report for submission to DAERA in Oct 2025 and the Adaptation report in March 2026.

The mitigation report must include:

1. 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;
2. 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;
3. a statement of the time-scales for implementing those proposals and policies; and
4. an assessment of the progress made towards implementing the proposals and policies set out in any previous climate change mitigation report.

The adaptation report must include:

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

2.6 Climate data platform

A Climate data platform has been developed by Digital Services, the Climate team and the data analyst, to store this information and track progress on delivery. The next steps are to populate the platform with the climate actions and other data once the CAP is approved. The Climate Team will test the platform before rolling it out more widely across the organisation.

2.7 Proposed governance structure

Six-monthly progress reports on the Climate Action Plan will be provided to Climate and City Resilience Committee. An annual report will be prepared by the Climate Team by August each year and the Climate Team will monitor and review progress through the Climate Data Platform and provide advisory support to departments where required.

3.1 Financial and Resource Implications

Funding for the implementation of the actions in the Corporate Annual Delivery Plan for 2024-25 has been agreed via the financial planning and rate setting process.

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

Equality screening completed and will be considered throughout implementation.

A Member stated that he felt that the Council's estate was underutilised and that he would be keen to see as many nature-based solutions as possible feature within the plan, including biodiversity, nature restoration, the promotion of an invertebrate population, the prompt removal of invasive species, open mosaic habitats and swift bricks.

In response to a number of Members' questions, the Monitoring, Learning and Reporting Officer advised the Members that the £1million Climate Fund would be a significant help in reaching the goals set within the plan, including, for example, buying scales to weigh waste in order to establish a baseline and set targets regarding waste management.

In relation to a Member's query regarding the integration of whole life carbon assessments as standard practice in the Capital Programme, the Members were advised that the Property and Projects Department was already looking at the issue and that they could link Members in to the process and the timeline.

A further Member requested information regarding the level of staff engagement which had taken place regarding active travel and sustainable transport. The Climate Commissioner explained that, to date, a light touch staff survey had been carried out but that they were

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 8th May, 2025**

carrying out a top-down approach, working with the Members and Corporate Management Team initially. She added that DAERA had a useful online training tool on sustainable travel which could be issued to staff.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the recommendations within the report.

Blackstaff Greenway Feasibility Study

The Committee noted that the item had been withdrawn from the agenda as representatives from Sustrans had advised that they could no longer attend the meeting.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

Standards and Business Committee

Thursday, 22nd May, 2025

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Lawlor (Chairperson) and
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor McCormick);
The High Sheriff (Councillor McAteer);
Aldermen McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Bradley, Carson, de Faoite, P. Donnelly,
D. Douglas, Kelly, Lyons, McAteer,
McCallin and R. McLaughlin

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

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 28th April were taken as read and signed as correct.
It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st May.

Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Motions

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

Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Theory

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Flynn
and seconded by Councillor Smyth, be referred, in the first instance, to the Climate and City
Resilience Committee.

Motion to Support Endometriosis Patients

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Collins
and seconded by Councillor Groogan, be referred, in the first instance, to the People and
Communities Committee.

**Standards and Business Committee,
Thursday, 22nd May, 2025**

**Stranded Dreams Report launched
by Anaka Women's Collective**

The Committee agreed that the motion, which had been proposed by Councillor Murray and seconded by Councillor Bower, be referred, in the first instance, to the People and Communities Committee.

**Voting Rights for the Election
of the President of Ireland**

Proposal

Moved by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor P. Donnelly, and

Resolved - That the motion which had been proposed by Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly and seconded by Councillor Brennan, be referred to the Council for debate, with no restriction to be placed on the number of speakers.

Chairperson

Ad Hoc Committee

Wednesday, 28th May, 2025

MEETING OF AD HOC COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);
Alderman Lawlor; and
Councillors Bower, Bradley, R. Brooks, Carson,
R-M Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett, I. McLaughlin,
Murphy, Nelson and Walsh.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal
and Civic Services;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and
Governance Manager; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

Alderman Rodgers was proposed by Alderman Lawlor and seconded by Councillor Ferguson; and Councillor Carson was proposed by Councillor Garrett and seconded by Councillor Walsh.

On a vote, seven Members voted for Alderman Rodgers and five for Councillor Carson. Accordingly, Alderman Rodgers was elected as Chairperson for the duration of the meeting.

(Alderman Rodgers in the Chair.)

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Smyth.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

THE MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE CONSIDERED THE FOLLOWING ITEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 47(8) AND (9):

Call-in of the decision regarding Armed Forces Covenant

The City Solicitor submitted for the Committee's consideration the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

To bring to the Committee's attention Counsel's opinion on the call-in of the decision on the Armed Forces Covenant.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Key Issues

Members will recall that a motion on the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant was referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee by the Standards and Business Committee on 21st November 2024.

3.2 A report was submitted to the Strategic Policy and Recourses Committee on 13th December, 2024 at which it was agreed to reject the motion and that no further action be undertaken

3.3 This decision was rejected by the Council on 9th January, 2025 at which it was agreed that the Council adopt the motion, subject to equality screening.

3.4 A further report on the outcome of the equality screening was then submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 27th January, 2025. Again the Committee agreed to reject the motion and that no further action be undertaken.

3.5 That decision was ratified by the Council on 3rd February, 2025.

3.6 Subsequently, that decision was called-in on procedural grounds pursuant to Section 41(1)(a) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 and, in accordance with Standing Order 48(c)(5), the City Solicitor sought a legal opinion, and this is appended to the report.

3.7 The requisition for call in outlines 3 procedural reasons:

- "1. The motion was incorrectly referred to SP&R at the Standards and Business Committee citing financial implications. There were no financial implications attached to the motion.*
- 2. The Motion was passed at the January 2025 Full Council Meeting and due to there being no finance or resource implications, was not required to go back to SP&R as a fresh motion.*
- 3. The motion should have been proposed for adoption, debate at full council or rejection at the Standards and Business Committee."*

- 3.8 In relation to points 1 and 3, the opinion indicates that they are related and can be considered together. It concludes at paragraphs 14 and 15:

14. It may well be that in some cases, the absence of financial implications will be obvious. But where it is not clear it is arguably prudent to relevant Committee for a report on that matter.

15. I do not therefore consider that there was an obvious procedural error in the Standards and Business Committee referring the matter to the SP&R Committee.

- 3.9 Regarding Point 2, the legal opinion states at paragraph 21:

21. For all the reasons outlined above, it is my view that no obvious procedural error has occurred. I do consider it important to note that, even if a procedural error did occur, the Council still had a full opportunity to consider the matter and no procedural detriment arose.

3.10 **Next Steps**

1. This process adopted in coming to the decision which is the subject of the procedural call in must now be considered by the Ad-Hoc Committee. As this advice has been provided at the request of the City Solicitor to assist with addressing the issues raised by the call-in, the Committee must consider this advice before making its decision on the call-in.
2. The powers of the Ad-Hoc Committee are set out at Standing Order 47(8) and (9):
 - (9) A committee appointed in accordance with sub-paragraph (4) of this standing order may -
 - (a) refer the decision back to the decision maker;
 - (b) in the case of a decision taken under delegated authority, support the decision;
 - (c) in the case of a decision for ratification by the council, refer the decision to the council.
 - (10) Where a decision has been supported in accordance with sub-paragraph (8) of this standing order, that decision shall –
 - (a) be approved;
 - (b) be inserted in the Register of Decisions; and

**Ad Hoc Committee,
Wednesday, 28th May, 2025**

- (c) become operative from the date of the meeting at which the committee appointed in accordance with sub-paragraph (4) of this standing order confirmed support for the decision.

3.11 Composition of the Ad Hoc Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee comprise the Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons of the 8 Standing Committees.

3.12 Voting

Members should note that the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the (Strategic Policy and Resources) Committee which made the decision do not have any voting rights. Also, it should be noted that, while those Members who submitted the call-in are invited to the meeting, they do not have voting rights unless they are voting Members of the Ad Hoc Committee.

After discussion, it was

Moved by Alderman Lawlor,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson and

Resolved - that the decision of the Council of 3rd February under the heading 'Armed Forces Covenant', in accordance with Standing Order 47 (9) Part (C), be referred to the meeting of the Council on 2nd June for reconsideration.

Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes

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

Chairperson

Armed Forces Covenant

“That this Council recognises the unique skills that are held by Armed Forces service leavers; recognises that many veterans can face disadvantages compared to the general population, arising from military life, when accessing services and as such, this Council commits to signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant immediately.”

Proposer: Alderman James Lawlor

Seconder: Alderman Dean McCullough

This page is intentionally left blank

Voting Rights for the Election of the President of Ireland

“That this Council notes that the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement recognises the birth right of all the people of the north to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both; recalls that, in November 2013, the Fifth Report of the Convention on the Constitution recommended to give citizens residing outside the 26 counties the right to vote in presidential elections; further notes that Irish citizens living in the north can stand for, and be elected as, President of Ireland but cannot vote in presidential elections; and calls on this Council to write to the Irish Government and ask that they implement the recommendation of the Convention on the constitution with regards to voting rights in presidential elections, thereby extending the right to vote in elections for President of Ireland to all Irish citizens on the island of Ireland.”

Proposer: Councillor Róis-Máire Donnelly

Seconder: Councillor Natasha Brennan

This page is intentionally left blank