

Public Document Pack

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

SUMMONS TO ATTEND THE MONTHLY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

Notice is hereby given that the monthly meeting of the Council will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Belfast on Monday, 1st September, 2025 at 6.00 pm, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Summons
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the Council (Pages 1 - 12)
5. Official Announcements
 - a) Requests to address the Council:

Ms. Sarah McCann - Motion to Support Endometriosis Patients; and
Benview Community Centre Representatives – New Licence
6. Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (Pages 13 - 62)
7. Minutes of the People and Communities Committee (Pages 63 - 104)
8. Minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee (Pages 105 - 124)
9. Minutes of the Licensing Committee (Pages 125 - 140)
10. Minutes of the Planning Committee (Pages 141 - 158)
11. Minutes of the Climate and City Resilience Committee (Pages 159 - 170)
12. Minutes of the Standards and Business Committee (Pages 171 - 172)

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

John Walsh

Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

Council

SPECIAL MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Held in the Council Chamber, City Hall
on Tuesday, 1st July, 2025 at 10.45 a.m., pursuant to Notice.

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Kelly (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Doherty;
The High Sherriff, Councillor McAteer;
Aldermen Copeland, Lawlor, McCoubrey,
McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Bower, Bradley, Brennan,
R. Brooks, T. Brooks, Bunting, Cobain,
Collins, de Faoite, Doran, S. Douglas, Ferguson,
Flynn, Long, Lyons, Maghie, McCallin, McCann,
McCormick, McDowell, McKay, McKeown,
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Murray,
Ó Néill, Verner and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors D. Douglas, Groogan and Smyth.

Battle of the Somme Anniversary

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Kelly)
Seconded by the Alderman McCoubrey and

Resolved – That we, the Lord Mayor and Citizens of the City of Belfast, on the 109th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, desire again to record our feelings of gratitude to the brave men of the 36th (Ulster) Division, the 16th (Irish) Division and other forces who, by their glorious conduct in that battle, made an imperishable name for themselves and their people and whose heroism will never be forgotten.

The Council stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect to all those who had lost their lives in the Battle of the Somme.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

Council

MEETING OF BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

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

Members present: The Lord Mayor, Councillor Kelly (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Doherty;
The High Sheriff, 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, Cobain, Collins,
de Faoite, M. Donnelly, P. Connelly, R.M. Donnelly,
Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas, Duffy, Ferguson,
Flynn, Garrett, Groogan, Hanvey, Long, Lyons,
Magee, Maghie, Maskey, McCabe, McCallin,
McCormick, McCann, McCusker, McDonough-Brown,
McDowell, McKay, McKeown, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Ó Néill,
Verner, Walsh and Whyte.

Summons

The Chief Executive submitted the summons convening the meeting.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Councillor Smyth.

Declarations of Interest

Minutes of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Councillor McCann declared an interest in relation to the item '2024-25 Quarter 4 Finance Report' in that his relative was employed by HERe NI.

Councillors R.M. Donnelly, Duffy, Groogan, McCabe and Verner declared an interest in relation to the item 'Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 9th June 2025' in that they were associated with organisations which had applied for, or were in receipt of, PEACEPLUS funding. As this item did not become the subject of discussion or debate during proceedings, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

Councillors R.M. Donnelly and Verner declared an interest in relation to the item 'Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality' in that they were associated with organisations which had submitted an application. As this item did not become

**Meeting of Council
Tuesday, 1st July, 2025**

the subject of discussion or debate during proceedings, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor Ferguson declared an interest in relation to the item 'Social Value Levy Fund Update' in that he was on the Board of Group associated with a project and left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

Minutes of the People and Communities Committee

Councillor R.M. Donnelly declared an interest in relation to the item 'Ending Violence Against Woman and Girls - Change Fund Agreement' in that she was associated with an organisation which had applied for funding and left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

Councillor McCann declared an interest in relation to the same item in that his relative was employed by HERe NI and left the meeting whilst this item was under consideration.

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in relation to the item 'Healthwise and Physical Referral Update' in that his employer was associated with the programme. As this item did not become the subject of discussion or debate during proceedings, the Member was not required to leave the meeting.

Minutes of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Councillor Duffy declared an interest in relation to item 2(a) 'Vacant to Vibrant Programme' in that his employer had applied to the scheme.

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the same item in that her employer was in receipt of a grant through the scheme and that she was acquainted with an applicant to the scheme.

As the above-mentioned item did not become the subject of discussion or debate during proceedings, the Members were not required to leave the meeting.

Minutes of the Council

Moved by the Lord Mayor (Councillor Kelly),
Seconded by the Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Doherty) and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Council of 2nd June, 2025, be taken as read and signed as correct.

Call-In - Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service

The Council considered a copy of the legal opinion which was obtained in relation to the call-in of the Council decision of 2nd June, 2025, in respect of the delivery of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service.

**Meeting of Council
Tuesday, 1st July, 2025**

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Collins,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough, and

Resolved – That the Council agrees to extend funding to the current service provider until 31st March, 2026.

Accordingly, the Council:

- i. noted the content of the legal opinion;
- ii. noted that the call-in was not considered to have merit on either procedural grounds or community impact grounds;
- iii. noted that the transition to procured services should be kept under close scrutiny to ensure that there would be continuity in service provision;
- iv. noted that, as the decision was called-in, the approval for the public advertisement of the Belfast Citywide Appeals Service was not able to be brought to the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in June, 2025;
- v. approved the public advertisement of the tender as per Standing Order 37(a) for the delivery of a Belfast Citywide Appeals Service from 1st October, 2025 to 31st March, 2028 (with the possibility of an extension to March, 2030) with an estimated contract value of £270k per annum; and
- vi. agreed to extend funding to the current service provider until 31st March, 2026.

Official Announcements

The Lord Mayor wished Ms. Jennifer Tosh, Deputy Registrar, well in her retirement following thirty-six years' service to the Council.

The Lord Mayor congratulated Ms. Jenny Pogue, principal of Arellian Nursery School, who was recently awarded an MBE for services to Early Years Education.

The Lord Mayor congratulated Councillor Murphy and his wife on the recent birth of their son.

Councillor Bunting highlighted the efforts of two local men, Mr. Mark Oliver and Mr. Chris Boyd, who had recently undertaken a "Walk the Country" fundraiser to raise awareness and funds for stroke-related charities. The Lord Mayor acceded to a request from Councillor Bunting that Mr. Oliver and Mr. Boyd be invited to City Hall to congratulate them for their efforts on behalf of the citizens of Belfast.

Councillor Murphy commended the Lord Mayor for her first weeks in office and the wide range of events she had attended across Belfast.

**Meeting of Council
Tuesday, 1st July, 2025**

He also raised concern in relation to the removal of a portrait of the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, from the Lord Mayor's Parlour.

Councillor R. Brooks congratulated Ballymacarrett Defenders Flute Band on their 90th anniversary. She also extended her thanks to St. Martins Church Defenders LOL 1980 for their continued support to the band.

Alderman Copeland congratulated the pupils of Park School, Belfast, and teacher, Mr. Jon McKinley, on their recent success in winning the Best Film (12-15 age category) at the Into Film Awards in London. The Lord Mayor acceded to a request from Alderman Copeland that Mr. McKinley and the pupils of Park School be invited to City Hall to congratulate them on their success.

Councillor T. Brooks congratulated the the Belfast Philharmonic Choir which recently marked its 15th anniversary with a celebration dinner in City Hall.

She also extended her congratulations to the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) which recently held its Members' Forum event in Belfast.

Councillor de Faoite congratulated the Quire LGBT Choir which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary in the MAC Belfast.

Councillor Whyte congratulated the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra (CBYO) which recently marked its 70th anniversary with a performance at the Ulster Hall and wished them well for their forthcoming tour of Italy. He highlighted the attendance of world-renowned flautist Sir James Galway, a founding member of the CBYO, at the Ulster Hall anniversary celebration and stated that, given that his status as one of Belfast's most famous citizens and his contribution to music and the local community, consideration should be given to awarding him with the Freedom of the City.

**Change of Membership on Committees/
Outside Bodies/Position of Responsibility**

The Chief Executive reported that notification had been received from:

- i. Sinn Fein which indicated that it wished to replace Councillor Duffy with Councillor Magee on the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership; and
- ii. the Green Party which indicated that it wished to replace Councillor Smyth with Councillor Groogan on the Arc21 Joint Committee.

The Council noted the changes.

**Meeting of Council
Tuesday, 1st July, 2025**

Request to Address the Council - Lagmore Community Forum

The Council agreed to receive a deputation from Ms. M. Smyth, Lagmore Community Forum, Ms. M. Gallagher, Christ the Redeemer Girl Guide Unit, and Ms. M. McCann, Little Saints Out of Schools Club, in relation to the minute within the Planning Committee of 17th June, 2025, under the heading 'LA04/2023/2890/F - Lagmore Drive, Dunmurry - Use of Financial Developer Contribution.'

Ms. Smyth, Lagmore Community Forum, addressed the Council in relation to the allocation of a financial developer contribution to mitigate the impact of the development of social housing units on lands on and adjacent to Christ the Redeemer Parish Hall, Lagmore Drive, Dunmurry. She raised concern regarding the decision process to allocate the developer contribution of £27,140 towards the funding of a permanent building for the Lagmore Youth Project, located within the grounds of Christ the Redeemer Church, stating that there had been a lack of consultation with other community groups in respect of the allocation.

Ms. Gallagher, Christ the Redeemer Girl Guide Unit, explained that the service provided fun and learning activities to girls within the local Lagmore and Colin community. She stated that the Girl Guides had previously occupied the Christ the Redeemer Parish Hall, however, due to the planned removal of the Hall, it had to relocate to a local school. It was reported that due to rental costs, the service has had to reduce from two nights per week to one. She highlighted that a proposal had been suggested to use the developer contribution towards a mobile unit within the Church grounds that would facilitate multiple community groups. She concluded by highlighting the significant and important service that the Lagmore Youth Project provided within the local community and stated that her concern was solely in respect of the lack of consultation with other community groups prior to the Planning Committee's consideration of the recommended allocation.

Ms. McCann, Little Saints Out of Schools Club, explained that Little Saints Out of Schools Club was a front-line service for childcare in the Lagmore and Colin area for approximately eighty working families. She advised that Little Saints had proposed that it be considered in relation to the developer contribution, with it being used towards a mobile unit within the grounds of the Church. She stated that a mobile unit would have enabled the service to remain in the Lagmore area and expressed her fear that the service could now be lost to the local community. She concluded by also raising concern at the lack of prior consultation with the community groups impacted by the development.

The Lord Mayor thanked the representatives, and they left the meeting.

Request to Address the Council - Trócaire

The Council agreed to receive a deputation from a Mr. P. Heaney, Head of Region Northern Ireland, Trócaire, in relation to the minute within the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 12th June, 2025, under the heading 'Notice of Motion - Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.'

Mr. Heaney highlighted to the Council the power of international treaties in effectively tackling global environmental issues such as the Montreal Protocol, signed in 1987, to protect the Earth's ozone layer by phasing out the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances.

**Meeting of Council
Tuesday, 1st July, 2025**

He stated that there was now an urgent need to address climate change and that, even though the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement remained critical in addressing the issue, there was a need to secure commitment to phase out fossil fuels.

He reported that, to date, sixteen nation states, the World Health Organisation, the European Parliament and various organisations had supported the call for the development of a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty that would provide the global roadmap needed to halt the expansion of fossil fuel and manage the phase-out of coal, oil and gas to enable a global just energy transition.

Mr. Heaney concluded by praising the Council for the steps it had taken in relation to climate change that included its declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and the launch of its Local Area Energy Plan as a roadmap to transition to a net-zero energy system by 2050. He stated that the Council's endorsement of the proposed treaty would build on these steps and provide a significant and influential voice in calling upon the UK and Irish Governments to endorse the development of a treaty to phase out fossil fuels and help the most vulnerable within Belfast and across the globe.

The Lord Mayor thanked Mr. Heaney, and he left the meeting.

Minutes of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Moved by Councillor Brennan,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th June, 2025, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.”

2024-25 Quarter 4 Finance Report

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Brennan,
Seconded by Councillor Long,

“That the decision under the heading ‘2024-25 Quarter 4 Finance Report’ be amended to provide that £2.94 million of underspend be allocated as following:

- Irish Language Policy - £1.9 million;
- Resilience Fund for newcomer families and communities - £500k;
- Cleansing equipment - £440k; and
- Biodiversity measures - £100k.”

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

**Meeting of Council
Tuesday, 1st July, 2025**

Pilot Sunday City Animation Project

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Nelson,
Seconded by Councillor Beattie,

“That the decision under the heading ‘Pilot Sunday City Animation Project’ be rejected, and accordingly the Council agrees:

- i. in principal, to progress the Holiday Resort designation citywide under paragraph (9) of the Shops Sunday (Sunday Trading &c.) (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, to be introduced on an ongoing basis commencing March, 2026, following further consultation and engagement with relevant stakeholders, including trade unions;
- ii. that the designation would include a public consultation; and
- iii. that the designation would be accompanied by a city centre, family friendly animation programme created in cooperation with other local stakeholders.”

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

**Irish Athletic Boxing Association (IABA)
Boxing Camp**

At the request of Councillor R. McLaughlin, the Council agreed that the funding of £25k to the IABA, ratified by the Council at its meeting in June, 2025, to help support the cost of hosting an elite boxing camp in Belfast in August, 2025, be used towards an IABA event in October, 2025, due to the cancellation of the August event.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee of 20th June, 2025, were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of People and Communities Committee

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

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 3rd June, 2025, be approved and adopted.”

**Meeting of Council
Tuesday, 1st July, 2025**

Dual Language Street Signs

Amendment

Moved by Councillor P. Donnelly,
Seconded by Councillor de Faoite,

“That that the decision under the heading ‘Dual Language Street Signs’ be rejected and, accordingly, that Shandon Park be included within the list of streets for which a second street nameplate in Irish would be erected.”

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

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendment, the minutes of the proceedings of the People and Communities Committee of 3rd June, 2025, were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of City Growth and Regeneration Committee

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

“That the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 4th and 25th June 2025, be approved and adopted.”

**Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP)
2025/26 Programme**

Amendment

Moved by Councillor Groogan,
Seconded by Councillor Collins,

“That the decision under the heading ‘Belfast City and Region Place Partnership (BCRPP) 2025/26 Programme’ be rejected and, accordingly, the Council does not approve the attendance of senior officers at MIPIM 2026 as part of the BCRPP 2025/26 programme.”

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

**York Street Interchange Placemaking
and Active Travel Review (PATR) –
Committee Response**

At the request of Councillor Groogan, the Council agreed that the decision under the heading ‘York Street Interchange Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR) – Committee Response’ be amended to provide that the issues raised by the Member be included in the Council’s formal response to the Minister for Infrastructure.

**Meeting of Council
Tuesday, 1st July, 2025**

Belfast Zoo Q4 Performance Report

At the request of Councillor R. McLaughlin, the Council agreed that the decision under the heading 'Belfast Zoo Q4 Performance Report' be amended to provide that membership of the proposed Council body to focus on the long-term financial sustainability of Belfast Zoo and complementary assets, be appointed using the Sainte-Laguë method.

Adoption of Minutes

Subject to the foregoing amendments, the minutes of the proceedings of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 4th and 25th June 2025, were thereupon approved and adopted.

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Moved by Councillor Doran,
Seconded by Councillor McCann, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Licensing Committee of 18th June, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Planning Committee

Moved by Councillor S. Douglas,
Seconded by Councillor Carson, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Planning Committee of 17th June, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Minutes of Climate and City Resilience Committee

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

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Climate and City Resilience Committee of 12th June, be approved and adopted.

Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Committee

Moved by Councillor Hanvey,
Seconded by Councillor Ferguson, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Committee of 16th June, be approved and adopted.

**Meeting of Council
Tuesday, 1st July, 2025**

Minutes of Standards and Business Committee

Moved by Councillor Flynn,
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin, and

Resolved - That the minutes of the proceedings of the Standards and Business Committee of 24th June, omitting matters in respect of which the Council has delegated its powers to the Committee, be approved and adopted.

Lord Mayor
Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Thursday, 3rd July, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Brennan (Chairperson);
Anderman McCoubrey;
Councillors Black, Bunting, Cobain,
de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett,
Long, Maghie, McDonough-Brown, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Nelson, Ó Néill and Whyte.

Also attended: Councillor McCormick.

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;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. P. Hamilton, Lead Officer – Community Safety; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported on behalf of Councillors Beattie and Smyth.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following two 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.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Thursday, 3rd July, 2025**

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

The Committee was informed that the Bonfire Panel had requested that the bonfire located at Broadway Industrial Estate be referred to the Committee for its consideration.

The Chief Executive provided the Committee with an update on the site.

Proposal

Proposed by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Whyte,

That the Committee approves the removal of asbestos from the Broadway Industrial Estate for the interest and well-being of residents.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Alderman McCoubrey,

That the Committee agrees to accept the extra mitigations proposed by the NIEA in relation to the bonfire at Broadway Industrial Estate, together with the additional precautionary measures, specified at the meeting.

On a vote, sixteen Members voted for the amendment and two against and it was declared carried. The amendment was thereupon put to the Committee as the substantive motion and passed.

The Committee noted, in accordance with Standing Order 48 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decision would not be subject to call-in.

Chairperson

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Wednesday, 9th July, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Brennan (Chairperson);
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting, Cobain,
de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett,
Maghie, McDonough-Brown, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Ó Néill and Smyth.

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;
Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development;
Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood
Services;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. P. Hamilton, Lead Officer – Community Safety; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman McCoubrey and Councillors Long and Nelson.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following two 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.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Wednesday, 9th July, 2025**

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

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

The Chief Executive provided the Committee with an update on the site.

Proposal

Proposed by Councillor McDonough-Brown,
Seconded by Councillor R. McLaughlin,

That the Committee approves the use of a contractor to remove bonfire materials from the Broadway Industrial site and to secure the site for the interest and well-being of residents.

Amendment

Proposed by Councillor de Faoite,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth,

That the Committee agrees that aforementioned proposal and also agrees to write to the Minister of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to ensure that the Northern Ireland Environment Agency would fulfil its obligations in relation to the site.

On a vote, twelve Members voted for the amendment and four against and it was declared carried. The amendment was thereupon put to the Committee as the substantive motion and passed.

Accordingly, the Committee approved the use of a contractor to remove bonfire materials from the Broadway Industrial site and to secure the site for the interest and well-being of residents and agreed to write to the Minister of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to ensure that the Northern Ireland Environment Agency would fulfil its obligations in relation to the site.

The Committee also noted, in accordance with Standing Order 48 (a) (2) (c), that the aforementioned decision would not be subject to call-in.

**Special Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Wednesday, 9th July, 2025**

City Centre Regeneration Scheme

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided an update in relation to various matters associated with the Assembly Rooms, following various Council decisions.

During discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development confirmed that member engagement would take place before further engagement with stakeholders on the future use of the site.

After discussion, it was

Proposed by Councillor R. McLaughlin,
Seconded by Councillor McDonough-Brown and

Resolved - That the Committee agrees to approve the recommendations, as outlined in the report.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i) Noted the update as set out in the report, including the draft Heads of Terms which set out the conditions for the proposed acquisition of the Assembly Rooms and adjacent lands to be reflected in a Contract for Sale;
- ii) Agreed that a without prejudice/conditional offer was made to acquire the Assembly Rooms and adjacent assets/lands on the basis as outlined in the report;
- iii) Subject to the offer being accepted by the vendor, agreed to acquire the property on terms to be agreed by the City Solicitor and the Director City Regeneration and Development subject to legal due diligence and relevant building surveys; and
- iv) Subject to approval to this acquisition, noted that a further report would be brought back on a strategy and next steps on the future use proposals for the Assembly Rooms and adjacent lands, including focused engagement with Members and other stakeholders.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

Friday, 22nd August, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Brennan (Chairperson);
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Beattie, Black, Bunting, Cobain,
de Faoite, R-M Donnelly, Ferguson, Garrett,
Maghie, McDonough-Brown, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin, Murphy, Nelson, Ó Néill,
Smyth 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;
Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager.

Apologies

An apology was reported from Councillor Long.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 20th June 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 July, 2025.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ferguson declared an interest under item 8(b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality in that he was associated with an organisation which had submitted an application. As the item did not become the subject of debate, he was not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor Beattie declared an interest under items 4(d) Department for Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme (CSP) 2025/26 in that he was

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

associated with a group/organisation which had applied for or received funding and left the meeting whilst the items were under consideration.

Councillor R-M Donnelly declared an interest under items 7(a) Shared City Partnership in so far as it related to PEACEPLUS in that she worked for an organisation which had applied for funding; and 8(b) Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality in that she was employed by an organisation which had submitted an application. As the items did not become the subject of debate, she was not required to leave the meeting.

Restricted Items

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

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

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

2025-26 Quarter 1 Finance Report

The Director of Finance submitted for the Committee’s consideration a report providing information on the financial position for Quarter 1 2025/26.

He reported that, at the end of Quarter 1, the financial position for the Council had shown an underspend of £1.14m, representing 2.2% of the net expenditure budget. The Quarter 1 Departmental forecast was an overspend of £0.5m, representing 0.3% of the net expenditure budget.

The Director then provided updates on the 2025/26 pay rise, the Extended Producer Responsibility Assessment 2025/26, the reserves position and the rates finalisation.

The Committee noted:

- the Quarter 1 financial position; and
- the Quarter 1 Treasury Management report.

**Medium Term Financial Plan
and Efficiency Programme**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the assessment of the key financial factors which would influence the development of the Council’s Medium Term

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

Financial Plan for 2026/27 - 2029/30 and the rate setting process for 2026/27, together with an overview of the priorities and work in progress to establish the 2026/27 - 2029/30 Efficiency Programme.

The Committee:

- noted the challenges to be taken into consideration as part of the annual and medium-term rate setting; and
- agreed to defer a decision on the district rate increase to be levied on domestic and non-domestic properties to enable further details to be provided.

Organisational Reviews and Change Programme

The Committee:

- noted the progress on the work programme for the Organisational Reviews and Change Portfolio and timescales going forward; and
- an increase to the Legal and Civic Services establishment headcount.

Asset Management

The Committee:

(i) Plot 26, Balmoral Estate – Proposed surrender of part of NIFRS Lease

Approved entering into negotiations with NIFRS in respect of agreeing the terms of a surrender of part of its existing Lease at Balmoral Estate and agreed to a further report in the future use of the Bouche Road Playing Fields.

(ii) Belfast Stories Site, 3rd Floor, 108 Royal Avenue – Surrender of lease with May Gordon

Approved the surrender of lease with May Gordon re 3rd floor, 108 Royal Avenue and payment of compensation of up to £15,000.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for the allocation of the necessary budget to facilitate the hosting of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Belfast in August, 2026.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

Proposal

After discussion, it was

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

That the Committee agrees to note the proposed governance arrangements but that discussions be undertaken with Comhaltas in relation to the Fleadh Executive Committee and inclusion of other local organisations.

On a vote, seventeen Members voted for the proposal and two against and it was declared carried.

The Committee further:

- Noted the Strategic Case and the economic impact and return on investment; and
- Noted that an update on programme development and engagement would be brought to the next meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee;
- Approved the draft outline expenditure budget for Fleadh Cheoil 2026; and
- Agreed not to establish a Members Working Group but that a further report be brought back to the Committee on alternative arrangements including the use of delegated authority.

Draft Irish Language Policy – Update on Consultation

The Director of Legal and Civic Services reminded the Committee that, in April 2024, the Council had approved the draft Irish Language Policy to go out for public consultation. The draft policy and associated draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) were issued for public consultation for a 14-week period between 17th August 2024 and 28th November 2024.

The Council had also carried out a staff consultation alongside the public consultation during the same period.

The public and staff consultations were supplemented by a range of online and in-person consultation events across the city, and an online survey through the Council's YourSay engagement platform. The same survey was provided for both the general public and Council staff (that is, there were no additional or different questions asked of staff). The Council also consulted with trade unions in accordance with the agreed Industrial Relations framework.

Accordingly, the Director submitted a report which provided an update on the findings from the consultation on the draft Irish Language Policy and which sought direction from the Committee on several key issues identified.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

Proposal

After discussion, it was

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

The Committee:

- (i) Noted the contents of the report, including:
 - a. The Report on the Public Consultation (Appendix 1)
 - b. The Report on the Staff Consultation (Appendix 2)
 - c. The Trade Union Joint Response to the consultation (Appendix 3)
 - d. The EQIA Final Decision report (Appendix 4)
- (ii) Agreed, in principle, to adopt a bilingual logo, subject to agreed further engagement with Trade Unions, stakeholders and design work;
- (iii) Agreed that relevant stakeholders be invited to the next meeting of the Committee;
- (iv) Noted that further engagement with JNCC and the Stakeholders Forum will be undertaken based on Committee direction on the key issues identified; and
- (v) Noted that a final version of the draft Policy, together with a proposed Implementation Plan and options for an updated logo, will be brought to Committee at its next meeting.

On a vote, fourteen Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

Matters referred from Council / Notices of Motion

Notices of Motion - Pathways to Work Green Paper

The Committee was reminded that, at the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee on 28th April, that Committee had exercised its delegated powers to adopt the undernoted motion:

“This Council strongly opposes the proposed Welfare reforms as part of the Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working Green Paper from the UK government, which will have disproportionate impacts on vulnerable people in the North; commits to writing to the First and Deputy First Minister asking them to lobby the UK Government to reverse changes that will negatively impact vulnerable people; further commits to writing to the Minister for Communities to prepare a business case for a mitigation package which provides protections for current and future claimants

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

from reductions in social security entitlements outlined in the Pathways to Work Green Paper.”

A response had since been received from the Minister for Communities, Gordon Lyons, MLA, in which he acknowledged the Council’s concern regarding the possible implications of the legislation. In addition, the Minister had pointed out that he had relayed his “strong opposition” to the Secretary of State and government ministers at Westminster. He added that he was committed to delivering a welfare system that “protects those who need it the most” and that his officials would continue to work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to assess the full implications of the legislation in Northern Ireland.

The Minister further added in his correspondence that the Department for Work and Pensions would be hosting a consultation event on Monday, 16th June. However, as the correspondence was received late on Friday, 13th June, it was impractical to advise Members.

The consultation has now closed, and the Department was considering the responses.

The Committee noted the receipt of the correspondence and agreed to the closure of the motion.

**Response received from Tanaiste re
extending voting in Irish Presidential Elections**

The Committee was reminded that, at the Council meeting held on 2nd June, the following motion was passed:

“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.”

The Committee was advised that a response had been received from Mr. Simon Harris TD, the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

In his response he advised that a Private Members Bill on Extending Voting Rights in Presidential Elections to citizens of Northern Ireland and the diaspora was debated in the Dáil Éireann on 24th May, 2025.

He outlined that the Government did not oppose the motion and that extending voting rights to citizens outside of the jurisdiction of the Republic of Ireland would require a referendum and the Government would continue to reflect on the matter.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

The Committee noted the receipt of the correspondence and agreed to the closure of the motion.

Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

Belfast Region City Deal – update

The Committee considered the following report:

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1** This report is to provide an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and seek approval for the BRCD Annual Report 2024/25.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- Approve the BRCD Annual Report for 2024/25
- Note the update in relation the Implementation and Financial Plan

3.0 Main report

Annual Report 2024/25

- 3.1** The agreed reporting arrangements for all City and Growth Deals requires the production of an Annual Report and the requirement to meet with the Northern Ireland Delivery Board in order to discuss deal progress as part of an 'Annual Conversation' which is arranged to take place at the end of August this year.
- 3.2** A high level, outward focused Annual Report has now been produced for 2024/25 and outlines the specific progress made at the overall programme level with some very tangible progress achieved in this reporting year. Key highlights as of 31 March 2025 include:
- A total of 16 projects with Outline Business Cases (OBCs) now approved alongside three Full Business Cases (FBCs) with a combined project value of £620m.
 - Following FBC approval this year iREACH Health hosted an official sod cutting ceremony in February 2025, with the construction phase for the world-class clinical research centre having now commenced.
 - In June 2024, construction commenced at the state-of-the-art Factory of the Future at Global Point in Newtownabbey marking a major milestone for the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC). Due to open in early 2026, the innovation centre with capacity for 150 staff, is set to

reinvigorate local industrial potential and address the future technology and skills challenges faced by the region's manufacturing sector.

- Augment the City successfully progressed through and completed the first two phases of its 3-phase SBRI programme.
- Four Contracts for Funding and funding agreements were signed – including Gobbins Phase 2 and Destination Royal Hillsborough.
- 21 contracts associated with BRCD projects now include social value clauses, to date these contracts that have commenced reporting to the SIB portal have committed to delivery of a total of 10,935 Social Value Delivery Points. Mainly through interventions such as paid employment opportunities for apprentices, student placements and graduates, health and wellbeing initiatives and climate change and carbon reducing training.
- Studio Ulster moved into full operation and as previously reported the official launch took place in June 2025 marking a new era for virtual production, creating opportunities and positive economic impacts for Belfast residents, and for our city and region.
- Two additional cross deals skills assessments were completed for the Virtual Production and Digital Sectors and a review of identified actions is underway to determine those suitable for inclusion in a BRCD Collaborative Employability & Skills action plan.

3.3 The Annual Report, which was approved by the BRCD Executive Board on 18th June 2025, is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration. The individual BRCD partners will also be seeking approval for the Annual Report through their own governance structures. The report will be formally published after all approvals have been secured.

3.4 The report will then be shared with the Department of Finance in advance of the Annual Conversation.

3.5 Moving into Year 4 (2025/26) and as partners focus on delivery and maximising the benefits of the investment, we will see significant progress across the programme with:

- The opening of Studio Ulster and the UK Digital Twin Centre already completed.
- Construction continuing at pace at both iREACH Health and AMIC and contractors expected on site at Momentum One Zero, Newry City Centre Regeneration and Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge.
- Approval of the OBC for Belfast Stories anticipated by the end of 2025.

- 3 additional CfFs currently in process for approval – committing an additional £140m
- 2 FBCs at advanced stages of the approval process
- The BRCD draft Benefits Realisation Framework being refreshed to ensure that benefits are effectively delivered and captured in alignment with the overall programme objectives.
- Completion of the Life and Health Sciences (LHS) skills assessment

Financial and Implementation Plan

3.6 The overarching deal document is supported by a Financial and Implementation Plan and the annual submission for 2024/25 was produced alongside the Annual Report. As the programme is now firmly in delivery phase this year's financial and implementation plan was combined into one document. The document includes the expenditure profile of all the projects broken down annually and the high level project milestones based on the Quarter 4 financial and performance returns. The PMO engaged closely with partners and following consideration by the Finance Directors' Group and the Executive Board it was formally submitted to the Department of Finance in June as required by the Contract for Funding.

3.7 During 2024/25 a further £46.3m was drawn down from both the Department for the Economy and the Department for Communities demonstrating the positive progress being made across the programme. Up to 31st March 2025, claims totalling £41m have been processed by Programme Management Office (£36m in FY24-25).

3.8 Financial and Resource Implications

All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.

3.9 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

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

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations as set out in paragraph 2.1.

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.

Department for Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme (CSP) 2025/26

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The main purpose of this report is:

- Inform Members that Council has received the Letter of Offer for the Community Support Programme 2025/26 from the Department for Communities (DfC). The Department has provided an uplift of 9% across certain elements of the programme.
- Seek agreement from members on the options to allocate the additional funding provided based on the detail provided in the report.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to:

- I. Agree the preferred option relating to the Community Support General additional funding. (Table 2)
- II. Agree the preferred option for the reprofiling of the budget for Advice and Tribunal services. (Table 3)
- III. Agree the proposed additional funding allocation for: Community Support General, Advice Grant and Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension-Tribunal Representation.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 A report on the Letter of Offer received from the Department of Communities Department for Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme 2024/25 was considered at the August meeting of the People and Communities Committee.
- 3.2 Members had asked that the following elements of the paper be referred to the August meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration

1. Options relating to the Community Support General additional funding (outlined in Table 2)
 2. Options for the reprofiling of the budget for Advice and Tribunal services (outlined in Table 3)
 3. Note the proposed additional funding allocation for: Community Support General, Advice Grant, Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension-Tribunal Representation which are captured under points 1 and 2 above.
- 3.3 Members will be aware that the Department for Communities (DfC) provides an annual grant to Council through its Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer. This funding provides an element of the budget towards Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Building grant, Summer Scheme Grant as well as Generalist Advice. It also provides 100% funding for Social Supermarkets.
- 3.4 Council received the CSP 2024/25 Letter of Offer from DfC on 13 June 2025. There is an increase to this year's funding across several new and existing elements.

Additional Funding by CSP Heading

- 3.5 Table 1 illustrates the additional 9% uplift and available budgets under the relevant headings to be considered by SP & R.

Table 1

CSP Heading	Additional Funds 2025/26
1. Community Support General	£82,007.26
2. Advice Grant	£60,108.77
3. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation- Appeals	£6,960.79

3.6 **Proposed Allocation of Additional Funds**

It is proposed that additional funding for elements 1-3 should be allocated using the approaches outlined below. Further detail is provided in Appendices 1-3

1. Community Support General

- 3.7 Members are asked to consider and agree their preferred option for allocating the additional funding provided under the Community Support General heading (£82,007.26) as outlined in Table 2. Further

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

detail on the organisations funded through Capacity and Revenue awards is provided in Appendix 1

Table 2

Option	Description	Pro	Con
1	Allocate all the additional funding £82,007.26 to the 43 Capacity funded groups. Each group will receive a non-recurrent payment of £1,907.15	<p>Capacity grant funding enables the provision of training, development and support programmes provided by 43 organisations to smaller organisations within communities. The funding contributes to staff and programme delivery running costs. As employers, Capacity funded groups have seen an increase in staff related costs this past year particularly in relation to National Insurance Contributions. They have also seen an increase to the costs running costs of their programmes.</p> <p>At Committee in March 2025, members agreed to double the funding allocation received by Revenue funded groups from a maximum of £20,629 in 2024/25 to £41,258 2025/26. Capacity funded organisations did not receive an uplift, this option would provide an increase in funding to these organisations.</p>	Revenue organisations do not have access to these additional funds.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

2	Allocate the funding to Revenue and Capacity funded groups. 130 organisations will receive a non-recurrent payment of £630.83	Revenue and Capacity organisations will receive additional funding to meet their running costs and provide services.	This option does not take into account the fact that revenue funded groups have already received a significant uplift for 25/26.
3	Use the funding to offset the council allocation that was used to double the revenue awards in 25/26.	This would offset the significant council investment that was made to double revenue awards in 25/26.	This option would not provide any additional support to funded organisations.

3.8 Appendix 1 provides a revised allocation for Capacity and Revenue based on options 1 and 2 above.

3.9 Members will be aware that this is the final year of awards of Capacity and Revenue Grants 2023-2026 in its current form. An open call for our new Large Grant programme 2026-2029 was launched on 28 July.

2. Advice Grant and Provision for Appeals.

3.10 Members will recall the Council agreed to provide £270,000 on a recurrent basis for the provision of an Appeals and Tribunal Service in the City. At Council in July, members agreed to extend the provision of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service (BCTS) provided by Ligoniel Improvement Association on behalf of the Belfast Advice Group (BAG) to the end of March 2026. Members also agreed that future services will be procured and for Officers to begin the process with the contract awarded and provider in place for April 2026.

3.11 This year DfC provided an allocation of £84,302.81 towards the provision of Appeals and Tribunal Services. Including Council's contribution of £270,000 the total available budget is £354,302.81. BCTS requested £242,000 which was agreed by Council in July. Thus, there is a potential underspend in the budget of £112, 302.81.

3.12 Funding relating to Advice and Appeals is a specific element of the Community Support Programme and ringfenced for the provision of related services. The review of Advice services which council completed in December 23 highlighted the rising delivery and staffing costs experienced by advice organisations, this additional funding will support organisations to address these issues. Members may also wish that a consultation on the DfC regional

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

review of advice services opened on 11th August, further detail on this will be presented to P&C committee at a later date. Members are asked to consider the reprofiling of the budget and agree a preferred option presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Option	Description	Pro	Con
1	Redistribute the £112,302.81 providing an uplift for Generalist Advice and Appeals to the five area-based Advice Consortia using Council's allocation model. (Table 4 below)	<p>Council currently funds 5 Area based Advice consortia that includes 14 independent advice providers in 19 locations and additional cover via extensive outreach provision.</p> <p>Providers have expressed concerns regarding the growing costs relating to staff such as National Insurance Contributions and operating overheads.</p> <p>Staff retention has posed a significant problem for advice providers. Due to short-term contracts and lower salary compared to other agencies such as Housing Associations</p> <p>Providers have also discussed the growing need for the provision of</p>	<p>The demand for services and complexity of dealing with multiple needs is growing. This greatly impacts on the level of service provision. The additional funding is short-term for 2025/26 on a non-recurrent basis. Next year the provision may return to its current level thus the service capacity of the organisations will reduce. Providing funding for 1 may lead to a higher dependency of the providers on Council funding and of people on the service. A demand that may be inflated with the provision of additional support this year.</p> <p>The providers may use some funding to increase its staff salaries and off set NIC. This increase may lead to an unmanageable cost next year</p>

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

		<p>services that meet the needs of more complex cases and also of a growing population who do not have English as a first language.</p> <p>An additional non-recurrent allocation for this year will provide the Advice providers with sufficient resources to maintain their current level of staff, meet increased overheads and provide additional resources to meet the growing demand for services on complex cases as well as for people who require additional support such as translation services.</p>	
2	<p>Redistribute the £112,302.81</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing an uplift for Generalist Advice and Appeals to the five area-based Advice Consortia using Council's allocation model. (Table 4 below) up to £85,302.81.and <p>allocating the remaining £27,000</p> <p>towards the procurement process ensuring that contingencies are in place to effectively transition from current funding to contracted service provision e.g. costs to transfer service user records and systems from</p>	<p>As Above</p> <p>This is the final year of the current arrangement for the Tribunal Service. From April 2026 the service will be provided by a contracted organisation following a procurement</p>	<p>As Above</p> <p>It is £27,000 that can be used for direct service provision.</p>

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

	<p>the current to the new provider. Grant permission to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make further allocations to the generalist advice services should the budget provision of up to £27,000 not be used.</p>	<p>process. It is envisaged that the provider will be secured by December 2026. The current provider has extensive case records and systems in place for maintaining the records. The provider is also dealing with an extensive caseload that may take longer to complete beyond the 31 March 2026.</p> <p>This allocation will provide Council with an opportunity to manage the transition from the current funding arrangements to the new contract. It may cover items such as transfer of Casefiles and systems, current caseloads, issues relating to GDPR.</p>	
--	--	--	--

3.13 In relation to the Advice Grant, DfC has provided an uplift of £60,108.77 for the provision of Generalist Advice Services. Members are asked to allocate the uplift based on Council's current advice grant funding model.

3.14 Table 4 below presents the level of additional funding each Area Based Advice Consortia will receive this year for the uplift and budget reprofile options. The additional funding is non-recurrent.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

Table 4

Area Consortium	Council's Funding Allocation Model	Advice Grant Uplift	Additional Budget Reprofile Option 1	Additional Budget Reprofile Option 2
Central	9%	£5,381.69	£9,953.06	£7,560.13
East	14%	£8,628.51	£16,229.47	£12,327.66
North	26%	£15,556.90	£29,063.05	£22,075.67
South	15%	£9,259.96	£17,299.22	£13,140.11
West	35%	£21,281.71	£39,752.01	£30,199.34

3.15 Appendix 2 provides details of the revised allocation for each Consortium based on uplift plus Options 1 and 2.

3. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation - Appeals

3.16 Members are asked to note the increase of £6,960.79 towards the provision of tribunal and appeals and agree the allocation be used for the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service.

3.17 Financial Implications

All awards listed in the appendices can be made in line with existing budgets for 2025/26. Members should note that the Capacity and Revenue awards are multi annual awards from 23/26.

3.18 Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

This will be considered throughout, and any appropriate issues highlighted to Members. Any amendments to existing scheme or new scheme will be considered in the context of any equality/good relations and rural needs considerations.

The Committee:

- (i) agreed to Option 2 relating to the Community Support General additional funding (Table 2);
- (ii) agreed to Option 2 for the reprofiling of the budget for Advice and Tribunal services (Table 3); and

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

- (iii) agreed the proposed additional funding allocation for: Community Support General, Advice Grant and Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension-Tribunal Representation.

30 Under 30 Climate Change-Makers Initiative 2025-6

The Committee deferred consideration of the matter to allow further information to be provided on the co-sponsors. The Committee also agreed that information on the assessment of participants in previous programmes would be provided at a future date.

City Innovation programme update

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

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on current City Innovation initiatives including the submission to the first phase of the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Mayoral Challenge competition.**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- 1. To note the Belfast Alleyways proposal has been submitted to Bloomberg Philanthropies and that a decision on whether we proceed to phase one is expected by the end of August.**
- 2. To retrospectively approve Belfast City Council's inclusion in a joint bid to DSIT's Regulators Pioneer Fund to independently map mobile coverage in Northern Ireland and elsewhere.**
- 3. To retrospectively approve letters of support to both Ulster University and Queen's Universities for two separate, independent, funding bids to the National Institute for Health and Care Research £50m funding call to tackle health inequalities.**
- 4. To approve support for Ulster University and the Agile Ageing Alliance consortium bid to Horizon Europe's 'GenAI4EU' call to deliver a potential €5,000,000 project which would include a demonstrator in Belfast.**
- 5. To note the date of the first event in the Belfast: Inclusive Futures series and that invitations have been issued to all Members.**
- 6. To approve attendance by two officers to accompany the Belfast Innovation Commissioner to this year's Smart Cities World Congress to develop innovation funding and investment opportunities for the city.**

7. To approve the participation of an officer from the City Innovation Office in the i30 Inclusive Innovation Medellin visit. Travel costs are included in the project funding.

3.0 Main report

Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayoral Challenge 2025

- 3.1 Following Member approval, Belfast City Council applied to Bloomberg Philanthropies' Mayoral Challenge with a proposal '*to re-imagine Belfast's network of alleyways*'. This broad proposal was accepted and over the past few weeks officers have been involved in planning workshops with the Bloomberg team to prepare Belfast's submission for phase one funding by 15 August.
- 3.2 If this submission is approved by Bloomberg \$50,000 will then be made available to Council to work with local communities and stakeholder over September and October to develop the detailed \$1 million application to deliver a 24-month programme.
- 3.3 The work of this first phase will be engaging with communities and stakeholders on options delivery mechanisms for a future Belfast alleyway transformation programme. It will examine local demand, types of viable projects, and specifically at co-delivery models with communities and the community and voluntary sector that can be sustained over the long term. Members should note that this phase will not be identifying specific locations for projects. There will be a range of engagement mechanisms including at least five neighbourhood workshops across the city.
- 3.4 Members are asked to note the submission of the Belfast proposal and that a decision from Bloomberg on phase one is expected by the end of August. Details will follow at a future Committee.

DSIT's Regulators Pioneer Fund

- 3.5 Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council invited Belfast City Council to be a supporting partner in a £1 million application by Wales, Northern Ireland & Scotland to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's (DSIT) Regulators' Pioneer Fund. The proposal is to map 4G/5G mobile coverage across all of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland at a granular level to help identify coverage gaps within communities and explore opportunities to improve coverage and address digital exclusion.
- 3.6 The bid is being led by Caerphilly County Borough Council (on behalf of Welsh local authorities), with support from Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (on behalf of NI local authorities) and Glasgow City Council (on behalf of Scottish local authorities). If the bid is successful, the project will start in October 2025. No

financial or resource commitment is required from Belfast City Council. Belfast City Council will have the opportunity to use the data to support its work and inform decision making.

- 3.7 Given the short deadline for submission over the summer months, Members are asked to retrospectively approve Belfast City Council's inclusion in the bid.

£50m call to tackle inequalities in cardiovascular disease

- 3.8 The Council has been approached separately by both Ulster University's Centre for Digital healthcare Technologies (CDHT, and by Queen's University, seeking support for two funding bids to the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) £50m funding call¹ to tackle health inequalities.
- 3.9 Both proposals seek to develop and implement long-term change in cardiovascular disease outcomes, focusing on digital healthcare interventions, escalating community focused engagement and diet and wellbeing education. Early detection and intervention will be important and as well as encouraging lifestyle changes, support systems changes or adaptations to medicine and treatments.
- 3.10 To enable both applications to be submitted in time for a 13 August deadline, a letter of support has been given to Ulster and a separate letter of support, with a role as a co-applicant, to Queen's. Members are asked to retrospectively approve both supporting letters, and to note that in the event of either bid making through to an initial selection stage, a more detailed report will be brought back to Committee in advance of any further commitments being made.

Horizon Europe Call: Generative AI in Health Care

- 3.11 The Agile Ageing Alliance is working with an EU wide consortium to submit a bid to the Horizon Europe GenAI4EU call which is making €15,000,000 available for three projects.
- 3.12 The Alliance have invited Belfast City Council and Ulster University's CDHT to partner in a bid which will focus on '*end user-driven application of Generative Artificial Intelligence models in healthcare*'. The consortium wishes to have 5 to 6 demonstrator sites over the four-year period of the project to test/further develop the infrastructure in real world settings. Belfast has been proposed as one of the health care demonstrator sites (locations might include social housing estates, retirement villages, care homes, or hospitals. The consortium will engage with local partners on potential local options.

¹ <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/new-50m-funding-to-tackle-inequalities-cardiovascular-disease>

- 3.13 Members are asked to approve support from Belfast City Council ahead of the 15 September deadline. This will involve brokering opportunities and building relationships to support the local demonstrator.

Belfast Inclusive Futures

- 3.14 In May Committee approved a 'dialogue series' to inform new thinking on inclusive growth opportunities from the Belfast Region City Deal and other investments. Specifically, the series called '*Belfast: Inclusive Futures*' will bring together city leaders (private, public and community) and senior policymakers to build understanding and consensus about the challenges and opportunities that digital technologies represent for our city existing shared commitment to inclusive growth.
- 3.15 Invitations have been issued, including to all Members, for the first in the series which will take place on Tuesday, 16 September at City Hall from 4:30pm. The first speaker is Professor Kate Devlin, Chair-Director of the Digital Futures Institute, King's College, whose research focuses on AI and its benefit to people, communities and society. The sessions will be introduced by the Chair of SP&R and co-hosted by our Chief Executive and the Belfast Innovation Commissioner. This first session will explore the implications of AI and automation across a broad range of social and economic policies associated with 'inclusive growth'. The event aims to encourage a common, pro-active, positive response to the challenges and opportunities.

Smart Cities World Congress 2025

- 3.16 Innovation City Belfast's (ICB) is participating at the Smart Cities World Congress from 4th to 6th November 2025. SCWC is the world's biggest and most influential event for urban innovation. Each year it attracts around 900 cities and 1,000 digital companies, bringing together a powerful ecosystem of leaders from global companies, city governments and funders.
- 3.17 The Belfast Innovation Commissioner, Adrian Johnston, is attending this year on behalf of ICB, which is hosting a Belfast presence as part of the UK Pavilion. The ICB stand at the United Kingdom Pavilion will provide rich opportunities for Belfast partners for networking, the promotion of Belfast's ambition, City Deal Digital innovation investments, the work of our universities, and the success of our innovative companies. (Members should note that Belfast's participation in a Bloomberg city network event last year that directly led to our successful bid to their Mayors Challenge outlined above.)

- 3.18 This year Belfast City Council has been invited by the SCWC organisations to present on inclusive innovation. ICB has also encouraged its members to attend and is making a small number of Congress passes available free of charge. (These normally cost up to €950 each).
- 3.19 Members are asked to approve attendance by two officers from the City Innovation Office to accompany the Innovation Commissioner to this year's Congress.

ESRC Inclusive Innovation city workshop

- 3.20 Members previously approved Belfast City Council's participation in an £85,000 project led by Newcastle University and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Working with the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Oslo and EAFIT University, the project is exploring how City Deal and other place-based innovation investments can better contribute to local inclusive growth outcomes. The project will deliver a policy toolkit, guidance, and inform a future large scale funding bid.
- 3.21 Subsequently, Queen's University's QCAP team and Innovation City Belfast have become part of this work. QCAP received an additional £15,000 from ESRC to become involved.
- 3.22 The first city visit is planned for early December to Medellin. A delegation from Belfast, including community representatives working with QCAP, and the Innovation Commissioner, are planning to attend. This will be an opportunity to share inclusive innovation practice with Medellin city government officials, local community organisations, and business leaders. Return visits to Belfast and to Newcastle Upon Tyne are planned for the new year when representatives from Medellin and Pittsburgh will visit both cities. This will include work with local communities here in Belfast.
- 3.23 Members are asked to approve the participation of an officer from the City Innovation Office in the Medellin visit. Travel costs are included in the project funding. Details of the return visit will be shared with Members in the coming months.

Financial and Resource Implications

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

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

- 3.25 None at present. A successful Bloomberg proposal will be subject to an Equality screening.

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

**Draft response to Department for Communities
Anti-Poverty Strategy Consultation**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to submit for the consideration of Members a draft corporate response to the Department for Communities (DfC) draft Anti-Poverty Strategy consultation.

2.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- i. note the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy being consulted upon – [CLICK LINK](#);
- ii. consider and provide feedback on the draft Council response attached at Appendix 1; and
- iii. agree that the draft Council response, subject to any amendments made by Members, be submitted to DfC.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 The Department for Communities (DfC) recently launched a consultation on a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland, which sets out a proposed framework for addressing poverty in a practical and sustainable manner.
- 3.2 DfC defines poverty as the inability of individuals and households to afford the essentials of life, including food, housing, heating, and other basic needs. It is influenced by factors such as low income, high living costs, employment insecurity, health inequalities, and access to services. When people experience poverty, it can lead to poor mental and physical health, reduced educational outcomes, social isolation, and intergenerational cycles of disadvantage.
- 3.3 This strategy proposes a vision of eradicating poverty sustainably, supported by principles of collaboration, dignity, inclusion, and respect. It is structured around three pillars, each with associated outcomes:
1. Minimising risks;
 2. Minimising impacts; and
 3. Exiting poverty

- 3.4 Key outcomes include improving education and skills, addressing health and disability barriers, supporting vulnerable groups (e.g., ethnic minorities, carers, and children in care), enhancing employment quality, tackling place-based deprivation (e.g., transport poverty and access to green spaces), and promoting civic engagement. The strategy also commits to involving those with lived experience, developing indicators aligned with the Programme for Government, and establishing an Anti-Poverty Strategy Board for oversight.
- 3.5 As part of the recent refresh of the Belfast Agenda, a key and immediate area of concern emerging from key stakeholder groups, community and voluntary sector representatives, citizens, communities of interest, and elected Members was the growing poverty crisis facing the city and communities. There was a strong call to action for community planning partners to work with NICS Departments to move quickly to bring forward immediate and integrated measures to support vulnerable people, alongside helping inform the development of long-term and sustainable approaches and underpinning strategies, policies, and programmes.
- 3.6 There is little doubt that the scale and complexity of challenges, with a dangerous combination of rising living costs, stagnant wages, insecure employment, inadequate access to essential services, and systemic barriers for groups like disabled people, single mothers, and ethnic minorities, could create the perfect storm and push many households further into poverty. These pressures come at a time when many household budgets are already stretched thin, exacerbated by issues such as the two-child benefit limit, long health service waiting times, and in-work poverty. Living in poverty can severely affect a person's life in a wide range of ways, on physical and mental health, household finances, the economy, and ultimately on people's quality of life.
- 3.7 Members will be aware of the significant investment made by the Council over recent years in helping to alleviate the impact of poverty and the cost-of-living crisis, including initiatives aligned with our Inclusive Growth agenda to create a more compassionate city. Officers would highlight the collaboration which has taken place with DfC, and the role of Council working closely with community partners to get significant funding and support to those impacted by poverty across the city. There is no doubt of the effectiveness and impact of central and local government working together with communities in responding together in times of emergency.
- 3.8 While we understand and embrace the fact that its causes are complex and its consequences are multiple, there is an opportunity through community planning to create the environment and bring the key stakeholders together to develop achievable actions. Whilst

immediate and practical interventions and support can be brought forward to help mitigate the effects of poverty, we would commend that a broader and integrated programme and longer-term strategy and associated resources are required to seek to eradicate poverty within Belfast and the wider region.

3.9 Attached at appendix 1 is a proposed draft response which has been informed by feedback received from across Council departments. Overall, the Council supports the strategy's vision, broad areas of focus and outcomes which mirror good practice in terms of prevention approach, supporting those experiencing poverty, and creating pathways out of poverty. However, there are concerns raised in the draft response in relation to the about the absence of any detail on specific actions, timelines, SMART targets, and a robust performance management framework. Some of the key points included in the draft response include e.g.

- Consider adding a fourth pillar on prevention/eradication of poverty;
- The need to develop and embed measurable targets (e.g., reducing child poverty by a specific percentage by 2030)
- The need to ensure clear accountability for delivery through assigning departmental leads.
- Need for multi-year funding to be put in place.
- Adopting a poverty mainstreaming approach with an intersectional lens
- Seek to maximise the opportunities presented through new technologies and inclusive innovation to help understand the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and bring forward new technology and digital solutions to address poverty and reduce inequalities.
- Involvement of lived experience through models like Scotland's Experience Panels
- Establishing an independent Poverty and Inequality Commission
- Enhancing monitoring by disaggregating indicators by Section 75 groups and geography.
- Additional outcomes suggested cover the working poor, dual diagnosis services, transport poverty, green spaces, and civic voice.
- Feedback also emphasises integration with other strategies, co-design with vulnerable groups, and alignment with local initiatives like the Belfast Business Promise for greater synergies and effectiveness.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.10 There are no financial or human resource implications arising directly from this report.

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

- 3.11 There are no equality/ good relations or rural needs implications arising directly from this report.

The Committee:

- (i) noted the draft Anti-Poverty Strategy being consulted upon;
- (ii) approved the draft Council response attached at Appendix 1; and
- (iii) agreed that the draft Council response be submitted to DfC.

Physical Programme and Asset Management

Physical Programme Update

The Director of Property and Projects submitted for the Committee's consideration 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, update on proposed new crematorium at Roselawn, along with updates on capital letters of offer and contracts awarded.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to –

- Capital Programme Movements –
 - Asset Management System – Integrated Work Management System – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary

procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

- **Belfast Stories** - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and update regarding the funding position on the submitted Business Case to the Department for Economy (DfE) as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).
- **Communication Boards in Playgrounds** – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to £170,000.
- **Strangford Playing Fields Enabling Works** - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a maximum allocation of up to £60,000 to allow contractor to be appointed and enabling works to commence.
- **City Hall External Christmas Tree** - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.
- **Basketball Courts** – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.
- **Woodvale Park Sensory Garden** – Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.
- **Musgrave Park Sensory Garden** - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.
- **Under the Bridges** - Agree that the project is moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted* to allow options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

- **Greening and Growing Project - Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme at *Stage 1 – Emerging* to allow a business case to be developed.**
- **New Crematorium – note the scheduled date regarding the dedicated workshop session facilitated by the consultants on the new crematorium project on Thursday, 18th September 2025.**
- **Capital Letters of Offer - to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer.**
- **Contracts awarded in Q1 2025/26 - to note the update in relation to contracts awarded.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 Physical Programme

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 and Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.

3.2 Capital Programme – Proposed Movements

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 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
IT Programme - Asset Management System – Integrated Work Management System	Procurement and implementation of a new Asset Management Integrated Work Management System (IWMS).	Move to Stage 3 – Committed
Belfast Stories	The development of a new world class visitor attraction within the city centre.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed
Communication Boards	Inclusive communication boards in playgrounds.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed with a

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

		maximum budget of £170,000
Strangford Playing Fields Enabling Works	Enabling works for active travel container and gate improvements.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of £60,000
City Hall External Christmas Tree Provision	Consideration of options for replacement of the current Christmas Tree provision in front of the City Hall with an alternative solution.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed
Basketball Courts	Creation and upgrade of basketball courts at five BCC park sites	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Woodvale Park Sensory Garden	New sensory garden facility	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Musgrave Park Sensory Garden	Upgrade to sensory garden	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Under the Bridges	Connectivity, active travel and public realm enhancements under M3 bridges	Move to Stage 2 – Uncommitted
Greening and Growing Project	Biodiversity improvement and sustainable food growing development project at the Waterworks, funded through Shared Island programme.	Add as Stage 1 – Emerging

3.3 IT Programme - Asset Management System – Integrated Work Management System

The project is to procure and implement a new Asset Management Integrated Work Management System (IWMS). A single corporate asset register is fundamental to the management of assets and the Council's ability to take a strategic approach to the planning and use of assets, the management of risk and delivery of value for money and quality. This project is part of the overall IT Programme and a business case has been submitted. *Members are asked to agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme and moved to Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk, pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated. A contract will be awarded based on the most economically advantageous tender received and full commitment to deliver.*

3.4 Belfast Stories

Members will recall that Belfast Stories Outline Business Case (OBC) update was considered by the SP&R Committee in April 2025. Belfast Stories is the Council's flagship project under the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and is due to open in 2030. Positioned as a tourism anchor, Belfast Stories is set to deliver significant economic and social impact for Belfast and beyond, helping to regenerate the city centre and connect the tourism offer to the neighbourhoods. The Committee noted the detailed overview of the OBC following the 5-case model, with the total estimated capital cost of the preferred option at approximately £100m with £35m funded by BCC and £65m by BRCD. Furthermore, it was agreed to submit the Business Case to the Department for Economy (DfE) for £65m funding as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD). *Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and update regarding the funding position referred above.*

3.5 Communication Boards

This project was moved to the Capital Programme at Stage 2 – Uncommitted in May 2025 and was part of the agreed additional local schemes as a consequence of UKSPF. The outline business case has been completed and the project can now progress to delivery stage. *Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum allocation of up to £170,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.*

3.6 Strangford Playing Fields Enabling Works

This project was moved to the Capital Programme at Stage 2 – Uncommitted in April 2025 as part of the additional schemes on the recoup capital monies from UKSPF. The project involves the transfer of two containers (council assets) to Strangford Playing Fields, and the associated enabling works in preparation for the delivery of the containers. It is envisaged that one container will be fitted for bike storage and the other will include a small kitchenette. The project will act as an outdoor classroom/park outreach hub which will improve accessibility and enable further community programming in the park. *Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum allocation of up to £60,000 to allow contractor to be appointed and enabling works to commence. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.*

3.7 City Hall Christmas Tree Provision

In June 2024, the City Hall Christmas Tree Provision project was moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted under the Capital Programme. The City Hall Christmas tree is a major focal point within the City Centre and can set the tone for the city's Christmas celebrations, both for visitors and the local economy. Given issues with the quality and supply of real trees it is proposed to purchase an artificial tree which will be installed from 2026 onwards. A real tree will be installed this year. The Installation - City Hall/ City Hall Grounds Working Group at its meeting on 13th August agreed to recommend this approach to SP&R Committee. *Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with a contract to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.*

3.8 Basketball Courts

This project was added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging in April 2025 as part of the additional schemes from UKSPF. The work includes creation or upgrades of basketball courts at five BCC park sites including Victoria Park, Alderman Tommy Patton Memorial Park, Ormeau Park, Blacks Road Park and Páirc Nua Chollann. *Members are asked to agree that the 'Basketball Courts' project is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.*

3.9 Woodvale Park Sensory Garden

This project was added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging in April 2025, as above, this is part of the agreed additional schemes as a consequence of UKSPF. The work involves creation of a new sensory garden at Woodvale Park. *Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.*

3.10 Musgrave Park Sensory Garden

This project was added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging in April 2025, and it is part of the agreed additional schemes from UKSPF. The work includes refurbishment of the existing Musgrave Park Sensory Garden to provide a greater range of equipment that will improve the play value and accessibility of the facility. As per the three-stage approval process, a strategic

outline case has been submitted. *Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.*

3.11 Under the Bridges

In April 2025, the Under the Bridges project was added at Stage 1 – Emerging under the Capital Programme. This project seeks to improve connectivity through high quality active and sustainable travel corridors, enhanced public realm and amenity space under the M3 bridges. Members will note that this project is in partnership with BHC, DfI, DfC and BCC. Officers are currently working with consultants to develop project concepts and designs. *Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.*

3.12 Greening and Growing Project

This project focuses on biodiversity improvement and sustainable food growing development funded through Shared Island programme at the Waterworks. It will be developed and delivered on site managed by GROW NI community group, in partnership with Belfast City Council and Belfast Healthy Cities. *Members are asked to agree that the project is added to Stage 1 – Emerging to allow the business case to be developed.*

3.13 New Crematorium

Members will recall that on 20th June 2025, the Committee has received an update on proposed new crematorium at Roselawn and agreed to hold a dedicated workshop to inform a Strategic Analysis and Options Appraisal on the proposed project. The date of the workshop is now set on Thursday 18th September 2025. All Members of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Development (SC&CD) Working Group and SP&R Committee are invited and encouraged to attend. *Members are asked to note on the scheduled date regarding the workshop session which will be facilitated by the consultants on the new crematorium project.*

3.14 Capital Letters of Offer

Members are asked to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer in Q1 2025/26 at Appendix 1.

3.15 Contracts Awarded

Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works including services related to works in Q1 2025/26 at Appendix 2.

3.16 Financial and Resource Implications

Financial Implications –

Belfast Stories – up to £35m.

Communication Boards - capital allocation of up to £170,000.

Strangford Playing Fields Enabling Works - capital allocation of up to £60,000.

The Director of Finance has confirmed that these are within the affordability limits of the Council.

Resource Implications – Officer time to deliver.

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

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

The Committee adopted the recommendations.

Asset Management

The Committee:

- (i) St. John Vianney Youth Club – Lease assignment & Deed of Variation to LORAG**
 - Approved the assignment of the existing Lease between the Council and the Trustees of St. John Vianney Youth Club to Lower Ormeau Residents Association Group (LORAG) to ensure continuity of a youth club following the dissolution of the Trustee company.
 - Approved the submission of an application to the Department for Communities to seek approval for a rent at less than best value.
- (ii) John Murray Lockhouse- Disposal of lands to LORAG**
 - Approved the freehold disposal of 0.055 acres of land to be carved out of the existing community garden ground Lease to LORAG to facilitate an extension to the John Murray Lockhouse project.
 - Approved the submission of an application to the Department for Communities to seek approval for a disposal at less than best value.
- (iii) Ulster Hall, 3rd Floor Recording Studio– Renewal of Lease with BBC**

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

- Approved the renewal of the Lease between the Council and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for the recording studio for a term of 5 years from 1 July 2025 at a rent of £3,500 p.a.
- (iv) Hope Street Car Park – Disposal of Land**
 - Approved the disposal of land resulting in the loss of 4 no. car parking spaces to the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company.
- (v) Glor-Na-Mona – New licence at Whiterock Close**
 - Approved a short-term licence for a meanwhile use at lands adjoining Glor-Na-Monas existing premises at Whiterock Close.
 - Approved amendment to the user clause for the current Lease and License to Glor- Na-Mona
 - Approve the proposal that the transaction can progress under delegated authority powers upon receipt of LPS valuation.
- (vi) Port Health Services – Transition arrangements from existing to new facilities**
 - Approved a Licence extension from DAERA to the Council to occupy DAERAs new Point of Entry inspection facility on a long-term basis.
 - Approved a Tenancy at Will from Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC) to the Council to retain the existing inspection facility as an operational contingency on a short-term basis.

Proposal

Benview Community Centre – New Licence

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

That the Committee agrees to reject a new 5-year licence agreement for the use of a portion of Benview Community Centre as a play centre and for use of storage container.

On a vote, twelve Members voted for the proposal and six against and it was declared carried.

Finance, Procurement and Performance

Contracts Update

The Committee:

- approved the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1);
- approved the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 3); and

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

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

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Booking system for cemeteries and crematorium including user licences, Funeral Director portal, Sculptor portal, finance integration, daily csv file extraction	Up to 4 years	£156,000	S McNicholl	License support and maintenance for Plotbox Bereavement Services Management System
Electric upgrade projects	Up to 5 years	£1,500,000	S Grimes	New MTC contract to provide emergency call outs, reactive & response maintenance works & provide call off facility for electrical contractor to carry out planned projects
Electric Gates, Barriers & Bollards maintenance and small works	Up to 5 years	£300,000	S Grimes	Recurring contract which covers callouts, repairs, planned maintenance and small works to electric gates, barriers & bollards systems to all Council properties
Lease of 2x 18T-RCV 4x2 x 18T narrow track 0L10N Electric Bin Lift	Up to 4 months	£35,000	S Leonard	The current lease for the hire of 2 x 18T RCVs contract (T2614) expires on 31/03/26 with no option to renew. A new 4- month interim hire contract required from April 2026 to July 2026 to allow for the continuation of services until the arrival of 2 x 18T RCV vehicles which have been purchased are not due to be

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

				delivered until August 2026.
Collection of environmental water and sediment samples at North Foreshore Site	Up to 3 years	£160,000	S Grimes	The samples are required to be taken, analysed and reported to DAERA / NIEA in accordance with the relevant provisions of The Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997.
Belfast WiFi Service	Up to 5 years	£165,000	S McNicholl	The Belfast WiFi service is required to deliver public WiFi services across over 100 council sites as well as external city centre locations.
Management and delivery of a Belfast Citywide Appeals Service	Up to 4.5 years	£1,215,000	D Sales	Provision of a shared and centralised appeals service, creating a dedicated and specialised service which could efficiently meet the wide range of need for appeals, across the communities of Belfast.
Implementation of a new Service Desk Management solution with Asset Management	Up to 4 years	£380,000	S McNicholl	Replacement of the current inhouse legacy CRM Service Desk system and Asset Management system that is approaching end of life.
Public services hub project delivery	Up to 15 months	£650,000	M McCann	Belfast 5G Innovation Region is a DSIT-funded programme that requires Belfast City Council, on behalf of Belfast Region, to deliver economic benefits in key industries. A public services hub will be delivered on behalf of Belfast City Council as part of this programme.

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

				Approved April 2025 for 11 months. Duration has now been updated.
--	--	--	--	---

Table 2: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason
Fleadh Cheoil Belfast 2026 Volunteer Services	Up to 8 months	£55,610	D Martin	Volunteer Now is the only organisation in NI with experience and capacity of co-ordinating and managing a complex, high profile, volunteering programme of the scale of the Fleadh.	Volunteer Now	3

Table 3: Contract Modifications

Title of Contract	Original Contract Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
<p>T1974 – Security Guarding Services</p> <p>Lot 1 – Manned security guarding</p> <p>Lot 2 – Event stewarding</p> <p>Lot 4 – Keyholding</p> <p>Lot 5 – Mobile Patrol</p>	Up to 4 years	Additional 1 months and £110k	N Largey	<p>An additional 1-month extension of contract to help facilitate the evaluation and award of the new tender and ensure continuity of services including a smooth transition of any new service provider i.e. time for TUPE consultations and transfer.</p> <p>Large number of tender bids received as part of the re-tender exercise which is resulting in the evaluation taking longer to complete. Evaluation and award scheduled to be complete by end of August 25 but a 2-month handover period needs to be allowed for to allow for a potential</p>	<p>Cobra Security Services (Lots 1, 4 & 5)</p> <p>Eventsec (Lot 2)</p>

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

				transfer to a new service provider.	
Review and development of additional H&S processes at Belfast Zoo	Up to 6 months	Additional 6 months and £15,000	D Martin	An extension to the current contract is required due to additional H&S requirements being generated following a HSENI investigation at the Zoo. Being reported as STA as value now exceeds £30k.	Health and Safety Risk Management Consultancy Service

Equality and Good Relations

**Minutes of Shared City Partnership
Meeting on 4th August 2025**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 4th August 2025 including:

Good Relations - Quarter 1 Update

- That Shared City Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report, including the allocation of £170,945.41 in grants through the Good Relations Small Grant Scheme.

Forth Meadow Community Greenway Signage update

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

Peace Plus Local Community Action Plan (LCAP) Mobilisation Update

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

Peace Plus Thriving and Peaceful Communities Thematic Update

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

Peace Plus Celebrating Culture and Diversity Thematic Update

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

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

Peace Plus Processes Update

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

Update from Partnership Members

- A Member advised the Partnership of an upcoming event entitled “Re-imagining Peace” which would take place in the City Hall on Monday, 29th September.
- A further Member reported that an event marking the International Day of Peace and promoting shared space would be taking place at Alexandra Park on Sunday, 21st September 2025.

Any Other Business

- The Chair welcomed the new Faith representative, Rev. Graeme Kennedy, who was taking over from Fr. Martin Magill and thanked Fr. Magill for all of his input over the last year.

Operational Issues

**Minutes of the Party Group
Leaders Consultative Forum**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum of 14th August 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
Active Communities Network	29 September 2025	ACN Way Project Celebration A celebration event alongside facilitated discussion of the ACN Way Project. The UK wide project helps grassroots organisations to become more sustainable and for leaders to develop their skills and confidence	D	Current rate free as Charity	

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

		Numbers attending – 150			
Arts Ekta	6 October 2025	Garba Night 2025 is an annual celebration which brings the spirit of the Indian festival of Navratri to life through traditional music, dance, and cultural exchange. Numbers attending – 370	D	Current rate free as Charity	
Ashton Community Trust	14 October 2025	PEACEPLUS Health & Wellbeing Project Launch Celebration with speeches, showcase of project and light catering Numbers attending - 50	D	Current rate free as Charity	
Ulster Scots Agency	29 November 2025	Belfast Tartan Tay Reception is the culmination of a series of events to celebrate and mark Ulster-Scots Language Week. Reception of refreshments and musical performances will follow a parade in city centre. Numbers attending – 450	C	Room hire £450	
Department for Communities	2 December 2025	International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPWD) and celebration of Sean Fitzsimmons, internationally known disability rights advocate and developer of	C	Room hire £450	

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

		<p>'Embrace the Inclusive Spirit'. Lunch, Presentations and speeches.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 70/100</p>			
South Belfast Youth Football League	12 December 2025	<p>10th Anniversary Celebratory Christmas Dinner. SBYL have supported young people with learning difficulties, disabilities and additional needs pensioners and the most vulnerable in society for 10 years.</p> <p>Numbers attending - 200</p>	C & D	Current rate free as Voluntary Community Group	
British Council	16 December 2025	<p>Schools COP30 British Council schools debate event engages students (aged 16-18) from approx. 30 schools in Northern Ireland to debate live and topical COP30 issues through a climate negotiation simulation.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 150</p>	D	Current rate free as Charity	
Cruse Bereavement Support	21 December 2025	<p>Light Up the Night – An Occasion to Remember commemoration event to support recently bereaved within community with reflective music, poetry and speeches.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 400</p>	D	Current rate free as Charity	

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

**Request for use of City Hall grounds
for two events in Autumn 2025**

The Committee was reminded that requests for the use of City Hall and the grounds 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 requests set out below falls into this category.

PWC Sleep-Out for Homelessness Awareness 26th September 2025

PWC had held similar events on 20th October 2023 and on 27th September 2024 and the events were successful with no incidents, hence PWC requesting a third event.

The proposed sleep-out would take place along the West façade of City Hall, with around 50 participants sleeping overnight on the pathways, ensuring a safe distance from the intruder alarms situated along façade. Their preference was concrete rather than the grass lawns. The City Hall building and grounds would be closed to the public as normal at this time. The only Infrastructure onsite would be portaloos, no catering provision was planned, and participants would bring their own sleeping materials. A wet weather alternative was not available inside the City Hall. PWC staff would fundraise in advance of the event and monies raised would be donated to charities helping with homelessness.

A Belfast One Halloween 25th – 26th October 2025

Belfast One had held similar events on 28th and 29th October 2023 and on 26th and 27th October 2024 and the events were successful with no incidents, hence Belfast One was requesting a third event.

The event would be aimed towards families celebrating Halloween, with a pumpkin patch on the west lawn with a few novelties throughout such as scarecrows. The event would be ticketed online and at the gate, allowing for restricted flow throughout the day, with an allowance of 80 guests per half hour to avoid overcrowding. It would be designed with a route through the patch with an entrance and exit on opposite sides to stop congestion and limit lawn damage, with mats in place to help mitigate damage also. There would be some additional entertainment throughout the day such as characters animation. The set-up would be facilitated from the afternoon of the 24 October 2025. The event intended to support wider activity across the City Centre. A report outlining Council funding for this event and associated city-wide activity was presented to City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 6th August by the Culture and Tourism Unit.

In respect of the PWC request, it should be noted that the city centre was very busy on Friday evenings and therefore there might be a requirement for the organiser to pay for additional security depending upon the event management plan and risk assessment.

There would be no costs to the Council for both these requests as the various organisers would bear any/all stewarding and equipment costs etc. themselves. The normal event support in the form of electrical and water provision in the grounds was not required for either of these events. There were no concerns from an asset management point of view,

**Strategic Policy and Resources Committee,
Friday, 22nd August, 2025**

although the organisers would be required to provide the usual insurances, indemnities, and obligations.

The Committee authorised:

1. the use of City Hall grounds on the dates noted above; and
2. the events to take place on the basis of the submission of an event management plan and risk assessment to ensure delivery of a safe public events.

**Minutes of the meeting of the City Hall/City
Hall Grounds Installations Working Group**

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group of 13th August 2025.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 5th August, 2025

MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor R. Brooks (Chairperson);
Councillors Abernethy, Black, Bower,
Bradley, Bunting, Canavan, Cobain, Collins,
M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly, Doran, Flynn,
Garrett, Magee, Maghie, Murray, McKeown
and Verner.

Also in attendance: Alderman McCullough and Councillor de Faoite.

In attendance: 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;
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building
Control; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and
Governance Co-ordinator.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July.

Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 2.b) EVAWG - additional in year Local Community Fund allocation, Councillors R-M Donnelly, Doran, and Murray declared an interest in that their employers had applied for the fund and left the meeting whilst this item was being considered.

Councillors Verner, Doran, M. Donnelly declared an interest under item 5.e) Department of Communities (DfC) Letter of Offer Community Support Programme 2025-2026, in that their employers had applied for the support programme. Under the same item, Councillor Canavan declared an interest in that she was a board member of Blackie River Community Group which had applied for the fund. The Councillors left the meeting whilst this item was being considered.

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

Financial Reporting - Quarter 4 2024/25

The Committee noted the year-end report and the associated financial reporting pack.

End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) - additional in year Local Community Fund allocation

The Committee was provided with an update on the EVAWG contracts from The Executive Office and the Tier 1 grants which had been awarded.

During discussion, Members highlighted the importance of spike testing and requested an overview of the EVAWG work being undertaken across the Council.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. Noted the recipients of Tier 1 grant awards approved under delegated authority by the Operational Director of Neighbourhood Services;
- ii. Noted the potential for further in-year financial support in response to correspondence to TEO seeking additional resources to meet the demand for community led EVAWG local change projects;
- iii. Agreed the proposed approach to allocate any additional Momentum fund, Local Change Fund grant support and additional in-year allocations for the Regional Change Fund;
- iv. Agreed that officers review the current Policing and Community Safety Partnerships programme support of spike testing and whether there was an opportunity/need to increase the provision as part of the draft momentum programme; and

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

- v. Agreed that a summary of council wide EVAWG activity be provided at a future meeting.

Additional Item - GLL Update

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services advised that notification had been received from GLL Trade Unions in relation to planned strike action.

The Committee noted the information provided and that further updates would be provided to the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum, together with the Member request for the Trade Union to present to the Committee.

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

(Alderman McCullough was in attendance for this item)

Notice of Motion - Safeguarding Belfast's Playparks

The Committee deferred consideration of the motion to allow further information to be provided to the Party Group Leaders' Consultative Forum on the consultation and policy process.

Notice of Motion - Support for Endometriosis Patients

The Committee considered the notice of motion which, in accordance with Standing Order 13 (f), had been referred for consideration by the Standards and Business Committee at its meeting on 24th June.

The Committee agreed to adopt the undernoted motion, which was moved at the meeting by Councillor Collins and seconded by Councillor Groogan:

"This Council notes that 1 in 10 women suffer from endometriosis: the second most common gynaecological condition. Endometriosis is a chronic and life changing condition. Despite this, waiting times for endometriosis treatment in the North has been labelled 'shocking' by Endometriosis UK. Women often have to wait years for an NHS diagnosis and can be waiting up to 7 years for life changing surgery. The Department of Health figures show that the total number of women waiting for a gynaecology outpatient appointment here has more than double in seven years, yet the north remains the only part of the UK and Ireland without a specialist endometriosis centre available through the public health service. Those unable to afford private care are forced to wait years for NHS treatment, enduring avoidable pain that inhibits their quality of life. This Council will write to the Belfast Health Trust and the Health Minister to outline these concerns and request urgent investment to bolster NHS support and reduce waiting times for endometriosis patients. This Council also notes the wider lack of awareness around endometriosis and other female health related illnesses. This Council therefore commits to organising a public workshop in Belfast City Hall to help end the stigma around

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

endometriosis. This Council will invite statutory health bodies, women's health campaign groups, elected members, Council staff and members of the public to attend and participate in this event, to raise awareness, and build support for patients of this illness."

The Committee agreed to write to the Belfast Health Trust and the Health Minister as set out in the motion with the additional request for information on patient referrals for treatment in other parts of the UK.

The Committee noted that a subsequent report would be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications.

**Notice of Motion - Stranded Dream
Report – Anaka Women's Collective**

The Committee considered the notice of motion which, in accordance with Standing Order 13 (f), had been referred for consideration by the Standards and Business Committee at its meeting on 24th June.

The Committee agreed to adopt the undernoted motion, which was moved at the meeting by Councillor Murray and seconded by Councillor Bower:

"This Council endorses the Stranded Dreams report launched by Anaka Women's Collective on the need for targeted education provision for young refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland and agrees to write to the Ministers of Economy and Education to outline our support for the recommendations, including a pilot scheme for the Greater Belfast area."

The Committee agreed to write to the Ministers of Economy and Education as outlined in the motion.

Committee/Strategic Issues

Dates and Times of Future Meetings in 2025

The Committee was advised that the schedule for meetings in 2025 was unable to be amended. It was reported that the planned meeting dates for 2026 would be presented in due course and officers would identify suitable dates within that schedule to ensure that the Council and Committee meetings would not take place on successive evenings.

Noted.

Notice of Motion Update - August 2025

The Committee were provided with an overview of the progress on those Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which remained open following the February 2025 update, and those Motions and Issues which had since arisen.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

It was reported that there were currently 36 active Notices of Motion and Issues Raised in Advance which the People and Communities Committee was responsible for and the following motions had been recommended for closure:

Category 1

- Cleansing Task Force (Ref 255)
- Corey Jack Memorial Park (Ref 286)
- Secure Needle/Drug Waste Bins (Ref 345)
- Signage at Finaghy Community Centre (Ref 353)
- Signage at Ruby Murray Park (Ref 362)
- Books for Refugee Children Living Across Belfast (Ref 389)
- Erection of Memorial Tree – Ruby Murray Village (Ref 428)
- Family Parking at GLL Leisure Centres (Ref 430)
- Returning of Black Bins to Properties (Ref 445)

Category 2

- Creating Better Access into the Hills (Ref 145) and Belfast Hills 'Call to Action' Document (Ref 161)
- Memorial at Former Workhouse Burial Site – Donegall Road (Ref 436)

During discussion, Members suggested that two of the motions should remain open so that further work could be undertaken.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- Noted the updates to all Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance that People and Communities Committee is responsible for as referenced in Appendix 1; and
- Agreed that the following motions should remain open: Returning of Black Bins to Properties (Ref 445) and Family Parking at GLL Leisure Centres (Ref 430) to allow further reports to be submitted to the Committee on the issues raised;
- Agreed to the closure of the remaining 10 Notices of Motion / Issues Raised in Advance, as recommended in paragraph 3.5 of the report; and
- Requested an update on motion Provision of toilet facilities at Falls Park (Ref 387) to include Woodvale Park provision.

**Consultation Update - proposed new rules
for the sale and supply of puppies and
kittens in Northern Ireland**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To make Members aware that The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has launched a public consultation on proposed new rules for the sale and supply of puppies and kittens in Northern Ireland. The consultation was launched on 2nd June 2025 and closes, for councils, on Monday 15th September 2025.

1.2 Summary of the Proposals

1.3 All persons seeking to:

- sell;
- give away; or
- otherwise transfer ownership

of a puppy or kitten (under six months old) will be required to apply to their local council to be entered onto the Register of Sellers and Suppliers of Puppies and Kittens. Registration will be valid for one year and will have conditions attached.

1.4 Applicants will be required to:

- pay a fee, which will be set by the council and will be nil for the first year (for any non-businesses);
- prove that they are the keeper of the mother of the puppies, by producing proof of a valid dog licence for the puppies' mother, or by producing proof of a valid licence to keep a dog breeding establishment or a pet shop where the mother of the puppy is kept;
- declare that they are the keeper of the mother of the kittens; and
- comply with the conditions of registration.

1.5 Councils:

- will not be required to carry out an inspection;
- will have powers to suspend, vary or revoke a registration;
- will have powers to inspect an address; and
- will have powers to take samples from animals for traceability purposes.

- 1.6 Whilst Council would welcome any legislation to improve animal welfare, we do not agree that Councils or other bodies should be required to take on this new legal requirement for puppies and kittens to be registered without a more robust and transparent assessment of the regulatory and financial impacts being assessed and laid out as part of the consultation with Councils or the impacts on rate payers

2.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to agree the proposed consultation response as attached in Appendix 5 and to agree to officers forwarding the response to the Department by the closing date of 15th September 2025 and advising it remains draft and subject to full Council ratification after the call in period of the September Council.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (the Department) is seeking views on a proposal to introduce a registration system for persons selling, giving away, or otherwise transferring ownership of puppies and kittens aged under six months old.
- 3.2 A key objective of the Department is to end third-party sales of puppies and kittens. A third-party sale is a sale that occurs when the seller has not bred the animal themselves but has obtained the puppy or kitten from a breeder so that they can sell it onwards.
- 3.3 Whilst we welcome any legislation to improve animal welfare, we do not agree that councils (or other organisations), should be required to take on this new legal requirement for puppies and kittens to be registered without a more robust and transparent assessment of the regulatory and financial impacts being assessed and laid out as part of the consultation with Councils / rate payers.
- 3.4 It is suggested that other alternative organisations should also be explored around the delivery of this new requirement, not excluding the Department themselves. for e.g. USPCA and other animal charities. We also advocate that a centralised register is created and maintained for NI hence one Department (DAERA) or central lead organisation would help facilitate this role. It is noted that the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine are responsible for a registration scheme in ROI.

3.5 Furthermore, it is our view that other reforms need to be addressed prior to the introduction of the proposed registration regime, and that the review of dog breeding legislation and the regulation of rescue and rehoming centres remain the priority.

3.6 Other key points made in the response:

- Officers from Councils have met with DAERA to strongly advise of our concerns of the difficulty of enforcing the proposed legislative provisions, e.g. the possible need for inspections, response to complaints, and possible litigation, criminalising individuals where there are no animal welfare offences. Council feels and legislation is especially difficult to enforce in relation to cats/kittens given their roaming nature.
- Enforcement responsibilities being devolved to local Government without a more robust, transparent and appropriate assessment to rate payers of the corresponding resources, funding assessment and transfer from DAERA, powers or legal protections.
- Costs impacts include need for investment by rate payers in a new IT system, new administration costs and recurring costs, a business support role around servicing a public facing register, new staff costs etc
- Ongoing litigation with the Department on the withdrawal of funding for Animal Welfare to Councils.
- Councils are still dealing with the new legislation on XL bully safeguards and incurring non-budgeted and on going costs, which the Department expected to be absorbed by rate payers, the legislation still impacts on day to day Dog Warden service capacity.

3.4 Financial and Resource Implications

The Department has completed a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) (See Appendix 2). There are significant concerns about the potential financial and resource implications of these proposals and our concerns have been highlighted throughout our response to the consultation.

3.8 Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment

The Department has completed an Equality and Disability Screening Exercise (See Appendix 3) and a Rural Needs

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

Impact Assessment (RNIA) (See Appendix 4). We have made comments on both in our responses to Questions 15 and 16.”

During discussion, several Members raised concern in relation to lack of funding for the enforcement of the issues raised and the amount of time it has taken for the proposal to come forward after the inception of Lucy's Law.

The following additions were suggested by the Committee:

- Emphasis on the scale of the resource challenge the Council would face;
- A clear and direct call for DAERA to provide dedicated funding for enforcement of the proposals;
- Concern that the emphasis was on the Council to deliver the scheme but did not hold the powers to set license fees;
- Concern that the delivery of such a scheme would impact enforcement resource, thus, mandatory inspections for breeders needed to be funded;
- The difficulty of enforcement across 11 Council areas versus a centralised approach; and
- The issue of the smuggling of kittens and puppies also needed to be emphasised.

After discussion, the Committee:

- Agreed the proposed consultation response (Appendix 5) and the inclusion of the additional aforementioned points raised by the Committee; and
- Agreed that officers forward the response to the Department by the closing date of 15th September, 2025 and advise that it remained a draft response, subject to full Council ratification and call in period of the September Council.

**Forth Meadow Community Greenway Opening
Hours and Opening Hours Pilots (5 Park Sites)
- Consultation Findings**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

- 1.1 To update Members on key findings of two community consultation exercises - Forthmeadow Community**

Greenway Opening Hours Consultation, and Opening Hours Pilots (5 park sites) consultation exercise and agree next steps.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note key findings for both consultation exercises and consider and approve next steps as follows.**

Forthmeadow Greenway

- Note resident feedback and opening hours preference for each section/site
- Note comments on programming or further physical enhancements to the FMG
- Consider trialling alternative gate opening hours (24/7 or other) for any of section/sites within the Greenway for a one-year period; or alternatively agree to officers formalising standard dawn-to-dusk opening hours into the Greenways By-Laws

Opening Hours Pilots

- Note resident feedback on each of the 5 park sites, including combined feedback on Falls Park from both consultation exercises
- Note the need for artificial lighting and additional security to ensure park safety were highlighted as barriers/concerns to extended opening hours across all five park surveys.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 Members will recall that at P&C Committee on 14th January 2025 [see Appendix 1] officer's updated on planned consultation exercise into residents views on the opening hours of the Forth Meadow Greenway, as well as a separate consultation exercise - Opening Hour Pilots at 4 park sites (Botanic gardens, Falls Park, Ormeau Park and Woodvale Park). The inclusion of a further site, Belmont Park, was agreed at this time.**
- 3.2 Since its construction the Forthmeadow Community Greenway, as well as the 5 Park sites that are the focus of the Opening hours consultation follow Council's standard 'dawn (7.30am at earliest) to dusk (10pm at latest)' opening hours pattern with times changing throughout the seasons as daylight lengthens or shortens. This report sets out the findings of both consultation exercises on extending**

Greenway gates/ parks opening, and sets out associated recommendations for Member's further consideration and agreement.

3.3 Forthmeadow Community Greenway Opening Hours Consultation

3.3 Officers ran an open survey on Council's Your Say platform from 15th January to 27th February 2025 and held three drop-in sessions in late January at Highfield Community Centre, Springfield Park (Dam) and Falls Park Bowling Pavilion. The aim of the consultation was to capture residents' views on 24 hour /7 day a week (24/7) opening of 14 gates across the Greenway that connect on to its main lit spine, as well as any other suggestions relating to the opening hours of individual gates. It was also an opportunity to get view on concerns/ barriers to supporting and suggested programming/activities and further physical improvements required to facilitate extended hours of use.

3.4 The consultation was promoted through Council's social media pages and communications to a range of stakeholders including local resident groups, environmental groups, community groups and elected members. In addition to the erection of posters (that included QR codes linking to the survey) in the local community facilities and at entrances to the Greenway, at Member's request, an additional leaflet drop took place within residential areas in proximity to the Greenway. Whilst only two of the drop-in sessions were well attended, the online survey inviting views on 24/7 opening of 14 gates on the Greenway that connect directly onto its lit spine/pathway, attracted 156 responses.

3.6 Findings

Consultation feedback confirmed community preference for existing operational hours pattern to be retained for all sections, with the exception of Glencairn Park to Forthriver Linear Park Section (Forthriver Crescent and Forthriver Road gate) where views on 24/7 opening were mixed. The overwhelming reason given by respondents for not supporting of 24/7 opening was anti-social behaviour and safety concerns.

3.7 14 alternative suggestions were made in relation to opening the various sections of the Greenway 24/7. These included retaining existing dawn to dusk opening (5), and closing later in the evening [during wintertime] 9pm (4), 9/10pm (1) and 8pm (3). 85 comments on programming or further

physical enhancements were received ranging from cycling, (dog) walking/ running groups to enhanced lighting to improve safety and exercise/outdoor gym facilities.

- 3.8 An overview of the consultation findings for each section are summarised in the table below, and a detailed analysis of feedback on each gate within is within ‘Appendix 1 – Forthmeadow Greenway Consultation – Detailed Analysis’

Section Gates Consulted Upon	Consultation Finding
Section 1 - Glencairn Park to Forthriver Linear Park	Overall respondents were not opposed to both pedestrian gates consulted upon remaining open 24/7 (over 56% in favour or undecided for each gate); however out of those recorded as living in close proximity to this Section (5 minutes’ walk or less away) – half (50%) were against Forthmeadow Crescent gate remaining open 24/7.
Section 2 - Ballygomartin Road to Springfield Road	Respondents overall, and those living in close proximity to the section, were marginally against the two pedestrian gates consulted upon in this part of the Greenway remaining open 24/7. (48% of respondents overall & 56% of those living 5 mins walk away from the Section were against)
Section 3 – Springfield Park (Dam) to Falls Park	<p><u>Springfield Dam</u> Respondents overall, including those living in close proximity to Springfield Dam, were against the three pedestrian gates and one vehicular gate within the site remaining open 24/7.</p> <p><u>Falls Park</u> Respondents overall, including those specifically living in close proximity to Falls Park, were against the two pedestrian and one vehicular gate consulted on within the Falls Park site remaining open 24/7. <i>Note: Falls Parks gate opening hours were subject of both consultation exercises.</i></p>
Section 4 - Bog Meadows Nature Reserve	Respondents overall, including those living in close proximity to the section, were against the two pedestrian gates and one vehicular gate in this section remaining open 24/7 (59% against); however the 31 residents recorded as living in close proximity to this section (5 minutes’ walk or less away) – were marginally in favour or undecided (52%) about the Donegall Road (Broadway) pedestrian gate remaining open 24/7.

3.9 Opening Hours Pilots Consultation (5 park sites)

Officers ran an open survey on Council's Your Say platform from 19th February 2025 to 16th April 2025 and held five drop-in engagement sessions - one at each of the park sites throughout March and April. The aim of the consultation was to capture residents' views on extending opening hours of the parks. Similarly to the previous consultation exercise, it was also an opportunity to get views on concerns/ barriers to supporting, suggested programming/activities and further physical improvements required to facilitate extended hours of use.

- 3.10** The consultation was promoted on Council's social media pages and through communications to a range of stakeholders including local resident groups, environmental groups, community groups and elected members. In addition to the erection of posters in the local community facilities and at entrances, (all included QR codes linking to the survey) - a leaflet drop took place within residential areas in close proximity to each of the park sites and banners were erected within the parks.
- 3.11** The 5 online surveys inviting views on extending opening hours at each of the park sites attracted a total of 1678 responses overall, which are broken down as follows: Botanic Gardens (652), Ormeau Park (593), Woodvale Park (308), with smaller levels of interest for both Belmont Park (51) and Falls Park (47) - however the combined number of responses for Falls Park across both consultation exercises was 203.
- 3.12** Consultation feedback has confirmed community support for extended park opening hours at Botanic Gardens (70% in favour, 4% undecided), Ormeau Park (70% in favour, 3% undecided), and Belmont Park (71% in favour 6% undecided). Across these sites the most favoured opening hours pattern was overwhelmingly 24/7 opening however there were a number of concerns were raised in relation safety and ASB and the need for more security to facilitate extended use. The need for artificial lighting to ensure park safety was highlighted as the main physical barrier to extended opening hours across all park surveys. Concern over the impact of artificial lighting on wildlife was a theme across all park surveys, with the need for ecological assessments and use of wildlife/bat friendly lighting suggested by a number of respondents.
- 3.13** Although there was support for Fall Parks' opening hours being extended, this was not in line with the views of the

majority of overall respondents for both consultation exercise including to the more detailed Forthmeadow Greenway (FMG) consultation. Overall circa 58% of the 203 respondents for both consultation exercises were against changes to opening hours of specific gates/ park in general. There was no clear support for extending the opening hours of Woodvale Park (65% against) at this time with the main reason being ASB concerns. Detailed analysis of all park surveys are found in Appendix 3 – ‘Parks Opening Hours Consultation – Detailed Analysis (5 sites)’, and an overview of Falls Park’s finding in Appendix – 4 ‘Falls Park Combined Analysis’.

- 3.14 The requirement for artificial lighting to facilitate extended park use and ensure safety during darker hours was raised a total of 956 times across all surveys. Members are reminded that the installation of any new lighting infrastructure would require significant capital investment, and that any requests for lighting schemes to be considered for any sites must be directed through to Council’s Capital Programme for progression through standard stages. This will also be an opportunity for ecological assessments to be carried out in respect to potential gate/route options, and for wildlife friendly lighting options and any associated path improvements that may be required to be explored.

3.15 Financial and Resource Implications

There is currently no revenue budget in place to support any potential animation and patrolling of the Forthmeadow Community Greenway or any of the pilot parks should their opening hours be extended. There is currently no budget in place to fund any requests for lighting schemes at the park sites or any other physical enhancements along FMG. These would be required to be taken through the Council’s capital process.

3.16 Equality or Good Relations Implications /
Rural Needs Assessments

There are no Equality or Good Relations Implications /Rural Needs Assessments associated with this report. Both consultation exercises have been equality screened.”

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

Proposal

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

In relation to the recommendation of the Forth Meadow Greenway, the Committee agrees to the trialling alternative gate opening hours (24/7 or other) for any of section/sites within the Greenway for a one-year period.

On a vote, fourteen Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

During discussion of the Opening Hours pilot for Botanic Gardens, Ormeau Park, Woodvale Park, Belmont Park, Falls Park, a range of concerns were raised by the Committee in relation to the survey results, proposed lighting, the protection of wildlife and the need to consider each park separately.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the key findings for both consultation exercises and approved the following next steps:

Forth Meadow Greenway(FMG)

- Noted the resident feedback and opening hours preference for each section/site;
- Noted the comments on programming or further physical enhancements to the FMG;
- Agreed to the trialling alternative gate opening hours (24/7 or other) for any of section/sites within the Greenway for a one-year period.

Opening Hours Pilots

- Deferred consideration of the recommendations to allow further information to be submitted on each park to the Committee in September.

**Heritage Lottery Nature Towns
and Cities Funding Award**

The Committee was reminded that, in October 2024, invitations had been issued for local authorities and other partners to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for funding to build capacity and partnerships, peer networks to share learning and practical solutions and schemes to attract new investment. The total funding pot across the UK was £15 million with a funding limit of £250,000 - £1,000,000 per application.

It was reported that Ulster Wildlife, in partnership with the Council and other key stakeholders, submitted an Expression of Interest and the Belfast bid had been successful at stage 3.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

Subsequently, in July 2025 the project was awarded £850,514 through the initiative. This was 92% of the total approved Project cost of £924,418, with in kind contributions from the Council and Ulster Wildlife totalling £73,904 (£59,531 Council funding and £14,373 Ulster Wildlife funding) made up of in kind staff time to manage the project and oversee recruitment.

The Committee considered the Project Overview to develop a shared, co-designed vision and associated set of plans and mechanisms for nature's recovery for the city of Belfast and key surrounding areas, including the Lagan Valley Regional Park and the Belfast Hills. The project would build on existing initiatives, such as the Future of Northern Ireland's Urban Green Spaces' report, work undertaken on Nature Recovery Networks (NRNS) and Belfast 2024.

During discussion, the Committee welcomed the Heritage Lottery Nature Towns and Cities Funding Award.

The Committee:

- noted the contents of the report;
- agreed to the signing of the letter of offer; and
- noted that a further report would be submitted for approval outlining the scope of the project.

Operational Issues

Food Service delivery plan

The Committee was reminded that the Food Standards Agency, in their monitoring and oversight role, required all NI District Councils to prepare an annual Food Service Delivery Plan which sets out the Council's key functions and planned activities for delivery of food hygiene, food standards and other food safety related responsibilities.

The Committee considered the [City Council's draft Food Service Delivery Plan](#) for the 2025/26 year to be submitted to the Food Standards Agency for review.

The Committee approved the draft Belfast City Council Food Service Delivery Plan 2025-2026.

Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report / Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the council is required, as a consequence of the cycle of reporting for Northern Ireland, established via Table 1-2 of the Department for Environment,**

Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance LAQM.TG(22), to provide either an annual Progress Report or Updating and Screening Assessment (USA) to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), detailing the status of ambient air quality for the Belfast City Council area, together with progress on implementation of the local air quality management regime, and on achieving or maintaining ambient air pollution concentrations below the respective air quality objective levels for human health, as detailed within the 2007 Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

- 1.2 Members are advised that for 2025, the council was required to provide a Progress Report to DAERA by 30th June 2025. An extension to the submission deadline until mid-August 2025 has, however, been obtained to allow the 2025 Progress Report to be considered at the People and Communities Committee and for any necessary revisions to be made, prior to the Progress Report being submitted to DAERA for technical appraisal. Accepted 2025 Progress Reports will be made available to the public later this year on the DAERA NI Air website, via the following weblink: <https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/reports/district-council-reports-1>
- 1.3 By way of clarity, Defra have advised that Progress Reports are intended to provide continuity within the local air quality management system, filling gaps between the three-yearly requirement to undertake an Updating and Screening Assessment, whereas Updating and Screening Assessments are intended to identify any significant changes in local ambient air quality that may have occurred since the previous rounds of Review and Assessment were completed.
- 1.4 Accordingly, Members are advised that this Committee report serves to provide context to, and an overview of the Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report.
- 2.0 Recommendation
- 2.1 The Committee is requested to review the attached Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report (Appendix A) and to recommend that the Report be submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs' (DAERA) independent technical appraisers by the revised submission deadline of mid-August 2025.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members are advised that to ensure standardisation of approach, and in accordance with requirements detailed within LAQM.TG(22), the Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report has been developed by populating the Defra 2025 Northern Ireland Progress Report Template.

3.2 Accordingly, the Defra 2025 Northern Ireland Progress Report Template requires councils to report on:

- New ambient air quality monitoring data, to include a summary of all monitoring undertaken and a comparison of monitoring results with the air quality objectives (Section 2);
- New local developments that are of a scale or function such that may have an effect on ambient air quality (to include road traffic or other transport sources, industrial sources, commercial and domestic sources, and new developments that comprise fugitive or uncontrolled sources) (Section 3);
- Recent planning applications that the council has been consulted upon by the Planning Authority, where some form of planning condition or other control may have been necessary in order to manage ambient air quality impacts (Section 4);
- Planning policies designed to manage ambient air quality (Section 5);
- Local transport plans and policies (Section 6);
- Climate change strategies (Section 7);
- Progress with implementation of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021 – 2026 (Section 8) and;
- Conclusions and proposed actions (Section 9).

3.3 Members will be aware that Belfast City Council continues to maintain four Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the city, declared for exceedances of nitrogen dioxide annual and 1-hour mean objectives, and encompassing major arterial road transport routes into and out of the city. Details of these AQMAs and their declarations are provided within '*Section 1.4 Summary of Previous Review and Assessments*' of the 2025 Progress Report.

3.4 With regard to new ambient air quality monitoring data, the Committee is advised that Section 2 of the 2025 Progress Report presents and considers new monitoring data for the 2024 monitoring year. During 2024, the council continued to operate four automatic roadside monitoring sites for

nitrogen dioxide at Stockmans Lane, the A12 Westlink at Roden Street, the Ormeau Road and the Upper Newtownards Road at Ballyhackamore. There is a further automatic urban background monitoring site operated by the Environment Agency, located in Belfast city centre at Lombard Street. There were no exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide annual, or 1-hour mean objectives recorded at any of these monitoring sites during 2024. Indeed, monitored annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations during 2024 were comfortably below the 40 mgm^{-3} objective level at all of these monitoring sites, with the highest nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration of 33.3 mgm^{-3} recorded at the Stockmans Lane roadside monitoring site. Moreover, annual and 1-hour mean concentrations have now been below the respective objective levels for a number of years at all of these sites, as evidenced in Table 2.3 of the 2025 Progress Report.

- 3.5 In addition to its automatic monitoring sites for nitrogen dioxide, the council has also placed 80 nitrogen dioxide diffusion tubes at 72 human health receptor locations across the city during 2024. 2024 monitoring data for these diffusion tubes is summarised in Table 2.5 of the 2025 Progress Report, along with preceding years historical data, where available, in Table 2.6.
- 3.6 During 2024, there was only 1 monitored exceedance of the 40 mgm^{-3} nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective, recorded at diffusion tube monitoring site No. 106 (41.3 mgm^{-3}), situated adjacent to new residential student accommodation, located at the junction of the M3 Motorway off slip with Nelson Street and the A12 Westlink. However, when this annual mean concentration was corrected for distance to the façade of the residential student premises, the resultant annual mean concentration of 31.4 mgm^{-3} was determined to be in compliance with the 40 mgm^{-3} nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective. Members will appreciate that for the purposes of local air quality management, regulations state that exceedances of ambient air quality objectives should be assessed in relation to the quality of air at locations that are situated outside of buildings or other natural or man-made structures, above or below ground, and where members of the public are regularly present. Accordingly, examples of where air quality objectives should apply are detailed in Box 1.1 of LAQM.TG(22).
- 3.7 Diffusion tube monitoring site No. 70 at Henry Place, located further along the A12 Westlink, which had exceeded the 40 mgm^{-3} nitrogen dioxide annual mean objective in previous monitoring years, returned a 2024 annual mean

nitrogen dioxide concentration of 39.1 mgm^{-3} ; in compliance with the objective. Other elevated monitored nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentrations in 2024 were recorded at Stockmans Lane roundabout (36.2 mgm^{-3}) and further along Stockmans Lane (35.2 mgm^{-3}). These sites were also in compliance with the 40 mgm^{-3} annual mean objective. All other roadside and kerbside diffusion tube monitoring sites across the city were generally within the nitrogen dioxide annual mean concentration range of $20 - 30 \text{ mgm}^{-3}$ during 2024.

- 3.8 No monitored exceedances of any of the objectives for other ambient pollutants, under consideration within the 2025 Progress Report were recorded across the city during 2024, including for particulate matter (PM_{10} and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$), sulphur dioxide (SO_2) and benzene (C_6H_6).
- 3.9 Accordingly, and on the basis of our 2024 monitoring data, the council is content that there are no requirements to either extend or amend the boundaries of any of our four AQMAs at this time.
- 3.10 Within Section 3 of the 2025 Progress Report, we have considered relevant new local developments across the city, to include new road traffic and other transport sources, new industrial sources, new commercial and domestic sources, and new developments with fugitive or uncontrolled emissions. We have consequently concluded that for 2024, there are no new, or newly identified local developments, which may have an appreciably adverse impact upon ambient air quality within the Belfast City Council area.
- 3.11 Within Section 4 of the 2025 Progress Report and in terms of planning applications considered, screening or detailed ambient air quality impact assessments were requested for 16 major developments proposed during 2024, that in the council's view, had the potential to have an adverse impact upon ambient air quality. Table 4.1 of the 2025 Progress Report provides summary details of those planning applications, together with information on any actions taken or mitigation measures introduced.
- 3.12 Section 5 of the 2025 Progress Report provides an overview of local planning policies that may be applied to manage ambient air quality for the city, including the Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP), and associated supplementary planning guidance.
- 3.13 Section 6 of the 2025 Progress Report provides details of local transport plans and associated strategies that may

have an impact on local ambient air quality, including the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035. DfI have acknowledged that a review of economic, social and environmental challenges for the new eastern plan area has confirmed that a number of key overarching themes, reiterated throughout local, regional and national policy documents, are to be reflected within the ETP 2035, including that pollution from vehicles contributes to poor local ambient air quality and the construction of roads and railways can harm the built or natural environment.

- 3.14 Section 7 of the 2025 Progress Report provides details of local climate change strategies and initiatives that may also have beneficial impacts upon ambient air quality, including formation of a Climate and City Resilience Committee, launch of the Belfast Local Area Energy Plan and delivery of the 2025 Climate Action Plan, as well as details of specific initiatives such as implementation of Phase 1 of the Belfast 'One Million Trees' Programme, which sets a target of planting one million trees across the city by 2035.
- 3.15 Section 8 of the 2025 Progress Report provides details of progress with implementation of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026.
- <https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/documents/belfast-city-air-quality-action-plan-2021-2026> Updates have been provided by our competent or relevant authority partners, and by other city bodies and partner organisations on actions taken to improve ambient air quality across Belfast during the Action Plan years of 2021-2026.
- 3.16 Finally, Section 9 of the 2025 Progress Report provides overall conclusions and proposed actions. In terms of conclusions drawn from 2024 monitoring year data and monitoring data for preceding years, and mindful of recommendations arising from previous DAERA appraisal reports, including the 20th November 2024 appraisal report concerning our 2024 Updating and Screening Assessment, that the council should move to revoke AQMA No.2 Cromac Street and Albertbridge Road, AQMA No.3 Upper Newtownards Road and AQMA No.4 Ormeau Road, council air quality officers have referred to the minutes of agenda item '7f Air Quality Updating and Screening Assessment 2024' of the People and Communities Committee meeting of 3rd December 2024.
- 3.17 Accordingly, and on the basis of the Committee decision in respect of agenda item 7f, the 2025 Progress Report advises

that with regard to revoking our AQMAs, at this stage, the council has decided not to move to revoke any of its Air Quality Management Areas, and instead to continue to monitor within its AQMAs and in other city locations in order to work towards further improving ambient air quality, having regard to air quality guidelines for ambient air quality as recommended by the World Health Organisation, in its 2021 Global Air Quality Guidelines: particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide publication.

- 3.18 Members are reminded, however, that with respect to revoking AQMAs, Section 3.57 of LAQM.TG(22) advises that, *‘the revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of compliance with the relevant objective as evidenced through monitoring. Where nitrogen dioxide monitoring is completed using diffusion tubes, to account for the inherent uncertainty associated with the monitoring method, it is recommended that revocation of an AQMA should be considered following three consecutive years of annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations being lower than 36 µgm⁻³ (i.e. within 10% of the annual mean nitrogen dioxide objective). There should not be any declared AQMAs for which compliance with the relevant objective has been achieved for a consecutive five-year period’.*
- 3.19 In addition, the 2025 Progress Report advises that the current air quality monitoring network provides an appropriately detailed representation of ambient air pollution levels for the city and, as a consequence, it is considered that the network does not need to be expanded further at this time. The Progress Report further advises that on an annual basis, council air quality officers will, however, review monitoring locations and relocate monitoring sites to better reflect relevant human health exposure.
- 3.20 In terms of forward actions, the 2025 Progress Report advises that the council will continue to monitor implementation of the Belfast City Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 via at least annual meetings of the Air Quality Action Planning Steering Group, and that we will next report progress with ambient air quality to DAERA via our 30th June 2026 Progress Report.
- 3.21 The 2025 Progress Report finally advises that whilst the current Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026 will continue to deliver further improvements in ambient air quality within our AQMAs and across the city until its conclusion during 2026, it is the council’s intention, in late 2026, to engage with

competent authorities and our city partner organisations concerning development of a new 5-year Air Quality Action Plan for the city covering the period 2027 – 2032.

3.22 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications for the council in the production of this Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report. The Report has been developed from within existing Scientific Unit air quality staff resources.

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

There are no Good Relations Implications or Rural Needs Assessment implications associated with this Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report.”

The Committee:

- noted the Belfast City Council 2025 Air Quality Progress Report ([Appendix A](#)); and
- recommended that the Report be submitted to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs’ (DAERA) independent technical appraisers by the revised submission deadline of mid-August 2025.

Request for Events in our Parks

The Committee considered the request from the All Nation Church for a “March for Jesus” event at Ormeau Park on Saturday, 23rd August, 2025.

The Committee granted authority to the applicants for the proposed event on the date noted, subject to the completion of the appropriate event management plans and satisfactory terms being agreed by the Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on the condition that the Event Organisers:

- I. resolved all operational issues to the Council’s satisfaction;
- II. meets all statutory requirements including Public Liability Insurance cover, Health and Safety, and licensing responsibilities; and
- III. shall consult with adjoining public bodies and local communities as necessary.

The Committee noted that the recommendations were taken as a pre-policy position in advance of the Council agreeing a more structured framework and policy for

'Events', which was currently being taken forward in conjunction with the Councils Commercial team.

The Committee also noted that the event would take place before ratification of the committee decision at September's Council meeting.

Update Report on Overfilled bins and bin liners

The Committee considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To provide an update to members on the work being carried out in relation to the overfilled bins and bin liner collection issues.**

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Key Issues

Members will recall this matter was discussed in June and members requested that updates were presented to P&C Committee at the August and September meetings. This report provides an update to members on progress to date.

- 3.2 It should be noted that Corporate Communications have supported and continue to provide resource to Resources and Fleet through the communications and awareness raising elements of the plan. A summary of that activity is in Appendix A.**

- 3.3 The Project Teams and their Resource Advisor colleagues within Waste Management have produced an engagement plan (Appendix B) based on the Implementation and Communications Plan approved by Council. Key Dates to be noted are as follows:**

- 3.4 Monday 4 August – the beginning of **Amber tagging** bedding in period for 8 weeks. Collections continue as normal (i.e. overfilled bins and bins with liners still collected) with warning tag placed on bins and reporting by crews. Enhanced Resource Advisor Teams on ground raising awareness and messaging. Report it App data will be used to inform the engagement and targeting of resources on the**

ground. It will also be used to measure the impact of the programme during both the amber and red collecting to policy stages.

- 3.5 September P&C Committee – Further update report to members on the impact of the amber phase and the comms and engagement plan. This update will include a summary of the reporting data and highlight problem areas.
- 3.6 Monday 29 September – planned start date for the beginning of **Red tagging** collecting strictly to policy phase. Overfilled containers will be tagged and will not be collected, and instances reported. Temporary additional clear up teams to be engaged Resource Teams, OSS and Enforcement Teams will be deployed to targeting remaining hot spot areas.

Project Team progress as at time of writing of this update report:

3.7 Overfilled Bins – Domestic Waste

The following actions are ongoing or are on schedule to be carried out as detailed

- In order to strengthen the presence of educational and communications on the ground, additional Agency Resource Advisors have been recruited. Staff have received their full day of induction and training and advised on the work required, campaign details and timeframes around communications and engagement..
- The Additional Resource Advisor Staff have been deployed and began operating in Urban Belfast from Monday 21st July. It is envisaged that this early messaging and later engagement will soften the landing of the bedding in and collecting to policy periods.
- Briefing information and FAQs have been prepared and issued to internal stakeholders w/c 21st July. For example, this includes a 2-page collection crew brief with graphics and scenarios.
- Customer Hub have been made aware of timings, comms and sequencing around the campaign and have agreed a bank of FAQs to support any customer engagement around the proposed changes.
- Corporate Comms are preparing a member briefing pack with FAQs supplied. It is planned that these are to be issued on Tuesday 29 July alongside the main press release.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

- The Project team have held briefings with operations managers and assistant managers and their crews.
- Community Outreach team are involved and have compiled a list of locations, areas and activity (e.g. Fresher's week) to support the campaign messaging w/c 21st July. Corp Comms have been included in this and will align their social media messaging to these events and amplify as appropriate. Campaign material has been provided to the Outreach Team to support their engagement.
- Campaign materials, letters, leaflets and posters have been printed and issued to the Resource Advisor Team to support resident engagement.. Example letter included in Appendix C. Engagement will be refined into the hotspot areas where overfilled bins are problematic based on reporting in the amber and red periods. Posters have also been delivered to all community centres and Household Recycling Centres to support the campaign.
- Trade Unions have been updated at the recent Resources and Fleet TU and Resources and Fleet Health and Safety fora. Messaging sent via Firetext to all teams on the ground w/c 21st July to align with other internal messaging and briefings.
- Internal Communications are running an Interlink piece in August and some messaging in community centre screens to inform staff of the campaign, many of whom are residents of Belfast themselves.
- Recent Summer City Matters had a 2-page piece around good bin behaviour and better recycling. The Autumn/Winter edition will also include a piece around the campaign and collecting to policy approach planned from 29th September. The project team have supplied this to Corporate Communications to include in the Autumn/Winter edition.
- Amber and Red Notification tags. An initial order of 40,000 amber tags has been placed, following a procurement exercise, which were circulated to crews and internal stakeholders w/c 21st July. This aligns with crew briefings etc planned for the bedding in period starting 4th August. Red tags will be ordered at end of August in time for Red Tag/Collecting to policy briefings with Waste Collection Operations Management.
- It is recognised that an additional hot spot area response team will be required from when we collect to policy. Planning has commenced to ensure that these posts will be in situ for the collecting to policy phase.

- The Resources Officer and team have been charged with compiling a distribution list of all agents, housing associations and management companies to advise on campaign and the application of the collection policies relating to all containers, including euro bins which are common at apartment blocks. This communication is based on campaign materials and letter to households and it is planned this will be issued w/c 28th July. The team have also arranged for some of the new campaign materials to be translated into alternative language formats to support households whose first language may not be English. The Corporate contract for this service has expired and requires renewal, so the team have went out to quotation for this which may delay the arrival of the translations which ideally would have be in place in advance of 4th August.
- Waste Management Operations have increased stock levels of recycling containers in anticipation of increased demand as a result of the campaign. As the focus is on Urban Belfast, recycling box stock, in particular, has been increased to meet demand for additional or replacement containers. The project team will monitor the impact on orders and work with WM operations to ensure container supply is able to meet demand.

3.8 Overfilled Bins – Commercial Waste

Ongoing and future activities are as follows

- A dedicated data gathering exercise is currently being conducted by the Project Officer with crews/rounds and customers to determine an average % of commercial customers presenting overfilled bins. This is due to be completed by 31st July and will inform any additional resource requirements needed for Support Services to support the Commercial Waste team.
- A4 sized Amber and red stickers will be introduced as majority of customers use large euro bins and tags would be missed. These will reflect the same domestic messaging adapted for commercial customers. These have been designed and ordered to align with crew briefings. Commercial Waste timings will align with domestic actions.
- Support Services have been provided with a template letter to issue to all customers (approximately 3000) advising them of the campaign, the timelines involved and how to avoid overfilled bins. This letter

was issued on the 25th July so customers will receive this info w/c 28 July onwards.

- Further work to refine a reporting procedure for commercial crews when collecting to policy i.e. no report it app use for commercial crews due to no integration with CREST so an alternative will be required to photograph and report Overfilled Bins from 29th September. The Project Team continue to work with Support Services and Comwaste Operations to resolve this issue.

3.9 Bin Liners – Domestic Waste

Activities in relation to Bin Liners are as follows:

- All public messaging around bin liners has been incorporated into the wider messaging around the campaign and aligned to the same timeframes for overfilled bin policy.
- In terms of engagement with cleaning providers, all companies that could be identified as operating in Belfast in April 2025 were contacted. Only one provider, based in Newtownabbey replied with queries. All others were content with the information and approach and didn't think the policy would negatively impact their operations.
- A future generic update email has been drafted to update these providers and will be issued week commencing 28th July. Within the email there will be an offer to receive physical or digital campaign materials, should they feel that this will be of assistance to their client base.
- The Project Officer will continue to engage with the individual company around their outstanding queries.

3.10 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. All costs will be covered from within existing revenue estimates.

3.11 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessments

There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report."

During discussion, the Director of Resources, Fleet, Open Spaces and Streetscene answered a range of questions regarding missed bins, overflowing bins,

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

reporting data and enforcement activity, prosecution information, communication literature in different languages, and fly tipping in alleyways.

In relation to one Member's concern on missed bins and overflowing alleyways in the Belvoir area and Donegall Road area, the Director advised that the issues would be investigated and a site visit would be undertaken, if required.

One Member highlighted missed bin collection issues in the New Lodge, in particular those bins with missing lids and the need for consultation with residents. The Director advised that he was working with the Housing Executive to resolve the issue, to ensure the bins could be collected.

In relation to Member's concern regarding residents' confusion of the new tagging campaign, bulky waste collection services awareness and additional recycling bins availability, he advised that he would liaise with managers and the Communication Team to ensure the messaging was clear.

The Committee:

- Noted the contents of the report;
- Agreed that a report be submitted to the Committee in relation to enforcement activity, prosecution information and a geographical breakdown of problem areas, fly tipping and house clearances, impacting the bin collections.

**Department of Communities (DfC) Letter of
Offer Community Support Programme 2025-2026**

The Committee considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The main purpose of this report is;

- **Inform Members that Council has received the Letter of Offer for the Community Support Programme 2025/26 from the Department for Communities (DfC). The Department has provided an uplift of 9% across certain elements of the programme.**
- **Advise Members that the Chief Executive has accepted the Letter of Offer, subject to Council approval and seek approval for him to accept subsequent Letters of Variance on behalf of the Council.**
- **Seek members' approval to issue further payments to funded organisations upon their completion of monitoring and relevant administrative checks.**

- Seek agreement from members on the option to allocate the additional funding provided based on the detail provided in the report.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to;

- Note the CSP funding allocation of £2,939,450.49 presented in the Letter of Offer from the DfC for the 2025/26 financial year.
- Note that the Chief Executive has accepted the Letter of Offer, subject to Council approval and seek approval for him to accept subsequent Letters of Variance on behalf of the Council.
- Agree option relating to the Community Support General additional funding.
- Agree option for the reprofiling of the budget for Advice and Tribunal services.
- Agree the proposed additional funding allocation for: Community Support General, Advice Grant, Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension-Tribunal Representation and Welfare Reform Mitigations-Face to Face Advice.
- Note the additional funding to Social Supermarket projects based on previous committee decisions.
- Approve that officers progress funding payments where appropriate, following completion of due diligence requirements based on the proposals.

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1** Members will be aware that the Department for Communities (DfC) provides an annual grant to Council through its Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer. This funding provides an element of the budget towards Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Building grant, Summer Scheme Grant as well as Generalist Advice.
- 3.2** The CSP also provides 100% funding for other elements of activity such as Social Supermarkets, Welfare Reform Mitigations and Integrated Advice Partnership Fund (debt related services)
- 3.3** At the March Committee, Officers advised that the Community Support Programme (CSP) Letter of Offer for 25/26 had not yet been received by Council from DfC. At that stage, Members granted approval for officers to progress

funding agreements and provide 50% payments for the Capacity Building, Revenue for Community Building grants and Generalist Advice.

- 3.4 Council received the CSP 2024/25 Letter of Offer from DfC on 13 June 2025. There is an increase to this year's funding across several new and existing elements. Table 1 below presents a breakdown of the allocation for 2025/25 in comparison to 2024/25.

Table 1

Belfast City Council	2025/26	2024/25
Community Support General	£993,199.04	£911,191.78
Advice Grant	£727,984.03	£667,875.26
Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation - Appeals	£84,302.81	£77,342.02
Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to Face Advice	£268,704.81	£246,518.17
Social Supermarket	£777,811.14	£711,627.57
Integrated Advice Fund Partnership (2024-2026)*	£87,448.66	£160,804.82
CSP Grand Total (Per Year)	£2,939,450.49	£2,775,359.62

*Please note that the Integrated Advice Fund Partnership (IAP) is allocated over a two-year period thus there is no uplift in 2025/26. Members agreed the funding awards for IAP at Committee in April 2025.

- 3.5 **Additional Funding by CSP Heading**

Table 2 illustrates the additional 9% uplift and available budgets under each heading.

3.6 Table 2

CSP Heading	Additional Funds 2025/26
1. Community Support General	£82,007.26
2. Advice Grant	£60,108.77
3. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation- Appeals	£6,960.79
4. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to face Advice	£22,186.64
5. Social Supermarket	£66,183.57

3.7 Proposed Allocation of Additional Funds

It is proposed that additional funding for elements 1-4 should be allocated using the approaches outlined below. Further detail is provided in Appendices 1-3

1. Community Support General

- 3.8** Members are asked to consider and agree their preferred option for allocating the additional funding provided under the Community Support General heading (£82,007.26) as outlined in Table 3. Further detail on the organisations funded through Capacity and Revenue awards is provided in Appendix 1

Table 3

Option	Description	Pro	Con
1	Allocate all the additional funding £82,007.26 to the 43 Capacity funded groups. Each group will receive a non-recurrent payment of £1,907.15	Capacity grant funding enables the provision of training, development and support programmes provided by 43 organisations to smaller organisations within communities. The funding contributes to staff and programme delivery running costs. As employers Capacity funded groups have seen an increase in staff related costs this past year particularly in relation to National Insurance Contributions. They have also seen an increase to the costs	Revenue organisations do not have access to these additional funds.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

		<p>running costs of their programmes.</p> <p>At Committee in March 2025, members agreed to double the funding allocation received by Revenue funded groups from a maximum of £20,629 in 2024/25 to £41,258 2025/26. Capacity funded organisations did not receive an uplift.</p>	
2	<p>Allocate the funding to Revenue and Capacity funded groups. 130 organisations will receive a non-recurrent payment of £630.83</p>	<p>Revenue and Capacity organisations will receive additional funding to meet their running costs and provide services.</p>	<p>This option does not take into account the difference in the annual level of funding to both Revenue and Capacity applicants.</p>
3	<p>Use the funding to offset the council allocation that was used to double the revenue awards in 25/26.</p>	<p>This would offset the significant council investment that was made to double revenue awards in 25/26.</p>	<p>This option would not provide an additional support to funded organisations.</p>

Appendix 1 provides a revised allocation for Capacity and Revenue based on options 1 and 2 above.

- 3.9** Members will be aware that this is the final year of awards of Capacity and Revenue Grants 2023-2026 in its current form. An open call for our new Large Grant grant programme 2026-2029 will be launched at end of July/beginning of August.

2. Advice Grant and Provision for Appeals.

- 3.10** Members will recall the Council agreed to provide £270,000 on a recurrent basis for the provision of an Appeals and Tribunal Service in the City. At Council in July, members

agreed to extend the provision of the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service (BCTS) provided by Ligoniel Improvement Association on behalf of the Belfast Advice Group (BAG) to the end of March 2026. Members also agreed that future services will be procured and for Officers to begin the process with the contract awarded and provider in place for April 2026.

This year DfC provided an allocation of £84,302.81 towards the provision of Appeals and Tribunal Services. Including Council's contribution of £270,000 the total available budget is

- 3.11 £354,302.81. BCTS requested £242,000 which was agreed by Council in July. Thus, there is a potential underspend in the budget of £112, 302.81.

Funding relating to Advice and Appeals is a specific element of the Community Support Programme and ringfenced for the provision of related services. The review of Advice services which council completed in December 23 highlighted the rising delivery and staffing costs experienced by advice organisations, this additional funding will support organisations to address these issues. Members may also wish to note that the DfC regional review of advice services is ongoing. Members are asked to consider the reprofiling of the budget and agree a preferred option presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4

3.12

Option	Description	Pro	Con
1	Redistribute the £112,302.81 providing an uplift for Generalist Advice and Appeals to the five area-based Advice Consortia using Council's allocation model. (Table 5 below)	<p>Council currently funds 5 Area based Advice consortia that includes 14 independent advice providers in 19 locations and additional cover via extensive outreach provision.</p> <p>Providers have expressed concerns regarding the growing costs</p>	<p>The demand for services and complexity of dealing with multiple needs is growing. This greatly impacts on the level of service provision. The additional funding is short-term for 2025/26 on a non-recurrent basis. Next year the provision will</p>

		<p>relating to staff such as National Insurance Contributions and operating overheads.</p> <p>Staff retention has posed a significant problem for advice providers. Due to short-term contracts and lower salary compared to other agencies such as Housing Associations</p> <p>Providers have also discussed the growing need for the provision of services that meet the needs of more complex cases and also of a growing population who do not have English as a first language. An additional non-recurrent allocation for this year will provide the Advice providers with sufficient resources to maintain their current level of staff, meet increased overheads and provide additional resources to meet the growing demand for services on complex cases as well as for people who require additional support</p>	<p>return to its current level thus the service capacity of the organisations will reduce.</p> <p>Providing funding for 1 may lead to a higher dependency of the providers on Council funding and of people on the service. A demand that may be inflated with the provision of additional support this year.</p> <p>The providers may use some funding to increase its staff salaries and off set NIC. This increase may lead to an unmanageable cost next year</p>
--	--	---	--

People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025

		such as translation services.	
2	<p>Redistribute the £112,302.81</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing an uplift for Generalist Advice and Appeals to the five area-based Advice Consortia using Council's allocation model. (Table 5 below) up to £85,302.81.and allocating the remaining £27,000 towards the procurement process ensuring that contingencies are in place to effectively transition from current funding to contracted service provision e.g. costs to transfer service user records and systems from the current to the new provider. Grant permission to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make further allocations to the generalist advice services should the budget 	<p>As Above</p> <p>This is the final year of the current arrangement for the Tribunal Service. From April 2026 the service will be provided by a contracted organisation following a procurement process. It is envisaged that the provider will be secured by December 2026. The current provider has extensive case records and systems in place for maintaining the records. The provider is also dealing with an extensive caseload that may take longer to complete beyond the 31March 2026.</p> <p>This allocation will provide Council with an opportunity to manage the transition from the</p>	<p>As Above</p> <p>Its £27,000 that can be used for direct service provision.</p>

	provision of up to £27,000 not be used.	current funding arrangements to the new contract. It may cover items such as transfer of Casefiles and systems, current caseloads, issues relating to GDPR.	
--	---	---	--

In relation to the Advice Grant, DfC has provided an uplift of £60,108.77 for the provision of Generalist Advice Services. Members are asked to consider allocating the uplift based on Council's current advice grant funding model.

Table 5 below presents the level of additional funding each Area Based Advice Consortia will receive this year for the uplift and budget reprofile options. The additional funding is non-recurrent.

3.13 Table 5

Area Consortium	Council's Funding Allocation Model	Advice Grant Uplift	Additional Budget Reprofile Option 1	Additional Budget Reprofile Option 2
Central	9%	£5,381.69	£9,953.06	£7,560.13
East	14%	£8,628.51	£16,229.47	£12,327.66
North	26%	£15,556.90	£29,063.05	£22,075.67
South	15%	£9,259.96	£17,299.22	£13,140.11
West	35%	£21,281.71	£39,752.01	£30,199.34

Appendix 2 provides details of the revised allocation for each Consortium based on uplift plus Options 1 and 2

3. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Tribunal Representation- Appeals

3.14 Members are asked to note the increase of £6,960.79 towards the provision of tribunal and appeals and agree the allocation be used for the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service.

4. Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension Face to face Advice

3.15 The funding relating to the WRME Face to Face Advice is funded 100% by DfC. The Department allocates the funding of £268,704.81 as follows for 2025/26.

Table 6

Organisation	% Of Total Allocation	Uplift Allocation
Advice Space	46.74%	£125,585.24
Advice Space (EBIAC)	13.32%	£35,779.89
Falls Community Council (NDA)	13.32%	£35,779.89
Ballynafeigh Community Development Association	13.32%	£35,779.89
North Belfast Advice Partnership (LIA)	13.32%	£35,779.89

The allocation is made to specific organisations covering the geographical areas aligned with the advice consortia. Should an organisation not be able to use all or part of this allocation, the area consortium will be able to bid for the available funds. All decisions relating to expenditure reprofiling, monitoring and reporting is made by the Department.

Members are asked to note DfC's allocation relating to Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension.

5. Social Supermarket Funding

- 3.16 In May 25 Council agreed to provide bridging support to 2024/25 funded groups from 01 April – 30 June 25, up to a maximum amount of £13,738 per group. In June, council further agreed that grants to the 24/25 scheme would be rolled over until 31 March 2026 except to those organisations which received funding in 2024/25 but did not apply for funding in 2025/26.

Council also granted delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make further allocations based on the agreed option, if further funding becomes available. The total amount of funding required for 25/26 to make the awards approved by council is £752,109.67 with DFC allocating £777,811.14 in the current year. Members will be aware that DFC fund Social Supermarkets at 100%, this provides additional funding of £25,701.47 for 25/26 Social Supermarkets. Given the low value of these additional funds, the Director has used his delegated authority to provide an equal allocation to all 19 groups who have been awarded funding in 25/26. This would equate to £1,352.71 which could be used to meet increasing demands for the services that social supermarkets provide.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

3.17 Members will note that the criteria for funding Social Supermarkets will be reviewed by September 2025 and Officers will bring a report to Committee in advance of the open call for 26/27.

3.18 Financial Implications

All awards listed in the appendices can be made in line with existing budgets for 2025/26. Members should note that the Capacity and Revenue awards which are multi annual awards from 23/26.

3.19 Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment

This will be considered throughout, and any appropriate issues highlighted to Members. Any amendments to existing scheme or new scheme will be considered in the context of any equality/good relations and rural needs considerations.”

Proposal

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

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to refer consideration of the recommendations under points 3 and 4 of the report, namely, the options relating to the Community Support General additional funding and the options for the reprofiling of the budget for Advice and Tribunal services to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to allow more time for the options to be reviewed.

The Committee:

1. Noted the CSP funding allocation of £2,939,450.49 presented in the Letter of Offer from the DfC for the 2025/26 financial year;
2. Noted that the Chief Executive had accepted the Letter of Offer, subject to Council approval and approved the Chief Executive to accept subsequent Letters of Variance on behalf of the Council.
3. Agreed to refer the options relating to the Community Support General additional funding to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration;
4. Agreed to refer the options for the reprofiling of the budget for Advice and Tribunal services to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

5. Noted that the proposed additional funding allocation for: Community Support General, Advice Grant, Welfare Reform Mitigations Extension-Tribunal Representation would also be subject to the decision of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (under points 2 & 3 above). The Committee agreed to the proposed additional funding allocation for the Welfare Reform Mitigations-Face to Face Advice to ensure it continued for another year.
6. Noted the additional funding to Social Supermarket projects based on previous committee decisions;
7. Approved that officer's progress funding payments where appropriate, following completion of due diligence requirements based on the proposals, once agreed.

Dual Language Street Signs (Verbal Update)

The Director of Planning and Building Control advised that, due to the response rates to the recent dual language street signs surveys being unusually low, an investigation had been undertaken which had identified an issue which resulted in a number of responses to the surveys that were using the pre-paid envelope being held by Royal Mail at the delivery centre.

Further investigation found that this amounted to around 375 responses being held at the delivery centre, with an unconfirmed number being sent through by Royal Mail to its return centre. Whilst the 375 responses had subsequently been recovered by Officers, Royal Mail were sending batches of additional responses from the return centre.

In response to Members' concerns, the Director of Planning and Building Control confirmed that the applications that were considered at the committee meeting in June had not been impacted and an assessment was being carried out on the applications that would have been brought to the August Committee and those that were currently out to survey to establish whether there would be a need to undertake any resurveys.

The Committee noted the update in relation to the Dual Language Consultation responses and that a further update would be submitted to the Committee in September.

Issues Raised in Advance by Members

**Lagan Gateway - Pedestrian Crossing
(Councillor de Faoite to raise)**

In response to Councillor de Faoite in relation to Lagan Gateway and the need for a pedestrian crossing on Annadale Embankment to access it, the Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Active Travel Unit to formally support the call for a crossing under Phase 2 enabling works for safe access to the Lagan Gateway.

**People and Communities Committee,
Tuesday, 5th August, 2025**

Alley-gate Update (Councillor Doran to raise)

In response to Councillor Doran's concern in relation to the length of time it was taking to install alley gates in various entries in North Belfast, the Committee noted the update provided and further funding installation request to the Department of Finance and that a report be submitted to a future meeting to provide a further update.

**Targeted Upgrades to Enhance Park
Accessibility (Councillor Brooks to raise)**

In response to the Chairperson's concern in relation to accessibility in Parks, the Committee agreed that a report be submitted to a future committee to outline the current standard of accessibility in Parks and what steps had been taken to date, an overview of engagement and research that had been undertaken with children directly, together with the potential of mapping the accessibility of parks across the city for users.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 6th August, 2025

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

- Members present: Councillor I. McLaughlin (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer;
Alderman Lawlor; and
Councillors Black, Bunting, de Faoite, S. Douglas,
Duffy, Groogan, Hanvey, Lyons, McCabe,
McCallin, McCormick, McKay, R. McLaughlin,
Murray, Nelson and O'Neill.
- In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mrs. L. Leonard, European and International Relations
Manager;
Mr. A. Ferguson, Senior Development Manager;
Mr. C. McCreery, Culture Development Manager; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Maskey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 4th and 25th June, 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 July, 2025, subject to the following amendments:

- the Committee's decision under the heading 'York Street Interchange Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR) – Committee Response' was amended to provide that the issues raised by Councillor Groogan be included in the Council's formal response to the Minister for Infrastructure; and
- the Committee's decision under the heading 'Belfast Zoo Q4 Performance Report' was amended to provide that membership of the proposed Council body to focus on the long-term financial sustainability of Belfast Zoo and complementary assets, be appointed using the Sainte-Laguë method.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Duffy declared an interest in relation to item 2(a) 'Vacant to Vibrant Programme' in that his employer was in the process of submitting an application to the scheme. As this was not related to any application under consideration, he was not required to leave the meeting.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 6th August, 2025**

Councillor Groogan declared an interest in relation to the same item in that her employer was in receipt of a grant through the scheme. As this was not related to any application under consideration, she was not required to leave the meeting.

Councillor Groogan also declared an interest in relation to item 2(b) 'Artist Studio Organisational Grant 2025/26' in that she was acquainted with an applicant to the scheme 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 Committee was provided with an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and the associated recommendations from the assessment panel.

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy highlighted that, subject to the Committee's approval of the recommendations by the assessment panel set out within the report, the available funding for the city-wide Vacant to Vibrant scheme would be almost fully depleted. He advised that officers would continue to seek additional funding to extend the city-wide scheme.

The Committee:

- i. noted the update in relation to the Vacant to Vibrant Programme which would be supporting up to 72 businesses/organisations to locate or expand into long term vacant units;
- ii. agreed the recommended city-wide grant awards as outlined within the report; and
- iii. noted that the city-wide fund was now almost completely expended, and that officers would continue to seek additional funding to extend the scheme.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 6th August, 2025**

Artist Studio Organisational Grant 2025/26

The Culture Development Manager provided the Committee with an update on the Artist Studios Organisational Grants for 2025/26 and the associated recommended grants.

The Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the report; and
- ii. agreed the recommendations for Artist Studios Organisational Grants for 2025/26, as set out in the report.

Financial Reporting - Quarter 4 2024/25

The Committee considered a report which provided an update in relation to its Quarter 4 financial position.

The Committee noted the report and the associated financial reporting pack.

Requests to Present

Belfast Waterfront Task Group

The Committee considered a request from the Waterfront Task Group to attend its next meeting to present Members with an update on the progress of the Belfast Waterfront Framework.

The Committee agreed to receive a presentation from the Waterfront Task Group at its meeting on 10th September, 2025.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

The Committee considered a report which highlighted recent correspondence from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to all Councillors in relation to the City Centre Waiting List. The report recommended that the NIHE be invited to attend a special meeting of the Committee to discuss the City Centre Waiting List, and that an invite also be extended to the Members of the People and Communities Committee and the Planning Committee.

The Committee agreed:

- i. to invite the Housing Executive to attend its special meeting on 27th August, 2025, to discuss the City Centre Waiting List;
- ii. to extend an invitation to Members of the People and Communities Committee and the Planning Committee; and

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 6th August, 2025**

- iii. that Members should submit questions to be forwarded to the Housing Executive, specifically in relation to the City Centre Waiting List, in advance of the special meeting.

Positioning Belfast to Compete

Events Update

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is

- to provide a programme update on the 2025 Belfast Maritime Festival.
- to provide members with an update on Halloween

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to

- note the contents of the Maritime Programme
- consider and approve funding to Bid One for Halloween activity

3.0 Main report

3.1 Maritime Festival 2025 Programme

Planning is well advanced for the Maritime Festival to be delivered across the weekend of the 6-7th September 2025. Officers continue to work with internal and external stakeholders on a range of matters to ensure the successful delivery of this signature project.

Titanic Quarter is all set for a weekend of free fun from 11am-6pm each day. Organised by Belfast City Council's Events team, in partnership with Maritime Belfast Trust, the Belfast Maritime Festival is also supported by Belfast Harbour, Titanic Quarter Limited, Titanic Belfast, Department for Communities, Tourism NI and the Odyssey Trust.

People of all ages are invited to dive deep into a celebration of Belfast's rich maritime past and innovative future along the Maritime Mile – from Sailorstown/City Quays to HMS Caroline.

Visitors can hop on board visiting ships docked at Queen's Quay and the Abercorn Marina, including the stunning Andalucía – a

Spanish galleon replica. Sailability will also operate from the marina, offering accessible sailing, and educational tours.

Queens Quay will also host Science Street, back by popular demand, transforming the waterfront into a space for hands-on learning and discovery – from marine biology and climate change to biodiversity. Close by is Kids Cove, where younger visitors will enjoy arts and crafts, circus and dance and pirate play time.

‘Maritime Presents Festival of Fools by the Sea’ at the Arc; a mix of live street circus, theatre and walkabout animation. Close by the Nomadic, the Hamilton Dock Maritime Village will celebrate past and future with immersive technology, interactive exhibits and boat building exhibitions.

The historic Slipways is the venue for a music programme & funfair with an extended Saturday evening programme (with headline Act ‘Hothouse Flowers’ backed by ‘Honey Feet’) delivered in partnerships with Maritime Belfast Trust. The Slipways Street Food Market is also located here, with regional producers showcasing and selling their goods supported by DAERA, through the NI Regional Food Programme (NIRFP).

New to the programme for 2025, is ‘City Sensations’, an Accessible & Inclusive programme of activities held on the Antrim side of the river in the recently developed City Quays Gardens.

Between City Quays and the footbridge, DRIFT, a legacy project from 2024, will be located at Donegal Quay. This unique floating installation will provide workshops.

To compliment the musical offering at the Slipways, there will be three further performance spaces along the Maritime Mile, extending from Donegall Quay, to the Soundyard, and finally as far as HMS Caroline/Titanic Distillers.

A Community Co-design project engaging Sailortown Regeneration, The Met and Passers by will provide programme enhancements in the form of public art, theatre or performance. There has also been ongoing engagement across the industry to showcase local offerings in conjunction with the overall festival programme. Our media partner Bauer Media Group will be on site with prizes, games and giveaways.

Visitors attending the Belfast Maritime Festival are encouraged to walk, cycle, take the Glider from Belfast city centre directly to the Titanic Quarter, or travel by train to Titanic Quarter Halt. Cycle parking is available outside Titanic Belfast and at Belfast Bike docks at the SSE Arena and SS Nomadic.

3.2 Halloween

Members will be aware of support that was offered to BID one to deliver Halloween activity in 2024 and a revised proposal has been submitted for 2025. 2024 activity delivered:

- **Monster Installations - 7 Giant inflatable monsters adorned prominent city buildings, drawing a remarkable 1 Million + total views and 500,000 reach across social media platforms. These installations encouraged footfall, inspired social media content, and instilled a sense of community pride. Local businesses such as Thompsons and Lush participated by creating complementary displays.**
- **Pumpkin Patch - In collaboration with Belfast City Council, the Pumpkin Patch distributed 1,600 pumpkins and hosted approximately 5,000 visitors. The event was widely praised for its value and organisation. Attendees received maps and brochures highlighting other Halloween activities and attractions in the area.**
- **Spooktacular Activity Centre - Located at 2 Royal Avenue, the centre hosted over 5,000 visitors throughout the weekend. Activities included pumpkin painting workshops, face painting, Halloween decoration creation, and a Creepy Crawly Farm featuring snakes and spiders. Quiet sessions each morning catered to children with additional needs, ensuring inclusivity**

2025

The proposal for 2025 is a continuation of this activity with an ask to uplift the proposed number of monster installations to 10. The Halloween offering, including the rooftop monsters and city-wide installations has the potential to be expanded further to bring a real sense of fun and animation across the city centre. This will not only enhance the visitor experience but also strengthens city vibrancy during a key festive period.

The return of the pumpkin patch will again offer families an economical and engaging reason to come into the city. This type of activity encourages footfall and translates into spend across our retail and hospitality sectors, helping drive economic benefit while reinforcing the city centre as a welcoming, diverse family-friendly space for all.

Monster Installations

- 10 Large, inflatable monsters placed on buildings throughout the City Centre.
- These award-winning installations are visually impactful, sharing, and proven to attract footfall in other cities.
-

Belfast One Pumpkin Patch – City Hall Grounds

- A two-day free ticketed event hosted at City Hall.
- Visitors will receive a pumpkin and be encouraged to visit 2 Royal Avenue, where they can decorate or carve at dedicated design stations and avail of activity similar to that delivered in 2024 – with 2 Royal Avenue becoming a dedicated ‘fun hub’ for the period
- This format encourages city movement and adds an interactive creative element to the overall experience.

Total costs to deliver extended monster installation and pumpkin patch including install, derig, insurances, event management, performers and staffing is estimated to be £80,000.

Members should note BID one are also seeking to deliver other activities including:

Cultural Engagement – Halloween Stories from Around the World & Living Window Animations

- Olive Tree House animated with projections acting out folk tales (e.g. Japanese yokai, Indian Diwali, Dia de Los Muertos).
- Window displays combine projection and theatrical storytelling.
- Performances run in loops across evenings.

Dia De Los Muertos Procession

- A twilight procession with music, dance and processional sculpture. The route for this could be in and around the Corn Market area.

BID one have advised that many businesses have expressed enthusiasm for getting involved again this year. They've made clear that investment from partners like Belfast City Council and Belfast One provides them with the confidence and support to contribute meaningfully to the event with their own in kind activation.

Outcomes and Impact For 2025

- Positive city experience for families and residents through interactive, safe, and festive events.
- Broader cultural engagement through stories and displays celebrating Halloween across global traditions.
- Increased footfall across the City Centre during Halloween.
- Support for local businesses through increased visibility and targeted promotions.
- High social media engagement via visual installations and visitor content.

Funding of 50K would support the increased number of monster installations as proposed and the pumpkin patch, including the hub at 2 Royal Avenue, with BID one funding the remaining costs. This would be an uplift of last year's support of £40,000.

Members had raised previously about potential for provision of support for Halloween activities in communities however capacity, timelines and resources has proved challenging in this area. Halloween activity can already be supported through the community festivals fund currently with one applicant being successful in receiving funding for activity with The Beat Carnival delivering Tales and Traditions: A Neighbourhood Festival of Global Halloween Heritage. The CFF grant is now closed and officers will continue to highlight that Halloween activity is eligible for future years.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

Financial resources will be met from within existing departmental budgets and from specified reserves.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

The cultural strategy, A City Imagining has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and a Rural Needs Assessment (RNA). Specific initiatives as required will be subject to a further equality screening."

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 6th August, 2025**

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy drew Members attention to the information provided within the report in respect of the Maritime Festival 2025 Programme.

In relation to Halloween, he highlighted the support provided by the Council to the Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID) to deliver Halloween activity in 2024 and outlined a recommendation to increase funding support for Belfast One BID to deliver Halloween activity in 2025.

During discussion, several Members welcomed the update provided on the proposed Halloween activity for 2025 and the recommended uplift of funding support to Belfast One BID, which would enable an increase to the number of monster installations throughout the city centre.

A Member highlighted the key role of the BIDs within the city centre and requested that representatives of each of the BIDs be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide Members with further detail on their work and how the Council could provide support.

In relation to future events updates, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy advised the Committee that it would be provided with a more detailed update on the Fleadh Cheoil at a future meeting. Members also requested that updates be provided in respect of the upcoming Oireachtas na Samhna and options for a New Year's Eve Event.

A Member highlighted an announcement by the Minister for Communities in April 2025, that funding would be made available for organisations to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence in 2026. The Member requested that, given the strong cultural and historical links with the United States, officers explore options in respect of the city marking the 250th anniversary.

After discussion, the Committee:

- i. noted the contents of the report including the Maritime Festival 2025 Programme update;
- ii. approved funding to Belfast One Business Improvement District (BID) for Halloween activity;
- iii. agreed that a report be submitted to its next meeting to provide an update on the Oireachtas na Samhna;
- iv. agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting to provide an update in relation to options for a New Year's Eve Event;
- v. agreed that a report be submitted to a future meeting in respect of options to support the marking of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the US Declaration of Independence in 2026; and

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 6th August, 2025**

- vi. agreed to invite representatives of the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to a future meeting to provide an update on their work.

International Engagement - Proposed Approach

The Committee considered a report which set out a proposed approach for the Council's engagement in international activity which included a draft International Relations Framework for 2025-28 and an International Relations Delivery Plan for 2025-26.

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy and the European and International Relations Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the draft Framework which included:

- **Previous Framework 2017-21** – Acted as a workplan for the Council's European and International Relations Unit; key priorities of the Economy, Education and Tourism; key new Council work areas not included such as city regeneration, city innovation and climate;
- **Changing Operational Context (Internal)** – New Framework's alignment with the Belfast Agenda;
- **Changing Operational Context (External)** – Impact of global politics, new EU trading relationships, alignment with the Executive's Programme for Government and the new Invest NI business strategy focused on trade and investment;
- **Review of Practice from Other Cities** - Focused on the strategies/frameworks of UK and Ireland core cities and highlighted the challenges in measuring success;
- **Vision** – To position Belfast as a globally-connected, forward looking city that would be open, inclusive and ambitious, attract trade, investment, talent and visitors whilst sharing the city's unique story and values with the world;
- **Purpose** - To identify areas of collaborative advantage and help focus resources on opportunities that could maximise return on investment, in keeping with city priorities;
- **Role of Council** - To use the Council's civic leadership and convening role to:
 - develop and utilise international relationships and connections to generate investment, trade and tourism and enhance Belfast's global visibility in key markets and communicate its unique assets and offer;

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 6th August, 2025**

- Coordinate and amplify messaging to maximise return on investment; and
- Support our partner organisations to deliver their organisational targets with a focus on inclusive economic growth;
- **Framework Pillars and Priority Activities for 2025/26:**
 - Trade and Investment;
 - Innovation and Knowledge Exchange; and
 - City positioning, tourism promotion and cultural development;
- **Tracking Impact** – All cities and partners found it difficult to accurately track impact of individual activities; introduction of a bespoke CRM (Customer Relationship Management); value of case studies; and
- **Oversight** – International activity would be presented to the Committee in an annual action plan with an additional focus on measuring performance and increasing opportunities for members in shaping agenda.

During discussion, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy and the European and International Relations Manager answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to engagement with China, messaging for international stakeholders and EU engagement.

Members also requested that the Framework include an Implementation Plan, quarterly updates, the continued membership of the Eurocities Network and consideration of future participation in the European Week of Regions and Cities, environmental and ethical elements, further detail on Member engagement with international stakeholders and measurable outcomes.

In response, the Strategic Director advised that officers would submit a further report, for the Committee's consideration, which would address the issues and requests raised by the Members.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the draft International Relations Framework 2025-28 and the International Relations Delivery Plan 2025-26 to enable a further report to be submitted to provide detail on the issues raised by Members.

**Culture Night - Correspondence from the Minister
for Infrastructure and the Department for Communities**

The Committee considered the following responses in relation to Belfast Culture Night 2025:

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 6th August, 2025**

- **Minister for Infrastructure** - Response to the Committee's request for late-night public transport to support Culture Night. The Minister welcomed the engagement between the Council and Translink in respect of Culture Night and stated that she was committed to finding a solution to extend late-night public transport services on a year-round basis. The Minister advised that she would continue to build on recent positive engagement with the Minister for the Economy and the Council; and
- **Department for Communities (DfC)** – Response to the Committee's request that DfC consider providing funding support towards Culture Night 2025, and Culture Night going forward. DfC advised that it did not have any funding streams available to provide support for Culture Night 2025.

During discussion, several Members expressed their disappointment regarding the responses received and highlighted the need for late-night public transport within the city and the value of investment in Culture Night.

A Member requested that the Committee write to the Minister for Communities to request engagement with the Council in respect of DfC providing funding support towards Culture Night 2026.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- i. noted the correspondence received from the Minister for Infrastructure and the Department for Communities in relation to Culture Night; and
- ii. agreed to write to the Minister for Communities to request engagement with the Council in respect of DfC funding support for Culture Night 2026.

Strategic and Operational Issues

**Minutes of the City Regeneration
Members' Working Group - 19th June 2025
and 4th August 2025**

The Committee approved the minutes of the City Regeneration Members' Working Group meetings of 19th June and 4th August, 2025.

Issues Raised in Advance

**Artist and Creative Studio Space
(Councillor Groogan to raise)**

Councillor Groogan raised concern in relation to studio space within the city for artist and creative use.

**City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 6th August, 2025**

She highlighted the value of the sector to the city and welcomed the Council's approach to providing support, however, she stated that this support needed to be matched by the Executive.

Councillor Groogan requested, as a way of the Council providing further support to the sector, that a review of the Council estate be undertaken to identify potential studio space for artist and creative use.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to recommend that a review of the Council estate be undertaken to identify potential studio space for artist and creative use and reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

City Growth and Regeneration Committee

Wednesday, 27th August, 2025

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor I. McLaughlin (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer; and
Councillors Black, Bunting, de Faoite, S. Douglas,
Duffy, Groogan, Hanvey, Lyons, Maskey,
McCallin, McKay, R. McLaughlin, Murray,
Nelson and O'Neill.

Also attended: Alderman Rodgers; and
Councillor T. Brooks.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration
and Development; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor McCormick.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Presentations

Northern Ireland Housing Executive – City Centre Waiting List (CCWL)

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. F. McGrath, Head of Place Shaping, and Ms. C. Wright, Housing for All Lead for Belfast Area, representing the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) to the meeting.

The NIHE representatives presented to the Committee an overview of the City Centre Waiting List (CCWL) which included:

- **Background to the CCWL** - Increase in housing need; difficulty securing land in traditional areas throughout the city; recognition of development opportunities within the city centre; new city centre Common Landlord Area (CLA) was approved and presented to the Council in 2012 and aligned with the Council's City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy;
- **City Centre Common Landlord Area (CLA)** - Creation of city centre boundary to attract growth in higher density apartment living; mixed

**Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 27th August, 2025**

use/tenure schemes; CLA not created due to no available scheme in 2012;

- **Latent Demand Test** - NIHE sought expression of interest for city centre living from approximately fifteen thousand applicants and transfers on Belfast Waiting List in 2020; virtual list created to enable NIHE to consider type of demand for the area; unable to progress until a scheme was under construction;
- **CCWL Project Team** - Dargan House, Loft Lines, was the first city centre scheme under construction; project team established in Spring 2025 to oversee delivery; expression of interest for city centre living sought from twenty-two thousand households in July 2025; to date, over four thousand had indicated their interest in city centre living;
- **Housing for All Programme** – The programme came out of the Executive's 'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy; NIHE took overall responsibility of managing the shared housing programme in February 2024 (previously managed by the Department for Communities);
- **Belfast Housing for All Overview** - NIHE manage the delivery of programme, working across Belfast to support, currently, eight developments with a total of four hundred and fifty households; developments not classified as shared until all homes are allocated;
- **Local Advisory Groups** - Five Local Advisory Groups across the shared housing communities; managed by Housing Association to support the development and delivery of Good Relations Plans (GRP); Advisory Groups include a wide range of stakeholders; plan to develop a Belfast Advisory Group Forum;
- **Good Relations Plans** - Pre-handover GRPs start when a development is invited onto the programme; five-year GRP begins when homes are fully allocated and deemed shared; longevity of plans key component to success of programme; key actions include promotion, Engagement, Bonding, Bridging, Learning and Sustainability;
- **Dargan House, Loftlines** - First City Centre scheme to be allocated from new city centre waiting list; invited onto Housing for All Programme; Strategic Oversight Forum to consist of key stakeholders; Collaborative Housing Partners Project Team;
- **Dargan House, Loftlines, Project Plan** - Development of a Memorandum of Understanding between NIHE and Housing Association to enable information and knowledge sharing; development of an enhanced Good Neighbour Agreement, Community Charter and Tenancy Success Programme Pilot;

**Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 27th August, 2025**

- **Future City Centre Schemes** - Two further schemes with planning approval on the Social Housing Development Programme (Marlborough House and Pilot Street); other schemes in early stages include Inner North West, North Street/Donegall Street, Weavers Cross and Waterside/Sirocco; and
- **City Centre Living** - Additional choice for those in housing need and will not replace support for social housing in other areas; city centre living in support of Belfast Agenda to increase the population of the city centre; need to ensure access to services and to be mixed use/tenure neighbourhoods.

During discussion, the NIHE representatives answered a range of questions in relation to social housing applicants' areas of choice, viability of city centre development, access to services and facilities, the Housing Executive's engagement with statutory partners and stakeholders, and tenant engagement and support. Members also highlighted the value and positive impact of the Local Advisory Groups and the Good Relations Plans.

In response to a Member's query, the representatives advised that further detail would be provided in due course in relation to the viability challenges associated with delivering homes within the city centre against Total Cost Indicators (TCI) and Housing Association Guide (HAG) levels. The representatives also agreed to provide further detail in respect of the Housing Executive's collaborative work to support vulnerable people and the demographic information regarding those who had expressed interest in city centre living.

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

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, the Housing Executive would provide further information on the issues raised.

Translink - Belfast Grand Central Station Update

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. G. Marshall, Business Change Manager, Mr. D. Bannon, Head of Operational Improvements, and Ms. L. Shannon, Corporate Communications Manager, representing Translink to the meeting.

Mr. Marshall presented the Committee with an overview of the completed works, Phase 1, to the Belfast Grand Central Station, which included eight railway platforms and twenty-six bus stands, an integrated concourse for bus and rail, self-service ticket machines and the Northern Ireland Operating Centre (NIROC Phase 1A) at Lanyon Place Station, which was delivered in parallel on a critical path of the hub. In terms of infrastructure upgrades, he highlighted signalling and track layout updates, timetable enhancement and the relocation of the Enterprise Train, which had helped to significantly

**Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 27th August, 2025**

increase the number of passengers through the station. He also highlighted the commercial and accessibility improvements to the station.

Mr. Marshall then provided the Committee with a progress update in respect of ongoing works, Phase 2, to Glengall Street and Great Victoria Street. He advised the Committee that Phase 2 would include a comprehensive resurfacing programme which was scheduled for 2026 and would cover multiple areas including Grosvenor Road and Durham Street.

In respect of Durham Street, he outlined the ongoing utilities and culvert works and highlighted that those works had an impact on the delivery of this section. He stated that Translink would continue to work at pace with the contractor to minimise the delay. Mr. Marshall then presented the Committee with a computer-generated image (CGI) of Durham Street post-completion of the works.

In relation to Operations, Mr. Bannon provided the Committee with an update in respect of late-night public transport services and the Translink customer experience.

During discussion, several Members raised issues in relation to the planned layout of Durham Street, highlighting that it differed from initial plans and would now include five traffic lanes with minimal cycling provision. The Members stated that the proposed layout would be a step back from the initial approach of promoting active and sustainable travel and displayed a lack of greenery and tree planting. The Members also expressed concern that the proposed increase in traffic lanes would have a significant negative impact on pedestrian safety, cycling infrastructure, traffic congestion and air quality.

In response, Mr. Marshall advised that there had been an extensive consultation with key stakeholders, in close collaboration with the Department for Infrastructure, in relation to the proposed layout of Durham Street and that the design was aimed at facilitating the needs of all road users, including pedestrians, car users and cyclists. He also pointed out that the pedestrian crossings had been designed and modelled to ensure pedestrian safety. The representatives highlighted that the CGI was a number of years old and agreed to provide the Committee with further detail on the proposed layout of Durham Street.

In relation to active travel, a Member highlighted the need for quality active travel infrastructure which would join up to existing and planned cycle lanes and requested further information on the timeframe for the delivery of the active travel hub and secured cycle parking. The representatives advised that they would provide the Committee with further detail in respect of active travel infrastructure.

The representatives also answered a range of questions in relation to ticketing, road closures, community engagement, retail offering within the station, including provision and support for local independent traders, access to the station, branding of the pop-up market at the former Europa Bus Station, active travel, integration between services and bus tracking information.

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

**Special City Growth and Regeneration Committee,
Wednesday, 27th August, 2025**

After discussion, the Committee noted the information which had been provided and that, where relevant, Translink would provide further information on the issues raised.

2025 Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards

The Committee considered a report which provided an update in relation to the 2025 Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards.

The Director of City Regeneration and Development advised the Committee that the Council had been shortlisted as a finalist in the following three categories of the 2025 APSE Awards:

- **Best Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship initiative** - Vacant to Vibrant;
- **Best Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship initiative** - GoSucceed (in conjunction with Derry City and Strabane District Council); and
- **Best Collaborative Working initiative (with other public sector or third sector)** - GoSucceed (in conjunction with Derry City and Strabane District Council).

The Committee:

- i. noted the update and that the Council had been shortlisted as finalists at the 2025 APSE Awards for the Vacant to Vibrant scheme and, in conjunction with Derry City and Strabane District Council, GoSucceed; and
- ii. approved the attendance of the Chairperson (or his nominee) at the APSE Awards on 11th September, 2025, for the nominations of the Vacant to Vibrant Programme and GoSucceed.

Standing Order 14 - Submission of Minutes

In accordance with Standing Order 14, the Committee agreed that, as the meeting had been held later than seven clear days before the meeting of the Council, the minutes of the meeting be submitted to the Council on 1st September, 2025, for ratification.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 20th August, 2025

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Doran (Chairperson);
Aldermen McCullough and Rodgers, and
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bradley,
T. Brooks, Bunting, Carson, M. Donnelly,
P. Donnelly, D. Douglas, McCann, McCusker,
McDowell, McKay, McKeown, Smyth and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;
Ms. C. Naylor, NIHMO Assistant Manager;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning); and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of the High Sheriff (Councillor McAteer).

Minutes

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

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)

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

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

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.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 20th August, 2025**

**Final Decision on Application for the Provisional
Grant of an Amusement Permit for Players,
22 - 23 Shaftesbury Square**

The Director of Planning and Building Control presented the details of the application to the Committee, following on from its previous consideration of the application on 18th June, 2025, where it had agreed that it was minded to refuse the application on the grounds of cumulative build-up of amusement arcades and increase in the number of gaming machines in a particular location, impacting on the character and amenity of the area.

The applicant had been advised that the Committee was minded to refuse the application for the Grant or Provisional Grant of an Amusement Permit. In line with the legislation, the Committee must then afford the applicant the opportunity to make representations at a specified Licensing Committee meeting on the matter before making a final determination on the application. The applicant and her representatives were therefore in attendance at the meeting.

She reminded the Committee that an existing amusement arcade, Players, on the ground floor of 22 Shaftesbury Square, had been operated by the applicant company since 2018. The applicant company wished to extend the existing amusement arcade into the rear ground floor of the neighbouring unit at 23 Shaftesbury Square, which had been vacant for some years. As there was no mechanism within the Order to allow for a variation of an existing Amusement Permit to cater for the extension of an existing premises, an application had to be made for the Grant or Provisional Grant of an Amusement Permit for the proposed extended amusement arcade.

The Members were advised that the applicant had requested to operate the proposed premises 7 days per week, Monday to Sunday, 00:00 to 24:00hrs. The applicant had confirmed that the requested hours were those that the current premises operated. The application was for a total of 69 gaming machines, giving an increase of 15 machines over the existing arcade.

The Director outlined that planning permission for a change of use of the ground floor of 23 Shaftesbury Square, to an amusement arcade, was granted on 20th April, 2023. The Members were advised that the Amusement Permit application involved the extension of the existing amusement arcade into the rear half of the adjoining property, but that the front portion would be retained as a retail unit.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Dr. T. Quinn, Braniff Associates (Planning Consultant), was in attendance. He had advised the Council on the formulation of the Amusement Permit Policy. He advised the Committee that:

- the Policy, which had been formulated in 2013, had highlighted areas where there was a presumption against such establishments but also highlighted areas which were open to consideration;
- amusement arcades were restricted in areas which were predominantly residential in character but were open to consideration in areas which

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 20th August, 2025**

were mixed-use, such as city centres, within which the above application was;

- the 1985 Order dictated that each application had to be assessed on its merits;
- from his appraisal the application broadly satisfied the suitability of a location for the establishment of an amusement arcade, as it was in the city centre, it was not in the busiest shopping streets and it wasn't predominantly residential in character;
- with regards to the cumulative impact, 15 additional machines was a marginal increase and that the Committee should consider whether or not that particular finding was sufficient grounds on which to refuse it, against all the other criteria which ticked the boxes.

The Chairperson then welcomed Mr. S. Beattie KC, representing the applicant, to the meeting. He thanked Dr. Quinn for his fair and frank appraisal.

Mr. Beattie advised the Committee that the Amusement Permit Policy was not a fetter nor a restriction and that it had to be applied consistently and fairly. In making the application, the applicant had been mindful of the Council's previous decisions, in particular, regarding premises on Wellington Place, which had been granted permission for a rear extension. He outlined that the Council had also permitted Playland to extend into a nearby coffee shop. He advised the Committee that the applicant, in this case, wished to invest £200,000 and refurbish its entire premises. The Members were advised that the refurbishment would include up to 15 new machines and he explained that some of the modern machines had bigger screens and therefore required more floorspace. He reminded the Committee that planning permission for a change of use of the ground floor of 23 Shaftesbury Square, to an amusement arcade, was granted in April, 2023. The Members were advised that the frontage would not be affected and that there were no commercial objectors, both of which were important material considerations. He added that the applicant had been at the forefront of gambling control, despite there being no gambling commission for Northern Ireland.

The Chairperson thanked Dr. Quinn and Mr. S. Beattie KC for their contributions.

A Member stated that he felt that the applicant and staff had shown themselves to be responsible operators with well managed facilities. He highlighted that their staff undertook regular training to enable them to identify any customers who required assistance with gambling habits. He added that there were no complaints and that a derelict building would also be brought back into use.

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor McCann,

That that Committee agrees to grant the application for an Amusement Permit for Players, 22 and to the rear of 23 Shaftesbury Square.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 20th August, 2025**

On a vote, sixteen Members voted for the proposal and two against and it was accordingly declared carried.

**Final decision on competing Stationary Street
Trading Licence applications for Boucher Crescent
at lamp post number 16, for which appeal received**

The Director of Planning and Building Control reminded the Committee that it had previously considered 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 Committee, at its meeting on 21st May, 2025, had agreed that it was minded to grant and approve the licence to Mr. A. Arputharaj. One of the reasons given by the Committee was that, in line with previous decisions, the street trading licence should be awarded to the application which had been received first. As a result, that had meant that the designated site had been taken and, there being no suitable location for the other applicant, the Committee was therefore minded to refuse the application submitted by Mr. A. Smallwood.

Mr. Smallwood had submitted a written representation to appeal the Committee's decision, which it was now being asked to consider before arriving at its final decision on the competing street trading applications for the designated site.

Moved by Councillor Bunting,
Seconded by Alderman McCullough and

Resolved – that the Committee agrees to uphold its decision of 21st May, 2025, and grant and approve the Stationary Street Trading Licence to Mr. A. Arputharaj and to refuse the licence application made by Mr. A. Smallwood.

**Final decision on competing Stationary Street
Trading Licence applications for Duncrue Link
50ft from the junction with Duncrue Road,
for which appeal received**

The Director of Planning and Building Control reminded the Committee that it had previously considered two competing Stationary Street Trading Licence applications to trade at a designated site at Duncrue Link, 50 feet from the junction with Duncrue Road. 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 Committee, at its meeting on 21st May, 2025, had agreed that it was minded to grant and approve the licence to Ms. V. Kemp. One of the reasons given by the Committee was that, in line with previous decisions, the street trading licence should be awarded to the application which had been received first. As a result, that had meant that the designated

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 20th August, 2025**

site had been taken and, there being no suitable location for the other applicant, the Committee was therefore minded to refuse the application submitted by Mr. D. Smith.

Mr. Smith had submitted a written representation to appeal the Committee's decision, which it was now being asked to consider before arriving at its final decision on the competing street trading applications for the designated site.

A Member stated that they felt that the appeal from Mr. Smith held validity, in that there were specific personal reasons as to why the licence had not been renewed and that it was a continuation of a business which had been trading on that site for years.

The Solicitor advised the Committee that the application was not a continuation and that it was from a new business.

A further Member stated that he did not feel that the Council's policy in relation to determining between competing Street Trading applications was robust. He stated that there should not be a deadline if the Council would grant licences on a first come, first served basis. He added that he felt that there should be a scoring matrix.

The Director clarified that there was no deadline for applications with regards to competing street trading applications.

Moved by Councillor McKay,
Seconded by Councillor P. Donnelly,

That the Committee agrees to amend its decision of 21st May, 2025, and, due to the personal circumstances of the previous business owner and that the van being used in the current application had been there for a decade, agrees to grant and approve the Stationary Street Trading Licence to Mr. D. Smith and refuse the application made by Ms. V. Kemp.

Amendment

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

That the Committee agrees to uphold its decision of 21st May, 2025, and grant and approve the Stationary Street Trading Licence to Ms. V. Kemp and to refuse the licence application made by Mr. A. Smallwood.

On a vote, nine voted for the amendment and nine against. As there was an equality of votes, the Chairperson exercised his second and casting vote in favour of the amendment and it was accordingly declared carried.

The amendment was thereupon put as the substantive motion and it was accordingly declared carried.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 20th August, 2025**

**Applications for the Grant of Indoor and
Outdoor Entertainments Licences for Liquid,
10-14 Tomb Street**

The Committee considered an application for the grant of a 7-Day Annual Indoor Entertainments Licence based on the Council's standard conditions to provide music, singing, dancing or any other entertainment of a like kind and an application for the grant of a 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence to provide outdoor musical entertainment at the above premises.

The Members were advised that the premises, formerly known as Libertine, previously operated as a Public Bar/Nightclub on the ground Floor and First Floor and held an Outdoor Entertainments Licence for the smoking area located at the side.

The areas where entertainment was proposed to be provided were the same as previously licenced, that is:-

- Ground Floor, with a maximum capacity of 180 persons.
- First Floor, with a maximum capacity of 220 persons.
- External Smoking Area, with a maximum capacity of 200 persons.

The days and hours during which entertainment was proposed to be provided, both indoors and outdoors, were the same as those granted for the previous licences, that is:

- Monday to Saturday: 11.30am to 3.00am the following morning and
- Sunday: 12.30pm to 3.00am the following morning

The Committee was advised that public notice of the applications had been placed and that no objections had been received. The PSNI and the NIFRS had both been consulted and neither had any objection to the applications.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. M. Houston, applicant, to the meeting. He advised the Committee that he did not foresee them having entertainment until 3am but the reason he was applying for the extended hours was to reduce the impact of patrons all leaving at the same time, thereby reducing pressure on taxi services and to be competitive with other premises in the vicinity.

The Committee agreed to approve and grant the 7-Day Annual Outdoor Entertainments Licence and also agreed to approve both the Indoor and Outdoor Entertainments Licences to allow entertainment to be provided until the later hour of 3am on any night of the week.

Non-Delegated Matters

**Clarification on Competing Street
Trading Licence Applications**

The Director of Planning and Building Control presented the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide clarity on how the Committee considers competing Street Trading licence applications.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to note the content of the report.**

3.0 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 At the meeting in May 2025, the Licensing Committee considered two competing applications for a street trading licence at two locations in the city.**
- 3.2 During the discussion on the applications, the Committee asked for clarification on how they should deal with competing applications, and a report was requested.**

The application process

- 3.3 The Council operates a Street Trading Licence process in accordance with the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. As part of those processes, the Council grants stationary licences to trade from designated permanent pitches.**
- 3.4 To designate a permanent pitch, the council will publish legal notices for 28 days explaining the proposals in a local newspaper to make sure the public and other organisations are consulted. Requests for designation of a permanent pitch can be made to the Council.**
- 3.5 Once a permanent pitch is designated, applications can be considered for licences to trade from that pitch. A list of all the designated pitches in Belfast is available on the Councils [website](#). The list outlines the items that can be sold on each pitch and whether the pitch is currently available.**
- 3.6 If a pitch is available and an application for a street trading licence is received, the Council will look to process that application within reasonable timescales. Applicants should allow a minimum of 28 days from the date of receipt for the Council to process the application for a stationary or mobile street trading licence. The Council strives to notify all applicants of the outcome of their application, including**

issuing the licence, within 10 working days of the council decision made in relation to the application.

- 3.7** Where a single application for a street trading licence is received on a designated pitch, the decision to grant the application can be made under delegated authority in line with the Council's scheme of delegation which sets out that the Strategic Director of Place and Economy has responsibility for exercising all powers in relation to the issue (but not refusal) of permits and licences.
- 3.8** Where a second application is subsequently received on a designated pitch, officers do not have delegated authority to refuse it because an application is already being considered. Similarly, officers do not have delegated authority to decide between the competing applications as this would require one to be refused. The competing applications must therefore be brought before the Licensing Committee so that one of the applications can be approved and one refused in accordance with the mandatory and discretionary reasons set out in legislation.
- 3.9** Mandatory reasons for refusal relate mostly to process issues such as the age of the individual, there isn't a designated pitch or the nature of goods to be sold.
- 3.10** The Council may refuse an application on the following discretionary grounds:
- (a) that—**
- (i)** the location at which the applicant wishes to trade as a stationary trader is unsuitable;
 - (ii)** the space in the designated street in which the applicant wishes to trade as a stationary trader is inadequate for the applicant to do so without causing undue interference or inconvenience to persons or vehicles using the street;
 - (iii)** the area or areas of the district in which the applicant wishes to trade as a mobile trader are unsuitable for the applicant to do so without causing undue interference or inconvenience to persons or vehicles in the area or areas;
 - (iv)** 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; or

- (v) the nature of the articles, things or services in which the applicant wishes to trade is such that their sale or supply, or their preparation for sale or supply, would adversely affect the general amenity of the area in which the applicant wishes to trade;
- (b) that the applicant has, in connection with the application, made a statement which he knows to be false in a material particular;
- (c) that the applicant is, on account of misconduct or some other reason relating to trading activities, unsuitable to hold a street trading licence;
- (d) that the applicant has, without reasonable excuse, failed to avail himself to a reasonable extent of a previous street trading licence;
- (e) that the applicant has at any time been granted a street trading licence by the council, which was revoked or could have been revoked on the grounds that he had refused or neglected to pay fees or other charges due to the council in respect of the licence;
- (f) that the applicant has failed to provide the particulars required by the council to deal with the application;
- (g) that the applicant has failed to provide or identify suitable or adequate arrangements for storing any articles, things or receptacles in or with which he proposes to trade.

The Council's Street Trading Licensing Policy

- 3.11 The Council's Street Trading Licensing Policy (included at Appendix 1) sets out guidance on matters which should be considered when deciding whether to grant to a person a Street Trading Licence. Its aim is to provide, insofar as is possible, consistent decision making to as to develop and maintain public confidence in Belfast City Council's performance of its duties.
- 3.12 The Policy was amended in early 2011 after Members had asked for the establishment of policy to assist them in determining competing applications for Street Trading Licences. The inclusion of the guidance followed considerable background research which included looking at other jurisdictions to ascertain if they have established a policy or procedure that could be used as the framework for our policy. Unfortunately, it became apparent that no jurisdiction had such a policy in operation, and that some working practices (including grating all competing applications and leaving it to the traders to agree who could trade) had created serious operational difficulties.

- 3.13 Paragraph 5 of the Policy was created to deal with the issue of competing Stationary or Mobile Street Trading Licence applications where there are two or more applications for a licence at a designated site or there are multiple mobile licence applications for a similar geographical area within the City. It provides guidance on how to deal with situations when the Council cannot negotiate competing licence applications.**
- 3.14 Paragraph 5.1 provides that where there are competing applications each applicant will be invited to address the Licensing Committee by making a short presentation on their proposed business.**
- 3.15 The presentation should include matters such as how the business will be operated, the design of the stall, how the commodities they propose to sell will add to the area and should address any concerns or objections to their proposal, this may be followed by questions from Members.**
- 3.16 Paragraph 5.2 provides that, in determining competing applications, the Committee may take into account any consideration which they deem appropriate and take into account the discretionary ground for refusal detailed in paragraph 4.6 of the Policy (and set out in paragraph 3.10 above).**
- 3.17 Section 5 of the Policy provides guidance on how to deal with competing licence applications and states that without prejudice to the discretionary grounds for refusing an application the Council may also take the following into account:**
- 1. The suitability of the application in the context of the area or street;**
 - 2. The suitability of allowing more than one application in the area or street;**
 - 3. The commodities or services which each applicant intends to sell or supply;**
 - 4. The merits of each application in the context of the character and appearance of the proposed area;**
 - 5. Whether a mobile trader/a number of mobile traders will affect the character and appearance of the proposed area;**
 - 6. Any potential adverse impact caused to the character and appearance of the proposed location by the application, by a mobile trader or by a number of mobile traders;**

7. The extent to which the sale of the commodity will provide a useful service not otherwise provided in the area.

3.18 In practice, where two or more similar street trading applications have been received and the first one would not be refused under the mandatory, or discretionary grounds, the Committee has previously felt that the first application received should be granted. This then means that the subsequent applications therefore require to be refused as in line with the discretionary grounds that there are then sufficient traders trading in the street, or at premises adjoining it, in the articles, things or services in which the applicant wishes to trade (i.e. the pitch has been taken).

3.19 This practice has not and would not preclude the Committee taking into account the considerations set out in the Council's Street Trading Licensing Policy and listed above in para 3.17 where there are considered to be discernible differences in the applications that are being considered.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications arising from this report.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

There are no issues associated with this report.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Decision taken under Delegated Authority

Cinema Licensing - Showing of Unclassified film "The Negotiator"

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The report is to inform the Committee of a decision taken under delegated authority by the Strategic Director of Place and Economy to approve the exhibition of a film called "The Negotiator" in Cineworld, Belfast on the 25 June 2025.

1.2 Delegated authority of the Strategic Director of Place and Economy was sought as the request was received after the

Licensing Committee's June meeting had taken place, and a decision was needed before the Committee's August meeting.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is requested to note the content of the report.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

3.1 The Council licences cinemas and other venues under the Cinemas (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 for the exhibition of films. The main functions of the legislation relate to technical matters such as structural stability and fire safety and, as such, the powers to issue licences are delegated to the Director of Planning and Building Control.

3.2 However, the Order also requires the Council to impose conditions or restrictions prohibiting the admission of children to film exhibitions involving the showing of films designated as works unsuitable for children.

3.3 Unlike other types of Licences there is no public notification and representation process for Cinema Licence applications hence there is normally no involvement of the Committee with Cinema Licensing.

3.4 When issuing Licences, the Council establishes Conditions on each Licence regarding the general running and administration of the premises. One such Condition is that only films which have been classified with a certificate issued by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) may be shown.

3.5 The BBFC is an independent body which classifies all films on behalf of local authorities, and they have strict guidelines and criteria in awarding films a classification.

3.6 Until recently it has been rare for a licensed cinema to seek permission to show a film that has not been through the BBFC process. However, with the development in the local creative industries and filmmaking sector here more films are being produced locally many of which are unclassified, or not classified by the BBFC, but the demand for them to be screened in local cinemas is growing.

- 3.7** There is a proviso in the Licence Conditions which allows the Council to give permission to show an unclassified film if it is satisfied with that film. The Council can also append any Conditions it deems appropriate, including an age restriction.
- 3.8** The Council has had requests in the past for permission to exhibit films which either do not have a classification or have a classification from another country. The Council has previously agreed such requests where it considered them to be acceptable.
- 3.9** Council officers were contacted on the 19 June 2025 regarding the screening of 'The Negotiator'. The film, which was supported by Queens University, Belfast, was being broadcast as part of the 'Docs Irelands' series of international documentary films by independent film makers. Screening of the film was scheduled for 25 June 2025 at Cineworld, cinema at the Odyssey Arena, Queens Quay.
- 3.10** The film had not been classified. It has not been given a rating by the BBFC. The applicant has been informed by the programming team that a '12A' rating would be appropriate for the film.
- 3.11** Information on the BBFC classification is provided in Appendix 1.
- 3.12** Normally approval to permit the film to be exhibited is considered and given by the Licensing Committee. In this instance the request was received after the June Committee meeting and the August Committee meeting was too late to consider the request for the proposed screening on 25 June 2025.
- 3.13** Discussions took place with Legal Services as to the options available to the Council and therefore the Strategic Director of Place and Economy under his delegated authority.
- 3.14** The film does not have a BBFC classification or have a classification from another country. A screener link was afforded by the applicant permitting viewing of the film by officers of the Service. This was to permit validation of the '12A' rating expressed by the applicant. See Appendix 3.
- 3.15** The expertise for film classification is considered to exist with BBFC and other statutory bodies established for this function. The option to validate the '12A' rating was not taken in this instance.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 20th August, 2025**

- 3.16 The applicant has identified that no tickets are to be made available for children for the screening.
- 3.17 The matter was discussed with the Chair of the Licensing Committee and the appropriate course of action was considered to be that the film should be allowed to be shown as an unclassified film with a rating of '18'.
- 3.18 The applicant was agreeable to screen the film as an unclassified film with a rating of '18'
- 3.19 Legal Services advised that this decision could be made under the delegated authority of the Strategic Director of Place and Economy (in accordance with para 2.3 of the Scheme of Delegation which deals with emergencies and cases of urgency) subject to advising the appropriate Chair and reporting the matter to the Licensing Committee at their next meeting.
- 3.20 This report is to inform Members that the Strategic Director of Place & Economy exercised his powers of delegated authority and approved the exhibition of "The Negotiator" in Cineworld, Odyssey Arena on 25 June 2025 as part of the 'Docs Irelands' series of international documentary films with an '18' Rating.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

None. Officers will carry out inspections before and during the events which will be catered for within existing Service budgets.

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

There are no issues associated with this report.

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

Restricted Item

The information associated with the following item 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 item as, due to the nature of the item, 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.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 20th August, 2025**

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.

**Update regarding legal proceedings concerning
a decision of the Licensing Committee to refuse
an application for new HMO licences for
Flats 1 and 2, 6 Sandhurst Road**

The Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning) presented the Committee with an update on legal proceedings concerning a decision it had made to refuse an application for new HMO licences for Flats 1 and 2, 6 Sandhurst Road.

After discussion, the Committee noted the update and agreed:-

- that the Council would consent to the Statutory Appeal based on legal advice received from Counsel;
- to the County Court in Belfast granting the Applicant a 5 year HMO licence with the special condition that it was prohibited from operating the properties as DIME (Dispersed Intensively Managed Emergency) accommodation, and;
- to allow the Applicants a period of 6 months to comply with the licence condition.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 12th August, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murphy (Chairperson);
Aldermen Lawlor, McCullough and Rodgers;
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bell, Brennan,
T. Brooks, Carson, Doran, D. Douglas, S. Douglas,
Garrett, Hanvey, Magee,
McCabe, McCann 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),
Mr. D. O’Kane, Acting Planning Manager (Plans and
Policy)
Ms. C. Reville, Principal Planning Officer;
Ms. L. Walshe, Principal Planning Officer;
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Groogan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July, 2025, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Doran declared an interest in respect of item 12d on the agenda - LA04/2024/1865/O - 3no. detached dwellings part 2 storey part 3 storey (amended plans) - Land between No 22 Squires View and Nos 57 and 59 Squires Hill Road, in that his employer had undertaken work with the developer.

Committee Site Visits

Note of Committee Site Visits

The Committee noted the site visits.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

Pre-emptive Committee Site Visits

The Committee agreed to undertake a site visit to the following application sites:

- LA04/2024/2134/F - Mixed use scheme for new community recreational facilities, including basketball court, parkland and residential development comprising 40no social/affordable housing units with landscaping and associated works. - Site of the former Dunmurry Cricket Club, Ashley Park, Dunmurry, Belfast BT17 0QQ, located north of 1-10 Ashley Park and south of 1-20 Areema Grove and Areema Drive; and
- LA04/2024/0948/F and LA04/2024/0955/LBC Derelict lands at and to the rear of numbers 34-36 The Mount, Belfast, BT5 4NA Redevelopment of listed buildings and lands to the rear for a residential development comprising 20no. townhouses and 6no. apartments with associated landscaping, parking and site works.

**Notification of Provision/Removal
of Parking Bays**

The Committee noted the Notice of Removal of Parking Bay in relation to 10 Castlereagh Place.

Notification from Statutory Bodies - Stopping Up Order

The Committee noted the Notice of Proposed Stopping-Up at St. Andrew's Square West.

**Notifications from Statutory Bodies:
Abandonment and Extinguishment**

The Committee noted the Notices of Proposed Abandonment at Glencairn Road, Little Victoria Street, Exchange Street, Wandsworth Road and Maple Hill.

**Notifications from Statutory Bodies: Experimental
Traffic Control Scheme**

Waiting Restrictions - Bedford Street

The Committee noted the Notice of Experimental Traffic Control Scheme (Waiting Restrictions – Bedford Street).

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

Planning Appeals Notified

The Committee noted the appeals decisions.

Planning Decisions Issued

The Committee noted the planning decisions issued in June and July, 2025.

Live applications for Major Development

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

Committee Decisions that have yet to issue

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

Miscellaneous Reports

**Listing of 174 Upper Malone Road and Gardner
Robb Building, City Hospital, 51 Lisburn Road**

The Committee noted and supported the proposed listing of 174 Upper Malone Road and the Gardner Robb Building, City Hospital.

Committee Review of Implemented Applications

The Committee noted the arrangements for site visits to implemented schemes and the procedure for proposing visits to specific schemes.

The Planning Manager (Development Management) invited Elected Members to contact the Planning Service with suggestions for sites to visit and that potential sites would be discussed with the Chair.

Local Applications Subject to Objections from NI Water

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

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

Planning Applications previously considered

LA04/2022/1046/F - Proposed demolition of existing building and construction of a residential development consisting of 14 No. units (9 No. apartments within a three storey building and 5 No. two storey terraced dwellings) with associated landscaping and car parking (amended description). - 18 Annadale Avenue

The Planning Manager (Development Management) outlined the application to the Committee, upon which consideration had been deferred at its meetings in March, April and June, 2025, and explained that the applicant had provided a viability assessment which demonstrated that the scheme would not remain viable if affordable housing was provided. He reported that the viability assessment had been independently appraised by Naylor Devlin, acting on behalf of the Council, which confirmed that the scheme would be unviable.

He informed the Committee that the applicant had agreed to a viability review mechanism which would reappraise the viability of the scheme prior to commencement of development that would be secured by a Section 76 planning agreement, which had been agreed in principle.

He reported that it was the view of officers that Policy ENV2 was satisfied and that the applicant had demonstrated that it was not feasible to retain the existing building from a viability perspective, and that retention of the original building would restrict access to the rear.

The Planning Manager explained that the applicant had provided viability information regarding different options to retain the existing building which concluded that retention was unviable, and having regard to the independent appraisal which confirmed unviability, demolition was considered acceptable.

He stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission was granted, subject to conditions and the agreed Section 76 planning agreement, to secure a viability review of the scheme, prior to commencement.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. H. Warner to the meeting, attending in objection to the application.

Ms. Warner explained that she resided in a neighbouring property and had concerns with regard to the potential impact of the proposed development. She stated that the proposal would lead to loss of light, overshadowing and result in the removal of established trees and vegetation to the rear of the site.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. E. Morgan, Planning Agent, speaking on behalf of the applicant, to the meeting. Mr. Morgan stated that a pre-application discussion had been submitted to the Council in October, 2020 and that the Council had confirmed that the principle of development was acceptable on the site and based on that guidance, the applicant proceeded to purchase the property.

He stated that the appointed design team had explored a range of development options with the initial brief to retain, extend and repurpose the existing building, however, those options proved unviable.

He stated that all options had been independently verified by Naylor Devlin and concluded that retention was not viable, however, the applicants had committed to use sustainability principles by salvaging materials such as red brick and roof tiles for reuse in the proposed development.

He highlighted that the existing building was not listed or located within a conservation area and that a previous planning approval for demolition and redevelopment for 14 apartments was granted in 2009. He pointed out that current regulations would permit demolition without the requirement of planning consent.

He stated that the proposal would reconfigure the site layout to enhance the public realm and outlined the planning history and associated costs. He explained that the retention was not feasible, demonstrated by robust evidence and that the refusal would discourage developers and investors in a time when house building should be encouraged.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the social housing element of the viability options, the Planning Manager explained that Policy HOU5 permitted case specific assessments where a scheme had not proven viable.

A Member indicated that she was not content with the proposed demolition, despite the building not having been in a conservation area or listed, as it did make a positive contribution of significant character to Annadale Avenue. She referred to the officer's report and pointed out that advice had been sought from DfC HED at the Pre-Application Discussion stage and that HED had stated *"the existing building, Busy Bees, contributes significant character to Annadale Avenue and HED advises that it is a prime candidate for local listing"* and she explained that the existing building's architectural features were of historical value.

She added that the proposed replacement building was significantly larger and did not sit well within the context of the area. She referred to Policy ENV2, stating that proposals should seek to avoid demolition and reuse existing structures as far as possible and that proposal to recycle material would not mitigate the loss of the building in terms of its contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

Proposal

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Hanvey,

“That the Committee refuses to grant planning permission on the basis that the existing building contributes significant character to the surrounding area.”

Amendment

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor Doran,

“That planning permission is granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement to secure a viability review.”

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

The original proposal standing in the name of Councillor T. Brooks was put to the meeting, with twelve Members voting for and six against and it was declared carried.

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the reasons for refusal.

LA04/2024/1466/F - Ground floor extension and alterations to provide 1 No. retail unit. Two storey rear extension. Rear dormer. Change of use of first & second floor level and part of ground floor level to 6 bed / 6 person HMO (amended description and plans). - 41 Rosetta Road

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key issues for consideration:

- 129 third party objections had been received;
- The scheme was compliant with Policy HOU10 in that the 10% threshold for HMOs on that stretch of the Rosetta Road has not yet been reached;
- There was sufficient provision for bin storage whilst retaining sufficient amenity space;
- Ground floor to be retained as commercial;
- The ground floor retail extension was acceptable in principle; and

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

- DfI Roads had no concerns in terms of traffic and parking.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. P. Bradshaw MLA to the meeting, who attended in objection to the application.

Ms. Bradshaw explained that she was representing 129 objectors. She stated that it was an area of historic flooding and that the existing drainage infrastructure was overburdened and could not sustain additional demand and pointed out that NI Water had recommended refusal for those reasons.

She highlighted issues with regard to transport, parking and traffic, stating that no additional parking had been provided for within the proposal.

She stated that, in terms of overcrowding, the application site was the equivalent to a typical three-bed semi-detached house, however, the proposal was for more units than the property's footprint could accommodate.

She stated that the objectors were of the opinion that the location was unsuitable and the design was out of character with the surrounding properties. She explained that the area was typically quiet family orientated neighbourhood, with long term residents, and that residents had concerns with regard to noise, antisocial behaviour, transient occupation, disruption to the community cohesion, and feared that approval of the application would set a precedent within a traditionally residential area.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to the flooding history of the application site, Mr. C. Heath, who was in attendance for DfI Rivers, explained that applications are assessed on the sources of flooding and from the evidence provided. The source was out of sewer flooding from the drainage network which lay outside the site boundary. He stated that there was a small evidence of surface water flooding on the site, however, it was not significant enough to trigger a drainage assessment and pointed out that the revised site layout had provided soft landscaping which would aid in the mitigation of surface water runoff.

In response to a Member's question Mr. Heath confirmed that, if the proposal was to proceed, it would provide an improvement to the surface water drainage.

A Member asked Ms. C. Purvis, who was in attendance for DfI Roads, to outline why DfI Roads had stated that the parking provision within the proposal was adequate. Ms. Purvis explained that two parking surveys had been undertaken which indicated that available parking had been more than sufficient. The Member stated that she had attended a site visit at the application site and was not of the opinion that there was adequate parking provision and that the quality of the design was not in keeping with the existing context as the extension sat significantly forward of the existing building line and that there was known historical flooding at the application site.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

Proposal

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Brennan, and

Resolved - "That the Committee refuses to grant planning permission on the basis that the design of the proposal was not complementary to the surrounding area and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the reasons for refusal."

LA04/2024/1654/F - Change of use from a 7-bedroom dwelling house (C1) to a 7 bed/ 9 person House of Multiple Occupancy (Sui Generis) - 432 Falls Road

The Planning Manager (Development Management) summarised the application for the Committee and referred to the following key issues for consideration:

- Policy HOU10 – the site was not within a Housing Management Area and the proposal fell under the 10% threshold for the number of HMOs on a residential street (there were currently 4 HMOs on the entire Falls Road and none within 300m either side of the site);
- No adverse impact on neighbour amenity;
- All rooms exceed the space standards;
- Parking survey demonstrated sufficient parking in the area with no objection from DfI Roads; and
- Sufficient bin storage/amenity space - the site was within a 12-minute walk of Bog Meadows Nature Reserve and a 10-minute walk from Falls Park.

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

Proposal

Moved by Councillor Carson,
Seconded by Councillor Garrett, and

Resolved – "That the Committee refuses to grant planning permission on the basis of the lack of parking provision which would greatly impact the amenity of local residents, contrary to Policy TRAN8."

The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the reasons for refusal

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

**LA04/2024/1865/O - 3no. detached dwellings part
2 storey part 3 storey (amended plans) - Land
between No 22 Squires View and Nos 57 and 59
Squires Hill Road**

The Principal Planning Manager provided an overview of the application to the Committee and outlined the following key issues:

- Principle of residential dwellings at this location;
- Impact on existing residential;
- Housing density;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design;
- Amenity space;
- Overshadowing;
- Overlooking;
- Access and parking;
- Waste management;
- Landscaping and trees;
- Topography of the site; and
- Climate change.

She reported that 16 third party objections had been received and considered and stated that the proposal would result in the loss of open space, contrary to Policy OS1.

She stated that the proposal was not considered to be in conformity with the character of the area and would conflict with adjacent uses and appear overly dominant when viewed from the adjacent property, contrary to Policy RD1. She added that the proposal would not be of sufficient design quality due to inappropriate engineering operations, ground remodelling works and associated retaining structures, and would encroach beyond the established building line, contrary to Policy DES1.

She informed the Committee that, having regard to the development plan, planning history on the site and other material considerations, the proposal was considered unacceptable, and refusal was therefore recommended.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. D. Monaghan, MBA Planning, who attended on behalf of the applicant.

Mr. Monaghan explained that the application site was zoned for housing development in the draft BMAP, not zoned for open space and did not function as open space.

He stated that, when the Squire's View development was approved in 2000, the site and adjoining land were shown on the landscape plan as undeveloped area, with two houses subsequently approved and built on the adjoining land.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

He pointed out that the Planning Service claimed that the application was open space, however, an application to build four houses on the site was made in 2020 and the Planning Service had accepted that the site was not open space.

He stated that there had previously been complaints that the site attracted antisocial behaviour and to leave it unmanaged and underdeveloped would likely lead to further antisocial issues.

He referred to design issues and pointed out that the application was for outline planning permission and the drawings which had been submitted with the application were illustrative only and that final drawings would be agreed at the reserved matters state, should permission be granted.

He stated that the drawings demonstrated how three dwellings could be developed on the site in a manner that was sympathetic to its topography and to the character of the built development in the area.

He stated that the proposal would not create conflict with an adjoining property, that the site had been surveyed and that proposed dwellings 1 and 2 did not face in the same direction as the proposed replacement dwelling, while dwelling 3 was 40 metres from its rear elevation, which had no habitable room windows facing the site.

He concluded by stating that the site was not open space and was capable of delivering three high quality new dwellings that would not result in any harm to surrounding properties or the local environment.

A Member expressed his frustration that the application site was referred to as open space and it was locally known as waste ground and historically and that it was understood that houses were to be built on the site. He stated that the application would solve antisocial behaviour issues associated with the site. He added that the proposed retaining wall would retain the character of the area.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the site was previously and currently zoned for housing and a housing development had been approved. She stated that the site did meet the requirement of being existing open space and, in its current form, the application was not considered acceptable.

The Chairperson enquired as to whether surveys had been undertaken in relation to subsidence at the application site. In response the Planning Manager stated that it would be an engineering issue for the developer to solve but could potentially become a planning issue and explained that the issue could be dealt with though a condition.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

Proposal

Moved by Alderman McCullough,
Seconded by Councillor Carson,

“That the Committee grants planning permission, subject to conditions and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with the concerns about subsidence insofar as they may be relevant and any other issues that might arise, provided that they are not substantive.”

On a vote, thirteen Members voted for the proposal and five against and it was declared carried.

**LA04/2025/0122/F - Demolition of 4 no garages
and erection of 2 no. semi-detached dwellings,
part 2 storey part 3 storey (amended description)
(additional plans) - Lands Between 14 and 16
Lancedean Road**

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application and summarised the following key issues:

- Principle of residential dwellings at the location;
- Impact on existing residential dwellings;
- Housing density;
- Adaptable and accessible accommodation;
- Design;
- Amenity space;
- Overshadowing;
- Overlooking;
- Access and parking;
- Waste management;
- Landscaping and trees; and
- Climate change.

She reported that 11 third-party objections had been received and addressed within the report and that the proposal respected the topography of the site and would not result in overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing or dominance.

She stated that the proposal would be in conformity with the character of the existing residential area and that DfI Roads, BCC Tree Officer, Environmental Health and NI Water had offered no objections to the proposal.

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

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Coulter to the meeting, who attended in objection to the application.

Mrs. Coulter explained that she was speaking on behalf of the 17 households which were most affected and stated that there were factual inaccuracies within the case officer's report.

She outlined concerns with regard to the following areas:

- Size – that the size of the site had been overestimated;
- Overlooking, loss of light and overshadowing – obscure glass on ground floor would not address overlooking;
- Parking and access – the Council had begun using a smaller bin lorry due to parking issues; and
- Landscaping – a tree surgeon had confirmed that excavations would severely damage the root structure of the Scots Pine tree.

She stated that there were many more omissions and misinformation, that included limited dimensions, out of date site maps and listed the policies that she believed the proposal was contrary to.

She concluded by stating that a decision to approve the application would be based on inaccurate information that included the size of the site, which was inaccurate as to its distance from neighbouring properties. She added that local residents wanted the site to be developed, but in compliance with policies and respectful of the site whilst accommodating the topography and she asked the Committee to refuse the application.

A Member stated that she agreed with the concerns of the objectors in that there would be a degree of overlooking and that the root protection area of the existing trees conflicted with the proposed foundations.

The Planning Manager pointed out that BCC Tree Officer had offered no objection with regard to the existing trees.

Proposal

Moved by Councillor T. Brooks,
Seconded by Councillor Abernethy,

“That the Committee refuses to grant planning permission on the basis that the design of the proposal was not complementary to the surrounding area and delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the reasons for refusal.”

On a vote, ten Members voted for the proposal with nine against and it was declared carried.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

LA04/2024/2044/F Erection of 895 room Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) across 9-20 storey building blocks with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space including landscaped courtyard and roof terraces and ancillary accommodation. With additional use outside term time (no more than 50% of the rooms) as short-term let accommodation and (no more than 50% of the rooms) accommodation for use by further or higher education institutions. Lands at 39 Corporation Street

The Planning Manager summarised the application for the Committee which was being reported back as officers were recommending a change to the heads of terms in the Section 76 planning agreement in relation to the public realm.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 planning agreement, and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and Section 76 planning agreement and to deal with any other issues that might arise, including resolving the final responses from Environmental Health, DAERA NIEA and SES, provided that the issues were not substantive

New Planning Applications

LA04/2025/0242/F - Erection of hotel (164 beds) including ground floor bar / restaurant; proposed heights of 8 storeys (c. 26.8m to parapet) at Donegall Pass, reducing to 5 storeys at Botanic Avenue and 4 storeys at Ratcliffe Street; and associated works including demolition of existing building - 2 - 10 Botanic Avenue

The Principal Planning Officer provided the Committee with an overview of the application and highlighted the following key areas for consideration:

- Principle of hotel development;
- Design and placemaking;
- Climate change;
- Access and transport;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Waste management;

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

- Natural heritage;
- Section 76 legal agreement; and
- Pre-application community consultation.

She explained that the proposal did not include dedicated parking for the hotel which was considered to be acceptable given the highly sustainable city centre location and that a travel plan had been submitted which promoted alternatives to the private car.

She reported that DfI Roads, HED and NIEA had no objections to the proposal and that third party representations had been received in support of the proposed development.

She stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and all relevant material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions and a Section 76 legal agreement to secure employability and skills developer contributions.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. G. Southall, Planning Agent attending on behalf of the applicant, to the meeting.

Mr. Southall explained that the applicant had worked collaboratively with Council officers to finalise the design and all other aspects of the proposal to secure officer endorsement and agreement on the recommendation to approve. He stated that the applicant had positively and extensively engaged with the local community which was evident from the letters of support.

He highlighted that the applicant was an award winning developer with a proven track record in delivering significant developments within Belfast city centre and that the proposal represented a significant investment in the city that would revitalise a long term vacant and derelict site to create a high quality new building.

The Committee granted planning permission, subject to conditions and a Section 76 Agreement to secure employability and skills developer contributions, 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, including the outstanding SES consultation, provided that they were not substantive.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

LA04/2024/2077/F - Proposed change of use from office space (B1) and storage or distribution (B4) to Bowling Alley, Restaurant, Indoor Golf, Children's Soft Play, VR Zone and Amusements, Smoking Area, Car Parking and Associated Site Works. Proposal includes changes to elevations and roof profile. (Change to Description). - Adelaide Business Centre 2-6 Apollo Road

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application and referred to the following key issues for consideration:

- Principle of change of use;
- Design and placemaking;
- Access and transport;
- Climate change;
- Health impacts;
- Environmental protection;
- Waste-water infrastructure;
- Waste storage;
- Employability and skills; and
- Pre-application community consultation.

She explained that the proposal involved alterations to the existing elevations which would reflect the proposed use and were in keeping with the surrounding context of the area.

She stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and all relevant material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

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 they were not substantive.

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

LA04/2023/2868/F - Section 54 application to vary condition 04 of Planning permission Z/1996/0985 to allow for the sale of convenience goods, non bulky comparison goods and bulky comparison goods. (Amended Description). - Lesley Retail Park, Unit 1 Boucher Road

The Principal Planning Officer outlined the application to the Committee and stated that, having regard to the Development Plan, relevant planning policies and consultation responses, it was recommended that the variation of condition be approved.

In response to a request from a Member with regard to an increase in non-bulky goods use within the Boucher Road area, the Principal Planning Officer agreed that future reports would include percentage growth statistics regarding type of use within the area.

The Committee approved the variation of condition and delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Building Control to finalise the wording of the conditions and to deal with any other matters that might arise, provided they were not substantive.

LA04/2025/0537/F - Proposed erection of drive through café (amended design to that approved under LA04/2021/2815/F) and retention of amended parking layout, landscaping finishes, switchroom unit and associated site works (amendments to that approved under LA04/2021/2815/F - no change to supermarket building). - Lands at access to Olympia Leisure Centre, directly opposite and approx. 70m east of Nos 9-15 Boucher Road

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application and highlighted the following key issues:

- Principle of café and switchroom;
- Design and placemaking;
- Access and transport; and
- Impact on amenity.

She stated that, having regard to the Development Plan and all relevant material considerations, it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to traffic management proposals on match days at Windsor Park, Mr. D. Monaghan, Planning Agent, in attendance on behalf of the applicant, explained that the applicant, Lidl, currently engaged

**Meeting of Planning Committee,
Tuesday, 12th August, 2025**

with PSNI, the Council and stadium operators on match days and would continue to do so.

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

**LA04/2025/0311/A - Street Art directly on facade
of Donegall Street Elevation - Telegraph
Building, 124-144 Royal Avenue**

The Principal Planning Officer summarised the application and referred the Committee to the following key considerations:

- Impact on Listed Building;
- Impact on public safety; and
- Impact on amenity.

She explained that the Historic Environment Division (HED) and DfI Roads had been consulted and offered no objection. She stated that the proposed advertisement was of acceptable design quality and that, although large in scale, would contribute to a visually interesting streetscape and would not negatively impact on amenity.

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

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 7th August, 2025

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor M. Donnelly (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Doherty;
Alderman McCoubrey; and
Councillors Anglin, R. Brooks, Collins, P. Donnelly,
S. Douglas, Ferguson, Groogan,
Lyons, Magee, McCann, Murray and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Copeland and Councillors T. Brooks and Maskey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 12th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Notice of Motion - National Park City

The Director presented the following motion to the Committee, which had been proposed by Councillor Groogan and seconded by Councillor T. Brooks:

“This Council recognises the ambition set out in the Belfast Agenda that Belfast will be a “vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable” city by 2035, as well as somewhere “where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing”.

The Council celebrate the good work already happening right across the city that will help us achieve this aim; alleyway greening, community growing projects, the Blackstaff greenway, development of a neighbourhood net-zero framework, the One Million Trees project, and many more initiatives working to improve biodiversity, make green spaces more accessible and help make Belfast a greener and cleaner city.

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 7th August, 2025**

The Council believes that a city where people, places and nature are better connected is one that not only helps us to tackle our climate and biodiversity crisis but leads to better health and wellbeing outcomes for everyone in the city.

As such, this Council commits to supporting the move to become a National Park City, convening stakeholders from across the city, improving support to empower local communities, bringing together existing projects, and developing a clear roadmap to how we collectively can restore nature for the benefit of people, wildlife and planet.”

He reminded the Committee that, as it had responsibility for making recommendations on the Council’s approach to addressing the climate crisis and the Council’s role and responsibilities at city level, including but not limited to considering public campaigns/public education programmes which the Council might wish to deliver to change behaviour amongst residents and businesses; and to take account of the Council’s statutory responsibilities on sustainable development, the motion had been referred to it.

A number of Members expressed their support for the motion and their aspirations for the City to become a designated “National Park City”.

One Member requested that the Committee invite Dr. Neil Galway, Senior Lecturer at the School of Natural and Built Environment at Queen’s University, and Mr. Conor McKinney, Wild Belfast, to attend a future meeting to discuss the issue.

A further Member added that he would like to see officers engage with their counterparts in the City of Galway, which was also aspiring to become a National Park City.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:

- to invite Dr. Neil Galway, Senior Lecturer at the School of Natural and Built Environment at Queen’s University, and Mr. Conor McKinney, Wild Belfast, to attend a future meeting;
- that officers would liaise with their counterparts in the City of Galway as part of the scoping exercise; and
- that a subsequent report be brought to the Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential cost implications.

**Response to the draft Third Northern Ireland Climate
Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP3) 2024-2029**

(Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members about the recent public consultation on the Draft NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2024-2029

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

- I. Note that the NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme has been drafted and refers to a series of climate risks for Northern Ireland based on the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022.**
- II. Note that the current Programme out for consultation identifies a range of actions to be carried out by local government up to 2029.**
- III. Retrospectively approve the response that was submitted by Belfast City Council to the Public Consultation which closed on 4th August 2025.**
- IV. Agree that further discussion and engagement should be requested with DAERA on the actions to understand the resource implications of these on the Council before they can be agreed and adopted.**

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Background

The Climate Change Act 2008 places a statutory duty on Northern Ireland Executive Departments to lay programmes before the Northern Ireland Assembly, which set out their objectives, policies, proposals and timelines for introducing those policies and proposals in response to the most recent UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) which was published in January 2022.

To fulfil this legal requirement the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has led on the development of a series of single coordinated adaptation programmes, which are known as the Northern Ireland

Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP), since the 2008 Act came into effect.

The recent public consultation, which opened on 9 June 2025 and closed on 4th August 2025 sought the views of stakeholders on the draft third iteration of these programmes (NICCAP3) which has been developed with input from all Departments and a range of key stakeholders, in response to the latest Third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3).

The Climate Change Committee are obligated under section 57 of the 2008 Act to produce an Independent Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA-IA) on a five yearly cycle, which is used to inform the development of the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) which must be laid in Parliament every five years under section 56.

Section 60 of the Act provides for Northern Ireland Departments to respond to each CCRA through an adaptation programme setting out:

- the objectives of the department in relation to adaptation to climate change,
- the department's proposals and policies for meeting those objectives, and
- the timescales for introducing those proposals and policies.

Effective climate change adaptation action requires a collaborative approach and so in recognition of this, DAERA has led on the development of a coordinated Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP) with the input of adaptation responses from across each of the NI Executive Departments.

The consultation document states that it also recognises the important role that key stakeholders including Local Government, academia, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and businesses can play in creating a climate resilient Northern Ireland, and in acknowledgement of this, they have also included an extensive range of actions from outside of Departments in the NICCAP3 Adaptation Delivery Plan.

3.2 What is in NICCAP 3?

Part 1 provides information on the legislative context for NICCAP3 and details on the consultation itself including how to respond as well as a short introduction to the two main responses to climate change:

– **Mitigation**

Climate change mitigation refers to actions or activities that limit emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from entering the atmosphere and/or reduce their levels in the atmosphere.

– **Adaptation**

Climate adaptation means taking action to prepare for and adjust to the current and projected impacts of climate change.

Part 2 covers NICCAP3 itself including how DAERA has chosen to structure it and why it provides detail on each of the Key Areas within NICCAP3 which cover 5 key areas of sectoral impact as follows:

- Natural Capital;
- Food Security;
- Infrastructure Services;
- People and the Built Environment; and
- Disruption to Business and Supply Chains.

This chapter also provides details on the statutory and best practice impact assessments which were carried out on the draft NICCAP3.

Part 3 provides details on the next steps, following the close of the consultation, including information on the confidentiality of responses to the consultation, as well as on Data Protection and Freedom of Information consideration.

3.3 Actions relating to Belfast City Council

There are 28 actions identified in the programme that are either owned by the Council, councils are required to support delivery of, or they are referenced in the programme description.

As part of our participation on the Local Government Climate Action Network (LGCAN), the following ongoing projects were highlighted and input into the programme:

- The Belfast Tree Strategy
- The Belfast Sustainable Food Strategy
- Preparation of a Climate Change Risk Assessment, Action Plan and Investment Framework

As well as that, the Council is listed as partners on the following initiatives:

- Greening the City (Belfast Healthy Cities)
- Regional Coordination of Adaptation (Climate NI)
- UPSURGE (QUB)
- SPACE (QUB)

Other actions that have an impact on Council programmes and operations include:

- NI Priority Species List (DAERA)
- NI Historic Environment Policy (DfC)
- Living with Water in Belfast Plan (DfI)
- The Eastern Transport Plan (DfI)
- The Connswater Community Greenway (Eastside Partnership)
- NILGA Elected Member Development Programme (NILGA)
- TalX 2 (University College Cork)

Actions relating to our Emergency Planning functions are:

- Severe Weather Debriefing (RCRG)
- NI Civil Contingencies Framework (TEO)
- Continued working by RCRG with communities impacted by flooding

3.4 Actions Endorsed by SOLACE/NILGA

There are 11 actions that the Council is required to deliver on that were endorsed by SOLACE in 2024. Some of these are on target to deliver, whilst others will require resources to be identified and deployed in their delivery across Climate, Emergency Planning, Spatial Planning, Community Planning, CNS and Finance and Resources. These are:

- Climate Adaptation Planning By 2025, councils will be delivering at least the first iteration of a climate adaptation action plan, linked to a regularly reviewed risk register, in alignment with public body reporting duties brought forward by DAERA.
- Corporate Risk and Adaptation Climate change adaptation will be embedded in each council corporate plan by 2029, recognising the challenges of increasing climate impacts over coming decades.

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 7th August, 2025**

- **Develop a baseline of Climate Impacts on Finance From 2025, councils will create a climate impact ‘tagging’ system, to create a baseline of financial impacts on council business operations from severe weather events. This will complement existing Met Office information gathering on non-financial impacts of weather events.**
- **Emergency Planning By 2029, Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) will have widened its remit to consider the promotion and development of societal resilience.**
- **Up to and beyond 2029, the Regional Community Resilience Group will continue to work with communities impacted by flooding to enhance preparedness, to better understand requirements for support, and identify what interventions should be prioritised to mitigate the impacts of flooding.**
- **Spatial Planning Councils will ensure local development plans demonstrate how climate adaptation considerations will be embedded in all approval decisions, recognising increasing climate impacts over coming decades.**
- **Local Development Plans will specify that developments are designed using the most up-to-date floodplain definitions from DfI, and councils will publish figures of how many approvals are granted by exception annually.**
- **Green and Blue Infrastructure targets are set by councils to ensure places and people are well informed and more resilient to more intense and frequent flooding and heatwaves.**
- **Community Planning Councils will collaborate through the community planning partnership to undertake work on how adaptation relates to community planning by 2026.**
- **Procurement Councils will ensure that any sustainability/net zero procurement screening includes climate adaptation considerations, to take advantage of co-benefits, ensure consistency and avoid unintended consequences.**
- **Food growing/local ownership Work with sustainable food places partnerships/communities to develop initiatives which enable more local food growing and community-owned food partnerships by 2029.**

3.5 Public Consultation Response

The response to the public consultation is attached in Appendix I for noting purposes.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.1 At this stage there is no immediate resource or financial ask of the Council to respond to this public consultation.**

Should the actions be adopted, resources will be required across departments to ensure their effective delivery and compliance with the plan. Identifying what the financial and resource implications are will require further cross-department consultation and agreement across Council.

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

While NICCAP3 contains a wide range of policies and proposals which cut across multiple sectors of society, the consultation document states that because NICCAP3 is a high-level programme which serves as a coordination document for these policies and proposals its creation and presentation to the Assembly does not in itself impact on any of the areas covered by the listed assessments. However, as policies and proposals contained within NICCAP3 may impact on each area to varying degrees, it will be the responsibility of the owners of such policies or proposals to ensure they are individually screened or assessed as part of their development as appropriate.

As a result of this determination, in each case DAERA has either found there to be no impact from the laying of NICCAP3 at the Assembly or have screened NICCAP3 out from a full assessment.”

In response to a Member’s question regarding allotments, the Adaptation and Resilience Advisor outlined that the growing areas across the City had already been mapped out, having been considered as part of the “Right to Grow” Motion which had been brought through the Council. She also provided further details of the Sustainable Food Programme and the Community Growing Forum.

A further Member requested that even small pockets of land in inner City areas be considered for green patches for growing, similar to one which had recently been established in the Short Strand area.

In response to a further Member’s query, she explained that officers were engaging with a number of different statutory bodies, including the Housing Executive, on accessing land for community growing and that the Belfast Tree Strategy would ensure that the Council planted the right trees in the right locations.

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 7th August, 2025**

In response to a further Member's suggestion of utilising the rooftops across the City for growing, the Climate Commissioner advised the Committee that some rooftops were better suited for solar panels.

A further Member raised the recent High Court judgement which had stalled the A5 road upgrade due to Climate Change legislation and queried whether officers were taking such issues into account. The Adaptation and Resilience confirmed that officers regularly engaged with the Capital Projects Team and that the recently adopted Climate Action Plan had been developed across Council departments to ensure that integrated mitigation and adaptation planning was taking place in the Council.

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

Elected Member Training

(Ms. B. Roddy, Project Support Officer (Climate), attended in connection with this item.)

The Project Support Officer (Climate) outlined that, following discussions with Elected Members, it was proposed that a two hour in-person climate training workshop would be delivered immediately after the Committee meeting on 11th September, 2025. She explained that the workshop would be delivered by Sustainable NI and supported by members of the Council's Climate Team. The Committee was advised that the content would be tailored to the findings of a training needs assessment carried out with Members of the Climate and City Resilience Committee.

The cost for up to 15 Elected Members to attend the training was covered within the Council's subscription as a partner to Sustainable NI for 2025/26. If additional places were required, the cost would be £150 per delegate, a 50% reduction on the regular charge, and would be funded via the existing City and Organisational Strategy budget.

The Committee:

- I. noted that Sustainable NI would deliver a two hour in-person Climate Workshop, on Thursday 11th September 2025, immediately following the Committee meeting, as a pilot for the wider group of Elected Members;
- II. gave approval to commission training; and
- III. agreed that Members should confirm their attendance by 22nd August.

Restricted Item

The information contained in the report associated with the following item 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 item as,

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 7th August, 2025**

due to the nature of the item, 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.

**District Heat Network: Results from Heat Mapping
and Master-planning study for the City Centre**

The Climate Commissioner provided the Committee with an update on the high-level feasibility study of a Belfast City, Central Heat Network.

The Committee was reminded that Belfast City Council had committed to ambitious actions to address climate change across all areas of the Council and the City. The Council had commissioned a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) which had been launched in September 2024. The plan integrated detailed energy system modelling with extensive stakeholder engagement. The LAEP outlined five priority projects for the near term, including the development of a heat network. The BCC Working Group continued to support delivery and the work was coordinated within the Council via the City Regeneration and Development Board and at the City level through the Belfast Net Zero group which reported into the Our Planet Board.

The Committee was advised of the results of the heat mapping and master-planning study.

The Committee noted that the work had been funded through the Innovate UK Pathfinders Project and had been delivered in partnership with the Energy Systems Catapult. Discussions were underway regarding the funding of the next phase of feasibility work ahead of further engagement and updates on options for the next steps.

After discussion, the Committee noted:

- I. that Belfast City had particularly advantageous conditions for a heat network, due to the compact heat load, and variety of energy centre locations;
- II. that the work to date was a high-level study, that figures were subject to change as and when more detailed feasibility progressed - a site to host the energy centre, choice of technology, anchor loads and network route were variables which might change as feasibility progressed;
- III. that, to progress the heat network project, further investment was required in feasibility, and market engagement activities;

**Climate and City Resilience Committee,
Thursday, 7th August, 2025**

- IV. That further work was required to lower the heat tariff to one more closely aligned with the price of gas;
- V. the results of the market readiness assessment and business model analysis;
- VI. that the Climate Team had been engaging with key city stakeholders, central government departments and facilities managers and sustainability leads for the key base load buildings; and
- VII. that the Corporate Management Team be requested to consider the issue at a future meeting to move the project forward.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

Standards and Business Committee

Thursday, 21st August, 2025

MEETING OF THE STANDARDS AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Flynn (Chairperson);
The High Sheriff (Councillor McAteer);
Aldermen Lawlor and McCullough; and
Councillors Bower, Bradley, Carson, de Faoite,
P. Donnelly, D. Douglas, Lyons, McCallin,
McCormick, McDowell, I. McLaughlin,
R. McLaughlin and Murphy.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal
and Civic Services; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apology

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 24th June were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 1st July.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Withdrawn Item

The Committee noted that the motion under the heading "Belfast City Council Youth Forum's Campaign to extend votes to 16 and 17 years old" had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Motions

The Committee considered the following motions which had been received in advance of the Council's meeting on 1st September:

Review Funding Levels for the Summer Scheme Fund

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

**Standards and Business Committee,
Thursday, 21st August, 2025**

**Summer Scheme Providers to be inclusive of a
wider range of disabilities and individual needs**

The Motion was withdrawn from the agenda, as it was a duplication of work already being undertaken.

Motion in Support of Leisure Workers

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

Chairperson