



Subject:	30U30 Northern Ireland Climate Change-Makers Initiative 2025-26
Date:	19 th September 2025
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officers:	Debbie Caldwell, Belfast Climate Commissioner

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update members about an approach to Belfast City Council for support for the 30U30 (30 under 30) Northern Ireland Climate Change-Maker's programme. The programme is coordinated by the leading charity, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and their partner Podiem. The collaborative, cross sectoral leadership programme, featuring world-class speakers and experts, will be supported by organisations including the Garfield Weston Foundation, Pinsent Masons, and Danske Bank with a request for local authority involvement being addressed through this approach to Belfast City Council.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note the contents of the report and approve the contribution of £8,750 plus VAT to the overall programme costs.
3.0	Main report

3.1	<p>Now entering its 4th cohort, the 30 under 30 initiative is a climate focused initiative where young leaders from Northern Ireland have the opportunity to take part in an international learning programme, led by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and Podiem. Following the culmination of an exceptionally successful programme in 2024-5 (supported by Belfast City Council) a new cohort of young leaders will be competitively selected for 2025-6. Belfast City Council has been requested to support the programme of activity. Most of the 30U30 modules are being delivered in Belfast City Centre and the vast majority of the participants will either reside or work within the Belfast City Council footprint. The cohort will be diverse with a broad range of backgrounds, sectors and interest/expertise areas represented. Within the pilot programme over 55% of the group were female with a mix of those in education, employment and currently economically inactive.</p>
3.2	<p>From the outset the 30 Under 30 programme has been promoted to all and encouraging of applications from all backgrounds. The outcome of this has been significant participation from underrepresented or hard-to-reach demographics including: Neurodivergent; Unemployed; and Ethnic Minority Groups. 64% of participants to date have been female. The programme partners have indicated that they welcome the opportunity to work with Belfast City Council to promote the fourth cohort across the Council's networks to ensure that we continue to attract participants from hard-to-reach and underrepresented communities across the city.</p>
3.3	<p>Within the modular programme participants will learn from globally renowned thought leaders and exemplars across a range of relevant topics. These topics have been carefully crafted to create a cohort of leaders who will return to their fields of expertise with the tools to become planet positive change-makers in the short/long term. Speakers and facilitators from the previous cohorts included globally renowned individuals such as:</p>
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sir Jonathon Porritt CBE - Jonathon is an eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator on sustainable development. Co-Founder of Forum for the Future, he was formerly Director of Friends of the Earth; co-chair of the Green Party and a Trustee of WWF-UK • Richard Shotton – a renowned thought-leader and the author of The Choice Factory, a best-selling book available in 15 languages, which explains how behavioural science can solve leadership challenges. • Professor Ian Robertson, Neuroscientist, Psychologist & Author. Currently co-director of the Global Brain Health Institute and Emeritus Professor at Trinity College Dublin, he is widely recognised as one of the world's leading researchers in neuropsychology.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Thompson, an international speaker and social business leader who co-founded Social Bite in Edinburgh and helped to establish 'The Worlds Big Sleepout' which took place in 52 cities around the world. • Gerry Hussey, Ireland's leading health, wellbeing and performance coach, who has worked with many leading sports people and teams, and author of 'Awaken Your Power Within'. • Philip Hesketh, an international authority on influence and persuasion, who has worked with clients such as the BBC, Nestle, Walt Disney, Nike, Microsoft and Bank of America among others. • René Carayol MBE who has worked with leaders such as Mikael Gorbachev, Nelson Mandela, Sir Richard Branson, Bill Clinton, and Kofi Annan, and authored the book 'SPIKE'. He has been Chairman, CEO and MD of businesses and served on the boards of Marks and Spencer's and Pepsi. He is an authority on inclusivity and leadership.
3.5	<p>The programme includes an international element which will encourage and enable the NI climate change-makers to build relationships and collaborations with climate change-makers from other parts of the world through the 30 under 30 programme currently run by the North American Association for Environmental Education.</p>
3.6	<p>Whilst Belfast City Council's support represents a modest proportion of the overall budget (circa £100,000 in total) it will be crucial in making the initiative (the themes of which complement and supplement the Council's climate programme) a reality. The Council's support will resource the launch along with 6 modules/events featuring world-class speakers/experts and 2 showcase events, all taking place from October 2025 – June 2026.</p> <p>Potential benefits to Belfast City Council</p>
3.7	<p>The programme coordinators will ensure that Belfast City Council will be positioned as championing (along with the other partners) the creation and development of the next generation of local leaders who will lead work to address climate change in Northern Ireland. This will support the cities ambition, articulated in the Belfast Resilience Strategy, to "transition to a low-carbon economy in a generation". It will also build on work undertaken by the Council Climate Unit with young people through the Belfast Climate Commission and Council funded research on young people's perceptions of the climate crisis undertaken during COP26 in 2021. In supporting this programme, Belfast City Council will be going well beyond its own carbon footprint and direct activity, it is proactively inspiring and equipping those who have the ambition to transform industries (similar to Artemis and Responsible,</p>

	both from Belfast) and create global solutions (for example Catagen, also from Belfast) to our most pressing climate and environmental challenges.
3.8	In terms of profile, the Belfast City Council brand will be prominent on all of the initiative marketing material which will be launched to ensure mass awareness. The Council brand will also be highly visible at all of the modules (including the finale event) and a Council representative will be invited to participate in the press photos launching the event and at the finale event.
3.9	There is also an opportunity for a member of the Belfast City Council Climate team to present on how the city is playing its part in helping to avert a climate crisis. Previous cohorts have reported that hearing from BCC's Climate Commissioner was greatly beneficial. The cohort will feature some of NI's finest future leadership talent (including those from the local government sector), so this content will be very useful and relevant to the participants.
3.10	There is an opportunity for the Lord Mayor of Belfast to greet the group and hear how they are planning to create meaningful impact as a direct consequence of the programme. The Lord Mayor met with the 2024-5 cohort at City Hall and again as recently as 19 th June 2025 and had the opportunity to address, both the cohort and a select audience of stakeholders for a lunchtime networking and pitching event. A short video of the Lord Mayor greeting the group as part of the pilot programme in 2021 is visible at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3wl5qXyd48
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.12	£8,750 plus VAT which will be allocated from existing City and Organisational Strategy budgets.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Implications</u>
3.13	None.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - 30 Under 30 Climate Change-Makers Initiative 2025-6 - Value Impact Report for BCC.