



Subject:	DAERA Funding Award and Update on the NoM on Urban Meadows
Date:	7 th October 2025
Reporting Officer:	Stephen Leonard , Operational Director City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Edel Gowdy, Lead Officer, Open Space & Streetscene & Orla Maguire, Biodiversity Officer

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

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No

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If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Some time in the future

Never

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Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To inform members of the committee that in September 2025, Belfast City Council, was awarded £472,000 through the DAERA Challenge Fund and to update Members on progress in implementing the NoM on Urban Meadows.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note the DAERA funding and agree to proceed with project implementation on the Urban Meadow sites.
3.0	Main report

3.1	Background and Context
3.2	<p>In March 2024, invitations were issued for organisations to submit applications to the DAERA Challenge Fund. The Environmental Impact Priorities are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature and Climate Recovery: Building Ecological and Climate Resilience, Landscape, water, habitats, species and earth science condition and extent maintained and improved • Connecting People with the Environment: Connecting with the natural environment, understanding it and taking action to have a positive effect on it
3.3	Council officers submitted an application in March on Nature Recovery and a letter of offer was received in September.
3.4	The project objective is to develop a landscape scale Nature Recovery Network across Belfast increasing habitat extent, condition and connectivity for nature and people. Conservation Management Plans will be developed for key BCC sites and habitat enhancement plans for a suite of sites across Belfast. A public awareness campaign and training will be undertaken for staff and stakeholders. Opportunities to create demonstration sites and share knowledge will be identified.
3.5	<p>The total project cost is £522,500 with delivery up to 31 March 2028. As the project develops further reports will be brought to Committee for update.</p> <p><u>Notice of Motion on Urban Wildflower Meadows</u></p>
3.6	Members are reminded that in September 2023 Council agreed to a pilot project that aimed to identify one site for a wildflower meadow in each quadrant of the city. A bid for £50,000 was secured as part of the 2025/2026 estimates to support delivery of this initiative.
3.7	Officers have undertaken a series of actions and identified a preferred site for each quadrant of the city. A workshop was undertaken with OSSS Managers and a long list created. Following site visits to assess ecological benefits, viability and securing indicative costings the following sites have emerged as the preferred option per quadrant.

3.8	<p>North: Glencairn Park</p> <p>South: Ormeau Park</p> <p>East: Belmont Park</p> <p>West: Brook Leisure Centre</p>
3.9	<p>Site prioritisation is based on ecological, community and education benefits along with feasibility and resourcing.</p> <p>Finance and Resource implications</p> <p><u>DAERA Funding</u></p>
3.10	<p>There is a requirement of £50,000 match funding from BCC as part of the DAERA funding. This has been identified within existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Urban Meadows NoM</u></p>
3.11	<p>The indicative site costs for interventions are just under the £50,000 budget secured within the 2025/2026 estimates.</p> <p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p>
3.12	<p>There are no known equality or good relations implications associated with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Letter of Offer</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Urban Meadow Maps</p>