

Climate and City Resilience Committee

Thursday, 6th November, 2025

MEETING OF THE CLIMATE AND CITY RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor M. Donnelly (Chairperson);
Aldermen Copeland and McCoubrey;
Councillors Anglin, Bell, R. Brooks,
T. Brooks, P. Donnelly, S. Douglas,
Ferguson, Groogan, Lyons, Magee,
McCann, Meenehan, Murray and Walsh.

In attendance: Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;
Ms. D. Caldwell, Climate Commissioner;
Ms. B. Roddy, Project Support Officer (Climate); and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Collins and Groogan.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 9th October were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 3rd November.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Schedule of Meetings 2026

The Committee agreed to meet on the following dates and times in 2026:

- Thursday 15th January at 5.15 pm;
- Thursday 12th February at 5.15 pm;
- Thursday 12th March at 5.15 pm;
- Thursday 16th April at 5.15 pm;
- Thursday 14th May at 5.15 pm;
- Thursday 11th June at 5.15 pm;
- Thursday 13th August at 5.15 pm;
- Thursday 10th September at 5.15 pm;
- Thursday 8th October at 5.15 pm;

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- Thursday 12th November at 5.15 pm; and
- Thursday 10th December at 5.15 pm.

Restricted Item

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

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following 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 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.

Single Use of Plastics - Policy and Implementation Action Plan

(Mr. C. Quinn, Customer Development Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee was reminded that officers had been working in partnership with the contractor Eunomia to develop an initial Single Use Plastic (SUP) Policy and Action Plan for the Council. That process had been undertaken by analysing data to identify the actions that would form the basis of the Policy and Action Plan, which had been overseen by a corporate working group in accordance with best practice.

The Customer Development Manager outlined the principal aspects of the Policy and Action Plan and indicated that the specific actions were aimed at reducing the use of single use plastic across the organisation. The Action Plan, he explained, had been structured in accordance with three strategic themes, that being, to reduce the Council's reliance on single use plastic; the objective of working with suppliers and contractors to address the issue; and how the Council could work with the community in this regard. In addition, he pointed out, each of the strategic themes contained ten core objectives with associated actions to measure the effectiveness of the Policy and Action Plan.

The Committee commended officers on the work which they had undertaken and, after further discussion, approved the Single Use Plastic Policy and Action Plan and:

- noted the progress of the cross-departmental working group, with the initial focus on Council use/working with suppliers and contractors;
- noted that future workstreams would require action to be undertaken by event organisers and organisations using Council facilities;

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- noted that consideration would be given to undertaking a public consultation exercise in advance of the implementation of future workstreams;
- noted the indicative cost implications in progressing the SUP Action Plan in the 2025/26 financial year; and
- noted that the working group had submitted a response to DAERA's Plastic Pollution Plan for Northern Ireland, which had been placed on the agenda for the Committee's approval.

Notice of Motion Update - Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation

The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 12th June, it had deferred consideration of a report relating to the above-mentioned motion to enable a further report to be submitted that would outline the cost implications to the Council should the motion be adopted in full. The further report mentioned above is set out hereunder:

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

- 1.1 To respond to the Notice of Motion referred to this Committee by the Standards and Business Committee on 22nd May 2025 in relation to Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and the request to investigate cost implications made at Climate and City Resilience Committee on 12th June 2025.**

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to note that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure or fall within the remit of a particular Committee must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.**

At this time Members are asked to note the outline consideration of the Notice of Motion and potential cost implications.

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 The following Motion was referred to the Climate and City Resilience Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2025**

Motion: Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

“Recognising Northern Ireland’s commitment to achieve net zero by 2050, (and Belfast City Council’s previous motion

recognising a climate emergency), Belfast City Council will endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, an initiative to secure an international and legally binding treaty to phase out fossil fuels and will write to the Northern Ireland Executive as well as the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero urging them to support this initiative.”

Proposer: Councillor Anthony Flynn
Seconder: Councillor Brian Smyth

The Motion calls upon the Council to endorse the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and to write to the Northern Ireland Executive, the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero urging them to support this initiative.

3.2 Consideration of the Notice of Motion

The Notice of Motion to endorse the Non-Proliferation of Fossil Fuel Treaty has been considered by officers within the Climate team in terms of its effectiveness and potential cost implications.

- 3.3** Endorsing the Treaty means supporting the three central commitments: that being, ending the expansion of fossil fuel production; setting and equitable path to phase out existing coal, oil and gas; and ensuring a just transition for communities and workers affected by the energy shift.
- 3.4** Under The treaty, as a developed economy, Northern Ireland will be expected to phase out faster than less developed countries. The commitments in the Treaty compliment the obligations in the Paris Agreement. As of October 2025, sixteen countries and more than 130 cities (including 8 UK cities) and sub-national governments have officially endorsed the Treaty. The UK and Ireland have not officially endorsed the Treaty.
- 3.5** The Notice of Motion is aligned with the Council’s ambition of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2050. The ending of fossil fuel expansion is considered to be highly beneficial for the global climate and efforts made by nations, governments and organisations to decarbonise their activities with renewable technologies at the forefront of moving toward net zero. Aside from their impact on climate change, there are other significant co-benefits associated with a move away from fossil fuels as their continued use contributes significantly to air pollution and associated human health impacts, water quality (from spills,

wastewater discharges etc), land degradation, and the displacement of communities.

3.6 Implications of endorsing the Treaty

Endorsing the Treaty signals support for a global phase-out of fossil fuel production and a just energy transition. The implications are mostly political, reputational and advocacy based rather than legal and financial.

- 3.7** Politically, endorsement places Belfast among other cities advocating for rapid climate action and builds pressure for the UK government to endorse the Treaty. It also signals to local communities the Council's commitment to social justice and an equitable transition. Endorsement would increase global visibility and help to build momentum for the phase out of fossil fuels.

3.8 Potential financial and legal implications

As the Council's existing climate ambitions align with the Treaty no additional Council resources, reporting or legal changes will be required. There are therefore no direct financial or legal obligations as the Treaty aligns with ongoing local climate ambitions. However, there could be higher costs for BCC and City residents as the NI economy transitions away from fossil fuels. Members should be aware that there are cost implications to decarbonisation, both to Council operations, especially where fossil fuels are still used by the Council's fleet and to heat its buildings, and at city level as transport and heating are increasingly electrified.

There may be some indirect cost implications for the Council through staff time for writing additional briefing notes, stakeholder engagement, communications or policy alignment checks. There may also be cost implications for bringing the wording or principles of the treaty into the procurement, strategies or plans of the Council.

3.9 Next steps if Council decides to endorse the Treaty

Endorsing the Treaty is essentially an advocacy gesture and there is no requirement to take any further action after endorsement. However, members may wish to consider the following possible actions:

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- **Publish the endorsement and make a public announcement through the BCC website and local media.**
- **Use the financial planning and rate setting processes as an opportunity to review and strengthen commitment to climate-related policies and those plans which prioritise fossil fuel phase out and adoption of renewable energy (e.g. Sustainable Procurement, decarbonisation of BCC estate and operations, installation of EV chargers, Bolder Vision etc.)**
- **Advocate for an increase in the level of financial support available to enable vulnerable households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and transition to low carbon heating solutions.**
- **Support renewable energy projects and community energy schemes including an assessment of the suitability of Council assets to host renewable energy and community energy schemes.**

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

4.1 There is no immediate resource or financial ask of the Council.

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications

5.1 There are no immediate implications regarding equality, good relations and rural needs aside to say that the cost of transitioning from fossil fuels will be disproportionately more challenging for low-income households.

The Committee noted that there would be no immediate cost implications to the Council in endorsing the motion.

After discussion, the Committee adopted the motion, subject to the following:

- that a report be submitted to a future meeting that would outline the indicative costs that might be incurred by the Council and the City in transitioning away from fossil fuel usage;
- that a letter be forwarded also to the Republic of Ireland's Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment, Mr. D. O'Brien, seeking his support for the Council's stance on the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty; and
- that the Council would be mindful of the infrastructural and transitional needs of all communities in achieving net zero by 2050.

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**Consultation on Setting of Northern
Ireland's Carbon Budget (2038/42)**

The Committee endorsed a response to the above-mentioned consultation exercise. The response can be accessed within the [attached link](#).

Chairperson