

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

21st January, 2025

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

As previously notified to you, I enclose a copies of the reports for the following items to be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.30 am on Friday, 24th January, 2025.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

2. Restricted Items

(g) Irish Football Association - Blanchflower Park (Pages 1 - 4)

3. Matters referred back from Council/Motions

(b) Notice of Motion – Armed Forces Covenant (Pages 5 - 8)

4. Governance

(a) Revisions to Scheme of Allowances (Pages 9 - 38)

5. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

(e) Community Recovery Fund (Pages 39 - 54)

(i) Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26 (Pages 55 - 62)

6. Physical Programme and Asset Management

(a) Physical Programme (Pages 63 - 76)

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 6
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Document is Restricted

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Belfast
City Council

Subject:	Notice of Motion – Armed Forces Covenant
Date:	24 th January 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
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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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider the Notice of Motion in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant which was agreed by Council at its meeting on 9 th January 2025, subject to equality screening pursuant to Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and determine whether it wishes to adopt the Notice of Motion to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	<p>The Committee will recall that Alderman Lawlor, seconded by Alderman McCullough, proposed the following Notice of Motion at the Standards and Business Committee on 21st November 2024:</p> <p>“That this Council recognises the unique skills that are held by Armed Forces service leavers; recognises that many veterans can face disadvantages compared to the general population, arising from military life, when accessing services and as such, this Council commits to signing up to the Armed Forces Covenant immediately.”</p>
3.2	Pursuant to Standing Order 13 (n), the Standards and Business Committee referred the Notice of Motion directly to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in order for officers to ascertain what is involved and to ascertain what, if any, the Council’s commitments may be in signing the Covenant. At its meeting on 13 th December 2024, the Committee rejected the notice of motion.
3.3	At Council on 8 th January 2025, this decision was overturned and Council agreed to adopt the notice of motion, subject to equality screening. In accordance with Standing Orders, this report sets out detail of the commitments in the Armed Forces Covenant, to include any financial implications, together with outcome of the draft equality screening exercise.
3.4	<p>The Armed Forces Covenant can be found at the following link:</p> <p>https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/</p>
3.5	The Covenant sets out two principles. The first is that those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. The second is that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.
3.6	The intention of the Covenant primarily relates to issues around housing, education or healthcare. The Armed Forces Act 2006 is a UK wide Act which imposes a statutory duty

3.7	<p>upon specified bodies to have due regard to principles of the Covenant. Specified bodies are those authorities responsible for certain relevant housing, education or healthcare functions.</p> <p>The draft equality screening report concludes that the signing of the Covenant is likely to have a minor impact on the basis of religious belief and political opinion on both the promotion of equality of opportunity grounds and good relations grounds. This is on the basis that the legacy of the conflict is still very much evident in some areas throughout Belfast and the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant may be a divisive issue.</p>
3.8	<p>As such the decision has been screened out at this time. However any future decisions about resource allocation based on signing the Covenant would require an updated screening exercise to be undertaken.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.9	<p>None associated with this report as the Motion only commits to signing the Armed Forces Covenant.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.10	<p>These are set out above.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>None.</p>

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Belfast
City Council

Subject:	Revisions to Scheme of Allowances
Date:	24th January 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
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Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider amendments to the Council's Scheme of Allowances to increase the rates of Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, and Dependents' Carers' Allowance.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. consider whether it wishes to increase the Basic Allowance paid to each Councillor from £15,486 per annum to £17,456 with effect from 1st April, 2024; 2. consider whether it wishes to increase the total maximum Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) from the current £117,774 per annum to £132,751, with the allocation as set out in Appendix 2, with effect from 1st April, 2024; and 3. Approve the increase to rate of Dependents' Carers' Allowance in line with the National Living Wage for 2025-2026
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, Part 2, paragraph 3 states that the Council must agree a new Scheme of Allowances for each year in which allowances are paid.</p>
3.2	<p>Paragraphs 4(2) and 5(2) further state that the amount of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances shall be determined by the Council.</p>
3.3	<p>The Department for Communities has issued a circular, LG 15/24 dated 9th December, 2024, which sets out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April, 2024.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Basic Allowance</u></p> <p>The Committee is requested to consider whether it wishes to increase the rate of basic allowance paid to each Councillor from the current £15,486 per annum to £17,456 per annum.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Special Responsibility Allowance</u></p> <p>The Committee is further requested to consider whether it wishes to apply the increase to the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) budget, with effect from 1st April, 2024. For a number of years, the Council has agreed a split in the special responsibility allowance budget so as to pay both the Chairpersons and the Deputy Chairpersons of the Standing Committees and the Party Officers (Party Leader, Deputy Party Leader and Party Secretary – depending upon Party size). The current division of SRAs is set out in Appendix 1. If the increase in the overall budget is agreed, a suggested split is set out in Appendix 2.</p>

3.6	<p>The Committee will note that the Council has not increased either the Basic Allowance nor the Special Responsibility Allowance since March, 2021, which was for the financial year commencing 1st April, 2020.</p> <p><u>Dependants' Carers' Allowance</u></p>
3.7	<p>The Department for Communities determines the maximum hourly rates of Dependant's Carers' Allowance for both standard care and specialised care. The rate for standard care is based on the hourly National Living Wage for age 23+, which will increase on 1st April, 2025 from the current rate of £10.42 per hour to £11.44 per hour. The rate for specialised care is double the rate for standard care. In addition, the Department for Communities sets the maximum monthly amounts for standard care and specialised care, capped at the equivalent of 52 hours per month.</p>
3.8	<p>Accordingly, in line with the increase in the National Living Wage, the Committee is requested to agree to following amendment to the Scheme of Allowances:</p> <p><u>"(iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Standard Care £11.44 per hour limited to £595.00 per month</i> • <i>Specialist Care £22.88 per hour limited to £1,190.00 per month"</i> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.9	<p>The increase to the maximum rates of each of the allowances can be met through existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.10	<p>There are not any Good Relations, Equality or Rural Needs issues associate with this report.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Current division of SRAs</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Proposed division of SRAs</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Proposed Scheme of Allowances 2025-2026</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Local Government Circular LG 15/24</p>

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Proposed Allocation of Special Responsibility Allowance

Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons

Position	Allowance	Number of Positions	Total
Chairpersons	£6,200	8	£49,600
Deputy Chairpersons	£3,100	8	£24,800
Total			£74,400

Political Party Officers

Party Officer Basic Allocation £4,086

Deputy Leader/Secretary Basic Allocation £3,663

Remainder allocated to Political Party Leaders £208.01 per Member of the Party

Position	Number of Members	Allocation per Party Member	Allocation per Party Strength	Basic Allocation	Total
SF Party Leader	22	£208.01	£4,576.22	£4,086	£8,662.22
SF Deputy Leader				£3,663	£3,663
SF Secretary				£3,663	£3,663
DUP Party Leader	14	£208.01	£2,912.14	£4,086	£6,998.14
DUP Deputy Leader				£3,663	£3,663
DUP Secretary				£3,663	£3,663
Alliance Party Leader	11	£208.01	£2,288.11	£4,086	£6,374.11
Alliance Deputy Leader				£3,663	£3,663
SDLP Party Leader	5	£208.01	£1,040.05	£4,086	£5,126.05
SDLP Deputy Leader				£3,663	£3,663
Green Party Leader	3	£208.01	£624.03	£4,086	£4,710.03
UUP Leader	2	£208.01	£416.02	£4,086	£4,502.02
Total	60				£58,350.57

Total

£132,750.57

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Scheme of Allowances Payable to Councillors 2025/2026

This Scheme is made under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and will take effect from 1st April, 2024.

Councillors' allowances

Councillors' allowances are governed by statute and provision is made for the following types of payments:

(a) Allowances:

- (i) Basic Allowance
- (ii) Special Responsibility Allowance
- (iii) Civic Dignitaries Allowance
- (iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance
- (v) District Policing and Community Safety Partnership Allowances (DPCSP)
- (vi) Renunciations
- (vii) Disqualification or Suspension of a Councillor

(b) Expenses

- (i) Travel
- (ii) Subsistence

In issuing the payment of allowances to elected members the Council follows the instructions set out by the Department of Environment in 'Guidance on Councillor Allowances' March 2012 and further circular updates.

Information regarding other provisions for Councillors is also included:

(c) Additional Information

- (i) IT/Phone Package
- (ii) Councillors' Support Services

(a) Allowances

(i) Basic Allowances

A basic allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all Councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and approved duties. Basic allowance is also intended to cover incidental costs incurred by Councillors in their official capacity, such as the use of their homes and the cost of any telephone calls, including mobile phone calls.

The maximum annual allowance with effect from 1st April, 2024 is £17,456 payable monthly.

This allowance will be paid in equal monthly instalments via the Council's Payroll and is subject to tax, National Insurance and pension deductions where applicable.

If a Councillor ceases to be a Councillor before the end of his or her term of office, payment of the allowance will cease and a pro rata calculation will be made to ensure that the Councillor receives the correct amount of allowance. If necessary, an adjustment for under or over payment may be made to ensure that the final payment is correct, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Basic Allowance.

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of the basic allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld.

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 60(1) (Decisions on Interim Reports) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of the basic allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld, subject to the provision that the allowance withheld shall be payable to the councillor concerned should the final adjudication of the Commissioner for Standards exonerate the councillor concerned.

In circumstances where a councillor is partially suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) or section 60(1) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the basic allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is partially suspended shall continue.

(ii) Special Responsibility Allowances

In addition to Basic Allowance the Council also pays Special Responsibility Allowances to those Councillors it considers to have significant additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a Councillor. These special responsibilities are related to the discharge of the Council's functions.

The maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance is determined by the Department for Communities. The division of the Special Responsibility Allowance is based upon the positions held by individual Councillors as agreed.

- The Council agreed a special responsibility allowance threshold of £132,751 which may be paid to holders of positions of responsibility. No more than 50% of the Councillors can receive a special responsibility payment and no individual member can receive more than one special responsibility payment.

Special Responsibility Allowance is paid in equal, monthly instalments. Special Responsibility Allowances are liable for tax, National Insurance and pension deductions where applicable

In the event of a Councillor ceasing to hold an office which entitled him or her to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance before the term of office is completed, payment of the Allowance ceases. If necessary, an adjustment for under or overpayment may have to be made to ensure that the final payment is correct, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Special Responsibility Allowance.

Rates of Special Responsibility Allowances with effect from 1st April, 2024 are:

Position	Committee	Allowance
Chairperson's Allowance	Strategic Policy and Resources	£6,200
	City Growth and Regeneration	£6,200
	People and Communities	£6,200
	Licensing	£6,200
	Planning	£6,200
	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall	£6,200
	Climate and City Resilience	£6,200
	Standards and Business	£6,200

Scheme of Allowances 2025/2026

Deputy Chairperson's Allowance	Strategic Policy and Resources	£3,100
	City Growth and Regeneration	£3,100
	People and Communities	£3,100
	Licensing	£3,100
	Planning	£3,100
	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall	£3,100
	Climate and City Resilience	£3,100
	Standards and Business	£3,100

Position	Party	Allowance
Party Group Leader	Sinn Féin (22 Members)	£8,662.22
	DUP (14 Members)	£6,998.14
	Alliance (11 Members)	£6,374.11
	SDLP (5 Members)	£5,126.05
	GREEN (3 Members)	£4,710.03
	UUP (2 Members)	£4,502.02
Deputy Party Group Leader	Sinn Féin	£3,663
	DUP	£3,663
	Alliance	£3,663
	SDLP	£3,663
Party Secretary	Sinn Fein	£3,663
	DUP	£3,663

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of any special responsibility allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld.

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 60(1) (Decisions on Interim Reports) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of any special responsibility allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld, subject to the provision that the allowance withheld shall be payable to the councillor concerned should the final adjudication of the Commissioner for Standards exonerate the councillor concerned.

In circumstances where a councillor is partially suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, that part of any special responsibility allowance (to which the partial suspension relates) payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is partially suspended shall be withheld.

In circumstances where a councillor is partially suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 60(1) (Decisions on Interim Reports) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, that part of any special responsibility allowance (to which the partial suspension relates) payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is partially suspended shall be withheld, subject to the provision that the allowance withheld shall be payable to the councillor concerned should the final adjudication of the Commissioner for Standards exonerate the councillor concerned.

(iii) Civic Dignitaries Allowance

Section 32 of the Finance Act provides that a council may pay to the Civic Dignitaries such allowances as it considers reasonable to meet the expenses of those offices and they should be considered totally separate from SRA arrangements.

The Civic Dignitary Personal Allowances are paid in equal, monthly instalments and are liable for tax, National Insurance and pension deductions where applicable.

The entitlements, per annum, are:-

- Lord Mayor £34,800
- Deputy Lord Mayor £6,250
- High Sherriff £6,250

Where a Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor is suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, the part of Civic Allowance payable to the Councillor in respect of the period for which the Councillor is suspended will be withheld.

(iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance

Any Member who is the main carer of a dependant, where care is required to enable that Member to perform an Approved Duty (see page 9), may claim Dependent Carers' Allowance (DCA). The rate for Standard Care is based on the hourly national living wage for age 25 or over, and the rate for Specialised Care is double the rate for Standard Care. The rates from 1st April, 2022 are:

- Standard Care £11.44 per hour limited to £594.88 per month
- Specialist Care £22.88 per hour limited to £1,189.76 per month

A dependant is defined as:

- a child under 16 years old;
- a child 16 years old or older, where there is medical / social work evidence that full-time care is required;
- an adult with recognised physical/mental disability where there is medical / social work evidence that full-time care is required; or
- an elderly relative requiring full-time care.

For the purposes of this allowance, a carer is defined as a responsible person over 16 years old who does not normally live with the councillor as part of that household; and is not a parent/guardian of the dependant. A specialist carer is a qualified person who is needed where it is essential to have professional assistance.

Receipts must be obtained from specialist carers and must accompany the claim form. Councillors may claim only once for each occurrence of an approved duty (page 9) and only one Dependants' Carers' Allowance rate is payable, even if there are two or more dependants being cared for.

Councillors must disclose any financial support provided under this allowance when applying for other care services offered by another public body.

This allowance claim may also include the duration of essential travel time, up to a maximum of one hour before the approved duty starts and ending up to one hour after it finishes.

(v) District Policing and Community Safety Partnership Allowances (DPCSP)

This allowance is paid to councillors who are members of the District Policing and Community Safety Partnership. Each councillor is entitled to claim £60 per attendance at each meeting and may claim for up to a maximum of 20 meetings a year. Each member can also claim for mileage for attending each meeting directly from the DPCSP secretariat.

Chairpersons of each DPCSP are entitled to claim for an additional 10 meetings per year of the DPCSP. In addition the Chairperson of the 4 DCPSPs also sit on the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and are entitled to claim for up to 20 meetings per year of this partnership.

(vi) Renunciations

Councillors may, if they wish, renounce their entitlement to basic, chairperson, vice chairperson or special responsibility allowances. They can do this by writing to the Chief Executive. A councillor can subsequently withdraw the renunciation. They can also amend a renunciation (for example, to limit it to one kind of allowance only). The withdrawal or amendment cannot have retrospective effect.

(vii) Disqualification or Suspension of a Councillor

The Local Government Commissioner for Standards may impose sanctions on a Councillor who is found to have breached the Northern Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors. Such sanction may be imposed at the conclusion of the Commissioner's adjudication process of the alleged breach or at the conclusion of an interim adjudication by the Commissioner.

For the purpose of this Scheme of Allowances, the following action will be taken upon receipt by the Chief Executive of a decision by the Commissioner which results in the disqualification or the suspension of a Councillor:

Disqualification

If a Councillor is disqualified, then the payment of all allowances and the provision of all support services outlined in this Scheme will cease with immediate effect from the date of disqualification.

Suspension

If a Councillor is wholly suspended for a period, then the payment of all allowances and the provision of all support services outlined in this Scheme will cease with immediate effect from the date of suspension.

(b) Expenses**Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

All claims for travel and subsistence should be submitted within three months. Any claims made outside of this time limit cannot be processed.

(i) Travel

- Motor Mileage Claims**

The rates of Travel and Subsistence Allowances, including motor mileage and pedal cycle rates, are reviewed annually by the Department for Communities, following consultation with the Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services.

Claims can only be made where expenditure is incurred in relation to the Councillors undertaking Approved Duties.

Travel claims may be made through Democratic Services and it is a matter for each individual Councillor to ensure that the details contained in any claim are accurate and only include actual expenditure for which they are entitled to make a claim.

In some instances, mileage claims may be liable for tax and National Insurance deductions.

The following rates are currently in use, with most Councillors getting the maximum amount of 65.0p per mile:

	Motor Cars				Pedal Cycle	Motor Cycle (all engine capacities)
	450-999cc	1000-1199cc	1199 + cc	Electric Car		
0-8,500 miles	46.9p	52.2p	65.0p	45.0p	20p	24p
After 8,500 miles	13.7p	14.4p	16.4p	25.0p		
Passenger rate	5.0p					

- Public Transport**

Expenditure on public transport in relation to attending approved duties can be claimed back only when accompanied by proof of purchase. Any journeys made using public transport should be noted separately in any travel expenses claim.

(ii) Subsistence

If Councillors attend conferences, courses or undertake visits as representatives of the Council they are entitled to receive appropriate subsistence allowances.

Before a Councillor attends an event, they must obtain Committee approval. Councillors may also attend approved events as part of their Personal Development Plan (PDP).

Any accommodation or travel arrangements for conferences are made directly by the Council.

Councillors should take a careful note and keep receipts for any expenses they incur while they are away on Council business because they may be able to claim for these as part of their subsistence allowances or as incidental expenses. This relates to such things as meals, bus and taxi fares, necessary telephone calls, etc. Purchases of any alcoholic beverages may not be claimed for.

Within the UK

The rates for subsistence allowance are determined by the Department for Communities. The following table shows the current rates of subsistence which may be claimed for:

Maximum Subsistence Rates		
	BRITISH ISLES	LONDON
Accommodation Allowance	£100.70	£122.45
Meal Allowance		
Breakfast	£11.50	
Lunch	£13.50	
Tea	£4.70	
Dinner	£20.95	
Total Meal Allowance	£50.65	

Departments will assist Councillors in the completion of claim forms and Councillors should make contact with an appropriate officer immediately upon returning from the conference to give details of additional expenses incurred and to sign the necessary claim forms.

Claims without receipts should rarely happen. However, Councillors must use the '[Lost or Unobtainable Receipt Voucher](#)' to claim reimbursement for expenditure they have incurred when no receipt is available.

Outside the UK

For travel outside the United Kingdom, the Council will pay advanced subsistence at the rate of £75.00 per 24-hour period, or £45 per part 24-hour period.

Approved Duties

Under the existing Regulations Councillors are entitled to claim expenses in relation to an approved duty. An approved duty may be defined as:-

- (a) attendance at a meeting of the Council or of any of its Committees. Members may only claim travelling allowance for attending Committees to which they have been appointed. A Member, however, may claim mileage allowance for attending a meeting of a Committee to which he or she has not been appointed if he or she is attending at the invitation of the Committee concerned or has been sent by another Committee to state a particular case.
- Or
- (b) attendance approved by the Council for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the Council:
- attendance by appointed Councillors at meetings of Advisory/Liaison Committees or Steering Groups/Working Groups;
 - attendance at approved conferences, courses, study visits or seminars as a representative of the Council;
 - attendance by appointed Councillors at meetings of PCSP's and DPCSP's;
 - attendance by appointed Councillors at meetings of community centre committees;
 - attendance on a Council or Committee deputation relevant to the functions of the Council;
 - attendance by appointed Councillors at meetings of outside bodies only if the functions of the Outside Body relates to the statutory functions of the Council, and where remuneration is not made by the Outside Body to which the Councillor has been appointed; and
 - attendance at training courses or briefing sessions provided by or through the Council

In addition, the Council's Chief Executive can authorise as approved duties certain miscellaneous functions.

Tax

Useful information on treatment of tax for councillors could be found at Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs website via <https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual/eim65900>.

Councillors' Pension Scheme

Councillors are automatically enrolled in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Scheme (NILGOSC). The main purpose of the scheme is to provide a pension in retirement for Councillors. The benefits paid under the Scheme are based on length of membership of the Scheme and career average pensionable pay.

The pensionable pay of a councillor consists of the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance payments only. The contribution rate depends on how much each Councillor is paid but will be between 5.5% and 7.5% of the pensionable allowances received.

If a Councillor no longer wishes to participate in the pension scheme, or has any queries regarding the scheme, NIGOSC should be contacted directly on 0345 3197 320

(c) Additional Information

(i) IT /Phone Package

Personal computer equipment can be provided by the Council to each Councillor on the basis that the Council owns the equipment and lends it to those Councillors who request it.

Councillors IT Package currently consists of the following:

- Tablet PC
- Smartphone, which includes a call, text and data allowance

- **Tablet PC**

Each Councillor is entitled to receive a tablet PC for their duration as a Member of Belfast City Council. The device is provided by the Council to assist Councillors in undertaking their role more effectively. The main benefits are having online access to the council minutes system and other Council provided software and to engage more effectively with constituents.

Where a Councillor has been provided with a tablet PC, hard copies of Council, Committee and Working Group report packs will not be provided.

- **Mobile Telephone costs**

Each Councillor will be offered the use of a mobile phone for the duration they remain a Councillor of Belfast City Council. The device is available for upgrade periodically.

The Council will cover the cost of line rental which includes:

- a. the cost of all phone calls to UK landlines or UK mobile phones whilst within the UK;
- b. the cost of all text messages to UK landlines or UK mobile phones whilst within the UK; and
- c. 3.75GB of data usage per month.

All costs incurred by calls, texts or data usage outside of that detailed above, are met by the Councillor and will be deducted the following month from the Councillor's basic allowance.

Hands free mobile phone equipment

The Council will contribute towards the cost of purchase and installation of hands free mobile phone equipment for use in the Councillors' cars on the following basis:-

- Reimbursement will be made in respect of the costs of installation of the equipment in the Councillor's own private vehicle and shall be subject to the submission of appropriate receipts
- The maximum amount of reimbursement on each occasion to be £250.00.

- **Home Telephone**

The Council may meet the costs of basic monthly/quarterly line rental of the home telephone of each Councillor. Councillors are required to pay the rental cost in the first instance and, having submitted the telephone bill, will then be reimbursed this amount, subject to any tax deductions being applied through the Council's payroll system.

The Department for Communities has determined that as the Councillor's Basic Allowance covers incidental expenses involved in being a Councillor, such as the use of a home telephone, it is therefore not possible to reimburse the cost of telephone calls made on a landline.

- **Broadband Internet Access**

In order to enable Councillors to use the Council's IT system remotely (from home or office), Councillors may claim part of their home broadband internet rental costs (maximum £25 per month).

As with phone line rental reimbursement, Councillors are required to pay the cost of the broadband in the first instance and, having submitted the appropriate bill, will then be reimbursed up to £25.00 per month, subject to any tax deductions being applied through the Council's payroll.

Access to the Council's systems is provided by means of a virtual private network (VPN). Councillors should speak to officers in Democratic Services to arrange to have the VPN set up on their computer.

- **Electronic Minutes System**

The electronic minutes system is accessible on the Council's website as well as the corporate intranet. The purpose of the system is to have a range of information relating to councillors and the Council's decision-making process in one place.

The system allows Councillors and members of the public to:-

- View the schedule of meetings;
- Access agendas, reports and minutes of Council, Committees, and Working Group Meetings; and
- Search for historical decisions.

The system is also used to alert Councillors that Committee summonses, agenda, minutes and reports have been published and, when any amendments or changes have taken place, Councillors can then access these electronically.

(ii) **Councillors' Support Services**

The Council provides Councillors with a wide range of support services to assist them in carrying out their work as Councillors. Support services include typing of correspondence, post, message and enquiry services, council stationery, research service, room bookings, Councillors training, travel arrangements, expenses and subsistence payments and general enquiries.

- **Members' Common Room**

The Members' Common Room is located at the reception area of the City Hall, adjacent to the Committee Rooms. Individual mail boxes and a kitchen are available for Councillors' use.

- **Party Rooms**

In addition to the Members' Common Room, the Council provides Party Rooms for each of the political party groups within the Council. These may be used for meetings, work or discussions with constituents.

All accommodation and facilities provided are for use in connection with Council or constituency business only.

In addition to a conference table, printer, scanner, television, tea/coffee making facilities and filing space, each Party Room has at least one PC in addition to docking stations for use with the Council provided tablet PCs.

- **Correspondence**

Items for typing may be left with Democratic Services, where a confidential secretarial service is available for letters, reports and all other correspondence related to Council or constituency work.

After typing, letters will be left in the Councillor's mailbox in the Members' Common Room or can be posted to the addressee.

- **Post**

A postal service is available for correspondence which relates to Council or constituency work.

Letters must be addressed to individuals living within the City boundary although letters to public bodies and government Departments with addresses outside the City will also be accepted.

Circularised mail will not be accepted.

Postal facilities are not available for party political issues.

- **Message and Inquiry Service**

Democratic Services staff act as a point of contact for all enquiries and telephone messages concerning Councillors from the general public, constituents and Council officers.

The telephones in the party rooms are set to divert to staff on no reply and telephone messages for Councillors will be taken. Urgent messages will be relayed immediately to Councillors, if contact is possible, and other messages will be emailed or left in their mail boxes.

- **Council Stationery**

Personalised headed-paper, compliment slips and business cards with the Council logo will be provided for each Councillor during their term of office. Standard Council stationery items are also available in the Members' Common Room.

- **Civic Gifts**

A limited range of Belfast City Council branded gifts is available for use by Councillors. The gifts are intended for VIP guests to City Hall or for special individuals or groups which a Councillor wishes to recognise. Councillors may also request civic gifts when visiting special individuals or groups when on Council business in other countries. When requesting Civic Gifts, the Councillor must sign a receipt of goods and a database of issued gifts is maintained.

- **Research and Information Service**

Democratic Services staff will be available to assist Councillors in obtaining information and carrying out research on items related to Council and constituency business.

- **Receiving Constituents**

Councillors may make arrangements to receive constituents or visitors in their party room if space is available. Councillors may also request to book a committee room to meet with a group of up to 3 visitors. Visitors will not be permitted access to party rooms or the committee rooms unless accompanied by a Councillor.

- **Car parking**

Councillors have 24 hour access to the City Hall car park. A pass for display in Councillors' vehicles will be provided by Democratic Services.

Car parking for guests of Councillors is limited. However, if this is required, please contact Democratic Services staff. The visitors' name and the registration number of the vehicle will be required for the purposes of admittance by Security staff.



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
Pobal

Depairtment fur
Commonities

Local Government and Housing
Regulation Division
Finance Branch
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG
Phone: 028 9082 9307
email: Gerard.murray@communities-
ni.gov.uk

Chief Executive of each District Council
Finance Officer of each District Council
Other Interested Parties

Our ref:CO1-24-496
09 December 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

CIRCULAR LG 15/24 - CONSOLIDATED COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES CIRCULAR (Updated December 2024)

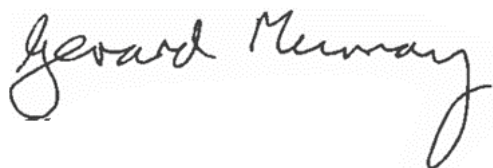
This Local Government Circular provides a consolidated record of all councillor allowances and supersedes Local Government Circular LG 23/23.

This consolidated circular is required to determine and reflect an increase in maximum rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance from 1 April 2024 and an increase in Dependants' Carers' Allowance from 1 April 2025.

All determinations are made by the Department under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019.

If you have any queries on the content of this circular please contact Jeff Glass on 028 9082 3375 or Ian Lewis on 028 9082 3506 or by email jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk or ian.lewis@communities-ni.gov.uk .

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerard Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'G' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

GERARD MURRAY
Director
Local Government and Housing Regulation

1. Basic Allowance

- valid from 1 April 2024

Basic Allowance
Maximum £17,456 per annum ≠

≠ (The basic allowance includes an element for incidental and consumable costs incurred by councillors in their official capacity. In 2015/16 this element was £1,000 and each year this amount is uplifted in line with the increase applied to the basic allowance, therefore this element within the basic allowance is £1,229 from 1 April 2024.)

2. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

– valid from 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants' carers' allowance.

Dependants' Carers' Allowance	Hourly Rate	Maximum Monthly Amount
	£	£
Standard	11.44 [^]	595
Specialist	22.88	1,190

[^](Based on national living wage)

– valid from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants' carers' allowance.

Dependants' Carers' Allowance	Hourly Rate	Maximum Monthly Amount
	£	£
Standard	12.21 [^]	635
Specialist	24.42	1,270

[^](Based on national living wage)

3. Travel Allowances

– valid from 1 April 2017

The following table states the maximum rates for travel allowances.

Type of Vehicle	Rate per Mile Pence	Rate per Mile Above 8,500 miles Pence	Rate per Mile Above 10,000 miles Pence
A pedal cycle	20.0p	20.0p	20.0p
A motor cycle (all engine capacities)	24.0p	24.0p	24.0p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 450cc but not exceeding 999cc	46.9p	13.7p	13.7p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 999cc but not exceeding 1,199cc	52.2p	14.4p	14.4p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 1,199cc	65.0p	16.4p	16.4p
An electric car	45.0p	45.0p	25.0p
Passenger rate (per passenger)	5.0p	5.0p	5.0p

4. Special Responsibility Allowance

Appendix 4

– valid from 1 April 2024

The following table states the maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance that a council may pay. The maximum rate is based on the size of the council population. Each council's population figures are updated each year by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and it is the duty of each council to operate within the total maximum rate appropriate to its population band. For ease the maximum any councillor can receive, within each band, is also provided.

Population of council	Maximum Special Responsibility Allowance £	Maximum (1/5th) for individual councillor £
Less than 120,000	61,459	12,292
120,000 to 199,000	86,043	17,209
200,000 +	132,751	26,550

5. Subsistence Allowances

Appendix 4

– valid from 1 April 2015

The following table states the maximum rates for subsistence; however, where councils believe it is necessary there is flexibility for councils to increase these rates by applying a suitable measure of price inflation.

PERIOD/MEAL	British Isles Rates £	London Rates £
Accommodation allowance - An absence involving an overnight stay, away from the normal place of residence. This rate does not include any meal allowance.	100.70	122.45
Breakfast allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period before 11 am)	11.50	11.50
Lunch allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 12 noon and 2pm)	13.50	13.50
Tea allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 3pm and 6pm)	4.70	4.70
Evening meal allowance - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period ending after 7pm)	20.95	20.95

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Subject:	Community Recovery Fund
Date:	24 th January 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

☐

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐
☐
☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	Following a meeting of the Strategy Policy and Resources (SP&R) committee on the 22 nd November 2024, members requested Officers to consider the Area Based Facet of the

	Community Recovery Fund (CRF) Action Plan, which the Deputy Prime Minister is making available to support communities impacted by the public disorder that took place between July and August 2024, including Belfast. In England this will be issued under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003, and in Northern Ireland funds will be released to the Department of Finance, to support those communities most affected.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree that Officers Progress the Community Recovery Action Plan under the following 4 themes: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1 Good Relations Inclusion and Integration • Theme 2 Wider University and Lower Ormeau • Theme 3 Community Integration and Inclusion • Theme 4 Resource Recoupment
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The CRF is allocative and offers a flat rate of £600,000 to Belfast City Council, to be committed and commenced before the end of the Financial Year 2024-25.</p> <p>Expenditure is eligible under this scheme if it is in response to the violent disorder that took place between July and August 2024 and is on, or in connection with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Immediate action to safeguard life or property. b. To prevent suffering or severe inconvenience. c. To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future. d. To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.
3.2	The Fund has deliberately sought to provide local areas with flexibility to design a package that responds to their circumstances. Previous reports have detailed examples of projects which are designed to support Community and Voluntary Activity.
3.3	<p>Officers have considered members feedback in relation to the original area-based approach and are recommending a number of changes to the Community Recovery Action Plan, which will assist bolstering support directly to Communities within Belfast City. The Changes can be summarised as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CRF002 – Integration and Inclusion has been realigned to £35,000. 2. CRF003 - Community Centre Programme (Reaching Out) has been realigned to £30,000. 3. CRF008 – Community Resource Integration and Inclusion has been increased from £180,000 to £330,000.

	<p>This will still leave sufficient budget to develop and target cultural competence and capacity within communities, as there will be opportunity to couple this with Council's Good Relations Action Plan 25/26. However, it also means more investment can be provided directly into Communities in Belfast to improve Integration and Orientation.</p> <p>3.4 CRF008 will be divided into two parts: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeted Intervention £160,000 – Proposals will be sought and developed through an open call for 4 areas in Belfast which have been directly impacted by Racist Attacks, Officers will work with Community Organisations in the following 4 locations, and ensure Community Led proposals to increase Integration and Inclusion of the Migrant population are developed and progressed: - <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sandy Row/Donegal Road b. Woodvale c. Connswater d. Greater Falls 2. The remaining £170,000 under this theme; Council will support Projects led by Constituted Community Organisations in Belfast City up to a value of £20,000, through an open call, that support a proactive approach to integration and inclusion of the Migrant population in Belfast City. <p>3.5 Council will invite projects that specifically address some or all the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals that are innovative and do not duplicate the work of other services. • Proposals that engage host communities and people from the migrant community. • Proposals that foster contact and connections with host communities to improve the welcome that people from the migrant community. • Proposals that encourage and support groups to involve migrant population to get involved in the life of their communities through participation in local activities, networks, sports and organisations. • Proposals that are delivered in areas where, to date, there has been limited infrastructure / funding for interventions supporting the inclusion of people from the migrant community. • Proposals that provide orientation and advocacy support <p>It should be noted that this fund does not support one - off events / festivals, and the said criteria applies to both parts of CRF008.</p>
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3.6	<p>The outcomes from the above programme should provide the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Projects which provide Increased Integration, Inclusion and Orientation for the Migrant Community in Belfast • A reduction in Anti-Muslim hate. • Increased Community Leadership and Competence
3.7	<p>Further to the above it is anticipated that the direct outcomes and data attained from the said projects will inform the core work of Council's Good Relations Action Plan and Strategy.</p>
3.8	<p>The Action Plan attached has been submitted and agreed in principle with the department. Officers have been in discussions with the relevant department in Westminster and providing programmes are committed Council will have the ability to deliver into the Financial Year 25/26. That said, members should note that the Good Relations Manager will have to agree the said changes with the Department of Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.</p>
3.9	<p>Following members comments in November at SP&R Officers have reviewed the fund criteria above and amended the four main themes of the action plan for delivery as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme 1 Good Relations Inclusion and Integration • Theme 2 Wider University and Lower Ormeau • Theme 3 Community Integration and Inclusion • Theme 4 Resource Recoupment <p>Full Detail of the Community Recovery Action Plan can be seen in Appendix 1</p>
3.10	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All the budget detailed within the report is at 100%, the biggest implication is that of resource to design, implement, manage and monitor the programmes, however Council will be able to recoup this under Theme 4.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>All the above aligns with Council's Good Relations Strategic Framework, which seeks to improve Good Relations between people from different political, religious, and racial backgrounds.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Revised Community Recovery Action Plan</p>

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Appendix 1 DRAFT COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND – ACTION PLAN 24-25

Background

the recently launched Community Recovery Fund (CRF), which the Deputy Prime Minister is making available to support communities impacted by the public disorder that took place between July and August 2024, including Belfast. In England this will be issued under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003, and in Northern Ireland funds will be released to the Department of Finance, to support those communities most affected.

The CRF is allocative and offers a flat rate of £600,000 to each eligible local authority, to be spent before the end of the Financial Year 2024-25.

Expenditure is eligible under this scheme if it is in response to the violent disorder that took place between July and August 2024 and is on, or in connection with:

- a. Immediate action to safeguard life or property.
- b. To prevent suffering or severe inconvenience.
- c. To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.
- d. To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.

The Fund has deliberately sought to provide local areas with flexibility to design a package that responds to their circumstances.

Belfast City Council has designed a high-level Action Plan to utilise the Community Recovery Fund and optimise its impact to the City. This will be delivered under four main themes: -

- Theme 1 Good Relations Inclusion and Integration
- Theme 2 Wider University and Lower Ormeau
- Theme 3 Anti Racism and Hate Crime Community Initiatives
- Theme 4 Resource Recoupment

THEME	Ref	Project Title	Project Outline	Alignment to CRF Priority		Project Outcomes	Project Budget
Good Relations	CRF001	Restore the Physical Environment	<p>To work with Open Spaces and Street Scene Department and the Department for Infrastructure to restore the physical environment back to its original form pre–August Riots.</p> <p>Increase on Street Engagement through the Safety Neighbourhood Officer Team</p>	<p>Immediate action to safeguard life or property.</p> <p>To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.</p>		Public Property and Space returned to pre riot condition	£20,000
	CRF002	Integration and Inclusion	<p>Commission projects to support key stakeholders such as teachers, youth practitioners and community leaders to work with young people and adults to prevent the threats from new and evolving harmful ideologies, that sow division, and spread hate and intolerance.</p> <p>Projects may include the development of Programmes which Develop: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Capacity and Cultural Competence within host communities and organisations. • Integration and Orientation • Trauma Services in School and/or the wider Community • The development of a toolkit resource <p>Make Provision to develop the capacity of the Migrant Forum.</p>	<p>To prevent suffering or severe inconvenience.</p> <p>To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.</p> <p>To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.</p>		<p>A reduction in Anti-Muslim hate.</p> <p>An increase in integration, orientation, and inclusion.</p>	£35,000
	CRF003	Community Centre Programme (Reaching Out)	This programme is designed to enable Council Owned Community Centres and 8 Independently Managed Community Centres to create programmes within their	To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.		<p>Opportunity for Engagement</p> <p>Centres of Sanctuary</p>	£30,000

		<p>area to connect with Asylum seekers, Refugees and BAME community. The Programmes will be designed to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Centres of Welcome and Sanctuary • Foster local connections • Provide Opportunities for engagement. • Signpost to other Services both Internal and External 	To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.	Increased Community Connections	
CRF004	Challenging the Narrative	<p>Every year, people move to Northern Ireland to live, work and study, and others leave Northern Ireland to live in other countries.</p> <p>Migration is normal and has been increasing on a Global Scale. Northern Ireland is benefitting from migration, on several different levels.</p> <p>This programme is to develop a resource that clearly presents the facts in relation to migration, and the process of immigration. This will include, but is not exhaustive: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Facts - Who can come here and how, Migration in numbers, Migration, our economy, and services. • The Immigration System Explained • Integration and Community Supports • Accommodation Support • Misinformation - They're Taking our Jobs, what they Receive, They're Here Illegally, Migrants Bring Crime, Migrants are given Preferential Access to Social 	<p>To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.</p> <p>To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.</p>	Factual Resource	£35,000

			Housing, what do Migrants Contribute to the Economy			
	CRF005	Supporting Education – Expansion of Schools of Sanctuary and Drop-in Support Programme	<p>The Schools of Sanctuary programme is an award scheme currently available in the Urban Villages areas of Belfast.</p> <p>The programme is aimed at helping schools to further the concept that schools are welcoming places where every child feels safe and accepted regardless of what they believe, where they are from or what they look like; places where cultural diversity is valued and celebrated.</p> <p>The Intercultural Education Service and Urban Villages have worked closely with Belfast City of Sanctuary to develop a customised Schools of Sanctuary resource pack - 2nd edition for schools.</p> <p>Selected schools follow 7 steps online, along with school clusters, which help them to follow the Schools of Sanctuary programme in bite-sized, manageable chunks. This provides advice and support to enhance the experience for children, parents, staff, and those in the wider community. This proposal will see the Schools of Sanctuary Programme expanded to 8 other schools across Belfast, which are not in the Urban Village areas. The schools will be identified by the Education Authority based on the enrolment statistics.</p>	<p>To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.</p> <p>To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.</p>	<p>Development of 8 Schools to become Schools of Sanctuary across Belfast NSEW</p> <p>Expansion of Drop in Support</p> <p>Opportunity for Engagement</p> <p>Increased Community Connections</p>	£20,000

			The EA Drop-in Programme to be expanded and will be hosted X number of evenings per week and will be hosted by the Educational Authority and partners to provide advice, guidance through interpreters to assist integration. This is currently running in 2 Royal Avenue which is an accessible central location for families to visit.			
Wider University and Lower Ormeau Page 49	CRF006	Business Mentoring, Engagement, and Integration Programme	<p>A number of drop-in clinics could be organised in the areas where businesses have suffered in the context of Hate Crime and racist attacks.</p> <p>It will be in a business/building from 9-5 (or a recommended time to ensure engagement) and people can call in at their leisure to hear more about support.</p> <p>People can also arrange a one-to-one meeting in the area at their business premises.</p> <p>From this engagement Officers will establish what the needs are of individuals and help to identify common themes for workshops, mentoring and support.</p>	<p>To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.</p> <p>To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.</p>	8 Businesses Receive Mentoring and Engagement Support	£20,000
	CRF007	Wider University and Lower Ormeau Support Programme	<p>This programme will be designed around Migrant Support Programmes and Council's commitment to, and interest in the diverse community within the WULO area of the city.</p> <p>It aims to strengthen the integration and inclusion of the migrant population.</p>	<p>To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.</p> <p>To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.</p>	Number of Key Organisations supported in the WULO area	£40,000

			<p>Through this programme Council wants to support projects that will have a clear and identifiable impact on supporting and building integration and inclusion of the migrant population within the wider university and lower Ormeau area of Belfast.</p> <p>The most recent Good Relations Audit seeks to build on the work undertaken by the Council on supporting the participation and inclusion of minority ethnic residents over the last number of years. In making recommendations on how to progress this work further the Audit highlights the following as being key components: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop initiatives to address anti-Muslim hate. 2. Develop a programme focusing on minority ethnic leadership. 3. Examine and explore the response of Council's and communities in Britain, Ireland and further afield regarding managing diversity and tackling systemic racism. 			
Community -Integration and Inclusion	CRF008	Community Resource	<p>CRF008 will be divided into two parts: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeted Intervention £160,000 – Proposals will be sought and developed for 4 areas in Belfast which have been directly impacted by Racist Attacks, Officers will work with Community Organisations in the following 4 locations, and ensure Community Led proposals to increase Integration and 	<p>To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.</p> <p>To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.</p>	<p>A Number of Community Projects which will provide outcomes as follows: -</p> <p>A reduction in Anti-Muslim hate.</p> <p>Increase integration, orientation, and inclusion.</p>	£330,000

			<p>Inclusion of the Migrant population are developed and progressed: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sandy Row/Donegal Road Woodvale Connswater Greater Falls <p>2. The remaining £170,000 under this theme; Council will support Projects led by Constituted Community Organisations in Belfast City up to a value of £20,000, through an open call, that support a proactive approach to integration and inclusion of the Migrant population in Belfast City.</p> <p>Council will invite projects that specifically address some or all the following, this criteria will apply to both parts of this proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals that are innovative and do not duplicate the work of other services. Proposals that engage host communities and people from the migrant community. Proposals that foster contact and connections with host communities to improve the welcome that people from the migrant community. Proposals that encourage and support groups to involve migrant population to get involved in the life of their communities through participation in local activities, networks, sports and organisations. 		Increased Community Leadership and Competence	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proposals that are delivered in areas where, to date, there has been limited infrastructure / funding for interventions supporting the inclusion of people from the migrant community.Proposals that provide orientation and advocacy support <p>It should be noted that this fund does not support one -off events / festivals.</p>			
CRF009	Hate Crime Hardship Programme	<p>From research undertaken via PCSP Council envision this programme will be able to assist through the provision of the following which have been the most communicated by victims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Security equipment to act as a deterrent to further crimes and better protect victims in their homes. Perpetrators do 'think twice' more often when there is more of a likelihood of them getting caught.<ul style="list-style-type: none">Security camerasRing DoorbellsEmergency door stops.AlarmsTemporary cover for clothing, personal care/hygiene products: Having to leave a property in an emergency will lead to victims needing to replace some everyday products they would have had more readily available. <p>We are not limiting what could potentially be covered by the programme to the list</p>	<p>To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.</p> <p>To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.</p>	<p>Increase in the number of people who feel safe.</p> <p>Decrease in number of people affected by Hate Crime</p>	£20,000

			above – these are just <i>some</i> of the more common areas where victims of hate crime have little support and could positively impact their personal safety, confidence in public institutions and ease financial burdens. Again, the purpose of the programme would be to ease burdens that wouldn't otherwise be there were but for the unfortunate victims being targeted with hate crime.			
Resource Recoupment	CRF010	Associated costs	<p>Belfast City Council will need additional resources to ensure the Community Recovery Fund Action Plan is implemented and achieves the desired outcomes. This will be in the form of: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Staff Resource • Additional Hours from existing members of the Team • Additional Administrative Support 	<p>Immediate action to safeguard life or property.</p> <p>To prevent suffering or severe inconvenience.</p> <p>To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.</p> <p>To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.</p>	All the above.	£50,000
					TOTAL	£600,000

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Subject:	Draft Performance Improvement Objectives 2025-26
Date:	24 January 2025
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty Karen Anderson-Gillespie, Strategic Performance Manager Geoff Dickson, Strategic Policy and Planning Manager

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
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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/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to obtain Committee approval of the draft performance improvement objectives and indicative actions for 2025-26 (Appendix 1) and to approve their issue for public consultation.

2.0	Recommendation														
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. consider and agree the Council's proposed 2025-26 draft performance improvement objectives and indicative actions (Appendix 1), subject to minor edits based on feedback. ii. agree that the proposed 2025-26 draft performance improvement objectives and indicative actions (Appendix 1) are issued for public consultation for a period of 8 weeks. The draft performance improvement objectives are summarised below for Members: <table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="2">Draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26</td></tr> <tr> <td>Our services</td><td>We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Our people and communities</td><td>We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Our place</td><td>We will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).</td></tr> <tr> <td>Our planet</td><td>We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Our economy</td><td>We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.</td></tr> <tr> <td>Compassionate city</td><td>We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe, and inclusive city.</td></tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. note the next steps, as outlined in paragraph 3.4 below. 	Draft performance improvement objectives 2025-26		Our services	We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.	Our people and communities	We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged.	Our place	We will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).	Our planet	We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.	Our economy	We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.	Compassionate city	We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe, and inclusive city.
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3.0	Main Report														
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that Councils have a statutory performance improvement duty that requires them to develop and consult on an annual Performance Improvement Plan, which must be published by 30 June each year.</p>														
3.2	<p>Council departments have been identifying areas for inclusion in the 2025-26 Performance Improvement Plan through the work that has been ongoing since early September 2023 to develop the Council's new Corporate Plan 2025-28 and the annual Corporate Delivery Plan 2025-26. The draft performance improvement objectives and indicative actions for 2025-26 were identified</p>														

3.3	<p>following a review of the evidence base and ongoing internal engagement and are set out in full in Appendix 1.</p>												
	<p>We will formally consult on the draft performance improvement objectives and indicative actions using the online YourSay Belfast platform for a period of 8 weeks and will use a range of other communication methods to help raise awareness and encourage participation/ reach. Members will note that during the public consultation period (February – April 2025), the Performance Improvement Plan for 2025-26 (including actions, performance indicators and targets) will be refined and brought back to Committee in May for approval.</p>												
	<p><u>Next steps and timeline</u></p>												
3.4	<p>To ensure the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 is published before the statutory deadline of 30 June 2025, the table below sets out the timetable for finalising the plan:</p>												
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th><th>Deadline</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Commence public consultation, following council ratification - 8-week public consultation on draft performance improvement objectives and indicative actions.</td><td>12 February – 9 April 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>The Strategy, Programmes and Partnership team will work with departments to refine actions and measures of success.</td><td>February – April 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>SP&R Committee agree the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.</td><td>23 May 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>Council ratify Committee decision to agree the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.</td><td>2 June 2025</td></tr> <tr> <td>Publish the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 and submit to the NIAO.</td><td>12 June 2025</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Action	Deadline	Commence public consultation, following council ratification - 8-week public consultation on draft performance improvement objectives and indicative actions.	12 February – 9 April 2025	The Strategy, Programmes and Partnership team will work with departments to refine actions and measures of success.	February – April 2025	SP&R Committee agree the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.	23 May 2025	Council ratify Committee decision to agree the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26.	2 June 2025	Publish the Performance Improvement Plan 2025-26 and submit to the NIAO.	12 June 2025
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	<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p>												
3.5	<p>All priorities agreed will form the basis of the rate setting process. All agreed activity and performance targets will be reflected within Committee Plans, Departmental Plans, and programme plans, thereby ensuring that they are resourced and managed and improvement is embedded within our planning, performance, and delivery processes.</p>												
	<p>Equality of Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</p>												
3.6	<p>There are no equality/ good relations or rural needs implications arising directly from this report.</p>												
4.0	<p>Appendices - Documents Attached</p>												
	<p>Appendix 1: Draft performance improvement objectives and indicative actions 2025-26.</p>												

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Appendix 1: Draft Council performance improvement objectives and indicative actions 2025-26 – for public consultation.

Draft improvement objectives 2025-26 (subject to consultation and engagement)	What we will deliver – proposed indicative actions 2025-26 (subject to consultation and engagement)
<p>Our services</p> <p>We will continue to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of our residents and stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Customer Focus Programme to build organisational capacity to enhance our services and customer experience. • Continue to deliver the Planning Service Improvement Plan. • Deliver a street cleansing programme to create a cleaner and greener city. • Operate daily bin collections of household and commercial waste through the deployment of adequate and efficient resources. • Deliver phase two of the kerbside glass expansion programme to enhance customer service and improve recycling rates. • Initiate the development of an overarching Asset Management Strategy to set out how Council owned and managed land and property assets will be used to support service delivery and the delivery of objectives in the Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda.
<p>Our people and communities</p> <p>We will improve our local areas and provide opportunities to support our residents to become healthier and engaged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance our playgrounds, to ensure that we continue to provide high quality facilities and equipment across the city. • Increase the number of people using our leisure centres, to participate in sport and physical activity. • Deliver animation and outreach activities in community, play and leisure development programmes. • Deliver and facilitate a range of events and community programmes within our parks and open spaces. • Deliver improvements to parks and open spaces to improve people's health and wellbeing through multimillion pound transformational schemes. • Progress the development of capital projects aligned to the Physical Activity and Sports Development Strategy and Pitches Strategy to enhance the quality and accessibility of sports and physical activity provision in Belfast.
<p>Our place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver the Vacant to Vibrant Programme 2025-26 to address city centre vacancy rates.

<p>We will create a more vibrant, attractive, and connected city (including the city centre).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Greenways Programme to improve the connectivity of the city. • Progress the development and delivery of the Council's Physical Programme to enable needs led investment across the city. • Support and progress the delivery of neighbourhood tourism physical projects, improving the city's local tourism facilities and infrastructure. • Progress infrastructure works at the North Foreshore to support the development of the site. • Work with the developer on emerging development specifications for the 250-acre Giant's Park site as set out in the Master Development Agreement.
<p>Our planet We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress the planet section of the Belfast Agenda, which aims to create a sustainable, nature positive city, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a pipeline of investable local energy projects arising from the Local Area Energy Plan, with a focus on a head network and solar PV. ○ Develop a demonstrator site in Botanic Gardens and test nature-based solutions through the UPSURGE project to strengthen climate resilience. ○ Complete the Horizon Europe funded UP2030 project which aims to embed net zero in urban planning. ○ Support the development of a neighbourhood retrofit pilot (led by social housing providers) through the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub. • Commence delivery of the Council Corporate Climate Action Plan to increase the climate resilience of Council assets and services and progress towards Council net zero emissions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a Sustainable Food Policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions and an events protocol. ○ Complete energy audits of 5 Council buildings (4x leisure centres (Andersonstown LC, Lisnasharragh LC, Templemore Av LC, Brook LC) and the Waterfront Hall). ○ Launch a phased metering and retrofitting programme across the Council's top energy users based on the findings of the building level audits of Adelaide, Cecil Ward, City Hall and Duncrue. ○ Launch a Climate Data Platform. ○ Prepare Climate Mitigation Report (Oct 2025) and Climate Adaptation report (March 2026) for submission to DAERA in line with Public Body Reporting requirements. • Deliver an effective waste management service across the city.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver year three of the Belfast Tree Strategy and action plan to help manage and improve the tree scape across the city.
<p>Our economy We will stimulate inclusive growth and innovation, help businesses to start-up and grow and create opportunities for more and better jobs and employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Enterprise Support Service to deliver 'Go Succeed' to increase the number of new business starts.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver employment and upskilling academies in priority sectors in line with industry demand.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Smart Belfast urban innovation programme to enhance Belfast's capacity for collaborative innovation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver an enhanced Learning City Festival to promote and encourage lifelong learning for people of all ages across Belfast.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the delivery of Belfast Business Promise (BBP) initiative to support the provision of good jobs and a sustainable local economy.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support our suppliers by helping business cashflow through the prompt payment of invoices.
<p>Compassionate city We will support our most vulnerable people to make Belfast a more caring, safe, and inclusive city.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver local community actions plans as part of the Peace PLUS programme, to fund community activities and infrastructure project that help build peace and reconciliation in Belfast.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an Anti-Poverty Network in Belfast to support and facilitate a co-ordinated approach to tackling poverty across the city.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend delivery of the Hardship Programme to ensure that support is available for those most impacted by poverty and the cost-of-living crisis.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a programme to help end violence against women and girls.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a programme of action for the community recovery fund to assist integration and inclusion for migrant population in Belfast.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress delivery of up to 5 capital projects across the city as part of the PEACE PLUS Local Action Plan to promote inclusive and shared spaces across Belfast.

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Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	24 January 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager

Restricted Reports									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 									
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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
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1.1	<p>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 approvals under the Capital Programme, approval to procure as required for the Physical Programme along with updates on UKSPF, Belfast Bikes, capital letters of offer and contracts awarded.</p>
2.0	<p>Recommendations</p>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IT Programme – Folder Inserter Equipment – Note that a satisfactory tender return has been received and that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of up to £69,000 be allocated. ○ City Hall Stained Glass Windows - Agree that 'City Hall Stained Glass Windows – Health Service and LGBT Community' is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i>; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received for the LGBT window, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of up to £35,000 be allocated to each of the windows, a total allocation of up to £70,000. ○ Belfast Bikes - Note that a satisfactory tender return has been received for a new Belfast Bikes operator, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council; and note that capital costs can be met via an existing reserve along with either external funding or a growth proposal as part of the Revenue Estimates 2025/26 & Medium-Term Financial Planning report. ○ EV Charging Network - Agree that 'EV Charging Network' is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i>, arising from the agreed LEV Strategy, to allow a business case to be developed. ○ Fleet Replacement Programme 2025/26 – Note the agreed fleet programme for 2025/26 at Appendix 1 including the replacement of the Lord Mayor's official car. ○ North Foreshore Development Site - Infrastructure Works – Note the cost increase for this project since the original budget was allocated in 2016, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council and can be met via capital receipts from the North Foreshore site as previously agreed by Members; and agree to a budget increase of £1.8m.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IT Programme – Corporate HR/Payroll System - Note the cost increase for this project since the original budget was allocated in 2016 and that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree to a budget increase of £93,000 up to a maximum total allocation of £486,000. ● Procurement process for 2025/26 Non-Recurrent Programme, Fleet Programme and Externally Funded Projects - agree that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programme projects in 2025/26 including Fleet Replacement Programme, non-recurrent programme and externally funded projects as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver. ● UK Shared Prosperity Fund – to note the update provided and the proposed additional local capital schemes as a consequence of the UKSPF funding and that a further update will be brought to the AWGs for consideration. ● Capital Letters of Offer – to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer in Q3 2024/25. ● Contracts awarded – to note the update in relation to contracts awarded in Q3 2024/25.
3.0	Main report <u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	<u>Physical Programme</u> <p>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 Council also delivers externally focused funding streams such as Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Local Investment Fund (LIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF), as well as numerous physical programmes and standalone projects that we deliver for central government. Our funding partners include National Lottery Heritage Fund, SEUPB PeacePLUS, the Executive Office, DfC, DfI including the Living with Water Programme, DAERA, Ulster Garden Villages, Levelling Up Fund (LUF), UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and others. When appropriate, the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed.</p>
3.2	<u>Capital Programme - Proposed Movements</u> <p>Members are aware of the scale of the Council's Physical Programme via a range of internal and external funding streams. 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</p>

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 – Folder Inserter Equipment	Folder inserter equipment is hardware used for automated mailing processes within Digital Services. It is required for large volume communications processing for NIHE and the Council.	Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of up to £69,000
City Hall Stained Glass Windows – Health Service and LGBT community	The creation of two new stained glass windows at City Hall, in recognition of the Health Service in Belfast and the acknowledgement of the positive role of the LGBT community in Belfast	Move to Stage 3 – Committed with a maximum budget of up to £70,000
EV Charging Network	The development of a publicly accessible electric vehicle charging point network on Council owned assets	Add at Stage 1 - Emerging

3.3 IT Programme – Folder Inserter

A new folder inserter is required to continue to provide a high volume enveloping service for NIHE mandated via a Service Level Agreement, and internally for council departments. Members will recall that in August 2024 this project was moved to *Stage 3 – Committed and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk* pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return. An update was to be brought back to Committee along with the final budget allocation and confirmation that this is within the affordability limits of the Council. **Members are asked to note that a satisfactory tender return has been received and that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of £69,000 be allocated.**

3.4 City Hall Stained Glass Windows – Health Service and LGBT Community

Members will recall that in September 2022 this project was moved to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted*. Due to the bespoke nature of this project, a procurement exercise for the LGBT Community window has been carried out to inform the business case process. The design for the LGBT window has been agreed by Members and work on the Health Service window will be progressed this year. **Members are asked to agree that ‘City Hall Stained Glass Windows – Health Service and LGBT Community’ is moved to Stage 3 – Committed; note that a satisfactory tender return has been received for the LGBT window, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this project is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree that a maximum of up to £35,000 be allocated to each of the windows - a total allocation of up to £70,000.**

3.5 Belfast Bikes

The Belfast Bikes scheme was launched in April 2015 with a network of 30 docking stations and 300 bikes. NSL Limited has operated the scheme (under contract) on behalf of the Council since its inception, and it uses bikes and supporting infrastructure provided by ‘Next bike by

	<p>TIER'. Currently, the network comprises of 60 docking stations and 560 bikes. The contract with NSL Limited expired in March 2024. It was extended initially to December 2024 and then on a rolling extension up to maximum period to 9 months.</p> <p>Members will recall that in October 2024, the Council approved a new operating model and revenue structure for the Belfast Bikes Scheme. It was agreed that after conclusion of the procurement exercise, Members would be updated about the outcome and clarity around any costs associated with the transition. The procurement exercise has now concluded and a preferred operator has been identified. Operational costs will be managed as part of annual revenue budgets. Members are advised that a bid has been submitted to DfI Active Travel for capital funding to support this phase of Belfast Bikes and a decision is awaited. If the Council is unsuccessful in securing external funding, then it is proposed that the remaining potential capital costs related to this project will be met via a growth proposal. Members will be aware that this proposal, if required, is part of the Revenue Estimates exercise. Members are asked to note that a satisfactory tender return has been received for a new Belfast Bikes operator, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that it is within the affordability limits of the Council; and note that capital costs can be met via an existing reserve along with either external funding or a growth proposal as part of the Revenue Estimates 2025/26 & Medium-Term Financial Planning report.</p>
3.6	<p>EV Charging Network</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) Strategy was approved by Council in September 2024. This project arises from the strategy and will see the development of a publicly accessible electric vehicle charging point network on Council owned assets, working with a commercial partner. The switch to LEVs, and particularly to Electric Vehicles, alongside a significant shift away from private car use, will be critical to Council's success in meeting its net zero targets. Action will also demonstrate leadership and provide a service to residents, visitors, and businesses. Members are asked to agree that 'EV Charging Network' is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging, arising from the agreed LEV Strategy, to allow a business case to be developed.</p>
3.7	<p>Capital Programme - Fleet Programme 2025/26 - including replacement of the Lord Mayor's car</p> <p>Members will know that the Council needs to run and maintain a substantial fleet in order to deliver its services. There is a rolling allocation of £2.2m towards the Fleet Programme for 2025/26. The Fleet Programme has been developed in conjunction with Council departments and reflects the service needs of the organisation, and there are ongoing issues caused by the high age profile and condition of the fleet operating well beyond its recommended operational life cycle. The agreed Fleet Programme for 2025/26 is attached at Appendix 1. Members are</p>

	<p>advised that this includes the replacement of the Lord Mayor's official car, last considered by this Committee in February 2020, the lease contract for which ends in October 2025. As previously, the Fleet Unit have engaged with the Lord Mayor's Unit to ensure that the requirements, duties and obligations of the Office of the Lord Mayor are considered along with mileage requirements and capability. In keeping with the Council's previous decision the replacement car will be fully electric. The replacement car will be a four door executive saloon type vehicle with higher range than the existing vehicle, considered to be more in keeping with the operational requirements of the role. Due to delivery lead times it is anticipated to take a minimum of six months to acquire the new replacement lease/hire vehicle once ordered.</p> <p>Members are asked to note the agreed Fleet Programme for 2025/26.</p>
	<p><u>Project Updates</u></p>
3.8	<p>North Foreshore – Development Site Infrastructure Works</p> <p>This project was moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> on the Capital Programme in March 2016 and a total budget of £6.9m was allocated in September 2016 to be met by capital receipts from the site as well as the Landfill Closure provision. The project involves the development of a gas ring main and edging gas membranes, storms drains, access ramps and associated landscaping as a pre-requisite to the development of individual sites and to ensure that the economic, regenerative and social impacts of the North Foreshore site are maximised. Substantial works on this project have already been completed. One of the most significant elements to deliver is an NIE substation and overall NIE upgrade connection to meet greater capacity power needs on the site. This is required now given the significant developments on the North Foreshore including the completion of Phase 2A of the Film Studios and the commencement of the works on the commercial led development sites. Engagement with NIE to move this element forward has been ongoing for a number of years, and NIE have now confirmed that the specification required and the passage of time since the initial agreements means that costs have increased. Legal Services have advised that the terms and conditions set out initially mean that any further challenge on this matter from the Council would be difficult given the pandemic and other mitigating factors. Members are asked to note the cost increase related to the NIE substation since the original budget was allocated in 2016, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council and can be met via capital receipts from the North Foreshore site as previously agreed by Members; and agree to a budget increase of £1.8m.</p>
3.9	<p>IT Programme – HR/Payroll Replacement HR/Payroll/Time and Attendance System</p> <p>Members are reminded that in August 2016 it was agreed to move the Replacement HR/Payroll/Time and Attendance system to <i>Stage 3 - Committed</i> on the Capital Programme with a maximum budget of £328,910 allocated, with a further allocation of £64,000 in April 2020. This project is nearing completion and due to additional system requirements an</p>

	additional £93,000 is requested. Members are asked to note the cost increase for this project since the original budget was allocated in 2016, that the Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council and agree to a budget increase of £93,000 up to a maximum total allocation of £486,000.
3.10	Approval to Procure 2025/26 <p>Members are asked to agree that any necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated for any Physical Programme projects in 2025/26 including Fleet Replacement Programme, non-recurrent programme and externally funded projects as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.</p>
3.11	UK Shared Prosperity Fund update and additional schemes <p>Members will recall that the Council secured £1,787,615 from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for 2024-25, covering both revenue and capital projects. The capital funding is targeted at pitch and playground improvements and delivery of these now externally funded projects is well underway with several already completed on site. As previously highlighted, a total of £1.1m of capital budget has therefore been recouped and can be directed towards a range of additional small scale local capital schemes.</p> <p>The proposals for the additional schemes as a consequence of the successful bid to UKSPF are now brought forward as follows: upgrades to basketball provision – west, east, south; a modular changing and flexible space facility at Loughside, and a series of inclusive and accessibility projects including a mobile Changing Places facility, Makaton communications boards in playgrounds and sensory garden schemes. An update will be brought to the next series of Area Working Groups with more details on the list of projects for consideration.</p> <p>Members are asked to note the update provided on the proposed additional local capital schemes as a consequence of the UKSPF funding and that a further update will be brought to the AWGs for consideration.</p>
3.12	Capital Letters of Offer <p>Members are asked to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer accepted in Q3 2024/25 at Appendix 2.</p>
3.13	Contracts Awarded <p>Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works including services related to works in Q3 2024/25 at Appendix 3.</p>
3.14	Financial & Resource Implications <p><i>Financial Implications –</i></p>

	<p>IT Programme – Folder Inserter Equipment - a maximum of £69,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p>City Hall Stained Glass Windows – a maximum of £70,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p>Belfast Bikes - The Director of Finance has confirmed that the new operator contract is within the affordability limits of the Council - capital costs can be met via an existing reserve along with either external funding or a growth proposal.</p> <p>Fleet Replacement Programme 2025/26 – this is an existing rolling allocation of £2.2m on the Capital Programme.</p> <p>North Foreshore Development Sites – Infrastructure Works – a maximum of £8.7m is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council and can be met by capital receipts from the site.</p> <p>IT Programme – Corporate HR/Payroll System - a maximum of £486,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications</i> – Officer time to deliver.</p>
3.15	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Fleet Replacement Programme 2025-2026</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Capital Letters of Offer in Q3 2024/25 – October to December 2024</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Contracts Awarded in Q3 2024/25 – October to December 2024</p>

Appendix 1 - Fleet Replacement Programme 2025/26

The proposed vehicle replacement of fleet assets for 2025/26 is made up as follows:
Total Budget £2.2m.

Item	No.
Lease/Hire of official corporate cars annually on 4yr contract	3
RCV 6x2 26t n/track, r/s, twin bin-lift	4
RCV 4x2 26t n/track trade bin-lift	2
RCV 4x2 18T n/track open back	1
Compact cleaning sweeper 5t	5
TOTAL	£2,174,000

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Appendix 2

Capital Letters of Offer 01 October – 31 December 2024

Project	Funder	Amount
<i>BCC Cleansing Fleet Enhancement Project – Phase II (Amendment)</i>	<i>DfC</i>	<i>£50,000</i>
<i>Coffee Culture (Amendment)</i>	<i>TEO</i>	<i>£763,302</i>
UKSPF - Communities & Place Project	MHC&LG	£1,787,615
<i>Donegal Pass Community Centre Solar Panels (Amendment)</i>	<i>CCAF</i>	<i>€46,620</i>
<i>Girdwood ICT (Amendment)</i>	<i>DfC</i>	<i>£127,088</i>
Complex Lives - Case Management System	NIHE	£21,929

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Appendix 3

Schedule of Contracts Awarded (Works and Works Related) for Notation (October – December 2024)

Contract Awarded	Supplier	Date of Award
Tender for the provision of independent quantity surveying reviews of planning viability appraisals	Naylor & Devlin	07/10/2024
NRF_ACT Initiative - Interpretive fit out design & installation	Redhead Conference & Exhibition Ltd	10/10/2024
NRF_Integrated Consultant Team for Dundela FC Community replacement pitch	Michael Herron Architects	17/10/2024
Term Contract for PAT Testing at all Council Properties	ICSS Ltd	11/11/2024
Main Contractor for Strand Arts Centre	Martin & Hamilton	22/11/2024

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