

# People and Communities Committee

Tuesday, 2nd May, 2024

## MEETING OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);  
Councillors Bell, Black, Bower, R. Brooks,  
Doherty, M. Donnelly, R-M Donnelly,  
Flynn, Kelly, Magee, Maghie, McAteer,  
Ó Néill and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. D. Sales, Strategic Director City Operations;  
Mrs. S. Toland, Director of City Services;  
Mr. S. Leonard, Director OSSS and Resources and Fleet;  
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;  
Ms. K. Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control;  
Mr. J. Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager;  
and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### Apologies

Apologies were reported from Councillors Bunting, Cobain and de Faoite.

### Minutes

It was reported that the minutes of the 9th April meeting would be considered at the next meeting of the Council, which was scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 7th May.

### Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

### Restricted Items

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

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

The Members were advised that content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which takes place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential

information' and no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

### **Update on XL Bully Legislation**

The Director of City Services provided the Members with a comprehensive update regarding the new safeguarding measures, along with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) timeline for implementation for XL Bully breed type dogs that was due to be introduced in Northern Ireland and would be likely to impact upon the Council's Dog Warden Service.

The Committee was advised that currently there was 140 XL Bully type dogs licensed in Northern Ireland, up from 90 last year and provided an overview of the requirements on owners.

The Director advised that, as requested at the April meeting of Committee, officers had written to Minister Muir to raise the Council's concerns regarding the impact of the upcoming XL Bully legislation for councils and animal welfare charities, and to enquire about what resources would be allocated to Councils to deal with the impacts. Currently the response was outstanding, and the Director undertook to update the Committee further once it had been received.

The Committee noted the update and that the correspondence seeking additional information on the impact of the legislation had been issued to Minister Muir.

### **Alleygates Phase V Consultation Update**

The Operational Director provided the Members with an update on the Alleygates Phase V Programme.

The Members noted that the Notice of Intention for those streets meeting the threshold in Phase 5a had been advertised on 9th February for the required period of 30 days for representations and objections to be logged and he provided an overview of those representations and objections received. He advised that the objections received had been reviewed with legal services and the advice was that the Council was not required to conduct a local enquiry and officers were recommending that the proposed gating order be enacted.

Following a query, the Director advised that the work to evaluate the Alleygate programme would be progressing later in the year.

He advised that the canvassers for Phase 5b had been recruited and those residents within the nominated areas would be given the opportunity to complete a hard copy questionnaire and return it in a Freepost envelope. In addition, notification would be given that the canvassers would be visiting each household to complete surveys, should a form not be registered from that household. As previously requested, canvassers would contact those elected representatives who had expressed an interest in promoting the consultation.

The Members noted that a request had been received from the Department for Infrastructure and Linen Quarter BID seeking to include Ventry Lane within the additional consultation areas. He advised that funding had been secured to include an

additional gate within the gating programme. The Department for Infrastructure had agreed in principle to the proposal and the PCSP had been supportive of the initiative due to the high levels of drug related incidents at this location.

The Committee approved the enacting of the legislation and agreed to the inclusion of an additional self-funded street within the Phase 5b consultation.

#### **Six monthly Healthwise and Physical Activity Referral Programmes Update**

The Committee noted the six-monthly progress update on the exercise and health referral programmes managed by GLL in Belfast, which included an overview of the various health related contracts and services along with the key performance indicators.

#### **GLL Leisure Management Contract – six monthly update on contract compliance and performance**

The Committee was reminded that it had previously been agreed that contract compliance and performance reports would be presented, at a strategic level, to Committee on a six-monthly basis in November and May. That would allow for sufficient time to collate and verify management information data related to the preceding six-month periods of April to September and October to March.

The six-monthly reports, as submitted, included detailed quarterly information on the two relevant quarters within each six-month period.

The Committee noted the:

- the information provided in paragraph 3.2.1 of the report in relation to contract compliance;
- the information provided at paragraph 3.2.2 in relation to key performance indicators;
- the supporting narrative presented at paragraph 3.2.3;
- the facility asset management monitoring information set out at paragraph 3.2.4; and
- the Health and Safety compliance assurances presented at paragraph 3.2.5.

#### **Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group Update**

The Director of City Services drew the Members' attention to the minutes of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group, during which the following matters had been considered:

- New Crematorium Development Update;
- Bereavement Services Operational Update; and
- City Centre Visitor Centre Operating Model Update.

The Committee approved and adopted the minutes of the Strategic Cemeteries and Crematorium Working Group of 24th April.

### **Update on Events Social Value Levy Fund**

The Operational Director provided the Members with an update on the social value monies that had been accrued, this included a breakdown of the fees collected per area since March 2019.

It was agreed that Councillors working with local community organisations, resident groups and businesses would be best placed to bring ideas for consideration to the local area working groups. In addition, Council officers would support Elected Members with project proposals by providing specialised knowledge and costings where required.

At the request of a Member, it was agreed that the fee collected for Ormeau Park should be directly considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee rather than the Area Working Group.

The Committee noted the amount of social levy fee collected by the Council since March 2019 in respect of events at Ormeau Park, the Boucher Road Playing Fields and Botanic Gardens and agreed that the South Area Working Group would further discuss the projects that should benefit from investment using the social value fund for Botanic Gardens and Boucher Playing Fields, with the fee collected for Ormeau Park to be directly considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

### **Matters referred back from the Council/Motions**

#### **Blanchflower Stadium - Preferential Use Agreement**

The Committee considered further the minute of the meeting of 12th March which had been referred back to the Committee by the Council at its meeting on 8th April. An extract of the minute is set out hereunder:

Extract from minutes of –

MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

12th March 2024

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#### **“Blanchflower Stadium – Preferential Use Agreement**

The Committee considered the following report:

##### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of this Committee that the Preferential Use Agreement with Glentoran Football Club for the use of the second synthetic pitch at Blanchflower Playing Fields, expired on 1 December 2023.**

- 1.2 Outside the timeslots allocated to Glentoran the facility is very popular and continues to be fully booked from 6pm to 10pm Monday to Thursday by a wide range of youth and senior teams.
- 1.3 On Friday evenings along with Saturday mornings and on Sunday the pitch is booked by South Belfast Youth League.
- 1.4 Council have been approached by several local, community based clubs who are unable to gain access to the pitch.
- 1.5 There are a number of options for Council to consider regarding the future booking arrangements for this pitch:

**Option 1**

To renew the Preferential Use Agreement with Glentoran Football Club

**Option 2**

To process all pitch bookings at the site following normal Belfast City Council procedures which is first come, first served.

**Option 3**

To work with local community based football clubs to develop an allocation model so that they all get access to the pitch on Monday to Thursday evenings. An example of a potential allocation model involving 8 clubs and the South Belfast Youth League is included at appendix 1 of the agenda.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Members of the Committee are asked to note that the Preferential Use Agreement with Glentoran Football Club for Blanchflower Playing Fields has ended.
- 2.2 From 1 April 2024 it is suggested that Council should progress with Option 3.

Council Officers will meet with local clubs to develop an allocation model so that they all get access to the pitch on Monday to Thursday evenings (see appendix 1 in the agenda).

**3.0 Main report**

**Background**

- 3.1 In March 2018 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee directed officers to undertake research into the provision of

suitable and convenient pitch facilities for Glentoran FC including its Youth Academy. Committee further accepted the East Area Working Group recommendation that a proposed capital programme to install a 3G pitch with floodlighting at King George V playing fields be replaced on the capital programme with a 3G pitch at Blanchflower Playing Fields.

- 3.2 People and Communities Committee of March 2019 agreed to upgrade facilities at King George V Playing Fields and offer a preferential Use Agreement for 5 years to Glentoran Youth Academy.
- 3.3 King George V playing fields are subject to a Deed of Covenant with Fields of Trust. Local residents had written to Fields in Trust in opposition to the proposed development of the site and management of bookings. Local residents also approached council officers protesting against the proposal on a number of grounds.
- 3.4 In the meantime significant investment in football facilities had taken place in East Belfast and in particular at Blanchflower Playing Fields where Council has developed two full size floodlit synthetic football pitches at Blanchflower Playing Fields. One of the pitches being directly managed and booked by Harland and Wolff Welders Football Club and the other managed and booked by Council.
- 3.5 By 2019 the decision regarding the upgrade works had not been fulfilled and Glentoran FC wrote to Council seeking approval for the previously approved Preferential Use Agreement at King George V playing fields to be transferred to Blanchflower playing fields.
- 3.6 Officers negotiated with Glentoran Football Club and an agreed timetable of priority use for Glentoran Football Club was produced, indicated in the table below. The timetable of use and the teams/sections from within the club using the pitch at these times were to be reflective of Glentoran Football Clubs commitment to growing the game in an inclusive way with significant usage by groups under-represented in sports participation.

Day	Times of Use
Monday	6:00pm-7:00pm 7:00pm -8:00pm
Tuesday	6:00pm-7:00pm 7:00pm -8:00pm
Wednesday	6:00pm-7:00pm 7:00pm -8:00pm
Thursday	6:00pm-7:00pm 7:00pm -8:00pm

Friday	None
Saturday	None
Sunday	None

**3.7 People and Communities Committee of 9 November 2021 agreed to offer a Preferential Use Agreement to Glentoran Football Club at Blanchflower Playing Fields for limited access to the site, as identified in the table above, for a period of two years. This agreement has now ended and there have been enquiries from a number of local youth teams with regards to being able to book this pitch for the slots currently allocated to Glentoran through this agreement.**

**3.8 Financial & Resource Implications**

**There are no additional resource implications associated with this report.**

**3.9 Equality Impact/Rural Needs Assessment**

**There are no equality or rural needs implications associated with this report.”**

The Committee noted that the Preferential Use Agreement with Glentoran Football Club for Blanchflower Playing Fields had ended with effect from 1st April 2024 and agreed that the Council should progress with Option 3.

At the request of a Member, it was further agreed that officers would look to work with local community based football clubs to develop an allocation model which was fair and equitable for all users, to ensure that all clubs would get fair access to pitches throughout the week.”

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Following a query, the Democratic Services and Governance Manager confirmed that, as the aforementioned minute had been referred back to the Committee, the Committee needed to, once again, consider the three options and whether it wished to proceed with option 3, as per the officer’s recommendation and previous Committee agreement.

The Members considered in detail the three options that had previously been suggested and considered whether a workshop to further discuss the needs of the various football clubs would be beneficial and asked the Strategic Director for an update on any work progressed to date on option 3.

The Strategic Director advised that, following the March meeting, officers had written to the local community-based football clubs and had since received each clubs’ preferred option for use along with detailed information on the membership of each club. Following lengthy discussion, a general consensus was agreed there would be no benefit in discussing this further at a workshop, as officers were already in receipt of the

required information from the clubs which could be used to draw up a proposed allocation model.

Following consideration of the various options available, the Committee agreed to proceed based on Option 3 and to also include consideration of Glentoran Football Club, with officers to devise a fair and equitable way to allocate slots, based on need, with a report to be submitted to the next meeting which would detail the proposed allocation model for the Committee to further consider.

**Response from DAERA re "Rethinking Our Resources:  
Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy In NI"  
Consultation - seeking an extension**

The Committee noted that Minister Muir had agreed to extend the closing date for responses to the consultation until 5.00 p.m. on 27th June, 2024, therefore, the consultation from Belfast City Council would have to be submitted in draft form, subject to ratification at the July Council meeting.

**People and Communities Committee  
Plan 2023/24 – End of Year Report**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues**

1.1 This paper provides a year end progress update on the key actions contained in the 2023- 24 People and Communities (P&C) Committee Plan, as agreed by the Committee in October 2023.

**2.0 Recommendation**

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the year end progress report against the agreed actions within the 2023-24 People and Communities Committee Plan.

**3.0 Main Report**

3.1 Members will be aware that the 2023-24 P&C Committee Plan was agreed at the Committee meeting in October 2023.

3.2 The plan locates priorities within the framework of the relevant Belfast Agenda themes (Our Services; Economic Recovery; Community Recovery; Environmental Recovery; Strategic Planning Frameworks; and Organisational Foundations) and the CNS Departmental key priority areas (Open Spaces & Streetscene; Community Provision; City Protection and Bereavement; and Resources and Fleet).



- 3.3 While the October 2023 report noted that it is likely many of these areas of focus will take several years to deliver, it detailed the key deliverables and priorities for 2023-24.
- 3.4 The Committee has received specific reports on a number of these priorities, and some are included in the Council's 2023-24 Improvement Plan, though this report provides an end of year progress update regarding all the priorities, as was proposed in the October paper.
- 3.5 The table within appendix 1b (attached to the agenda) provides detail and commentary on the progress of all 36 actions. It sets out the work undertaken by the Department to deliver the key priorities, to the end of Q4 2023/24 (end of March 2024). 36 actions were identified across the Department's three Directorates. Of these, 1 has been completed (marked 'blue' in the table), 33 are currently on track (marked 'green'), 2 are considered at risk and are slightly delayed (marked 'amber').
- 3.6 The Committee is reminded of the resource, capacity and resilience pressures on the City and Neighbourhood Services Department experienced during 2023-24. Recent recruitment exercises have provided some additional resources which will assist with the progress of those actions currently considered to be delayed, though it is anticipated that some of these actions will be carried into the 2024-25 Department Business Plan where completion is more realistically achievable.
- 3.7 The Department intends to bring a further report detailing the 2024-25 Committee Plan to a subsequent People and Communities Committee meeting.
- 3.8 **Financial and Resource Implications**
- The Committee Plan and annual programme of work aligns with the budget agreed by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee through the rate setting process in January for 2023-24 for the People and Communities Committee of £98.901m.
- 3.9 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**
- There are no implications directly relating to this report however individual strategies and plans will be subject to the council's equality, good relations and rural needs requirements."

The Committee noted the update.

**People and Communities Committee Plan 2024/25**

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 This report provides a draft People & Communities Committee Plan summarising the Committee’s key priorities for 2024-25.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the draft People and Communities Committee Plan priorities for 2024-25.**

**3.0 Main report**

**The 2024-25 draft P&C Committee Plan has been developed in the context of the Council’s Corporate Plan and the Belfast Agenda and considering the Belfast Agenda Refresh. Consequently, the new Committee Plan contains the commitments within the Corporate Delivery Plan, which fall under the remit of this Committee, plus additional deliverables that have been agreed by the P&C Committee throughout 2023-24 and are relevant to the Standing Orders. The draft plan sets out the main priorities and programmes of work that the Committee oversees to maximise the Council’s contribution to the Belfast Agenda.**

**3.2 The structure of the delivery plan is themed under the following:**

- Our People and Communities**
- Our Place**
- Our Planet**
- Compassionate City**
- Improving Our Services**
- Organisational Priorities**

**3.3 A series of priorities fall under each theme, each with several committed deliverables for 2024-25.**

**3.4 Members will recall that the People and Communities Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of strategies, policies, programmes, and projects aimed at improving life at a local level in the context of the outcomes agreed in the community and corporate plans and other corporate strategy. This includes:**

- Developing and delivering programmes, events, and activities to promote health, safety, and well-being at a local level.**

- Administering and enforcing the Council's powers and duties under the Public Health Acts and all environmental health and building related legislation and regulations.
- Securing and providing adequate provision for the recycling, treatment and disposal of commercial and domestic waste including bulky waste and the collection and disposal of abandoned motor vehicles.
- Exercising the Council's powers for improving local environmental quality in relation to housing legislation, managing controlled waste, emergency planning and community safety and anti-social behaviour, clean neighbourhoods and other environmental or regulatory issues not falling within the remit of any other Committee.
- Managing, maintaining, and maximising the benefit of the Council's parks, pitches, playgrounds, and other public spaces as well as community centres and other indoor facilities.
- Developing and implementing activities to ensure the delivery of corporate strategies and initiatives in respect of the promotion of health and physical activity, environmental protection, community safety and other such areas under the domain of this Committee.
- Overseeing the delivery of the Council's frontline services and associated community assets including Environmental Health Services; Cleansing; Waste Management; Parks and Leisure service (excluding Zoo, Malone House and Belfast Castle), Neighbourhood and Development Services; Community Services, Community Safety and Emergency Planning.

### **3.5 Summary of Committee Plan Priorities**

- The draft Committee Plan identifies the following key areas of focus:
- Build capacity within our communities
- Addressing vulnerabilities and responding to societal challenges
- Increase opportunities for people to be physically active
- Community Safety
- Heritage Tourism
- Off-Street Car Parking
- Open Spaces

- Reservoir Improvement Programme
- Transition to low carbon
- Promote sustainable circular economy approaches
- Climate Resilience
- Belfast Youth Council
- Good Relations Action Plan
- Community Safety
- Bereavement Services
- Port Health
- House in Multiple Occupancy
- Digital Development
- Asset Management

3.6 It is likely many of these areas of focus will take several years to deliver. The draft plan includes and outlines the key deliverables for 2024-25 that we are working towards achieving.

3.7 It is proposed that Committee receive a 6 monthly progress update regarding the priorities. This will be in addition to usual reports that will be brought to Committee regarding individual priorities and deliverables.

3.8 The Departmental Plan on which the committee plan is based reflects that the department is continuing to focus on the delivery of business-as-usual services while progressing the transformation and improvement agenda.

3.9 **Financial & Resource Implications**

The Committee Plan and annual programme of work aligns with the budget agreed by Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on 9th February 2024, for 2024-25 for the People and Communities Committee, of £105,332,936.

3.10 **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

There are no implications directly relating to this report however individual strategies, programmes and actions will be subject to the council's equality, good relations, and rural needs requirements."

The Committee approved the draft People and Communities Committee Plan priorities for 2024-25.

## **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

### **Tullycarnet Bowling Pavilion – Keyholder Agreement**

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for the Council to enter into a key holding arrangement with the Church of Ireland Diocese of Down and Dromore for access to and use of Tullycarnet Bowling Pavilion.

The Operational Director provided an overview of those users of the facility and highlighted that if the Church was to become the responsible key holder for the building it would negate the need for the Council to staff the facility when in use. It was noted that there had been no prior clashes of bookings and the key holder arrangement would not have any impact on the hire of the pavilion or events by other third-party organisations.

The Committee granted authority for the necessary key holding arrangement between the Council and the Church of Ireland Diocese of Down and Dromore for access to and use of Tullycarnet Bowling Pavilion, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed by the Operational Director of City and Neighbourhood Services and on condition the Church resolve all operational and health and safety issues to the satisfaction of Council officers.

It noted that an appropriate legal key holding arrangement would be prepared by legal services to include the necessary facility management and health and safety requirements.

### **Annual GLL policies and operational procedures alignment statement**

The Committee noted a report which provided details on annual assurances on GLL policy and procedure alignments as set out in the leisure management contract.

### **Proposal to name New Street**

The Committee approved the applications for the naming two new streets in the city, Black Ridge Place and Black Ridge Hill.

### **Proposal for Dual Language Street Signage**

The Committee agreed the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at Meadowhill, Glencolin Manor, Glencolin Close, Glenveagh Park, Ramoan Drive, Garnock Hill, Naroon Park, Laganvale Street, South Parade, Willowvale Avenue and Hamill Park.

## **Issues Raised in Advance by Members**

### **Provision of toilet facilities at Falls Park – Councillor M. Donnelly to raise**

At the request of Councillor M. Donnelly, the Committee agreed to assess if the bowling pavilion at Falls Park could be made accessible for the use of its toilet facilities for users of Falls Park.

At the request of further Members, the Committee also agreed to submit a report to a future meeting considering the provision of toilet facilities at other parks throughout the city, to include Woodvale Park and at Shaws Bridge.

**Public Health Nuisance of feeding pigeons –  
Councillor G. McAteer to raise**

At the request of Councillor G. McAteer, the Committee agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would consider the public health nuisance of people feeding pigeons and provide an update on the legislative powers that existed.

**Books for Refugee Children living across  
Belfast – Councillor Bower to raise**

At the request of Councillor Bower, The Committee agreed that a report would be submitted to a future meeting which would consider the Council supplying reading material in their native language, along with support, to refugee children living in Belfast.

**Glentoran Football Pitch Request to address  
the Committee – Councillor Maghie to raise**

The Committee considered a request to address the Committee, as raised by Councillor Maghie, and agreed, given the decision earlier in the meeting, not to accede to the request for Glentoran Football Club to address a future meeting of the Committee.

Chairperson