### **Public Document Pack**

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



19th February, 2024

#### MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room and remotely via Teams on Friday, 23rd February, 2024 at 9.30 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

#### **AGENDA**:

### 1. Routine Matters

- (a) Apologies
- (b) Minutes
- (c) Declarations of Interest

#### 2. Restricted Items

- (a) Financial Reporting Quarter 3 2023/24 (Pages 1 22)
- (b) Organisational Reviews and Change Programme (Pages 23 30)
- (c) Community and Neighbourhood Services Establishment Update Resources and Fleet (Pages 31 34)
- (d) Regeneration (Place Based Growth Proposition) Advocacy and Lobbying Report and Regeneration Framework Update (To Follow)
- (e) Update on 2 Royal Avenue (To Follow)

- (f) Belfast Agenda Refresh (2024-2028) (Pages 35 158)
- (g) Outstanding Accounts (Pages 159 160)
- (h) Update on Cost-of-Living Hardship Programme 23/24 (Pages 161 168)
- (i) City Centre Byelaws Consultation Update on process (Pages 169 172)
- (j) Minutes of the Shared City Partnership Meeting (To Follow)
- (k) Draft Irish Language Policy (To Follow)

#### 3. Matters referred back from Council/Motions

- (a) Motion Transparency by Default Belfast City Council (Pages 173 176)
- (b) Motion Rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy (Pages 177 180)
- (c) Quarterly Update on Notices of Motion (To Follow)

### 4. Governance

- (a) Change of Date Council Meeting in May (To Follow)
- (b) Consultation on Standing Orders Regulations (Pages 181 202)
- (c) Appointment of Members to the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners (Pages 203 210)

#### 5. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

- (a) Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress (Pages 211 240)
- (b) Northern Ireland Executive Ministerial Meetings (Pages 241 242)
- (c) Correspondence from Invest NI (To Follow)
- (d) Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Pages 243 264)
- (e) Employability Update (Pages 265 270)
- (f) Apprenticeship Programme (Pages 271 274)

#### 6. Physical Programme and Asset Management

- (a) Physical Programme Update (To Follow)
- (b) Asset Management (Pages 275 284)

#### 7. Finance, Procurement and Performance

- (a) Contracts (To Follow)
- (b) Commercial and Procurement Services Social Value Working Group update (To Follow)

### 8. **Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 285 288)
- (b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality (Pages 289 296)
- (c) Requests for use of the Council Chamber for Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition (Pages 297 300)
- (d) Request for use of City Hall grounds Belfast Photo Festival Photographic Exhibition in June 2024 (Pages 301 320)
- (e) Illumination Request (To Follow)
- (f) Minutes of the Social Policy Working Group 13 February (Pages 321 338)
- (g) Minutes of the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group 8 and 14 February (Pages 339 344)
- (h) Minutes of the Language Strategy Working Group 26 January and 9 February (Pages 345 348)
- (i) Minutes of the City Centre Working Group -17 January (Pages 349 352)
- (j) Minutes of the Disability Working Group 30 January (To Follow)



# Agenda Item 2a

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





# Agenda Item 2b

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





# Agenda Item 2c

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



# Agenda Item 2f

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









# Agenda Item 2g

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



# Agenda Item 2h

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





# Agenda Item 2i

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





# STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Subject:		Motion – "Transparency by Default" at Belfast City Council				
Date:		23rd February, 2024				
Reporting Officer:		Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services				
Contact Officer:		Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager				
Restricted Reports						
Is this	report restricted?		Yes No X			
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 conn	ection with any labour relations matter				
5.	Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained					
6.	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?						
	Committee Decisio	n				
Sometime in the future  Never						
Call-in						
Is the	decision eligible fo	Yes X No				

### 1.0 **Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues** To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to "Transparency by Default" at Belfast City Council, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 23rd January. 2.0 Recommendation Members are asked to note that in accordance with Standing Order 13(i) that Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report. At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that a subsequent report will be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications. 3.0 Main Report Key Issues 3.1 The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 23rd January, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 1st February: 'Transparency by default' at Belfast City Council "This council believes that maintaining public trust in the democratic process is essential. A key part of this is ensuring that decisions are made openly and can subject to public scrutiny. Council recognises the concern that there is about the degree to which council, committee and working group discussions and decisions are being conducted in restricted session, and the wholesale redaction of documentation that accompanies these matters. To help maintain public trust and ensure that the people of this city can be fully informed about how decisions that affect them have been reached, this council is committed to a policy of 'transparency by default' by which all meetings and documentation will be placed in the public domain as standard, with information or discussions only being redacted or restricted very specifically in relation to those issues which fall within the exemptions in the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. To that end, committee reports will, in addition to identifying the relevant exemption in the 2014 Act, also set out a rationale as to why information or discussions are to be restricted, when this is the case. Officers will also bring forward guidelines in relation to all council, committee and working group discussions and decisions which will enable this approach, to ensure maximum transparency while adhering to legislative requirements, ultimately making this organisation an exemplar public body in terms of transparency and openness." Proposer: Councillor Gary McKeown Seconder: Councillor Donal Lyons

3.2	The motion calls upon the Council to undertake transparency by default by bringing for				
	guidelines in relation to all council, committee and working group discussions and decision				
	which will enable this approach, to ensure maximum transparency while adhering to				
	legislative requirements – the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for				
	governance issues and the motion has been referred to this Committee.				
3.3	Financial and Resource Implications				
	None at this stage as there is no commitment to proceed with the Notice of Motion.				
	Details of any financial and resource implications will be reported at a subsequent meeting.				
3.4	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment				
	This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs				
	implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.				
	psatis.is and should be sabjest to sai its.inal corooning process as appropriate.				
4.0	Documents Attached				
	None				





Subject:	Motion - Rights-based Ethical Procureme	ent Policy			
Date:	23rd February, 2024				
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services				
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager				
Restricted Reports					
Is this report restricted?		Yes No X			
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					
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2. Information likely to	reveal the identity of an individual				
<ol><li>Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li></ol>					
4. Information in conr	ection with any labour relations matter				
5. Information in relat	on to which a claim to legal professional privile	ege 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, investigati	on 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					
Call-in					
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?					

### 1.0 **Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues** To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to Rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 23rd January. 2.0 Recommendation Members are asked to note that in accordance with Standing Order 13(i) that Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report. At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that a subsequent report will be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications. 3.0 Main Report **Key Issues** 3.1 The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 23rd January, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 1st February: Rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy "This Council deplores those corporations that profit from protracted armed conflict and systematic violations of human rights, particularly in the context of Israel's continuing brutal assault on the people of Gaza and escalating settler terrorism in the West Bank, Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, and other conflicts around the world. With this motion, the Council encourages companies to meet their obligations to avoid contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities, and to prevent or mitigate human rights abuses linked to their operations. The Council is aware of the crucial role of local authorities and their public procurement procedures in ensuring respect for human rights by companies, as well as their obligations under widely accepted business and human rights norms - as laid down in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the Global Sullivan Principles (1999) - to promote respect for human rights by companies with which they do business. The Council affirms that every endeavour is made to ensure that councils tender processes are consistent with the above principles, including under the Fourth Geneva convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and under customary international humanitarian law, prohibiting the importation or sale of goods or services originating in occupied territories. This Council resolves to adopt a rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy (EPP) that takes fully into account existing obligations and standards. The EPP will incorporate widely accepted and precisely formulated international standards and explain clearly how the policy will be implemented. The primary aim of the EPP is to ensure that

	human rights obligations are properly acknowledged, observed and respected at all stages of the procurement process."
	Proposer: Councillor Bronach Anglin
	Seconder: Councillor Aine McCabe
3.2	The motion calls upon the Council to adopt a rights-based Ethical Procurement Policy (EPP)
	- the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for procurement and the
	motion has been referred to this Committee.
3.3	Financial and Resource Implications
	None at this stage as there is no commitment to proceed with the Notice of Motion.
	Details of any financial and resource implications will be reported at a subsequent meeting.
3.4	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
	This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs
	implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.
4.0	Documents Attached
	None



# Agenda Item 4b

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Subject:	Consultation on Standing Orders Regulations – in respect of the Call-in process and those decisions subject to a Qualified Majority Vote
Date:	23 February 2024
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor / Director of Legal and Civic Services
Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes No X
	ption, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of med this report restricted.
Insert number	
Information relating t	o any individual
	reveal the identity of an individual
*	to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the
council holding that i	
	ction with any labour relations matter
	n to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
9	that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a
	ction in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime
7. Information on any a	- Chori in relation to the prevention, investigation of prosecution of chine
If Yes, when will the report	t become unrestricted?
After Committe	ee Decision
After Council D	Decision
Sometime in th	ne future
Never	
Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for	Call-in?

# 1.0 **Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues** 1.1 The Department for Communities are seeking the views of Councils on the future contents of any proposed legislation dealing with Standing Orders, and in particular on the operation of call-in and what if any mandatory Standing Orders should be included in future legislation. The purpose of this report is to seek SP&R approval on the Council position which will then be issued to the Department for Communities pending ratification by Council. 2.0 Recommendation 2.1 The Committee is asked to: i. note the background in relation to Standing Order Regulations ii. agree the Council position outlined at paragraph 3.5 iii. note the list of decisions called-in since April 2015 and the status of each (Appendix 3) 3.0 Main Report 3.1 Background The Department for Communities issued a letter on 31 October seeking the views of Councils on the future contents of any proposed legislation dealing with Standing Orders (Appendix 1). The Department is, in particular, seeking information related to the operation of the 'call-in' procedure, which provides a mechanism by which councils may reconsider decisions already taken. The Council have been asked to identify and provide details of: any issues with the current 'call-in' process; how many decisions have been called-in since 1 April 2015; what type of decisions were called-in; on what grounds were they called-in; and what the outcome was – decision upheld or overturned. The Senior Democratic Services Officer has collated the information on the numbers and status of all decisions called in since April 2015 which is presented at Appendix 3. An extension to the deadline has been provided until February 2024. 3.2 **Background to Standing Order Regulations** It was always the intention of the Department that they would introduce Standing Order Regulations in the Assembly which would include "mandatory" standing orders which must be included in the standing orders of each of the 11 Councils. In the interim period before the establishment of the new Councils, the Department issued a set of Model Standing Orders which were adopted by all of the new Councils and remain the basis for the existing standing orders within each of the 11 Councils. The Department previously tried in 2015 and again in 2016 to bring forward Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (NI) but both sets of draft regulations were negatived by the Assembly. This was mainly due to a disagreement on the "merit principle" in relation to decisions called in on "community impact" grounds.

# 3.3 Current arrangements in relation to Call In and Qualified Majority Voting

The procedures in relation to the "reconsideration of a decision" (also referred to as "call-in") are provided for by Section 41 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 and are outlined in more detail in the Councils Standing Orders (see Standing Order 48).

#### 2014 Act

Section 41(1) of the 2014 Act indicates that the Council must make provision requiring reconsideration (or "call-in") of a decision if 15 per cent of members of the council (which for Belfast City Council means at least 9 Members) present to the clerk of the council a requisition on either or both of the following grounds –

- a) that the decision was not arrived at after a proper consideration of the relevant facts and issues (i.e. "procedural" grounds);
- b) that the decision would disproportionately affect adversely any section of the inhabitants of the district (i.e. "community impact" grounds).

With regards to a decision called in on "community impact" grounds, our current Standing Orders indicate that if the legal opinion deems the "call in" to have merit, then the decision must be tabled at the next available meeting of the Council where it will be taken by a Qualified Majority Vote (i.e. where 80% of Members present and voting must be in favour of the decision).

If the legal opinion deems the "call in" on community impact grounds **not** to have merit, then the original decision stands and should be implemented at the next available opportunity.

#### 3.4 Proposals under Standing Order Regulations

The most recent Draft Standing Order Regulations 2016 were presented to the Assembly in 2016 but no agreement could be reached. (**Appendix 2**)

These would have made important changes to the Model Standing Orders adopted by each of the Councils, not least in relation to the operation of call-in and the list of those decisions which must be taken by a Qualified Majority Vote.

The Department received legal advice which indicated that the "opinion" of the solicitor or barrister can only be on "a point of law" and cannot be on the "merit" principle as originally proposed – as this power was not provided by the primary legislation. According to the Department's legal advice, to assume this power would be "ultra vires".

The draft regulations provided that a call in made under "community impact" grounds would only be taken by a qualified majority vote where a barrister has found that the decision is **outside the powers of the council**, is **incompatible with EU law or convention rights**, or is **not in compliance with** the **council's equality scheme.** In all other cases the decision would be implemented or tabled for ratification by the council.

## 3.5 The following proposed response is provided for Members consideration:

- Belfast City Council have operated the call-in process consistently since April 2015.
   Details on the number of decisions called in, including the types of decisions, the grounds and the outcomes are included in Appendix 3.
- The Council would be broadly supportive of the proposals set out in the draft Standing Order Regulations 2016 which included a revision to the decisions which would be subject to Qualified Majority Vote.
- The Council supports the proposal that decisions called in under Section 41(1)(b) (i.e. on "community impact" grounds) would only be subject to a Qualified Majority Vote where a solicitor or barrister has opined under section 41(2) of that Act that there is a risk that the decision is:
  - outside the powers of the council,
  - or is incompatible with EU law or Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998),
  - or is not in compliance with the council's equality scheme in so far as it relates to equality of opportunity (within the meaning of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998).
  - The Council would also take this opportunity to raise a further related issue which arises out of Section 41 of the 2014 Act (Power to require decisions to be reconsidered).
  - Section 41(1) requires Council's to make provision for reconsideration of decisions. Section 41(4) states that a "decision" means a decision of the council or a committee of the council (and includes a decision to make a recommendation).
  - In practice, this means that a decision taken by a Committee and which is not called, may nevertheless be called in following ratification at full Council (being a decision of the Council). This has the effect of prolonging the period following Council ratification before a decision can be implemented. In most cases any issue which arises as a result of a Committee decision before it reaches Council can either be resolved informally or the decision referred back to Committee for reconsideration. If that does not resolve the issue then the ultimate decision at Council could be subject to call-in.
  - The Council would respectfully suggest that only one opportunity to avail of call-in is sufficient to address the issue which the legislation sought to address and avoids adding unnecessary bureaucracy to the decision-making process.

#### 3.7 **Financial and Resource Implications**

There are no financial or resource implications connected to this report.

#### **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

There are no equality or good relations implications connected to this report.

#### 4.0 Appendices - Documents Attached

3.8

Appendix 1 – Letter from Andrew McIntyre, Dept for Communities

Page 184

Appendix 2 – Draft Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (NI) 2016
Appendix 3 – Belfast City Council Pro Forma response – list of call ins







Depairtment fur

Commonities

# Local Government and Housing Regulation Division

Level 4 Causeway Exchange 1-7 Bedford Street Belfast BT2 7EG

Phone: (028) 90 909385

Email: andrew.mcintyre@communities-ni.gov.uk

Our ref:

Date: 31 October 2023

Chief Executive of each District Council

Via email.

Dear Chief Executive,

# THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (STANDING ORDERS) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND)

You will be aware the Department previously tried in 2015 and 2016 to bring forward Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (NI) and that both sets of draft regulations were negatived by the Assembly.

The Department is considering what, if any, mandatory Standing Orders should be included in future legislation and the purpose of this letter is to seek the views of councils.

The previous draft Regulations contained provisions on:

- decisions to be taken by a qualified majority;
- the call-in process;
- positions of responsibility; and
- appointments of councillors to committees.

A link to the 2016 draft Regulations is provided below:

<u>The Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016</u> (legislation.gov.uk)

The Department has already written to councils on 20 July 2023 regarding the allocation of committee places and positions of responsibility, asking to identify any concerns with the current process. The Department will consider those replies to assess what legislation or guidance may help clarify or add to the process.

The Department is, in particular, seeking information related to the operation of the 'call-in' procedure, which provides a mechanism by which councils may reconsider decisions already taken. To further understand how this process is working in councils I would be grateful if councils could identify and provide details of:

- any issues with the current 'call-in' process;
- how many decisions have been called-in since 1 April 2015;
- what type of decisions were called-in;
- on what grounds were they called-in; and
- what the outcome was decision upheld or overturned.

See attached proforma to be completed and returned. The Department would ask that Councils provide this information by 1 December 2023.

The Department has also received correspondence from a number of councils following the judgment in the Hartlands Judicial Review case. Please note, it will require primary legislation to exclude quasi-judicial decisions, such as planning decisions, from the call-in process and the Department is liaising with the Department for Infrastructure on this matter.

The Department would welcome the views of councils on any additional areas which they consider may benefit from being included in Standing Orders Regulations.

Yours faithfully,

## **Andrew McIntyre**

Local Government and Housing Regulation Division

Draft Regulations laid before the Assembly under section 127 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, for approval

#### DRAFT STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

# 2016 No.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Made - - - - - - Coming into operation

The Department of the Environment makes the following Regulations, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 38 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014(1).

In accordance with section 127(1) of that Act, the Department has consulted councils, such associations or bodies representative of councils, such associations or bodies representative of officers of councils and such other persons and bodies as appeared to the Department to be appropriate.

#### Citation, commencement and interpretation

- 1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Local Government (Standing Orders) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and shall come into operation on 15th March 2016.
  - (2) In these Regulations—
    - "the 1972 Act" means the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972(2);
    - "the 2014 Act" means the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014;
    - "Executive Arrangements Regulations" means the Local Government (Executive Arrangements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015(3); and
    - "call-in" means a requisition for the reconsideration of a decision under section 41(1) of the 2014 Act.

## Incorporation of provisions in standing orders

**2.** A council must incorporate the provisions in the Schedule in its standing orders for regulating its proceedings and business.

<sup>(1) 2014</sup> c. 8 (N.I.)

<sup>(2) 1972</sup> c. 9 (N.I.)

<sup>(3)</sup> S.R. 2015 No. 44

#### Modification of standing orders

**3.** A council must refrain from modifying its standing orders for regulating its proceedings and business, to enable provisions incorporated under regulation 2 in those standing orders to be amended or disapplied unless permitted by those provisions.

#### Revocation

**4.** Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Transitional, Supplementary, Incidental Provisions and Modifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014(4) is revoked.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of the Environment on 2016.

A senior officer of the Department of the Environment

#### **SCHEDULE**

Regulation 2

#### PART 1

#### Voting

#### Decisions to be taken by a qualified majority

- 1. A qualified majority shall be required in relation to a council's decision on—
  - (a) a call-in made in accordance with section 41(1)(b) of the 2014 Act where a practising barrister or solicitor has opined under section 41(2) of that Act that there is a risk that the decision is outside the powers of the council, or is incompatible with EU law or Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998(5)), or is not in compliance with the council's equality scheme in so far as it relates to equality of opportunity (within the meaning of section 75(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998(6)); and
  - (b) the suspension of standing orders, other than those whose provisions are specified in accordance with
    - (i) section 40(1) of the 2014 Act;
    - (ii) section 41(1) and (2) of the 2014 Act;
    - (iii) paragraphs 2(3), 4(2) and 6(3) of Schedule 1 to the 2014 Act; and
    - (iv) this Schedule,

which cannot be suspended.

#### PART 2

#### Call-in Process

#### Interpretation

2. In this Part—

"budget" means the expenditure authorised by a council under section 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011(7);

"clerk" means the clerk of a council appointed under section 41 of the 1972 Act;

"committee" means a committee of the council appointed under section 7 of the 2014 Act;

"delegated authority" means the discharge of a function under authority fixed by a council under section 7 of the 2014 Act;

"decision maker" means the body or person making an executive decision, a decision under delegated authority or a key decision;

"executive" means a cabinet-style executive or a streamlined committee executive as provided for in section 21(2) of the 2014 Act;

"executive decision" means a decision taken by a decision maker in connection with the discharge of a function which is the responsibility of the executive of a council;

<sup>(5) 1998</sup> c. 42

<sup>(</sup>**6**) 1998 c. 47

<sup>(7) 2011</sup> c. 11 (N.I.)

"key decision" means a decision under executive arrangements which is likely—

- (a) to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings are, significant having regard to the council's annual budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of the effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more district electoral areas in the local government district of the council;

"member" means a member of the council;

"policy framework" means the policies and procedures agreed by the council in relation to the delivery of a function or functions of the council;

"proper officer" means an officer appointed by the council for the purpose of supporting the executive;

"published" means made available for inspection by members of the council;

"Register of Decisions" means a register of decisions maintained by the council of those decisions agreed by the council;

"section of the inhabitants of the district" means any section of the inhabitants that is clearly identifiable by location, interest or other category;

"special resolution" means a resolution of a council as defined in section 148 of the 1972 Act.

#### Decisions subject to call-in

- **3.**—(1) The following decisions may be subject to call-in and in such manner as is specified in these standing orders—
  - (a) a decision of the council;
  - (b) a decision of the executive;
  - (c) an executive decision taken under joint arrangements in accordance with section 26 of the 2014 Act;
  - (d) a key decision taken by an officer of the council;
  - (e) a decision taken by a committee under delegated authority in accordance with section 7 of the 2014 Act; and
  - (f) a decision taken by a committee to make a recommendation for ratification by the council.
  - (2) The following decisions shall not be subject to call-in—
    - (a) a decision on a regulatory or quasi-judicial function which is subject to a separate appeal mechanism;
    - (b) a decision which is deemed to be a case of special urgency in accordance with regulation 24 of the Executive Arrangements Regulations;
    - (c) a decision where an unreasonable delay could be prejudicial to the council's or the public's interests;
    - (d) a decision taken by an officer of the council which is not a key decision;
    - (e) a decision by the executive which serves only to note a report from or the actions of an officer; and
    - (f) a decision which is required to be taken by a special resolution.
- (3) No decision may be subject to call-in more than once for each of the grounds specified in section 41(1) of the 2014 Act.

#### Call-in procedure

- **4.**—(1) A call-in must be submitted in writing to the clerk by 10am on the fifth working day following—
  - (a) in the case of a decision of the council, the date of the council meeting at which the decision was taken;
  - (b) in the case of a decision of a committee or a key decision taken by an officer of the council, the date on which the decision to which the call-in relates was published.
- (2) If a call-in is received after the relevant period specified in sub-paragraph (1), it must be deemed inadmissible.
  - (3) A call-in shall—
    - (a) specify the reasons why a decision should be reconsidered; and
    - (b) subject to sub-paragraph (6), be deemed to be inadmissible if the reasons are not specified.
- (4) In the case of a call-in submitted under section 41(1)(b) of the 2014 Act, members must in the reasons specified under sub-paragraph (3)(a) specify—
  - (a) the section of the inhabitants of the district that would be affected by the decision; and
  - (b) the nature and extent of the disproportionate adverse impact.
  - (5) Within one working day of receipt of a call-in, the clerk must confirm that—
    - (a) it has the support of 15 per cent of the members of council; and
    - (b) the reasons for the call-in have been specified.
- (6) Where the reasons have not been specified on the requisition, the clerk must notify the members making the requisition that it must be considered inadmissible if reasons are not specified in writing within the specified period.
- (7) Within two working days of receipt of an admissible call-in submitted under section 41(1)(b) of the 2014 Act, the clerk must seek the opinion of a practising solicitor or barrister in accordance with section 41(2) of the 2014 Act.
- (8) When the legal opinion obtained in accordance with section 41(2) of the 2014 Act is received, the clerk must—
  - (a) furnish the opinion to the members; and
  - (b) include the decision on the agenda for the next available meeting of the council for reconsideration.

#### The call-in process: committee arrangements

- **5.**—(1) For the purposes of reconsideration of a decision pursuant to a call-in, the minutes of a committee which record a decision—
  - (a) taken under delegated authority; or
  - (b) for referral for ratification by the council

must be published within five working days of the conclusion of the meeting. The date on which the minutes were published must be regarded as the relevant date for the purposes of a call-in.

- (2) If a call-in is not received within the period specified in paragraph 4(1)—
  - (a) a decision to which sub-paragraph (1)(a) applies must be implemented; or
  - (b) a decision to which sub-paragraph (1)(b) applies must be tabled for ratification by the council.

- (3) The tabling for ratification of a decision to which sub-paragraph (1)(b) applies, or the implementation of a decision to which sub-paragraph (1)(a) applies, must be postponed until the decision has been reconsidered. The decision maker may rescind the decision at any time prior to the decision being reconsidered.
- (4) If a call-in is made in accordance with paragraph 4(3) and section 41(1)(a) of the 2014 Act, the council must appoint an ad hoc committee of the council, the membership of which will be—
  - (a) the chairpersons of all committees of the council; and
- (b) the deputy chairpersons of all committees of the council to consider the process adopted by the decision-making committee.
- (5) The chairperson and deputy chairperson of the committee which was responsible for the decision which is the subject of the call-in must not have voting rights at a meeting of the committee appointed in accordance with sub-paragraph (4).
- (6) The members of the ad hoc committee who are present shall choose a member to preside at the meeting.
- (7) The members who submitted the call-in, or a member on their behalf, must be invited to attend the meeting at which the decision subject to the call-in is considered and may, upon the request of the chairperson, address the meeting, but must not have voting rights, unless they are voting members of the ad hoc committee.
  - (8) A committee appointed in accordance with sub-paragraph (4) may—
    - (a) refer the decision back to the decision maker;
    - (b) in the case of a decision taken under delegated authority, support the decision; or
    - (c) in the case of a decision requiring ratification by the council, refer the decision to the council.
- (9) Where a decision has been supported in accordance with sub-paragraph (8), that decision must—
  - (a) be approved;
  - (b) be inserted in the Register of Decisions; and
  - (c) become operative from the date of the meeting at which the committee appointed in accordance with sub-paragraph (4) confirmed support for the decision.

#### The call-in process: council decisions

- **6.**—(1) If a call-in is not received within the period specified in paragraph 4(1) in respect of a decision, that decision may be implemented after that period expires.
  - (2) The implementation of a decision must be postponed until the decision has been reconsidered.
  - (3) The clerk must place a call-in on the agenda for the next meeting of the council.

#### The call-in process: executive arrangements

- 7.—(1) A proper officer must, within two working days of the production of a statement in accordance with regulations 25 and 26 of the Executive Arrangements Regulations, submit to the council a notice detailing the decision(s) recorded in the statement.
  - (2) The notice prepared in accordance with sub-paragraph (1) must specify—
    - (a) those decisions that are not subject to call-in;
    - (b) the period for receipt of a call-in; and

- (c) the overview and scrutiny committee, as determined by a proper officer, that will consider a call-in in accordance with section 41(1)(a) of the 2014 Act.
- (3) If a call-in is not received in respect of a decision, that decision may be implemented after that period expires.
- (4) If a call-in is received which specifies that the decision was not taken in accordance with the budget or policy framework agreed by the council, the call-in must be referred to the council for decision.
- (5) The implementation of a decision must be postponed until the decision has been reconsidered. The decision maker may rescind the decision at any time prior to the decision being reconsidered.
- (6) Subject to sub-paragraph (4) the clerk must place a call-in on the agenda of the overview and scrutiny committee specified in the notice prepared in accordance with sub-paragraph (2).
- (7) The overview and scrutiny committee must meet within 5 working days of receipt of the call-in.
  - (8) More than one call-in may be considered at a meeting of an overview and scrutiny committee.
- (9) Subject to sub-paragraph (10), the consideration of a matter under sub-paragraph (5) by an overview and scrutiny committee may be adjourned, provided that—
  - (a) the chairperson presiding at the meeting; and
  - (b) the chairperson of the executive

agree a date for the resumption of consideration of the call-in request.

- (10) A meeting convened in accordance with sub-paragraph (6) may only be adjourned under sub-paragraph (9) in order to—
  - (a) allow for additional information to be obtained; or
  - (b) permit additional witnesses to attend.
- (11) The members who submitted the call-in, or a member on their behalf, must be invited to attend the meeting at which the decision subject to the call-in is considered and may, upon the request of the chairperson, address the meeting, but must not have voting rights, unless they are members of the overview and scrutiny committee.
- (12) In response to a call-in made in accordance with section 41(1)(a) of the 2014 Act, an overview and scrutiny committee may—
  - (a) support the decision; or
  - (b) refer the decision, along with the recommendation of the overview and scrutiny committee, back to the decision maker
- (13) Where a decision has been supported in accordance with sub-paragraph (11), that decision must—
  - (a) be approved;
  - (b) be inserted in the Register of Decisions; and
  - (c) become operative from the date of the meeting at which the overview and scrutiny committee confirmed support for the decision.
- (14) Where a decision has been referred back to a decision maker in accordance with sub-paragraph (12)(b), the decision maker must—
  - (a) consider the recommendation of the overview and scrutiny committee; and
  - (b) reconsider the original decision.

#### PART 3

## Positions of Responsibility

#### Positions of responsibility: time limits

- **8.**—(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), in relation to positions of responsibility selected in accordance with paragraphs 2(1) and 2(2) or paragraph 4(1) or paragraphs 6(1) and 6(2) of Schedule 1 to the 2014 Act, the period specified for—
  - (a) the nominating officer to select a position of responsibility and the term for which it shall be held; and
- (b) the person nominated to accept the selected position is 15 minutes.
- (2) An extension to the period specified in sub-paragraph (1) may be granted subject to the approval of the council. Such an extension may be requested by—
  - (a) the nominating officer;
  - (b) the person nominated to hold the selected position; or
  - (c) another member.

#### PART 4

#### Appointment of Councillors to Committees, etc.

#### Interpretation

- 9. In this Part
  - "2000 Act" means the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000(8);
  - "member" means councillor;
  - "nominating officer" means—
  - (a) the person registered under the 2000 Act as the party's nominating officer; or
  - (b) a member of the council nominated by that person for the purposes of Schedule 1 to the 2014 Act; and

"party" means a party registered under the 2000 Act in the Northern Ireland register (within the meaning of that Act).

#### Standing Order - Appointment of more than one committee

- 10. Where a council appoints more than one committee at the same meeting in accordance with paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act, for the purposes of determining the number of places that must be allocated across the parties and independent members of that council, it must agree—
  - (a) the number of committees to be appointed; and
  - (b) the number of councillors that shall constitute the membership of each committee.

#### **Nomination**

- 11.—(1) The total number of places to which a nominating officer of a party may nominate members who stood in the name of that party when elected must be calculated in accordance with paragraphs 2 to 4 of Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act and any resolution of the council made thereunder.
- (2) A nominating officer's function under paragraph 2(1)(b) of Schedule 2 to the 2014 Act must be exercised in such manner as to ensure that—
  - (a) all the members of a committee are not nominated by the same nominating officer;
  - (b) a nominating officer of a party may nominate members who stood in the name of that party to fill the majority of places on a committee, if the majority of members stood in the name of that party; and
  - (c) subject to heads (a) and (b), the number of members which each nominating officer of a party may nominate, in so far as is practicable, bears the same proportion to the number of places on that committee as is borne by the number of members on the council who stood in the name of that party.
- (3) Nominations made in accordance with sub-paragraph (2) must take into account any positions of responsibility on a committee held by a member who stood in the name of a party.

#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

Section 38 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 ("the 2014 Act") provides for regulations to require councils to incorporate such provisions as may be prescribed by the Department in standing orders for regulating their proceedings and business. These regulations prescribe those provisions.

Regulation 2 provides that the standing orders specified in the Schedule to the regulations must be incorporated in a council's standing orders.

Regulation 3 provides that a council must refrain from modifying its standing orders to enable the standing orders specified in the Schedule to be amended or disapplied, unless permitted by those provisions.

Regulation 4 revokes Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Transitional, Supplementary, Incidental Provisions and Modifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The Schedule specifies standing orders that must be incorporated in a council's standing orders.



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# Proforma

Item	Decision called-in (brief description)	Application number (If planning decision)	Date of decision	Reason for call-in (section 41(a) or (b), or both)	Date and opinion of solicitor	Date decision reconsidered	Decision upheld or overturned
1	Revised Gasworks Masterplan		CG&R 12/04/2017	41 (1) (b)	29/5/2017 No Merit	Council 1/6/2017 For ratification – referred back to Committee	CG&R 14/06/2017 Decision upheld
2	Removal of Bonfire Material		Special Council 2/8/2017	41 (1) (a) 41 (1) (b)	13/05/2017 Merit No Merit	27/06/2018	new policy agreed
3	City Centre Social Outcomes		SP&R 20/10/2017	41 (1) (b)	7/01/2018 No Merit	N/A	N/A
4	Removal of Banners and Paramilitary Flags in Belfast		Special Council 1/7/2019	41 (1) (a) 41 (1) (b)	3/08/2019 No Merit Merit	29/09/2019	overturned
5	Economic Future Planning		SP&R 20/9/2019	41 (1) (a) 41 (1) (b)	12/10/2019 No Merit No Merit	N/A	N/A
6	Standards and Business Terms of Reference		SP&R 23/4/21 Council 4/5/2021	41 (1) (a)	23/05/2021 No Merit	Referred to Ad-hoc Committee Ad-Hoc 14/06/2021 - agreed	Adopted Council

Item	Decision called-in (brief description)	Application number (If planning decision)	Date of decision	Reason for call-in (section 41(a) or (b), or both)	Date and opinion of solicitor	Date decision reconsidered	Decision upheld or overturned
7	Just Eat Belfast Bikes Strategic Review		CG&R 9/6/2021	41 (1) (a) 41 (1) (b)	30/6/2021 Merit Merit	8/09/2021	overturned
8	Update on Standards and Business Committee		SP&R 20/8/2021	41 (1) (a)	21/09/2021 No Merit	N/A	N/A
9	Consultation on Signage – Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres		SP&R 24/09/2021	41 (1) (a) 41 (1) (b)	21/09/2021 No Merit Merit	ongoing	
10	Erection of Dual Language Sign at Clifton Street		P&C 11/1/2022	41 (1) (a) 41 (1) (b)	23/06/2022 No Merit No Merit	N/A	N/A
11	New Ireland Forum and Citizens Assemblies		C&CR 13/10/2022 – not called in Council 2/12/2022 – called in	41 (1) (a) 41 (1) (b)	21/12/2022 No Merit No Merit	N/A	N/A
12	Update on Dual Language Street Signs (Gaeltacht Quarter)		SP&R 17/2/2023	41 (1) (a) 41 (1) (b)	29/06/2023 No Merit No Merit	N/A	N/A
13	Physical Programme Update – Forth Meadow Greenway		SP&R 24/3/2023	41 (1) (a) 41 (1) (b)	29/06/2023 Merit No Merit	ongoing	

Item	Decision called-in (brief description)	Application number (If planning decision)	Date of decision	Reason for call-in (section 41(a) or (b), or both)	Date and opinion of solicitor	Date decision reconsidered	Decision upheld or overturned
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							

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# Agenda Item 4c

# STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Subjec	ct:	Appointment of Members to the Board of the Belfast Harbot Commissioners	ur			
Date:		23 <sup>rd</sup> February, 2024				
Repor	ting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Civic and Leg	al Services			
Conta	ct Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manage	<u>r</u>			
Restric	Restricted Reports					
Is this	report restricted?	Yes	No X			
		iption, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information emed this report restricted.	by virtue of			
Insert	number					
1.	Information relating t	to any individual				
2.	Information likely to	reveal the identity of an individual				
3.		to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (in	cluding the			
4	council holding that i	•				
		ection with any labour relations matter	vintain a d			
	Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained					
6.	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.	7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime					
If Yes,	when will the repor	rt become unrestricted?				
	After Committe	ee Decision				
	After Council D					
	Sometime in th					
	Never					
Call-in	<u> </u>					
Is the	decision eligible for	r Call-in?	No			
1.0	Purpose of Repor	rt/Summary of Main Issues				
1.1	To consider the pro	ocess to be used to identify 6 elected Members to be consid	ered under a			
	public appointmen	nt's process to fill 2 places on the Board of the Belf	fast Harbour			
	Commissioners.	_				
		Page 203				

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is recommended to employ a one-off proportionality exercise, using the Sainte
	Lague method, for the purpose of identifying the political nomination of 6 members for
	consideration for appointment to the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.
2.2	The Committee is asked to agree to two nominations from both the Sinn Fein Party and the DUP and one each for the Alliance Party and the SDLP.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Belfast Harbour Order (Northern Ireland) 2002 provides that a maximum of four of the
	Harbour Commissioners shall be Members of Belfast City Council.
3.2	Correspondence has been received from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) (copy attached at appendix 1) indicating that there are currently three Councillors in post with one vacancy. One Councillor has served two terms of appointment and cannot be reappointed after 31 March 2024. The remaining two Councillors are due to complete their first term on 31 March 2024 and the DfI Permanent Secretary has decided that he is minded to reappoint them for a further term to ensure continuity on the Board. If both eligible Councillors accept the reappointments, then the DfI will be recruiting for two vacancies with the terms due to commence from 1 April 2024.
3.3	In November 2019 in considering the appointment of Members to the Board, the Council agreed to a one-off selection process using the Sainte Lague system.
3.4	In keeping with that principle, the Sainte Lague system would provide the following result:
3.5	1 SF 2 DUP 3 ALL 4 SF 5 SDLP 6 DUP  Giving Sinn Fein 2 choices, DUP 2 choices, Alliance 1 choice and SDLP 1 choice.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.6	There are not any financial implications for the Council associated with this report.

	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.7	The suggested approach to be employed to select Members for consideration for appointment to the Board of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners is in keeping with the principles of proportionality established in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. Therefore, there are not any equality or good relations considerations associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Correspondence from the Department of Infrastructure



#### **Public Appointments Unit**



Mr John Walsh Chief Executive Belfast City Council

Issued via email to: walshjohn@belfastcity.gov.uk

Clarence Court 10-18 Adelaide Street BELFAST BT2 8GB

Email: <u>publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-</u>

ni.gov.uk

Our ref.:

Date: 30 January 2024

Dear Mr Walsh

# Appointment of Councillors to the Board of Belfast Harbour Commissioners (BHC)

I am writing to invite you to submit a number of Council nominees to be considered by the Permanent Secretary for the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), for appointment to the Board of Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

The recruitment process will be run under the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation Etc) Act 2022. Should the Assembly return before the end of the recruitment/selection process we will write to you to provide an update of any change to this process.

These Councillor appointments are not positions of responsibility as defined under the 2014 Local Government Act, which require to be shared across the parties using d'Hondt or Saint-Lague formula of the Single Transferrable Vote method. They are appointments to be made by DfI after consultation with the Council, and in compliance with the Commissioner for Public Appointment Northern Ireland (CPANI) Code.

The Belfast Harbour Order (NI) 2002 provides that a maximum of four Commissioners shall be Members of Belfast City Council. There are currently three Councillors in post and one vacancy. One Councillor has served two terms of appointment and cannot be reappointed after 31 March 2024. The remaining two Councillors are due to complete their first term of appointment on 31 March 2024 and the Dfl Permanent Secretary has decided that he is minded to reappoint them for a further term to ensure continuity on the Board. If both eligible Councillors accept the reappointments, we will be recruiting for two vacancies with the terms due to commence from 1 April 2024.

The Non-Executive Members of the Board, together with the Chair, have corporate responsibility for ensuring that Belfast Harbour Commissioners complies with all relevant

statutory or administrative requirements including requirements in respect of the use of public funds. The role will be to work as a member of the Board to bring experience and judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance, and governance. Members should bring wide experience and critical detachment to the work of the organisation and be prepared to constructively criticise and assist executive management in the development of strategic objectives and policies.

New appointees will be expected to attend the full monthly Board meetings and other ad hoc meetings as required. Board meetings may vary in time commitment from month to month. The appointment may involve a commitment both inside and outside of normal working hours, including representing the Port at occasional evening engagements. Meetings are normally held at the Harbour Commissioners Office, Corporation Square, Belfast, BT1 3AL.

To provide the Permanent Secretary with a choice of nominees, as required by the Commissioner for Public Appointment Northern Ireland (CPANI), the Department invites your Council to nominate at least six Councillors to be considered for appointment.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments also requires that public appointees should serve no more than two terms in the same position and no more than ten years in total. Please ensure that those who you are considering nominating have not previously served 10 years / two terms on the Board of Belfast Harbour Commissioners as they will not be eligible for interview.

I enclose copies of the Information Booklet and Application and Monitoring Form for completion by each nominee to be considered for appointment. Full details of the process are set out in the Information Booklet.

The date of appointment will be 1 April 2024 and will last for as long as the appointee remains on the Council, up to a maximum of four years.

Nominees should complete the short application form. They will be invited to attend an interview at a date to be confirmed. The interview panel will comprise two departmental officials and an independent assessor allocated by CPANI. The interview will explore nominees' understanding and experience of corporate governance and the role of a board member. Integrity, conflicts of interest and the time commitment involved in the appointment will also be discussed. The panel will draft a record of these discussions to be sent to the Permanent Secretary to help him decide who to appoint.

Finally, DfI wants to improve diversity on our Boards. We would particularly welcome nominations from the following under-represented groups: women; younger people; people with disabilities; and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

I should be grateful if you could arrange for the completed application form for each nominee to be returned no later than 12 noon on Friday 22 March 2024 to:

publicappointmentsunit@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

or

Jennifer Macrory Dfl Public Appointments Unit Clarence Court 10-18 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8GB

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Gai bris

**GAVIN IRWIN** 

**Dfl Public Appointments Unit** 





Subject:	Belfast Agenda Statement of	of Progress (Nov 2021-Dec 2023)		
Date:	23 February 2024			
Reporting Officers:	John Walsh, Chief Executive	е		
Reporting Officers.	John Tully, Director of City a	and Organisational Strategy		
Contact Officers:	Kevin Heaney, Head of Incli	usive Growth and Anti-Poverty		
	_			
Is this report restricte	d?	Yes No X		
	escription, as listed in Schedule deemed this report restricted.	6, of the exempt information by virtue of		
<ol> <li>Information relating to any individual</li> <li>Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> <li>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</li> <li>Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>				
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	e for Call-in?	Yes X No		

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update on the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) on the
	development and publication of a Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress for the period November

2021- December 2023, which is a legislative requirement for the council and its community planning partners.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
  - note the statutory requirement for the Community Planning Partnership to publish a Statement of Progress (SoP) for the period 2021-2023.
  - ii. note the engagement undertaken with and input from community planning partners in developing the draft SoP;
  - iii. agree that the final SOP, taking account of feedback received from Members and community planning partners, be submitted to the Department for Communities.

## 3.0 Main report

#### Background

- 3.1 Members will be aware that The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the Council and its community planning partners to make arrangements to monitor progress against meeting the objectives of the Belfast Agenda and the effectiveness of the actions taken in aiming to achieve these objectives. The legislation also requires the Council to publish a report (Statement of Progress) assessing progress towards the outcomes and actions taken every two years.
- 3.2 The third statement of progress is due to be published covering the period end of 2021-2023. In recognition of the significant pressures which local Councils, and community planning partners, have faced over recent months in recovering from a worldwide pandemic, responding to the cost-of-living crisis and managing significant fiscal and budgetary pressures, a light touch approach has been adopted to producing the statement of progress. It is also important to recognise the intensive focus over past 16months to co-designing the refreshed Belfast Agenda and underpinning actions plans for the period 2024-2028.
- 3.3 Nevertheless, the statement of progress provides an opportunity for partners to update the public on the actions that have been undertaken or are ongoing through the community planning process. In addition, it demonstrates the impact of such actions on communities and local people as well as their contribution to the achievement of the ambitions and outcomes outlined in the Belfast Agenda.

#### Statement of Progress: November 2021 – December 2023

3.4 The draft statement of progress attached as **Appendix 1** has been developed in association with and input from community planning partners and highlights a number of case studies and noteworthy achievements showcasing the work of partners over the last 24months. The final draft SOP had been shared with community planning partners for final consideration and endorsement with feedback sought by 16 February 2024. Members will be updated at Committee if there is any feedback of significant received from partners.

3.5	The intention would be that the final statement of progress, taking account of any feedback
	received from Members or the community planning partners would be finalised and submitted to
	the Department for Communities and circulated to CPP.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.6	There are no financial or human resource implications contained within this report.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.7	There are no equality or good relations implications contained within this report.
3.8	There are no rural needs implications contained within this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Draft Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress (Nov 2021 – Dec 2023)





The Belfast Agenda

Statement of Progress 2021-2023



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#### **Foreward:**

The Belfast Agenda, our community plan, was first published in 2017, setting out a joint vision for the city up to 2035. We have come a very long way as a city since then, experiencing significant economic, social and environmental changes in recent years. This Statement of Progress looks back at the last two years and reports on our progress towards realising the long-term outcomes and ambitions in the Belfast Agenda, along with our partnership's impact through the delivery of our collaborative priorities and actions.

In that period, businesses have invested over £1.2 billion in the city, over 16,000 new jobs have been created, the number of businesses has increased by almost 12 per cent, and over 7,800 additional people are now living in Belfast.

During this time, we have faced unprecedented challenges, navigated through difficult circumstances, and forged new innovative collective approaches to help and support people in Belfast who are negatively impacted. As a partnership we have remained committed to our 2035 vision, albeit through the lens of these new challenges.

This phase of delivery has also coincided with the first formal review of the Belfast Agenda. This provided the opportunity to build on the extensive community action and partnership working that we saw during the global pandemic and the continuing cost of living crisis, to refocus our resources and energy to support recovery and growth within and across our city.

City partners have been proactively engaging our residents, stakeholders, and organisations to identify local challenges, priorities and opportunities and to co-design interventions to ensure that our collective efforts are targeted to where we can make the most difference. As part of this journey, the Belfast Agenda has been reviewed and updated to reflect current priorities and actions to be delivered over the next four years 2024 – 2028.

Collectively, we are committed to achieving 'inclusive growth' on a scale that we haven't before, creating new and better jobs, promoting training and employment opportunities, tackling the climate emergency, reducing inequalities, and helping alleviate the impact of poverty on those most vulnerable across the city.

This Statement of Progress outlines the latest stage of our journey as a partnership to deliver the Belfast Agenda ambitions and priorities and the future direction of travel we are collectively committed to. Together we are on a journey, to create the city we know Belfast can be.

Community planning and city partners



The Belfast Agenda and the community planning process is a significant catalyst for the city, bringing partner organisations, regional government departments and agencies, the council and local communities together to work collaboratively to deliver our shared vision. It's about creating real and sustainable improvements in the wellbeing of our residents.



### Our vision for Belfast in 2035 is:

Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent. A great place to live and work for everyone. Beautiful, well connected and culturally vibrant, it will be a sustainable city shared and loved by all its citizens, free from the legacy of conflict. A compassionate city offering opportunities for everyone. A confident and successful city energising a dynamic and prosperous city region. A magnet for talent and business and admired around the world. A city people dream to visit.

#### **Focusing on outcomes**

Residents and city partners identified five key outcomes they want to achieve by 2035 working together.

#### Belfast will be a city....



#### Our ambitions

There are many things that we need to do to make our vision a reality. We therefore set ourselves four very bold ambitions to be achieved by 2035. Our progress against these longer-term targets is detailed below and benchmarked against initial baselines.

Our economy supports.

46,000

additional jobs.

Our city is home to an additional

66,000

people.

There will be a

33 per cent

reduction in the life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods. Every young person leaving school has a destination

that fulfils their

The number of jobs in the city has grown by 7 per cent, creating an additional 16,286 jobs. This equals a third of 2035 target of 46,000 additional jobs.

The city's population has increased by 2 per cent, equalling around 7,811 people. The increase accounts for 9 per cent of the 2035 target of 66,000 additional people.

The life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods has widened for both men (10.8 years) and females (7.7 years) from the baseline year.

94.6 per cent of school leavers entered further or higher education, employment, or training, which is marginally higher than the 94.0 value of the baseline year.

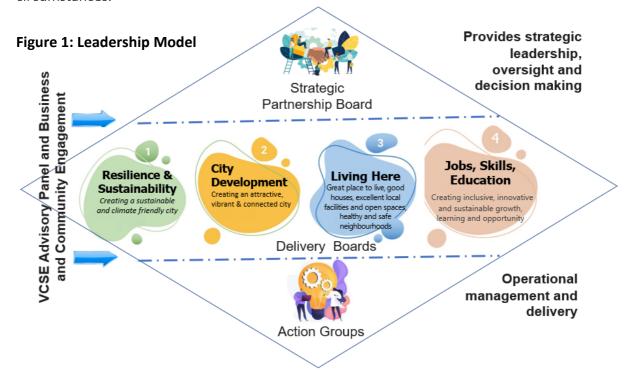
Positive change



#### Collaborative city leadership model

The Belfast Community Planning Partnership (CPP) was established in February 2018 with a shared aim to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our communities and all citizens.

With a focus on delivering outcomes, investment, and improvements across the city, the CPP continues to lead and provide collective city leadership and oversight. The delivery is supported by four thematic Delivery Boards and a number of action focused delivery groups who drive forward specific priority areas, seek to problem solve, innovate and develop focused action plans. An agile approach to delivery was adopted as we respond to ongoing changing circumstances.



#### Connecting with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector

Recognising Belfast's vibrant and active voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and to further strengthen the sector's involvement in the community planning process, a new pioneering VCSE Sectoral Advisory Panel was established in spring 2020.

The Panel comprises 15 representatives, drawn from Belfast's large and diverse voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, reflecting a spread of themes, areas of the city, and large and small organisations.

#### Its aims are:

- to ensure that the sector's voices are represented in the community planning process
- to develop and improve cross sectoral relationships and partnerships
- to promote effective community engagement.



Since publishing the Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress in November 2021, together we have delivered success in a number of areas.

Jobs, skills and education

Living here

Inclusive growth leaving no one behind

City development Resilience and sustainability

#### Jobs, skills and education

Connecting people to opportunities



- Signed funding agreements for Belfast Region City Deal projects with a value of £430m
- Invest NI have provided £233m support to businesses, leveraging a total investment of £1,398m, which will create 11,100 jobs over the 3-5 years.
- Provided venture capital funding of almost £60m to 250 Belfast based companies,
   which will leverage a total investment of £239m.
- D Increased investment in the development of skills from £2.3m to £16.3m.
- Increased Investment in locally owned businesses by 16% from £71m to £82m.
- NSupported 922 individuals to develop a business through the Go for it Programme Supporting the creation of 578 jobs.
- Supported 719 Businesses, Social Enterprises and Cooperatives with one-to-one mentoring, advice and guidance.
- Launched the Vibrant Business Destinations Programme in partnership with DfC and supported 7 organisations to develop area-based action plans.
- Established and strengthened Belfast's **Labour Market Partnership**, to increase the range and scope of employability and skills activity in the city.
- Delivered a wide range of employment academies and interventions that have connected 3478 people with new or better employment opportunities.
- Over 4,000 learners completed **English language courses** at BMET.
- Worked in collaboration with RSA Cities of Learning, Navigator and Badge Nation to develop and issue 3,753 digital badges and skills passports to individuals.
- Secured the only UNESCO City of Music designation on the island of Ireland and achieved a
   UNESCO Learning City Award in 2021 for outstanding progress in providing learning
   opportunities for residents in Belfast.
- Co-created an Inclusive Growth City Charter for employers across Belfast the Belfast Business Promise with commitment from over 20 organisations in the first 6 months.

#### Living here

#### Making life better for all our residents



- Delivered over £1.6m in Hardship Programme funding, which has supported over 15,000 people in need.
- Supported 414 vulnerable households through the Belfast Warm and Well Programme.
- Launched a Social Supermarket Programme in 2021 and provided £944,000 to support 21 projects.
- Invested £75m in 60 capital projects in neighbourhoods across the city.
- Invested £25m in two new world-class leisure facilities.
- Progressed a £10m **neighbourhood regeneration fund** to drive recovery and transformation in local areas and communities.
- Delivered the Complex Lives programme, helping 50 vulnerable people per year.
- Allocated £27k to deliver the first **Participatory Budgeting (PB)** process 2,497 votes received, and 27 groups funded (30% non-constituted).
- Established the first Ukraine Assistance Centre (providing one-stop multiagency advise and support), welcoming more than 4,300 attendances from approx. 2,800 individual Ukrainians.
- Progressing towards completion of the Belfast Peace IV Programme
   Projects and co-designed and submitted the Local Community PeacePlus
   Action Plan proposal.
- Launched a multi-agency intervention in the Wider University and Lower Ormeau area to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, improve community cohesion and improve the wellbeing of residents.

### Delivering together

Since publishing the Belfast Agenda Statement of Progress in November 2021, together we have delivered success in a number of areas.

### Resilience and sustainability Creating a sustainable and climate friendly city



Inclusive growth

skills and

education

development

Living

here

Resilience

sustainability

#### **City development**

Creating an attractive, vibrant and connected city

- **Built 518 new social housing units,** representing a cumulative total of 1,887 social homes (since 2017).
- Formal adoption of the Belfast City Council's **Local Development Plan Strategy**.
- Completed the disposal of land adjacent to the Gasworks Estate with the benefit of planning permission for **94 housing units**.
- •NAs of 1 April 2023, the Housing Monitor identified over **340 hectares of land** available for new housing with the potential to accommodate **20,901 units**.
- Strategic Site Assessment work has informed the launch of a public procurement
  process to attract a private sector development partner to take forward cf.630m of
  residential led regeneration across the city.
- Progressing the delivery of almost £1bn of major development schemes, including the successful opening of the Ulster University Belfast Campus.
- Progressing the Belfast "Grand Central Station" at pace.
- Commenced delivery of the £1m Vacant to Vibrant Pilot Capital Grant Scheme for the City Centre with delivery of projects valued at c£15m implemented through the lens of achieving A Bolder Vision.
- Developed the Waterfront Promenade Framework to identify and prioritise projects for funding including feasibility work - Sailortown to Queens Island Bridge.
- In 2021 / 2022 we saw a 2% growth in the rates base (arising from additional development), which has resulted in additional rates growth of £3.3m every year.

- Belfast received an 'A' award from the Carbon Disclosure Project and was the top performing Council in Northern Ireland on the UK Climate Emergency Scorecards.
- Belfast ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the world as a sustainable tourism destination on the
   Global Destination Sustainability Index.
- Continued investments in low-emissions public transport half of all Belfast Metro bus services scheduled to be zero emission by 2025 and all Metro services planned to be Net Zero by 2030.
- Established the Belfast Retrofit Delivery Hub in 2022 to bring together the
  construction industry and other key stakeholders to catalyse retrofit activity
  across the city.
- The draft Belfast Electric Vehicle Strategy is under review and seven EV charging infrastructures recently went live across Council sites, with a number of pilot and consortium projects in the pipeline.
- Completed a strategic outline business case for connected circular economy hubs as part of a Shared Island funded partnership between Belfast and Dublin City Council. The study identifies four unique opportunities to support a Connected Circular Economy.
- Continued to deliver the One Million Trees programme with 91,313 trees
  planted and 6,380 people across the city engaged in the programme since its
  launch in 2021.
- Adopted the Belfast Tree Strategy in 2023.

## Improving health & wellbeing

The Community Planning Partnership and other organisations have been working collectively to create a healthier city for all, but especially those who are most vulnerable, to live, healthier, happier, and fulfilling lives.

#### Supporting vulnerable people with complex lives

The Belfast Complex Lives initiative supports some of Belfast's most vulnerable people with complex needs. Not everyone who is supported through the initiative has the same issues. However, all of those involved have very challenging needs and many live very chaotic lives. With the support of a multi-agency partnership and an assigned intensive support worker, vulnerable individuals gain access to stable accommodation, addiction support services, mental health support and healthcare.

#### Move More and Eat Well – to Feel Better

In February 2023, the Active Belfast Partnership took forward our first 'test and learn' pilot of Participating Budgeting (PB) in Belfast.

The 'Move More and Eat Well – to Feel Better' initiative focused on promoting and encouraging physical activity and healthy eating. The initiative was led by local people who submitted and voted on small-scale projects (i.e., £1,000) that would have a positive impact on physical activity and healthy eating in their area.

It gave residents a voice, brought people together and perhaps most importantly, enabled them to have the final decision on which projects are brought to life.

A total of 2,497 voters decided to fund 27 groups to deliver a wide range of physical activity and healthy eating projects supporting a variety of people from very young to old, teenagers, parents, families, those living with dementia, those that were sedentary, socially isolated, ethnic minorities and asylum seekers.



The success of this initiative will enable others to learn and inform the development of future participatory budgeting approaches across the city.

For more information, including project evaluation and videos, please see: <a href="https://makinglifebettertogether.com">https://makinglifebettertogether.com</a>



#### **Creating an Age-Friendly Belfast**

An age-friendly city is one in which organisations work together to make sure the quality of life for people is enhanced as they age.

We are acutely aware of the challenges which may face many people and families within the city as they age including housing conditions, social isolation and poverty.

A key focus has been:

- supporting the return of older people to volunteering working with Volunteer Now and hosting an annual Older Volunteer Celebration event
- addressing mental health issues through promotion of the Take 5
   Steps to Wellbeing
- programming events to encourage older people to become involved in physical activity (e.g., Tea Dances and walks)
- delivery of the annual Positive
   Ageing Month programme in
   October 22 and 23 with over 150
   different events and activities held to encourage older people to reconnect and increase levels of wellbeing.
- addressing loneliness and social isolation through initiatives such as 'Warm Places' which guaranteed an extra warm welcome to older people during winter period with an extended programme of activities.



Responding to the cost-of-living crisis

We continue to provide support and advice to help people across the city with the high cost-of-living.

During this period, older people also faced additional pressures linked to the cost-of-living crisis. Age Friendly Belfast provided advice on available services such as dedicated Belfast City Council warm spaces programme in Winter 2022, winter warmth packs and the 'Make the Call' initiative.

The Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2023 - 2027 was launched in May 2023. Four main strategic themes have been identified, with associated targets and actions to be delivered. The Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (HASP) oversees the delivery of the Age Friendly plan.

#### Hardship Support

'Delivered £1.6m funding to support over 15,000 individuals and families in need.'

Over the past two years households have faced pressures relating to inflation and the rising cost of living, which is having an adverse impact on the most vulnerable in society, widening inequalities and increasing the prevalence of social isolation. Mitigating the worst impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and tackling increasing poverty levels within the city is a key community planning priority.

As part of our ongoing commitment to help alleviate the rising cost of living we have delivered over £1.6 million in funding, which has supported over 15,000 people in need.



This has included working with community partners to deliver a Fuel Poverty Hardship Programme, which provided electric, gas and oil vouchers to individuals and families in need and enhancing the capacity of existing organisations who already provide much needed services across the city. We have also produced a cost-of-living support guide to help raise awareness and signpost people to support and advice services available in Belfast.

#### **Social Supermarkets Programme**

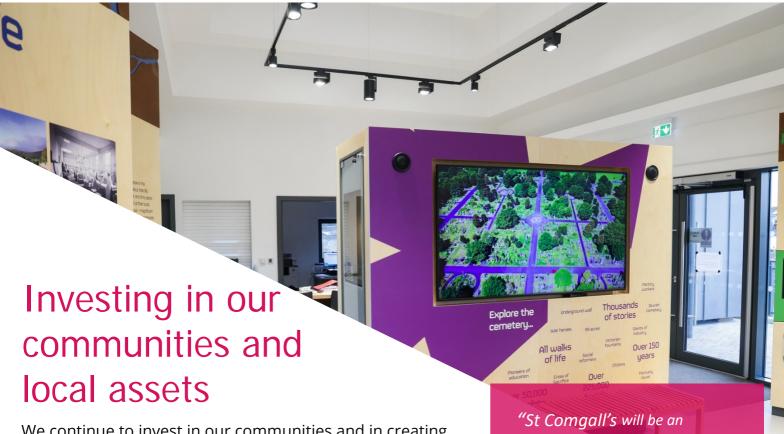
Between April 22 – March 2023, we supported **5743 individuals** through the social supermarket programme.

We have supported the creation of a network of Social Supermarkets across the city with £944,000 provided to 21 projects.

Supported through funding from the Department for Communities, social supermarkets enable individuals to access food as well as being offered wraparound support and signposted to key services such as benefit checks, debt advice, training and employment advice and childcare.

There are different models which exist across the city as they respond to the needs of their own communities. Some are set-up as a shop within a community organisation while others offer support to particular interest groups such as those impacted by domestic violence and people living with a disability.





We continue to invest in our communities and in creating local assets and facilities across the city that people can access and enjoy. Such investment creates opportunity and empowers communities to improve their local places.

#### Creating local assets and facilities

Since our last statement of progress in 2021, we have invested £75million and completed 60 projects resulting in new local assets, facilities and services across the city: creating jobs, training opportunities and making a real difference to people's lives and behaviours. Examples of projects delivered across the city include:

- £7.2m investment in the transformation of St Comgall's into a multiuse community hub.
- £4.3m in the redevelopment of Marrowbone Millennium Park transforming the area with state-of-the-art facilities and assets.
- new £2.8m visitor centre at the Belfast City Cemetery, a heritage project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Department for Communities and Belfast City Council
- significant investment in upgrading the Belfast Zoo, a key visitor destination in the city.
- Completion of phase one of the £4.3m Lagan Gateway project including a new pedestrian and cycle bridge at Stranmillis.
- Significant investment in upgrading our playing fields across the city including the redevelopment of Blanchflower Playing Fields including two new 3G pitches, a pavilion and a 200-seater stand, and access improvements at Strangford Avenue Playing Fields.
- Progressing the new £10 million neighbourhood regeneration fund which will help transform local areas and communities across the city.

"St Comgall's will be an economic, social and cultural driver for the area and its completion has brought great pride to the local community. The building provides top class office accommodation as well as event spaces that will be used by the local community. The newly renovated St Comgall's is a building that Falls Community Council and the local community

Liz Grove





Leisure transformation programme

Since the Belfast Agenda was published, we have continued to invest in transforming Belfast's leisure provision, through the £105m Leisure Transformation Programme, with six of the seven new states-of-the-art facilities now open.

Since 2021, £25 million has been invested in developing modern, state- of-the-art leisure facilities across the city, which will enable active and healthy lifestyles for our citizens whilst also delivering on key priorities such as reducing life inequalities, improving neighbourhoods and creating employment and opportunity.



During this period two new facilities opened in the heart of communities across the city - £8m Avoniel opened in November 2021 and £17m Templemore Baths in June 2023.

Each centre has a unique selling point, as well as state of the art pools, fitness suites and pitches. Working collaboratively with GLL, our leisure service delivery partner, significant health and wellbeing outcomes

have been realised, creating jobs and skills opportunities for local people. A business case for Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility (the last of the seven centres) will be submitted to DfC early 2024. Construction could start in summer 2025, subject to securing funding and planning permission.

Key highlights from the investment in new leisure facilities:

- 13,800 live pre-paid members (59.5% of the city's total)
- 3,415 live members of swim schools (67.2% of the city's total)
- 1,545 love junior gym members (60.4% of the city's total)
- Over 1.4 million user visits
- 653,500 swim visits
- 601,000 gym and class visits
- 1,676 health referrals to LTP sites in the past 12 months
- Over jobs and promotions created
- 21 Leisure Employment Academies delivered.
- Over 200 leisure employment academy participants successfully achieved industry specific qualifications and commenced careers in leisure.
- Small business friendly procurement policy and working with social enterprises and local businesses to deliver café model in centres.
- £75,000 donated to local sporting athletes per year through the 'GLL Sports Foundation'.
- Over 2,800 children enrolled in holiday schemes in 2023.

#### Creating safe and shared places

We continued to work with communities and city partners to create a safe, inclusive, and shared city and places through the delivery of the Good Relations Strategy and collective actions through working the Shared City Partnership. Together we have secured significant investment, through the now closed Peace IV Programme and the new Co-Designed PEACE PLUS Local Action Plan, into communities to create shared, vibrant, and connected places and spaces.

Some delivery highlights include:

- Development of £15.1m PEACE PLUS Local Action Plan (2024-2027) - investing in 16 cross-community projects which will result in improved, shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces and make a significant and lasting difference to the quality of people's lives.
- Shared Spaces and Services completed £8m Forth Meadow Greenway project which connects and animates existing open spaces in north and west Belfast along a 12km route from Clarendon Playing Fields to the new Transport Hub in the city centre. The investment enables local people to enjoy this important community greenway and improve their health and wellbeing through walking and cycling.
- Building positive relations continued support provided to people to participate in projects that focus on building positive relations including network development, creative arts, leadership and
- Supporting new and minority communities promoted the inclusion and integration of new communities, including the facilitation of the Migrant Forum which seeks to ensure access to services for new communities. Further to this, additional funding was received from the Executive Office, to deliver five programmes to support asylum seekers in Belfast City.
- Grant aid supported local responses to locally identified good relations issues.
- Interface Programme worked with interface communities to develop relationships, create shared spaces and remove barriers.

This helped boost feelings of civic pride and confidence across the city



### City development

#### Housing-led regeneration

A key focus has been to work together to address the housing pressures facing the city whilst also supporting the ambition to grow our population. Covering the full range of housing tenures, including affordable and social housing, community planning has brought partners together to develop a housing-led regeneration approach to unlock development across the city, contributing to the population growth ambitions and ensuring that everyone has access to a high-quality, affordable, and sustainable home.

#### Since 2021:

- 518 new social housing units have been built across the city, representing a cumulative total of 1,887 social homes since the Belfast Agenda was published in 2017.
- Published the NI Housing Executive's "Endling Homelessness Together 2022-2027" strategy reflecting a continued need for partners to work together to address the complex factors which lead to homelessness, many of which extend beyond accommodation.
- Completed a comprehensive mapping of public lands to assess potential availability of land for housing and to facilitate housing led regeneration; work has now commenced on planning and feasibility studies to assess the potential for mixed tenure development on a number of these sites.
- Release of land adjacent to the Gasworks Estate with the benefit of planning permission for 94 housing units
- The development of an Intermediate Rent model for the housing market has been progressed with DfC Public Consultation completed; this marks an important milestone to support meeting the affordable housing need.
- Launch of a public procurement process to at Ragerizes sector development partner to take forward c£.630m of residential led regeneration across the city.



#### Local Development Plan launched.

The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP): Plan Strategy, was adopted in May 2023, a significant milestone for Belfast as it will guide future investment and development decisions to enable sustainable spatial growth of the city up to 2035. It underpins the city's ambitions to increase the population by around 66,000 residents while providing more that 30,000 new homes and 15,00 new jobs. The supporting policies to be brought forward next will support the delivery of sustainable economic growth alongside measures to address climate change and biodiversity.



#### **Eastern Transport Plan**

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) are currently preparing a new transport plan which will set the framework for making transport policy and investment decisions up until 2035. The Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035, previously known as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), will provide attractive and viable alternative modes of transport to reduce unnecessary car journeys, which in turn will create safer, healthier communities by reducing carbon emission and improving air quality.

The first step is to agree the vision of what we are trying to achieve and then check if the future transport networks will assist in its delivery. This approach shifts the focus to creating places for people, built around a healthy, safe and carbon neutral vision for the future.

#### **Creating conditions for growth & opportunity**

Since 2021 we have continued to work with partners to ensure that Belfast is a well-connected, vibrant and attractive place to live, work and visit with the right infrastructure to succeed.

#### Since 2021 we have:

- Launched Belfast Waterfront Development Framework
- Launched the £475k Vibrant Business Destination Programme to strengthen the competitiveness and create more vibrant local business destinations, enhancing the profile of local areas and driving footfall to local and neighbourhood centres.

- Achieved UNESCO City of Music status in 2021, celebrating the city's rich musical heritage.
- Hosted the One Young World Conference in 2023
- In 2022/23 Ulster University welcomed an additional
   15,000 students and staff to its new Belfast site
- Completed site assembly for the £100m Belfast
   Region City Deal Belfast Stories attraction in the city centre and appointed design-team.

#### Positioning the city to compete

Work continued at pace through the 'Belfast City & Region Place Partnership' to position Belfast and wider city-region to compete on a region and global scale and maximise investment into the city and support inclusive economic growth. This is the time of unique possibility for the city and wider region.

Bringing together leaders from across the public private and third sector to create spaces and paces that sustainability boost employment, improve tourism and cultural infrastructure, deliver homes and support community and neighbourhood regeneration.

"With collaboration stronger than ever before, we must be unashamedly ambitious for our city region and work together to keep bringing our story across the globe and to the right audiences, highlighting the very best that we have to offer".

Joe O'Neill, Chief Executive of Belfast Harbour Chair of the Belfast City & Region Place Partnership.



# Improving educational outcomes

All children and young people deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential and achieve the best educational outcomes and life chances possible. We must raise our ambition for change in improving educational outcomes.

Community Planning Partners recognises the fundamental contribution of education to improving individuals' wellbeing and life opportunities, as well as the wider societal benefits to our communities and economy.

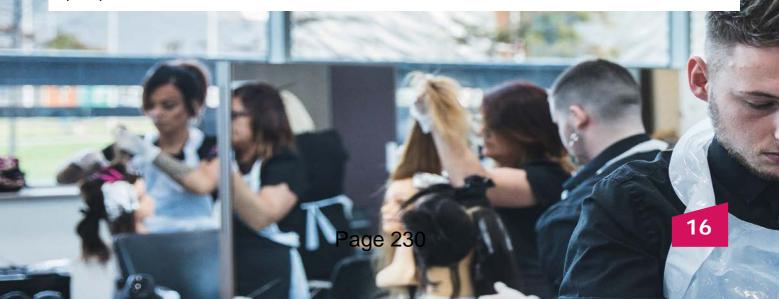
We have established a task group who are focussed on collaboration and innovation across the public, voluntary and community sectors to address educational inequalities in the city. This work is aligned with the regional direction provided in the Department of Education's Fair Start Strategy & Action Plan.

Supporting children with special educational needs

We recognise that every child is unique and deserves support that meets their needs including children and young people with special educational needs (SEN). The one-to-one support offered by a classroom assistant can positively impact the quality of education and help children with SEN reach their full potential.

Working in partnership with Stranmillis University College and People 1<sup>st</sup> 301 people have taken part in our classroom assistant employment academies to help meet increasing demand. We have also introduced our first academies for the Irish Medium education sector in partnership with Gaelchursaí, with 70 participants enrolled on the classroom assistant employment academy and level 3 and 5 upskilling programmes.

The Education Authority have developed over 84 SEN support classes in 40 mainstream school settings across the Belfast area. These settings include nursery, primary and post-primary schools representing controlled, maintained, Irish medium and Integrated sectors.



#### GCSE Support Programme

Delivery of a citywide GCSE revision programme in partnership with the Area Partnership Boards. This innovative learning initiative provides tailored support for young people who are not expected to achieve a Grade C in their GCSE Maths and English, with over half of those supported were entitled to Free School Meals.

In the 2022-23 academic year the programme supported 434 pupils, with the majority receiving at least 14 hours targeted revision support. An average of 59% of those young people supported through the programme achieved at least a Grade C in either English or Maths GCSE.

Support to Schools

Community planning partners are committed to strengthening our relationship and collaborative working with schools across Belfast. Schools are civic organisations which not only support academic development of our children and young people but also contributes to wider community wellbeing and stability.

The Education Authority lead our Educational Inequalities Task Group and has undertaken the following activity with schools across Belfast:

- 13 Primary principals and 1 Nursery principal from Belfast form part of the EA NI School Leadership Forum, which provides a consultative mechanism to strengthen and shape the NI Education system.
- 128 schools in Belfast received Extended Schools funding totalling over £2.4 million per year.
- 95 schools in Belfast are involved in the Pathways into Partnership Programme funded via 'A Fair Start'. This programme supports the development of best practice, staff development and professionalism across the school network with the ultimate aim of improving learning outcomes for children.

I would recommend
the the GCSE Support
Programme to
anyone struggling
with Maths. It
helped to build my
mme confidence and to
get a pass in my
GCSE exam.

Year 12 student

#### Schools Support Programme

In October 2023, Belfast City
Council, in collaboration with the
Education Authority and
Department for Communities
agreed to allocate £250,000 to
support the implementation of a
Schools Hardship Programme.

The programme is open to all schools across Belfast and will provide funding to design initiatives to mitigate the rising cost of living and enhance the wellbeing of children. This may include school breakfast clubs, healthy eating initiatives.



# Supporting people into employment

#### **Belfast Labour Market Partnership**

The Belfast Labour Market Partnership (LMP) is focused on improving Belfast's employability outcomes and labour market conditions by working with a wide range of partners, being flexible to meet local needs and helping to connect employers with employees. It enables us to increase the range and scope of employability and skills opportunities.

We developed the partnership with funding from the Department for Communities and Department for the Economy. The LMP provides a platform for engagement with government departments, community partners and business organisations as a means of refocusing regional programmes more effectively within the Belfast area.

LMP partners recognise that, while there are gaps that have been identified that will necessitate the creation of new interventions, not all activity need be new. Sometimes it is equally important to join-up, profile and support existing interventions.

Key deliverables include:

- Gateway to Choices Service: helping people to navigate and find the right support, at the right time, to help them get a job or move them towards positive job, skills, and qualification outcomes. Since being rolled-out in mid-2023, the service has supported over 700 people through the Gateway.
- Belfast Jobs Fair: Since 2021, we have brought together more than 100 employers under one roof to share information about over 1,800 employment opportunities (jobs) to over 1400 people who attended the fairs.



Bridges to Progression: has been developed to provide extra support for those young people at risk of leaving education or training with no positive destination. It focuses on supporting people through key transition stages and offers wrap-around support for young people who are facing social, financial, or other life issues impacting on ability to continue education or training journey. In 2022-23 the programme supported 193 young people through their Skills for Life & Work journey with 173 either moving onto a positive destination or remaining on course to achieve. In 2023-24 we are on track to support an additional 120 young people.

Building an Inclusive Labour Market Conference: Attended by over 200 delegates, representing employers, government agencies, providers and key stakeholders, the conference facilitated discussion and instigate actions to address economic inactivity and champion inclusive employment. The conversations focused on the need for, and value of, creating a more inclusive labour market, one that can improve outcomes for citizens and support a more competitive and productive economy.

#### Assured skills academies

The *assured skills* programme offers pre-employment training to give you the skills needed to compete for new employment opportunities. Funded through the Department for the Economy and delivered through the Belfast Metropolitan Colleague, the programme is designed to upskills individuals and help them compete for guaranteed job vacancies.

Since Nov 2021, there were **572 participants** on **35 Assured Skills Academies** in key growth sectors such as cyber-security, data analytics, software development and professional business services. We also delivered the first Civil Service Academy, developed in collaboration with the Department for the Economy and the Executive Office, with 75 appointments made from 80 participants by mid-2023.

#### Recognising talent and enhancing skills

Working with RSA Cities of Learning network, Navigator and Badge Nation, we have developed delivered a digital badges and skills passport for Belfast which gives people a portable record of achievement through employability interventions. Since the introduction of this initiative, 263 digital badges have been designed and published with 3753 issued to

individuals across the City, 43 pathways have been created, these pathways map out the necessary skills and training requirements into employment and career opportunities.

Digital badges give employers a new way to connect with talent in cities — an alternative to the standard practice of asking for evidence of academic qualifications and work experience. We now frequently see individuals sharing their digital accreditations on social media and elsewhere.



#### **Employment Academies**

Across community planning partners a range of tailored 'Employment Academies' are being designed and implemented to better connect local residents to employment opportunities, removing barriers to participation and improving skills development.

From Nov 2021 until Dec. 2023, we have continued to help Belfast residents get jobs and help meet increasing employment demand across businesses sectors including tech, professional services, logistics and transport, leisure, construction, working with children, health and social care and working at sea.

During this period **1392** people accessed the Employment Academies, with 535 still undertaking an academy. **79%** of those who completed the academies have gone on to secure a new or better job.



# Securing investment, creating jobs and opportunities.

City partners are working closely with Invest NI, the Northern Ireland Executive, and the Department for the Economy, who have a regional responsibility, to secure investment and bring forward targeted programmes to support and enable local businesses to grow and compete globally.

#### **Belfast Region City Deal**

The signing of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) in December 2021 was a key milestone for the city and wider region as it secured a financial commitment of the UK Government, NI Executive and BRCD partners, to work with industry to deliver a £1bn programme of investment that offers a 'once in a generation' opportunity to accelerate inclusive economic growth for the region.

The investment will help further develop the city's innovation and digital offering and support those sectors where we have the potential to become world class including life and health sciences, the digital and creative industries, and advanced manufacturing. It will support next generation digital capabilities, boost tourism including a new £100m visitor destination in Belfast, and support the region's regeneration, underpinned by infrastructure developments and skills investment to connect people to jobs and services.

Over the lifetime of the deal, the following benefits are anticipated:

- Support the creation of 20,000 new jobs.
- Connect local people to new and better jobs.
- Place the region at the top table of digital innovation.
- Deliver £400 million in GVA directly on-site and within the region.
- Target delivery of almost £1 billion of private sector leverage
- Create compelling world class visitor attractions.
- Help to regenerate major towns and cities.

In 2022/23 BRCD partners have moved from development to delivery with eleven outline business cases approved and an additional three at advanced stages of the approval process. In addition, seven contracts for funding and funding agreements have been signed, which will enable project delivery with an approximate value of £430 million. Another key milestone was the commencement of construction on the first project on the Studio Ulster site at Giant's Park in October 2022.

2022/23 also saw work commence on the skills assessment process to understand and respond to the labour and skills implications and opportunities of the City Deal investment projects. Two well attended market engagement events were held in March 2023 to raise awareness among local businesses of upcoming construction and professional services opportunities through the BRCD.



# Supporting local business and enterprise

Over the past two years we have continued to work with city partners and the business community to understand the needs and pressures facing local businesses and to co-design a range of support packages and interventions to address these and support business enterprise and start-ups.

Key achievements over the past two years:

- Supported 922 individuals to start a business through the 'Go For It Programme', supporting the creation of 578 jobs.
- Supported 116 social enterprises and cooperatives with one-to-one mentoring, advice and guidance.
- Supported 603 businesses to implement growth strategies, become more resilient, enhance their digital and online presence, improve tendering skills and access specialist support for businesses with high growth potential.
- Launched the 'Vibrant Business Destinations' programme in partnership with the Department for Communities. The programme aims to strengthen the competitiveness and create more vibrant local business destinations, delivering interventions that drive footfall and create vibrancy in areas outside of the city centre. So far, we have supported 7 business associations across the city to develop area-based action plans.

#### **Belfast Business Promise**

SUPPORTER

We are committed to ensuring that the success of the city reaches everyone.

#### **Growing local economy**

Since the Belfast Agenda was published in 2017, Invest NI has provided support totalling £233m to 4,244 businesses in Belfast. This assistance will leverage a total investment of £1,398m and over the next 3-5 years will lead to the creation of over 11,100 new jobs.

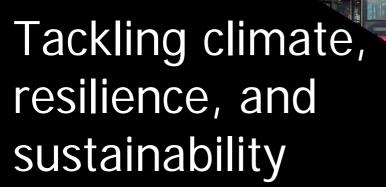
Other key highlights include:

- Providing venture capital funding of almost £60m to 250 Belfast based companies, which will leverage a total investment of over £239m.
- Increasing investment in skills from £2.3m in 2021-22, to £16.3m in 2022-23, which includes investments from companies such as Dale Farm, Portview Fit out, FinTru and KPMG to improve the skills of their workforces.
- Over the last year investment in locally owned Belfast businesses has increased by 16% from £71m in 2021-22 to £82m in 2022-23.
- Launching a new competitive programme, Ambition to Grow, to support local businesses that are innovative and seeking to export and to grow from Northern Ireland

We have co-created with our business sector an Inclusive Growth City Charter for employers across the city. Known as the **Belfast Business Promise**, the free accreditation scheme is open to all employers working to

improve Belfast. Build around eight pledges of excellence, such as providing fair wages, the scheme helps develop and embed better employment practices.

Since launched in March 2023 with the participation of 20 organisations to help test and refine the model, the scheme continues to grow with 37 organisations signed-up to the Belfast Business Promise in December 2023 and are committed to improving how they do business together.



Belfast faces major challenges related to climate change and sustainability. These challenges will have a profound impact on economic and social objectives unless they are addressed with urgency and in a collaborative manner.

Changes to the environment are amongst the biggest threats we face. We must become a sustainable city that meets the needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

From the way we heat our houses, how we use water or how we choose to travel have significant long-term impacts on our local environment and quality of life.

City partners share focus on climate adaptation, mitigation and decarbonising the city's economy and delivering the goal to transition Belfast to an 'inclusive, net zero-emissions, climate resilient city'.

#### Together we have delivered:

The Belfast Sustainable Food
Partnership was re-established in
2022 to bring focus to key
challenges for the food system in
Belfast including tackling climate
change, enabling urban farming and
community growing, reducing food
waste, food poverty and diet related
ill-health.

Development of a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) to inform investment decisions to accelerate the transition of the city to a low emission energy system.

ZERO

- A programme of interventions to help increase energy efficiency and reduce costs for homes and businesses across the city (e.g. retrofitting, solar PV) is under development with associated funding models being explored.
- Work continued with the Place Based Climate Action Network to develop a pipeline of investable climate projects to help us fund our net zero ambitions for the city.
- Investments in low-emissions public transport continued with half of all Belfast Metro bus services scheduled to be zero emission by 2025 and all to be Net Zero by 2030.
- Delivery of the Belfast Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP), launched in Nov. 2021, to improve the ambient air quality and reduce air pollution within Belfast and improve public health and wellbeing.

Working with public and private sector partners, to extend the Belfast Bikes scheme, creating 8 new docking stations across the city during 2021-2023.

**Translink** 

Part of almost £1m investment to create 15 new docking stations with seven further stations planned as Phase 2 in 2023-24.

The scheme connects the city and provides a sustainable form of transport for citizens, visitors, and business users. The scheme provides greater access to places and destinations across the city as well as helping improve the health of users by encouraging people to integrate exercise into their daily transport routine.

With 56 docking stations across the city with a capacity for up to 588 bikes, there was 29, 974 active members in December 2023. Since the launch of Belfast Bikes scheme there has been more than 1,422,196 journeys made across the city.

#### Understanding the city's population indicators

To enable the community planning partnership to understand the changing dynamics of Belfast and to enable us to identify were we need to bring shared focus, 48 population indicators have been identified and tracked to understand the wellbeing of our city's population (refer to figure 2 below). They reflect the conditions of the whole population within the city and take account of wider societal, environmental, or economic shocks.

There is no doubt that the city and its people have experienced significant challenges over the past two years including recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, accelerating cost-of-living crisis, political instability, climate change and budget constraints.

Belfast is a vibrant, **Everyone in Belfast** Belfast is a welcoming, **Everyone in Belfast** Everyone in Belfast attractive, connected benefits from a thriving **Frend** safe, fair and inclusive fulfils their potential experiences good Trend and environmentally city for all. health and well-being and prosperous sustainability city. economy 21 Proportion of working age population who have attained 40 Air Quality 29 Life expectancy at birth ⇑ 1 City productivity levels  $(\uparrow)$ 14 Number of victims of any crime  $(\uparrow)$ 41 Percentage of household waste Level 4 or above 30 Gap in life expectancy by depriv. 2 Investment into Belfasi 15 Number of hate-motivated ➂ that is reused, recycled or  $\odot$ 22 Proportion of school-leavers composted **(1)** (V) 3. Size of Belfast Economy 16 Proportion of people who feel safe low birth weight 42 Percentage of all journeys including English and Maths 4 Business Demographics  $\bigcirc$ **(** 32 Preventable deaths 17 Number of ASB incidents  $\bigcirc$ cycling or public transport 5. The proportion of the population in **(** school leavers entitled to free 33 Proportion of the population of 18 The number of people who agree  $\bigcirc$  $\Theta$ school meals achieving at least Level 2, including English and **(** 43 Visitor numbers that people from different adults/children who are obese (A) **(1)** 6. The total number of jobs in Belfast backgrounds get on well together 44 Engagement in culture and arts maths, and their peers 34 Proportion of population who **①** (**v**) 19 Proportion of population who 24 Proportion of school-levers  $\Theta$ **(** believe their cultural identity is 45 Number of miles of cycle lanes, entering employment, education  $\odot$ 35 Proportion of adults drinking respected by society  $\odot$ footways and footpaths 0 8 Employment rate by deprivation guidelines 46 Proportion of homes that are (A) 25 School attendance rates (V) energy efficient  $\Theta$ 9 Economic inactivity rate (ex-students) 36 Proportion of people who rank shared and open to all  $\bigcirc$ themselves as having high levels 47 Satisfaction with Belfast as a 26 Volunteering of wellbeing.  $\bigcirc$ 10 Average earnings place to live 27 Self-efficacy

Figure 2: City Dashboard: Population Indicators Snapshot

11 Total spend by external visitors

13 Disability employment rate

12 Supply of housing

**(**1)

**(1)** 

KEY (1) Positive change (2) No significant change (3) Negative change (3) No update

The Statement of Progress clearly identifies specific areas where the work of community planning partnership has contributed to the delivery of the Belfast Agenda ambitions and agreed stretched goals. However, it is important to recognise that moving the curve on the city's population indicators requires much more than the work being taken forward through community planning, will take significant time to realise and will need a collective and sustained commitment across all levels of government and society.

28 Proportion of Working Age

There is a strong leadership commitment and shared focus across the Belfast Community Planning Partnership in those bid challenges facing the city and the curves we wish to change, including addressing health inequality issues, through the delivery of the refreshed Belfast Agenda (2024-2028). This provides he catalyst and call to action across city stakeholders on those issues where more needs to be done. Our vision, ambitions and outcomes as set out in the Belfast Agenda are long-term and intended to improve the lives of everyone in Belfast.

(V)

(V)

**(** 

ndertake at least 150 minutes of physical exercise per week

38 Number of households in housing

39 Number of people in treatment

48 Carbon Emissions

#### **Next steps**

Over the past year we commenced our first formal review of Belfast's community plan. To complete the review, a "Continuing the Conversation" consultation and engagement programme was rolled out citywide in three phases.

The purpose of this was to reengage residents, city partners, stakeholders and organisations in a conversation on the community plan which would ensure their needs and aspirations remained at its core.

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In phase one we sense-checked our vision, priorities and outcomes and you told us that you were happy that these stayed the same. In phase two we looked at our strategic intents, the stretch goals we should use to measure success and the actions we should undertake to get us there.

In phase three we carried out a public consultation. The rich and diverse feedback we received has been shaped into this revitalised strategy and its accompanying action plans.

Strengthened by the partnership working which came to the fore during the pandemic and in the spirit of turning crisis into opportunity, the time has proven right to build back better, drive recovery and look at ways to lever change.

The Community Planning Partnership would like to thank every person who attended one of our workshops, contributed to the conversation online or submitted a survey. Your insight has been invaluable in shaping the refreshed Belfast Agenda.

We now intend to bring forward and embed the refreshed Belfast Agenda and supporting action plans for the period 2024-2028. Our focus will be on delivering on the priorities identified, supporting individuals, families and businesses across the city, improving life opportunities, health and wellbeing.



Strategy, Programmes and Partnerships team City Hall Belfast BT1 5GS

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communityplanning@belfastcity.gov.uk

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/belfastagenda

#### Access to information

As part of our commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations, we want to ensure that everyone is able to access the documents we produce. This document is available in alternative formats such as Braille, easy read, audio large print and also in other languages on request by contacting: 028 9027 124 9





#### Agenda Item 5b



#### STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

Subject:	Northern Ireland Executive N	linisterial Meetings	
Date:	23 February 2024		
Reporting Officers:	John Walsh, Chief Executive		
Reporting Officers.	John Tully, Director of City a	nd Organisational Stra	ategy
Contact Officers:	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclu	sive Growth and Anti-	Poverty
Contact Officers.	Geoff Dickson, Strategic Plan	nning & Policy Manag	er
Is this report restricted?		Yes	s No X
	iption, as listed in Schedule (emed this report restricted.	6, of the exempt info	rmation by virtue of
Insert number			
1. Information relating	to any individual		
2. Information likely to			
<ol> <li>Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> </ol>			
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter			
<ol><li>Information in relation</li></ol>	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 repor	rt become unrestricted?		
After Committ	ee Decision		
After Council	Decision		
Sometime in the future			
Never			
Call-in			
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?			

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval to schedule a series of All Party meetings with the
	new incoming NI Executive Ministers.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to:
	i. consider and agree that meetings are sought with the incoming new NI Executive Ministers
	ii. consider and agree that Party Group Leaders (or their nominees) will attend meetings
3.0	Main report
	Background
3.1	Members will be aware of the recent restoration of the NI Executive and appointments made to the respective ministerial portfolios. There are a number of key issues which it is hoped will now be taken forward by the NI Executive and NICS Departments which will impact, and possibly benefit, Belfast (e.g. Poverty Strategy, Childcare Strategy, Climate Action Plan, infrastructure investment plans etc).
3.2	It is important that urgent engagement takes place with the incoming new Ministers on the key priorities, challenges and opportunities facing Belfast as well as encouraging greater collaboration with the Council in designing and delivering key programmes and informing future investment decisions. Real opportunity for Belfast to be seen as a test bed to accelerate delivery of key NI Executive ambitions around, for example creating jobs, supporting vulnerable people, creating shared communities, supporting children and families, maximising the potential of innovation to support growth and helping mitigate the impact of climate change whilst supporting green growth.
3.3	It is therefore proposed that a series of Ministerial meetings is sought with an All-Party delegation from the Council to discuss the strategic issues for the city. It is proposed that the All-Party delegation would consist of Party Group Leaders (or their nominees) as well as the Chief Executive / Deputy Chief Executive and relevant Chief Officers. Officers will develop supporting briefings which will set out the strategic issues, opportunities and considerations for these meetings.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.4	There are no Financial or Human Resource implications contained within this report.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.5	There is no equality of good relations implications contained within this report.
3.6	There are no rural needs implications contained within this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None
<u> </u>	

#### Agenda Item 5d





Subje	ct:	Health and Wellbeing Strategy			
Date:		23 February 2024			
Repoi	Reporting Officer: Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources				
Conta	Contact Officer: Catherine Christy HR Manager - Development				
Restri	cted Reports				
Is this	Is this report restricted?			Х	
		otion, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt eemed this report restricted.	t inform	nation by	virtue
Insert	number				
1.	Information relating t	o any individual			
2.	•	eveal the identity of an individual			
3.					
4.	Information in conne	ction with any labour relations matter			
5.				ained	
6.		that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice			
0.		ake an order or direction	·p • • •	9	
7.	Information on any a	ction in relation to the prevention, investigation	or pros	secution o	f crime
	If Yes, when will the	report become unrestricted?			
	After Committe	e Decision			
	After Council D				
	Some time in the				
	Never	ie iuture	t		
	ivevei		L		
Call-in					
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?					
1.0		or Summary of main Issues	Olam ta	.	
1.1	To present the Hea	Ith and Wellbeing Strategy and 3 year Action F	rian to e	elected me	embers.

2.0	Recommendations		
2.1	The Committee is asked to:		
	Note the contents of this report.		
3.0	Main report		
3.1	A cross departmental Health and Wellbeing Working Group which included trade union		
	representation was established to refresh the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and develop a		
	3-year action plan. The strategy has been fully consulted on through the Joint Negotiating		
	and Consultative Committee (JNCC).		
3.2	Health and Wellbeing Strategy Goals		
	The Strategy defines the type of organisation that the Council wants to be to support the		
	health and wellbeing of our employees. That is, an organisation:		
	Where individuals feel valued and recognised for their contribution		
	With increased employee engagement/motivation		
	Where employees feel that they have the opportunity to develop		
	With reduced absenteeism		
	With good employee retention		
	Where employees are clear about their role		
	Where employees feel supported by their line manager		
	Where employees improve their physical and mental health		
3.3	It is based on the four strands of Business in the Community's Workwell Model. These are:		
	Better Work – Create good work and working conditions that enhance employee		
	wellbeing.		
	Better Health & Wellbeing – Take a whole-person approach to wellbeing. The four    Take a whole-person approach to wellbeing a decided and the settle a		
	pillars of wellbeing are physical, mental, financial and social health and wellbeing.  All of which are inextricably linked.		
	·		
	<ul> <li>Better Management – Make employee mental health 'business as usual' for all leaders and people managers.</li> </ul>		
	Better Specialist Support – Take an inclusive and employee-led approach to		
	providing support.		
3.4			
	Implementation and communication  Whilst the refresh of the strategy was ongoing, a programme of health and wellbeing		
	activity was delivered and covered a range of topics including active travel, positive mental		
	health, stress management, suicide awareness, finance, caring for carers and nutrition.		

The revised strategy builds on our existing policies and initiatives and provides a series of actions aimed at producing a more cohesive, structured and corporate approach to health and wellbeing across the council with activity meets the needs of the organisation and our employees. Corporate HR will work closely with Marcomms and departments to ensure that employees are made fully aware of the health & wellbeing initiatives that are available and provided with the opportunity to attend/engage in planned activities where possible.

#### 3.5 A Health and Wellbeing Champions Network

To help influence, drive and champion the programme of work, a network of health and wellbeing champions will be established. While the number of champions and role may vary across departments, roles and responsibilities will include:

- acting as a role model for promoting positive health and wellbeing practice within your organisation, team and department
- linking in with the health and wellbeing leads or the person responsible for delivering the health and wellbeing strategy in the organisation
- engaging with colleagues on health and wellbeing ideas/initiatives
- signposting staff to the wellbeing support that is available providing support to health and wellbeing leads
- encouraging colleagues to take breaks and to look after themselves, for example: drinking plenty of fluids, lunchtime walks, taking up hobbies
- making sure that colleagues are taking time to reflect and be aware of their physical and mental health.

A programme of training and support including Mental Health First Aid, will be put in place for the champions. It should be noted that champions are not expected to provide advice to colleagues. Wellbeing champions are there to listen and signpost colleagues to further support and information, including if they require mental health support.

#### 3.7 Governance, measurement and reporting.

Progress on delivery of the actions will be reported to CMT on a six-monthly basis. These reports will measure progress on actual delivery against proposed timeframes. To measure the impact of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy the following qualitative and quantitative people performance indicators will be used:

- % staff agree that that they have opportunities to discuss their personal development
- % staff agree that there are opportunities for career growth

% staff agree that they receive feedback and that their contribution is valued and recognised Continued retention of and improvement in external diversity accreditations and benchmarks Attendance at and evaluation of events and training; both office based and frontline staff Number of health checks carried out Attendance management statistics and reasons for absence Staff turnover Demand for counselling service Active travel surveys 3.8 Progress reports will also be included in quarterly absence reports to the Audit and Risk Panel. Financial and Resource Implications 3.9 Costs associated with delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy will be met from the existing Corporate OD budget. Indicative costs for Years 1, 2 and 3 of the Strategy are £9770, £8000, and £7000 respectively. Any specific departmental requirements will be met from departmental learning and development budgets. A full communication and awareness raising exercise for staff and managers will be implemented and directors will be required to ensure that the Strategy is fully communicated within their departments. **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment** 3.10

The draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy has undergone equality and rural needs screening

and has been screened out.

Appendices – Documents Attached

Appendix 1 - Health and Wellbeing People Strategy 2024-2027

4.0

## Belfast City Council's Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy April 2024 – March 2027

Our ambition . . .

to improve the health and well-being of all our employees

#### **Contents**

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3	What is health and wellbeing?	4
4	Things that impact on the health and	6
	wellbeing of our employees	
5	Where are we now?	7
6	Where would we like to be? - our strategy	9
	goals	
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8	Action Plan	12
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	ongoing initiatives and activities	
Appendix 2	Subject areas for H&WB training	17

#### 1. Introduction

- **1.1** Belfast City Council developed its first Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2014, understanding that investing in employees' health and wellbeing delivers outcomes that can have a positive impact on employees' mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.
- 1.2 The council has undertaken significant activities to deliver the objectives of the strategy by investing in health and wellbeing initiatives that support our employee's physical and mental health. As Public Sector Champions of the Mental Health Charter, it is our firm belief that the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of our workforce is a major contributor to the successful delivery of council services and that an engaged, healthy and productive workforce is integral to that success. It is crucial in enhancing organisational performance and better service delivery, as well as meeting the objectives of the Belfast Agenda and investment within the city. We believe that to date, the strategy has delivered positive outcomes for employees across all services. The following feedback was received from members of staff:

"I feel like everyone should attend the Mental Health First Aid course as it was so insightful and helpful. Because of the course I was able to talk to a stranger with suicidal thoughts and encouraged her to get the specialist help she needed. It also gave me a greater understanding of other mental health conditions and the confidence to address issues around them."

#### Roisin Bradley Graphic Designer

Better Mental Health has always been an issue close to my heart and the MHFA training provided through Corp HR was really beneficial to me as an individual both professionally and personally. As chair of the LGBT+ Network, Proud, for the last number of years it is an issue high on the agenda for the LGBT+ community.

The pandemic was a difficult time for all communities and the uncertain times we currently live in have impacted a lot of people at different levels. The outcomes of the training for me have been a better awareness of my own mental health and how to manage stress. It has also let me help and signpost friends and colleagues who have struggled with their mental health to take simple actions and ask for help when they need it. I couldn't recommend the training highly enough to colleagues.

Darren Trowlen
Project Officer ( Delivery )
Proud LGBT+ Network

I took part in the 1 Billion Steps Challenge and found the experience exhilarating and beneficial both physically and mentally – it helped me to become energized after the winter lull in outdoor activities and had the added bonus of being able to meet people and chat while out and about which would not have happened had I merely gone to the gym or swimming pool. I'm still walking and I would thoroughly recommend it to everyone!

Mary McKenna

HR Support Assistant

- **1.3** We recognise that health and lifestyle choices are the choice of the individual, however the council has a role in supporting a healthy environment and promoting and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices, as well as helping employees deal with specific aspects of health.
- 1.4 By providing a positive organisational culture, the availability of protective health and safety guidance, supportive human resource policies and health improvement practices including the provision of employee counselling and occupational health services, we believe that our Health and Wellbeing Strategy will also create a health improvement legacy of knowledge and practice which could be extended through our employees to their families and friends and through to wider society. Just over 50% our employees are Belfast ratepayers so our Health and Wellbeing Strategy has the potential to have a positive impact, across the city and contribute to the delivery of the Belfast Agenda goals for improved health throughout Belfast.

#### 2. Foreword from the Chief Executive

Through the Belfast Agenda, we're committed to making Belfast a place where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing. This commitment is as valid for our own staff as it is for the communities we serve.

Our People Strategy sets out what we currently have in place to support your physical and mental health. This updated Health and Wellbeing Strategy is the next step we're taking to ensure that the support on offer is fit for purpose and provides the right mix of assistance that may be called upon to help you feel and give your best while at work, and outside of work too.

We are all more than Belfast City Council employees. We have friends, loved ones, hobbies, interests and passions that we want to give time to and be fit and healthy to enjoy. We hope the benefits of the approach we're taking through this strategy extend beyond the working day to support all staff to feel healthy, happy and motivated.

John Walsh Chief Executive

#### 3. What is health and wellbeing?

3.1 Health relates to a person's physical and mental condition. Wellbeing is the subjective state of being healthy, happy, contented, comfortable and satisfied with one's quality of life. Mental wellbeing relates to a person's emotional and psychological wellbeing. This includes self-esteem and the ability to socialise and cope in the face of adversity. It also includes being able to develop potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others and contribute to the community.

(Source: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

A healthy workforce can lead to:

- Healthy, happy employees
- Motivated employees with improved morale
- High employee retention and low employee turnover
- Reduced sickness absence
- Good employee/management relations

A healthy workplace can be defined as:

- A place where health risks are recognised and managed
- A place where work design is compatible with people's health needs and limitations
- An environment that supports the promotion of healthy lifestyles
- A place where employees and employers recognise their responsibility for their own health and the health of their colleagues
- **3.2** Implementing this strategy will help support the development of a healthier, robust, resilient and engaged workforce, who will be tasked with achieving the council's main priorities set out in:
- The Belfast Agenda;
- Corporate Plan, incorporating the Improvement Plan;
- Continual delivery of quality, value for money services
- 3.3 A cross-council team facilitated by Corporate HR has led the review of the strategy. The team included representatives from all departments as well as representatives from the Trade Union Group, Corporate Health and Safety Unit and Marketing and Communications. A number of external partners including the Public Health Agency, Business in the Community

and the councils Occupational Health and Employee Counselling providers also input into the development of the strategy.

**3.4** In order to realise our ambition of improving the health and wellbeing of all our employees, we firmly believe that everyone has a part to play:

#### **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive is responsible for the effective implementation of the strategy and its action plan through delegation to Directors.

#### **Directors**

Each Director is responsible for:

- Ensuring employees within their department are aware of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Ensuring that managers are trained and understand their responsibilities with regard to their people management role;
- Ensuring that support is provided to managers in carrying out their people management roles
- Role modelling effective leadership and people management behaviours
- Supporting managers on the implementation of the strategy;
- Supporting employees in availing of the opportunities which the strategy presents.

#### **Director of Human Resources**

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for:

- Leading on the development, implementation and review of the strategy and action plan;
- Providing advice and support to managers and employees in implementing the strategy;
- Ensuring appropriate training is provided for managers where necessary on relevant human resource policies together with a programme of management development training;
- Monitoring the progress and outcomes of the strategy.

#### Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring all employees are aware of the strategy and subject to operational requirements
   facilitate employees who wish to avail of the opportunities the strategy presents;
- Ensuring that they comply with all human resource policies and procedures, codes of practice and guidance notes;

- Participating in appropriate training in order to fulfil their roles as line managers.
- Role modelling effective leadership and people management behaviours

#### **Health and Wellbeing Strategy Working Group**

- Review of Health and Wellbeing Strategy and actions plans
- Monitoring progress
- · Evaluation and reporting

#### **Employees**

Employees have responsibility for:

- Taking due care of their own health, safety and wellbeing and that of others who could be affected by their activities at work;
- Adhering to all relevant council policy and procedures.
- To avail, participate in relevant/appropriate training

#### **Trade Union Representatives**

TU representatives have responsibility for:

- Advising, supporting and representing their members;
- Working with managers to progress the implementation of the strategy and supporting further initiatives to help improve employee health and wellbeing.

## 4. Things that impact on the health and wellbeing of our employees

#### 4.1 Our working environment is key

This will include:

- Work and how it is organised including fair allocation of work
- Job meaning and contribution to success
- Job security
- Supportive management and leadership style
- Work / Life balance
- Perceived fairness and justice in the workplace
- **4.2** Having effective job and organisation design, fit for purpose people practices, policies and procedures and effective management and leadership are crucial to ensure all our employees are provided with an optimal working environment.

#### 5. Where are we now?

5.1 We have a number of key policies, procedures and strategies in place, which directly or indirectly support employee health and wellbeing. We also have an effective track record of promoting and supporting a range of health and wellbeing initiatives and activities. This has been strengthened further with the council becoming the Public Sector Champion of the Mental Health Charter.

Please see Appendix 1 for a summary of current policies, procedures and strategies and ongoing initiatives and activities as of April 2024.

#### 5.2 Our ageing workforce

44% of our employees are over 50 and while an aging workforce can be a good thing in terms of the wealth of experience and knowledge it can also mean that a greater percentage of employees can face more health issues, which can impact on performance and attendance levels. Our aging workforce means that it is more important than ever to support our employees' mental and physical wellness through planned activity.

#### 5.3 Observations from our employee counselling and occupational health providers

Statistics reported in May 23 highlighted a steady increase in demand for support from the Council's employee counselling service, rising most notably during the pandemic. Increases in the cost of living has also had a major impact on employees in terms of anxiety and stress levels and issues like addiction and homelessness are becoming more prevalent. Current pressures in the health service including long waiting lists, inaccessibility of mental health services in the community and even simply accessing primary care services in GP practices has also caused anxiety and stress due to delays in getting other health issues addressed and treated. Connections and relationships with other people, both in and outside work continues to be a major contributor to high levels of stress and anxiety.

Employees who are involved in disciplinary or grievance investigations can be put under additional pressures where investigations are not being completed in a timely manner, or when a manager is required to address under performance, so there is a continued need to support staff and ensure that managers and officers involved in the implementation of HR policies and procedures are adequately trained and knowledgeable.

The effective management of absence in line with the Council's Attendance Policy is of particular importance not only for those staff absent from work but in addition, for staff impacted by colleagues' absence who are required to take on additional work.

Where knowledge and support does not exist within the Council or where expert or long term support is required, effective signposting to and partnerships with other agencies and organisations can also help ensure that staff get the support they need.

#### 5.4 Increasing levels of absence

Absence levels have been increasing steadily over the last 5 years. The top five reasons for absence in 2022/2023 are as follows:

	% of total
Reason for absence:	absence
Stress. depression, anxiety	35.88%
Musculo-skeletal	23.57%
Infections, Covid19	10.93%
Stomach, digestive, etc	7.19%
Infections, inc colds & flu	6.06%

The council recognises that it is inevitable that employees will experience periods of ill health which prevent them from attending work. It is important that sickness absences are treated fairly and sympathetically, and we are committed to providing appropriate support and encouragement to employees who are absent.

- 5.5 Our Attendance Policy and Booklet are designed to balance the requirements of the service with the interests of individual employees and encourage all employees to meet the high standards of attendance normally achieved by the vast majority of Belfast City Council staff. Particular communication and awareness raising around the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, activity and initiatives will be targeted to any areas where absence levels are high or where there is an identified need to address particular causes of absence.
- **5.6** The Attendance Policy sets out the council's commitment to "explore with the employee what reasonable adjustments, if any, can be made to enable the employee to meet the attendance standards."

### 6. Where would we like to be? - our strategy goals

#### 6.1 We want to be an organisation:

- Where individuals feel valued and recognised for their contribution
- With increased employee engagement/motivation
- Where employees feel that they have the opportunity to develop
- Reduced absenteeism
- With good employee retention
- · Where employees are clear about their role
- Where employees feel supported by their line manager
- · Where employees improve their physical and mental health

#### 6.2 Developing our strategy

The strategy builds on our existing policies and initiatives to provide an evolving series of actions aimed at producing a more cohesive, structured and corporate approach to health and wellbeing across the council.

It is based on the four strands of Business in the Community's Workwell Model (see figure 1) and the proposed actions have been developed accordingly:

- Better Work Create good work and working conditions that enhance employee wellbeing.
- Better Health & Wellbeing Take a whole-person approach to wellbeing. The four pillars of wellbeing are physical, mental, financial and social health and wellbeing. All of which are inextricably linked.
- Better Management Make employee mental health 'business as usual' for all leaders and people managers.
- Better Specialist Support Take an inclusive and employee-led approach to providing support.

Figure 1



A FRAMEWORK FOR EMBEDDING HEALTH AND WELLBEING INTO ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE - The Five Enablers

- Open Dialogue and Feedback
- Collaborative Individual Focused Approach
- Focus on relationships
- Positive Physical Environment
- Measuring & Monitoring

#### **The Four Actions**

- Empathy and Compassion
- Inclusivity and Equity
- Trust and Appreciation
- Authenticity
- 6.3 The 2024 2027 action plan (see section 8) has been developed as a result of internal feedback provided via the departmental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Working Group, organisational data, trade unions and external partners including, our Occupational Health and Employee Counselling providers. Aspects of the wider Health and Social Care Agenda have also influenced the action plan.
- **6.4** The action plan is not exhaustive and should the Health & Wellbeing Strategy Working Group be made aware of concerns, trends or new initiatives, from internal sources, including Elected

- members and external sources such as Public Health Agency, Business in the Community or other external partners to support our employees, these can be incorporated at any stage.
- **6.5** The council is going through a period of change and it is important that the strategy and action plans aim to meet the needs of our employees during this challenging time.

### 7. Implementation, review and governance

- 7.1 Responsibility to deliver the actions is set out in the action plan. Departments will be required to ensure that the strategy is communicated to all staff and that as far as possible attendance and participation at events / training etc is facilitated. It is recognised that facilitating attendance can be challenging, particularly for employees in frontline operational roles. Corporate HR will work closely with frontline services to address any barriers that might prevent frontline staff from participating; in particular, where and when health and wellbeing activities and initiatives are being delivered.
- 7.2 Progress on delivery of the actions contained in the strategy will be reported to Corporate Management Team on a six-monthly basis. These reports will measure progress on actual delivery against proposed timeframes.
  In order to be able to measure the impact of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the following qualitative and quantitative people performance indicators are proposed:
  - Staff Turnover
  - % staff agree that that they have opportunities to discuss their personal development?
  - % staff agree that there are opportunities for career growth
  - % staff agree that they receive feedback and that their contribution is valued and recognised
  - Continued retention of and improvement in external diversity accreditations and benchmarks
  - Attendance at and evaluation of events and training; both office based and frontline staff
  - Number of health checks carried out:
  - Attendance management statistics and reasons for absence
  - Demand for counselling service
  - Active travel surveys

Measurement of these performance indictors will take place at the end of year 1, 2 and 3.

## Belfast City Council – Health & Wellbeing (H&WB) Action Plan 2024-2027

Activity Lead key
CHR Corporate Human Resources
CH&S Corporate Health & Safety
IC Internal Communications

Theme		Actions	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	Activity Lead	Indicative cost
Better Health & Wellbeing	•	Deliver a programme of health checks – including a focus on Men's health	☑	Ø	Ø	CHR	£1,000
Page	•	Develop an annual H&WB training plan to deliver a programme of wellbeing support and awareness raising to all employees. (See Appendix 2)	Ø	Ø	☑	CHR	£3,000
258	•	Establish a team of health and wellbeing champions across all departments	Ø	$\square$	$\square$	CHR	£2,000pa
	•	Continue to deliver stress management training.	<u> </u>	$\square$		CHR	Nil
	•	Provide support for staff to practice mindfulness and lunch time activities such as yoga, Pilates etc	Ø			CHR	Nil
	•	Signpost healthy eating advice programmes on Staywell and Interlink	Ø			CHR/IC	Nil
	•	Assess our position against mental health charter	<b>☑</b>	$\square$	$\square$	CHR	Nil

Theme	Actions	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	Activity Lead	Indicative cost
	Deliver a workforce Active Travel Plan including continuing to encourage employees to participate in the Sustrans Active travel programme.					£2,770 for Year 1
Better Specialist Support	Continue to provide health and safety advice to managers and employees - including workplace/ergonomic assessments/DSE audits and reasonable adjustments	Ø	Ø	Ø	CH&S	Nil
Page	Provide a programme of planned awareness raising activities/articles/campaigns. Engage with staff to assess H&WB priority needs and provide a programme.	V	Ø	⊠	CHR	Nil
259	Develop training or a programme to support managers to recognise addiction and how they can support their staff				CHR	£1,000
Better Work	<ul> <li>Stress Audit (using the HSE management standards).</li> <li>Planning and small pilot</li> <li>Trial in Departments</li> <li>Roll out across all departments</li> </ul>	Ø	Ø	Ø	CH&S	Nil ( Yr 1 ) Future years TBD
	Continue to conduct Personal Development Plans for all employees.	Ø	Ø	Ø	CHR	Nil
	Provide a programme of training for managers to ensure they are equipped with effective people management skills to		Ø		CHR	Corporate Training programme

Theme Actions 2		2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	Activity Lead	Indicative cost
	include staff engagement, support and inclusion.					
	Continue to provide a programme of Mental Health First Aid training.	Ø	Ø	Ø	CHR	£1,000
	Ensure provision of a quiet room and develop guidance on usage	Ø			CHR	Nil
	Ensure continual signposting/communication of support available via Staywell Hub.	Ø	Ø	Ø	CHR/IC	Nil
Better Management හ ග ග	<ul> <li>Ensure effective H&amp;WB engagement processes are in place for staff via Induction, App, PDP's, surveys etc</li> </ul>	<b>☑</b>		<b>☑</b>	CHR	TBA Nil
260	Continue to develop employee networks providing support through the strategy objectives.	Ø	Ø	Ø	CHR	
	Develop a Dignity at Work/Bullying and Harassment Policy	Ø			CHR	Nil

## Appendix 1

Integrated procedures, policies a	nnd Ongoing Initiatives & Activities
strategies in place	
<ul> <li>Attendance (to reduce the impact sickness absence on the individual the organisation)</li> <li>Capability</li> <li>Code of Conduct</li> <li>Disciplinary and Grievance</li> <li>Domestic violence and abuse</li> <li>Drugs and Alcohol in the Workpla</li> <li>Equal Opportunities</li> <li>Enhanced Bereavement Leave</li> <li>Gender Identity &amp; Expression Guidelines</li> <li>Health and Safety</li> <li>Learning and Development (include personal development plans for a employees)</li> <li>Menopause Policy</li> <li>Protection of staff from workplace</li> </ul>	Childcare voucher scheme     Diversity Action Plan (Gender, Disability, LGBT+, Race Action Plan)     General/specific health, safety and wellbeing courses e.g. manual handling, stress management, positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.  Better Health & Wellbeing     Active Travel Plan     Cycle to work scheme     Discounted leisure centre membership  Better Management     Ongoing internal communications supporting all related initiatives  Coeff Support Networks (Warner Bischillter)
<ul> <li>violence and abuse from the publi</li> <li>Raising a concern</li> <li>Redundancy</li> <li>Risk Management Strategy</li> <li>Social Media</li> <li>Safeguarding Policy - Adults</li> <li>Safeguarding Policy - Children an Young People</li> <li>Smoking at Work</li> <li>Work life Balance</li> <li>Workstyles Policy</li> </ul>	Better Specialist Support     A counselling service for employees who want to access confidential help and support  An occupational health service that

Signposting of a wide r	ange of H&WB
support not necessarily	delivered by council
Smoking cessation pro	grammes
StayWell online health	hub
Trade Union Learning I	Representatives
promoting learning in the	ne workplace

## Appendix 2

Subject Areas for H&WB training and support
Age at work
Bereavement and Loss
Cancer Awareness
Dementia Awareness
Disability Awareness
Domestic Violence
Financial Hardship
LGBT+ Awareness
Loneliness
Menopause Awareness and Support
Men's Health including mental health
Mental Health First Aid
Neurodiversity
Positive Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing
Race Awareness
Resilience
Safeguarding
Sexual Harassment/Consent
Stress Awareness for Managers
Suicide Awareness
Women's Health

The above list is not exhaustive and topics will be prioritised according to need and issues as they emerge.



## Agenda Item 5e

## STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Subjec	et:	Employability Update						
Date: 23 February 2024								
Report	Reporting Officer: Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources							
•								
Contac	ct Officer:	Catherine Christy, HR Manager Development						
Restric	cted Reports							
Is this	report restricted?		Yes		No	X		
li	f Yes, when will th	e report become unrestricted?						
	After Commit	tee Decision						
	After Council							
	Some time in Never	the future						
	Nevel							
Call-in								
Is the d	decision eligible fo	or Call-in?	Yes	Х	]No[			
1.0	Purpose of Reno	rt or Summary of main Issues						
	-							
1.1	_	mmittee with an update on the employability activ	ity to	promo	ote			
0.0		nrough our role as an employer.						
2.0	Recommendatio	ns						
2.1	The Committee is	asked to						
	note the co	ontents of this report						
3.0	Main report							
	Background							
3.1	The Inclusive Gro	wth Strategy recognises that as a civic leader and	l large	e empl	loyer i	in		
	Belfast we can an	d should set a strong example for others in driving	g best	pract	ice			
	around employme	around employment and that the Council can make real progress towards the						
	achievement of th	e council's inclusive growth ambitions by looking		own				

employment practices and the job opportunities we create. This report provides a summary of activity this year to date aimed at delivering on these ambitions.

#### Ring fencing and programme of support for the long term unemployed.

- 3.2 In the Inclusive Growth Strategy, the council has committed to ring fencing entry level posts, where there is a high volume of posts to be filled, and support this through the provision of appropriate pre recruitment training programmes to benefit those furthest removed from the labour market.
- 3.3 As part of the current recruitment campaign to fill a number of General Operative vacancies and create a list of reserve candidates, 9 posts (25% of the permanent vacancies) have been ring fenced to candidates eligible to a complete a pre recruitment training programme. Corporate HR has worked with the Employability and Skills team in the Place and Economy Department to deliver the programme to participants nominated by the Council's employability partner, Workforce.
- 3.4 The eligibility criteria of the programme are as follows:
  - must live in Belfast (except the four nominations ringfenced to disability organisations)
  - must meet the employee specification for the job they'll be applying for:
  - must have been unemployed or economically inactive for at least 6 months or work less than 16 hours a week.
- 3.5 The programme ran from 19 January to 24 January, comprised of classroom-based learning which included guidance on how to complete the application form and two days of work experience on the job. Nine out of 19 nominated participants completed the programme. All 9 participants were invited to mock interviews on 13 February, but only 7 attended. All 9 participants were interviewed on 14 February and 5 have been recommended for appointment.

#### Support for agency workers

In addition, job application and interview skills training has been offered to all agency workers currently engaged in the General Operative role. A total of 73 attended the full training course with 2 attending the mock interview element only.

#### Participation in the JobStart Scheme

- 3.7 Following the success of the JobStart Scheme delivered in 2021/22, funding has been made available to the DfC through the Northern Ireland Office's New Deal Funding Initiative for a new JobStart Scheme.
- 3.8 To engage in the programme, the Council must ensure that:
  - opportunities offered must not replace existing or planned vacancies or cause existing employees, apprentices or contractors to lose or reduce their employment
  - job opportunities must last for six months, with a possible extension to 9 months for those who meet certain criteria
  - job opportunities must offer at least 25 hours of employment per week
  - jobs offered must pay at least the National Minimum Wage through PAYE
  - Employers must develop a training plan to assist participants to gain new occupational and employability skills.
- 3.9 To participate in the programme the young person must be:
  - 16-24 years old and on benefits
  - be at risk of long-term unemployment or struggling to obtain employment
  - be currently unemployed
  - have been allocated a National Insurance number providing them with "the right to work in NI"
- 3.10 The 9 JobStart vacancies were advertised the week commencing 12 February 2024 with a view to making appointments to the scheme to successful candidates in April.

Other employability support and outreach since 1 April 2023.

- 3.11 Job fairs and schools/universities support
  - Attendance at 10 careers fairs (one targeted at people with disabilities),
  - Delivery of 5 mock interview events at schools
  - Delivery of an employability talk for a disability organisation,
- 3.12 Attendance at a further 3 careers fairs is scheduled for February and March 2024.

3.13 The Employability and Skills unit, Place and Economy Department organised a job fair in City Hall on 17 January to promote current vacancies across City & Neighbourhood Services and Property & Projects and promote the benefits of working for the Council. Corporate HR and departmental operational staff were also in attendance. This event was very well attended, and it is hoped that it will have an impact on the number of applications received for difficult to fill posts.

#### **Placements**

3.14 Corporate HR is facilitating placements across the council on an ongoing basis in conjunction with disability organisations, Belfast Metropolitan College, schools and both universities.

Employability outreach for driver recruitment.

- 3.15 Over May/June 2023, as part of Combined HGV/LGV Driver recruitment, we delivered 2 information sessions at Duncrue for potential applicants which included the opportunity to register for mock interviews. In addition, in September 2023, Corporate HR engaged with participants at a Place and Economy Transport Academy information session regarding the Council's recruitment process and the benefits of working for Belfast City Council.
- 3.16 It should be noted that Marketing and Communications have played a key role in assisting with the promotion and advertising of recruitment opportunities and employability outreach opportunities using a variety of communication channels.

#### Financial & Resource Implications

3.17 There are no financial implications to this report.

#### Equality or Good Relations Implications

- 3.18 The Council's employability outreach activity is aimed at assisting those people who are furthest removed from the labour market and those who face most barriers to employment.
- 3.19 All recruitment is undertaken in accordance with the Local Government Staff
  Commission Code of Procedures for Recruitment and Selection and in accordance with
  Fair Employment legislation.

4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None



## Agenda Item 5f

### STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Subjec	Subject: Apprenticeship Programme							
Date:		23 February 2024						
Report	eporting Officer: Christine Sheridan -Director of Human Resources							
Contac	t Officer:	Catherine Christy - HR Manager - D	evelopment					
Dootrio	ted Departs							
Restric	ted Reports							
Is this r	eport restricted?		Yes No X					
		ption, as listed in Schedule 6, of the med this report restricted.	e exempt information by virtue of					
Insert n	number							
2.   3.   4.   5.   6.	<ol> <li>Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <li>Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li> </ol>							
If Yes, v	when will the repor	t become unrestricted?						
	After Committe After Council I							
	Sometime in the							
	Never							
Call-in								
Is the d	Is the decision eligible for Call-in?							
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t/Summary of Main Issues						
1.1	The purpose of th	is report is to outline options for a	Belfast City Council apprenticeship					

programme including indicative costs.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the content of this report and determine next steps.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Inclusive Growth Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to addressing current and future recruitment needs through apprenticeships from entry-level through to higher-level technical and professional qualifications. Apprenticeships provide a sustainable route into employment across all levels of the workforce and as a council we are committed to embedding apprenticeships within our workforce planning strategy.
3.2	The Council has not undertaken an apprenticeship programme in recent years and in line with our commitment as set out in the Inclusive Growth Strategy, SP&R Committee at it's meeting of 20 October 2023, requested that a paper be brought to a future meeting on introducing a Belfast City Council apprenticeship programme and the potential cost implications.
	Previous apprenticeship programmes
3.3	When the Council previously recruited apprenticeships, these were in traditional roles such as Electricians, Joiners, Fleet Technicians, Plumbers, Gardeners and Painters. Our records indicate that since 2005, 38 apprentices were appointed into apprenticeship roles, 26 of whom went on to secure permanent posts in the Council with 2 currently engaged in Fixed Term Contract posts.
3.4	At the end of an apprenticeship programme, if permanent vacancies existed and the number of qualified apprentices was equal to the number of permanent jobs, apprentices were appointed automatically to those posts. Where the number of vacancies was less than the number of qualified apprentices, the posts were ringfenced to the qualified apprentices, a selection process undertaken, and appointments made in order of merit.
3.5	Current funding arrangements  Belfast City Council does not have a central budget to fund apprenticeship programmes and previous apprenticeships have been funded by departments through realigning existing staffing budgets. There is a desire across all departments to explore apprenticeships and address strategic workforce planning challenges. However, the absence of a corporate budget or funding to create new apprenticeship opportunities continues to be a barrier.  Elected Members will be aware that as a public authority, the Council is not able to access government funding for associated apprenticeship training costs, and while this presents an

additional challenge, the main issue to be addressed going forward is the direct salary costs.

#### Potential areas to consider for a future apprenticeship programme

- 3.6 Elected Members asked officers to identify potential areas for apprenticeship programmes.

  Like many organisations, the Council has experienced difficulties in recent years in attracting applicants to certain roles and in particular, within technical areas where the current supply is not meeting employer demand. Two potential areas identified are:
  - CNS, Fleet & Resources; auto electricians and technicians
  - Digital Services; cyber security, support and systems development.

#### **Financial and Resource Implications**

The indicative salary costs for an apprenticeship programme in the Fleet & Resources and Digital Services are set out below. Apprenticeship programmes can take between 1 and 4 years to complete and the average time to complete is usually 3 years.

Skill area	Level required	Approximate	Approximate	Approximate
		BCC Salary	Annual Salary	Annual Training
		Grade	Costs per	costs per
			apprentice	apprentice
Auto	Apprentice	Scale 2	£30 000	£2000
Electrician /	level 2 or 3			
Auto				
Technician				
Digital	Higher level	Scale 6	£40 000	£5000
services	apprenticeship			
	level 4 to 7			

In addition to the recurring salary costs for the period of the apprenticeships, there will be training costs which will vary depending on the specific course, approximate costs are set out in the table above,

	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.8	Recruitment for an apprenticeship programme will be carried out in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	None

## Agenda Item 6b

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE



	Asset Management:			
	i) Woodbourne Environmental Improvement Scheme – Asset			
Subject:	transfer from DfC			
	ii) River Terrace – Deed of Dedication			
	iii) Boodles Dam, Ligoniel Park – Land acquisition and disposal			
Date:	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2024			
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property and Projects			
Contact Officer:	Pamela Davison, Estates Manager			
Dest in the Library in				
Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?				
Please indicate the descri	ption, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of			
which the council has dee	med this report restricted.			
Insert number				
Information relating t	·			
•	reveal the identity of an individual to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the			
<ol> <li>Information relating that in the second of the s</li></ol>				
4. Information in conne	ction with any labour relations matter			
5. Information in relation	n 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 mak	ke an order or direction			
7. Information on any a	ction in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime			
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committe	ee Decision			
After Council D	Decision			
Sometime in th	e future			

I	Nove		
	Never		
Call-in			
Is the d	decision eligible for Call-in?		
1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues		
1.1	The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Committee on asset related disposal acquisition, and estates matters.		
2.0	Recommendation		
2.1	The Committee is asked to:		
	i) Woodbourne Environmental Improvement Scheme – Asset Transfer		
	- approve the transfer of 5 no. green spaces from DfC to the Council upon completion of the scheme.		
	ii) River Terrace – Deed of Dedication		
	- approve the completion of a Deed of Dedication to Urban Villages in respect of the works carried out as part of the redevelopment of the Lockhouse at River Terrace.		
	iii) Boodles Dam, Ligoniel Park – Land acquisition and disposal		
	approve the land acquisition and disposal of plots at Boodles Dam to facilitate the		
	Ligoniel Park Environmental Improvement Scheme.		
3.0	Main Report		
3.1	i) Woodbourne Environmental Improvement Scheme – Asset transfer		
	Key Issues		
	Woodbourne Environmental Improvement Scheme is a project within the Department for Communities (DfC) Building Successful Communities (BSC) programme. The aim of the project is to deliver improvements to the area including formal parking provision, flood alleviation measures, improved vehicular and pedestrian traffic flows and improved streetscape with the provision of designated green space. Following completion of a vesting process DfC now hold the lands required to deliver the project. Council is asked to assume ownership and maintenance responsibility for the 5 no. green spaces of c. 0.115 acres within the scheme (see Appendix 1), upon completion of the project. In line with a SP&R committee decision obtained in October 2016 regarding the transfer of third-party assets, the land is transferring at nil value and the Council will receive revenue funding from DfC for maintenance of the asset for the initial 3 years.  Financial and Resource Implications		
	Financial and Resource implications		

DfC will provide revenue funding for the initial 3 years. Legal Services shall act on the instructions of the Estates Management Unit.

#### **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

None associated with this report.

### 3.2 ii) River Terrace – Deed of Dedication

#### **Key Issues**

The Committee, at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023, granted approval for the Council to enter into a Deed of Variation with LORAG, amending their existing lease dated 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 to facilitate the inclusion of an additional portion of land to be used in connection with the redevelopment of the John Murray Lockhouse development. The redevelopment of the Lockhouse is being funded by the Executive Office under the Urban Villages Programme. The Letter of Offer from The Executive Office places a requirement on the Council to enter into a Deed of Dedication with the Executive Office over all of the lands demised in the Lease dated 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 (as subsequently varied) for the use of the land for the project for a period of 25 years. See Appendix 2 showing the lands subject to the Deed of Dedication.

#### Financial and Resource Implications

Legal Services shall act on the instructions of the Estates Management Unit.

### **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

None associated with this report.

#### 3.3 iii) Boodles Dam, Ligoniel Park - Land acquisition and disposal

#### **Key Issues**

In 2022, the Council decommissioned Boodles Dam and drained the adjacent mill pond in preparation for an Environmental Improvement Scheme at Ligoniel Park. Further to boundary / title investigations by the Estates Management Unit it has been agreed with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) that its interest in the lands shown coloured yellow on the map at Appendix 3 and totalling 0.258 acres are to be transferred from NIHE to the Council to bring all land within the scheme boundary into Council ownership. In addition, the lands shown coloured pink and totalling 0.121 acres are to be transferred from the Council to NIHE. Land and Property Services (LPS) have assessed the transfer values and the result is a net consideration of £4,105 payable from the Council to NIHE.

#### **Financial and Resource Implications**

The land transfers will be subject to a net payment of £4,105 from BCC to NIHE (as assessed by LPS). Legal Services shall act on the instructions of the Estates Management Unit. Each party shall bear its own legal costs.

#### **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

	None associated with this report.		
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached		
	<b>Appendix 1</b> – Map illustrating the 5 no. green spaces within Woodbourne Environmental Improvement Scheme outlined red.		
	<b>Appendix 2</b> – Lease Map showing lands at River Terrace subject to the Deed of Dedication outlined in red.		
	<b>Appendix 3</b> – Boodles Dam, Ligoniel Park – Land acquisition & disposal - areas shown coloured yellow to be transferred from NIHE & areas shown coloured pink to be transferred from the Council to NIHE.		











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# Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024

#### **Attendance**

Members:

Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Ciaran Beattie
Councillor Brian Smyth
Councillor Christina Black
Councillor Áine Groogan (for Councillor Brian Smyth)
Councillor Sarah Bunting

Apologies: Councillor Séamas de Faoite, Alderman Sonia Copeland, Chief Executive.

#### Officers:

Sharon McNicholl Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services
Jim Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager (for item 1)
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance (for Item 2)
Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources (for Item 3)
Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects (for item 4 & 7)
Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services (for Items 5, 6 & 7)
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

#### 1. Segregation and the Environment

The Neighbourhood Services Manager provided an update on research that was undertaken as part of the Good Relations Action Plan on the links between segregation and its impact on the environment and climate change. He advised that the report had previously been considered by the Shared City Partnership and SP&R Committee and following feedback some revisions had been made. The Neighbourhood Services Manager then outlined the key summary points, the four strategic themes that had emerged from the research and the actions being taken to implement the recommendations within the report. Members noted the next steps to publish and disseminate the report and the report will be circulated to Members following the meeting. In relation to a query raised by a Member it was also agreed to circulate the stakeholder engagement list. Members noted the report would be circulated in confidence at this stage.

#### 2. Finance Update

The Director of Finance presented the Quarter 3 financial position for 2023-24 which would be presented to members at the February SP&R Committee. He outlined for Members the forecasted underspend for year end and noted that no reallocations would be considered until the year end position is presented to SP&R Committee in June 2024. In response to some queries raised by a Member in relation to loss of income outlined and grant allocations the Director provided clarity. He advised that Members would be kept updated as this work progresses.

#### 3. Elected Member Development Programme

The Director of Human Resources provided an update on the Charter Plus Assessment programme of work and outlined the insights and learning Corporate HR had gained from observing another Council Charter Plus assessment panel. She advised that following the recent observation current BCC process had been reviewed and updated and that the new Member Development Strategic Framework would be circulated to Party Group Leaders following the meeting for discussion with their individual parties. Plans for identifying a strategic case study were also outlined. It was also noted that this item would be considered bi-monthly at the Forum going forward given the timelines for assessment had now been extended.

Members also noted the upcoming political management development training for Council Officers and the dates required for Members participation in the training sessions.

#### 4. Installation of Statues in City Hall Grounds

The Director of Property & Projects provided a briefing on the upcoming installation of two Statues in City Hall Grounds. She advised that a report was considered by the City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February which included an update on the status of the manufacture and installation of the statues, the arrangements/date for the installation ceremony and associated evening event and the arrangements for participation at both events. Members also noted an additional request to host a special event after the official ceremony has taken place. The details discussed along with the communications plan will be circulated to Party Group Leaders imminently and it was noted that if Members wished to add anyone to the guest list for either event to forward those names directly to the Director of Property & Projects.

### 5. Illuminate Requests

The City Solicitor outlined for Members a number of illuminate requests received. The City Solicitor advised that a previous request considered by the Forum for which there was no consensus on will be brought to SP&R Committee in February for Members consideration.

Members then noted the following requests would be agreed under the City Solicitors delegated authority.

- Hydrocephalus awareness week 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024
- Global Intergenerational Week 24th April 2024
- Organ Donation Week 2024 23rd September 2024

### 6. Planning Update

The City Solicitor updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in the coming months.

#### 7. AOB

### **Draft Irish Language Policy**

The City Solicitor provided an update on the ongoing work to develop a corporate Irish Language Policy for the Council. She advised that an update had been considered by the Language Strategy Working Group at its February meeting following stakeholder consultation. Members noted the recommendations made by stakeholders following the consultation which have been incorporated into the redrafted policy that will be bought to February SP&R Committee for Members consideration. A query was raised by a Member in relation to consultation with staff going forward, the City Solicitor to further consider for inclusion in the report going to SP&R Committee.

### **Wild Frontier Memorial Project**

The Director of Property and Projects referred to a recent media article in relation to the Wild Frontier Memorial project and a Crowdfunding campaign set up to finance a memorial statue for guitarist Gary Moore in the City. It was noted that Officers will contact the organisers and

explore if the Council could provide any non financial assistance. An update to be brought back to the Forum in due course.

### **Party Group Leaders Study Visit**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services referred to correspondence previously issued to Party Group Leaders on behalf of the Director City Regeneration & Development in relation to a study visit in April. The scope and details of the study visit was previously approved at December CG&R Committee. Members to confirm attendance or provide name of nominee with the Director City Regeneration & Development.

#### **Belfast Stories**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services provided an update for Members on the Belfast Stories project and outlined the contracts for the project now appointed. She also advised that there would be a third contract appointed in the near future. Given the nature of these contracts and the complexities involved it was noted that a specialised resource would be put in place in order to manage these contracts over a fixed period.

Members raised the matter of development of content for Belfast Stories and how the stories would be represented. They emphasised the importance of updates being presented to Members in a timely manner to allow for informed decision making. It was agreed that an update on the governance arrangements which had been put in place to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of each key stage of the project would be brought back to the Forum at a future meeting.

### **Belfast Transport Hub**

A member raised a query in relation to the Belfast Transport Hub and an update to be circulated to the Forum members.

## Agenda Item 8b

### STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Subject:	Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality				
Date:	23 February 2024				
Reporting Officer:  Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services					
Contact Officer: Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager					
Restricted Reports					
Is this report restricted?	Yes No X				
	iption, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of emed this report restricted.				
Insert number					
Information relating to the second seco	to any individual				
•	reveal the identity of an individual				
•	to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the				
4. Information in conne	ection with any labour relations matter				
5. Information in relation	on to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained				
9					
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime					
If Yes, when will the repor	t become unrestricted?				
After Committe	ee Decision				
After Council I	Decision				
Sometime in the future					
Never					
Call-in					
	Vos No X				
le the decision eligible for	r Call-in?				

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	This paper, together with the attached appendix, contains the recommended approach in
	respect of each of the requests by external organisations for access to the City Hall function
	rooms received up to 9 February 2024.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to:
	Approve the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1.
3.0	Main report
	Background Information
3.1	The current criteria for use of the function rooms used to review external applications is
	Functions permitted
	<ul> <li>functions which support other events in the city and which are of demonstrable eco-</li> </ul>
	nomic benefit to Belfast whether organised by the council or not
	functions which demonstrably enhance the city's image nationally or internationally
	as a desirable commercial, business or tourist destination
	functions designed to celebrate or commemorate a notable achievement or signifi-
	cant anniversary (25, 50, 100 years) by an organisation or body with close links to
	the city or province
	functions organised by recognised local community or voluntary sector groups for
	non-profit and non-political purposes
3.2	Functions not permitted
	conferences, meetings, seminars, performances, wedding receptions, private parties
	or receptions and similar booking requests in the prestige function rooms
	functions, which have as their principal purpose the generation of commercial gain
	for the organisers. Charity-fundraising functions are managed by the Lord Mayor's
	Office.
	<ul> <li>functions which have no compelling links to the council or the city specifically and</li> </ul>
	which could instead use local private sector facilities
	functions which have as their primary purpose the advancement of any political or
	religious cause or campaign or are otherwise potentially contentious or involve
	significant reputation risks for the council.
	<ul> <li>functions which involve exceptionally large or disruptive set-ups or pose a real and</li> </ul>
	tangible risk to the fabric of the building or grounds
	Key Issues
3.3	The existing revised criteria and scale of charges have been applied to the various requests

	received and the recommendations herein are offered to the Committee on this basis for
	approval.
3.4	The schedule attached at Appendix 1 covers 13 applications for functions scheduled for
	2024, 2025 and 2026.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.5	None, any recommendations for hospitality will be met from existing budgets.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.6	None.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Schedule of function requests received up to 9 February 2024.



### **FEBRUARY 2024 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS**

NAME OF	FUNCTION	FUNCTION	CRITERIA	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY	CIVIC HQ
ORGANISATION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MET		OFFERED	RECOMMEND
	1	202	4 EVENTS			I
Lagmore Youth Project	21 March 2024	Lagmore Youth Awards to recognise the achievements of local young people through qualifications and development of community in West Belfast Numbers attending — 150C &	C & D	No charge as charity	Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception  £500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival
Roma Support Hub	9 April 2024	Living Library engagement event to celebrate International Roma Day  Numbers attending - 40	D	No charge as charity	No hospitality as Good Relations funding the event	Approve No Charge No hospitality
HERe NI	13 May 2024	Launch of LGBT Awareness Week 2024 showcasing events and projects . Numbers attending – 150C &	C & D	No charge as charity	Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception  £500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival
EALTA – European Association for Language Testing and Assessment	8 June 2024	Reception and dinner for the 2024 EALTA Conference 2024. for guests attending their 6-day conference taking place in Stranmillis University.  Numbers attending - 120	A &B	No charge as charity and linked to Visit Belfast	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Queens University	15 August 2024	EPS Summer School 2024 Finale - Drinks Reception, Awards, Dinner and Entertainment for international students attending a 4-week summer school.  Numbers attending - 120	В	Charge £300	No hospitality	Approve Charge £300 No hospitality
Swim Ulster / Swim Ireland / British Swimming	27 September 2024	European Aquatics Annual Congress 2024 Gala Dinner	В	Charge £825	No hospitality	Approve Charge £825 No hospitality

### **FEBRUARY 2024 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS**

Ulster Journals Ltd	3 October 2024	for guests attending 3-day seminar.  Numbers attending -300  Ulster Tatler Awards 2024  Drinks Reception, Awards, Dinner and entertainment.  Numbers attending -	В	Charge £825	No hospitality	Approve Charge £825 No hospitality
Lanyon Group Event Management	24 October 2024	IFA McDonalds Community Football Awards – Celebrating the volunteers who help deliver their programs – reception, dinner, entertainment and awards.  Numbers attending -	С	Charge £825	No Hospitality	Approve Charge £825 No Hospitality
Children's Kidney Fund NI	30 November 2024	200 Centenary of 74 <sup>th</sup> Scout Group Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Dinner, Speeches and entertainment.  Numbers attending — 200	C & D	No charge as charity	Yes, Wine Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine Reception  £500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival
Belfast Bible College	6 December 2024	Graduation and Reception – reception event to mark the graduation and achievements of the students at the college.  Numbers attending - 150	C & D	No charge as charity	Yes, Tea and coffee reception.	Approve No Charge Tea and Coffee Reception  £500 given to their chosen caterer.
			25 EVENTS			1
Cancer Fund for Children and Cash for Kids	1 March 2025	Cancer Fund Support Group Recognition event to celebrate volunteer's effort to raise £50,000 for Cancer Fund for Children and Cash for Kids Page	c 2 <b>94</b>	No charge as charity and voluntary	Yes, Wine and Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Wine and Soft drinks reception  £500 given to their chosen caterer.

### **FEBRUARY 2024 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS**

Poval Polfast	28 March		D26 EVENTS C & D	No Chargo as	Yes,	Approvo
Royal Belfast Academical Institution 74th Scout Group	28 March 2026	Centenary of 74 <sup>th</sup> Scout Group Anniversary Celebration- Drinks Reception, Dinner, and entertainment.  Numbers attending – 200	CWD	No Charge as charity	Wine and Soft drinks Reception as significant anniversary	Approve No Charge Wine and Soft drinks Reception  £500 given to their chosen caterer for wine on arrival
Northern Ireland Prison Service	26 October 2026	Welcome Reception for Annual Conference of the International Corrections and Prisons Association for guests attending their 3-day conference taking place at ICC.  Numbers attending - 500	А &В	No charge as charity and linked to Visit Belfast	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality



### Agenda Item 8c

### STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE



Subject:	Requests for use of the Council Chamber Debating Competition	for Northern Ireland Schools		
Date:	23 February 2024			
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Dir	ector of Legal and Civic		
	Services	3		
Contact Officer:	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition	Manager		
Restricted Reports				
Is this report restricted?		Yes No X		
	ption, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exeremed this report restricted.	mpt information by virtue of		
Insert number				
Information relating t	o any individual			
2. Information likely to	reveal the identity of an individual			
<ol> <li>Information relating to council holding that in the council holding that in the council holding that it is a second to the council holding.</li> </ol>	to the financial or business affairs of any painformation)	rticular person (including the		
•	ction with any labour relations matter			
	n to which a claim to legal professional priv	ilege could be maintained		
6. Information showing	that the council proposes to (a) to give a note an order or direction	_		
• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	ction in relation to the prevention, investiga	tion or prosecution of crime		
If Yes, when will the repor	t become unrestricted?			
After Committee Decision  After Council Decision  Sometime in the future  Never				
Call-in				
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?				
4.0 Dumana of Domont	(O			

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the application by Belfast Building Trust to:
	use the chamber and function rooms, no room charge applicable due to charity
	status.
	offer tea and coffee hospitality reception.
3.0	Main report
	Key Issues
3.1	Members will be aware that Committee approval is required for the use of the Council
	Chamber by an outside body. Although such approval is rarely sought, the Committee has
	previously approved to use the council chamber for similar events.
	Belfast Building Trust request
3.2	A request has been received from the Belfast Building Trust for the use of the Council
	Chamber on 3 May 2024 for the Grand Final of the Northern Ireland Schools Debating
	Competition.
3.3	The Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition is an annual event, founded by Lord
	Lieutenant Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle in 1993 to encourage mature debate and civic engagement
	amongst young people. Thousands of students have participated in the competition, with over
	80 teams from across Northern Ireland entering annually. Topics range from foreign affairs to
	planning. It is organised as part of the civic charitable work of Belfast Buildings Trust.
3.4	The normal venue for this competition is the Senate Chamber at Stormont but this venue is
	unavailable due to refurbishment. Given the significance of the Competition, it is vital that the
	participants have the opportunity to debate in a true debating chamber, hence the request to
	use the Council Chamber at City Hall.
3.5	Annually two guest judges attend from national political, legal, or media environment;
	Professor John Bew of Kings College London and Gavin Robinson MP have been invited for
	this years debate. Other attendees include the Competition's regular panel of judges, BBT
	Trustees, students, teachers, parents, and other family members.
3.6	The Finals consist of two debates - a Best Individual Speaker Final and the Main Debate
	Final - involving a total of 10 sixth form students. Guest attendance is up to 120 people.
	The Belfast Building Trust have also requested the use of the Reception Room for a judging
	room and Banqueting Hall for refreshments for the guests. Due to the charitable nature of the

	about this event. As the debate takes place in the evening of 3 May 2024 the hosting of this
	debate will not affect daytime delivery of public and private tours of which chamber access is
	integral to the tour route and script.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.8	The Belfast Building Trust are a charity, under the current charging matrix no room hire fee
	will apply. If committee is minded to approve tea and coffee hospitality, monies would be
	provided from existing budget.
3.9	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.9	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment None.
3.9	



### Agenda Item 8d

STRATEGIC POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE



	1					
		Request for use of City Hall grounds – Belfa	ast Photo	Festiv	/al	
Subject:		Photographic Exhibition in June 2024				
Date:		23 February 2024  Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Direction	otor of L	and on	d Civil	
Repor	ting Officer:	Services	CIOI OI LE	gai an	ia Civi	Ĵ
Conta	ct Officer:	Aigling Millikon, Eunstians and Exhibition M	onogor			
Conta	ct Officer.	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition M	anagei			
Restri	cted Reports					
Is this	report restricted?		Yes		No	Х
		ption, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exemement this report restricted.	pt inforn	nation	by vi	rtue of
	. $\Box$					
Insert	number					
1.	Information relating t	to any individual				
	3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the					ng the
4.	council holding that information)					
	,					
	<ul><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a</li></ul>					
0.	person; or (b) to make an order or direction					
7.	Information on any a	action in relation to the prevention, investigation	on or pro	secutio	on of c	rime
If Yes,	when will the repor	t become unrestricted?				
	After Committe	ee Decision				
	After Council I					
	Sometime in the future					
	Never					
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?						
1.0	Purpose of Repor	t or Summary of main Issues				
1.1		est from Belfast Photo Festival for the use of	City Hall	groun	ds on	from 8

been held in the grounds in previous years.

to 28 June 2024 to host a photographic exhibition. This is an annual exhibition which has

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to:
	1. Authorise Belfast Photo Festival to use City Hall grounds from 8 to 28 June 2024 to
	display a photographic exhibition as part of the Belfast Photo Festival.
	2. Authorise the exhibition in line with similar events previously approved by Council.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Background Information
3.1.1	Members will be aware that requests for the use of City Hall are normally dealt with under
	the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using
	criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally however, it is necessary to place such requests
	directly before the Committee, and the request set out below falls into this category.
3.2	Key Issues
3.2.1	A request has recently received from the organiser of the Belfast Photo Festival (BPF) to
	have a photographic exhibition in the grounds of the City Hall from 8 – 28 June 2024.
	The BPF is the visual arts festival of Northern Ireland and one of the leading photography
	festivals in the UK. Launched in 2011 and in 2023 the festival attracted 100,000 visitors
	across 24 city centre venues and is one of the city's major art events.
3.2.2	Each year the city-wide festival includes the grounds of Belfast City Hall as a primary location
	for both photographic exhibitions and other events. Previous exhibits have included the
	DeLorean Print Project in 2015 which proved to be very successful and brought a real
	spectacle to the City Hall lawns. In 2018 the exhibition looked at music & photography, 2020
	exhibition theme "The Man Machine' shows 'speculative fictions' where artificial creatures,
	robots and other avatars interact with man in everyday life scenarios. The 2022 exhibition is
	'Lockdown Collages' by Nico Krinjo and in 2023 the theme was 'Journey', focusing on
	photography's ability to capture and reflect the world around us, from journeys of self-
	discovery, migration and spiritual journeys.
3.2.3	Belfast Photo Festival have provided two exhibition proposals for 2024 Festival and wish to
	seek committee approval for both; however only one proposal will be chosen, and BFF will
	confirm the proposal they which to host in City Hall grounds.
	The theme for 2024 is Divergence and focusing on photography's ability to capture and
	reflect the world around us. BPF 2024 will explore how contemporary photographers are
	responding to and offering reimagining to overcome the profound polarity and divisions
	prevalent in our globalised world.
3.2.4	The proposals are from two contemporary artists.
	<ol> <li>Photo with a teddy bear by Polish artists Barbara Caillot and Aleksandra</li> </ol>
	Karkowska. As an antidote and provocation, during such uncertain times perhaps  Page 302

	we all need a teddy bear to hug? Why are people so eager to take photos with a				
	white bear? What is mythical, magical and universal about it that everyone has a				
	photo with it?				
	The 'Photo with a Teddy Bear' project received the Honorary Partnership of the City				
	of Zakopane and was under the patronage of the Tatra Museum. Dr. Tytus				
	Chałubiński. It will be Barbara Caillot and Aleksandra Karkowska debut in Northern				
	Ireland				
3.2.5	2. Walking Back to Happiness by British Artist Maisie Cousins. The selected work				
	will present a combination of Cousin's close-up and visceral photography, delving				
	into the artist's obsessive search for reliving childhood memories. The exhibition				
	marks an inaugural solo presentation of Cousins' work in Northern Ireland, and				
	'Walking Back to Happiness' series was listed as the Guardian's best photographic				
	exhibitions of 2023.				
	There will be 8 exhibition framework structures installed on the lawns of				
3.2.6					
	Belfast City Hall, weighed down with metal bases and water butts for additional weight				
	and stability. They are a safe, sturdy, stable and accessible form of exhibition structure for				
	all locations and weather conditions and do not need to be affixed or pinned to the ground.				
	.The exhibition would be installed on the West & East Lawn of City Hall grounds on 8 June				
	and dismantled on 28 June 2024. It would be free for members of the public to view daily in				
	line with the opening times of the grounds.				
	Belfast Photo Festival have a dedicated Front of House Team who will be roaming				
3.2.7	throughout their open-air public exhibitions across the city. They will engage with visitors/				
	publics to talk about the work, as well as ensure any maintenance, graffiti or other issues				
	arising.				
	ansing.				
3.2.8	Good Relations and Corporate Communications will review the exhibition images included in				
	the proposal but presently no negative good relations implications identified that should stop				
	the exhibition being hosted at City Hall. A copy of the two exhibition proposals are included				
	in Appendix 1.				
	Financial & Resource Implications				
	There are no direct resource implications in terms of staff time or additional costs				
3.3	associated with this request and hosting of the exhibition.				
	accessated with the request and recting of the combinents				
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment				
2 1	Good Relations will be consulted on this request and the exhibition content, but don't				
3.4	foresee any negative implications.				
4.0	Appendices – Documents attached				
	Page 303				

Appendix 1 - Exhibition Proposal - artwork for two potential exhibitions - only 1 will be
exhibited in the grounds
Appendix 2 – Exhibition site map in City Hall grounds

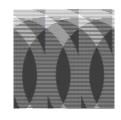
# BELFAST PHOTO FESTIVAL

# PROPOSED ARTWORKS FOR CITY HALL

Page 305

Foto z misiem / Photo with a Teddy Bear

BARBARA CAILLOT & ALEKSANDRA KARKOWSKA















































































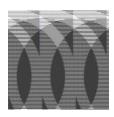


# BELFAST PHOTO FESTIVAL

# PROPOSED ARTWORKS FOR CITY HALL

Walking Back to Happiness

**MAISIE COUSINS** 





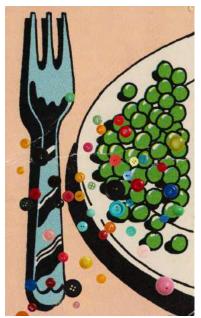














Walking Back to Happiness Series, Maisie Cousins

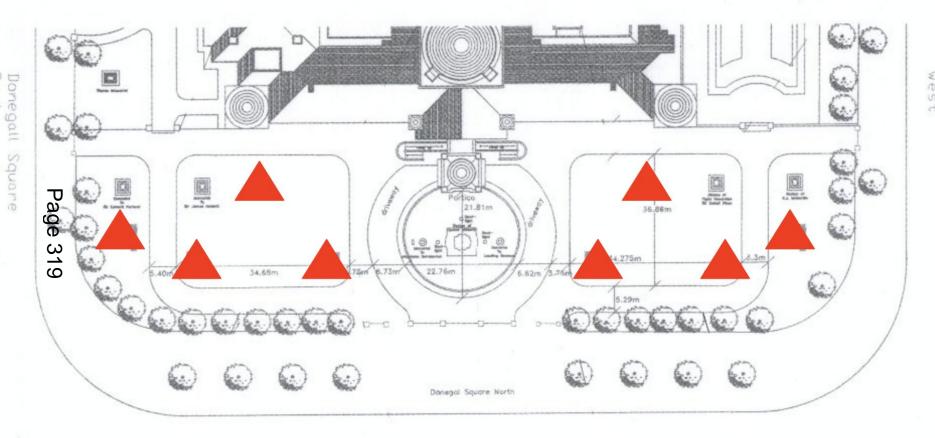


Walking Back to Happiness Series, Maisie Cousins

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## PROPOSED EXHIBITION LAYOUT





Danegall Square North



Number of Display Units = 8 framework displays

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### **Social Policy Working Group**

Tuesday, 13th February, 2024

#### MEETING OF THE SOCIAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Doherty (Chairperson); and

Councillor R. McLaughlin.

In attendance: Ms. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of

Corporate Services;

Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy;

Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources; Ms. N. Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement

Services;

Ms. C. Christy, HR Manager (Development);

Mr. C. Campbell, Divisional Solicitor;

Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti Poverty; Ms. C. Hutchinson, Strategic Planning and Policy Officer; Ms. S. O'Regan, Employability and Skills Manager; Ms. C. Patterson, Policy and Programme Manager,

Inclusive Growth;

Mr. K. Quinn, Employability and Skills Officer;

Ms. M. Robinson, Belfast Business Promise Programme

Co-Ordinator;

Mr. J. Uprichard, Business, Research and Development

Manager; and

Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Copeland and from Councillors McAteer and Smyth.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 14th November, 2023 were approved by the Working Group.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Item Withdrawn from Agenda**

The Committee noted that agenda item 5 - Social Value Procurement Policy/Ethical Framework had been withdrawn from the agenda, as it would instead be considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

### **Actions Update**

The Working Group noted the contents of a report providing information on those actions which were now complete and those which were still ongoing.

### <u>Building an Inclusive Labour Market – Research</u> highlights and proposed next steps

The Employability and Skills Manager submitted for the Working Group's consideration the following report:

### "1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Working Group on research that was recently commissioned on economic inactivity and inclusive labour market issues in Belfast and Northern Ireland and to note next steps on this work.

### 2.0 Recommendations

#### 2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- Note that research recently undertaken by Ulster University Economic Policy Centre (UUEPC) on inclusive labour market issues in Belfast and Northern Ireland
- Note the recent conference on this issue that took place in Ulster University on 22 January 2024
- Note the ongoing engagement with partners across the community and voluntary, statutory and private sectors to maintain momentum and develop shared solutions to effect change in this area of persistent challenge.

### 3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 At the 14 November 2023 meeting of the Social Policy Working Group, officers provided an oral update on a research piece that had recently commenced. The purpose of the research was to build an understanding of the scale and scope of the economic inactivity challenge in Belfast and Northern Ireland, and to begin to identify potential policy responses to this area of persistent challenge.
- 3.2 The research was undertaken by UUEPC. It aimed to provide answers to the questions: 'Economic inactivity: who, what, where and why?'. The research was presented at a

conference in Ulster University's Belfast campus on 22 January 2024. The conference attracted more than 200 representatives across the public, private and statutory sectors. Those in attendance heard from a range of keynote speakers in this field and took part in breakout sessions on issues such as; Future Challenge for Frontline Welfare and Advice; Joining Up the Skills and Employment Services; Resourcing the Solution and Health and Employment Services – Working Together?

- 3.3 This conference was positioned as the start of a conversation on the issue as opposed to trying to resolve all outstanding challenges on the day. Our conference partners NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) have now taken up the mantle and are planning to organise a follow-up event with their members in mid-February 2024, followed by a wider event in the coming months.
- 3.4 While Belfast City Council does not have any statutory remit in this space, the research pointed to the disproportionately large number of economically inactive residents in some parts of the city and the associated social cohesion challenges that this can create. It also identified the need for targeted interventions and specific support to deliver on the council ambitions around inclusive growth.
- 3.5 One key issue that emerged in the discussion is that the term 'economically inactive' is an administrative one that can have pejorative connotations. In our work with employers, we focus our language on finding them talent from sources that have previously been overlooked and that can add value to their business.
- 3.6 An overview of the research is attached, including the presentation that was shared on the day. Key highlights for members' information include:
  - Around 303,000 individuals across the region are categorised as 'economically inactive'. The figure in Belfast is around 70,000
  - Economic inactivity rates vary from council area to council area. Derry City and Strabane has the highest overall levels of inactivity, followed by Belfast
  - The term 'economically inactive' involves a range of categories – all of whom have different needs and therefore require different approaches and support. The main categories are students (sometimes excluded from the figures presented given that they are spending time studying to improve their opportunities to find a job); looking after family and home; sick; retired
  - The most significant changes in the number of economically inactive over recent decades has come

- about as a result of more females joining the labour market. However those figures have plateaued in more recent years
- A much more significant proportion of those who are economically inactive are likely to have no or low skills than those who are in the labour market. The level of demand for low-skilled jobs has decreased over recent decades and looks set to fall further
- Demographic changes (more people retiring early; decreases in population numbers) mean that labour markets will become increasingly tight. This underlines the need to stem the flow of people into economic inactivity (particularly young people) and also to look at new support systems of scale for helping people back towards work. This is likely to mean changes in thinking from an employer perspective (ways of recruiting; flexible terms and conditions etc.) and a changing approach to support services to provide outreach and engagement over a longer-term if required to help people move back or towards the world of work.
- 3.7 The research positioned a number of policy discussions that will require further consideration. These include:
  - Plan for participation: inclusive labour markets are an economic necessity in the wake of labour market shortages and demographic challenges. Business and policy must plan and prepare
  - Greater levels of partnerships: complex multi-layered challenges require co-ordinated cross-departmental, third sector and businesses-led solutions. This will include bringing all ecosystems together to agree on strategic priority groups and required approaches and investing in a shared understanding of the problem, based on evidence
  - Sharing what works: are there effective small-scale interventions that could be scaled up? Are there businesses out there having success with employing people previously inactive, and what can we learn from those?
  - Inclusivity from employers: success will be linked to how well employers can adapt an openness to inclusivity in their workforces (hiring practices, flexibility in roles – part-time, qualifications required for the job). It is clear that this is increasingly important for employees and potential employees when considering a possible place to work
  - Ebbing the flow of people becoming unemployed and economically inactive is vital to reducing the stock – this points to the need for early interventions – preventative approach

- Retaining older workers is critical for maintaining both volume and talent. To do this, employers will need to consider issues such as flexible conditions, hybrid working, reduced hours and part-time working
- Employers will need to invest in supporting well-being in work (early intervention/continual contact with temporary sick, 'right to return', access to occupational health etc).
- Benefit systems: the current system can act as a
  deterrent to people finding work. Research shows that
  a system that encourages participation, where
  individuals are signposted to services if they report a
  desire to work (e.g. job opportunities, upskilling,
  working experience, general labour market support),
  removing fear of loss of benefit would improve
  engagement levels
- Localised/targeted interventions: economic inactivity doesn't impact everyone, everywhere to the same extent. Localised, targeted interventions will be important to support those areas with entrenched concentrations.
- 3.8 Members will be aware that the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) the UK Government fund which replaced EU Structural Funds such as ESF and ERDF has been used to fund 18 organisations that are supporting economically inactive individuals to move towards work. The funding for these projects will end in March 2025. It is therefore critical that the shared conversation on this issue continues throughout this year, in order to identify and resource sustainable solutions that will make a positive impact on this long-standing challenge.

#### 3.9 Financial and Resource Implications

No specific financial or resource implications at this point. This work will be led by the Employability and Skills team within Belfast City Council. Reporting will be through the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

#### 3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment

As the research identifies, some groups are more adversely impacted by this issue than others. Any future funding intervention will have to involve an equality impact assessment."

The Working Group noted the contents of the report.

#### Social Value Procurement Policy - Delivery Report

The Head of Commercial and Procurement Services submitted for the Working Group's consideration the following report:

#### "1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

To update the Social Policy Working Group 'SPWG' on the delivery of social value outcomes via open tender competitions awarded in accordance with the Council's Social Value Procurement Policy 'SVPP'

The report also provides an update on tenders awarded by Property & Projects department where, due to project funding rules, social value has been considered and included in accordance with the CPD Buy Social Model.

At the last SPWG meeting in November 23 Members asked that further consideration is given to the inclusion of social value in STA contract awards. An update on progress regarding this has been provided in section 4.0 of this report.

#### 2.0 Background

The SVPP was approved by Committee in April 22 with a 'Go Live' date of 1st June 2022.

A copy of the SVPP can be found here - <u>Social Value</u> <u>Procurement Policy (belfastcity.gov.uk)</u>

SVPP applied to any new applicable open tender exercises with approval dated from 1st June 22.

To help Officers and suppliers understanding the SVPP and how to apply this to applicable tender competitions, the Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team has developed:

- Online guidance on interlink which takes Officers through key considerations in line with the SVPP. This guidance was developed and communicated to Officers ahead of the 'Go Live' date in June 22.
- A new Supplier Guidance document was launched in September 23 which includes step by step guidance for suppliers in how to offer social value as part of their tender and how their social value offers are evaluated (new innovative approach). This was developed taking on board key learnings since the SVPP was launched in June 22.
- Social value evaluation training based on the new approach developed from September 2023. This is being rolled out during October 23 to January 24.

A link has been provided below to the interlink guidance (within the link you can access the guidance which should open as a Microsoft Sway document)

Social value procurement guidance now available (sharepoint.com)

It is planned the Supplier Guidance will be available on the Councils' website but want to ensure it is fully tested with the suppliers and gather feedback before doing so. Currently available as a PDF document with tenders.

As outlined in the guidance to Officers application of the SVPP is considered in 2 key parts:

<u>Part 1</u> – For all tender competitions valued over £30k, consideration by Officers about whether to:

- 1. Reserve the tender competition to a social enterprise/ VCSE sector taking into consideration levels of market competition in this sector
- 2. Include organisational behaviours (i.e., ethical procurement, environmental and HR policies and procedures) taking into consideration relevance of these policies and procedures to the goods, services or works being purchased and relevance to the market. When selected for inclusion in the tender these social value organisational behaviours are mandatory pass/fail questions for suppliers to demonstrate rather than scored questions.

<u>Part 2</u> – the inclusion of a social value weighting (10% or 15%) and scoring for tenders valued:

- over £250k for tenders pre-April 23
- over £30k for tenders post-April 23

The social value offer made by suppliers using the list of social value initiatives and points is then evaluated and scored with a minimum scoring threshold required to be met.

Note from April 23 for all tender competitions valued over £30k the following be included (in addition to the above in Part 1):

- Payment of the Real Living Wage by suppliers to their employees
- The prohibited use of zero hours contracts by suppliers

The above post April 23 changes will be implemented on a phased approach from April 23 and applied to any new

applicable open tender exercises with approval dated from 1st April 23.

#### **CPD Buy Social Model**

The CPD Buy Social Model is applied where external central government funding of 50% or greater is provided for a capital/works project managed by Property & Projects.

Further information on the CPD Buy Social Model can be found here:

PPN 01/21 - Scoring Social Value | Department of Finance (finance-ni.gov.uk)

#### Social Value - (buysocialni.org)

The CPD Buy Social Model is broadly similar to the Council's SVPP in terms of achieving the social value outcomes. See comparison table set out in Annexe 1 (see below at end of report) which provides an overview of the similarities/differences in key areas.

#### 2.0 Reporting Period

It is intended that this report will be provided every 2 months in line with scheduled SPWG meetings.

This report covers the Reporting Period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 (3 months due to rescheduling of SPWG meetings).

#### 3.0 Main report

Appendix 1 of this report set out details of tenders valued over £30k which have been awarded during the Reporting Period and associated SVPP data/information

Appendix 1 includes:

#### Table 1 - Tenders awarded during Reporting Period

This sets out details of tenders awarded during Reporting Period and whether SVPP was applied or not.

For ease of reporting this shows tenders awarded by Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team and the Property & Projects department.

<u>Table 2 – Summary of key data and findings associated with</u> application of SVPP

This shows a summary of key findings from the tenders set out in Table 1; in particular a summary of the Part 1 SVPP considerations i.e. reserved contracts and social value organisational behaviours.

#### <u>Table 3 - Summary of Supplier's Social Value Offers</u> (<u>Evaluated submissions</u>)

This shows a summary of the tenders that included a social value weighting (10/ 15%) and the social value offers put forward by suppliers for evaluation as explained under Part 2.

A summary of each applicable tender has been set out in the table.

#### **Lessons Learned and Continuous Improvement**

A Social Value Review Team has been established to review how the SVPP is being implemented and any lessons learned that need to be applied following conclusion of tender competitions. Areas the team are currently reviewing include, but not limited to:

- Trends in the use of Reserved Contracts and any further guidance required for Officers on when these should be used
- 2. Trends in the selection of Social Value Organisational Behaviours by Officers when using the Social Value Toolkit and any further guidance required for Officers on when these should be applied
- 3. The quality of social value offers by suppliers (the evaluated submissions) and if further guidance is required in terms of how these are evaluated by Officers. In additional any further guidance required for suppliers to improve their understanding BCC expectations in line with Belfast Agenda aims and associated strategies.

The Social Value Review Team will meet every 2 months in line with scheduled SPWG meetings and the production of this report.

The content/ format of this report will be reviewed with further information included as more social value data becomes available i.e. social value delivery by suppliers using SIB reporting database.

#### 4.0 <u>Including social value in STA contracts</u>

At the last SPWG meeting in November 23 Members asked that further consideration is given to the inclusion of social value in STA contract awards.

Following consideration, it is proposed that the inclusion of social value is considered as part of the current >£30k STA process. This process to include:-

- Social value to be included in all STAs unless sound rationale presented as part of the approvals process i.e. 'Opt out'. Although this rationale will develop over time this may include:
  - Proprietary equipment where the economic balance sits more with the supplier e.g. BCC require Microsoft products whereas Microsoft do not require BCC spend.
  - Urgent requirements
- Rationale for opting out documented and approved on tender initiation request 'TIR' form which includes scrutiny/ challenge by CPS Strategic Category Manager; and approval by Head of CPS, City Solicitor and Chief Officer.

Applying the SVPP to STAs will be broadly similar to a normal competitive procurement with Officers still using the SV Toolkit; however, as STAs are not evaluated the same as a competitive procedure (i.e. with quality, social value and cost % weightings) associated templates, guidance and training for Officers will need to be adapted to suit. CPS will be working on this in the coming weeks.

#### 5.0 Summary

Members of the SPWG are asked to consider the content of this report and provide feedback (positive or negative) on the data/ information contained in this report and how the SVPP is being applied.

This feedback can then be considered by the Social Value Review Team and associated guidance updated for Officers and suppliers when applying the SVPP.

In addition Members are asked to endorse the proposed approach to include social value in STA contracts going forward."

Appendices Appendix 1

Table 1 - Tenders awarded during Reporting Period

Table 2 – Summary of key data and findings associated with application of SVPP

Table 3 - Summary of Supplier's Social Value Offers (Evaluated submissions)

Annexe 1 – Comparison between BCC's SVPP and CPD Buy Social Model

Key Criteria	BCC SVPP Approach	CPD Buy Social Model Approach
Consideration of Reserved Contracts	Mandatory consideration with rationale document for inclusion/exclusion noted in Social Value Toolkit	Mandatory consideration but no further guidance provided about when to reserve.
Social Value Organisational Behaviours	See comparison table below	See comparison table below
Social value weighting	Applied to all applicable tenders valued over £250k (goods, services and work) from June 22 and £30k from April 23.  Social value weighting determined by cost criteria for tender i.e.  If cost criteria is >50% then social value weighting is 10%	Applied to above threshold tenders (applicable Public Contracts Regulations) for services and works. Supplies not included.  For local government this means application to tenders valued above:  £170k (approx.) for services contracts
	If cost criteria is ≤50% then social value weighting is 15%	£4.3m (approx.) for works contracts  Social value weighting 10%, rising to 20% from June 23 (subject to review/ approval)
Minimum Social Value scoring threshold	If 10% social value weighting then minimum 7% out 10% required  If 15% social value weighting then minimum 11% out 15% required  Suppliers who fail to meet this threshold are excluded from award of tender.	Not included
Real Living Wage	Mandatory from April 23	Mandatory requirement
Prohibited use of zero hours contracts	Mandatory from April 23	Not included

#### Social Value Organisational Behaviours comparison

#### **BCC SVPP Approach**

BCC currently include the following requirements as mandatory for all suppliers:

- 1. Compliance with the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- 2. Compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015
- 3. Prompt payment of suppliers/ supply chains

Using the Social Value Toolkit (as explained under Part 1) Officers then consider the inclusion of the following social value organisational behaviours in the tender:

## 1. Ethical Procurement and Fair Treatment of the Supply Chain

Suppliers are to demonstrate they have a procurement policy and/or corporate social responsibility policy which clearly sets out the supplier's commitment to ethical procurement practices and fair treatment of your supply chain including associated training/ communication to staff.

#### 2. Environmental Management Systems

Suppliers are to demonstrate they have an environmental management system in place i.e. ISO14001 or equivalent.

#### 3. Single Use Plastics Policy

Suppliers are to demonstrate they have a single use plastics 'SUP' policy which clearly sets out the supplier's commitment to managing and reducing the use of SUP in their business operations including associated training/communication to staff.

## 4. Donating/ Recycling equipment to the VCSE sector

#### **CPD Buy Social Model Approach**

From the 1 September 2021 the following requirements are mandatory;

- 1. compliance with relevant employment, equality and health and safety law and human rights standards;
- 2. adherence to relevant collective agreements; and
- 3. adoption of fair work practices for all workers engaged in the delivery of the contract.

Suppliers are to demonstrate they have a policy in place which clearly sets out their commitment to supporting the VCSE sector through donating/ recycling equipment (e.g. ICT equipment)

#### 5. Equality and Diversity Policy

Suppliers are to demonstrate they have an equality and diversity policy and/or relevant HR policy which clearly sets out their commitment to equality and diversity in the workplace including associated training/ communication to staff.

### 7. Development, Health and Wellbeing of Employees

Suppliers are to demonstrate their commitment to the development, health and wellbeing of their employees by providing at least 3 of the following points i) to v):

- i) evidence that employees are offered fair and equitable terms of employment including sick pay, holidays, pension and set working hours;
- ii) evidence of having a learning and development policy in place which shows commitment to the personal and career development of your employees;
- iii) evidence of having in place employee appraisal procedures in place including regular employment engagement;
- iv) evidence of offering employees flexible working to support a healthy work life balance i.e. flexible working hours or working from home option;
- v) evidence of having in place policies/ initiatives to support the mental and physical health of your employees e.g. offer employee counselling services or occupation health support service.

The Working Group noted the contents of the report.

#### **Employability Update**

The Director of Human Resources provided the Working Group with an update on the Council's employability activity, this included a summary of the activity this year to date, within the context of the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy:

The Members were reminded that the Council had committed to ring-fencing entry-level posts, where there was a high volume of posts to be filled, and it supported this through the provision of appropriate pre recruitment training programmes to benefit those furthest removed from the labour market.

The Director detailed that, as part of the current recruitment campaign to fill several General Operative vacancies and create a list of reserve candidates, 9 posts (25% of the permanent vacancies) had been ring fenced to candidates eligible to a complete a pre recruitment training programme. Corporate HR had worked with the Employability and Skills team in the Place and Economy Department to deliver the programme to participants nominated by the Council's employability partner, Workforce.

She detailed that the eligibility criteria of the programme was as follows:

- must live in Belfast (except the four nominations ringfenced to disability organisations);
- must meet the employee specification for the job they will be applying for; and
- must have been unemployed or economically inactive for at least 6 months or work less than 16 hours a week.

The programme had been held from 19th to 24th January, it had comprised of classroom-based learning which included guidance on how to complete the application form and two days of work experience on the job. Nine out of 19 nominated participants had completed the programme. She advised that mock interviews were taking place today, 13th February, immediately prior to the proper interviews on 14th and 15th February 2024.

#### Support for agency workers

The Members were advised that, in addition, job application and interview skills training had been offered to all agency workers currently engaged in the General Operative role. A total of 73 had attended the full training course with 2 attending the mock interview element only.

#### Participation in the JobStart Scheme

The Members noted that, following the success of the JobStart Scheme delivered in 2021/22, funding had been made available to the DfC through the Northern Ireland Office's New Deal Funding Initiative for a new JobStart Scheme.

To engage in the programme, the Council must ensure that:

- opportunities offered must not replace existing or planned vacancies or cause existing employees, apprentices or contractors to lose or reduce their employment;
- job opportunities must last for 6 months, with a possible extension to 9 months for those who meet certain criteria;
- job opportunities must pay at least the National Minimum Wage through PAYE; and
- Employers must develop a training plan to assist participants to gain new occupational and employability skills.

#### To participate in the programme the young person must be:

- 16-24 years old and on benefits;
- Be at risk of long-term unemployment or struggling to obtain employment;
- Be currently unemployed; and
- Have been allocated a National Insurance number providing them with "the right to work in NI".

The Director reported that, it was anticipated that 9 JobStart vacancies would be advertised the week commencing 12th February 2024, with a view to making appointments to the scheme to successful candidates in April.

She then provided an overview of the other employability support and outreach delivered since 1st April 2023, as follows:

#### Job fairs and schools/universities support

- Attendance at 10 careers fairs (one targeted at people with disabilities);
- The delivery of 5 mock interview events at schools;
- The delivery of an employability talk for a disability organisation; and
- Noted that attendance at a further 3 careers fairs was scheduled for February and March 2024.

In addition, the Employability and Skills Unit, Place and Economy Department had organised a job fair in the City Hall on 17th January to promote current vacancies across City and Neighbourhood Services and Property and Projects and to promote the benefits of working for the Council. Both Corporate HR and departmental operational staff had also attended. It was noted that this event had been very well attended and it was hoped that it would have an impact on the number of applications received for difficult to fill posts.

The Director also advised that the Council was currently facilitating placements across the Council on an ongoing basis in conjunction with disability organisations, Belfast Metropolitan College, schools and both universities.

The Members were reminded that during May/June 2023, as part of Combined HGV/LGV Driver recruitment, the Council had delivered 2 information sessions at Duncrue for potential applicants which included the opportunity to register for mock interviews. In addition, in September 2023, Corporate HR had engaged with participants at a Place and Economy Transport Academy information session regarding the Council's recruitment process and the benefits of working for Belfast City Council.

The Director thanked the Council's Marketing and Communications Section for the key role it had played in assisting with the promotion and advertising of recruitment opportunities and employability outreach opportunities using a variety of communication channels.

Both Members welcomed the progress made and the impressive recruitment numbers but noted that there was likely to be a high turnover in these roles.

Following a query regarding the timescale for the introduction of apprenticeship scheme, the Director advised that a report on this matter was scheduled to be submitted to the February meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

The Working Group noted the update provided.

#### **Belfast Business Promise Update**

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Belfast Business Promise Programme Co-Ordinator provided the Working Group with an update on Belfast Business Promise, which included the next steps for the Initiative, as follows:

- A Soft Launch and Celebration event to be held on 11th April 2024, with the Lord Mayor and Chairperson of the SPWG, Councillor Doherty, in attendance;
- Third Technical Panel (March 2024), with quarterly panels scheduled for 2024/25, including P3: Protect our environment;
- To provide support for P3: Protect our environment;
- Programme of Promise Learning Days to be developed for 2024/25;
- Recruitment of E&BG Officer;
- Comms plan currently to be developed for 2024/25;
- Further development of the website to enhance visibility / share resources across BBP Network;
- Business engagement ongoing; and
- Presence at partner events to continue Future Flexible 2024.

The Working Group noted the update provided.

#### **Inclusive Growth Index and Toolkit (Verbal Update)**

The Strategic Planning and Policy Officer provided the Working Group with a verbal update on the plans for piloting the draft Inclusive Growth Toolkit over the next 2 to 3 months, along with details regarding the proposed next steps regarding the further development of the Inclusive Growth Index.

She advised that the suggested pilots included:

- Belfast Stories;
- Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility;
- Sustainable Food, focusing on food poverty;
- A community based pilot to be agreed with City and Neighbourhood Services officers; and
- A pilot to be agreed with an Inclusive Innovation focus.

She explained that the next stage of the development of the Index was to assign the scoring and weighting mechanism and then build the dashboard. A meeting had been held with Digital Services to agree timescales and to ensure alignment with other corporate frameworks.

The officer concluded by advising that the Toolkit, once tested and amended, would be supported by a capacity building programme for officers to further embed its use across the Council. The aspiration was to share the Toolkit and Index with the Council's other partners to encourage them to adopt similar practices.

The Working Group noted the update provided.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group noted that its next scheduled meeting was 16th April, 2024.



# City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group

Thursday, 8th February, 2024

### THE CITY HALL/CITY HALL GROUNDS INSTALLATIONS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

#### HYBRID MEETING IN THE CONOR ROOM

Members present: Councillor Beattie (Chairperson);

Alderman Lawlor; and

Councillors Flynn and Murray.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;

Ms. K. Mullen, Client Manager;

Mr. M. Doherty, Programme Delivery Manager; and Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

(Councillor Flynn in the Chair)

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 11th October, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

(Councillor Beattie in the Chair)

#### City Hall Statues

The Working Group was updated on the proposed events to mark the installations of the two new statues of Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken scheduled to take place on Friday, 8th March 2024 – International Women's Day.

The Client Manager highlighted that Members of the Working Group had visited the Foundry, in Dublin, on Tuesday, 30th January 2024 to meet with the artist (Ralf Sander) and view the work which had been completed to date. She advised that works were progressing well and pointed out that bases for the plinths had recently been installed in the City Hall grounds.

She reminded the Working Group that the Council, at its meeting on 1st February, had agreed to give delegated authority to agree the text for the statues to officers in consultation with Party Leaders and the Members of the Working Group. She provided an overview of what had been agreed to date.

The Director pointed out that Members should not share information about the events at this stage, in particular, she advised that Members should not post any images of the statues on social media in order that both pieces would be seen for the first time on the day of the unveiling. The Client Manager highlighted that officers were engaging with Corporate Communications in order to put in place a supporting communications plan for both events. Plans included the publication of a booklet which would be given out at both events, a shortened version of which would be published on the Council's website and accessed through a QR code on the statue.

The Client Manager summarised the proposals for the public unveiling ceremony and the ticketed panel event.

During discussion, the Working Group and the Director thanked the team for their hard work and dedication. The Client Manager explained further the speaker list for the unveiling and guest list for the events.

The Director also advised that a request had been received from ICTU to host a special event for trade union activist and leaders to provide an opportunity for union representatives to view both pieces, take some photographs, and meet Elected Members. In addition, ICTU would be keen to engage with Officers around future programming opportunities.

The Programme Delivery Manager also advised that a condition survey and cleaning of the other statues within the City Hall grounds was scheduled to take place before the 8th March.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- Noted the current status of the manufacture and installation of the City Hall statues: Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken;
- Agreed to the arrangements for the unveiling ceremony and associated evening events;
- Noted that further updates and a draft guest list for the unveiling ceremony would be shared with the Working Group; and
- Agreed to host a special event/visit for female trade union activists and leaders.

#### **Belfast Blitz Memorial - City Hall**

The Working Group were reminded that, at its meeting on 11th October 2023, it had agreed, which had subsequently been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 20th October, 2023, to progress the installation of a permanent memorial to all of the Fire Service efforts during the Belfast Blitz and move it to Stage 2 (uncommitted) on the capital programme.

The Client Manager advised that officers had attended a meeting in Dublin on 30th January, 2024 with a representative of the Fire Brigade Union. In addition, there had been early engagement with a foundry which had provided a very early stage estimate of potential cost for design, manufacture and installation in City Hall.

She described the design and making process of the pieces, together with the potential location. The Client Manager requested authority to seek quotations for the piece in order to provide a pre-tender estimate figure for Members' consideration with a view to moving the project to the next stage on the capital programme – Stage 3 (Committed).

She informed the Working Group that a request had also been received to incorporate the Women's Voluntary Service cap, as the women of the WVS were responsible for caring for those who were evacuated and displaced by bombs during the Blitz.

#### The Working Group:

- Granted approval for officers to seek quotations for the Belfast Blitz Memorial City Hall in order to determine a pre-tender estimate figure with a view to moving the project to the next stage on the capital programme, namely, Stage 3 (Committed); and
- Agreed to the inclusion of the Women's Voluntary Service cap alongside the Fire Service helmets.



## City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group

Wednesday, 14th February, 2024

### THE CITY HALL/CITY HALL GROUNDS INSTALLATIONS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

#### REMOTE MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Beattie (Chairperson);

Councillors de Faoite and Flynn.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of

Legal and Civic Services;

Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;

Ms. K. Mullen, Client Manager;

Ms. P. Donnelly, Marketing and Communications

Coordinator; and

Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declaration of Interest were reported.

#### <u>City Hall Statues –</u> Communication/Restricted Information discussion

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 8th February, it had been requested that Members should not share information relating to the Mary Ann McCracken and Winifred Carney Statues, in particular, that Members should not post any images of the statues on social media in order that both pieces would be seen for the first time on the day of the unveiling. The Working Group was reminded that it had also been highlighted that officers were engaging with Corporate Communications to prepare a supporting communications plan for the events.

The Chairperson drew the Members' attention to a post which had been published on social media by a Member of the Council on 9th February which specified details of the unveiling events.

The Director of Property and Projects pointed out that the event date was in the public domain as it had been published under the item "Physical Programme Update" as part of the Strategic Policy and Resources agenda on 19th January. She also confirmed that the invitations for the events and communications plan would be finalised soon.

A Member highlighted that a Motion would be considered by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting in February in relation to 'Transparency by default' which proposed clarification on the restriction of documentation and the need for further guidelines on the matter.

The Working Group agreed that the City Solicitor would submit a report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to provide further clarification on the issues raised.

### **Language Strategy Working Group**

Friday, 26th January, 2024

### LANGUAGE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP MINUTES HELD IN PERSON AND REMOTELY

Members present: Alderman Rodgers; and

Councillors Walsh (Chairperson) and Groogan.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and

Civic Services;

Mr. C. McGuigan, Irish Language Officer; Mr. M. Johnston, Language Officer;

Ms. J. Beck, Sign Language Interpreter; and Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 1st September, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### Verbal update on Language Strategy Action Plan Consultation

The Irish Language Officer advised the Working Group that officers had spent a considerable amount of time constructing the Action Plan and that they had consulted with numerous sections within the Council, as well as benchmarking it against other Councils in terms of best practice. The Members were reminded that the consultation period had lasted for 14 weeks and, as part of that, a number of events had been held online as well as a number of focus groups with the Disability Stakeholder Forum, the Irish Language Stakeholder Forum and the Ulster-Scots Stakeholder Forum. The City Solicitor added that the Migrant Forum had also been consulted in respect of its thoughts on the Language Action Plan.

The Irish Language Officer explained that a number of very detailed responses had been received in response to the Action Plan and that officers would collate the information over the next few weeks and present their recommendations to the Working Group in due course.

A Member sought clarification regarding the Council's use of computer-assisted translation tools and suggested that a policy should perhaps be developed regarding the use of such software. In response, the City Solicitor confirmed that she was aware of concerns which had been raised regarding the Irish signage within one of the Council's Leisure Centres. She stated that she was satisfied that the Council engaged accredited translators, who had been appointed following a formal process, and that there was no onus on them to use software. She advised the Members that the issue was also likely to be raised by stakeholders during the course of the consultation period and that she was content to raise the issue with them, in terms of best practice regarding translation services.

In response to a request from the City Solicitor, the Working Group agreed to meet the following month in order to consider the feedback from the consultation exercise.

Noted.

#### **Draft Irish Language Policy**

The City Solicitor reminded the Working Group that it had been presented with an earlier draft of the Irish Language Policy in September, 2022. At that time, the Working Group had been broadly content but had requested further detail on the proposals within it.

The City Solicitor reported that the draft policy had since been subject to redrafting, with the actions in the policy having been benchmarked against the Councils' policies, similar policies in Wales and in the Republic of Ireland, and the contents of the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan.

She outlined the main aspects of the Policy to the Working Group.

The Working Group was advised that any Irish Language Policy adopted by the Council would be subject to a review after two years but would also be subject to revision in light of any relevant legislation or guidance from an Irish Language Commissioner.

The City Solicitor reminded the Working Group that work was also ongoing in respect of an Ulster-Scots Policy but that, given that the ask from those stakeholders was different, it was likely to be focused more so on culture and heritage, and less so on language.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the updated draft Irish Language Policy and agreed that officers would proceed with the informal consultation with stakeholders, noting that a further meeting of the Working Group would be held in a fortnight to discuss the outcomes.

### **Language Strategy Working Group**

Friday, 9th February, 2024

### LANGUAGE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP MINUTES HELD IN PERSON AND REMOTELY

Members present: Councillor Walsh (Chairperson); and

Councillors Brooks, Groogan and Long.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and

Civic Services;

Mr. C. McGuigan, Irish Language Officer; Mr. M. Johnston, Language Officer;

Ms. J. Beck, Sign Language Interpreter; and Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

#### <u>Draft Irish Language Policy - Update on</u> Feedback from Stakeholders Forum

The City Solicitor reminded the Working Group that, at its meeting on 26th January, 2024, it had considered an updated draft Irish Language Policy. The Working Group had agreed that the draft Policy should be presented to the Irish Language Stakeholders' Forum for discussion at its meeting on 1st February, 2024.

She reported that it had not yet been possible to meet with Foras na Gaeilge but that a meeting was scheduled to take place on 13th February, 2024.

The Irish Language Officer provided the Working Group with an overview of the feedback from the Stakeholders' Forum in relation to the draft Policy and outlined the changes which had been incorporated into it as a result. The Members were advised that the changes related to the removal of some ambiguous language, changes to the commitments in relation to media and communications to allow for Irish Language content to be issued in relation to events not solely relating to Irish, and changes in relation to the erection of bilingual signage at facilities outside the Gaeltacht Quarter in an agreed manner.

The City Solicitor advised the Working Group that the creation of Irish language forms on the Council website had been raised by stakeholders and that she had been advised that that would require significant back office work to be undertaken.

The Members' attention was drawn to a written submission which had been received which raised concerns regarding the issue of translation standards and how the development of standards would impact Irish language signage in Council facilities. A number of Members acknowledged that, as long as the translations were not wrong, and given that there were a number of ways of translating certain phrases from English into Irish, that the visibility of the language was key.

In response to a Member's question, the Irish Language Officer advised the Working Group that around 100 responses had been received in relation to the Action Plan, a number of which were incredibly detailed. He advised the Members that a report on the responses would be submitted to a future meeting of the Working Group.

The Member further stated that he felt that the Policy should be City-wide and, rather than using the Gaeltacht area, using the Census figures in relation to the percentage of "some ability in Irish" would be the fairest way to determine which areas would be prioritised for the Categorisation of Council Facilities Signage.

Contrary to the suggestion of Conradh na Gaeilge, the Member stated that, as English was the predominant language spoken in the City, it should be placed first in the proposed bilingual Council logo. A number of Members agreed that whether Irish was first or second was not an issue and that the visibility of the Irish language was what was important.

The Stakeholders were advised that any Irish Language Policy adopted by the Council would be subject to a review after two years but would also be subject to revision in light of any relevant legislation or guidance from an Irish Language Commissioner.

In response to a Member's suggestion, the Working Group agreed that a realistic timeframe for the proposed Action Plan would be welcomed, given the significant finance and resources which would be required to deliver certain aspects within it, as well as to manage expectations. The City Solicitor agreed to highlight that request to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

A Member stated that they had some concerns regarding the costs associated with some of the actions proposed within the draft Policy and Action Plan. She stated that Ulster-Scots was more widely spoken than Irish, within the Titanic DEA, for example. She added that she wanted to see progress in relation to the promotion and use of British Sign Language and Makaton throughout Council facilities.

After discussion, the Working Group was reminded that the Draft Irish Language Policy would be subject to a Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment. The Draft Policy would then be subject to a 12-week public consultation.

The Working Group noted the informal consultation responses which had been received and agreed that the draft Irish Language Policy be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for its consideration, in conjunction with the Working Group's comments.

# All-Party Working Group on the City Centre

Wednesday, 17th January, 2024

#### MEETING OF THE ALL-PARTY WORKING GROUP ON THE CITY CENTRE

Members present: Councillor de Faoite (Chairperson);

Alderman McCullough; and

Councillors Groogan, Long and Maskey.

In attendance: Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and

Development;

Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development; Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;

Ms. D. Kelly, Programme Manager;

Mr. J. Uprichard, Business Research and Development

Manager;

Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager; and

Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 1st December, 2023 were agreed.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

#### **Presentation - Purple Flag Steering Group**

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. Eimear McCracken, Operations Manager Belfast One BID, and Mr. Chris McCracken, Managing Director LQ BID, to the meeting.

Ms. McCracken commenced by providing an overview of the Purple Flag Initiative. She advised that Purple Flag was an international accreditation programme which aimed to recognise those cities that achieved excellence in their night-time economies. It strived to help create safe and thriving locations at night for all users, by looking at an area in terms of the following themes - wellbeing, place, appeal, movement and policy.

The Association of Town City Centre Management (ATCM) aimed to support those who manage high streets, town centres and city centres across the UK and Ireland. The representative detailed that towns participating in Purple Flag, included Derry/Londonderry, Omagh, Enniskillen, Newry, Sligo, Carrick on Shannon, Dublin, Drogheda, Waterford, Cork and Kerry. More information was available via the ATCM website <a href="here">here</a>

Ms. McCracken explained that the Belfast Purple Flag Steering Group comprised of the following stakeholders:

- Belfast One BID:
- Linen Quarter BID;
- Destination CQ Bid;
- Belfast City Council;
- Belfast Chamber of Trade and Commerce;
- PSNI;
- SOS Bus;
- Value Cabs;
- Hospitality Ulster; and
- Translink.

She drew the Members' attention to a map of the Belfast Purple Flag Area, which comprised of Belfast One, The Linen Quarter and Destination Cathedral Quarter.

She explained that the recent application had focused on addressing the 5 key themes of wellbeing, place, appeal, movement and policy and was informed by a range of issues identified as part of an assessment of the Night Time Economy in September 2023. An accompanying KPI document had looked at key statistics, including night-time footfall, crime statistics, alcohol and drug related hospital admissions and data from a public perception survey. She explained that Belfast's Status was jointly funded by the 3 BIDs and that renewal to the scheme was required every 2 years.

In terms of the current Purple Flag Status, the Members were reminded that a successful initial application had been made in 2019 when Purple Flag status had been granted in 2020, unfortunately, as a result of the COVID pandemic and the challenges that it had presented, the Steering Group had been unable to fully utilise the opportunity that the accreditation presented, however, it had continued to meet regularly. In 2023 an application was made to renew Belfast's Purple Flag status with an external showcase night having been held in November 2023, she then provided an overview of the work that the Steering Group had undertaken with its various stakeholders to promote the night-time economy of Belfast.

The Working Group was advised that the outcome of the application and the assessor feedback was due on 30th January. Once this had been received it would be circulated to the Purple Flag Steering Group and any feedback and recommendations would then be discussed by the Group which would formulate its 'action plan' going forward. She advised that the Steering Group continued to meet quarterly to review and progress any actions and highlighted that the 3 BIDSs were planning to fund a piece of research into the value of the night-time economy in Belfast.

The Chairperson stated that he would like to see further engagement with the various stakeholders regarding the proposed research into the value of the night-time economy in Belfast but it was suggested that this would be better undertaken following the receipt of the feedback and recommendations from the application process. Ms. McCracken concurred and advised that the Purple Flag Steering Group already had a rolling action plan, and any key points raised would be fed into this prior to any roundtable discussions.

The Chairperson referred to a previous notice of motion made on appointing a night Czar for Belfast to champion Belfast's night-time economy and expressed concern at the time taken to consider this notice of motion.

The Members then discussed the importance of regular night-time public transport to support the night-time economy. It was noted that 6 bus routes had been identified by the BIDS as potential pilot scheme but that there was a funding gap of £150,000.00 per annum in making this deliverable. The representative advised that funding options were being explored, both from the private and public sector, to try and get agreement to progress a 2-year pilot.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their informative presentation and stated that he looked forward to seeing the results from the application process.

The Working Group agreed that officers would investigate an alternative style Night Time Economy roundtable event with the various stakeholders once the feedback from the application process had been fed into the current Purple Flag Steering Group Action Plan.

Noted.

#### **Future City Centre Programme Dashboard**

The Business Research and Development Manager drew the Members' attention to a draft of the Future City Centre Programme Performance Dashboard which provided a comprehensive analysis of 13 key indicators, including footfall, dwell time, catchment area, vacancy levels and tourism spend. It also provided information on performance measures and secondary indicators for the previously agreed Future City Centre 5 pillars, which reflected the impact of Council and wider public and private sector activity and interventions which ultimately contributed overall to the strategic indicators.

The Members noted the volume of positive information contained within the dashboard, particularly in respect of city centre activity overall, as well as improvements to cleanliness and safety, given that recently there had also been certain negative news. It was agreed that it was important that this information was shared via the Council's social media platforms and also with the Members.

The Members also discussed the City Centre Footfall over the Christmas period which had exceeded that seen in 2022 throughout most of the pre-Christmas period and discussed the fact that the Christmas Market was a powerful magnet which drew many people from outside of Belfast to the City over the Christmas period.

The Working Group noted the dashboard.

#### **Site Visit**

The Working Group agreed to convene a site visit to Riddel's Warehouse on Ann Street.

