

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

21st May, 2024

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

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall on Friday, 24th May, 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) City Centre Regeneration Scheme
- (b) Organisational Reviews and Change Programme (Pages 1 - 8)
- (c) Pay and Grading Review (Pages 9 - 16)
- (d) Living With Water Programme Update (Pages 17 - 34)
- (e) North Foreshore - Giant's Park Belfast Limited Leisure Led Development Update (Pages 35 - 40)
- (f) City Hall Income Generation Proposals (To Follow)

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

- (a) Motion - Plant based Councils Initiative - referred from Standards and Business (Pages 41 - 44)
- (b) Report - Response received from Translink re NOM - Bilingual Signage at Weavers Cross (Pages 45 - 48)

4. **Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

- (a) Belfast Region City Deal – update (Pages 49 - 60)
- (b) Smart Belfast: Immersive technology initiatives (Pages 61 - 64)
- (c) Culture Night (To Follow)
- (d) Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership Event - Funding Agreement (Pages 65 - 68)
- (e) Inclusive Growth - Belfast Business Promise (Pages 69 - 78)

5. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

- (a) Assets Management
- (b) Area Working Groups Update (Pages 79 - 82)

6. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

- (a) Contracts Update (Pages 83 - 92)
- (b) Commercial and Procurement Services Social Value Working Group update (Pages 93 - 108)

7. **Equality and Good Relations**

- (a) Draft Language Strategy Action Plan (Pages 109 - 130)
- (b) Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 13th May 2024 (Pages 131 - 172)
- (c) Equality and Diversity: Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Quarter 4 2023-24 (Pages 173 - 180)
- (d) Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 - DAERA Annual Monitoring Report (Pages 181 - 188)

8. **Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 189 - 194)
- (b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality
- (c) Minutes of the Language Strategy Working Group- 16.05.24 (Pages 195 - 196)

- (d) Minutes of the Disability Working Group - 9.05.24 (Pages 197 - 200)
- (e) Minutes of Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group - 13.05.24 (Pages 201 - 206)
- (f) Minutes of the Social Policy Working Group - 14.05.24 (Pages 207 - 212)

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

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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Plant Based Councils Initiative</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th May, 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to Plant Based Councils Initiative, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 30th April.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
	<p>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.</p> <p>At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that, if agreed, a subsequent report will be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 30th April, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 7th May:</p> <p><b><u>Plant Based Councils Initiative</u></b></p> <p>Belfast City Council endorses the plant based councils initiative.</p> <p>The Council therefore;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agrees to engage with the Plant Based Councils initiative and to commit to fully plant-based procurement where food is served throughout the council estate, prioritising seasonal local produce to support local farmers, and ensure that there are plant-based food options available at all City Council run events, as well as prioritising plant-based menu options in Council run facilities.</li> </ul> <p>Proposer: Councillor Anthony Flynn</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Brian Smyth</p>
3.2	<p>The motion calls upon the Council to support Plant Based Councils Initiative through a number of actions. Members will be aware that the provision of hospitality is through a number of catering contracts which may not currently provide for plant-based catering. Committing to this may also require additional expenditure for a number of departments which provide catering at Council events and facilities. As such, this Notice of Motion will be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p>

3.3	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b> 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	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> 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	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None

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<b>Subject:</b>	Response received from Translink re Bilingual Signage at Weavers Cross
<b>Date:</b>	24th May, 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
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After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To note the correspondence received from Translink.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the correspondence as set out in the report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The Committee will recall that, at the Standards and Business Committee meeting held on 28th March, 2024, it was agreed to write to Translink advising them of a Notice of Motion in connection with bilingual signage at Weavers Cross.
3.2	The Committee is advised that a response has been received from Mr. Chris Conway, Group Chief Executive of Translink.
3.3	In his response he advises that Translink acknowledges the motion and further acknowledges the importance placed on matters of language by all sections of the community.
3.4	He states further that it is important Translink reach out to engage with all relevant communities and stakeholders. Translink is currently planning a series of meetings with a range of interested parties during the coming weeks, where they will listen carefully to all viewpoints and will consider a response once this process has been completed.
3.5	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>  None associated with this report.
3.6	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>  None associated with this report.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – Response from Mr. Chris Conway, Group Chief Executive of Translink.



7 May 2024

Sara Steele  
Democratic Services Officer  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
Belfast City Council

Email: [steelesara@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:steelesara@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Dear Mrs Steele

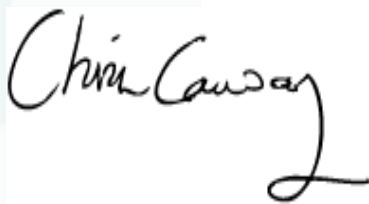
**Notice of Motion – Bilingual Signage at Weavers Cross**

Thank you for your letter of 17 April 2024 in relation to the Notice of Motion passed by the Standards and Business Committee in connection with bilingual signage at Weavers Cross.

Translink acknowledges the motion, and we further acknowledge the importance placed on matters of language by all sections of the community.

It is important we reach out to engage with all relevant communities and stakeholders. We are currently planning a series of meetings with a range of interested parties during the coming weeks, where we will listen carefully to all viewpoints, and will consider a response once this process has completed.

Yours sincerely



Chris Conway  
Group Chief Executive

[www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk)

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<b>Subject:</b>	Belfast Region City Deal – update
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl, Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
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<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	This report is to provide an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the progress on project development and delivery across the pillars of investment.</li> <li>• Note the update in relation to the Annual report and Annual Conversation.</li> <li>• Note the update in respect of programme communication and the BRCD Council Panel</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	Significant progress has been seen now that the BRCD is fully into delivery, with the most advanced projects recruiting and upskilling staff, constructing new premises, co-designing projects with industry, procuring next generation technology and equipment and moving fully into operation in 2024, 2025 and 2026.
3.2	To date a total of 15 Outline Business Cases (OBC's) have been approved with a combined approximate project value of £660m and 10 Contracts for Funding have been signed for projects with an approximate value of £505m. To date over £5m of claims have been paid to individual projects.
3.3	Also following significant local market engagement local businesses have been awarded contracts to support delivery of the BRCD. For example Henry Brothers were recently appointed to deliver a significant contract for the Queen's University led Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) and the aim this year as outlined in BRCD's first annual report is to have awarded 15 major contracts for design, support for delivery and construction.
	<p><b>Progress across BRCD Pillars since previous update in January</b></p> <p><b>Innovation</b></p>
3.4	Innovation has seen a number of key milestones since the last update with the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre ( <b>AMIC</b> ) receiving Full Business Case (FBC) approval in early March and with construction works commencing on site at Global Point in Newtownabbey on 25 <sup>th</sup> March. A significant recruitment drive is also underway with 21 new roles advertised including senior engineers and roles relating to sustainable manufacturing.
3.5	<b>Studio Ulster</b> also received FBC approval in March and is well on course to open fully for business this Autumn, leading the way in creative industries. The construction of the Studio Ulster facility at Giant's Park in North Belfast is due for completion in July. A recruitment drive is also underway for the project. The procurement process in relation to specialist virtual production equipment has also been completed.

3.6	<b>iREACH Health</b> received planning approval in March, full planning permission was granted for the erection of four and five storey clinical research buildings on either side of the Lisburn Road replacing the existing Russell court buildings currently at the site. The FBC has been significantly drafted and formal submission is anticipated in June ahead of construction commencing in Autumn.
3.7	In relation to <b>Momentum One Zero</b> , the planning application has been formally submitted and Stage 4 Detailed Designs are progressing well.
3.8	The <b>CDHT OBC2</b> was submitted to Government partners by Ulster University and following detailed review has now successfully received DoF Supply approval. The drafting of the Contract for Funding is now well underway, following legal consideration of Subsidy Control.
	<b>Digital</b>
3.9	The <b>Digital Twin Centre</b> project led by Digital Catapult signed its Contract for Funding at the end of March and a formal launch has now taken place. The City Deal is funding £15m towards the project, with £15m of funding from Innovate UK and an additional £7.6m from industry partners. Digital Catapult are seeking rental accommodation within Belfast and a significant recruitment drive is underway.
3.10	The <b>Augment the City Challenge Fund</b> opened in April 2024 for applications from local SMEs who wish to explore the future role of immersive technologies in visitor experiences, with the ability to utilise and exploit the benefits of 5G technology – with learnings for Belfast Stories and all tourism & regeneration projects across the Deal. A separate report on the Smart Cities innovation programme which includes a detailed update on the fund is also on the agenda for Members consideration.
3.11	The <b>i4c Cleantech Centre</b> at St Patrick's Barracks, led by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council, is progressing procurements for a centre operator and progressing detailed designs for the facility.
3.12	An OBC for the <b>AND Innovation Hub</b> , an innovation centre based in Holywood, focused on the creative industries and led by Ards & North Down Borough Council, which will utilise £8.9m of City Deal funding has been formally submitted to Government partners for consideration. Discussions are underway to maximise integration with Studio Ulster and South Eastern Regional College.

	<b>Tourism and Regeneration</b>
3.13	<p>As reported previously Contracts for Funding are in place for the Carrickfergus, Newry City Centre and Bangor Waterfront regeneration projects. Newry are now progressing with the procurement of contractors, Carrickfergus are developing RIBA 2 designs and Bangor Waterfront have progressed the appointment of the design teams for Ballyholme Yacht Club and Pickie Fun Park.</p>
3.14	<p>The Tourism projects have also seen significant progress since the last update in relation to Contracts for Funding.</p>
3.15	<p>The contract for funding for <b>Mourne Mountain Gateway Project</b> has now been approved through Newry Mourne &amp; Down District Council governance arrangements. Approval for the OBC addendum from the Department of Finance has also been received meaning the contract can now proceed to signing, which is a significant milestone for this project. Procurement of design team is also reaching final stages of approval, with design team expected to be appointed this month.</p>
3.16	<p>The <b>Gobbins Phase 2</b> contract for funding has now been signed. The design team procurement has concluded and the design team has been formally appointed.</p>
3.17	<p><b>Destination Royal Hillsborough</b> has received final Council and Historic Royal Palaces approval for the Contract for Funding and will now progress to signing. Procurement of the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Historic Royal Palaces design teams have commenced with first appointments expected in the summer. Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council have continued to engage with a number of statutory bodies to progress the planning application for the public realm.</p>
3.18	<p>A detailed report on the progress to date on <b>Belfast Stories</b> was considered by Members in March 2024. The RIBA 1 stage has completed and development on the Stage 2 concept designs for both the visitor experience and the build has now commenced.</p>
3.19	<p><b>Subsidy Control</b></p> <p>In line with the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act, the subsidy assessments for Mourne Gateway and Gobbins, were referred to the Competition and Markets Authority, which concluded that a well reasoned case for the subsidies had been made. The PMO continue to work closely with projects and Government Departments and take appropriate professional advice to ensure that the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act are fulfilled.</p>

	<b>Infrastructure</b>
3.20	Feasibility studies are being completed <b>Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2</b> on the extensions to Glengormley and Carryduff as requested by the last Minister. Following completion of these studies the OBC will be updated.
3.21	The OBC Addendum for <b>Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge</b> has now received approval from the Department for Finance. Approval is now being sought from the Minister to progress to procurement of the design and build contractor.
3.22	The minister has reaffirmed the previous decision that the preferred option for the bridge on the <b>Newry Southern Relief Road</b> is a non-opening 50m fixed bridge and work is proceeding to finalise Statutory Orders
	<b>Employability and Skills (E&amp;S)</b>
3.23	Work has been progressing on the cross deal skills assessments in order to align the plans of partners, industry and government to meet the needs of the high-quality jobs that will be created through BRCD investments. The first assessment focusing on construction opportunities has already informed recommendations for BRCD partners and other stakeholders. Since the last update the advanced manufacturing assessment has now been completed and the Creative Industries (Virtual Production) assessment is at an advanced stage of preparation. A digital skills assessment has also commenced and work is ongoing.
3.24	The £7.5m <b>Digital Transformation Flexible Fund</b> is a cross-Deal project, funded by the NI Complementary Fund and offers eligible businesses and social enterprises help to fund their digital transformation project. The DTFF grants are worth between £5,000 and £20,000 and are designed to help small and micro businesses accelerate their digital transformation ambitions. Demand has been strong as the project progresses through its second call for applications.
	<b>Annual Report 2023/24</b>
3.25	As previously reported the agreed reporting arrangements for all City and Growth Deals requires the production of an Annual Report and the requirement to meet with the Northern Ireland Delivery Board in order to discuss deal progress as part of an 'Annual Conversation'.
3.26	The annual report for 2023/24 is currently being compiled by the Programme management office who have been actively engaging with partners on project specifics where required in

	<p>advance of consideration of by the Executive Board in June and by partners through their own governance structures.</p> <p><b>Communications &amp; Engagement</b></p>
3.27	<p>Partners held their first Industry Engagement breakfast event, at Belfast City Hall on 29 February 2024. The session set the Deal in its wider political and economic context, offered greater visibility of the full programme of investment and outlined the significant opportunities being created for local businesses. Attended by a diverse range of heads of NI business and industry bodies, sectoral representative organisations, representatives from NI and UK Government, and elected members from the partner councils, the event offered an excellent opportunity to showcase the pillars of investment.</p>
3.28	<p>Participants learned how the Deal's long-term investments will help overcome embedded economic challenges in order to enhance the region's productivity and generate more and better job opportunities.</p>
3.29	<p>Attendees were encouraged to help engage their members and partners by amplifying key messages and opportunities in their own communications and events.</p>
3.30	<p>Further political and business engagement is planned for the months ahead and Members will be kept updated as this work progresses.</p> <p><b>BRCD Council Panel</b></p>
3.31	<p>The next meeting of the Council Panel will be held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024, hosted by Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council. At the meeting members will be provided with a programme update and presentations on the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC), the advanced manufacturing skills assessment and the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund.</p>
3.32	<p>The minutes from the meeting hosted by Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council on 27 September 2023 are attached at Appendix 1 for information.</p>
3.34	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets. As outlined additional resources have also been leveraged from other funding sources to extend the impact of the deal.</p>
3.35	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>



	<p>The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that;</p> <p><i>‘BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.’</i></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 – Minutes of the Council Panel Meeting 27 September 2023

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## BRCD Council Panel

<b>Subject:</b>	Minutes of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Council Panel
<b>Date:</b>	12.30 pm, 27 September 2023
<b>Councillors in attendance:</b>	<p>Mayor Councillor Jennifer Gilmour, Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council  Councillor Alistair Cathcart – Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council  Alderman Alan McDowell - Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council  Councillor Michael Goodman – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council  Councillor Jay Burbank - Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council  Councillor Sarah Bunting – Belfast City Council  Alderman Amanda Grehan – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Councillor Tim Mitchell – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Councillor Gary McCleave – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Councillor John Lavery – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Councillor Oonagh Hanlon - Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council  Alderman Billy Ashe MBE – Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council  Councillor Timothy Gaston - Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council</p>
<b>Officers:</b>	<p>Stephen Reid – Chief Executive, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Susie McCullough – Director of Place, Ards and North Down Borough Council  John Walsh - Chief Executive, Belfast City Council  Sharon McNicholl – Deputy Chief Executive, BRCD SRO, Belfast City Council  Damien Martin – BRCD Programme Director, Belfast City Council  David Burns – Chief Executive, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Marie Ward – Chief Executive, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  Caroline Magee – Director of Organisation Development and Innovation, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Arlene Barton – Programme Co-Ordinator - Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Jonathan McGrandle – City Deal Programme Director, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council  Majella McAlister – Director of Economic Development and Planning, Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council  Conor Mallon – Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  Josephine Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  Theresa Slevin, Stephen Wallace, Emer Husbands, Lorraine Beggs– BRCD Programme Office</p>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
1.1	The Mayor of Ards & North Down Borough Council, Councillor Jennifer Gilmour, welcomed the members of the BRCD Council Panel to the meeting hosted in the City of Bangor by Ards & North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) and outlined the key areas of focus for the meeting.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
2.1	<p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Councillor Matthew Magill – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council  Councillor Emmett McDonough-Brown- Belfast City Council  Councillor Ronan McLaughlin - Belfast City Council  Councillor Pete Byrne - Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council  Councillor Robert Logan, Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council  Councillor Robin Stewart, Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council</p>

	<p>Apologies were received from the following Officers:</p> <p>Valerie Watts – Interim Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council</p> <p>Jacqui Dixon – Chief Executive, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
3.1	<p>Councillor Jennifer Gilmour asked Councillors if they had any interests to declare in relation to the agenda. No interests were declared.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
4.1	<p>Councillor Jennifer Gilmour asked if the Panel agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>Councillor Alistair Cathcart proposed that the minutes from the last meeting were agreed.</p> <p>Seconded by Alderman Amanda Grehan</p> <p><b>Members agreed the minutes.</b></p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>BRCD Programme and Governance Overview</b>
5.1	<p>At the first meeting of the new BRCD Panel Damien Martin (DM) presented an overview of the programme and its associated governance. DM outlined the BRCD history, geography, ambition and pillars of investment and explained in detail the BRCD governance, including the role of the Council Panel and the various boards in place.</p> <p>Alderman Alan McDowell welcomed the presentation and enquired about the funding landscape for introducing new projects or complementing existing projects. DM explained that many of the BRCD partners were now being successful in accessing and leveraging external funding as a result of BRCD funding being in place for projects. DM also explained that revenue funding would be more helpful in order to support the skills pipeline, capacity building and ongoing sustainability of projects. Stephen Reid (SR) added that in addition to funds already mentioned, such as shared prosperity and peace plus, there is also an NI-wide City / Growth Deals Complementary Fund – for which phase 2 is likely to go out to consultation in around a year's time. SR also highlighted the strong partnership that has been built within the Belfast Region and the benefit seen by partners and that consideration should be given towards a 'second Deal' – particularly with strategic issues such as net zero to be addressed.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>BRCD Annual Report</b>
6.1	<p>Cllr Jennifer Gilmour highlighted the first BRCD Annual Report which had been circulated to members. DM provided an overview of the content of the Annual Report which outlines in detail progress to date, challenges met by the partnership and by partners and the aims for the year ahead.</p> <p>Cllr Alistair Cathcart requested clarification in relation to the change in approach in operation of the Studio Ulster project, emphasising the need for it to be industry facing and commercial in nature. DM explained that whilst the proposed operating model had changed, it was in line with the Outline Business Case but agreed that it was essential that the project continued to be commercial in nature –significant and increasing demand from end users in the sector is anticipated.</p> <p>Alderman McDowell welcomed the Annual Report and stated that he believed the timelines were very helpful for each project. Alderman McDowell requested further clarity in relation to timelines under the Employability &amp; Skills pillar and projects such as Digital Twin. DM explained there were detailed timelines in place for the planned skills assessments under the Employability &amp; Skills pillar – and that the Digital Twin project, due to its</p>

	<p>nature may be operational in just a number of months. Jonathan McGrandle set out latest timelines in relation to the i4c project, led by Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council.</p> <p><b>Members agreed to publish the Annual Report and requested that the presentation be shared with members of the Panel.</b></p>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>BRCD Programme Update</b>
7.1	<p>Cllr Jennifer Gilmour highlighted the detailed programme update paper which had been circulated amongst members.</p> <p>DM explained that the programme update set out the progress since the end of the financial year period covered by the Annual Report. DM updated in relation to contracts for funding, business case approvals, funding drawdowns and progress on wider regional projects such as the Digital Transformation Flexible Fund and the Advanced Manufacturing skills assessment.</p> <p>DM also set out some continuing challenges on which there is continuing engagement with Government partners, such as the complexity of the overall programme and associated governance and approval mechanisms and the impact of this on pace of progress and a new challenge relating to the new Subsidy Control regime which was impacting on the timelines of a number of projects currently.</p> <p>DM explained that there was now an increasing focus on strategic engagement and communications including with industry, political representatives and the public and that this would be ramping up over the next period.</p> <p>Alderman McDowell welcomed the renewed focus on strategic communications and stated that he believed that all stakeholders had a part to play in highlighting the positive opportunities under the City Deal.</p> <p><b>Members noted the programme update.</b></p>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Overview of Bangor Waterfront Regeneration Project</b>
8.1	<p>Susie McCullough (SMcC) Director of Place at ANDBC provided Members with an update in relation to the Bangor Waterfront Regeneration Project – a key project within the BRCD Tourism &amp; Regeneration pillar.</p> <p>Before setting out the detail of the Bangor Waterfront Regeneration project, SMcC explained that ANDBC were also developing a proposal for a Regional Innovation Hub under the BRCD Digital pillar focused on the creative industries, aligning with industry strengths in the area and with Studio Ulster and Belfast Stories. A site had been identified in Holywood and soft market testing had been completed – with an OBC now being developed for consideration by partners in the coming months.</p> <p>SMcC also updated on the Queen’s Parade project which has strong alignment with the BRCD-supported Bangor Waterfront Regeneration project.</p> <p>SMcC detailed the range of plans for various elements of the programme of investment including across the Marina, Pickie Fun Park, the courthouse and at Ballyholme. SMcC explained that work was ongoing in relation to appointing an integrated design team – with a range of tenders expected to be awarded in 2024 – and the project anticipated to be on site by 2026.</p> <p>Cllr Cathcart queried as to whether there was flexibility with the programme in order to phase different elements of the project if there are problems with some parts. SMcC explained that there was flexibility in relation to the timing of the programme – for example Ballyholme Yacht Club has recently been prioritised due to its self-</p>

	<p>contained nature, but there is less flexibility in relation to funding – with set funding across the five different elements of the project. Any change to this funding would require Departmental approval through the Belfast Region City Deal structures.</p> <p>Cllr Jennifer Gilmour thanked Susie McCullough for the detailed presentation.</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Press Release</b>
9.1	<p>Cllr Jennifer Gilmour asked members if they were content to agree the draft press release circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Members agreed the press release.</b></p>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Date of next meetings</b>
10.1	<p>Cllr Jennifer Gilmour highlighted that a schedule of meetings has been circulated with the next meeting to be hosted by <b>Belfast City Council on 31 January 2024.</b></p>



<b>Subject:</b>	Smart Belfast: Immersive technology initiatives
<b>Date:</b>	24 May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl, Director of Corporate Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark McCann, City Innovation manager (Acting) Brenda Murphy, Innovation Broker

Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?				
After Committee Decision				
After Council Decision				
Sometime in the future				
Never				

<b>Call-in</b>					
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?		Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update Members on a number of Immersive technology initiative currently being designed and delivered by the City Innovation Office.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note progress on the City Hall exhibition immersive experience and plans to present these at the next Members' City Hall and Grounds Installations Working Group.</li> <li>2. Note progress on the Augment the City challenge competition for SMEs and innovators.</li> <li>3. Note the delivery of the Maritime Mile Innovation Fund.</li> </ol>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	The Smart Belfast urban innovation programme encourages collaboration on digital innovation projects between government (both local and regional), industry, SMEs, academia and communities. Immersive digital technology (such as virtual reality and augmented reality) is one

	of the digital technologies that the programme has prioritised, as it is recognised as having an important role in driving innovation in many disparate areas including planning, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, tourism and entertainment.
3.2	While immersive technologies are still at an early stage of maturity, they already generate £1.4 billion in turnover for over 2,000 companies nationally. Locally, a recent report by The Data City noted that the region has many of the characteristics necessary to establish a significant immersive ecosystem, with the sector already supporting over 200 local jobs.
3.3	Building on such potential, the City Innovation Office is taking forward three initiatives that aim to encourage greater investment in Immersive R&D by local companies, while at the same time helping to demonstrate the application of such technologies in the tourism sector. These initiatives are:
3.4	<p><b>(1) City Hall exhibition immersive experience</b></p> <p>Following Member approval, the Council and BT(NI) signed a collaborative agreement to work together on an experimental project called the 'Belfast City Hall Immersive experience'. Its aim is to explore the role of immersive tech and advanced connectivity in visitor locations such as City Hall, Belfast Stories and elsewhere, while at the same time offering a world-class visitor experience as part of the Belfast 2024 programme.</p>
3.5	BT appointed the nationally renowned agency, Jam Creative Studios, to develop the concepts and content behind the experience. The team has worked closely with council officers over the past twelve months – particularly the Functions & Exhibition and Belfast 2024 teams - to develop an approach that is sensitive to the themes of the existing exhibition.
3.6	The immersive experience will focus on three rooms on the east side of City Hall (7, 8, and 9) which make up the 'City Speech' and 'City Streets' exhibitions themes. The new experience will use this existing content as a jumping-off point for an experience that allows visitors to explore these rooms in novel ways.
3.7	Each room will be equipped with iPads (while also offering the option for visitors to use their own mobile devices). This will be a magical experience, guiding visitors through the rooms with immersive, augmented reality moments. Room 7 will mainly concentrate on the Belfast accent, our turns of phrase, and the unique sound of local voices. Room 8 will explore the changing physical shape of the city in the past, present and future. For example, visitors will be immersed in virtual vignettes that explore the role of the city's now-hidden rivers. We're also asking young people from all over Belfast to give us their ideas of Belfast of the future. We'll recreate their



	designs in 3D and add them to a virtual city model. Room 9, is a more playful room and we want to enable visitors to have some fun with interactive games and Instagram-able wall art.
3.8	These high-level concepts will be presented to the next meeting of the Members' City Hall and Grounds Installations Working Group. Following engagement with Members, the creative team will begin detail work on detailed-design and coding with the aim of opening to the public by mid-September.
3.9	<p><b>(2) Augment the City SME Challenge</b></p> <p>Following Department of the Economy approval of a Belfast Region City Deal business case, the City Innovation Office opened the Augment the City challenge competition for applications in April 2024.</p>
3.10	This £575,000 competition will provide R&D funding to up to ten organisations (including individuals, start-ups and SMEs) to work with the team from Belfast Stories to explore the role of immersive technologies in supporting individuals to contribute their stories to future Belfast Stories collection.
3.11	Thirty-two organisations applied to the competition. The ten winners will commence in June 2024 working with Belfast Stories, Digital Catapult and the City Innovation Office to develop their ideas over the next eighteen months. The best of these will be tested and show-cased in City Hall alongside the immersive experience.
3.12	<p><b>(3) Maritime Mile Challenge Fund</b></p> <p>With funding from Horizon 2020, the City Innovation Office, working with Belfast Maritime Trust, awarded £120,000 to six local creative businesses, artists and innovators to create experimental projects aimed at animating and enriching the local heritage of the Maritime Mile.</p>
3.13	The winning projects were powered by a range of technologies including AI, 3D film, augmented reality and virtual reality. Each ran co-creation sessions with local partners and communities, gathering stories, artwork, and artefacts that shaped their individual prototypes. The projects were open to the public in April and May, encouraging increased footfall, dwell-time and local spend.
3.14	Projects included: an interactive experience with an AI 'Salmon of Knowledge' (ie, the 'Big Fish'); a joint project with the Public Records Office and local communities to develop interactive 3D/virtual reality rooms; an AI 'Voyage to the Past', that brought local historical figures to life; a project with Sailortown Regeneration Group to explore new ways to preserve heritage and local

	stories through interactive digital sculpture and storytelling; an immersive experience along the Yardman's Trail; and an augmented reality experience highlighting HMS Caroline's heritage.
3.15	A follow-up survey found that the participating companies were overwhelming positive about their experience and its contribution to their own R&D work. While three-quarters of local participants reported that the programme greatly enhanced their knowledge of local history.
	<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>
3.16	Budgets for the initiatives noted above are funded via third-party sources, with any Council contributions identified within the existing City Innovation Office and Belfast Region City Deal budgets.
3.17	Under the terms of the collaborative R&D agreement Belfast City Council are bringing managed access to the City Hall location, creative content, promotion, and access to the new small cell network in City Hall – which is funded as part of the Augment the City Challenge. BT are bringing substantial technology and development support.
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.18	None.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	Sustain Exchange Climate Leadership Event - Funding Agreement
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To inform Committee of a proposal by the non-profit Management and Leadership Network (MLN) to host a prominent climate leadership event 'Sustain Exchange' with up to 300 decision-makers. To request approval for a funding agreement to be put in place between Belfast City Council and the event organiser with the value of £8,450+vat. The event will put the challenges, opportunities and absolute need for positive action associated with climate change, on the agenda for local organisations and leaders.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support this climate leadership conference by approving a funding agreement to the value of £8450+vat be entered into with the event organiser.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<b>Background</b> It is now beyond doubt that organisations of all shapes, sizes and sectors need to radically reduce their environmental impact both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. The extreme

	<p>weather experienced across the globe over the past 12 months has further evidenced the reality that the effects of climate change are being felt now and the need for decisive action from organisations, championed by their leaders, is now. We are fast approaching the point of no return.</p> <p>It is a truly transformative time for organisations as they address climate risks and identify new opportunities in the green economy. The transition is not straightforward. Organisations need help in developing planet positive practices, securing cleaner power, heat and transport solutions. They need help in navigating new markets to find more environmentally sustainable solutions in their supply chain, and they need to do it fast. There has never been a more important time to find specialist help to navigate the transition, and to educate, inform and engage by sharing the existing knowledge and exemplar experience of those at the forefront of the transition.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Purpose and format of event</b></p> <p>The Sustain Exchange Summit will deliver on the objectives above and will connect local decision-makers with international thought leaders as well as those at the forefront of the transition locally.</p> <p>The event is expected to attract some 300 local leaders (primarily business leaders but also those from the public, NDPB and third sectors) to a Belfast City Centre venue with strong public transport links to ensure the carbon footprint of the event is kept to a minimum. The Sustain Exchange project will ensure the messages, around the need and importance of positive climate action are heard, and the Council's proactivity in this area will be strongly profiled before and during the event.</p>
3.3	<p><b>Content</b></p> <p>Previous speakers at this event have included the eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator Sir Jonathan Porritt CBE, Norman Crowley (global entrepreneur and founder of CoolPlanet) and Sit Tim Smit KBE (Founder of The Eden Project and world-renowned thought leader in sustainability). The 2024 Sustain Exchange Summit will again be delivered to a world-class standard and will feature a globally-renowned speaker as well as a carefully selected line-up of local leaders who will be challenged to share their story (exemplar), insights (expert) or support offering (stakeholder).</p> <p>As exemplars these leaders will share their story and associated lessons in an engaging, informative, and entertaining manner. The speakers will encourage and empower attending organisations to consider their own climate impact and take the first (or next) steps in their quest to become 'planet positive'. Previous local speakers at this event have demonstrated how leaders from humble beginnings in Belfast have become game-changers in their respective fields. These</p>

	<p>include the likes of Dr Andrew Woods from Catagen (Sustain Exchange 2022), Eddie McGoldrick from The Electric Storage Company (Sustain Exchange 2021) and Philip Rainey from Weev (Sustain Exchange 2023). The 2024 event will once again showcase how leaders from Belfast are leading the charge when it comes to the quest to avoid what is now a 'code red for humanity'. In doing this MLN plans to galvanise existing businesses to act and to inspire the next cohort of planet positive pioneers to emerge from our city.</p> <p>The event will also provide the opportunity to make the broader leadership community in NI aware of the proactive work of Belfast City Council when it comes to the climate emergency.</p>
3.4	<p><b>Management and Leadership Network Experience</b></p> <p>The Management and Leadership Network (MLN) is a non-profit which exists to connect decision-makers in NI with the insights of thought-leaders and world-class performers. The rationale is that be enhancing our leadership competence we will, empower local organisations, strengthen our economy, enrich our society and ultimately improve lives.</p> <p>MLN has worked with some of the most respected leaders on the planet and is vastly experienced in creating and delivering truly world-class events that engage, enrich and elevate attendees. As host, MLN will facilitate the event and invite all speakers to provide their slides in advance so that the idea-sharing session is delivered in a concise, visually impactful and professional manner. Belfast City Council would once again be invited to participate and profile its extensive climate work i.e the Mini Stern Report, Resilience Strategy, Climate Commission, One Million Trees etc.</p>
3.5	<p><b>Date, Venue &amp; Contingence</b></p> <p>The Sustain Exchange Summit will take place in October 2024. The total cost of the project will be in excess of £70k. Belfast City Council has been a key partner in the Sustain Exchange Summit since its inception in 2021 and its support has been crucial in the growth of the initiative and its impact. In order to reduce the financial cost to Belfast City Council and increase collaboration MLN will seek financial support from additional sources to include the private sector. MLN will give previous sponsors the opportunity to remain as partners. These have included Belfast-based organisations such as Danske Bank, FPM Accountant, International Synergies (circular economy specialists), Belfast Harbour and Mills Selig Solicitors. As well as demonstrating real collaboration, these partnerships have allowed MLN to reduce Belfast City Council's financial contribution from £10,000+vat in 2021 to £8,450+vat in 2024.</p>
3.6	<p><b>Partner Contribution &amp; Profile Benefits</b></p> <p>If Belfast City Council chooses to support the Summit, it would be profiled as an 'Event Partner' alongside several other lead event partners (examples given in 3.5). The Council brand would be prominent on all event marketing collateral as well as 'at-event'. A Council representative would</p>

	be invited to participate in the event press launch and MLN would be delighted for the Lord Mayor of Belfast to speak at the event. Council would also promote the conference through its social media and other relevant communication channels.
3.7	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>£8,450+vat to support this initiative has been allocated from within the existing climate budget.</p>
3.8	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>There are no direct equality or good relations/rural needs implications.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	Inclusive Growth – Belfast Business Promise
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth & Anti-Poverty Maria Robinson, Belfast Business Promise Co-ordinator

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

☐

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1	To provide Members with an update on the continued progress with the Belfast Business Promise, following the celebration and launch event in City Hall on 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2024.
1.2	The Committee will be aware that the Belfast Business Promise is a key commitment in the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy and embedded within the refreshed Belfast Agenda (2024-2028). The development of the Business Promise has been shaped by Elected Members through the work of the Social Policy Working Group and supported by a strong cross-council partnership approach.
1.3	As the inclusive growth charter for the city, the Belfast Business Promise is a key tool to encourage and support employers across the city to adopt and/or improve their practices and demonstrate a positive social impact through their core business activities. The level of engagement and positive response from businesses of all sizes and sectors during its first year of operation has been significant. There is now a strong and growing community of practice aligned to the ambitions of the business promise. This presents a real opportunity to build upon and share good practice and adopt a holistic approach to create a stronger, more resilient, and fairer economy and society for Belfast.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Note the progress made during the first year of implementing the Belfast Business Promise</li> <li>(ii) Note the work underway to support the further development and continued scaling up of the Business Promise and to ensure the continued successful implementation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the continued growth in the number of organisations engaging in the initiative, committing to be partners and supporting implementation and accreditation.</li> <li>▪ the Council's continued commitment and work underway to progress through the Belfast Business Promise journey to become an accredited Member and Ambassador.</li> <li>▪ Next steps for the programme as outlined at paragraph 3.12.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	As agreed by SP&R Committee, the Belfast Business Promise is a proactive commitment by businesses to support the city's inclusive growth mission by signing up to a number of underpinning pledges that support inclusive business practices. Organisations use the process to assess and benchmark their business practices against eight pledges and gain support from the Belfast Business Promise community/network to continually improve their inclusive practice and performance.
3.2	A cross-council team has been progressing the development and delivery of the Belfast Business Promise with an external business working group, with oversight and input from the Council's Social Policy Working Group. The Belfast Business Promise is aligned to and complements other



strands of work across the Council, including the Social Value Procurement Policy & Toolkit, Social Enterprise action plan and BCC Employment Academies. Strong relationships have also been built with the Inclusive Growth Network, the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter and the Scottish Business Pledge Charter teams which has enabled the sharing of good practice and shared learning opportunities.

3.3 Following a significant period of co-development and engagement, the Belfast Business Promise went live on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 for a six-month pilot phase. Working with 20 early adopters, the pilot phase enabled testing and refining of the model with the business community and clearly identified a strong support for the scheme across the public, private and third sectors. The pilot phase also allowed for crucial practical testing of the operational delivery processes with improvement work on both the systems and the support provided to businesses continuing.

3.4 The pilot phase endorsed the holistic approach adopted by the Belfast Business Promise and the ethos of building a network of like-minded organisations to work together to create a better Belfast and a more inclusive city. It also confirmed the three core pledges that all organisations should commit to (see figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Belfast Business Promise pledges



3.5 An underpinning accreditation process has been developed in conjunction with key Council Departments, partner organisations such as the Labour Relations Agency and external advisers, including those with expertise and experience in auditing quality standards (IIP, EFQM and ISO standards). This has been tested and enhanced during the pilot phase to ensure that it aligns to other good practice standards, provides assurance around the robustness of the process and recognises the challenges organisations are facing in the current economic climate.

3.6	<p>A review and evaluation of the pilot phase was undertaken and considered by the Social Policy Working Group in November 2023, with identified improvements progressing in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ clarifying the requirements set out in each of the pledges that organisations are expected to demonstrate.</li> <li>▪ strengthening the requirement to encourage employers to consider inclusivity/accessibility, streamlining the processes to support the assessment and accreditation process.</li> <li>▪ developing a communication plan and website.</li> <li>▪ continuing to build on the work so far to develop the Promise Learning Days and create a sense of community and network for Supporters to learn from each other and share practice.</li> </ul>
3.7	<p>Since the pilot completed, the network of supporters has continued to grow with 46 organisations now signed-up to the scheme. A well-attended and very positive celebration/launch event had been held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024 in the City Hall. This event recognised the significant level of commitment to the Business Promise in the city, the growth in the network of Belfast Business Promise Supporters and the improvement journey underway across many organisations.</p>
3.8	<p>Some of the highlights and successes during the first year of implementation of the Belfast Business Promise include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 46 organisations have signed up as Supporters (see Appendix 1),</li> <li>▪ 3 organisations secured 'Member' status (meeting 5 of the 8 pledges and committing to continue to work towards all 8 pledges) – Department for Economy, Linen Quarter BID and Belfast Harbour.</li> <li>▪ Established a BBP Partner Network of technical advisers which provide specialist expertise to support the accreditation process and delivery of the Belfast Business Promise (See Figure 2 below)</li> <li>▪ Delivered 7 Promise Learning Days, focusing on sharing good practice relating to each of the pledges.</li> <li>▪ Almost half the 'early adopters' in the pilot phase reported measuring their carbon footprint for the first time.</li> <li>▪ BBP Supporters are recommending other organisations to sign-up to the BBP.</li> <li>▪ Showcased the Belfast Business Promise, promoting more inclusive practices and insight at key events such as the Labour Relations Agency conference, Equality Commission's event to mark International Day for people with Disabilities and the Inclusive Growth Network's Good Employment Conference in Manchester.</li> <li>▪ Shared learning and experience from the Belfast Business Promise with the Inclusive Growth Network's Good Employment Charter group</li> </ul>

Figure 2: Belfast Business Promise Partners



### BCC Accreditation

- 3.9 As an organisation, the Council has also signed-up to the Belfast Business Promise demonstrating leadership and commitment to working with employers and encouraging others to join us in working to create an inclusive city. Detailed internal discussions are ongoing with key officers and professions to assess the Council's position in relation to meeting the pledges and the subsequent action planning to ensure continuous improvement.
- 3.10 Members will be aware of the significant progress made in key areas such as Social Value Procurement Policy, the work of the Employability and Skills team, community engagement teams, HR, Legal, Finance etc. In addition, the Council achieving accreditation from the Real Living Wage Foundation for paying the Real Living Wage in February 2023 and the progress being made in terms of Protecting our Environment (pledge 8) have been vital steps in meeting the standards.
- 3.11 The internal assessment of the Council's stage of readiness across the eight pledges, identified a number of areas of development which had already been recognised with work underway in these areas. These included the development and delivery of the Council's People Strategy, which was approved by the Committee in August 2023, and the Health & Wellbeing Strategy approved in February 2023. Additionally, the Council has also signed up as a JAM (Just a Minute) Card Partner with the NOW Group to enhance its commitment to inclusivity and plans are being taken forward for the development of a staff volunteering policy to strengthen its contribution to the core pledge 'working in partnership with our communities'. The Council is committed to continuing its efforts to meet the standards set in the Belfast Business Promise and is therefore on course to achieve its aim to attain Member and Ambassador status in autumn 2024.

3.12	<p><b><u>Next steps for the BBP</u></b></p> <p>In addition to continuing to make progress on the Council's journey through the Belfast Business Promise, the following next steps will be taken forward with regular progress reports being brought to the Social Policy Working Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Building the Belfast Business Promise offer and menu of provision.</li> <li>▪ Onboarding strategic partners/technical panel specialisms.</li> <li>▪ Developing effective MIS (Management Information Systems) / MS Forms to streamline delivery.</li> <li>▪ Conducting an interim evaluation to support plans to sustain and scale-up.</li> <li>▪ Encouraging progression through the accreditation tiers, increasing the awards of Member / Ambassador status to organisations.</li> <li>▪ Developing the website to highlight the reputational benefits associated with a city charter, which is key to sustaining interest and commitment.</li> <li>▪ Showcasing the story so far and celebrating success.</li> </ul>
3.13	<p>A further report on the steps being taken to embed inclusive growth will be brought to Committee in June, alongside an update on the Corporate Plan.</p>
	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.14	<p>Resources are included within Departmental budgets. In addition to the core team of 3 officers, support is also provided across a range of Council Departments and professions to support the delivery as well as the Council's aim to lead by example and progress through the accreditation tiers.</p> <p>Delivery of the programme also draws on the Supporter network to share resources and expertise to assist in delivery, where possible.</p>
	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.15	<p>An Equality screening and Rural Needs Assessment has been carried out, with the Belfast Business promise screened out with mitigating actions. Whilst the Belfast Business promise is a key tool to deliver on the Inclusive Growth Strategy and is not expected to have any adverse impacts on the Section 75 categories, the programme will continue to be informed by practice and review, with an interim evaluation planned for 2024/25. This will ensure that modifications and mitigations can be put in place to meet the needs of programme participants as delivery matures.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Belfast Business Promise Supporters and Members</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Accreditation Tiers of membership</p>



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Belfast  
City Council



Recognise good practice.  
Encourage progress.  
Meaningful accreditation.



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5

8

Everyone starts as a ***SUPPORTER*** and commits to working towards 3 core pledges

Once you evidence meeting the 5 pledges (including at least 2 Core Pledges) you will gain ***MEMBER*** accreditation

The ***AMBASSADOR*** tier is for those who demonstrate having met all eight pledges





<b>Subject:</b>	Update on Area Working Groups
<b>Date:</b>	24 May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 <input type="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <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 person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. 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	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
<b>1.1</b>	To present to the Committee for approval the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Area Working Group.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the minutes of the special meeting of the South AWG of 22 April 2024, as attached.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Area Working Group Minutes</u></b></p> <p>It was agreed in June 2016 that the minutes of the meetings of the Area Working Groups would be presented to the SP&amp;R Committee for approval going forward, in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups. The Committee is asked to approve the most recent meeting, as attached.</p>
3.2	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>
3.3	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	<b>Appendix 1 - Minutes – Special Meeting - South Belfast Area Working Group 22 April 2024</b>

# South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 22nd April, 2024

## MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Murray (Chairperson);  
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Councillor Groogan); and  
Councillors Bunting, T. Brooks,  
Lyons, McKay and McKeown.

In attendance: Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager  
(City Centre Regeneration);  
Mrs. D. Murtagh, Divisional Solicitor;  
Mr. S. Lavery, Programme Manager;  
Ms. E. Hamilton, Client Manager;  
Mr. C. McCartan, Regeneration Project Officer; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported from Councillors Kelly, G. McAteer and McDonough-Brown.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

### **Finaghy Mural – ArtsEkta in attendance**

The Senior Development Manager (City Centre Regeneration) provided the Working Group with an overview of the Business Cluster Community Grants scheme, through which ArtsEkta had been awarded £25,000 to deliver artwork to reinvigorate the Finaghy Road Bridge. He explained that, due to issues surrounding landowner consent at the bridge location, the Council had subsequently agreed that the funding could be repurposed and colourful street art was subsequently completed at various locations on the Lisburn Road, including utility boxes and murals, at Larkstone Street, Surrey Street and at the Finaghy Crossroads.

The Members were advised that the artwork at the Northern Ireland Hospice shop had been vandalised on a number of occasions. The Members were advised that that artwork had since been removed following community engagement.

Dr. N. Tandon, Founder and CEO of ArtsEkta, was welcomed to the meeting. She outlined that three consultation events had taken place and that she had attended the first

one. Unfortunately, however, she explained that she had been subjected to racist remarks at the event.

A number of Members expressed their apologies that Dr. Tandon had received racist comments at a consultation event.

A further Member stated that she believed there had been some confusion amongst the community as to where the original mural on the hospice shop had come from.

The Members were advised that the artist had since created a different image for the Hospice shop and they were shown the proposal. The Members stated that they were content with the image. A Member added, however, that it was a little disappointing that the original artwork had to be painted over.

Dr. Tandon explained that she wanted to ensure that the local community and the Hospice shop were content with the new image before it was installed. She advised that the artist was ready to paint it once the consultation had concluded.

The Senior Development Manager (City Centre Regeneration) agreed that additional consultation would be carried out and requested that Members would send him through the contact details of anyone who they felt should be invited to take part.

Noted.

**Request from Friends of Belfast Botanic Gardens  
to present at a future meeting**

The Working Group acceded to the request.

**Invitation received for a tour of the new  
Belfast Islamic Centre (University Road)**

The Working Group acceded to the request.

Chairperson



<b>Subject:</b>	Contracts Update
<b>Date:</b>	24 May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <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 person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. 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	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek approval from members for tenders and Single Tender Actions (STA) over £30,000</li> </ul> <p>And to ask members to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note contract modifications to contract term and retrospective Single Tender Actions (STA)</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 1</b>)</li> <li>Approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 2</b>)</li> <li>Note the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 3</b>)</li> <li>Approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 4</b>)</li> <li>Approve the public advertisement of tenders (Peaceplus) as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 5</b>) noting current conditions set out in Section 6 of this report.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Competitive Tenders</b>
3.1	Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states Chief Officers have delegated authority to authorise a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works over the statutory limit of £30,000 following a tender exercise where the council has approved the invitation to tender
3.2	Standing Order 60(a) states any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000) shall be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b) the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council.
3.3	Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.
3.4	The Committee is asked to approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 ( <b>Table 1</b> )
	<b>Single Tender Actions (STAs)</b>
3.5	The Council's current Single Tender Action (STA) process, which has been in place since 2020, provides assurance that the Council continues to comply with its obligations under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 'PCRs' and internal governance arrangements including required controls and approvals. It mirrors the PCRs setting out the exceptional and specific

	<p>circumstances when a STA can be used (see STA/ Direct Award Reasons Table in Appendix 1).</p>
3.6	<p>To support Officers understanding and to build capability CPS also offer STA Process training on a regular basis.</p>
3.7	<p>In line with Standing Order 55 the following STAs are being submitted for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contract for up to £65,000, for up to 3 months, awarded to Global Elephant Care, for an elephant transfer service. Service required for the relocation of two elderly female Asian elephants, Dhunja and Yhetto, that currently reside in Belfast Zoo, while work continues on a long-term development plan for the zoo and its animal collection. Approval was granted in August 2023 by CG&amp;R Committee to transfer the elephants to Burgers Zoo in the Netherlands. The transfer is due to take place in July 2024. The supplier is considered the only current suitable supplier to ensure the safe and secure transfer of the two elephants.</li> </ul>
3.8	<p>Further details on these STAs is set out in Appendix 1 <b>(Table 2)</b> including the reason selected to support justification of each STA.</p>
3.9	<p>In line with Standing Order 55 the Committee is asked to note the award of the following retrospective STAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contract for up to £45,000, for up to 3 years, awarded to Heather Martin, for Interpreting Services. A new team member is registered as deaf and is supported via the Access to Work (NI) programme for Support Worker funding from DFC which permits BCC to claim 50% of expenditure relating to interpreter services. Team member came from other post has already built a relationship with existing interpreter.</li> </ul>
3.10	<p>Further details on these STAs is set out in Appendix 1 <b>(Table 3)</b> including the reason selected to support justification of each STA.</p>
	<p><b>Modification to Contract</b></p>
3.11	<p>The Committee is asked to approve the following modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to an additional £164,390, awarded to Cushman &amp; Wakefield for T2135b Continuation of Consultancy Services for City Centre Residential Development.</li> </ul>

	<p>Additional fees required due to delay in commencement of procurement and greater input required for commercial advisory work under the existing contract specification. This variation has been permitted by the Crown Commercial Services 'CCS' framework provider. Contract modification being reported retrospectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to an additional 6 months, awarded to Café Nosh for T2422 Provision of Catering for services (retail and small to medium signed events) at Malone House. Six-month extension of contract period to facilitate market exercise for the future operation of Malone House. This is a concession contract with estimated annual gross revenue of £435,000 for the contractor (based pre-Covid figures), Of which a minimum 5% commission will be payable to BCC (£21,750).</li> </ul>
3.12	Further details on these contract modifications are set out in Appendix 1 ( <b>Table 4</b> ).
	<b>PEACEPLUS</b>
3.13	<p>Peace Plus tenders (<b>Table 5</b>) are subject to a letter of offer being received from SEUPB. The Council funding allocation of £15.1m has been assigned by SEUPB, although the funding application (including the Local Community Action Plan), associated with these tenders is currently under assessment. Due to the required tight timelines related with the procurement process for SEUPB funding to mobilise projects, members are requested to agree approval in principle to progress PEACEPLUS procurement exercises, subject to securing a formal approval and a letter of offer.</p>
	<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>
3.14	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets.
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.15	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table 1 - Competitive Tenders</li> <li>Table 2 - Single Tender Actions</li> <li>Table 3 - Retrospective Single Tender Actions</li> <li>Table 4 - Modification to Contract</li> <li>Table 5 - Peace Plus Tenders</li> </ul>



**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

<b>Title of Tender</b>	<b>Proposed Contract Duration</b>	<b>Est. Max Contract Value</b>	<b>SRO</b>	<b>Short description of goods / services</b>
Gartner for Technical Professionals	Up to 2 years	£91,200	P Gribben	Provides in-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/projects that support execution of the Digital strategy
Delivery of Customer Focus Programme	Up to 2 years	£61,200	J Tully	To provide tailored access to research and insights, access to analyst review of strategy and approach, diagnostics and toolkits to support the delivery of Customer Focus Programme.
Bolder Vision for Belfast Strategy and Implementation Framework	Up to 1 year	£70,000	C Reynolds	Commission of consulting services to finalise A Bolder Vision Strategy and Implementation Framework to include update of draft strategy.

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason Code
Elephant Transfer Service	Up to 3 months	£65,000	D Martin	Service required for the relocation of two elderly female Asian elephants, Dhunja and Yhetto, that currently reside in Belfast Zoo, while work continues on a long-term development plan for the zoo and its animal collection. Approval was granted in August 2023 by CG&R Committee to transfer the elephants to Burgers Zoo in the Netherlands. The transfer is due to take place in July 2024. The supplier is considered the only current suitable supplier to ensure the safe and secure transfer of the two elephants.	Global Elephant Care	3

**Table 3: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

Title of Contract	Duration	Est. Max Contract Value	SRO	Description	Supplier	STA Reason Code
Interpreting Services (Partly funded)	3 years	£45,000	S Toland	A team member is registered as deaf and is supported via the Access to Work (NI) programme for Support Worker funding from DFC which permits BCC to claim 50% of expenditure relating to interpreter services. This provides continuity of existing support.	Heather Martin	11

**Table 4: Modification to Contract**

Title of Contract	Original Contract Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T2135b Continuation of Consultancy Services for City Centre Residential Development  Contract modification being reported retrospectively	2 years	Additional £164,390	C Reynolds	Additional fees required due to delay in commencement of procurement and greater input required for commercial advisory work under the existing contract specification.	Cushman & Wakefield
T2422 Provision of catering for services (retail and small to medium signed events) at Malone House  This is a concession contract with estimated annual gross revenue of £435,000 for the contractor (based pre-Covid figures). Of	1 year	Additional 6 months	D Martin	Six-month extension of contract period to facilitate market exercise for the future operation of Malone House.  This contract is a below threshold requirement under the Concession Regs and, given history of low interest in the local market to provide this service, this extension is considered a low risk.	Café Nosh

Appendix 1

which a minimum 5% commission will be payable to BCC.					
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**Table 5: Peace Plus Tenders**

Title of Tender	SRO	Proposed contract duration	Est. Max Contract Value
Annadale Open Space - ANIMATION	Jim Girvan	Up to 2 years	£86,000.00
Distillery Street Open Space - ANIMATION	Jim Girvan	Up to 2 years	£85,900.00
Access to the Hills - ANIMATION	Jim Girvan	Up to 2 years	£85,600.00
Sanctuary Theatre ANIMATION	Jim Girvan	Up to 2 years	£85,100.00
Capacity Building - Community Empowerment Programme	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£903,577.68
Health & Wellbeing Programme	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£853,000.00
Youth - Inspiring Future Belfast	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£970,861.00
Sports for Peace	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£711,646.00
Employability - Language Up	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£447,513.00
Arts in communities	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£695,744.00
Interfaith and Belief Programme	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£304,564.00
Community Connections - Ethnic Minorities	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£638,135.00
LGBTQIA+ - Community Engagement Programme	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£391,672.00
Community Empowerment Ex Politically Motivated Prisoners	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£493,006.00

From Multiculturalism to Interculturalism (possible broken into lots)	D Sales	Up to 2 years	£949,140.00
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**Belfast**  
City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	Commercial and Procurement Services Social Value Working Group update
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <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 person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								
<b>Call-in</b>									
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>								

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
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1.1	To update the Strategic Policy & Resources 'SP&R' Committee following consideration by the Social Policy Working Group 'SPWG' at their meeting in May 24 (rescheduled from April 24) on the delivery of social value outcomes via BCC tender competitions awarded in accordance with the Council's Social Value Procurement Policy 'SVPP'
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the attached Social Value Procurement Policy 'SVPP' Delivery Report.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	The SVPP Delivery Report is provided every 2 months to the SPWG in line with the scheduled meetings and then a copy is shared to Members at the SP&R Committee. This report covers the Reporting Period 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 29 <sup>th</sup> February 2024.
	<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>
3.2	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.3	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 - SPWG Report - SVPP Delivery Report April 24  Appendix 1 a - Appendix to the SPWG SV report April 24





Subject:	Social Value Procurement Policy Delivery Report
Date:	16 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
Reporting Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS'
Contact Officer:	Lewis Murray, Strategic Category Officer, CPS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	<p>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'</p> <p>The report also provides an update on tenders awarded by Property &amp; Projects department where, due to project funding rules, social value has been considered and included in accordance with the CPD Buy Social Model.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
	<p>The SVPP was approved by Committee in April 22 with a 'Go Live' date of 1st June 2022.</p> <p>A copy of the SVPP can be found here - <a href="https://belfastcity.gov.uk">Social Value Procurement Policy (belfastcity.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>SVPP applied to any new applicable open tender exercises with approval dated from 1st June 22.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Social value evaluation training based on the new approach developed from September 2023. This was rolled out during October 23 to January 24. This is not included in CPS evaluation training.</li></ul>

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:

**Part 1** – 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.

**Part 2** – 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):

1. Payment of the Real Living Wage by suppliers to their employees
2. 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.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Reporting Period</b>
	<p>It is intended that this report will be provided every 2 months in line with scheduled SPWG meetings.</p> <p>This report covers the Reporting Period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<p>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</p> <p>Appendix 1 includes:</p> <p><u>Table 1 - Tenders awarded during Reporting Period</u></p> <p>This sets out details of tenders awarded during Reporting Period and whether SVPP was applied or not.</p> <p>For ease of reporting this shows tenders awarded by Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team and the Property &amp; Projects department.</p> <p><u>Table 2 – Summary of key data and findings associated with application of SVPP</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p><u>Table 3 - Summary of Supplier's Social Value Offers (Evaluated submissions)</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>A summary of each applicable tender has been set out in the table.</p> <p><u>Lessons Learned and Continuous Improvement</u></p> <p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trends in the use of Reserved Contracts and any further guidance required for Officers on when these should be used</li> <li>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</li> <li>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 addition any further guidance required for suppliers to improve their understanding BCC expectations in line with Belfast Agenda aims and associated strategies.</li> </ol>

	<p>The Social Value Review Team will meet every 2 months in line with scheduled SPWG meetings and the production of this report.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<p>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.</p> <p>This feedback can then be considered by the Social Value Review Team and associated guidance updated for Officers and suppliers when applying the SVPP.</p>
	<b>Appendices</b>
	<p>Appendix 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table 1 - Tenders awarded during Reporting Period</li> <li>Table 2 – Summary of key data and findings associated with application of SVPP</li> <li>Table 3 - Summary of Supplier's Social Value Offers (Evaluated submissions)</li> </ul>

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

<b>Key Criteria</b>	<b>BCC SVPP Approach</b>	<b>CPD Buy Social Model Approach</b>
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	<p>Applied to all applicable tenders valued over £250k (goods, services and work) from June 22 and £30k from April 23.</p> <p>Social value weighting determined by cost criteria for tender i.e.</p> <p>If cost criteria is &gt;50% then social value weighting is 10%</p> <p>If cost criteria is ≤50% then social value weighting is 15%</p>	<p>Applied to above threshold tenders (applicable Public Contracts Regulations) for services and works. Supplies not included.</p> <p>For local government this means application to tenders valued above:</p> <p>£170k (approx.) for services contracts</p> <p>£4.3m (approx.) for works contracts</p> <p>Social value weighting 10%, rising to 20% from June 23 (subject to review/ approval)</p>

Minimum Social Value scoring threshold	<p>If 10% social value weighting then minimum 7% out 10% required</p> <p>If 15% social value weighting then minimum 11% out 15% required</p> <p>Suppliers who fail to meet this threshold are excluded from award of tender.</p>	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

<b>BCC SVPP Approach</b>	<b>CPD Buy Social Model Approach</b>
<p>BCC currently include the following requirements as mandatory for all suppliers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compliance with the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998</li> <li>2. Compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015</li> <li>3. Prompt payment of suppliers/ supply chains</li> </ol> <p>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:</p> <p><u>1. Ethical Procurement and Fair Treatment of the Supply Chain</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p><u>2. Environmental Management Systems</u></p> <p>Suppliers are to demonstrate they have an environmental management system in place i.e. ISO14001 or equivalent.</p> <p><u>3. Single Use Plastics Policy</u></p>	<p>From the 1 September 2021 the following requirements are mandatory;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. compliance with relevant employment, equality and health and safety law and human rights standards;</li> <li>2. adherence to relevant collective agreements; and</li> <li>3. adoption of fair work practices for all workers engaged in the delivery of the contract.</li> </ol>

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

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.	
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**Table 1: Tenders awarded during Reporting Period**

Table 1a: Tenders awarded by Commercial and Procurement Services Team 'CPS'

Ref	Contract Title	Contract Type	Value	Successful Supplier	SVPP applied (Y/N)	If No - Reason why?	Reserved Contract (Y/N)	Social Value Weighting % applied
T2483	Support and Maintenance of E-Bravo tendering solution	Services	£73,000.00	Bravosolution UK Limited	N	STA/Direct Award	N	N/A
T2408	NIESS Framework B Subject Matter Experts and Sector Experts (29 Lots)	Services	Up to £12m	Various – Total 178 contracts awarded under framework	Y	N/A	N	N/A*
T2454	Managed Print Service	Services	£700,000	Ricoh UK Ltd	N	External Framework Used	N	N/A
T2320(1)	Cleaning consumables and sundries (Lot 1 - Cleaning Brushes, Cloths and Sundries)	Supplies	£240,000.00	Supplies Team	Y	N/A	N	N/A <£250k (Tender pre-dated April 23)
T2320(2)	Cleaning consumables and sundries (Lot 2 - Cleaning chemicals)	Supplies	£100,000.00	Lyreco	Y	N/A	N	N/A <£250k (Tender pre-dated April 23)
T2320(3)	Cleaning consumables and sundries (Lot 3 - Cleaning sundries and associated products)	Supplies	£30,000.00	Bunzl McLoughlin	Y	N/A	N	N/A <£250k (Tender pre-dated April 23)
T2484	Daisy Telephone service provision, Calls / Lines / Broadband	Services	£157,132	Daisy Corporate Services Trading Limited	N	External Framework Used	N	N/A

## Appendix 1

Ref	Contract Title	Contract Type	Value	Successful Supplier	SVPP applied (Y/N)	If No - Reason why?	Reserved Contract (Y/N)	Social Value Weighting % applied
T2476	Provision of building management, operation and café provision at 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast	Services	£132,989.58	MayWe LLP	Y	N/A	N	15%
T2494	Supply and Delivery of Office Supplies	Supplies	£690,000.00	Banner Group Ltd	Y	N/A	N	N/A**
T2432	Provision of Temporary Resources - Neutral Vendor Approach	Services	£8,000,000.00	Matrix SCM Ltd	N	External Framework Used	N	N/A
T2490	Booking system for Belfast Castle and Malone House (STA)	Services	£36,000.00	Kenetics Solutions	N	STA/Direct Award	N	N/A
T2499	Provision of a Carnival Parade / Pageant for St Patrick's Day 2024	Services	£45,000.00	Luxe	Y	N/A	N	N/A***
T2468	Provision of Bulk LPG for Duncrue Estate	Supplies	£160,000.00	Flogas Ltd	N	External Framework Used	N	N/A
T2489(b)	Supply and Delivery of 18T and 26T RCVs	Supplies	£463,667.00	Dennis Eagle	N	External Framework Used	N	N/A
T2504	Provision and installation of a system for side of vehicle advertising on Refuse Collection Vehicles (STA)	Services	£80,000.00	Roadvert	N	STA/Direct Award	N	N/A
T2449	Independent playground inspections	Services	£80,000.00	Play Services Ireland	Y	N/A	N	10%
T2464	Supply and delivery of summer plants and installation of containers	Supplies	£250,000.00	Hannas Nursery	Y	N/A	N	15%
T2443	Collection and treatment of paints and varnishes	Services	£951,496.00	Irish Waste Services Limited	Y	N/A	N	10%
T2215(c)	T2215 - Accessible Tourism Programme	Services	£45,000.00	Smith and Kent Consulting	Y	N/A	N	N/A****

## Appendix 1

\* The T2408 framework is a collaborative framework which BCC procured on behalf of all 11 Council as part of NI Enterprise Support Service/ Go Succeed project. Due to how work is assigned under the Framework across the 11 Council (i.e. low value projects on a rotational basis across 178 shortlisted suppliers) it was not possible to include Social Value % weighting at tender stage. Instead, we designed a process where a Social Value plan/offer is delivered by a supplier each time accumulative spend with a supplier under the framework reaches £30k.

\*\* The T2494 contract was awarded using an external framework. Supplier was required to include a Social Value plan/offer as part of the contract but SV % weighting not included as not evaluated under the framework.

\*\*\* The T2499 contract was awarded as a STA/Direct Award. Supplier was required to include a Social Value plan/offer as part of the contract but SV % weighting not included as not evaluated under STA/Direct Award.

\*\*\*\* This is a direct award contract under the T2215 framework therefore no evaluation of the supplier's social value offer.

Table 1b: Tenders awarded by Property & Projects

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Ref	Contract Title	Contract Type	Value	Successful Supplier	SVPP applied (Y/N)	If No - Reason why?	Reserved Contract (Y/N)	Social Value Weighting % applied
ITT 37368	UV - The Lockhouse Community Wellbeing Centre & Cafe - Main Contractor	Works	£1,960,000.05	Hugh J O'Boyle	N	Funded by UV. CPD/SIB set threshold applies	N	N/A
ITT 37511	Installation of New Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) Air Conditioning at City Hall	Works	£141,711.78	BL Refrigeration	Y	N/A	N	10%
ITT 37549	MTC small engineering & general metalwork	Works	£207,215.00	WJM Building Services	Y	N/A	N	10%
ITT 37616	Design and Build Contractor for the construction of a new Changing Facility at Brook 3G Intermediate Pitch	Works	£191,500.00	CivCo Ltd	Y	N/A	N	10%
ITT 37655	UV - Main Contractor for Hosford Community Homes	Works	£760,532.55	McKelvey Construction Ltd	N	Funded by UV. CPD/SIB set threshold applies	N	N/A

**Table 2: Summary of key findings/ data**

Key area/ criteria	Summary/ Key Findings
Total number of tenders awarded during Reporting Period	24 tenders awarded
Total number of tenders awarded where SVPP was applied	14 out of 24 tenders
Number of tenders awarded where a % weighting and scoring was applied.	7 out of 24 tenders
Summary of reasons why SVPP was not applied	3 out of 24 – STAs/ Direct Awards 5 out of 24 – an external framework was used to award contract therefore restricted to framework evaluation criteria 2 out of 24 – externally funded project therefore CPD Buy Social policy applies but are below threshold (CPD/SIB set threshold) to include social value
Total number of tenders awarded where CPD Buy Social (above threshold) was applied	None
Number of Reserved Contracts	None.  Social Value Review Team to consider if any further guidance is required about when/ what tenders should be reserved to social enterprises.
Social value organisational behaviours selected for inclusion in tenders.	Ethical Procurement Policies - included in 10 out of 14 tenders Environmental Managements Systems - included in 7 out of 12 tenders Single Use Plastics Policy - included in 0 out of 12 tenders Donating/recycling equipment to VCSE policy - included in 0 out of 12 tenders Equality and Diversity policy - included in 11 out of 12 tenders Employee development, health, and wellbeing policy - included in 11 out of 12 tenders  The Social Value Review Team will review guidance to ensure it is clear when to include these organisational behaviours in tenders; particular areas where there are low levels of inclusion i.e. single use plastic and donating/ recycling equipment to VCSE sector policies.

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

Tender Awarded - Supplier	Social Value Initiatives																
	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Apprenticeships	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Priority Groups	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Students	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups	Initiatives to enhance employability of young people	Use of a social enterprise or co-operative in the supply chain (in relation to contract)	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation	Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial & ethnic backgrounds	Initiatives to reduce or prevent crime (including hate crime) and/or ASB	Initiatives to reduce or prevent health related inequalities	Initiatives to increase participation in sports related activities	Initiatives to increase participation in arts related activities	Reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply	Reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation	Improve waste management, including recycling, upcycling and supporting the circular	Improve resource efficiency	Enhance environmental natural resources and biodiversity
T2476 - Provision of building management, operation and café provision at 2 Royal Avenue, Belfast - MayWe Events Ltd					✓												
T2494 - Supply and Delivery of Office Supplies - Banner Group Limited				✓													
T2499 Provision of a Carnival Parade / Pageant for St Patrick's Day 2024 - Luxe								✓				✓	✓		✓		
T2449 - Independent playground inspections - Play Services Ireland Ltd									✓								
T2464 - Supply and delivery of summer plants and installation of containers - Hanna Nurseries													✓	✓			
T2443 - Collection and treatment of paints and varnishes - Irish Waste Services	✓	✓								✓							

## Appendix 1

	Social Value Initiatives																
Tender Awarded - Supplier	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Apprenticeships	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Priority Groups	Number of employment weeks* (FTE) created for Students	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups	Initiatives to enhance employability of young people	Use of a social enterprise or co-operative in the supply chain (in relation to contract)	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation	Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial & ethnic backgrounds	Initiatives to reduce or prevent crime (including hate crime) and/or ASB	Initiatives to reduce or prevent health related inequalities	Initiatives to increase participation in sports related activities	Initiatives to increase participation in arts related activities	Reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply	Reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation	Improve waste management, including recycling, upcycling and supporting the circular	Improve resource efficiency	Enhance environmental natural resources and biodiversity
T2215(c) - Accessible Tourism Programme - Smith and Kent Consulting				✓													
ITT 37511 - Installation of New Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) Air Conditioning at City Hall - BL Refrigeration													✓	✓		✓	
ITT 37549 - MTC small engineering & general metalwork - WJM Building Services Ltd														✓	✓		
ITT 37616 - Design and Build Contractor for the construction of a new Changing Facility at Brook 3G Intermediate Pitch - CivCo Ltd			✓		✓						✓						



<b>Subject:</b>	Draft Language Strategy Action Plan
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer Michael Johnston, Language Officer Colm McGuigan, Irish Language Officer

## Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

☐

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

☐

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of report or summary of main issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on recent progress on the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the contents of this report;</li> <li>• Approve the amended version of the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>Belfast City Council conducted a consultation on the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan between 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024. The public and interested parties were encouraged to give feedback through an online survey available in English and Irish and were able to make submissions in writing. A range of consultation sessions and stakeholder engagement sessions were also conducted by Council officers.</p>
3.2	<p>The consultation resulted in a range of amendments to the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan. This revised plan was presented to members at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024.</p>
3.3	<p>While there was broad agreement with the revised Action Plan, members suggested some further amendments to the Action Plan, specifically, actions in relation to the development of a Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme and recurring annual funding for a large-scale event to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge.</p>
3.4	<p>The proposals in relation to Seachtain na Gaeilge also included a commitment to compiling and publishing a comprehensive programme of events for all events, not just those organised by Council. It was also proposed that the Council would organise a comprehensive calendar of events and place particular emphasis on Irish language branding, posters, exhibitions in City Hall and use of Irish at Council meetings during the festival.</p>
3.5	<p>These proposals are likely to require additional significant resource commitments, including staffing resource. It is therefore proposed that there is a commitment to undertaking exploratory work on these proposals as part of the Action Plan. A detailed report will come to the Language Strategy Working Group in relation to Seachtain na Gaeilge 2025 in the coming months.</p>
3.6	<p>Members will note that the amendments suggested at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee have been changed slightly for their inclusion in the Draft Language Strategy</p>



	Action Plan. This is to give officers the opportunity to explore the full scope of these suggested amendments and the operational and resource issues associated with them.
3.5	<p><b><u>Next steps</u></b></p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the amended version of the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan;</li> </ul>
	<b>Monitoring and Reporting</b>
3.6	A quarterly progress update will be brought to the Language Strategy Working Group outlining progress in the implementation of the Action Plan.
	<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>
3.7	None associated with this report.
	<b>Equality, good relations or rural needs implications</b>
3.8	The Draft Language Strategy Action Plan has been subjected to a Section 75 Equality Screening and to a Rural Needs Impact Assessment.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1: Draft Language Strategy Action Plan

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## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

This is a draft action plan across the all the language strands in the Council's Language Strategy 2018-23.

The Council launched its Language Strategy in April 2018. The Strategy commits to establishing a transparent set of principles for promoting, protecting and enhancing the linguistic diversity of the city. There are five language strands within the Strategy:

- Irish
- Ulster-Scots
- Minority Ethnic Communities
- Sign Languages (British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language)
- Disability Communications

This Strategy is organised on thematic work streams setting out how the Council will deliver its commitments in the Language Strategy. It identifies both immediate priorities and longer- term goals. Whilst the immediate priorities will be in the initial focus, it is the aspiration to deliver all of the priorities identified within the lifetime of this plan.

The Council's Legal & Civic Services Department will have overall responsibility for monitoring progress of the priorities with the action plan. However, it is the responsibility of each Council Department to ensure that the Language Strategy and this action plan informs the delivery of their functions. This action plan will be subject to annual review with regular update reports brought to the Elected Member Language Strategy Working Group which reports to the Council's Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.

Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

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3.0 Community, Education and Business..... 10

4.0 Staff Awareness and Training ..... 12

5.0 Engagement ..... 15

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## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

### 1.0 Access to Council Services

	Language	Action	Responsible Department (Resourcing to be confirmed)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
1.1	All Languages	Provision and promotion of interpretation and translation services across the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
1.2	Minority Ethnic Communities	To explore the development of a signposting database, including identifying already available advice, on how to access public services in Belfast through different languages including an exploration of what may already be available and promoting this information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Good Relations</li> <li>Marketing and Comms</li> </ul>	Quarter 4		
1.3	Minority Ethnic Communities	To continue to provide good quality of automated translation software on external website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and Comms</li> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
1.4	Disability Communications	To develop guidance to support departments in the accessibility to Council documents, services and facilities from a disability perspective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>All Departments</li> </ul>	Quarter 3		

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

	Language	Action	Responsible Department (Resourcing to be confirmed)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
1.5	Irish	Creation and promotion of a <a href="mailto:gaeilge@belfastcity.gov.uk">gaeilge@belfastcity.gov.uk</a> email address and website page explaining how the public can contact us in Irish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and Comms</li> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Quarter 3		
1.6	Irish	Codify the arrangements for the use of Irish in Council meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Quarter 3		
1.7	All Languages	Ensure Council-run events and festivals have regard to the promotion of different languages and encourage the delivery of relevant events in City Hall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Place and Economy/Economic Development</li> <li>City &amp; Neighbourhood Services</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
1.8	Irish	Develop a list of key strategic Council documents and publications to proactively be made available in Irish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Lead department</li> <li>Marketing and Comms</li> </ul>	Quarter 4		

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

	Language	Action	Responsible Department (Resourcing to be confirmed)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
1.09	All Languages	To provide information on the website (and City Matters) on how to use the translation function on the website, how to telephone the council using BigWord and requesting an interpreter or documents in an alternative language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and Comms</li> <li>• Customer Focus</li> <li>• Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>• Good Relations</li> </ul>	Quarter 4		
1.10	Irish	Develop a protocol for the provision of Irish press statements where the subject relates to Irish or is related to a key strategic Council initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and Comms</li> <li>• Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Quarter 3		
1.11	All Languages	Develop a protocol for the provision of Language content across the Council's social media platforms on a regular basis where the subject relates to a service to the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and Comms</li> <li>• Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Quarter 4		
1.12	All Languages	Requests for social media content in other languages where it relates to specific events or celebrations associated with the Council will be accommodated, where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Quarter 4		
1.13	Sign Languages	To provide a clear description on website and City Matters of what	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and Comms</li> </ul>	Quarter 3		

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

	Language	Action	Responsible Department (Resourcing to be confirmed)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
		services are available in Sign Languages to members of the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>• Customer Focus</li> </ul>			
1.14	All Languages	Develop an approach to provide regular content in other languages in City Matters. This will be developed in line with agreed parameters at <b>Annex 1</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and Comms</li> <li>• Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>• Good Relations</li> </ul>	Quarter 4		
1.15	Irish	Development of a recurring page in Irish in City Matters with information about the language and Council policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>• Marketing and Comms</li> </ul>		Quarter 1	
1.16	All Languages	Review protocols for staff to support non-English speaking customers to include a code of courtesy for indigenous languages and provision of cultural awareness training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Hub</li> <li>• Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Quarter 4		
1.17	All Languages	Carry out an audit of Council staff to assess language capability and their willingness to provide services in another language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>• Corporate HR</li> </ul>	Quarter 2		



## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

	Language	Action	Responsible Department (Resourcing to be confirmed)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
1.18	Irish	Develop a corporate Irish language policy, including an approach to signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Departments</li> </ul>	Ongoing		
1.19	Ulster-Scots	Develop a corporate Ulster-Scots language policy, including an approach to signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Departments</li> </ul>	Quarter 4		
1.20	All Languages	Include consideration of opportunities for development of language skills in staff development/ process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer Hub</li> <li>Human Resources</li> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>		Quarter 2	
1.21	Sign Languages	To expand the provision of Sign Language translation on popular pages on the website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Marketing &amp; Comms</li> </ul>		Quarter 3	
1.22	All Languages	To ensure operating partners such as GLL provide appropriate language interpretation and translation services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>		Quarter 4	
1.23	Irish	Explore the provision of simultaneous interpreting for Members who wish to address the Council through the medium of Irish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services</li> </ul>		Quarter 3	

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

### 2.0 Branding

	Language	Action	Responsible Department	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
2.1	Irish	Promote the availability of the Irish language Council logo, use of bilingual English/Irish corporate signatures and Irish language City brand for use in correspondence, documentation, literature etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Marketing and Comms</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
2.2	Irish	Carry out exploratory work on a bilingual corporate logo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Marketing and Comms</li> </ul>		Quarter 4	
2.3	Ulster-Scots and Irish	Work with the stakeholders to develop an approach to raise awareness on Ulster-Scots and Irish place/street names.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Place and Economy/Economic Development</li> <li>Good Relations</li> <li>Marketing and Comms</li> </ul>	Quarter 4		
2.4	Ulster-Scots	Develop an Ulster-Scots Language Council logo, bilingual Ulster Scots/Irish corporate signatures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>		Quarter 3	

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

	Language	Action	Responsible Department	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
		and explore the development of Ulster Scots City brand for use in correspondence, documentation, literature etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and Comms</li> </ul>			
2.5	Sign Language	Develop an approach to translated Sign Language “welcome” information at identified council venues liaising with relevant departments on the installation and procurement of new screens where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Marketing and Communications</li> <li>Physical Programmes</li> </ul>			Quarter to be decided in 2025-26
	Disability Communications	Develop an approach to signage across Council facilities liaising with relevant departments on the installation and procurement of new Disability signage e.g., braille, tactile maps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical Programmes</li> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Marketing and Communications</li> </ul>			Quarter to be decided in 2025-26

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

### 3.0 Community, Education and Business

	Language	Action	Responsible Department	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
3.1	All Languages	Explore the development of a Language Strategy development fund for internal and external events and continue to host internal and external events promoting all strands of the Language Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Finance</li> <li>Place and Economy/Economic Development</li> </ul>			Quarter to be decided in 2025-26
3.2	All Languages	Support the implementation of language-related actions in the Belfast Stories Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place and Economy/Belfast Destination Hub</li> <li>Physical Programmes</li> <li>Legal and Civic Services</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
3.3	Irish	Development of a range of workshops/information sessions and events on council related issues such as recycling biodiversity etc aimed at Irish Medium Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>City and Neighbourhood</li> </ul>			Quarter to be decided in 2025-26
3.4	Irish	Delivery of Employment/Upskilling Academies for Irish-medium classroom assistants and others working in the Irish medium education sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place and Economy/Economic Development</li> <li>Legal and Civic Services</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

	Language	Action	Responsible Department	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
3.5	Irish	Production of Irish language booklet of basic Irish phrases, sayings and facts about the benefits of bilingualism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>		Quarter 3	
3.6	Ulster-Scots	Distribution and promotion of Ulster-Scots Place Name of Belfast booklet at City Hall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
3.7	All Languages	Explore how the benefits of linguistic diversity can be promoted to the business and tourism community in Belfast, including the promotion of cultural initiatives to increase the visibility of other languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Place and Economy/Economic Development</li> </ul>			Quarter to be decided in 2025-26
3.8	Minority Ethnic Communities	Promote ESOL (English for Speakers of other Languages) courses provided by Belfast Metropolitan College and other local providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Marketing and Communications</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
3.9	Irish	Explore the development of a Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme which will support students of Irish in Belfast to attend Gaeltacht Summer Courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Finance</li> </ul>		Quarter 1	
3.10	Irish	Explore the provision of annual recurring funding for the delivery of a Seachtain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Quarter 3		

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

	Language	Action	Responsible Department	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
		na Gaeilge event, to include a communications plan for the promotion of events and Irish language by the Council during the festival.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place and Economy/Economic Development</li> </ul>			

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### 4.0 Key Area of Work: Staff Awareness and Training

	Language	Action	Responsible Department	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
4.1	Sign Languages	To provide a range of Sign Language courses to staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>	Quarter 1	Ongoing	Ongoing
4.2	Disability Communications	To promote awareness to the public through the website and City Matters of how to access Council documents, services and facilities, such as, how to request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and Communications</li> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Customer Focus</li> </ul>	Quarter 3		

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

	Language	Action	Responsible Department	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
		documents/forms in an alternative format.				
4.3	Disability Communication	To explore introducing Makaton training to staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>		Quarter 1	
4.4	All Languages	Development and roll-out of Making Communications Accessible Guide to staff and develop guidance for staff on providing accessible options (e.g., subtitles, dubbing) for remote meetings and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Corporate HR</li> <li>Marketing &amp; Communications</li> <li>Digital Services</li> </ul>	Quarter 3		
4.5	Irish	Establish an informal discussion group for Irish speaking staff and staff who wish to learn Irish and encourage the use of Irish amongst staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Quarter 2		
4.6	All languages	To support recruitment the Council will aim to extend our reach by, for example, by ensuring that job advertisements are distributed widely and specifically to employability and support organisations associated with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Resources</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

	Language	Action	Responsible Department	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
		particularly under-represented groups.				



## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

### 5.0 Key Area of Work: Engagement

	Language	Action	Responsible Department	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
5.1	Minority Ethnic Communities	Establishment of an Minority Ethnic Communities stakeholder forum to give input into action plans and policy development. This forum would be a sub-group from the Migrant Forum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal and Civic Services/EDU</li> <li>Good Relations</li> </ul>		Quarter 4	
5.2	All Languages	Inclusion of young people in the Council's external Language Strategy Engagement Fora. Any engagement with the Irish-medium youth sector will be conducted through Irish.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal &amp; Civic Services/EDU</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

### Annex 1 – interim approach for selected languages for Minority Ethnic Communities

Information has been gathered from various sources to identify the most in demand language for Minority Ethnic Communities.

The number of language translation/interpreting requests to Council since April 2018 are set out below:

Language	Number of requests
Arabic	15
Russian	4
Polish	4
Somalian	2
Chinese (Mandarin Traditional)	1
Chinese (Mandarin Simplified)	1
Romanian	1
Spanish	1

The Belfast Health & Social Care Trust have provided latest statistics on their most requested languages for interpreting health matters:

Language	Requests
1. Arabic	9235
2. Polish	4697
3. Romanian	3032
4. Somali	2708
5. Slovak	2138

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

A collection of Language statistics from Census 2021 were published in September 2022, however more details on Languages will be published during Winter/Spring 2023. Below we have a list of languages spoken at home.

	Main Language		
		Population	%
1	English	310,386	93.000944
2	Polish	3843	1.1514779
3	Irish*	2659	0.7967161
4	Chinese (Mandarin)	2272	0.6807593
5	Arabic	2046	0.6130429
6	Romanian	1460	0.4374597
7	Spanish	960	0.2876448
8	Portuguese	669	0.2004524
9	Slovak	649	0.1944598
10	Malayalam	527	0.157905
11	Tagalog/Filipino	462	0.138429
12	Hungarian	433	0.1297398
13	Chinese (Cantonese)	415	0.1243464
14	Lithuanian	397	0.1189531
15	Russian	228	0.0683156
16	Bulgarian	179	0.0536338
17	Latvian	123	0.0368545
18	Tetan	20	0.0059926
19	Other languages*	6017	1.8028735
	TOTAL	333,745	100

Please note that Census 2021 asked follow up questions on Irish and Ulster-Scots language ability:

## Language Strategy – Draft Action Plan 2024-2027

17,986 people in Belfast indicated that they can speak, write, and read Irish Language

2,553 people in Belfast indicated that they can speak, write, and read Ulster-Scots

### **Recommendation – top 5 Ethnic Minority Communities languages for translating Council material**

Based on the Census 2021 statistics and from language requests issued to the Council and the Belfast Trust in recent years, we are recommending that the following languages to be listed as the top five for translating Council material:

1. Polish
2. Chinese (Mandarin & Simplified)
3. Arabic
4. Romanian
5. Somali



<b>Subject:</b>	Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <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 person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"><input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>
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Never	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>								

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To report to committee on the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2024.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	That the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2024 including:
2.2	<p><b><u>Committee Papers of 8th April meeting which was inquorate - for notation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members were advised by the Good Relations Manager that the meeting scheduled for 8th April had been inquorate and had therefore not been held. He drew the Members' attention to the Committee pack for that date and advised that no decisions had been required as the papers had all been update position reports. He advised the Members to contact him directly if they had any queries and agreed for Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to note the papers of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024.</li> </ul>
2.3	<p><b><u>Good Relations Verbal Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Good Relations Manager advised that officers were still not in receipt of a Letter of Offer from The Executive Office, however, he hoped to be able to provide a further update at the June meeting.</li> </ul>
2.4	<p><b><u>The Executive Office Asylum Dispersal Verbal Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee the verbal update provided and detailed in the minutes.</li> </ul>
2.5	<p><b><u>Peace IV - Secretariat Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report.</li> </ul>
2.6	<p><b><u>PEACEPLUS – Theme 1.1 - Local Action Plan Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Partnership agreed to recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p>The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which consists of Elected members and representatives from various sectors across the city. The minutes from the Partnership are brought before the Committee for approval on a monthly basis.</p>
3.2	<p>The key issues on the agenda at the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee Papers of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 (Inquorate)</li> <li>Good Relations Verbal Update</li> </ul>

3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Executive Office Asylum Dispersal Verbal Update</li> <li>• Peace IV – Secretariat Update</li> <li>• Peaceplus – Theme 1.1 – Local Action Plan Update</li> </ul> <p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the minutes of the meeting attached in Appendix 1 and a copy Committee Papers of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 is attached in Appendix 2.</p>
3.4	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>All financial implications are covered through existing budgets.</p>
3.5	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The recommendations of the Partnership promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Minutes of the Shared City Partnership 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Committee Papers of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024</p>

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## **SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP**

**Monday 13th May, 2024**

### **MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillors Duffy (Chairperson) and McLaughlin.

External Members: Mr. P. Anderson, Department for Communities;  
Ms. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Superintendent N. Henry, PSNI;  
Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council;  
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;  
Ms. C. McMenamin, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;  
Ms. T. Mimna, Good Relations, TEO;  
Mr. W. Naeem, Interfaith Forum;  
Mr. G. Walker, Community and Voluntary Sector; and  
Ms. A. M. White, British Red Cross.

In attendance: Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;  
Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager;  
Mr. D. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer;  
Mrs. L. Dolan, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were recorded from Councillor Smyth and Ms. A. Roberts, Mr. J. Donnelly and Mr. L. Gunn.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 11th March, 2024, were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Ms. B. Arthurs declared an interest in respect of agenda item 3, Good Relations Update, in that she worked for an organisation that was in receipt of funding, as the item did not become the subject of discussion, she was not required to leave the meeting.

#### **Committee Papers of 8th April meeting which was inquorate - for notation**

The Good Relations Manager advised the Members that the meeting scheduled for 8th April had been inquorate and had therefore not been held. He drew the Members' attention to the Committee pack for that date and advised that no

decisions had been required as the papers had all been update position reports. He advised the Members to contact him directly if they had any queries.

Noted.

### **Good Relations Update - verbal update**

The Good Relations Manager advised that officers were still not in receipt of a Letter of Offer from The Executive Office, however, he hoped to be able to provide a further update at the June meeting.

Noted.

### **TEO Asylum Dispersal - verbal update**

The Good Relations Manager advised that representatives from Mears had been invited to attend this month's meeting but had requested that the Working Group consider extending an invitation to a representative from the Home Office to also be in attendance to help address some of the queries.

The officer then drew the Members' attention to the undernoted briefing document that had been received from Mears in relation to questions that had been submitted to Mears by officers in advance of Mears attending the Partnership.

- **Overview of contract with HO**

**Mears entered into the AASC (Asylum Accommodation and Support Contract) with the Home Office in 2019. Mears's role in the delivery of the AASC contract is to provide adequate, safe, and habitable accommodation. The financial support and asylum policy sits with the Home Office.**

**The 10-year contract reflects a change from the previous approach taken by the Home Office. The contract was designed to prevent homelessness and promote community cohesion.**

**Mears are contracted to house families and individuals seeking asylum within 4 hours of notification of arrival. It is important to note that Mears is not a 'dispersal region', in that we house families & individuals who present to claim asylum in Northern Ireland only.**

- **Contingency accommodation**

**Since 2021, a number of factors led to Mears taking on hotel-style accommodation. This was an emergency response to an unprecedented increase in new arrivals.**

**At the peak of contingency accommodation, Mears were operating within 23 hotel sites including smaller B&B style accommodations. As of June 2024, there will be 13 hotel sites**

within the estate, following 5 closures which are currently underway. We endeavour to close an additional 3 hotel sites before the end of 2024 which will bring the total number of hotels used to 10 across the region.

Currently, asylum seeking families and individuals facing destitution will be initially placed into contingency or hotel-style accommodation. Hotels are separated into family, single-male and single-female cohorts. Each resident is entitled to full room and board, as well as essential toiletries. Each hotel has a welfare support officer on-site to facilitate initial property inductions, as well as key signposting and safeguarding duties.

- **Widening dispersal**

In 2022 the Home Office decided to widened dispersal outside of Belfast. Mears acquire new dispersal and contingency accommodation in new council areas, including: Derry & Strabane, Causeway Coast and Glens, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Newry Mourne & Down, Antrim & Newtownabbey, Mid & East Antrim, North Down & Ards, and Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon.

- **Reporting repairs and accommodation issues**

The AASC contract is not self-reporting. The AIRE (asylum issues reporting and eligibility) contract held by Migrant Help governs the relationship between the Home Office and contractor responsible for providing advice and assistance to people seeking asylum in understanding the asylum support system across the UK.

Migrant Help are contracted to provide advice and assistance logging of Issue Reported, and Eligibility for people seeking asylum. All issues relating to housing (maintenance and relocation) & welfare should be reported through this pathway, to be documented and relayed to the relevant team within Mears.

Migrant Help are contracted to send reported repairs to asylum accommodation providers. There are 3 categories applied to repair and maintenance issues: an immediate 2-hour make-safe, with 24-hour completion; 7 days; and 28 days.

- **Induction information**

Mears are contracted to provide a full induction for residents into contingency and dispersal accommodation. The induction includes taking the resident through their tenancy agreement utilising translation services to do so.

Additional information includes material provided by Migrant Help relating to the AIRE contract, material from the Home Office on the asylum process, rights & responsibilities, as well as a 'Local

Information Guide' developed by Mears and translated. This includes general information on the local area, guidance on access to Health & Education, as well as a directory of CVS support services and access pathways to these.

Please note that Mears are currently adapting Welcome Packs in consultation with residents and our front-line teams, with support from council good relations officers & trusts across Northern Ireland. This is a regular process as we aim to make the information provided more current, concise and accessible for our residents.

- **Procurement**

Heat mapping is to check safety and suitability of accommodation. Home Office, PSNI and NIHE provide the input on heat mapping. Mears is provided with heat mapped council areas broken down into ward level. Green, amber and red wards. Green is ok to procure, Amber can procure but propose property address for decision. Red do not procure.

- **Hotel allocation and standing up/closing hotels- response to protests and engagement with PSNI-local community.**

Allocations within contingency accommodation are based on available spaces, and matching families to the bed spaces & rooms available. Hotels are divided into family, male and female cohorts.

Mears work with PSNI and Home Office on by sharing information found on social media and other avenues in relation to planned protests. Robust procedures are in place to safeguard residents in hotels in the event of a protest. This includes additional on-site welfare support to monitor and support service users, as well as additional security presence to mitigate risk of escalation.

Mears work closely with the PSNI to facilitate productive engagement with residents, including orientation sessions on rights & responsibilities, community safety, hate crime reporting, and other issues including consent and domestic abuse.

This has been completed with the support of lived-experience organisation with an understanding of the barriers faced in this area. We believe that there is a collective responsibility of all parties to equip newcomer families and individuals with information on their rights and responsibilities in the UK, and we are always open to further engagement from the PSNI and community partners.

- **Data Sharing**

**Mears are not in a position to share sensitive data relating to service users or the properties in which they are accommodated. We currently work within Information Sharing Agreements (ISAs) which are in place with NIHE, Health and Education to facilitate the implementation of key support.**

**Mears have been working to set up ISAs with a number of partners including councils.**

**Mears have no information that allows them forecast intake of people seeking asylum. Northern Ireland is a non-dispersal zone which mean that Northern Ireland only support those asylum seeker who arrive in Northern Ireland.**

The Working Group noted the responses to the prepared questions but agreed that it would still like Mears to attend a future meeting, along with a representative from the Home Office, to enable discussion on the many issues of concern. It was further agreed that, if available, a TEO representative should also be invited to attend the meeting.

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer reported that following the closure of the open call on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 16 submissions were received. These were assessed and scored according to agreed criteria. It has been agreed to award the remaining Asylum Dispersal funding to 5 projects following the Open Call for applications, and support a further 2 projects, submitted as part of this call, through the Good Relations Action Plan Budget under BCC5 and the existing action around Supporting Community Groups to develop integration, subject to funding for the Good Relations Action Plan.

#### **Peace IV - Secretariat Update**

The PEACE Programme Manager provided the Partnership with an update in respect of the activity associated with the closure of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

As previously advised, the PEACE IV delivery partners would be notified of the revised retention period of 31st December 2029, the archiving of Council records and documentation was continuing.

In relation to claims reimbursement, she reported that following legal advice on the process relating to the SSS claims impacted by the financial correction, officers were progressing the claims to the next stage. This would enable reimbursement of P31-33 claims, valued at approx. £1.26m to be progressed by SEUPB. She advised that senior officers were continuing to liaise with SEUPB through a legal approach on this issue.

At the time of writing the report, the value of the claims remained at £4.2m, however, the officer report that earlier in the week £1.07m had been received. She advised that officers would continue to liaise with the SEUPB in respect of a timeframe for the verification and reimbursement of the outstanding claims.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report.

**Peace Plus Belfast City Council**  
**Local Action Plan Update**

The Working Group considered the following report:

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

The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership members with an update on the assessment of PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed Belfast Local Community Peace Action Plan.

**2.0 Recommendations**

Members note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report.

**3.0 Main report**

**3.1 Application Assessment Status**

At April’s meeting, members were advised that clarifications had been received from The Executive Office (TEO) Corporate Governance Branch (CGB) and Economic Assessment Branch (EAB). Subsequent clarifications were also received from SEUPB, and all responses were to be provided within a tight timeframe.

3.2 Due to the extent of the clarifications, the introduction of new finance system, Easter holidays and end of leave year, CMT advised that an extended response timeframe should be requested. Subsequently responses were provided to TEO by 17 April 2024 to enable the consideration by the TEO Major Business Case Committee (MBCC) on 25 April 2024, and SEUPB Steering Committee in May 2024.

3.3 Following submission of the above responses, further clarifications were received and responded to from the TEO Communities in Transition team. TEO subsequently advised that further queries were raised by CGB and EAB) before providing advice to Major Business Case Committee.

3.4 Given the timeframe, the application will now be considered by the MBCC on 30 May 2024, and the SEUPB steering committee

on 19 June 2024, with a Letter of Offer to follow. TEO has advised this timeframe remains within the 28 week window outlined in the assessment process.

3.5 The Programme Manager has liaised with relevant officers to respond to all clarifications and will also consider the impact of the delayed timeframe on implementation and mobilisation, as well as community expectations.

3.6 Members are requested to note that responses to five clarification documents have been provided, and should also note the revised timeframe for approval,

3.7 **Staff Recruitment**

Appointments have been made for the Lead Officer, who will take up the role on 3 June 2024, and the Programme Support Assistant. Interviews are progressing for the Project Officer and Project Managers throughout April / May 2024.

3.8 **Capacity Building Programme**

Delivery of the Prepare to Procure Capacity Building Programme is continuing, with sessions focusing on the procurement process. The Writing Winning Tenders session which took place on 25 April 2024 was fully booked and well received.

Feedback from attendees has been positive, however further sessions on the procurement process focusing on building capacity of smaller community organisations is being considered.

3.9 **Financial and Resource Implications**

Expenditure associated with the PEACEPLUS LCAP is eligible from the submission date. As such expenditure is within the existing budget which will be claimed retrospectively from SEUPB. Advice on the drawdown of the £30K advance from SEUPB is outstanding and will be progressed by the Programme Manager, once the clarification process has been completed.

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

Plan has been submitted for equality and good relations screening as well as rural needs assessment.”

The Working Group noted the update and agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report.

Chairperson



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



**Belfast  
City Council**

29th March, 2024

## **MEETING OF THE SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Working Group will meet in the Conor Room, City Hall as a Hybrid meeting on Monday, 8th April, 2024 at 1.30 pm, 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 (Pages 1 - 8)
  - (c) Declarations of Interest
2. **Good Relations Quarter 4 Update** (Pages 9 - 16)
3. **Peace IV - Secretariat Update** (Pages 17 - 22)
4. **Peace Plus Belfast City Council Local Action Plan Update** (Pages 23 - 26)
5. **Forth Meadow Community Greenway Walk** (Pages 27 - 28)



**SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP****Monday 11th March, 2024****MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP  
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillor Duffy (Chairperson);  
Alderman Copeland; and  
Councillors Lyons, McLaughlin and McMullan.

External Members: Mr. L. Gunn, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;  
Ms. J. Irwin, Community Relations Council;  
Ms. C. McMenamin, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;  
Ms. T. Mimna, Good Relations, TEO;  
Mr. W. Naeem, Interfaith Forum; and  
Ms. A. Roberts, Community and Voluntary Sector.

In attendance: Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;  
Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager;  
Mr. D. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer;  
Mrs. L. Dolan, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

**Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillor Smyth, Mr J Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager and Mrs. B. Arthurs, Mr. P. Anderson, Superintendent Henry, Mr. M. McBride, Mr. G. Walker and Ms. A M White.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 5th February, 2024, were taken as read and signed as correct.

**Declarations of Interest**

Councillor McMullan declared an interest in the item "The Executive Office Asylum Dispersal Funding Update", in that he was an individual member of Belfast City of Sanctuary, and he left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

**Shared City Partnership Membership (Verbal Update)**

The Good Relations Manager advised the Working Group that Mr. Liam Gunn had been appointed as the nominee from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Chairperson welcomed him to his first meeting.

The Good Relations Manager also advised that Ms. Clare Guinness, Belfast Chamber of Commerce, had been appointed as the Business representative nominee and, although not at today's meeting, he hoped that she would be available to attend the next meeting of the Partnership.

Noted.

### **The Executive Office Asylum Dispersal Funding Update**

(Councillor McMullan, having declared an interest in this item, left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.)

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer reminded the Members that, in March 2023, The Executive Office (TEO) had awarded the Council £406,228 of Asylum Dispersal Funding to support proposals to enhance or develop support for asylum seekers. She then provided the Working Group with an update on the projects which had been delivered over the past 9 months, noting that £70,000 of the overall funding awarded by TEO had been allocated to the provision of an Immigration Advice Project, however, following a procurement exercise, whereby no award had been made and following a further commissioning of Regional Immigration Advice Services by TEO, the Council was now proposing to reprofile this money into supporting four further projects.

She reported that, given the increase in the number of people seeking asylum, whom had been accommodated in new areas of Belfast and the growing use of community and voluntary organisations, across the city, it was proposed that the remainder of this funding be used to procure four projects to support the localised community integration and inclusion of asylum seekers in Belfast. This would be done through an open call, prioritising organisations that had not been recipients of this fund, while also inviting applications in areas where asylum seekers have not been traditionally accommodated.

The officer advised that the proposed approach was consistent with previous conversations raised at the Shared City Partnership in relation to supporting capacity within local communities to accommodate the integration and inclusion of asylum seekers.

Following a query regarding the fair distribution of the available funding, the officer encouraged the Members of the Partnership to make any organisations that they felt might be keen to avail of the funding aware of the fact that it would be going out for an open call and assured the Members that officers could provide advice to organisations that were interested in developing projects in relation to asylum seekers.

In regard to specific concerns raised regarding the lack of integration of asylum seekers into the community within the Shankill area, the Good Relations Manager undertook to liaise further with the Member directly.

Discussion ensued regarding the data around the housing of asylum seekers and following discussion it was agreed that a representative from Mears be invited to a future meeting of the Partnership to provide an overview of its role.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it approves that the remaining £70,000 of Asylum Dispersal Money be used to procure four further projects to support the localised community integration and inclusion of asylum seekers in Belfast.

### **Segregation and the Environment Research Report**

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer reminded the Partnership that, as part of the Good Relations Action Plan for 2022/23, provision had been made for the development of a piece of research to identify the links between segregation within the city and its subsequent impact on the environment and the climate.

At its meeting in February 2023, Members of the Partnership: *“noted the report and the actions being taken to implement the recommendations in the research, including the provision already made within the previously agreed Good Relations Action Plan”*. Further, Members agreed *“to publish and disseminate the report, Segregation and the Environment, after further internal and external engagement has taken place”*.

The officer continued that, as part of the further internal and external engagement, the research had been considered by the Chief Officers Management Team (CMT), in February 2023 who had discussed the report and requested that further discussion on the research be undertaken. CMT had also requested that the author of the report would attend a future meeting of CMT to discuss its contents further with them. Mr. Peter Osborne had subsequently attended CMT in April 2023 to input into the conversation and to address queries that the senior management had had regarding the content, background and recommendations contained within the report.

Following this, two workshops had been held with a number of internal staff sections to discuss the research and the recommendations further. Central to this was to look at how the recommendations could be taken forward by various relevant Council sections. In addition, officers had engaged through various meetings and events with external parties.

Once this process had been completed, CMT had considered a revised draft of the report, along with the revised recommendations. Following discussion, CMT had engaged with Party Group Leaders who agreed that officers now progress the report through the Shared City Partnership and for onward agreement by Elected Members.

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer then drew the Members' attention to Updated Research Report, including updated recommendations, that had been attached as an appendices to the report.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that, following full Council approval, the research report be launched, published and that the recommendations within the report be progressed.

### **Peace IV - Secretariat Update**

The PEACE Programme Manager provided the Partnership with an update in respect of the activity associated with the closure of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

She reported that, as PEACE IV progressed towards closure, officers had been reviewing the ongoing contractual obligations, this included future audit requirements and the retention of all documentation associated with the delivery of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

She advised that all documentation associated with the delivery of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan was required to be retained for 5 years after the submission of the final claim, in line with the PEACE IV Programme Rules, therefore, the retention date was until 31st December 2028. In line with this, the contractual obligations, including the retention date, had been outlined to external delivery partners during the On the Spot Verification visit at project closure.

The Programme Manager advised that she had been liaising with relevant Council Departments, including Procurement Services, Human Resources and Finance to ensure compliance with PEACE IV retention requirements. Advice from Legal and Information Governance on the retention of records was being progressed and the archiving of all relevant information would be done in line with the Council's Records Retention Disposal Schedule and Policy.

In term of the reimbursement of PEACE IV claims the officer advised that this was progressing, with the Period 34 BPR claim for Council (£181K) and Period 34 CYP claim for NIHE (£62K) having now been paid. The value of outstanding claims remained as previously reported at £4.2m.

The Peace Programme Manager advised that community stakeholders continued to animate the Forth Meadow Community Greenway and were keen for the Partnership to continue to support the Greenway. They had invited the Partnership Members to participate in a walk along part of the Greenway from Glencairn, to the Springfield Dam and finishing at the City Cemetery, followed by refreshments at St John's Parish.

The Members agreed that this would be valuable as it would enable them to see first-hand the works that had been undertaken.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report and the appendices.

**Peace Plus Belfast City Council**  
**Local Action Plan Update**

The Partnership considered the undernoted report:

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

The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership members with an update on the assessment of PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed Belfast Local Community Peace Action Plan, and the proposed Capacity Building Programme.

**2.0 Recommendations**

Members note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report.

**3.0 Main report**

As members are aware, planning for the mobilisation of the Local Action Plan is progressing.

Officers have received and responded to initial clarifications from SEUPB regarding the submitted appendices that support the formal application, which indicates that the assessment process has progressed. The time frame for assessment approval and mobilisation of the Local Action Plan is being closely monitored to enable a realistic delivery schedule, any proposed delays will be reported to members, as necessary.

To aid understanding of Council's obligations in rolling out the Local Action Plan, including the monitoring and evaluation requirements, a request was submitted to SEUPB seeking advice on the proposed training that will be provided for Councils. In response, SEUPB advised they 'have not decided on approach around this, whether in terms of written guidance or training session with councils,' and they 'will revert on any decision and provide collective information to all 17 local authorities.'

In the absence of training / guidance, the management of risk in preparing for mobilisation is critical.

The immediate priorities, as previously reported, include the recruitment of staff, the delivery of a procurement capacity building programme and preparing for procurement. Recruitment of a Lead Officer to support the

development of systems and processes, commenced on 16 February, with further recruitment for project support administration to process in March 2024.

### 3.2 Capacity Building Programme

The content of the capacity building programme has been discussed with colleagues in Commercial and Procurement Services and Employability and Skills, as outlined below.

Training	Provider
PEACEPLUS Mobilisation Pre- Market Overview	PEACEPLUS Team
Introduction to Tendering	Commercial Procurement Services
Writing a Winning Bid	External Facilitator
Consortium Development	External Facilitator
Collaborative Bidding	External Facilitator
BCC Procurement System and Social Value Procurement Policy	Commercial Procurement Services
PEACEPLUS Monitoring and Evaluation	PEACEPLUS Team

Dates for delivery are to be confirmed, after which stakeholders will be informed and public advertising of the programme will be progressed. It is envisaged that subject to agreement delivery will commence mid-March to May 2024, which should align with the opening of tender calls.

### 3.3 Financial & Resource Implications

Expenditure associated with the LCAP is eligible from the submission date.

As such expenditure is within the existing budget which will be claimed retrospectively from SEUPB. Council is awaiting guidance on the drawdown of the £30K advance from SEUPB.



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

**Plan has been submitted for equality and good relations screening as well as rural needs assessment.”**

A Member commended the work that was currently being undertaken by the Peace Programme Manager and welcomed the fact that the recruitment of a Lead Officer had now commenced and that further recruitment for project support administration was due to commence later in the month. He added that it was disappointing that PEACE IV staff had not been able to be retained whilst transitioning to the new programme.

The Good Relations Manager concurred and stated that, due to the temporary nature of roles in a funded programme, staff had moved on to avail of new opportunities. He stated that ‘future succession planning’ was an issue that needed addressed to try and avoid such a loss of valuable officer experience and knowledge.

The Partnership agreed to recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report.

Chairperson

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**Belfast**  
City Council

SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

GOOD RELATIONS ACTION PLAN QUARTER 4 UPDATE

<b>Subject:</b>	Good Relations Action Plan Quarter 4 Update Report
<b>Date:</b>	8 April 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer (Acting)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager David Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer (Acting) Leish Dolan, Senior Good Relations Officer (Acting) Danny Sweeney, Good Relations Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <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>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>After Committee Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues				
1.1	To update the Shared City Partnership on the delivery of the Council’s Good Relations Action Plan during Quarter 4 which covers the period January – March 2024.				
2.0	Recommendation				
2.1	That Members note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they too, note the contents of the report.				
3.0	Main Report				
3.1	Members will be aware that, as reported, the Council’s Good Relations Action Plan contains £294,644 towards programme costs, made up of funding from the Council and The Executive Office’s District Council’s Good Relations Programme.				
3.2	Members will recall that during over the first 3 Quarters of the delivery of the Action Plan, a total of £246,614.84 was allocated to projects. During Q4, a further £38,750 was allocated bringing a total allocation to £285,364.84. A request will be made to The Executive Office to reprofile the slight under-allocation of £9,279.16, plus any subsequent underspend identified as projects complete, into salaries and administration, ensuring full spend of the Action Plan budget.				
3.3	Activity for Q4 is summarised as follows:				
	Code	Project Summary	Budget	Progress in Quarter 3	Total allocated
	BCC1	Good Relations Small Grants Programme.	£154,644	All projects in receipt of letter of offer and currently being delivered	Fully allocated
	BCC2	St Patrick’s Day Civic Events programme	Increased to £20,000	Following reprofile of BCC6, it was agreed to provide £20,000 towards the preparation of the Carnival Parade to improve the diversity of the event.	£20,000 allocated in Q4
	BCC3	Positive Cultural Expression Programme	Increased to £30,000	Beacon Programme delivered. 11 groups supported to deploy a beacon on the 11 <sup>th</sup> July. Increased allocation following reallocation of BCC6 in Q3.	Fully allocated
	BCC4	Civic Engagement and Learning Programme	£10,000	Full allocation delivered in Q1.	Fully allocated
	BCC5	Minority Ethnic Inclusion Programme	£30,000	2 projects supported in Q4.	£11,000 allocated towards Roma Engagement and £6,000 allocated to the revision of the Refugee Transition Guide

	BCC6	Civic Engagement and Strategic Priorities	£0	Following 2 unsuccessful quotation exercises, this budget was reallocated to BCC2 and BCC3.	Did not proceed
	BCC7	Interface Engagement and tackling sectarianism and racism	£40,000	2 further projects allocated support for interface events.	£1,750 allocated in Q4
	BCC8	Shared Education Schools Programme	£10,000	Programme being delivered in Q3 and Q4.	Fully allocated
	BCC 9	Strategic Intervention Programme	£0	N/A	£0
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£294,644</b>		<b>£38,750</b>
3.4	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b> All costs within the District Council's Good Relations Action Plan are covered within existing agreed budgets.				
3.5	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> All activity within the District Council's Good Relations Action Plan seek to improve Good Relations between people from different political, religious, and racial backgrounds.				
4.0	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>				
	1. Quarter 4 2023/24 Summary Action Plan update template				

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## Appendix 1: 2023/24 Quarter 4 Action Plan Programme Summary Report

Code	Key Priority	Project Summary	23/24 Programmes	Budget	Progress in Quarter 3	Total Q4 allocation
BCC1	All 4 themes – projects will be aligned to relevant theme	<b>Council Community Provision Support Programme.</b> Criteria will reflect focus on the 4 T;BUC themes and will provide opportunities for organisations across Belfast to engage in activities which promote the TBUC outcomes.	Good Relations Small Grants Programme to include Good Relations and Intervention outcomes	<b>£154,644</b>  <b>Total: £154,644</b>	45 projects were awarded letters of offer following an open application process in Q1. Projects ongoing.	<b>£0</b>
BCC2	Cultural expression	<b>St Patrick's Day Civic Events programme</b> to embed Good Relations Outcomes into events marking the celebration of Saint Patrick's Day.	Supporting the Tourism and Events Unit with events around St. Patrick's Day to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public events</li> <li>- Cultural activities such as music, dance, poetry</li> </ul>	<b>£20,000</b>  <b>Total: £10,000</b>	Following a reprofile of BCC6 in Q3, it was agreed to provide £20,000 towards the preparation of the Carnival Parade to improve the diversity of the event.	<b>£20,000</b>  <b>Total: £20,000</b>
BCC3	Cultural expression	<b>Positive Cultural Expression Programme</b> – to support capacity building to facilitate the positive expression of cultural heritage through training and awareness raising programmes and the provision of bonfire beacons, with a view to cultural inclusion in the City's Year of Culture in 2024.	Suite of delivery options to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity building</li> <li>- Training and mentoring</li> <li>- Leadership development</li> <li>- Events such as community beacons and local community celebrations.</li> </ul>	<b>£30,000</b>  <b>Total: £30,000</b>	Beacon Programme underway. Assessment of Sites and repairs to Beacons complete. 11 groups supported to deploy a beacon on the 11 <sup>th</sup> July. Increased allocation of £10K, following reallocation of BCC6.	<b>£0</b>
BCC4	Shared Community	<b>Civic Engagement and Learning Programme</b> Develop programme of events and training on good relations/diversity issues to increase knowledge of diversity and cultural competence.  Involve residents in an enhanced Day of Reflection to mark those who suffered as a result of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.	A calendar of programmes and events, open to the public, staff and members on Good Relations issues to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Living Library Event,</li> <li>- Visits to Cultural and Faith locations such as an Orange Hall, Culturlann, Synagogue, Mosque, Orange Museum, Roddy McCorley Museum, sporting bodies, Chinese Resource Centre.</li> <li>- Events to mark HMD, Refugee week, Black History Month and Day of Reflection,</li> <li>• Training opportunities to challenge anti-Muslim hatred</li> </ul>	<b>£10,000</b>		<b>£0</b>

			Involve delivery partners such as UK Pivot, Tell Mama, Faith Matters, ASCONI.	<b>Total: £10,000</b>		
BCC5	Shared Community	<p><b>Minority Ethnic Equality and Inclusion Programme</b> To facilitate partnership working on the inclusion and participation of new communities.</p> <p>To deliver actions arising from the recent Inequalities research, this includes commissioning a volunteer and befriending programme that supports the integration and inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers.</p> <p>To support the Roma Hub to provide outreach and engagement to the Roma Community to the Roma Community</p> <p>Support localised opportunities to promote the integration and orientation of current minority ethnic communities, through good relations initiatives</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings of the Belfast Migrant Forum</p> <p>Working internally and externally to progress a programme of volunteer support that develops the skills of refugees and asylum seekers and links them with opportunities commensurate with their skills.</p> <p>Provision of outreach to the Roma Community, through the Roma Hub</p> <p>Working with Migrant Forum Members, Red Cross, Barnardo's, Conway Education and other Migrant Forum members, to commission proposals to support integration of new communities.</p>	<p><b>Total: £30,000</b></p>	<p>2 projects were supported in Quarter 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forward South towards Roma Engagement and</li> <li>- The Law Centre towards the revision of the Refugee Transition Guide</li> </ul>	<p><b>£11,000</b></p> <p><b>£6,000</b></p> <p><b>Total: £17,000</b></p>
BCC6	Children and Young People	<p><b>Involving young people in civic engagement and strategic priorities</b> Implement practical recommendations from the Segregation and the Environment research</p> <p>Involve young people in influencing and participating in programmes in Council parks and open spaces, to create Good Relations activity through such engagement.</p>	<p>Develop and deliver a plan of action to involve young people in initiatives that can improve the environment while also contributing to reducing segregation and improving Good Relations.</p> <p>Support the Council's Parks Outreach team to create Good Relations activity within parks and open spaces that can contribute to building Good Relations outcomes in such public spaces.</p>	<p><b>£0</b></p> <p><b>Total: £0</b></p>	<p>Following 2 unsuccessful quotation exercises, this budget was reallocated to BCC2 and BCC3.</p>	<p><b>£0</b></p>
BCC7	Safe Community	<p><b>Interface Engagement and tackling sectarianism &amp; racism</b> Work with a range of internal and external stakeholders to identify strategic projects that will:</p>			<p>Sectarianism and racism initiative did not proceed.</p>	



		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop and deliver a city-wide initiative on anti-sectarianism and anti-racism to include other agencies and government</li> <li>support progress towards the softening, transformation and/or removal of interface barriers.</li> </ol>	<p>Support relationship building between Deliver strategic training, information and engagement work to tackle sectarianism and racism</p> <p>Work with key community delivery agents to deliver innovative localised cross-interface projects to build relations at the local level</p>	<p><b>£40,000</b></p> <p><b>Total £40,000</b></p>	<p>2 further projects supported in Q4;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross community St. Patrick's Day event at St. Comgalls</li> <li>East Meets West Community Centre programme</li> </ul>	<p><b>£1,250</b></p> <p><b>£500</b></p> <p><b>Total: £1,750</b></p>
BCC8	Children & Young people	<b>Shared Education Schools Programme</b> To support shared education activity between pupils from P5 – P7, including cross community engagement between parents, across 4 partnerships (9 schools).	Deliver a menu of interactive engagement activities between the 4 partnerships to increase understanding and respect for different community and racial backgrounds.	<p><b>£10,000</b></p> <p><b>Total £10,000</b></p>	Programme delivery underway in Q3 and will continue into Q4.	<b>£0</b>
BCC 9	All 4 themes – projects will be aligned to relevant theme	<b>Strategic Intervention Programme</b> To deliver a targeted, strategic and proactive intervention programme to address good relations issues arising from conflict, anti-social behaviour and localised hate crime.	Deliver 4 year-long, area based, good relations focussed strategic intervention projects across Belfast. Local consortia will be invited to apply for this programme.	<p><b>£0</b></p> <p><b>Total £0</b></p>	£23,000 from this programme was reallocated towards small grants to support 5 projects that were delivering on the objectives of the Strategic Intervention Funding, prior to the budget cuts. No further activity was delivered.	<b>£0</b>
				<b>£294,644</b>	<b>Quarter 4 allocation</b>	<b>£38,750</b>
				<b>£294,644</b>	<b>Quarter 3 allocation</b>	<b>£61,970.84</b>
				<b>£294,644</b>	<b>Quarter 2 allocation</b>	<b>£0</b>
				<b>£294,664</b>	<b>Quarter 1 allocation</b>	<b>£184,644</b>
				<b>£294,664</b>	<b>Total allocation</b>	<b>£285,364.84</b>

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**Belfast**  
City Council

**SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP**

**PEACE IV SECRETARIAT UPDATE**

Subject:	<b>PEACE IV Programme - Secretariat Update</b>
Date:	8 April 2024
Reporting Officer:	Debbie McKinney, Programme Manager (ext 6034)
Contact Officer:	Debbie McKinney, Programme Manager (ext 6034)

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with a progress update in respect of the activity associated with the closure of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	The Partnership is requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report and appendices.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Document Retention</b>
	The archiving of records and documentation associated with PEACE IV is progressing, as reported in March 2024. However members are advised that recent correspondence from SEUPB (Appendix I) amends the programme rules and the retention date “for a period of five years from 31 December of the year in which the last payment by SEUPB to the Lead Partner took place.”
<b>3.2</b>	As members are aware a significant value claims are yet to be reimbursed by SEUPB, and as such the retention date is dependent on SEUPB processes and timeframe for reimbursement and therefore, cannot be fully determined at this point.
<b>3.3</b>	It is proposed that working on the basis that all claims reimbursement will be received during 2024, a preliminary revised date of 31 December 2029 is determined. This revised retention date will be communicated to all PEACE IV delivery partners and internal Council departments. Remedial action will also be taken on the current archiving of records.
<b>3.4</b>	However given that the programme and projects have progressed to closure, Members are requested to note that adherence to this revised retention date may pose a risk to Council and delivery partners in relation to future audits of the programme.
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Claims Reimbursement</b>
	Members are requested to note that reimbursement of the Period 34 BPR claim to NIHE has

	<p>now been completed, as such all NIHE claims have now been reimbursed.</p> <p>The value of outstanding claims remains as previously reported, at £4.2m, with the breakdown as follows:</p> <table> <tr> <td>BPR Theme</td><td>£215,968.46</td></tr> <tr> <td>CYP Theme</td><td>£232,823.80</td></tr> <tr> <td>SSS Theme</td><td>£3,758,339.26</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>£4,207,131.52</td></tr> </table> <p>Officers are continuing to liaise with SEUPB to progress the verification of outstanding claims.</p>	BPR Theme	£215,968.46	CYP Theme	£232,823.80	SSS Theme	£3,758,339.26	Total	£4,207,131.52
BPR Theme	£215,968.46								
CYP Theme	£232,823.80								
SSS Theme	£3,758,339.26								
Total	£4,207,131.52								
3.6	<p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b></p> <p>As previously reported, all programme expenditure claims, totalling £12.9m, have been submitted to SEUPB for reimbursement. The current financial position of reimbursement of approximately £8.7m.</p>								
3.7	<p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>The draft plan has been equality screened and discussed at the Equality Consultative Forum on 13 May 2015. The Equality Consultative Forum was further consulted on 18 November 2020.</p>								
4.0	<p><b>Appendices</b></p> <p>Appendix I – SEUPB Memo to Lead Partners – Programme Rules</p>								



**To:** Project Lead Partners

**From:** Phil Heaton

**Date:** 21 March 2024

**Re: INTERREG VA AND PEACE IV PROGRAMMES – CHANGES TO  
PROGRAMME RULES: DOCUMENT RETENTION & INCOME GENERATION**

Dear Lead Partners,

Please be advised that the programme rules have been updated to reflect the European Commission's requirements regarding Retention of Documents and Income Generation.

Retention of Documents

Please see below the updated requirements on the length of time to retain project records:

*Beneficiaries/Recipients shall keep available all records and supporting documents, including statistical records and other records related to the project, as well as records and documents in an electronic format, **for a period of five years from 31 December of the year in which the last payment by SEUPB to the Lead Partner took place.** This period shall be three years where the funding is of an amount lower than or equal to EUR 60 000.*

***For example, if the SEUPB made the last payment on 12 March 2023, the supporting documents must be retained until 31 December 2028.***

***If any State Aid was granted (de minimis or GBER) to any partner or final beneficiary, all documentation must be made available for a period of 10 years from 31 December of the year in which the last payment to the Lead Partner took place. Records and documents pertaining to audits, appeals,***



*litigation, and the pursuit of claims relating to legal commitments or pertaining to OLAF investigations shall be retained until such audits, appeals, litigation, pursuit of claims or investigations have been closed.*

***Other, possibly longer statutory archiving periods, as required by national law, or due to legal charges, remain unaffected by the rules mentioned above.***

Further details can be found under Section 11.6 of the Programme Rules.

#### Income Generation

Lead Partners are required to monitor any net revenue accrued:

- during the lifetime of the project, and
- up to 3 years after the project or 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025, whichever is earlier.

Projects should keep good records of all income generated so as to demonstrate whether net revenue has occurred.

If net revenue was not already determined and deducted from the project budget at application stage, net revenue must be reported to SEUPB. **It is Lead Partners' responsibility to inform SEUPB of net revenue as soon as it is anticipated, so that it can be netted off appropriately.**

Further details can be found under Section 6.33 of the Programme Rules.

A full list of changes to the Programme Rules can be found as an Annex to this letter.

Please note, it is the Lead Partner's responsibility to ensure that all project partners are informed of the content of this memo. Thank you for your cooperation.

Regards,

**Phil Heaton**

**Interim Programme Manager, Managing Authority**

**Annex 1: List of Changes in Version 10 of the PEACE IV & INTERREG VA****Programme Rules**

Section	Summary of Change
3.9	Reference to document retention, updated to reflect Section 11.6
6.33	Requirement for net revenue monitoring confirmed as <i>“within three years of the completion of a project, or by February 28<sup>th</sup> 2025, whichever is earlier”</i>
11.6	Retention requirement updated to reflect EU Commission requirements.
Annex III, Section 4	Reference to document retention, updated to reflect Section 11.6. Reference to net revenue monitoring updated to reflect Section 6.33.
Annex 4 (new)	New Annex added, specifying the programme’s recoupment framework for projects that do not meet output indicator requirements.
Output Indicator Guidance; Priority 4	Removal of reference to requirement for gender breakdown.

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**Belfast**  
City Council

**SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP**

**PEACE PLUS LOCAL COMMUNITY PEACE ACTION PLAN**

Subject:	PEACE PLUS Belfast Local Community Action Plan Update
Date:	8 April 2024
Reporting Officer:	Debbie McKinney, Peace Programmes Manager (ext 6034)
Contact Officer:	Debbie McKinney, Peace Programmes Manager (ext 6034)

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership members with an update on the assessment of PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed Belfast Local Community Peace Action Plan, and the proposed Capacity Building Programme.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	Members note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	The assessment of the PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan has progressed with clarifications received from both SEUPB and TEO. The Programme Manager is currently liaising with relevant officers across Council to consider and compile suitable responses to the clarifications.
3.2	Members are requested to note that the SEUPB clarifications were received on 27 March 2024, with a response return by 9 April 2024, which equates to 7 working days.  Given the complexity of the Action Plan, the extent and scope of the clarifications, the imminent financial / leave year-end period as well as the Easter Holidays, a request to extend the response timeframe has been submitted to TEO and SEUPB. TEO has agreed to extend the timeframe to 15 April 2024, with no detriment to the approval timeframe. A response on the extended timeframe from SEUPB is to be provided.
3.3	As previously reported, the timeframe for assessment approval and mobilisation of the Local Action Plan is being closely monitored, at this stage the original timeframe of a Letter of Offer by June 2024 remains achievable.
3.4	Recruitment of staff to mobilise the PEACEPLUS Programme is continuing with interviews for the Lead Officer taking place and the advertising for the Programme Support Assistant, Project Officer and 3 x Project Managers in March 2024.
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Capacity Building Programme</b>
	Details of the Prepare to Procure Capacity Building Programme, as outlined in Appendix I,

	<p>have been finalised and circulated to the PEACEPLUS stakeholder mailing list and wider public. To maximise broad participation, places are restricted to one representative per organisation and allocated on a first come basis.</p> <p>The first session which focused on an overview of the PEACEPLUS Programme and timeframe for delivery was delivered on 28 March 2024.</p>
3.6	<p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>As previously reported expenditure associated with the LCAP is eligible from the submission date and therefore expenditure is within the existing budget which will be claimed retrospectively from SEUPB.</p> <p>A response from SEUPB regarding the drawdown of the £30K advance is yet to be received.</p>
3.7	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Plan has been submitted for equality and good relations screening as well as rural needs assessment.</p>
4.0	<p><b><u>Appendices</u></b></p>
	Appendix I – Prepare to Procure Capacity Building Programme

APPENDIX I - PREPARE TO PROCURE  
Capacity Building Programme

Training	Date	Time	Venue	Address
PEACEPLUS Mobilisation Pre- Market Overview	Thurs 28 March 2024	10am-12pm	Spectrum Centre	331-333 Shankill Road, Belfast BT13 3AA
Introduction to Tendering	Tues 9 April 2024	10am-1pm	Skainos Centre	239 Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 1AF
Writing a Winning Bid	Thursday 25 April 2024	10am-1pm	Girdwood Community Hub	10 Girdwood Avenue, Belfast BT14 6EG
Consortium Development	Wednesday 8 May 2024	10am-1pm	Innovation Factory	385 Springfield Road, Belfast BT12 7DG
Belfast City Council Procurement System and Social Value Procurement Policy	Thursday 16 May 2024	10am-1pm	EBCDA East Belfast Community Development Agency	55 Templemore Ave, Belfast BT5 4FP
PEACEPLUS Monitoring and Evaluation	Wednesday 22 May 2024	10am-1pm	Girdwood Community Hub	10 Girdwood Avenue, Belfast BT14 6EG
Consortium Development	Tuesday 28 May 2024	10am-1pm	Spectrum Centre	331-333 Shankill Road, Belfast BT13 3AA

To register to attend any of the above sessions, please email [peacepluslap@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:peacepluslap@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Places are allocated on 1st come basis and restricted to one representative per organisation.

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**Belfast**  
City Council

**SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP**

**FORTH MEADOW COMMUNITY GREENWAY - PEACE IV**

Subject:	<b>Forth Meadow Community Greenway</b>
Date:	8 April 2024
Reporting Officer:	Debbie McKinney, Programme Manager (ext 6034)
Contact Officer:	Debbie McKinney, Programme Manager (ext 6034)

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
	To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with an overview of the walk on Forth Meadow Community Greenway, which is scheduled following the SCP meeting on 8 April 2024
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
	The Partnership is requested to recommend to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report and appendices.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Forth Meadow Community Greenway Members Walk</b>
	As agreed at the SCP meeting in March 2024, a walk along Forth Meadow Community Greenway has been arranged for SCP members. The walk will follow the meeting of 8 April 2024.
<b>3.2</b>	As members are aware Forth Meadow Community Greenway connects 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 transformation works included the addition of new paths and cycle ways along the route, additional planting, new pathway surfaces, new street furniture and public art.
<b>3.3</b>	The walk represents an opportunity for members to see first-hand the transformation achieved by the PEACE IV project, understand the ongoing challenges, and potential for further activity and development.
<b>3.4</b>	Members are advised that the walk will commence at the Innovation Factory, at approximately 2.30pm and will include walking to Section 1 in Glencairn through the Springvale Lands Section 2 and Section 3 Springfield Dam / Springfield Road through Falls Park and the City Cemetery. It is envisaged the walk will take approx. 1-1.5 hours, with refreshments provided in St Johns on completion.
<b>3.5</b>	Transport between sections may be provided, on request.

3.6	Council officers, community and faith representatives including Fr Martin Magill and Canon Tracey McRoberts will join the walk to outline to SCP members the activities they deliver to promote the common good and usage of Forth Meadow Community Greenway
3.7	Members are requested to confirm attendance on the walk and also outline any transport requirements.
3.8	<p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b></p> <p>Any costs associated with the activity will be met within current budgets</p>
3.6	<p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>As per previous PEACE IV reports, the draft plan has been equality screened and discussed at the Equality Consultative Forum on 13 May 2015. The Equality Consultative Forum was further consulted on 18 November 2020.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
	N/A



<b>Subject:</b>	Equality & Diversity: Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Quarter 4 2023-24
<b>Date:</b>	24 May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/ Director of Legal & Civic Services
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Bridgeen O'Neill, Equality & Diversity Support Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set out the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for Quarter 4 2023-24.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	It is recommended that Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report which will be published on the Council's website.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<u>Background</u>  As Members will be aware, the Council has a duty to have, under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories; and</li> <li>• Regard to the desirability of promotion good relations</li> </ul> <p>In addition, under section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.</li> </ul> <p>To this end, the Council has a process to carry out equality screening and rural needs assessment of new and revised policies. This allows any impacts related to equality of opportunity, good relations or rural needs to be identified and addressed.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment template is completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Unit. On a regular basis, the Unit collates all completed templates into a screening outcome report and publishes onto the Council's website along with the relevant completed templates. The current screening outcome report for Quarter 4 2023-24 is attached at <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This report contributes to the Council's compliance with section 75 or the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Rural Needs Act 2016.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<b>Appendix 1</b> – Screening Outcome Report for Quarter 4 2023-24.





**Belfast**  
City Council

**Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment  
from January – March 2024**

# Introduction

## Legislation – An Overview

### Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Council, when carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland, to have due regards to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to its obligations above, the council must also have regards to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Council's Revised Equality Scheme was formally approved by the Equality Commission in March 2021. The revised Scheme outlines how we propose to fulfil our statutory duties under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the council gave a commitment to apply the screening methodology below to all new and revised policies and where necessary and appropriate to subject new policies to further equality impact assessment.

- What is the likely impact of equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy/proposal, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy/proposal likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?
- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

In keeping with the Council's commitments in its Equality Scheme, the Council has applied the above screening criteria to new policies and proposals. Screening identifies policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Screening identifies the impact of the policy/proposal as major, minor or none.

- If major – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out.
- If minor – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.
- If none – screen out and give reasons.
- Ongoing screening – for strategies/policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages – screen at various stages during implementation.

The council also committed within its Revised Equality Scheme to prepare and publish for information regular reports on its screening exercises. This is screening report providing details on all screenings undertaken from the period January-March 2024.

### **Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

The Council also has a statutory duty under the Rural Needs (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions. The Council must therefore engage with rural stakeholders in relation to policy development when it is relevant and appropriate. The Equality and Diversity Unit is responsible for reporting to the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee and for ensuring that annual reporting returns are submitted to DAERA.

To further promote openness and transparency, there is a link to each completed screening and rural needs impact assessment template on the Council's website. [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)

The templates detail all policies screened over this period and includes decisions reached.

## Consultation

The development of new policies and proposals will be supported by effective engagement processes to ensure that staff, service users and all interested parties are fully involved.

Planning for and delivering safe and cost-effective services requires close collaboration at many levels.

If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:-

Bridgeen O'Neill  
Equality and Diversity Unit  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

Direct Line 02890 270555  
or 028 9032 0202 ext 6315

email: [equality@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:equality@belfastcity.gov.uk) or [oneillbridgeen@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:oneillbridgeen@belfastcity.gov.uk)

## Screening Outcome

The screening outcomes are outlined in the table below. Three possible outcomes are recorded:

If **Major** – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out. **EQIA** - subject to further scrutiny under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 to determine the impact upon those directly affected, which in turn will require informal and formal consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

If **Minor** – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.

If **None** – screen out and give reasons.

## Screening Outcome Options

Major= In

Minor= Out with mitigation

None= Out without mitigation

## Rural Needs Impact Assessment Options

Does the policy, plan, strategy or service design/delivery impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

## Belfast City Council Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

This report includes published screenings and Rural Needs Impact Assessments for the period January-March 2024. Copies can be found at:-

<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality-and-diversity/equality-screening-reports#711-3>

Description of Policy/Proposal	Rural Needs Impact Assessment	ECNI Screening Decision and Contact
Belfast City Council Hardship Programme	This programme will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast.	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
Participatory Budgeting and Active Belfast Pilot	This pilot will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast.	Screened Out - Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)
Vacancy Grant Programme	This programme will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast.	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)

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<b>Subject:</b>	Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 – DAERA Annual Monitoring Report
<b>Date:</b>	24 May 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal & Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Russell Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>									
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
<p><b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b></p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information relating to any individual</li> <li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li> <li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li> <li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li> <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 person; or (b) to make an order or direction</li> <li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li> </ol>									
<p><b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b></p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 30%;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>								

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To provide the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with the Council's annual monitoring return (the "Annual Return"), which provides evidence of how the Council has met certain duties under the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (the "Act").

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the submission of the Council's Annual Return for 2023 – 2024 (attached to this report as <b>Appendix 1</b>) to DAERA, subject to ratification by the Council at its meeting on 1 November.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>As Members will be aware, the rural population of Belfast is comprised of the small settlements of Edenderry, Hannahstown and Loughview.</p>
3.2	<p>Section 1(1) of the Act requires public authorities to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services.</p> <p>As part of that duty, Council officers complete Rural Needs Impact Assessments.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>Section 3(1) of the Act requires public authorities to: (i) compile information on the exercise of their functions, (ii) include that information in annual reports and (iii) send that information to DAERA.</p>
3.4	<p>The Annual Return is designed to inform stakeholders and other interested parties of how the Council has had due regard to rural needs in the exercise of its functions. The attached Annual Return shows how the Council has met this duty for 2023-24.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>Subject to Committee and Council approval, the Annual Return will be submitted to DAERA next month for inclusion in its Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report in order to meet DAERA's deadline for publication.</p> <p>A copy of the Annual Return, together with a list of the completed Rural Needs Impact Assessments will be published on the Council's website as the Council does not have an annual report.</p>
3.6	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>Officers from across the organisation are involved in completing Rural Needs Impact Assessments and the Equality and Diversity Unit have corporate responsibility for collating this information.</p>
3.7	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>The Annual Return provides evidence as to how the Council has met its duty under the Act to have due regard to Rural Needs.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1: Annual Monitoring Return to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs</p>





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## Appendix 2 - Template for Information to be Compiled

### Information to be compiled by Public Authorities under Section 3(1)(a) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

(To be completed and included in public authorities' own annual reports and submitted to DAERA for inclusion in the Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report).

Name of Public Authority: *Belfast City Council*

Reporting Period: April 20 23 to March 20 24

The following information should be compiled in respect of each policy, strategy and plan which has been developed, adopted, implemented, or revised and each public service which has been designed or delivered by the public authority during the reporting period.

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016<sup>1</sup>.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to<sup>2</sup>.</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service<sup>3</sup>.</i>
Delivery of Asylum Seeker free of charge concession for leisure centre membership	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Development of the Black Mountain/ Upper Whiterock Greenway: Economic	Rural Development / Agri Environment	Rural landowners have raised issues with people accessing their land informally and parking or walking close to their

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016<sup>1</sup>.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to<sup>2</sup>.</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service<sup>3</sup>.</i>
Appraisal		homes to access Divis Mountain.  The council will take care in developing the project that any impact on landownership is fully explored with owners and gains their approval.
Implementation of works to Cherryvale Playing Fields –Pitch 1	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Development of the Disability Action Plan 2022-25	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Delivery of the Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service	Jobs or Employment	Issues considered in relation to the socio-economic needs of people in rural areas include promotion, access to support services/training etc, adjustments to delivery to facilitate attendance for young people, older people, women, etc who may live in rural areas and experience travel challenges, childcare challenges, etc.  Providing support via a variety of means – online, in person, hybrid, different locations, timing etc, have been considered. Consideration of the specific issues that may affect individuals and businesses in rural areas allow adjustments to be made to the modes of delivery to ensure equal access and participation.
Revision of the Safeguarding All Ages Policy	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Delivery of the Summer Community	N/A	No rural needs were identified.

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016<sup>1</sup>.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to<sup>2</sup>.</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service<sup>3</sup>.</i>
Diversionsary Festivals Programme		
Adoption of The Employee Active Travel Plan 2023-26	Internal	No rural needs were identified.
Adoption of a Change to Security Rotas	Internal	No rural needs were identified.
Revision of the Health & Well Being Strategy 2023-26	Internal	No rural needs were identified.
Revision of the Interim Staff Car Parking Arrangements	Internal	No rural needs were identified.
Development of the Belfast City Council People Strategy	Internal	No rural needs were identified.
Development of the Belfast Business Promise – An Inclusive Growth Charter	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Development of the Belfast City Council Belfast Tree Strategy 2023 -2033	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Delivery of the Marrowbone Park redevelopment (Urban Villages funded project)	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Implementation of the installation of gating at Crescent Park	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Development of Music Matters – A Roadmap of Belfast	N/A	No rural needs were identified.

<i>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016<sup>1</sup>.</i>	<i>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to<sup>2</sup>.</i>	<i>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing, or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service<sup>3</sup>.</i>
Development of the Local Community Peace Action Plan	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Development of the Participatory Budgeting and Active Belfast Pilot	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Implementation of the Vacant to Vibrant Pilot Grant Programme	N/A	No rural needs were identified.
Delivery of the Hardship Programme	N/A	No rural needs were identified.

## NOTES

1. This information should normally be contained in section 1B of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
2. This information should normally be contained in section 2D of the RNIA Template completed in respect of the activity.
3. The information contained in sections 3D, 4A & 5B of the RNIA Template should be considered when completing this section.

## **Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

### **Attendance**

#### **Members:**

Councillor Michael Long  
Councillor Ciaran Beattie  
Councillor Christina Black  
Councillor Anthony Flynn (*for Councillor Brian Smyth*)  
Councillor Sarah Bunting  
Councillor Séamas de Faoite

**Apologies:** Alderman Sonia Copeland

#### **Officers:**

John Walsh, Chief Executive  
Sharon McNicholl Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services  
Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services (for Items 6 & 7)  
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance  
John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy (for Item 3)  
Damien Martin, Strategic Director of Place & Economy  
Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty (for Item 1)  
Lisa Toland, Senior Manager, Economy (for Item 1)  
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

### **1. Presentation – Bill Strickland Belfast Centre for Arts and Technology**

The Chief Executive welcomed Mr Bill Strickland and his colleagues from the Strickland Global Leadership Institute. Mr Strickland presented a briefing on the origin of his work in relation to the creation of vocational training and cultural enrichment centres around the world, creating environments in which people would flourish, specifically young people from areas of deprivation. Mr Strickland outlined the detail of his vision for Belfast. His team also outlined the extensive stakeholder engagement that has taken place to date. Detailed discussion followed and Members noted their interest in engaging further as this proposal moves forward. A number of key points and comments were raised by Members in relation to connectivity, creating bridges with existing providers and outreach to those hard to reach communities. Mr Strickland and his team advised that they would consider the points raised moving forward and highlighted key milestones for the project. The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty to circulate contact details to Party Group Leaders.

The Chief Executive advised that the Director of City and Organisational Strategy was preparing a Corporate Social responsibility prospectus which will be brought to a future meeting of the Forum.

## **2. Smart Belfast Innovation Programme**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services provided an update on the development on a number of Immersive technology initiatives currently being designed and delivered by City Innovation. She outlined the progress to date on the City Hall exhibition immersive experience project within three rooms on the east side of City Hall including providing an update on the concept and themes for these rooms. A report will go to May SP&R Committee, and a presentation would be made to the Installations – City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group. It was agreed that the concept presentation slides would be shared with Party Group Leaders.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services also provided an update on the Augment the City challenge competition for SMEs and innovators. In relation to a query raised from a Member on the applications process the Deputy Chief Executive provided clarity.

## **3. Draft Electric Vehicle Strategy**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy provided an update on the current status of the draft Electric Vehicle Strategy and outlined feedback received from the Department for Infrastructure. He provided a summary on the proposed approach in relation to electric vehicle charging points across the Council estate and provided clarity on a number of queries raised by Members. In relation to a point raised by a Member the Director to consider non profit making organisations as potential location sites. A further query was raised by a Member in relation to enforcement for improper use of car park spaces specifically allocated for electric vehicles. The City Solicitor subsequently provided an update on the work ongoing from a legal perspective with the other Councils. The City Solicitor to also ensure that the electric vehicle space in City Hall courtyard is marked accordingly. The Director of City and Organisational Strategy to consider the feedback provided and the draft strategy to be brought to June SP&R Committee for Members consideration.



#### **4. Knockagh Monument**

The Chief Executive provided an update on previous requests made for Belfast City Council to reconsider its position and formally join the Knockagh Monument Joint Committee. Correspondence had also been previously sent to advise that following discussion with Party Leaders, Belfast City Council would not be reconsidering membership of the Joint Committee. He advised a further request has since been received from Mid and East Antrim, on behalf of the Knockagh Monument Joint Committee. There was a consensus that Belfast City Council would not be reconsidering membership and the Chief Executive to respond again on that basis.

#### **5. Arc21 Joint Committee**

The Chief Executive referred to correspondence received from the Acting Chief Executive of arc21 in relation to attendance of elected representatives at the arc21 Committee. Since the flexibility to hold remote meetings was not extended the recent in person meetings have not been quorate. Party Group Leaders to raise within their own parties in relation to attendance at future meetings so that the committee can take place.

#### **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**

#### **Northern Ireland Executive Ministerial Meetings**

The Chief Executive provided an update on scheduling for All Party meetings with the new NI Executive Ministers. An email will be issued from the Office of the Chief Executive with the details discussed.

#### **Day of Reflection 2024**

The Chief Executive referred to the joint statement on behalf of Party Group Leaders for the Day of Reflection in June 2024. A copy of which was previously circulated to Party Group

Leaders for their consideration. There was consensus to issue the statement and a copy of the final statement to be issued to be circulated to Party Group Leaders.

### **City Hall Income Generation Proposals**

The City Solicitor referred to the 2024/25 rate setting process, whereby proposals were put forward and agreed by Members for the introduction of new charges and the revision of existing charges for activities at City Hall. She outlined the phased approach and the detail of the proposals being considered. A report will be brought to May SP&R Committee for Members consideration.

As part of the discussion a Member also raised the ongoing issues in relation to Donegall Square West including amplification issues. City Solicitor to follow up.

### **Building Cultural Networks**

The Chief Executive advised a request had been received from a Member in relation to Officer representation at a Building Cultural Networks workshop on 29 May 2024. Following discussion and given there was no consensus a report will be brought to May SP&R Committee for Members consideration.

### **Draft Irish Language Policy Consultation/Equality Impact**

The City Solicitor outlined the timeframe for the consultation process for the draft Irish Language Policy which will include engagement with Trade Union colleagues in accordance with the Council's Industrial Relations Framework as well as engagement with the Irish Stakeholders Forum. It was noted that a report outlining the proposed timeframe would be considered by the Language Strategy Working Group later today and then subsequently at May SP&R Committee.

### **Draft Language Action Plan**

The City Solicitor provided an update on the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan. She advised that Members had suggested some further amendments at April SP&R committee to the Action Plan. Specifically in relation to the development of a Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme and recurring annual funding for a large-scale event to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge. Given the proposals are likely to require additional resource commitments it was proposed that

there is a commitment to undertaking exploratory work on these proposals as part of the Action Plan. This will be considered by the Language Strategy Working Group later today and then subsequently at May SP&R Committee.

### **Illuminate Requests**

The City Solicitor outlined for Members the illuminate requests received. Members noted the following requests would be agreed under the City Solicitors delegated authority.

**Cliftonville FC Winning the Irish Cup – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024**

**Refugee Week – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

Members also noted a report would go to SP&R Committee in relation to the request for Baby Loss awareness week.

### **Chief Executive Appraisal**

Members were reminded to forward nominations for the Chief Executive appraisal panel. The correspondence in relation to this will be reissued to Party Group Leaders.

### **City Hall Grounds**

The Chief Executive briefed Members on an incident that had taken place in City Hall grounds, Members will be kept updated following an investigation. A Member also referred to a separate incident in City Hall grounds and the City Solicitor to follow up.

### **Summer Community Divisionary Festival Fund**

An issue was raised by a Member in relation to the Summer Community Divisionary Festival Fund that had recently opened and it was agreed this would be followed up with the Strategic Director, City & Neighbourhood Services.

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## Language Strategy Working Group

Thursday, 16th May, 2024

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

- Members present: Councillor Walsh (Chairperson);  
Alderman Rodgers; and  
Councillors Brooks, Long and Whyte.
- In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and  
Civic Services;  
Mr. C. McGuigan, Irish Language Officer;  
Mr. R. Connelly, Policy, Research & Compliance Officer;  
Mr. M. Johnston, Language Officer;  
Ms. J. Beck, Sign Language Interpreter;  
Ms. M.T. McGivern, Client Manager  
(Physical Programmes); and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 9th February, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

#### **Update on Language Strategy Action Plan**

The City Solicitor provided the Working Group with an update on the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan. She outlined that the Council had conducted a consultation on the Draft Action Plan between 16th October, 2023 and 22nd January, 2024. The public and interested parties were encouraged to give feedback in English and Irish. A range of consultation sessions and stakeholder engagement sessions had also been conducted by Council officers.

The Members were reminded that the consultation had resulted in a range of amendments to the Draft Action Plan. The revised plan had since been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 19th April, 2024. While there had been broad agreement with the revised Action Plan, Members had suggested some further additions to the Action Plan, specifically, actions in relation to the development of a Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme and recurring annual funding for a large-scale event to mark Seachtain na Gaeilge.

The City Solicitor explained that those proposals were likely to require additional significant resource commitments, including staffing resource. It was therefore proposed that there was a commitment to undertaking exploratory work on those proposals as part of the Action Plan. She outlined that a detailed report would come to the Language Strategy Working Group in relation to Seachtain na Gaeilge 2025 in the coming months.

In response to a Member's question, regarding the Gaeltacht Summer Schemes, the City Solicitor confirmed that officers would look at who was already being catered for in respect of current Irish Language Summer courses and that the Council's schemes should demonstrate some additionality and that they should particularly seek to consider the inclusion of adult learners and those in receipt of benefits.

In response to a further Member's question, regarding the timeline for delivery in respect of sign language and disability communications, the Language Officer and the City Solicitor confirmed that it was realistic, based on current resources.

After discussion, the Working Group recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would agree the amended Draft Language Strategy Action Plan.

### **Update on Draft Irish Language Policy**

The City Solicitor reminded the Working Group that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had approved the draft Irish Language Policy for the purposes of public and staff consultation, together with an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA). She outlined that the proposed timeline for consultation would be from the end of June 2024, for a period of 14 weeks.

It was reported that officers would engage with the Irish Language Stakeholders Forum before the consultation would commence.

She explained that, after the consultation period had concluded, officers would produce a report for consideration by the Working Group and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. The Members were advised that indicative costings and a draft Implementation Strategy would accompany the final version of the Policy and accompanying EQIA. As a high volume of response was expected to the consultation, the Working Group noted that the report from officers would likely not be available until January 2025.

In response to a Member's query, the City Solicitor confirmed that public meetings would form part of the consultation exercise. She confirmed that she would be happy to consider venue suggestions from Members as to where those public meetings would take place.

The Working Group noted the update that had been provided.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Working Group agreed that its next meeting would take place in August, 2024.

Chairperson

## Disability Working Group

Thursday, 9th May, 2024

### DISABILITY WORKING GROUP HELD IN PERSON AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McMullan (Chairperson); and  
Alderman Copeland and Councillors R. Brooks,  
Doherty and Smyth.

In attendance: Mrs. N. Largey, City Solicitor;  
Mr. R. Connelly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer;  
Ms. J. Beck, Sign Language Interpreter;  
Mr. M. Johnston, Language Officer; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor G. McAteer.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 13th March, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

#### **Changing Places Toilet Policy - Consultation Update**

The Policy, Research and Compliance Officer provided the Working Group with the feedback from the Changing Places Toilet Policy public consultation, which had been carried out between 29th January and 22nd April, 2024.

He outlined that a first draft had been completed and that 90 survey responses had been received, as well as two more detailed, written responses. The initial findings included that:

- 75.4% of the respondents agreed with the draft Changing Places Toilet (CPT) Policy, with a smaller percentage (17.9%) disagreeing;
- 66% of the respondents used the Parks at least once week;
- 39.7% of the respondents had a disability;
- 57.5% of the respondents were carers/dependents; and
- CPT facilities were required at large events and a commitment to a rolling programme of addressing the CPT deficit and toilet needs was identified.

The Members stated that they had received a letter from Ms. C. McClements, a parent of a disabled child, and a strong advocate for Changing Places Toilet facilities.

In response to a Member's question, the City Solicitor confirmed that no changes had been made to the draft policy yet as the officers required political direction from the Members, as some suggestions during the consultation would involve a significant financial spend. However, she reiterated to the Working Group that the Policy was intended to go above and beyond the legislative requirements.

During discussion, it was agreed that officers would respond to Ms. McClements' letter and invite her to address the Working Group at its next meeting.

A Member asked whether a Changing Places Toilet had been considered as part of the redevelopment of the former Lockhouse. The project, which represented a total investment of £2.9million, was a collaboration between the Urban Villages Initiative, the Department for Communities, the Department of Infrastructure, Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group, and was being delivered in partnership with the Council. The City Solicitor confirmed that a representative from Property and Projects would be in attendance at future meetings of the Working Group however, due to staff leave, unfortunately no officer had been available to attend that meeting. She agreed that information would be circulated to the Members of the Working Group in relation to that issue.

In response to a further Member's question regarding the Council buying its own mobile CPT for use at community events, the City Solicitor advised that officers would seek to meet with the organisers of the Belsonic music festival to discuss the options and would provide an update at a future meeting.

Noted.

### **Disability Advisory Panel - Mapping Out Exercise**

The Language Officer reminded the Working Group that it had met with the Disability Advisory Panel (DAP) on 4th December, 2023. It was agreed that the Disability Advisory Panel would carry out a mapping-out exercise, rating issues that they had and outlining what they would like to see delivered by the Council. The mapping-out exercise had since been carried out and the DAP now wished to present its findings to the Working Group.

The Working Group was asked to advise the Language Officer, by Monday, 13th May, whether they would prefer to meet the DAP on 5th or 12th June, at 10.30am.

Agreed.

### **Councillor McMullan**

The Chairperson thanked the officers and his fellow Members for their work as part of the Disability Working Group, as the meeting was his last before he officially resigned as a Councillor. He stated that he was keen to see the work of the Working Group continue and that, ultimately, he would like to see the Council develop a Disability Inclusion Strategy which would seek to remove all barriers for those living with a disability within Belfast. He emphasised that it was crucial that the Council continued to listen to those with lived experience of a disability.



The City Solicitor thanked the Chairperson for his comments and stated that she was determined to put Equality and Diversity at the heart of her work over the next twelve months.

Each Member of the Working Group thanked Councillor McMullan for his tireless work and passion for advocating for those with a disability and wished him well for his future.

Chairperson

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## **Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group**

Monday, 13th May, 2024

### **CASTLE, CAVEHILL, ZOO AND NORTH FORESHORE STEERING GROUP MINUTES**

#### **HYBRID MEETING IN THE CONOR ROOM**

Members present: Councillor Nelson (Chairperson);  
Alderman Rodgers; and  
Councillors Anglin and Cobain.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and  
Development;  
Ms. S. Kalke, Client Manager;  
Ms. P. Davison, Estates Manager; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance  
Coordinator.

#### **Election of Chairperson**

The Working Group agreed that Councillor Nelson be elected to serve as Chairperson for the period to end on the date of the annual meeting of the Council in June 2024.

(Councillor Nelson in the Chair.)

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors Smyth and Whyte.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 27th February, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

#### **Presentation - Giant's Park Belfast Limited Update**

The Chairperson welcomed representatives of Giant's Park Belfast Limited and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) to the meeting.

They provided a brief overview of the Giant's Park proposed scheme located on a 250-acre (former landfill) landmark development site 3 kms from Belfast City Centre.

They explained that the vision for Giant's Park was to create a visitor experience in Belfast through a combination of commercial, leisure, sporting and mixed-use development, organised into a series of key hubs, each of which would provide a range of activities and attractions.

They presented a summary of the Master Plan and its guiding principles and explained the proposals for the logistics and distribution hub. They described the Welcome Hub and Adventure Park's vision and mission, together with the key audience groups and benefits of the proposal, which included:

- Transformation of the Wasteland into a major asset for local people and visitors;
- Job creation across the site;
- Accessibility to the City Centre;
- Unlocking the Coastline in partnership with RSPB;
- Enhancing the environment and green network;
- A visitor attraction for domestic and overseas visitors; and
- A strengthened economy adding benefits to the supply chain and local businesses.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to the height of the logistics hub, protection of the shoreline, revenue streams, community engagement, Planning timeline and accessibility of the development.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

### **North Foreshore – Update**

The Working Group considered the following report:

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

**1.1 To update Members of all ongoing developments on the North Foreshore.**

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 To note the updates provided.**

#### **3.0 Main Report**

**3.1 Members will be aware that the North Foreshore is a significant regeneration site at over 340 acres. A number of uses for the site have already been agreed by Members as outlined below**

- Commercial Leisure Led Development – 250 acres – Preferred developer Giant's Park Belfast Limited**

- Harbour film Studio and Film Studio Extension (including Studio Ulster) – 20 acres in total – Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- AD Plant – 10 acres – Dargan Road Biogas Limited (DRBL)

The Council's Waste Transfer Station is also on the site. There are currently only two sites (one 13 acre and one 4 acre) which do not have agreed preferred uses. A site map is attached at Appendix 1.

### **3.2 Update on Commercial Leisure Led Development**

The SP&R Committee, at its meeting on 16th December 2022, approved a revised development proposal from GPBL for a mixed-use development over approximately 250 acres. This amended their previous successful bid approved by Members in August 2018, which was submitted as part of an Expressions of Interest exercise carried out by the Council. In addition, Committee approved the Council to enter into a Master Development Agreement (MDA) for the revised scheme which will require GPBL to deliver the uses identified in their submission within a prescribed timeframe.

- 3.3 The Steering Group is asked to note that the Master Development Agreement and all supporting documents, including Guarantees, Site Investigation Licence, Collateral Warranties, Funding Agreement, Licence to Occupy, Lease, Works Deed and Side Letter have now been agreed and signed.

- 3.4 Members are asked to note that this is a significant step forward in the regeneration of the North Foreshore site which is the largest regeneration site in the city. The proposed development will bring significant benefits including -

- the Council to receive £4.3m from leasing the lands to GPBL,
- the completed development will have an estimated rateable value of £2.97m.
- the developer's estimated expenditure of £98.7m on construction will secure up to 200 construction jobs in the construction/development phase
- the creation of 1082 permanent jobs when the scheme becomes operational alongside 433 additional jobs generated off site.

The Council is also working closely with the developer to ensure that the social, economic and environmental of the initiative are maximised.

- 3.5 Members are asked to note that Giant's Park Belfast Limited will be in attendance at today's Steering Group to present an update on their proposals. Regular updates will be brought into the Steering Group going forward and into SP&R.

**3.6 Update Film Studio Expansion**

Members will be aware that the Belfast Harbour Film Studio is currently located on the North foreshore site. The development was taken forward by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. (BHC). The film Studio opened in 2017 and has already been the filming location for a number of key productions including The School for Good and Evil, The Northman, Lift and How to Train Your Dragon.

- 3.7** In 2022 the Council agreed a further option with BHC for an expansion of the Film Studios. Phase 2A is due to be completed by the end of July 2024. This latest phase will deliver a further workshop to the north of the existing studio site and two new studio buildings to the south, one of which is a Screen and Media Innovation Lab known as Studio Ulster. This studio is an Innovation Pillar Project within the Belfast Region City Deal and will be operated by the University of Ulster and industry partners to establish a centre of excellence for research, development, and innovation for virtual production.

- 3.8** BHC hold a 5-year option agreement from July 2022 on an adjacent site to the south which has been earmarked for a planned Phase 2B. This additional phase has planning permission for further studios, workshops and a vendor village.

**3.9 Update AD site (Environmental Resource Park)**

In August 2018 SP&R Committee agreed preferred developer status for Dargan Road Biogas Limited (DRBL) a subsidiary company of Energia Renewables for the development of an AD plant on a 10 acre central site on the North Foreshore. This went forward for planning in June 2019 but was not recommended for approval. Last year DRBL successfully appealed refusal of their planning application.

- 3.10** DRBL are currently negotiating terms with Council officers for what is expected to be a 25-30 year lease to facilitate the development of the plant. The proposed facility will break down biodegradable material to produce biogas which can then either be supplied directly to the gas mains or converted to electricity using the existing Combined Heat and Power engines located on site and supplied to the electricity grid. The Steering Group will be kept up to date with progress.

**Remaining sites - 4-acre site and 13-acre site**

- 3.11** Currently there are two sites which do not have agreed uses (see map at Appendix 1). These are currently being marketed through the Council's letting agent for the site. Council has recently received a number of interests in both of these sites. More information on these proposals is being sought and further detail will be brought into the Steering Group and Committee in due course for consideration.
- Update on ongoing Capital Works**

**3.12 Members are asked to note that there are also a range of recently completed/ongoing/planned capital works for the North Foreshore site including**

- Recently completed - The storm drain installation for the Western part of the site is complete.
- Underway – tender documentation is currently being finalised for works to the landfill gas ring main (required for the Western lands) and the pumping stations. Tenders are due to go to market in June 2024
- Planned - An upgrade of NIE power supply is required and a draft quotation with NIE is in place. Discussions around timelines and cable routes across third party lands are ongoing

**4.0 Financial and Resource Implications**

Developments are being taken forward on a site by site basis.

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

None associated with this report.”

During discussion, in response to a Member's question in relation to the longevity of the site and its developments, the Estates Manager clarified the details of the a Master Development Agreement in relation to the Commercial Leisure Led Development – Giant's Park Belfast Limited. She explained further the potential uses of the remaining sites.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the contents of the report.

**Presentation - Belfast Zoo Update**

The Client Manager provided a recap of the Vision Masterplan for Belfast Zoo.

She explained the drawbacks and challenges of its location and fragmented sites and the need to diversify the offering at the zoo to attract a wider audience. She highlighted its assets and opportunities, including the heritage and history of the zoo, its uniqueness and space.

She described the strategic vision for the Zoo, together with the short and long term goals. She pointed out the need to continually re-imagine what a zoo can do and its wider prospects.

The Client Manager provided an overview of the recent investments and achievements including: The new Kingdom of the Barbary Lions; New water facility at sea lion pool; New bird house; Changing places - new disabled toilets; Improved fibre network; Improvements to enclosures; Structural survey Floral Hall; New picnic area; and Five new art pieces.

She provided a comparison to other Zoo facilities and outlined recommendations and next steps.

During discussion, the Working Group highlighted the need for a broader range of attractions at the zoo, the regeneration of the Floral Hall, alternative funding models and improved accessibility.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the update provided.

Chairperson



## Social Policy Working Group

Tuesday, 14th May, 2024

### MEETING OF THE SOCIAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND  
REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Doherty (Chairperson); and  
Alderman Copeland and Councillors  
F. McAteer and I. 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. 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;  
Mr. L. Murray, Strategic Category Manager;  
Ms. M. McKay, Enterprise and Business Growth Manager;  
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;  
Ms. L. Toland, Senior Manager Economy;  
Mr. J. Uprichard, Business, Research and Development  
Manager; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillors R. McLaughlin and Smyth.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 13th February, 2024 were approved by the Working Group.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **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.

### **Social Value Procurement Policy – Delivery Report**

The Strategic Category Manager referred to the report on the delivery of the social value procurement policy which was a standing item on the Working Group's agenda. He drew Members' attention to Appendix 1, attached to the report, which outlined the application of the social value procurement policy to the 24 tenders that had been awarded during the period 1st January – 29th February 2024. He reminded the Members that a review team had been established to review how the policy was being implemented and to identify any lessons learned that needed to be applied in the future. Views on the report were sought and the Working Group noted the update provided.

### **Employee Diversity bi-annual report**

The Director of Human Resources provided the Working Group with an update on the diversity of the workforce living in Belfast, this included a breakdown of staff by department and postcode.

The Director drew the Members' attention to appendices which providing detail of Belfast LGD post codes for Council staff by department, along with information on community background, gender, ethnic origin, age and disability. She advised that this information had been provided for the 53.8 % of employees living in the Belfast City Council area and provided for all other Belfast City Council staff (46.2%) who resided in other council areas.

The Members were asked to note that some of the diversity information was collected from staff on a voluntary basis, for example, ethnic origin and disability, and following a query, the Director reported that this might reflect the low statistics reported for those with a disability, as often people chose not to report their disability. The Members noted that the information was collected through the recruitment process or through a voluntary monitoring exercise. She reported that a further voluntary monitoring exercise was due to be completed in 2024.

The Members were advised that additionally there had been several departmental structural changes, and it was therefore difficult at this point to make departmental comparisons with August 2023 figures. However, overall there had been minimal change in the total number of Protestant and Roman Catholic employees between August 2023 and March 2024. In August 2023, the percentage of Protestant employees was 51.4% and the Roman Catholic percentage was 48.6%. In March 2024, the percentages minimally changed to 51.5% and 48.5% respectively.

In response to a query, the Director advised that management were actively trying to encourage more females to apply for traditional front line roles, such as drivers, but confirmed that there did continue to be some male dominated roles.

The Working Group noted the update provided and that a departmental comparison would be provided in the next report. In addition, at the request of a Member, the Director also undertook to provide a more comprehensive breakdown of the figures in terms of the categories of the roles throughout the Council, including senior positions.

### **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:

- To follow up with strategic partners (BMET, DFC, Invest NI, NIHE and NI Libraries);
- Promise Learning Day - 18th June 2024 (to focus on improve training, engagement and wellbeing);
- Fourth Technical Panel (July 2024) - quarterly panels scheduled for 2024/25;
- Pledge 3: To protect our environment:
  - UU confirmed as a Partner - QUB committed in principle;
  - Pledge commitments under review; and
  - 66 organisations availing of Climate Essentials platform.
- Progress the recruitment of Enterprise and Business Growth Officer;
- Go Succeed offer / programme of work to be developed;
- Further development of website to enhance visibility / share resources across BBP Network;
- Corporate Comms to actively promote events/updates, including an article in City Matters; and
- Business engagement to be ongoing.

The Chairperson thanked the officers for the hard work being put into this business initiative and stated that it was a pleasure seeing it grow and he asked the other Members to encourage businesses to sign up.

The Working Group noted the update provided.

### **Go Succeed - Belfast Update**

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Senior Manager Economy, provided the Working Group with an update on Go Succeed, the new go-to source for expert business advice led by Northern Ireland's eleven councils.

She advised that if individuals had an idea but were not sure how to turn it into a business or had already started out in business and required mentorship, Go Succeed Start experts were on hand to help them create a business plan, seek funding and to put the necessary foundations in place to get the business up and running.

She provided an overview of the progress so far, following the successful launch of the initiative in November 2023, including details of the website visits, sign-ups, enquires and details of the participants.

The officer concluded the presentation by providing details of the focus for 2024/25, as follows:

- Through local council outreach activity, further activity was planned to increase participation across all underrepresented groups;
- Identification of opportunities to enhance support for key groups to help overcome any additional barriers;
- Local stakeholder engagement planned to drive focus on inclusion;
- Targeted marketing activity to increase participation for social entrepreneurs and those with higher growth potential;
- Opportunities to drive participation from existing businesses in key sectors, including tourism, creative industries and social economy;
- Roll out of support across thematic areas including procurement, net zero, cyber security and digital transformation;
- Development and roll out of a series of peer support networks for key groups; and
- Enhanced engagement with entrepreneurs and businesses to support signposting and access to funding opportunities.

The Members were advised that more information, including details in respect of future events, was available via the Go Succeed – NI Business Support website [here](#)

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Working Group, congratulated the officers on the successful launch of the initiative and stated that he was pleased to now be able to signpost people to Go Succeed for assistance.

Following a query from a Member, the officer agreed to provide more information at a future meeting regarding the numbers of people with caring responsibilities that had either enquired or signed up to the programme. It was highlighted that people had often left long term employment and moved to self-employment as a way of trying to juggle caring responsibilities and this was therefore a cohort of people who might benefit from the scheme.

The Working Group noted the update provided.

### **Proposed areas of focus 2024-26**

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty referred to the report which highlighted the proposed areas of focus that would inform the future discussions at the Working Group. He referenced the Inclusive Growth Strategy commitments, the successes and progress as well as the need to for continued momentum to deliver key priorities such as progressive procurement (social value and support for social enterprise and co-operatives), opening up employment opportunities as well as developing a 'one city approach' to inclusive growth through the Belfast Business Promise. He advised that embedding inclusive growth would also continue as a priority with the continued development of the inclusive growth index and toolkit, which included testing the approach to ensure it was fit for purpose, capacity building across the council and working with community planning partners. The development of the Corporate Plan was also noted as key opportunity to embed inclusive growth.

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty also highlighted the increasing emphasis on the need to prioritise poverty alleviation and tackle the persistent inequalities that held people back, with the proposal for an anti-poverty framework. He referred to emerging discussions on the potential for corporate social responsibility to contribute to Belfast's ambitions which would also be scoped out as a means of complementing the Council's efforts to drive inclusive growth, improve the local environment, and support local communities. There was discussion about the importance of connecting to other working groups that could contribute to these issues, in particular, the Cost-of-Living Working Group.

The Chairperson welcomed the proposed areas of focus and reiterated the need to keep prioritising discussion around poverty.

The Working Group noted the update report and agreed the key areas of focus and actions as outlined.

Chairperson

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