

# Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

20<sup>th</sup> August, 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, 23rd August, 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) Update on Temporary Contracts and Agency Workers (Pages 1 - 16)
- (b) In-house Agency Research Report - Findings (Pages 17 - 22)
- (c) Organisational Reviews and Change Programme (Pages 23 - 28)
- (d) 2024-25 Quarter 1 Finance Report (Pages 29 - 50)
- (e) Medium Term Financial Plan and Efficiency Programme (Pages 51 - 58)
- (f) Discretionary Payments (Pages 59 - 64)

- (g) 2 Royal Avenue (To Follow)
- (h) Low Emissions Strategy (Pages 65 - 112)
- (i) Wider University and Lower Ormeau Intervention Programme (Pages 113 - 138)
- (j) Assets Report (Pages 139 - 156)
- (k) NI Water update (Pages 157 - 164)
- (l) Belfast Bikes Operating Model and revenue Structure (To Follow)

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

- (a) Notices of Motion – Neonatal Leave (Pages 165 - 174)
- (b) Report - Response received from DfC re NOM - Anti-Poverty Strategy\_ (Pages 175 - 180)
- (c) Report - Response received from DfI re Trademark Belfast's request (Pages 181 - 186)
- (d) Report - Response received from Translink re NOM - Bilingual Signage at Weavers Cross (Pages 187 - 190)

4. **Governance**

- (a) Appointment to Outside Body: Integrated Care System NI Area Integrated Partnership Board (Pages 191 - 210)
- (b) Amendments to Standing Orders - The Local Government (Remote Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 (To Follow)

5. **Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

- (a) Director of Economic Development Recruitment (Pages 211 - 214)
- (b) Belfast Stories (Pages 215 - 224)
- (c) Belfast Region City Deal – update (Pages 225 - 256)
- (d) Corporate Plan (2024-28) and Annual Delivery Plan (To Follow)
- (e) Hardship Programme (Pages 257 - 262)
- (f) Belfast Learning Cities (Pages 263 - 266)
- (g) Belfast Business Promise Update (Pages 267 - 278)
- (h) Update on Planning Performance (Pages 279 - 294)
- (i) City Innovation programme update (Pages 295 - 300)

6. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

- (a) Physical Programme Update (Pages 301 - 306)
- (b) Community Asset Management Framework - Pilot Community Benefit Sites (To Follow)

7. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**

- (a) Contracts Update (Pages 307 - 314)
- (b) Commercial and Procurement Services Social Value Working Group Update (To Follow)

8. **Equality and Good Relations**

- (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 5th August 2024 (Pages 315 - 330)

9. **Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 331 - 334)
- (b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality (Pages 335 - 342)
- (c) Request for use of City Hall grounds for sleepout to raise awareness of homelessness (Pages 343 - 346)
- (d) Minutes of the Meeting of the Social Policy Working Group (Pages 347 - 352)

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| <b>Subject:</b>           | Notices of Motion – Neonatal Leave                       |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources          |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Eamonn Neeson, Principal HR Advisor (Employee Relations) |

|  |   |                          |                          |                        |                          |                        |                          |       |                          |
|--|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| <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 style="width: 30px; 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: 5%; 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"/>  |                          |                          |                        |                          |                        |                          |       |                          |

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| <b>Call-in</b>                               |   |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | 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        | At the SP&R committee on 24 March 2023 the Committee was advised that the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21 February 2023, had referred the following |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| 1.2        | <p>motion which had been proposed by Councillor Spratt and Seconded by Councillor Bunting:</p> <p><i>“This Council will amend maternity leave provision for mothers of babies defined as premature so that maternity leave will not commence until the certified due date of the child. All/any leave required from delivery date of a premature baby by parents will be considered compassionate leave and not reduce an employee’s right to standard parental leave.”</i></p> <p>The SP&amp;R Committee adopted the motion, and it was forwarded to The Director of Human Resources to review / action.</p> <p>This report informs Committee of the outcome of the consultation with the trade unions and the development of a proposed Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy which will be implemented in September 2024.</p>  |
| <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 agreed Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy and to agree to the implementation of the policy for all staff with immediate effect.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |
| 3.1        | <p><b>Commencement of Maternity Leave</b></p> <p>As maternity leave and pay provisions are a statutory right and the entitlement to maternity leave and pay is enshrined within legislation, including when maternity leave must begin, i.e. no later than the day of the birth (regardless if the child is born prematurely), Council are unable to amend the commencement date of a new mother’s (or the equivalent for an adopter/ surrogate) maternity leave to that of the expected due date as opposed to the date of the birth. However, there is no restriction upon the Council providing another form of leave which can be added on to the end of maternity leave to enhance the time a mother has to spend with her new-born child.</p> <p>On 24 May 2023 a new Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Bill became law and will come to effect in 2025 in England, Scotland and Wales. This is not applicable in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>In addition, Neonatal Leave is included within the current consultation on the Department for the Economy’s <i>“Good Jobs” Employment Rights Bill</i>.</p> <p>Despite this, there is no restriction upon the Council developing its own policy to allow for the provision of this additional leave and therefore consultation was commenced with the</p> |

trade unions through the Council's Industrial Relations Framework to seek to develop a policy which would offer this provision to staff.

### 3.2 **Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy**

Following consultation between management and trade unions a Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy was agreed by JNCC on 20 June 2024.

The policy provides additional leave for staff, whereby they have a newborn child who has spent time in a neonatal care unit following birth. This will ensure such parents have the opportunity to spend the same amount of time at home with their newborn child, as would be the case had the child not spent time in neonatal care.

The proposed entitlements are based upon the statutory entitlements that will be provided to employees in England, Scotland and Wales as part of the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023 and will create an additional family related leave over and above that which is already provided by the Council through its various work life balance entitlements.

Furthermore, the same entitlements will apply to mothers, fathers/non birthing parents, adoptive parents and the intended parent (if having the baby through surrogacy arrangements).

### 3.3 **Entitlement to Neonatal Leave**

The policy provides additional leave for Council employees whose newborn child has had to spend a minimum of seven consecutive days in a neonatal care unit within the first 28 days following birth.

The amount of leave will be dependent upon how long the baby spends in neonatal care and will be based upon full weeks only. The minimum period of leave will be one week (i.e. one period of seven consecutive days), with the maximum being 12 weeks.

The leave can be taken at any time up to 68 weeks following the birth of the baby. However, for the mother of the child it must be taken following her maternity leave (this will also apply to the main adopter of the child – i.e., it can only be taken at the end of the adoption leave). This is because, once maternity leave has commenced it cannot be ended and then restarted again.

For the father or non-birthing parent the leave can be taken at any time up to the 68 weeks and does not impact upon the entitlement to paternity leave.

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| 3.4 | <p><b>Entitlement to Neonatal Pay</b></p> <p>Payment for a period of neonatal leave will be paid at the same rate as the weekly rate of statutory maternity pay, maternity allowance, statutory paternity pay, statutory shared parental pay, statutory adoption pay and statutory parental bereavement pay. Currently, this equates to £183.03 per week.</p> <p>While entitlement to the leave is a day one right, entitlement to the pay will require the employee to have completed 26 weeks of continuous service. This is in line with the current requirements for other types of paid “family leave” and mirrors the legislation to be introduced in GB.</p> |
|     | <p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b></p>   |
| 3.5 | <p>Based upon UK average numbers of newborn babies who spend time in neonatal care following birth, and using the numbers of Council employees who were on maternity leave during 2021 – 2023 the estimated costs to the council would range from £497.84 (one weeks leave) to £5,974.09 (12 weeks leave).</p>  |
| 3.6 | <p>Following ratification at council, we will work with colleagues in External Affairs, Communications and Marketing to deliver both external and internal communications around the benefits of the policy.</p>  |
| 3.7 | <p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>There are no equality or good relations implications with the Neonatal leave policy.</p>  |
| 3.8 | <p>The introduction of the enhanced leave provisions should have a positive impact on equality and good relations as it will ensure that the parents of children born premature or sick, requiring a longer hospital stay, will have the same amount of time to spend at home with their newborn child as those employees whose child is born healthy.</p>  |
| 3.9 | <p>This policy has undergone equality and rural needs screening and has been screened out.</p>  |
| 4.0 | <p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>   |
|     | <p>Appendix 1: Agreed Neonatal Leave and Pay Policy</p>   |



## **NEONATAL LEAVE AND PAY**

### **1. Background and Introduction**

- 1.1 Following the birth of a child most parents will expect to spend a couple of days in hospital before being discharged and returning home to spend time with their newborn baby. However, for many parents of premature or sick babies the situation will be very different as many of these babies will receive weeks, and in some cases, months of neonatal care.
- 1.2 This means that for the mother of those babies a period of their maternity leave and pay is used while the baby is in hospital before they even get to spend time with their newborn. This may often lead to new mothers having to return to work without having spent the normal amount of time with their new babies.

### **2. Purpose of the Policy**

- 2.1 This policy sets out the entitlement to neonatal leave and pay for eligible employees. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the organisation may amend it at any time.
- 2.2 The policy has been developed to help support families whose newborn child spends time in neonatal care following birth. This is generally because the baby is born prematurely (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) or at full-term but sick. For many parents, therefore much of their maternity/paternity leave is spent on the neonatal unit, not at home bonding with their babies.
- 2.3 This policy will ensure that the parents of the child in neonatal care have the opportunity to spend the same amount of time, at home, with their child as would be the case where the child does not spend time in hospital. This will provide the parents of such babies with the assurance that they will be able to spend as much time with their newborn baby as those on maternity leave/ maternity support leave whose baby does not require to spend time in a neonatal unit.

### **3. Eligibility for Neonatal Leave and Pay**

- 3.1 All employees will be eligible to apply for neonatal leave from the first day of employment. Agency assignees, casual workers, self employed contractors, are not eligible under this policy..
- 3.2 Employees will be eligible for neonatal pay if they have 26 weeks continuous service at the date the child is first admitted to the neonatal unit.
- 3.3 To qualify for neonatal leave the newborn baby would have to have spent at least 7 consecutive days in a neonatal care unit within the first 28 days of birth.

## Appendix 1

- 3.4 If you are the mother of the child and receiving maternity leave and pay this will continue until the end of the maternity leave period. Any entitlement to neonatal leave will commence at the end of the maternity leave period.
- 3.5 Where the mother of the child does not qualify for maternity pay she will still be entitled to apply for neonatal leave and pay.
- 3.6 If you are not the mother of the child you will be eligible to apply for neonatal leave if you are:
- the father
  - the husband or partner of the mother (or adopter) - this includes same-sex partners
  - the child's adopter
  - the intended parent (if you're having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement and eligible to apply for a parental order)

### **4. Neonatal Leave and Entitlements**

- 4.1 This policy provides all new mothers and fathers/ non-birthing parents with the right to leave from work if their baby receives neonatal care for at least 7 continuous days before the baby reaches 28 days from birth.
- 4.2 The length of leave depends upon how long the baby receives neonatal care and there is a maximum entitlement of 12 weeks leave and pay.
- 4.3 You will be entitled to a period of leave equivalent to the number of weeks your baby spends in a neonatal unit, provided it has been for at least seven consecutive days. Leave will be granted based upon full weeks only (ie each period of 7 consecutive days).
- 4.4 The leave must be taken within 68 weeks of the newborn baby being admitted to the neo-natal unit.
- 4.5 If you are the mother of the child, any neonatal leave must be taken immediately at the end of maternity leave.
- 4.6 Fathers of the baby and non birthing parents will receive the same entitlements but will be able to take the leave at any stage up to 68 weeks from date the child was admitted.
- 4.7 All leave must be taken in a single block of working days.

### **5 Impact on maternity leave and other types of family leave**

- 5.1 Maternity leave cannot be paused or restarted, however the provision of neonatal leave and pay will allow the mother to have additional leave at the end of her maternity leave period.
- 5.2 The mother of a newborn child is entitled to take maternity leave for up to 52 weeks, through a combination of Ordinary Maternity Leave and Additional Maternity Leave.
- 5.3 This is a statutory right and maternity leave must begin on the day of the birth or at 11<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of confinement (EWC).

## Appendix 1

This policy does not affect the right to maternity leave or the requirements for maternity leave. This policy is to allow all parents of newborn babies to have the opportunity to spend up to the full 52 weeks at home with the newborn baby.

- 5.4 Neonatal leave for the mother of the child cannot be taken during a period of maternity leave and must be taken immediately the maternity leave ends.
- 5.5 The interaction with other types of statutory parental leave (shared parental leave and paternity/ maternity support leave) with neonatal leave will be more flexible as these can be used at different times. For example, paternity leave can be used at any time between the birth of the baby and 56 days from birth (or due date in the case of premature birth). Neonatal leave can be used at any time up to 68 weeks following admittance to the care unit.
- 5.6 The policy will not impact on the mother's rights to maternity leave and pay or on the right to take paternity/maternity support leave or any other statutory leave.

### **6 Notifying the Council of the intention to take Neonatal leave**

- 6.1 The Council recognises the sensitivities of a newborn child receiving neonatal care however it is important that the employee provides notification of their intention to take neonatal leave as soon as possible. For the mother of the newborn baby, this should be no later than 4 weeks prior to the leave being taken. For the father/ husband/ non birthing parent notice should be provided which is at least the same period as the leave being requested, eg if requesting one week off then one week's notice should be provided. Where, for whatever reason this is not possible the employee should discuss with the line manager prior to taking any leave.
- 6.2 As the leave for the mother of the child will begin immediately the maternity leave ends it is important to ensure adequate notice is provided so the appropriate payroll adjustments can be made.
- 6.3 Employees should complete the form attached at Appendix 2 and submit to their line manager. The line manager will confirm the entitlement by writing to the employee within two weeks of the request by way of appendix 3.  
  
Where the father/non-birthing parent wishes to avail of the leave immediately following paternity leave the manager will confirm this immediately at the time of request and follow up in writing to the employee.
- 6.4 A line manager cannot refuse a request for neonatal leave provided the employee meets the eligibility criterion and provides the requisite period of notice.

### **7 Payment**

- 7.1 Neonatal leave will be paid at the statutory rate for a week's pay up to a maximum of 12 weeks.
- 7.2 If you are the mother of the child on maternity leave and do not intend to return to work following the maternity leave you will not be entitled to any neonatal pay.

### **8 Terms and conditions during neonatal leave**

- 8.1 During any neonatal leave an employee will be entitled to all their existing terms and conditions other than those relating to pay.

## Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions

### **Is neonatal leave paid or unpaid?**

Neonatal leave is paid at the statutory rate of pay for each full week of leave up to a maximum period of 12 weeks.

### **When can I use my neonatal leave entitlement?**

Neonatal leave can be used up to 68 weeks following the baby's admission to the neonatal unit. However, for the mother the leave must be used immediately once the period of maternity leave ends.

### **I am the mother of the child, do I need to take my neonatal leave in one single block?**

Yes. If you are the mother of the child, you cannot take part of the entitlement and then return to work, or use another type of leave, and then take further neonatal leave.

### **My maternity leave is due to end and I am entitled to two weeks neonatal leave. I am arranging child care for my return to work. Can I return to work after my maternity leave and take my neonatal leave at a later date?**

No. The purpose of neonatal leave entitlement is to ensure that the mother of the child can spend the same amount of time with her child at home as would be the case with maternity leave. For the mother of the child neonatal leave must be taken immediately the maternity leave ends.

### **I am the father of a child who has spent more than one week in a neonatal unit before being allowed to come home. Am I entitled to neonatal leave as well as paternity leave.**

Yes. Both types of leave have different criteria. Paternity leave can be used at any time up to 56 days following the childbirth and neonatal leave up to 68 weeks following admission to the neonatal unit.

### **Can I use my paternity and neonatal leave in immediate succession?**

Yes. Paternity leave can be used at any time from the birth of the child up to a period of 56 days. Neonatal leave can be taken any time up to a period of 68 weeks from the first day of admission to the neonatal unit. The two types do not need to be taken in immediate succession; however, the neonatal leave will need to be taken in a single block.

A week for these purposes is a seven day period starting on any day

### **Can my manager refuse to grant me neonatal leave at the times I request?**

No. you are entitled to neonatal leave if you meet the criteria. However, you must provide the correct notice to management.

### **Is the amount of leave I am entitled to based upon the number of days my newborn child spends in the hospital or only the full weeks, ie each period of 7 full days?**

You will be entitled to leave and pay only for the number of FULL WEEKS your child spends in care, ie seven consecutive days. Therefore, if your child is in neonatal care for 10 days, you will receive one full week in leave and pay if you meet the eligibility criteria. If your child is in care for 25 consecutive days you will receive neonatal leave and pay for 3 weeks if you meet the eligibility criteria.

### **My baby came home with me a few days following the birth but then became ill and was admitted to hospital for 10 days. Am I entitled to neonatal leave?**

You will be entitled to neonatal leave in this instance provided the baby is admitted to hospital within 28 days of childbirth. Should hospital admission have occurred later than the 28 days then this type of leave will not apply.

## Appendix 2: Application for Neonatal Leave

### BELFAST CITY COUNCIL NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO TAKE NEONATAL LEAVE

Please complete this form if you are the mother/ father/ non-birthing parent. If you are the mother of the child your maternity leave must be brought to an end in order for neonatal leave to be taken. Once the maternity leave has been brought to an end it is unable to be reinstated. **You must provide at least four weeks' notice if you are the mother of the child and currently on maternity leave**

For the father/ husband/ non birthing parent notice should be provided which is at least the same period as the leave being requested, eg if requesting one week off then one week's notice should be provided. Where, for whatever reason this is not possible, please discuss with your line manager prior to requesting leave.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Employee Name:   |  |
| Job Title:   |  |
| Department:  |  |
| Section:   |  |
| State if you are the mother/ father/ non-birthing parent:    |  |
| Date of birth of child                                       |  |
| Date the baby was admitted to neo-natal care                 |  |
| Date baby was discharged from neo-natal care                 |  |
| Period of leave requested                                    |  |
| I wish my neo-natal leave to commence on the following date: |  |

#### **DECLARATION:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 3: Confirmation of Neonatal Leave Template**

Your reference:

Our reference:

Being dealt with by:

Date:

**Strictly private and confidential**

[Addressee]

[Address line 1]

[Address line 2]

[Town]

[County]

[POSTCODE]

Dear [Enter first name]

**RE: Confirmation of Neonatal leave**

Thank you for your Notification of your intention to take neo-natal leave dated [enter date]. Based upon the information you have provided I can confirm your neo-natal leave will commence on [Enter date] for a period of [Enter details].

I acknowledge that you have provided the requisite notice.

Should you have any queries or concerns at all regarding your curtailment, please do not hesitate to contact me on [Enter details].

Yours sincerely

[Line manager/Business Support]

[Department]



|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Response received from Department for Communities re Notice of Motion – Anti-Poverty Strategy |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 21st June, 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   |

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| <b>Restricted Reports</b>  |   |                                 |  |                          |                               |  |                          |                               |  |                          |              |  |                          |
| <b>Is this report restricted?</b>  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                 |  |                          |                               |  |                          |                               |  |                          |              |  |                          |
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| <b>After Committee Decision</b>  |   | <input type="checkbox"/>        |  |                          |                               |  |                          |                               |  |                          |              |  |                          |
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| <b>Never</b>   |   | <input type="checkbox"/>        |  |                          |                               |  |                          |                               |  |                          |              |  |                          |

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| <b>Call-in</b> |
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Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

No

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>  |
| 1.1        | To note the correspondence received from Department for Communities.  |
| <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 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 19th April, 2024, it was agreed to write to the Minister for Communities requesting that the Anti-Poverty Strategy be brought forward as quickly as possible.   |
| 3.2        | The Committee is advised that a response has been received from Mr. Carl Savage, Deputy Director Central Policy Division, Department for Communities.   |
| 3.3        | In his response he advises “ <i>Minister Lyons is committed to delivering long-term, sustainable solutions to poverty in all its forms for our communities right across Northern Ireland and ensuring the best possible future for those suffering socio-economic disadvantage.</i> <p><i>The Minister will be engaging with his Executive colleagues over the coming weeks and months to identify and implement effective and sustainable actions that will address the issues faced by all living in poverty within Northern Ireland.</i></p> <p><i>The intention is for a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy to be brought to the Executive as soon as possible, taking account of the current delivery environment and Executive and Ministerial priorities.</i></p> <p><i>Final decisions on the content and implementation of the Anti-Poverty Strategy will be subject to Executive agreement.”</i></p> |
| 3.4        | Members will note that officers will continue to work with colleagues from DfC to seek to maximise the draw-down of available funding to support those affected by the cost-of-living crisis through the Hardship Programme. We will also continue to raise awareness and create referral pathways to existing support services which may be available through the annual publication of the cost-of-living guide.  |

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| 3.5        | <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> |
| 3.6        | <p>None associated with this report.</p>  |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>  |
|            | <p>Appendix 1 – Response from Department for Communities.</p>   |

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**From Carl Savage**  
**Deputy Director Central Policy Division**

**Causeway Exchange**  
**1-7 Bedford Street**  
**Belfast**  
**BT2 7EG**

e-mail: [Carl.Savage@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Carl.Savage@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Our Ref: TOF-1402-2024

Date: xx May 2024

Jim Hanna

Via email: <mailto:hannajim@belfastcity.gov.uk>

Dear Jim,

**Notice of Motion – Anti-Poverty Strategy**

Thank you for your email dated 15 May 2024 to Minister Lyons in which you advised that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in their meeting on the 19 April requested that the Anti-Poverty Strategy be brought forward as soon as possible. Your letter has been passed to me for reply.

Minister Lyons is committed to delivering long-term, sustainable solutions to poverty in all its forms for our communities right across Northern Ireland and ensuring the best possible future for those suffering socio-economic disadvantage.

The Minister will be engaging with his Executive colleagues over the coming weeks and months to identify and implement effective and sustainable actions that will address the issues faced by all living in poverty within Northern Ireland.

The intention is for a draft Anti-Poverty Strategy to be brought to the Executive as soon as possible, taking account of the current delivery environment and Executive and Ministerial priorities.



Final decisions on the content and implementation of the Anti-Poverty Strategy will be subject to Executive agreement.

Thank you for your communication.

Yours sincerely,

Carl Savage  
Deputy Director Central Policy Division  
Department for Communities



|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Response received from Department for Infrastructure re Trademark Belfast's request to take land over at Bankmore Square |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23rd August, 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  |

|  |   |                                 |  |                          |                               |  |                          |                               |  |                          |              |  |                          |
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| <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 style="width: 30px; 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> |   |                                 |  |                          |                               |  |                          |                               |  |                          |              |  |                          |
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| <b>Call-in</b>                               |   |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>   |
| 1.1        | To note the correspondence received from Department for Infrastructure.  |
| <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 Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 19th April, 2024, it was agreed to write to Mr John O’Dowd, Minister for Infrastructure, to communicate the Council’s support for Trademarket moving to Bankmore Square as an important catalyst for local business activity and as a unique offering to tourists, and ask that the Department ask Linen Quarter BID to surrender their lease and award Trademarket the lease of Bankmore Square, with all the due diligence required, from July 2024 in order to protect jobs and reduce any disruption to their business and the dozens of small independent businesses which rely on Trademarket. |
| 3.2        | The Committee is advised that a response has been received from Ms Mary Toner, Lands Branch, Department for Infrastructure.  |
| 3.3        | In her response she advises that” <i>the area of land in question is not surplus to the Department’s requirements. You are aware that the Department has already entered arrangements with another party (Linen Quarter BID) in respect of this land. The Department will not be seeking to terminate its licence agreement with Linen Quarter BID as there has been no breach of their obligations.</i> ”   |
| 3.4        | <b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b><br>None associated with this report.   |
| 3.5        | <b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b><br>None associated with this report.  |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>   |
|            | Appendix 1 – Response from Department for Infrastructure.  |



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Mr Jim Hanna  
Belfast City Council  
Legal and Civic Services Department  
City Hall, Belfast  
BT1 5GS  
[hannajim@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:hannajim@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8GB

Your reference: SP&R 19.04.24 JH/JT  
Our reference: TOF-1270-2024  
4 June 2024

Dear Mr Hanna,

**Trademarket Belfast's request to take land over at Bankmore Square**

Thank you for your email to John O'Dowd, Minister for Infrastructure on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 regarding your request that the Department requests that Linen Quarter BID surrender their licence and award Trademarket the licence of Bankmore Square. Your correspondence has been passed to me to respond.

The area of land in question is not surplus to the Department's requirements. You are aware that the Department has already entered arrangements with another party (Linen Quarter BID) in respect of this land. The Department will not be seeking to terminate its licence agreement with Linen Quarter BID as there has been no breach of their obligations.

I hope this provides clarity on the Department's position.

Yours sincerely,

**Mary Toner**  
**Lands Branch**

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|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Response received from Translink re Bilingual Signage at Weavers Cross |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23rd August, 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                  |

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| <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 style="width: 30px; 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> |   |  |  |  |  |
| <b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>   |   |  |  |  |  |
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| <b>Call-in</b>                               |   |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| <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 had previously been received from Mr. Chris Conway, Group Chief Executive of Translink, dated 7th May, which noted that Translink was planning a series of meetings with a range of interested parties, where they would listen carefully to all viewpoints and consider a response once this process had been completed.  |
| 3.3        | The Committee is advised that a response has subsequently been received, dated 18th July, again from Mr. Chris Conway, Group Chief Executive Translink, advising that, during recent weeks, representatives have met with a wide variety of groups, including Conradh na Gaeilge, Foras na Gaeilge, Ulster-Scots Agency/Board o Ulster Scots, Sinn Féin, DUP, and Belfast South Community Resources to discuss the issue. He details that Translink’s position has been consistent throughout all meetings, a desire to listen to the issues raised and look for solutions. |
| 3.4        | In conclusion the correspondence advises that further dialogue on this issue within and between communities and political representatives will be required to reach a solution.   |
| 3.5        | <b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b><br>None associated with this report.  |
| 3.6        | <b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b><br>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.  |

18 July 2024

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

Via Email – [steelsara@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:steelsara@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Dear Ms Steele

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

I am writing to provide an update on the discussions we have had with various interested parties in connection with bilingual signage at Belfast Grand Central Station.

During recent weeks, we have met with a wide variety of groups, including Conradh na Gaeilge, Foras na Gaeilge, Ulster-Scots Agency/Boord o Ulst r Scots, Sinn F in, DUP, and Belfast South Community Resources, to discuss the issue. Translink’s position has been consistent throughout the meetings – a desire to listen to the issues raised and look for solutions, we provide a public transport service for all communities, and that we remain impartial on cross community matters and issues that may be perceived to be political in nature.

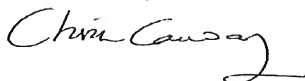
We have concluded that further dialogue on this issue within and between communities and political representatives will be required to reach a solution. We intend to reach out to Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency/Boord o Ulst r Scots to help facilitate this.

The station will open operationally later this year, but the project is not programmed for completion until late 2025, and there will be no official opening prior to this. This provides the benefit of both time and space for ongoing dialogue, alongside further clarity arising from the implementation of the Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022.

Initial steps to accommodate the linguistic heritage of Belfast will be taken in advance of the operational opening during autumn 2024, including multi-lingual welcome and helpdesk signage, as well as significant ongoing arts and heritage work being undertaken to accommodate the vibrant linguistic and cultural heritage of the area; we are working with the local communities to deliver this. We are also working to deliver multi-lingual capability on our website in the period ahead.

I hope that you will find the foregoing useful.

Yours sincerely



Chris Conway  
Group Chief Executive

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

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|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | <b>Appointment to Outside Body: Integrated Care System NI –Area Integrated Partnership Board</b> |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23rd August, 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   |

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| <b>Restricted Reports</b>  |   |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Is this report restricted?</b>  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   |  |  |  |  |
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| <b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>   |   |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>After Committee Decision</b></p> <p><b>After Council Decision</b></p> <p><b>Sometime in the future</b></p> <p><b>Never</b></p>   | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> |  |  |  |  |
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| <b>Call-in</b>                               |   |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>   |
| 1.1        | To consider a request from the Department of Health for a member to represent Belfast on the Area Integrated Partnership Board.   |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendation</b>   |
| 2.1        | The Committee is asked to consider the request and to note that, if it is minded to agree, the nomination will be made in accordance with Committee's decision of 26th June, 2023 in relation to additional appointments to outside bodies.   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main Report</b>  |
| 3.1        | Correspondence (copy attached) has been received from the Department of Health advising that work is underway on the development and implementation of the Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland (ICS NI).  |
| 3.2        | The letter indicates it has been agreed that council representation on Area Integrated Partnership Boards will be undertaken by local councillors. Therefore, the Department is now seeking to secure one local government representative from each relevant council within each shadow AIPB area, which will include one from Belfast City Council                   |
| 3.3        | This falls under the appointments to outside bodies under the St. Lague Order of Choices.   |
| 3.4        | In accordance with the decision of the SP&R Committee 21/6/19 which " <i>agreed a process to deal with any additional requests from outside bodies for Council representation during the Council term, in that the Party or Parties who would have had the next available choice(s) under the Saint Lague table would be asked to nominate a representative(s)</i> ". |
| 3.5        | Accordingly, the positions will be offered in the instance to the next Party on the list, namely, the DUP.  |
| 3.6        | <b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b><br>None associated with this report.  |
| 3.7        | <b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b><br>None associated with this report.   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>  |
|            | Appendix 1 – Request from the Department of Health<br>Appendix 2 – Information Pack   |



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NI Council Chief Executives  
*via e-mail*

Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
BELFAST  
BT4 3SQ

[martina.moore@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:martina.moore@health-ni.gov.uk)

30 July 2024

Dear Chief Executive

### **ICS NI – Request for local Government representatives to be members of Area Integrated Partnership Boards**

You will be aware of the work underway on the development and implementation of the Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland (ICS NI).

As outlined in our correspondence of 28 June, it has been agreed that council representation on AIPBs will be undertaken by local councillors. I am therefore writing to advise that the Department of Health is now seeking to secure one local government representative from each relevant council within each shadow AIPB area. This process is being undertaken to identify local councillors for all five shadow AIPB areas, regardless of the phased timing of their establishment.

The Department is seeking a single councillor nomination from each relevant Council in the AIPB area, as shown below:

**Belfast AIPB** – Belfast City Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

**Northern AIPB** – Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Causeway Coast and Glens District Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council.

**South Eastern AIPB** – Ards and North Down Borough Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council.

**Southern AIPB** – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council.

**Western AIPB** – Causeway Coast and Glens District Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

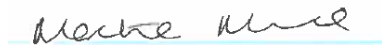
The attached **information pack** provides further detail for prospective applicants on the expression of interest process, and applications can be completed online via the following link: [ICS NI - Area Integrated Partnership Boards - Local Government representative - Expression of Interest - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#). Hard copies of the **application form** and **equality monitoring form** can be provided on request by contacting [aipb@hscni.net](mailto:aipb@hscni.net).

Applications must be submitted by **5pm** on **6 September 2024** and will be considered by a panel consisting of representation from the Department, NILGA, and an independent lay person.

I would be grateful if you could arrange for the attached information to be circulated amongst your Council members.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter and if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



**Martina Moore**

**Director, ICS NI Programme**

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# Integrated Care System NI

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## Area Integrated Partnership Board Local Government Representative Information Pack

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**July 2024**

## SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1. The Department of Health is inviting interest for members for each of its **shadow Area Integrated Partnership Boards** that are to be established as part of the **Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland (ICS NI)**.
- 1.2. ICS NI is the new [framework](#) for planning health and social care services in Northern Ireland. It is a single planning system that will help us to improve the health and wellbeing of our population and address demand by:
  - placing a focus on people keeping well in the first instance, providing timely, co-ordinated care when they are not, and supporting people to self-care when appropriate; and
  - ensuring we are maximising the resource we have available to deliver the best outcomes for our population, optimising our effectiveness and efficiency and reducing duplication.

The objective is to **improve health and wellbeing outcomes** and **reduce health inequalities** through collaboration and partnership working.

- 1.3. It recognises that the solutions to the many challenges and issues facing our system cannot be found in traditional ways of working but require a more agile and innovative approach, and they cannot be found by working in isolation. It provides the mechanism to bring together the constituent parts of the HSC system and those wider partners involved in improving the health and wellbeing of our population to work together to find solutions.
- 1.4. The ICS NI model is outcomes-based and underpinned by a population health approach, that is; looking at the entire life course from prevention, through to early intervention, treatment, aftercare and eventually end of life care.
- 1.5. ICS NI is a new way of working in terms of planning care and services in Northern Ireland. Within the model there are 3 core aspects:
  - working locally in partnership with others to identify local needs, agree priorities, and identify what collective action should be taken to effect change with a focus on prevention, early intervention and community health and well-being. To support this, we will establish five **Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs)**,
  - working regionally in partnership with others to support the work of AIPBs, identify areas for regional collaboration where this would bring the greatest benefit to the whole NI population, and support shared learning. A **Regional ICS Partnership Forum** will be established to lead this approach, and
  - applying this integrated approach in practice, with the **Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG)** and **Public Health Agency (PHA)** planning care and services across the system, informed by local and regional collaboration.
- 1.6. In undertaking their responsibilities for service planning, SPPG and PHA will adopt an evidence-based and outcomes-focused decision-making approach, inclusive of the input from across the system, networks, communities, and service users, in line with the underlying principle of integration.

- 1.7. Work is currently underway to stand up ICS NI in shadow form from Autumn 2024 to allow for a period of learning and refinement. This will involve a phased approach, with work progressing on the establishment of the Regional ICS Partnership Forum as well as shadow Area Integrated Partnership Boards (AIPBs) in the following areas:
- Southern (transitioning from Test status);
  - South-Eastern; and
  - Western.
- The Belfast and Northern shadow AIPBs will be stood up in due course.
- 1.8. Further information about ICS NI can be accessed here: [Integrated Care System NI](#).

## SECTION 2 – ROLE OF THE SHADOW AIPB

- 2.1 The shadow AIPB is one component of the overall model and provides a way to bring together a wide range of partners with a responsibility and/or interest in the health and wellbeing of the local population.
- 2.2 The shadow AIPB enables all partners to work together to tackle the challenges being faced in their local area, drawing together their collective skills, resources and capabilities to develop plans that will deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes, support sustainability, and ultimately reduce health inequalities. The shadow AIPB will be expected to undertake a population health approach with a focus on **prevention, early intervention and community health and wellbeing**.
- 2.3 There will be five shadow AIPBs established across NI which will be geographically coterminous with each of the Health and Social Care Trusts and intersect with boundaries of the 11 Councils.
- 2.4 Each shadow AIPB is a **planning body** for its geographical area with responsibility for:
- identifying the health and social care needs of their local population supported by a population needs assessment and an ongoing relationship with local communities and networks;
  - agreeing on the priorities from the identified need, aligned under a Strategic Outcomes Framework;
  - developing a plan to meet those needs; and
  - taking action within the resources available to support delivery of the plan.
- 2.5 Shadow AIPB priorities will be determined in line with the identified needs of their local population, and they must operate in line with the overarching strategic direction set by the Minister and the Department. To further support this, the Regional ICS Partnership Forum (RICSPF) will provide shadow AIPBs with guiding planning assumptions to support their work and clarify key strategic priority areas that they should reflect in their local planning approaches.
- 2.6 It is critically important that AIPBs are able to draw on the knowledge, experience and expertise of a broad range of clinicians, professionals, networks, organisations and other bodies when undertaking their work. AIPBs will engage and include these individuals and groups as required. Importantly, AIPBs will work with existing partnerships and networks to support alignment and remove duplication.
- 2.7 AIPBs will not commission services and their remit does not extend to making decisions about changing clinical and acute services. Such decisions remain the remit of health and social care bodies, in line with any relevant Departmental and Ministerial direction, as well as with the engagement and involvement of key stakeholders.

- 2.8 AIPBs do not hold specified budgets, rather they focus on how the available resources that their respective sectors and organisations are being used in terms of wider public health, prevention, and early intervention, working collectively to ensure that they are being utilised in the best possible way to achieve the best outcomes for their population.
- 2.9 In time, AIPBs will be established in statute in line with the duty set out at Section 15B of the [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act 2009](#). Until such time as the regulations are brought before the Assembly, AIPBs are to be established in shadow form. This means that shadow AIPBs will be established in line with the proposed procedures for the statutory AIPBs and will accordingly undertake their intended role. This will allow the regulations to be informed by any relevant learning from the shadow period. Roll-out of shadow AIPBs commenced from April 2024 with the selection and induction of members, with the shadow AIPBs being established on a phased basis from September 2024 onwards.

### **Shadow AIPB Membership**

- 2.10 The membership of each shadow AIPB will include representation from across organisations and sectors who have a role and/or interest in the health and social wellbeing of the population of Northern Ireland. It includes representation from across the HSC Trusts, Primary Care – GPs and Pharmacists, as well as local councils, the voluntary and community sectors, and service users, and carers.
- 2.11 Each shadow AIPB will also have Strategic Partners: one Public Health Agency (PHA) representative and one Strategic Planning & Performance Group (SPPG) representative. The Strategic Partners' role is to co-ordinate the administrative and analytical support and ensure AIPBs make the necessary connections with the wider system to support partnerships undertaking their work.
- 2.12 The SPPG Strategic Partner will also undertake responsibility to ensure alignment and linkages are made to the relevant Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) in the AIPB area. The role of the CPP and its processes and structures is recognised as the over-arching mechanism to address the wider determinants of health, with AIPBs supporting this work through creating the space and opportunity for more in-depth exploration of health needs and challenges, focusing on more health-related opportunities and solutions. Consequently, the SPPG Strategic Partner to the AIPB will sit on both and make the appropriate linkages.

## SECTION 3 – ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

- 3.1 Evidence shows that health and wellbeing, and health inequalities, are shaped by many factors, including age, family, community, workplace, beliefs and traditions, economics, and physical and social environments.
- 3.2 It suggests that, while health and clinical services contribute 20% to improving health outcomes, the population's health is to a much larger extent affected by the economic and social factors (40%) and environmental factors (10%) in which people live and related lifestyle and health behaviours (30%).
- 3.3 There is also a robust and compelling evidence base to support Community Development as an effective approach in tackling health inequalities<sup>1</sup>. *Making Life Better* and *Delivering Together* acknowledge this and identify it as a key approach within health and social care to reduce health inequalities.
- 3.4 Local Government representatives are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the local community and Councils undertake a range of roles and responsibilities on behalf of their local population and communities. They provide services and programmes which look to improve the quality of life of their citizens – from improving wellbeing, supporting sustainable economic development to improving the lived environment and neighbourhoods and to facilitate and lead on Community Planning.
- 3.5 As such their responsibilities extend across areas that contribute directly to the improved health and wellbeing of their communities. From sports, leisure services and recreational facilities, to parks, open spaces, playgrounds and community centres, economic development, and neighbourhood renewal.
- 3.6 Councils sit at the heart of their communities. They provide access to a wealth of data, information and expertise on the needs of those communities, the challenges, opportunities, and what is currently being done, or is being planned, to meet those needs across the wider determinants of health.
- 3.7 Connecting the work of Councils, and the impacts they can have on the wider determinants of health, with that of shadow AIPBs will help to support improved health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals and communities.
- 3.8 In turn, representation on shadow AIPBs will help to ensure that the scope of Council's responsibilities is fully considered and taken account of where relevant to shadow AIPB discussions and proposals.
- 3.9 Representatives will help enable synergy between the work of the shadow AIPB and that of the Council, helping to identify where there is potential for alignment and complimentary actions and to achieve better coordination of activity.

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<sup>1</sup> CDHN Fact sheet on Health Inequalities: [Layout 1 \(cdhn.org\)](https://www.cdhn.org/layout/1)

3.10 At all times, the work of the shadow AIPB will take cognisance of the statutory remit and responsibilities of Councils, including the priorities and actions detailed in Council corporate plans or statements. Shadow AIPBs will also ensure any relevant need for Councils to secure wider input, or approvals in line with their existing statutory and organisational governance arrangements, is taken into account and accommodated.

## **SECTION 4 – KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1 Represent and act on behalf of the local community in the Council area with a commitment to link with relevant Council employees, networks, partnerships, or other groups where relevant to support the work of the shadow AIPB.
- 4.2 To contribute to the creation of a compelling vision for the future health and wellbeing of the local population, with a particular focus on identifying opportunities for synergy with Council plans and activities.
- 4.3 To communicate this vision within their organisation.

### **Understanding Need**

- 4.4 To contribute to the development of a collective understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of the local population utilising available population health data and local intelligence from all relevant partner organisations.
- 4.5 To provide and share intelligence and information relevant to the work of the shadow AIPB that has been specifically gathered, collated, or shared by the Council.
- 4.6 Help inform avenues for community engagement and support the shadow AIPB with wider engagement.
- 4.7 To support the collection of local intelligence and sharing of examples of good practice that complement the shadow AIPBs understanding of local need in their identification of priorities.

### **Agreeing Priorities**

- 4.8 Through analysis of the needs assessment, and in conjunction with the Strategic Outcomes Framework and guidance from the Regional ICS Partnership Forum, agree the priority areas on which the shadow AIPB will focus.
- 4.9 Identify key linkages with relevant Council plans and opportunities for alignment.

### **Planning**

- 4.10 Contribute to the development of local Area Plans to address the identified priorities based on a shared understanding of the local population and how people live their lives.
- 4.11 Consideration of all available financial and performance information, and pertinent issues and challenges, to make informed plans and recommendations – members are responsible for contributing such information from the Council perspective where relevant and/or appropriate.
- 4.12 Work closely with the Strategic Partners to support co-ordination of the Council contribution to plans, identifying where they are best positioned to lead on delivery against agreed objectives and working to remove any duplication.

4.13 To explore the use and contribution of resources, if appropriate, from the Council to advance shared goals and outcomes in Area plans.

4.14 Support co-production and co-design of shadow AIPB plans.

4.15 Contribute to Task & Finish groups where required to develop local plans.

### **Connecting with Communities**

4.16 To actively contribute to and support direct engagement with local communities, building on existing infrastructure and local arrangements – identifying opportunities for a joined-up approach to community engagement. This will evolve and develop over time.

4.17 To foster and enable communication, engagement, and active participation of local communities with the planning of actions to improve health and social wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

### **Effective Leadership**

4.18 To be a source of leadership and expertise representing the local community and the Council within the shadow AIPB.

4.19 To engage with and communicate the views of the local community and Council effectively and efficiently as possible to the shadow AIPB.

4.20 Support the building of relationships and trust between shadow AIPB leaders and the Council, encouraging shared responsibility and accountability for collective gains and risks.

### **Collaborative Working**

4.21 To adhere to the principles of parity and inclusion between partners acknowledging the skills, experience and value that each partner can bring.

4.22 To agree clear and transparent ways of working together, having a mutual understanding of each other's existing governance arrangements and structures, ensuring shadow AIPB members are kept informed of relevant changes and pressures across the organisation.

4.23 To work collectively to identify, remove or avoid duplication, ensuring the most efficient use of available resources.

4.24 Identify and promote best practice and learning between partners, encouraging flexibility, agility and innovation to collectively meet and address challenges.

### **Commitment to Meetings**

4.25 To demonstrate commitment to the shadow AIPB structure, through regular attendance at Board meetings and be fully engaged in two-way communication with own sector and the shadow AIPB to facilitate the development of a comprehensive plan.

4.26 To support, lead and participate in shared learning events and keep up to date with issues relevant to the work of the shadow AIPB.

4.27 To ensure adherence to the confidential nature of information shared for the purpose of the shadow AIPB members role.

4.28 To promote the shadow AIPB's role in the community it serves.

## SECTION 5 – ROLE PROFILE

### **Training**

5.1 Appropriate induction training will be provided on commencement of the appointment to the shadow AIPB. Further refresher training will be delivered where required. This requirement will be an expected commitment additional to the commitment detailed at paragraph 5.3.

### **Period of Appointment**

5.2 It is expected that a shadow AIPB member will undertake a term of four years pending regulations approval.<sup>2</sup>

### **Time Commitment**

5.3 The implementation of ICS NI is an evolving and maturing process. Shadow AIPB members will typically be required to commit one day per month to attendance at shadow AIPB meetings. There may be a requirement for further work outside of meetings for reading of papers, preview of presentations, or involvement in workshops for the development of plans.

### **Expense Claims**

5.4 This is **not** a remunerated position. Payments are covered under the Departmental circular [HSC \(F\) 14 2024](#) which lays out what can be claimed and the appropriate rates.

5.1 The member Claim Form will be provided electronically on appointment to the AIPB. For further information relating to allowances, please contact [aipb@hscni.net](mailto:aipb@hscni.net).

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<sup>2</sup> Members should note that AIPBs will ultimately be subject to statutory regulations, which will provide further detail upon legislative provision. Prior to this, any membership is based solely on shadow arrangements until formal legislation is enacted.

## SECTION 6 – SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

### Selection Process

- 6.1 Applications are required to be submitted for the position which will be considered by a panel consisting of representation from the Department, NILGA, and an independent lay person. The selection process may be extended to include an interview, by the same panel, depending on the number of applications received. If required, it is anticipated that interviews will be conducted week commencing 9 September 2024. Successful applicants will be notified by the Department.
- 6.2 The Panel reserves the right to revert to Councils, if required, to support diversity and representation in terms of shadow AIPB membership with regards to e.g. geographical representation, demographics, political representation etc.
- 6.3 Applications can be completed online. If required, hard copies of the application form and equality monitoring form can be provided on request by contacting [aipb@hscni.net](mailto:aipb@hscni.net).
- 6.4 Applications must be submitted by **5pm on 6 September 2024**.

### Eligibility Criteria

- 6.5 Councillors must be serving on a local Council within the area of the AIPB as of July 2024.
- 6.6 Applicants must not be employed by the Department of Health, a health and social care body or a health service body.

### Essential Criteria

- 6.7 Applicants must ensure they demonstrate that they have met the criteria. This needs to be clearly detailed otherwise they will not be considered for the role.
- Broad understanding of current health and social care structures and services and appreciation of key issues affecting population health and social wellbeing,
  - Experience in working effectively with a broad range of stakeholders from across the statutory and voluntary/community sectors, as well as with local communities, to achieve agreed objectives in a challenging and changing environment, and
  - Demonstration of effective listening and communication skills – including negotiation and influencing skills, and interpersonal communication.

### AIPB and Council Area

- 6.8 A small number of electoral areas within the 11 Councils straddle the geographic areas of two AIPBs. Prospective applicants are asked to consider the information below (illustrated in **Appendix 1**, Local Government Districts and Health and Social Care Trusts). The Department is seeking a **single** Councillor nomination from **each** relevant Council in the AIPB area.

**Belfast AIPB** – Belfast City Council; Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

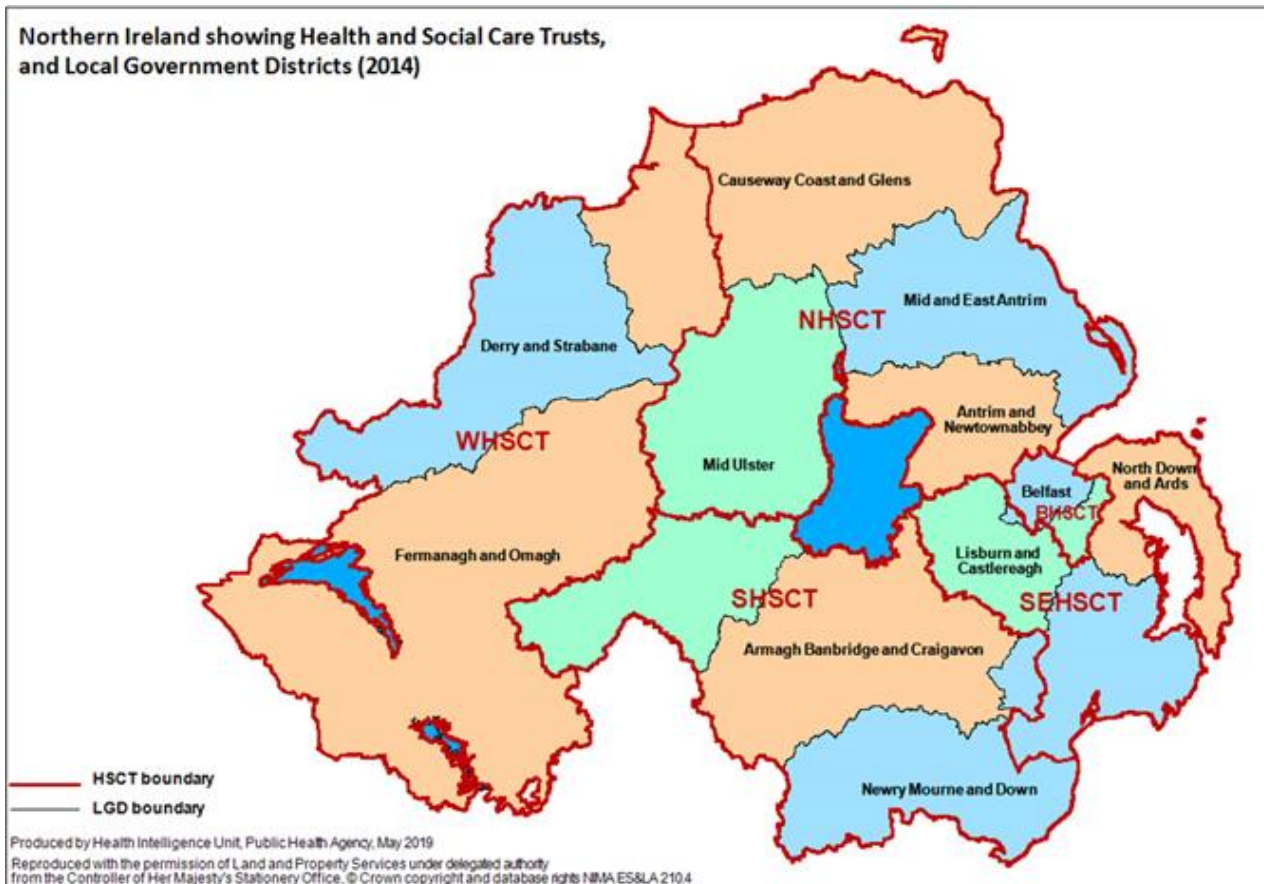
**Northern AIPB** – Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Causeway Coast and Glens District Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council.

**South Eastern AIPB** – Ards and North Down Borough Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council.

**Southern AIPB** – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Newry Mourne and Down District Council

**Western AIPB** – Causeway Coast and Glens District Council, Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

Northern Ireland showing Health and Social Care Trusts, and Local Government Districts (2014)





|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Chief Officer Recruitment                       |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024                                  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Christine Sheridan, Director of Human Resources |

**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?**

|                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>After Committee Decision</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>After Council Decision</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Some time in the future</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Never</b>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**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        | Members will be aware that John Greer, current Director of Economic Development will be leaving the Council in October 2024. |

|  |   |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1.2                                    | The purpose of this report is to seek permission to recruit the post of Director of Economic Development and agree the constitution of the selection panel.   |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| <b>2.0</b>                             | <b>Recommendations</b>  |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| 2.1                                    | It is recommended that the post Director of Economic Development be recruited on a permanent basis and that the selection panel for the post comprise the Chairperson of the SP&R Committee: the Deputy Chairperson of the SP&R Committee (or their nominees); and one additional elected member from the SP&R Committee from a political party not already represented by the Chair and Deputy Chair; along with the Chief Executive (or his nominee) and the Strategic Director of Place & Economy.   |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| 2.2                                    | It is important that the Elected Members nominated to constitute the selection panel, provide a balance where practicable in terms of both gender and community background.   |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| <b>3.0</b>                             | <b>Main report</b>  |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| 3.1                                    | The post of Director of Economic Development will be publicly advertised in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Procedures on Recruitment & Selection.  |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| 3.2                                    | <p><b>Recruitment Timetable – Director of Economic Development</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Public Advertisement / Closing Date</td> <td>Thursday 5 &amp; Friday 6 September 2024/ Friday 27 September 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Panel Short-listing Meeting (Stage 1)</td> <td>Monday 7 October 2024* 2pm to 4pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Virtual Assessment Centre</td> <td>Monday 14 October 2024 (all day)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Outcome of Assessment Centre (Stage 2)</td> <td>Monday 21 October 2024* 10am to 12pm</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Final Interviews</td> <td>Tuesday 29 October 2024* (all day)</td> </tr> </table> | Public Advertisement / Closing Date | Thursday 5 & Friday 6 September 2024/ Friday 27 September 2024 | Panel Short-listing Meeting (Stage 1) | Monday 7 October 2024* 2pm to 4pm | Virtual Assessment Centre | Monday 14 October 2024 (all day) | Outcome of Assessment Centre (Stage 2) | Monday 21 October 2024* 10am to 12pm | Final Interviews | Tuesday 29 October 2024* (all day) |
| Public Advertisement / Closing Date    | Thursday 5 & Friday 6 September 2024/ Friday 27 September 2024  |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| Panel Short-listing Meeting (Stage 1)  | Monday 7 October 2024* 2pm to 4pm   |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| Virtual Assessment Centre              | Monday 14 October 2024 (all day)  |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| Outcome of Assessment Centre (Stage 2) | Monday 21 October 2024* 10am to 12pm  |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| Final Interviews                       | Tuesday 29 October 2024* (all day)  |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| 3.3                                    | *Elected Members will be required to attend on these three key meeting dates. Elected Members may also be required to attend a 2-hour R&S training course on non-discriminatory R&S techniques in advance of these meeting dates. An observer from the Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC) and a Professional Assessor may also attend these meetings but they will not have any voting rights.  |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |
| 3.4                                    | The selection panel will have the authority to make an appointment and the outcome of the recruitment and selection process will be reported back to SP&R and full Council for notation.  |                                     |  |                                       |                                   |                           |                                  |  |                                      |                  |                                    |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | <b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b>  |
| 3.5        | There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report as the post has already been budgeted for in the revenue estimates and any quotes for Assessment Centres will be managed in line with the Council's agreed procurement thresholds.   |
|            | <b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>   |
| 3.6        | There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications associated with this report. These posts will be recruited in full accordance with the LGSC's Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection and be conducted in a fair, systematic and objective manner with all appointments based strictly on the merit principle. |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>   |
|            | None.  |

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|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Belfast Stories Update                             |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024                                     |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Wendy Langham, Programme Director, Belfast Stories |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Eimear Henry, Strategic Lead, Belfast Stories      |

**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
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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?**

|                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>After Committee Decision</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>After Council Decision</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Sometime in the future</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Never</b>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Call-in**

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes  No

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>  |
| <b>1.1</b> | <b>Purpose of the report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update Members on the Belfast Stories programme as part of the Belfast Region City Deal including design work undertaken to date as part of RIBA Design stages 1 &amp; 2.</li> </ul> |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outline activity to support the next phase of development up to the end of RIBA Design stage 2 and the submission of the Outline Business Case.</li> <li>- To note a 12-week public consultation on emerging designs including an Equality Impact Assessment and Rural Needs Assessment.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendation</b>  |
| 2.1        | <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Note a 12-week public consultation on emerging concept designs for Belfast Stories, to run from 26 September until 19 December 2024.</li> <li>- Agree that a Members' workshop take place during the public consultation.</li> <li>- Note that a report in December 2024 will be submitted to approve the submission of the Outline Business Case (OBC) to the Department for Economy (DfE) to secure a contract for funding as part of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).</li> </ul> |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main Report</b>   |
| 3.1        | Members will be aware that Belfast Stories is the Council's flagship project under the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and is due to open 2030. Positioned as a tourism anchor, Belfast Stories is set to deliver significant economic and social impact for Belfast and beyond helping to regenerate the city centre and connect the tourism offer to the neighbourhoods.   |
| 3.2        | A dedicated Programme Management Office within the Council has been operational since 2020 and the team provides regular updates to Committees and to the Belfast Stories Members Working Group.   |
| 3.3        | In March 2024, an update was provided to SPR Committee outlining work undertaken to date and the appointment of design teams including the architectural team which is a partnership between Oslo-based Snøhetta and Belfast based TODD Architects. Gleeds was also appointed to oversee project management and design assurance.  |
| 3.4        | In April 2024 Ralph Applebaum Associates (RAA) was appointed to head up the Experience Design Team to deliver the Interpretive Masterplan and Concept Design through to the end of the current project stage. The teams have been working together towards the delivery of RIBA stage 2 concept designs by the end of March 2025.  |
| 3.5        | <p><u>Programme activities and key milestones 2024</u></p> <p>The focus in 2024 is the development of the design brief and concept designs for the experience and build and the development of the Outline Business Case (OBC) for submission to the Department for the Economy (DfE) for BRCD funding, which is expected to be submitted January 2025, subject to Council approval.</p>   |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 3.6  | <p>Key milestones in 2024 are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of the Project Brief RIBA 1 by Q1 2024 - <i>complete</i></li> <li>- Concept Design (experience and build) RIBA 2 - Q2 &amp; Q3 2024 - <i>ongoing</i></li> <li>- Establish the Belfast Stories Network by Q1 2024 - <i>complete</i></li> <li>- Stories Pilot by Q1 2024 - <i>complete</i></li> <li>- Set up the Stories Panel by Q2 2024 – <i>due September 2024</i></li> <li>- Develop the Outline Business Case (OBC) to be complete Q4 2024 - <i>ongoing</i></li> <li>- Members' Study Visit by Q3 2024 - <i>scheduled</i></li> <li>- Consultation on the Concept Design (experience and build) Q4 2024 - <i>seeking approval to proceed</i></li> <li>- Completion of the OBC for SPR approval December 2024 - <i>ongoing</i></li> <li>- Submission of the OBC to BRCD January 2025 - <i>ongoing</i></li> </ul> |
| 3.7  | <p>These activities have been underpinned by a programme of ongoing engagement that recognises that the success of Belfast Stories hinges on the active participation and input of those who know the city best—its residents, local communities, cultural groups, business owners and visitors. Engaging with these diverse stakeholders through a structured consultation process is crucial to ensuring that the project reflects the collective vision and meets the needs and aspirations of all who will use and enjoy the space. A detailed Engagement Framework has been developed and an overview is included in <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p>   |
|      | <p><b>First Public Consultation, August - November 2022</b></p>  |
| 3.8  | <p>The first public consultation on Belfast Stories was delivered from August to November 2022 running for 14 weeks. The consultation focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raising awareness of Belfast Stories so that people are excited and want to continue to be engaged in its development.</li> <li>- Making sure that Belfast Stories can be a positive experience for everyone, including consultation on the EQIA, RNIA and Story Collection Framework.</li> <li>- Asking people how they would like to continue to be involved in the ongoing engagement.</li> </ul>  |
| 3.9  | <p>A comprehensive consultation programme included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online consultation hub</li> <li>- Workshops and exhibitions</li> <li>- General Public events and on street research</li> <li>- Creative engagement.</li> </ul>   |
| 3.10 | <p>The reach of this consultation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2,755 visits and 2,495 unique visitors to Belfast Stories online consultation hub</li> </ul>  |

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|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 234 unique visitors viewed or downloaded the consultation documents and videos</li> <li>- 149 responses to online survey and polls</li> <li>- 65 consultation workshops</li> <li>- 1,148 participants engaged through consultation workshops and events</li> <li>- 82 per cent of those completing the survey or responding at consultation and engagement events are now excited by the concept of Belfast Stories.</li> <li>- In the survey, 58 per cent of respondents offered stories, experiences, knowledge and networks they could share to help develop Belfast Stories.</li> </ul>                         |
| 3.11 | <p>Whilst the feedback received during the consultation was overwhelmingly supportive of Belfast Stories, there were several areas that were noted as requiring careful ongoing consideration throughout the development of the project. In particular, responses indicated that the main barriers that would stop people enjoying Belfast Stories included concerns over the experience not being considered inclusive, potential to be politically partisan or lack of trust in how the stories would be represented.</p>  |
| 3.12 | <p>Specific barriers in relation to the building included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cost</li> <li>- Feelings of it 'not being for us'</li> <li>- Specific design considerations</li> <li>- Lack of interest/ relevance</li> <li>- Concerns over duplication or competition with what is on offer elsewhere</li> </ul>  |
| 3.13 | <p><b>Second Public Consultation, September – December 2024</b></p> <p>From an early stage and in line with Council's consultation and engagement framework, the project had made a commitment to consult with the public, communities and key stakeholders at key points in the design process to allow feedback to be meaningfully taken on board. RIBA Stage 2 represents an important milestone and as such a second public consultation has been planned. It is anticipated that this second public consultation will take place for 12 weeks from 26 September to 19 December 2024.</p>  |
| 3.14 | <p>This consultation programme will demonstrate how the emerging designs are already responding to feedback received to date. The information presented during this consultation is commensurate with the current design phase. As such it will not present detailed designs, however, it will offer a genuine and inclusive opportunity to engage on two primary areas of interest, the design of the building and the envisioned visitor experience. Through the consultation exercise it is hoped Belfast Stories will gain both quantitative and qualitative responses to inform the next stage of project development up to the end of RIBA stage 2</p> |

and beyond. By undertaking consultation events, workshops and targeted activity, Belfast Stories will continue to ensure the potential of the project to deliver on inclusive growth through focusing on positive economic, social and environmental impacts.

- 3.15 The specific objectives of this consultation are to:
- Promote the project, raise awareness and gain buy-in.
  - Ensure that Belfast Stories is for everyone including undertaking an equality impact assessment and rural needs impact assessment.
  - Gain feedback on current plans and thinking.
  - Inform next phase of project development and design - feedback will be taken on board and reported on as part of the end of RIBA stage 2 report (March 2025).
- 3.16 Activities and opportunities for feedback during the public consultation will focus on the:
- Emerging design concept to reflect the current stage of the project, RIBA Design stage 2 of a RIBA seven-stage process.
  - Proposed facilities mix including creative hub, visitor attraction and public space.
  - Visitor experience as informed by the *draft* Interpretive Masterplan, and specifically focusing on primary audiences (visitor journeys) for all elements of the Belfast Stories site.
- Design Concept**
- 3.17 Emerging proposals bring the former Bank of Ireland back into the life of the city respecting the importance of Royal Avenue whilst developing the full site, ensuring that the design orientates towards and embraces local communities. In designing a home for stories, the design teams have placed significant emphasis on inclusivity and generosity, making spaces for stories and for a multiplicity of uses. Above all, their proposals focus on making spaces for both visitors and local people.
- Facilities Mix**
- 3.18 The proposed facilities mix at Belfast Stories is based on the site bringing together three threads as one:
- 1. A creative hub** where writers, musicians, artists and film makers can meet to create, collaborate and develop art and stories to sustain us. Proposals include education and learning facilities together with development and showcasing spaces for industry and a new home for archive.
  - 2. A visitor attraction** that visitors can engage with which clearly communicates the spirit of the city – its past, its present and its future. Proposals include a ticketed experience that can support a 90-minute core visitor journey aimed at local and international visitors as well as free to access areas including orientation and a springboard to neighbourhood tourism.

**3. A public space** – a place for everyone to gather, helping us to express our unique identities and share them with others. Proposals include generous outdoor space comprising of a programmable central courtyard for activities and events and an extensive roofscape offering panoramic views of the city.

Defining the proposed facilities mix further will continue to be an iterative process as we progress through the business case and design development processes.

### **Visitor Experience**

3.19 The emerging masterplan for the visitor experience challenges a conventional thematic approach to storytelling and replaces it with a narrative framework comprising of the two main proposed routes of time and space, supported by a series of crossroads that will support large scale interventions and creative installations. This approach also emphasises the importance of the city's authentic voice focusing on engagement with the people of Belfast through an extensive programme of ongoing story gathering as well as establishing a creative commissioning model for local artists.

3.20 The consultation programme and materials will be designed to be accessible for a wide range of stakeholders and groups. Activities will be structured around five key themes, aligned to the overarching aspirations of Belfast Stories and mapped against the physical form that the building could potentially take. These themes are:

- Regenerating the city centre
- Providing outdoor space for all
- Providing indoor space for all
- Trusted storytelling
- Engendering pride.

3.21 Planned activity during the consultation includes:

- Online consultation hub
- Pop up hubs including 2 Royal Avenue and neighbourhood locations
- Partnership sessions co-hosted by local organisations
- Citywide stakeholder events
- Creative engagement projects working with Belfast 2024 and NI Screen
- Deep dive programmes with priority groups and Section 75 groups
- Internal Council events including workshop for Members.

Full details of the consultation activity programme will be shared with Members, and we would encourage dissemination and communication of these details further when shared.

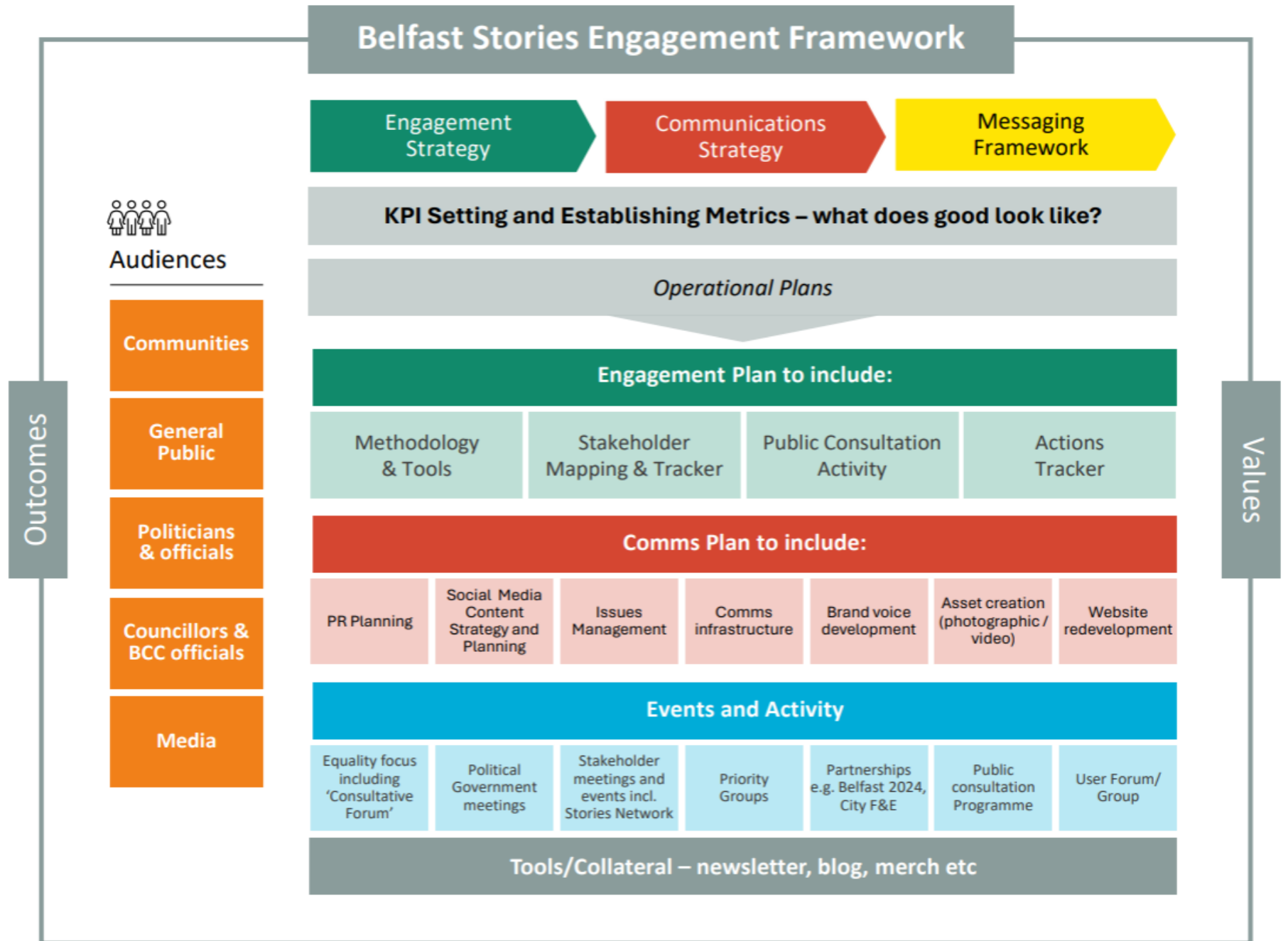
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| 3.22 | <p>A detailed report on the findings from the consultation, including how RIBA 2 end of stage designs have responded to feedback, will be presented to Committee in Q1 2025.</p>  |
| 3.23 | <p><b>Outline Business Case</b></p> <p>An interim Outline Business Case was completed in 2020 in advance of the purchase of the site. This business case estimated that investment in a worldclass attraction could deliver an estimated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £15m GVA (Gross Value Added)</li> <li>- 700,000 visitors per year anticipated</li> <li>- Potential to create 1,200 jobs including construction</li> <li>- Ambitions to become a net zero exemplar for the city.</li> </ul> |
| 3.24 | <p>This work is now being reviewed and updated to reflect progress, emerging concept designs and project development with an updated OBC due to be developed by December 2024. At this stage the project will then move to departmental casework review with Tourism NI and the Department for Economy. A detailed report will be presented to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in December 2024, in advance of the submission of the Outline Business Case for departmental review.</p>                  |
| 3.25 | <p>The estimated approval period for the OBC is 6 months. This will hopefully be followed by a BRCD Contract for Funding estimated by September 2025.</p>   |
| 3.26 | <p><b>Next steps</b></p> <p>It is proposed that a Members' workshop is held during the public consultation period in October 2024. A report on the OBC will be presented to Committee in December 2024 followed by a further report in Q1 2025 outlining the key findings of the public consultation with details on recommendations and next steps.</p>  |
| 3.27 | <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>There are no new financial implications to this report.</p>   |
| 3.28 | <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment and a Rural Needs Assessment were undertaken in 2022. These will be reassessed and updated in line with emerging designs and as part of the public consultation 2024. Findings will be reported on in Q1 2025.</p>   |
| 4.0  | <p><b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b></p>   |
|      | <p>Appendix 1: Belfast Stories Engagement Framework</p>   |

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# Appendix 1

## Engagement Framework Overview

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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Belfast Region City Deal – update   |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | John Walsh, Chief Executive   |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Sharon McNicholl, Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive |

|  |   |                          |                          |  |                        |                          |  |                        |                          |  |       |                          |  |
|--|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------|--|-------|--------------------------|--|
| <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 style="width: 30px; 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: 5%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></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"/>  |                          |                          |  |                        |                          |  |                        |                          |  |       |                          |  |

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

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| <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) and seek approval for the BRCD Annual Report 2023/24. |

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| <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 BRCD Annual Report for 2023/24</li> <li>• Note the update in relation the Implementation and Financial Plan</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>   |
|            | <b>Annual Report 2023/24</b>   |
| 3.1        | <p>As previously reported to Members, 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’.</p>  |
| 3.2        | <p>The annual report has been produced for 2023/24 and outlines the significant progress made now that the deal is fully into delivery. The report provides an update on the progress of all the BRCD projects across its pillars of investment, and key highlights as of 31 March 2024 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of fifteen projects with Outline Business Cases (OBC) now approved.</li> <li>• The first Full Business Case (FBC) was approved for the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) project in March 2024 marking a significant milestone for deal delivery. This was followed shortly thereafter with approval for the FBC for Studio Ulster.</li> <li>• Nine Contracts for Funding (CfF) and Funding Agreements (FA) have been signed with an approximate value of £500m. These signed contracts for funding which include, Studio Ulster, Carrickfergus Regeneration, Bangor Waterfront, Newry City Centre Regeneration, AMIC, Momentum One Zero, iReach Health, Augment the City and Digital Twin, will enable project delivery.</li> <li>• As the Accountable Body for the Deal, BCC has paid out £5.2m of claims to individual projects up to March 2024, with the most advanced projects now recruiting and upskilling staff, constructing new premises, co-designing projects with industry, procuring next generation technology and equipment and moving fully into operation.</li> <li>• This year has seen key recommendations brought forward through the advanced manufacturing skills assessment for the projects associated with Advanced Manufacturing. Skills assessments for the Creative Industries (Virtual Production) and Digital sectors are also now in progress.</li> <li>• The Infrastructure projects, which have so far received £350k from BRCD funding are also progressing well towards the delivery phase.</li> <li>• Launched in December 2022, the Belfast Region City Deal website <a href="http://www.belfastregioncitydeal.co.uk">www.belfastregioncitydeal.co.uk</a> continues to be regularly updated with programme</li> </ul> |

and project information, as well as the latest news and events. 27 key news and events announcements were uploaded to the BRCD website during the year.

3.3 The Annual Report, which was approved by the BRCD Executive Board on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024, is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration. The individual BRCD partners will also be seeking approval for the Annual Report through their own governance structures. The report will be formally published after all approvals have been secured (and is therefore restricted until then).

3.4 The report will be shared with the Department of Finance in advance of the Annual Conversation which is scheduled to take place on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

3.5 Moving into Year 3 (2024/25) we will see significant pace across the programme with:

- The opening of Studio Ulster anticipated later this year
- The innovation centres of excellence continuing to build capacity through ongoing recruitment of key positions and development of operating models
- Five additional CfFs currently in process for approval – committing an additional £150m
- Three FBCs at advanced stages of the approval process
- Eight major design and delivery contracts in place
- Two more skills assessments completed
- A Benefits Realisation Framework developed for the Programme
- Implementation of our Strategic Engagement Framework
- Participation of the BRCD Partnership at showcase investment events
- Partners continuing to seek to ensure that inclusive growth opportunities are maximised for those priority groups defined in the Deal's ambitions

3.6 **Delivering Social Value and Inclusive, Sustainable Growth**

As members will be aware, ensuring that the growth generated through the BRCD is inclusive and sustainable and that it balances societal and economic needs with those of the economy, remains a central tenet of the BRCD. To this end we continue to monitor the efforts of partners to incorporate social value considerations into their contracts through the development of Social Value Delivery Plans. These Plans are reported through the SIB's social value portal and allow us to see the extent to which contracts are delivering against the social value points to which they have committed. This also gives the PMO an opportunity to identify any challenges to achieving these targets and to connect contractors relevant employability and skills services. All partners are aware of their obligations in this regard and training on this aspect of integrating social value is offered on an ongoing basis.

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| 3.7  | <p>More broadly we will deliver for inclusive and sustainable growth through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our Employability and Skills programme of activities which includes, skills for growth in high growth sectors within the deal as well as skills for inclusion providing opportunities and pathways to employment for economically inactive and marginalised groups – aligning with DfCs Labour Market Partnership ambitions</li> <li>- Integrating inclusion and sustainability commitments in project design and development and holding projects to account for these commitments</li> <li>- Adopting additional policy levers as appropriate</li> </ul>     |
| 3.8  | <p>The BRCD PMO will shortly be recruiting an Employability and Skills Manager, funded by Belfast Met, to support the delivery of the Employability and Skills programme across the BRCD projects.</p>  |
| 3.9  | <p><b>Financial and Implementation Plan</b></p> <p>The overarching deal document is supported by a Financial and Implementation Plan. This year’s Financial and Implementation Plan has been combined into one document which includes the expenditure profile of all the projects broken down annually and the high level project milestones. The Programme Management Office has engaged closely with partners and updated the plan alongside the production of the Annual Report. This has now been considered by the Finance Directors’ Group and approved by the Executive Board and was submitted to the Department of Finance in June as required by the Contract for Funding.</p> |
| 3.10 | <p><b>Programme Communication</b></p> <p>With the investment programme now in delivery phase, communication and engagement at programme, pillar and individual project level is becoming ever more important.</p>   |
| 3.11 | <p>External support, which includes implementation of a strategic engagement plan, is now in place for the Belfast Region City Deal Programme. With an initial focus on local businesses, the plan will be further developed to engage with elected members and MLAs across the region to update on progress and identify further priorities and areas of collaboration, as well as future investment.</p>  |
| 3.12 | <p>The Belfast City &amp; Region Place Partnership has also been engaged to share relevant messaging with investors across the UK, Ireland and internationally, at showcase investment events such as UKREiiF - The UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum, MIPIM, the world's leading real estate market event and New York New Belfast. The partnership will continue to participate in wider investment events to maximise the benefits of the investment.</p>   |

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| 3.13 | <p><b>BRCD Council Panel</b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Council Panel will be held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024, hosted by Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council. At the meeting members will be provided with a programme update and presentations on the highlights outlined in this report in relation to the 2023/24 Annual Report and a Destination Royal Hillsborough update.</p>   |
| 3.14 | <p>The minutes from the meeting hosted by Belfast City Council on 31 January are attached at Appendix 2 for information.</p>  |
| 3.15 | <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.</p>  |
| 3.16 | <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> |
| 4.0  | <p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>   |
|      | <p>Appendix 1 – BRCD Annual Report – <b>RESTRICTED</b></p> <p>Appendix 2 - Minutes of the BRCD Council Panel – 31 January 2024</p>  |

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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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## BRCD Council Panel

|                                   |   |
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| <b>Subject:</b>                   | Minutes of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Council Panel  |
| <b>Date:</b>                      | 12.30 pm, 31 January 2024   |
| <b>Councillors in attendance:</b> | <p>Councillor Ronan McLaughlin - Belfast City Council – Chair<br/> Councillor Sarah Bunting – Belfast City Council<br/> Councillor Michael Goodman – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council<br/> Councillor Jay Burbank - Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council<br/> Alderman Alan McDowell - Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council<br/> Alderman Allan Ewart – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council<br/> Councillor Tim Mitchell – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council<br/> Councillor Gretta Thompson – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council<br/> Councillor John Lavery – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council<br/> Councillor Robert Logan, Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council<br/> Councillor Robin Stewart, Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council<br/> Councillor Oonagh Hanlon - Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council<br/> Councillor Pete Byrne - Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p>   |
| <b>Officers:</b>                  | <p>John Walsh - Chief Executive, Belfast City Council<br/> Sharon McNicholl – Deputy Chief Executive, BRCD SRO, Belfast City Council<br/> Damien Martin – BRCD Programme Director, Belfast City Council<br/> Richard Baker – Chief Executive, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council<br/> Susie McCullough – Director of Place, Ards and North Down Borough Council<br/> David Burns – Chief Executive, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council<br/> Jonathan McGrandle – City Deal Programme Director, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council<br/> Conor Mallon – Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council<br/> Colin McKenna – Programme Co-ordinator, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council<br/> Wendy Langham - Director Belfast Stories, Belfast City Council<br/> Eimear Henry – Strategic Lead, Belfast Stories, Belfast City Council<br/> Theresa Slevin, Stephen Wallace, Emer Husbands, Jane Young, Lorraine Beggs– BRCD Programme Office<br/> Chris Brown and Arlene O’Connor – Brown O’Connor</p> |

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Welcome and Introductions</b>   |
| 1.1        | <p>Councillor Ronan McLaughlin, Belfast City Council welcomed the members of the BRCD Council Panel to the meeting hosted in City Hall, Belfast City Council and outlined the key areas of focus for the meeting.</p> <p>Ronan McLaughlin and John Walsh thanked Damien Martin for his contribution to City Deal and wished him success in his new role.</p> |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Apologies</b>   |
| 2.1        | <p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Alderman Matthew Magill – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council<br/> Alderman Mark Cosgrove - Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council<br/> Councillor Alistair Cathcart – Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council<br/> Councillor Craig Blaney - Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council</p>                       |

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|            | <p>Councillor Ray McKimm - Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council<br/> Councillor Emmett McDonough-Brown - Belfast City Council<br/> Councillor Carl Whyte - Belfast City Council<br/> Alderman Billy Ashe MBE – Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council<br/> Councillor Timothy Gaston - Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council<br/> Councillor Declan Murphy - Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p> <p>Apologies were received from the following Officers:</p> <p>Stephen Reid – Chief Executive, Ards and North Down Borough Council<br/> Valerie Watts – Interim Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council<br/> Majella McAlister – Director of Economic Development and Planning, Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council<br/> Marie Ward – Chief Executive, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council</p>  |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Declarations of Interest</b>   |
| 3.1        | <p>Councillor Ronan McLaughlin asked Councillors if they had any interests to declare in relation to the agenda.<br/> No interests were declared.</p>   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>  |
| 4.1        | <p>Councillor Ronan McLaughlin asked if the Panel agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Laverty proposed that the minutes from the last meeting were agreed.<br/> Seconded by Cllr Ronan McLaughlin<br/> <b>Members agreed the minutes.</b></p>   |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>BRCD Programme Update</b>  |
| 5.1        | <p>Damien Martin (DM) presented an overview of the programme update which was circulated with the papers, and presented the programme dashboard which provides an overview of the progress on the individual pillars of investment and an update on the business case approval and signing of contracts for funding. DM noted that significant progress has been made in relation to OBC approvals for I4C and Gobbins. The Innovation projects are most advanced and DM highlighted success across a number of innovation projects in leveraging additional funding.</p> <p>DM also outlined some of the challenges in relation to subsidy control which had been discussed at the previous meeting, and have impacted on signing of contracts for funding for the tourism projects. The subsidy assessment for Mourne Mountain Gateway was referred as a Subsidy of Particular Interest to the Competition and Market Authority (CMA) in November and the CMA concluded that overall, a well-reasoned case for the subsidy was made. The learnings from this process have been incorporated into the Gobbins subsidy assessment which was submitted to the CMA on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. Colin McKenna confirmed that LCCC have received positive advice in relation to subsidy position of Destination Royal Hillsborough (DRH) project and these are not expected to need referral to CMA.</p> <p>DM reported that work is ongoing in relation to skills assessments and highlighted the work by NI Screen and Studio Ulster to ensure skills pathways are provided within the creative industry sector.</p> <p>Alderman Ewart wished DM well in his new role and queried when the Contract for Funding for DRH would be signed. DM confirmed that now the subsidy position has been confirmed, that following further engagement with Government Departments the contract should be signed within the coming months.</p> <p><b>Members noted the progress of the programme.</b></p> |

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| <b>6.0</b>  | <b>Communication and Engagement</b>   |
| 6.1         | <p>Chris Brown (CB) from Brown O'Connor presented the proposals for strategic engagement and communication of the City Deal to raise awareness with key stakeholders and maximise the benefits of the deal. CB updated the panel on proposals for business engagement, which will start with a breakfast event in City Hall for the heads of NI business bodies and sectoral representative organisations. CB also discussed proposals for ongoing political engagement in NI and London, to ensure we maximise the full benefit of the deal.</p> <p>John Walsh noted the importance of this piece of work to ensure political support for BRCD and ensure the opportunities of the Deal are realised.</p> <p>Cllr Ronan McLaughlin thanked CB for the comprehensive update.</p> <p><b>Members noted the Communications and Engagement plans for the programme.</b></p>   |
| <b>7.0</b>  | <b>Belfast Stories</b>  |
| 7.1         | <p>Wendy Langham (WL), Programme Director for Belfast Stories presented to the panel the plans for Belfast City Council's flagship tourism project Belfast Stories and invited members to join her for a tour of the Belfast Stories site at the end of the meeting. WL highlighted the project objectives which include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grow Belfast's economy through tourism led regeneration and support for screen-based creative industries,</li> <li>• create and sustain a diversified, vibrant city where people want to live and work, visit and invest,</li> <li>• create a new shared city space to support a greater sense of connection and belonging.</li> </ul> <p>Belfast Stories will be a 3 in 1 space which will incorporate civic space, a visitor attraction and creative hub and will act as a springboard to the city and gateway to the region. The project has challenging aspirations for net zero exemplar, to ensure the project is socially and economically sustainable for future generations. The Design Team and Project Management and Design Assurance Team were appointed in November and a visitor experience team have been recently appointed to develop the design.</p> <p>In response to a query from DM on the social value aspects of the Belfast Stories project, WL noted that the inclusive growth ambitions have been communicated to design teams and these cover all social, economic and environmental aspirations.</p> <p>Cllr McLaughlin noted the importance of the social value aspects of these large capital projects to ensure the communities surrounding these projects are not left behind.</p> <p><b>Members noted the programme update.</b></p> |
| <b>8.0</b>  | <b>Press Release</b>  |
| 9.1         | <p>Councillor Ronan McLaughlin 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>Councillor Ronan McLaughlin highlighted that a schedule of meetings has been circulated with the next meeting to be hosted by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council on 29th May at 12.30 pm</p>  |

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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25  |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy<br>David Sales, Strategic Director of City Operations  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty<br>Brian Carr, Portfolio Manager<br>Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager<br>Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, Community Services |

**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?**

|                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>After Committee Decision</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>After Council Decision</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Sometime in the future</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Never</b>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

|            |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report</b> |
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| 1.1        | The purpose of this report is to update Members on recent correspondence from Department for Communities in relation to in-year funding being made available to support delivery of hardship support to those vulnerable people impacted by the cost-of-living crisis across the city.   |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| 2.1        | <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. note the contents of this report including recent response received from the Department for Communities (attached at Appendix 1)</li> <li>ii. note the current budget position (£100,773) in relation to the development and delivery of a hardship programme in 2024/25.</li> <li>iii. note the planned exhibition and awareness event to be held in Belfast City Hall for those agencies and partners who provide support and advice; with invites to be issued to Members.</li> </ul> |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main Report</b>   |
| 3.1        | Members will recall the updated provided to the Committee in June 2024 on the need for and positive impact of the £1million+ hardship scheme implemented in the 2023/2024 year which was fully funded by the Department for Communities. Members will be aware that the Council fully funded and delivered a £1million Fuel Hardship Programme in 2022/23.   |
| 3.2        | At the meeting in June, Members had been informed that whilst some underspend from previous years was available to support a hardship programme in 2024/2025, the amount available is <b>£100,773</b> , which is significantly lower than previous years.  |
| 3.3        | As agreed by Members, the Council issued correspondence to the Department for Communities seeking confirmation as to whether any in-year funding allocation for hardship would be made available to Council and highlighting the need for a longer-term commitment to such funding by the Department and NI Executive.   |
| 3.4        | Attached at <b>Appendix 1</b> for Members information is the response received from the Permanent Secretary of DFC, Mr Colum Boyle. The correspondence states that given the very constrained financial/budgetary position and competing priorities, the Department is currently unable to provide any hardship funding for 2024/25. It also confirms that it would not be possible at this time to consider a recurrent hardship funding model.   |
| 3.5        | Members will be aware that the Committee has previously agreed significant grant funding to support the social supermarket network across the city which provides direct support to those in need. Members will also note that officers are working with key support agencies across the city to host a exhibition event in City Hall in late October / early November which will acknowledge and showcase   |

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|            | the important work being done across the city to help people in poverty. The event will enable key service providers and support organisations to network with each other, to explore possibilities to collaborate and importantly to understand the referral pathways to key areas of support which exist for vulnerable people. Elected Members will receive an invite to the event when details are confirmed. |
|            | <b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>  |
| 3.6        | There is currently £100,773 identified from underspends to support the delivery of a hardship programme in 2024/25.   |
|            | <b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>   |
| 3.7        | An Equality Screening and Rural Needs Assessment will be undertaken for the delivery of any Hardship Programme for 2024/25.   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>  |
|            | <b>Appendix 1:</b> Correspondence from Department for Communities, dated 31 July 2024   |

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From: Colum Boyle  
Permanent Secretary

Level 9  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 7EG

Telephone: 028 90 823301  
E-mail: [Colum.Boyle@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Colum.Boyle@communities-ni.gov.uk)  
Our Ref: PSC 0253.24  
Date: 31 July 2024

John Walsh LLB LLM  
Chief Executive  
Belfast City Council  
Office of the Chief Executive  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

Via email: [walshjohn@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:walshjohn@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Dear John

## **DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES' HARDSHIP SUPPORT FUNDING 2024/25**

Thank you for your letter of 19 July 2024 enquiring about the Department's intention to bring forward a hardship grant for 2024/25 and seeking views on exploring the potential to create a recurrent funding model.

The funding available for the Department was set within the context of a very constrained financial position for 2024/25, and the overall Departmental budget position was considered against competing priorities.



In this challenging context the Department is currently unable to provide any hardship funding for 2024/25, and it would not be possible to consider a recurrent funding model at this time.

Yours sincerely

**Colum Boyle**  
**Permanent Secretary**



|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Belfast Learning Cities – 2024-2025 emerging programme  |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy<br>Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty |
| <b>Contact Officers:</b>  | Patricia Magee, Policy and Performance Analyst,<br>Naomi Doak, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator                  |

**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)
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7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>After Committee Decision</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>After Council Decision</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Some time in the future</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Never</b>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report</b>   |
| 1.1        | To update Members on the work underway in support of Belfast’s membership of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and the repositioning of this work in the context of community planning. |

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| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1        | <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) note the ongoing work being taken forward in support of the city’s designation as a UNESCO Learning City including the cross sectoral partnership in place.</li> <li>ii) note the £25k funding secured through the Public Health Agency in support of the Belfast Learning Cities initiative.</li> <li>iii) note the proposed theme of ‘Connect’ for the 2024-2025 Belfast Festival of Learning.</li> <li>iv) consider and agree, subject to SP&amp;R approval, the proposed £40k funding to be allocated from existing budgets within City and Organisational Strategy to support the Belfast Learning Cities programme.</li> <li>v) consider and agree, subject to SP&amp;R approval, the proposed £20k allocation to set aside to support opportunities for celebrating success or enabling access to learning opportunities across the city with up to £4,000 available N/S/E/W/Shankill.</li> <li>vi) consider and agree the proposed open call for small grant funding (up to a maximum of £500) to support community groups to design and delivery events as part of the Belfast Learning Cities Festival.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Key Issues</b>   |
| 3.1        | <p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Members will be aware that Belfast joined the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities in 2018 in recognition of the City’s commitment to promoting and encouraging lifelong learning for people of all ages. Within The Belfast Agenda, we have a vision that our city should be a great place for everyone to live and providing lifelong learning opportunities is a core part of this. Learning has the potential to transform lives for the better- it can build better relationships and help enhance quality of life for everyone in the city.</p> <p>3.2 Whilst Belfast continues to play its role as a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities as well as a member of an All-Island Network of Learning Cities, it is felt there is a real opportunity to build on Belfast’s Learning City status and to bring city stakeholders together to reenergise our focus and maximise the opportunities presented. Under the auspices of community planning, a cross-sectoral ‘Learning Cities Leadership Group’ currently exists and comprises representatives from QUB, UU, BMET, BHSCT, PHA, Education Authority, Libraries NI, community partners and Council. Other key partners, including the Open University and Belfast Healthy Cities, are engaged and plan to join the Leadership Group.</p> <p>3.3 <b>Emerging programme of work 2024-2025</b></p> <p><i>i. Belfast Learning Festival 2025</i></p> |

A key focus of the annual programme of work has been a '**Festival of Learning**' which is a week-long programme of free interactive and engaging events for local residents and partners. A thematic approach was adopted for the recent festival (held on 22-27 April 2024) which brought focus to the climate challenges facing the city and our communities through the delivery of 120+ events across the city and attracting significant participation.

- 3.4 Council officers are actively scoping opportunities for the 2025 Festival of Learning Week. The theme of 'Creating Connections' is proposed alongside a strapline of 'Take Time to Connect'. This theme aims to promote the fact that learning is a lifelong journey and encourage individuals of all ages to connect with new knowledge, technologies, skills and each other. Similar to previous years, it is proposed that the programme of events is created through a combination of the following:
- Open call for small grants (up to a maximum of £500) to help local voluntary and community sector organisations to develop and/or showcase an event.
  - Open call for in kind events, working in collaboration with key departments internally as well as external partners and anchor institutions.

- 3.5 *ii. **Learning Neighbourhoods***
- Another key area we would wish to scope and bring forward a potential initial demonstrator initiative is in relation to 'Learning Neighbourhoods'. The potential of this for Belfast emerged through shared learning and good practice from Cork Learning City and the work of the All-Island Network of Learning Cities.

- 3.6 A learning neighbourhood is an area that has a commitment to learning, providing inclusive and diverse opportunities for whole communities through partnership and collaboration and help build a culture of lifelong learning. It is proposed that the first demonstrator is realised in West Belfast, this is something that part of the city is already working towards and provides an opportunity to learn, and replicate based on evidence (aligned to values of our status).

- 3.7 *iii. **Celebrating excellence***
- A core way to help foster a lifelong culture across Belfast is to celebrate excellence. Rather than duplicating efforts or developing a bespoke approach to celebrating excellence this year, Belfast as a Learning City aims to capitalise on existing schemes/initiatives which align with our ethos or address gaps where appropriate.

- 3.8 In this context, a recent request has been received for the Council, under the auspices of learning cities, to support the Aisling Education Bursaries up to a value of £4,000. The Aisling Bursaries provide financial support to students from disadvantaged or challenging backgrounds in West Belfast

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|            | <p>and Shankill to help make their ambitions of taking up further and higher education or training a reality, leading to securing a fulfilling career. Those who are supported through the initiative include young people who were perhaps the first person in their extended family to go to university; women and men returning to education and training having missed out education the first time around; ex-prisoners and victims of the conflict, lone parents, those from low-income households and those disadvantaged through disabilities. Since the Bursaries began in 2000, 1248 students of all ages from west Belfast and Shankill have been awarded £905,500 in Bursaries.</p>  |
| 3.9        | <p>It is understood that the bursaries have received an unprecedented level of eligible applicants (i.e. 224) and the request of support from Council would help enable all applicants to be awarded a Bursary. Officers are actively exploring other opportunities to partner with other initiatives which celebrate success and/or enable access to learning opportunities across the city</p>   |
|            | <p><b>Funding</b></p>  |
| 3.10       | <p>It should be noted that £25,000 has been secured through the Public Health Agency in support of the festival and other related areas of work including the recognising and <b>celebrating excellence</b> as well as exploring the potential to bring forward a demonstrator initiative in relation to <b>‘Learning Neighbourhood’</b>. Similar to last year, it is proposed that the Council consider allocating funding to the learning city initiative up to a value of £40,000 from within existing in-year departmental budget. This would be spent on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Belfast Learning Festival: £15,000 to enhance the small grant funding, the delivery of a launch event and to contribute to marketing &amp; communications related costs.</li> <li>ii. Learning Neighbourhood: £5,000 to progress the demonstrator and a report on key learning/impact etc.</li> <li>iii. Celebrating Excellence: £20,000 to enable support to be provided to initiatives and schemes which celebrate success or provide opportunities to access learning opportunities. It is suggested that up to a maximum of £4,000 be made available to support initiatives across the city (N/S/E/W/Shankill). It should be noted that any future year support would be subject to Members consideration.</li> </ul> |
|            | <p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b></p>  |
| 3.11       | <p>£25K funding has been secured through the Public Health Agency in support of the delivery of the Festival of Learning. An additional £40k funding from Council is proposed and will be funded through available in-year budgets within City and Organisational Strategy.</p>  |
|            | <p><b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b></p>   |
| 3.12       | <p>There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications contained in this report.</p>   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>  |
|            | <p>None</p>  |



|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Belfast Business Promise   |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2024   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy   |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth & Anti-Poverty<br>Maria Robinson, Belfast Business Promise Co-ordinator |

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| <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 style="width: 30px; 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> |   |  |  |  |  |
| <b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>   |   |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>After Committee Decision</b></p> <p><b>After Council Decision</b></p> <p><b>Sometime in the future</b></p> <p><b>Never</b></p>   | <table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> |  |  |  |  |
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| <b>Call-in</b>                               |   |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b> |
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| 1.1        | The report provides an update on the work being taken forward to scale up the Belfast Business Promise including proposals to support organisations become JAM card friendly and adopt practices which supports those who may have a hidden disability or communication barrier.  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendation</b>   |
| 2.1        | The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) note the work being progressed in relation to the refinement of the Belfast Business Promise and the increase in the number of organisations becoming supporters.</li> <li>(ii) consider and agree the proposed establishment of a seed-fund/bursary (up to a value of £27,480) to support up to 80 organisations over a 2-year period to achieve JAM card friendly status, enabling them to become more inclusive</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main Report</b>  |
| 3.1        | The Committee will be aware of the pioneering work which has been taken forward to develop, pilot and scale-up the Belfast Business Promise (BBP). As a key commitment in the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy and Belfast Agenda, the BBP is an accreditation for employers working to improve Belfast. It encourages, supports and recognises excellence and its flexibility makes sure all employers can take part, regardless of size or sector. The scheme has created a growing community of organisations committed to improving how they do business together.   |
| 3.2        | The BBP is a demonstration of effective partnership working across sectors and across Council in designing, implementing, and securing commitment to the model. In May 2024, the Committee noted the positive response and commitment from businesses of all sizes and sectors during the first year of operation. There are currently 49 organisations committed as BBP Supporters (refer to <b>Appendix 1</b> attached)   |
| 3.3        | The BBP is a commitment from organisations to inclusive business practices and work towards achieving eight pledges including three core pledges which all businesses are committed to (refer to <b>Appendix 2</b> attached). 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 enables organisations to benchmark their performance and practice against the eight pledges and gain support from the Belfast Business Promise community and network to continually improve. |
| 3.4        | In delivering the BBP and engaging with businesses and employers, a key area identified for possible improvement related to enhancing the accessibility to services for those with disabilities (including hidden disabilities). In response, and working alongside BBP partners, including the Equality Commission and the NOW Group, the following standard for organisations has been attached to core pledge 2 (Working in partnership with our communities):   |

“Ensure services are accessible and inclusive for those with disabilities (including hidden disabilities) through, for example, JAM Card membership (or equivalent)”

**Just A Minute (JAM)**

3.5 Members may be aware of the Just A Minute (JAM) Card, an award-winning initiative which originated within Belfast. The JAM Card is a discrete way for people with a disability (including hidden disabilities) or communication barriers to indicate that they need extra time and understanding in a private and easy way. It is a card that can be displayed in physical form or via an App, and which is widely recognised by both the people and participating businesses around the world, There are in excess of 2,500 businesses signed-up. Belfast City Council is already JAM card friendly alongside other organisations such as Danske Bank, Bank of Ireland, Translink, Belfast Harbour, Belfast City Airport, Labour Relations Agency, NHS as well as many smaller and community-based businesses. The NICS has also committed to becoming JAM Card friendly and have trained 17,000 staff across the region. Becoming JAM Card friendly, enables organisations to access the training, support and knowledge they need to ensure users of the JAM Card feel welcome in their premises.

3.6 Within the Belfast Agenda, there is a stated commitment to work towards Belfast becoming a JAM Friendly City; ensuring that all individuals are confident living, working and socialising in the city. There is a strong recognition across the Belfast Business Promise supporters and network of the benefits and social impact of becoming a JAM friendly organisation (refer to **Appendix 3** for examples of feedback and testimonials received).

3.7 To encourage and support Belfast Business Promise support organisations to adopt more inclusive practices and to avail of available training and advice, it is proposed that the Council consider the creation of a ‘JAM Card Bursary’ scheme. The scheme would be put in place in collaboration with the NOW Group, who is the custodian of the JAM Card as well as a BBP partner. The scheme would act as a seed/fund to enable up to 80 organisations, over a 2-year period, to start their journey to become JAM Card Friendly. The scheme will target BBP supporters covering micro, small and third sector (voluntary, community, social enterprise) organisations. The scheme will provide one-off funding to participating organisations to become a JAM Card member and enable them to access the training and support available for a 3 year period. Any subsequent membership beyond the 3 years would be subject to consideration and funding by the organisations themselves.

3.8 Some examples of expected outcomes from the bursary include:

- i. enhance awareness and promote inclusivity and accessibility in the workplace and in service provision

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|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. demonstrate the Council’s commitment to promoting inclusion;</li> <li>iii. support the delivery of the Belfast Business Promise and increase the number of organisations achieving the core pledge ‘Working in partnership with our communities’.</li> <li>iv. enable up to 80 businesses to become JAM Card Friendly and directly contributing to the Belfast Agenda commitment for Belfast to become a JAM card friendly city by 2028.</li> </ul>  |
| 3.9  | <p><b>Ongoing development of BBP model</b></p> <p>The process to refine and develop the Belfast Business Promise includes identifying different mechanisms to encourage, support and challenge organisations on their improvement journey, particularly in terms of bolstering the core pledges. The expertise and input from BBP Partners, including their resources, is critical to this. For example, external technical expertise has been provided to support the core pledge ‘Protect our Environment’ and work is underway with BBP Partners to improve and develop this further. Work is also ongoing to maximise the alignment and support through the Go Succeed programme.</p> |
| 3.10 | <p>As the BBP moves through its second year of delivery with 49 Supporters there is need to maintain momentum by continuing to build the programme of support available to Supporters and providing the robust assurance process to support the accreditation process, encouraging organisations to continue to improve and recognise their good practice.</p>  |
| 3.11 | <p>As part of the ongoing development of the model, officers have commenced a process of independent evaluation of work undertaken to date in order to advise on the optimal approach for the BBP work for the next phase of development. An update on the key findings, implications and proposals will be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee for information and endorsement.</p>  |
|      | <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>  |
| 3.12 | <p>The proposed JAM Card bursary scheme to be put in place to enable and encourage up to 80 Belfast Business Promise supporter organisations (micro, small and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations) to become a member over a 2-year period is estimated to cost £27,420 (approx.). This budget would cover an organisations JAM Card membership and accessing associated training and support services. The actual costs incurred will depend on the level of uptake by organisations which will be monitored by the BBP team.</p>   |
| 3.13 | <p>The proposed budget has been included within existing City and Organisational Strategy departmental budget.</p>  |

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|            | <b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b>   |
| 3.14       | 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. This will ensure that modifications and mitigations can be put in place to meet the needs of programme participants as delivery matures. |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>   |
|            | Appendix 1: Belfast Business Promise Supporters and Partners<br>Appendix 2: Belfast Business Promise Pledges<br>Appendix 3: Belfast Business Promise Supporter feedback and testimonials   |



**Appendix 1: Belfast Business Promise Partners:**



**Belfast Business Promise Supporters:**



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## Appendix 2: Belfast Business Promise pledges



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### **Appendix 3: Examples of feedback/testimonials from Belfast Business Promise Partners**

'Working in partnership with our communities' pledge and the positive social impact for the city:  
"Becoming a JAM Card-friendly employer not only enhances accessibility and inclusivity for neurodiverse individuals, but also enriches our organisation and community by fostering a supportive environment. This commitment drives social impact at a local level, improves service delivery, and strengthens relationships with residents and service users by demonstrating our dedication to equality, diversity and respect for all." **Susan Russam, GEMS NI**

"At Fish City, our primary goal is for each and all of our guests to have a wonderful experience. The JAM Card provides our team with a great tool for providing extra assistance where it is required. We are proud and delighted to be a part of this initiative." **John Lavery, Fish City**

"Becoming a JAM card employer will benefit Endeavour Information Solutions by giving to the tools to train our staff and managers about hidden disabilities and communication barriers. Endeavour is committed through the Belfast Business Promise to improving our inclusivity as a business/employer and being able to respond to the Jam Card effectively and comprehensively will help us to reach that goal." **Shauna Mullan, Endeavour Information Solutions**

"At NB Housing we want to deliver a quality service to all of our customers. We recognise however everyone has differing levels of communication and engagement levels and by embracing the JAM Card, we discreetly promote support and inclusivity for all. As a JAM card friendly employer our staff will be trained to support our tenants and residents privately, ensuring we address need and provide services effectively. The Jam Card initiative allows excellent services to reach those with and without disability across our local community."

**Caroline Keenan-Jackson, NB Housing**

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|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>              | Update on Planning Performance                          |
| <b>Date:</b>                 | 23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2024                            |
| <b>Reporting Officer(s):</b> | Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control |
| <b>Contact Officer(s):</b>   | Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)     |

**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

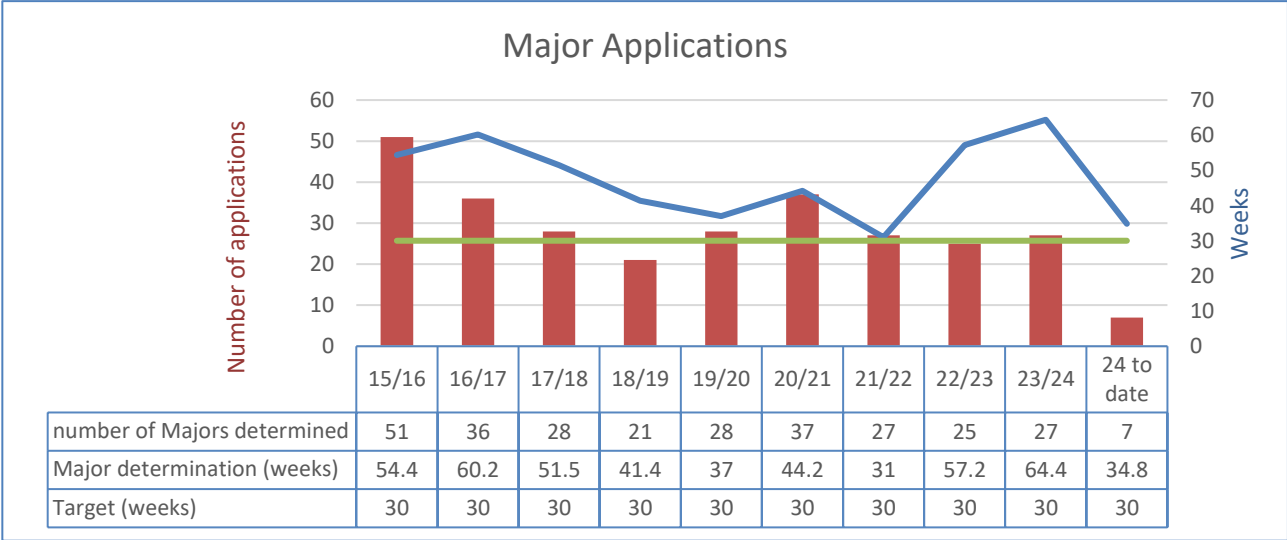
1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
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 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| After Council Decision   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sometime in the future   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Never                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**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                         | To provide an update on Planning Performance. The report sets out how current performance challenges are being addressed through the Planning Service's updated Improvement Plan.   |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 1.2                         | A similar update report will be taken to the Planning Committee.  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>2.0</b>                  | <b>Recommendation</b>   |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 2.1                         | The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the report</li> </ul>  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>3.0</b>                  | <b>Main Report</b>  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|                             | <b><u>Background</u></b>  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 3.1                         | At its 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2024 meeting, the Committee sought an update on planning performance. The Planning Service last formally reported its Improvement Plan and performance to the Planning Committee on <a href="#">12th December 2023</a> (Item 15).  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|                             | <b><u>Performance</u></b>   |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|                             | <b><u>Overview</u></b>  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 3.2                         | The Council's Planning Service is subject to three statutory indicators set by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The statutory indicators are a simple but crude measurement of performance which can be affected by a significant number of factors. Performance over the last nine years is set out below along with performance for the current year to date.   |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|                             | <b><u>Major applications</u></b>  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|                             |  <p>The chart 'Major Applications' displays two metrics from 2015/16 to 2023/24, plus 2024 to date. The left Y-axis represents the 'Number of applications' (0-60), and the right Y-axis represents 'Weeks' (0-70). Red bars show the number of applications, and a blue line shows the average weeks. A green horizontal line at 30 weeks indicates the target. The data is summarized in the table below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>15/16</th> <th>16/17</th> <th>17/18</th> <th>18/19</th> <th>19/20</th> <th>20/21</th> <th>21/22</th> <th>22/23</th> <th>23/24</th> <th>24 to date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>number of Majors determined</td> <td>51</td> <td>36</td> <td>28</td> <td>21</td> <td>28</td> <td>37</td> <td>27</td> <td>25</td> <td>27</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Major determination (weeks)</td> <td>54.4</td> <td>60.2</td> <td>51.5</td> <td>41.4</td> <td>37</td> <td>44.2</td> <td>31</td> <td>57.2</td> <td>64.4</td> <td>34.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Target (weeks)</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> |       | 15/16 | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | 21/22 | 22/23      | 23/24 | 24 to date | number of Majors determined | 51 | 36 | 28 | 21 | 28 | 37 | 27 | 25 | 27 | 7 | Major determination (weeks) | 54.4 | 60.2 | 51.5 | 41.4 | 37 | 44.2 | 31 | 57.2 | 64.4 | 34.8 | Target (weeks) | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
|                             | 15/16   | 16/17 | 17/18 | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | 21/22 | 22/23 | 23/24 | 24 to date |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| number of Majors determined | 51  | 36    | 28    | 21    | 28    | 37    | 27    | 25    | 27    | 7          |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Major determination (weeks) | 54.4  | 60.2  | 51.5  | 41.4  | 37    | 44.2  | 31    | 57.2  | 64.4  | 34.8       |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Target (weeks)              | 30  | 30    | 30    | 30    | 30    | 30    | 30    | 30    | 30    | 30         |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 3.3                         | Current performance so far in 2024/25 is an average processing time of 34.8 weeks against the target of 30 weeks. This is currently a significant improvement over 2023/24. The number of Major applications received each year is given for information.   |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 3.4                         | All Major applications must by law be determined by the Planning Committee. Analysis of the Major applications determined in 2023/24 shows that the main impact on performance were delays post-  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |            |       |            |                             |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |                             |      |      |      |      |    |      |    |      |      |      |                |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

Committee. In 2023/24, it took an average of 25 weeks to report Major applications to Committee – well inside the statutory target. However, the KPI statistics are generated from the time taken from validation of an application to issuing the decision notice. Therefore, the overall processing time was 64.4 weeks.

3.5 Two withdrawn Major applications significantly adversely affected the statistics – LA04/2019/2882/O renewal of outline permission for mixed use development of the SSE Arena car park and lands adjacent (withdrawn after 189 weeks); and LA04/2020/2071/F erection of 57 apartments at Tates Avenue (withdrawn after 127 weeks).

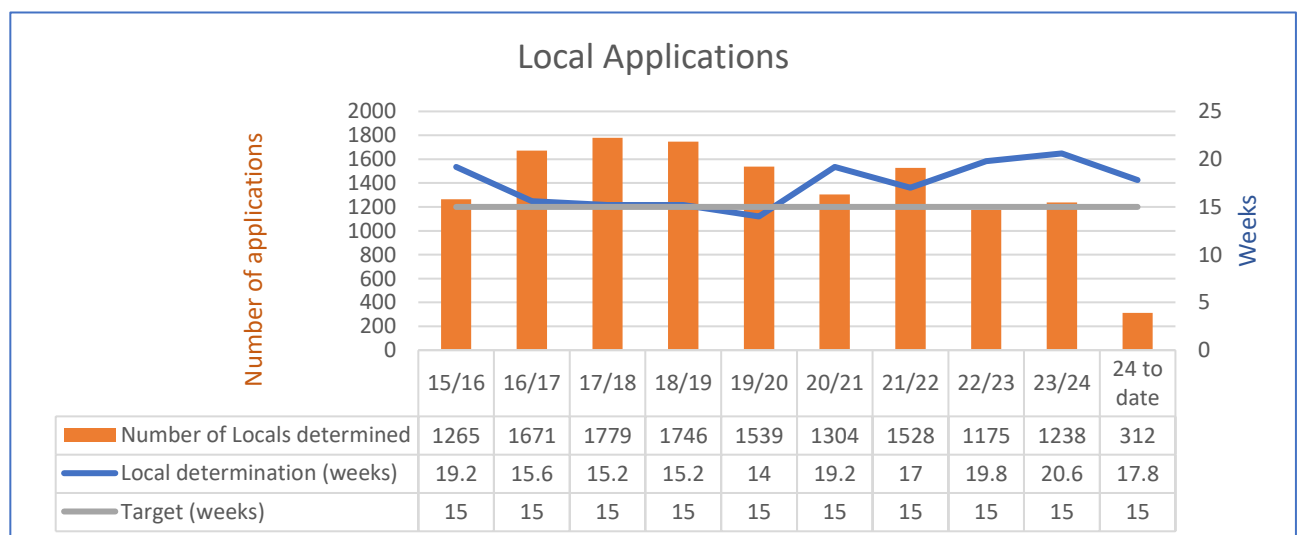
3.6 Of the 27 Major application decisions made in 2023/24, nearly half (13 applications) were subject to significant post-Committee delays of 10 weeks or more. In 9 of these applications the delay was the need to complete a Section 76 planning agreement before the decision could be issued. In the other 4 cases, the delays were due to either procedural issues or outstanding consultations.

3.7 Whilst the Section 76 planning agreement process was the main cause of delays post-Committee, the most common reason for Major applications not achieving the 30-week target was found to be the quality of applications and the need for applicants to address outstanding issues to make their proposals acceptable. Such delays affected 9 of the 19 major applications determined outside the 30-week target in 2023/24. This underlines the importance of the quality of planning applications on submission.

3.8 Measures to address both of these issues are already being progressed and are set out later in this report.

3.9 Dfl’s measurement of performance is very narrow and does not consider quality of decision making or outcomes. The Planning Service approved all Major applications 100% in 2023/24, which is a strong indication of commitment to customer service and quality outcomes. There is a significant amount of unmeasured work undertaken by the Planning Service each year in improving the quality of both Major and Local applications through negotiating amendments to schemes and seeking additional information to address Council policy and satisfy consultees. Details of how Belfast will seek to report performance in future years are set out later in the report.

Local applications

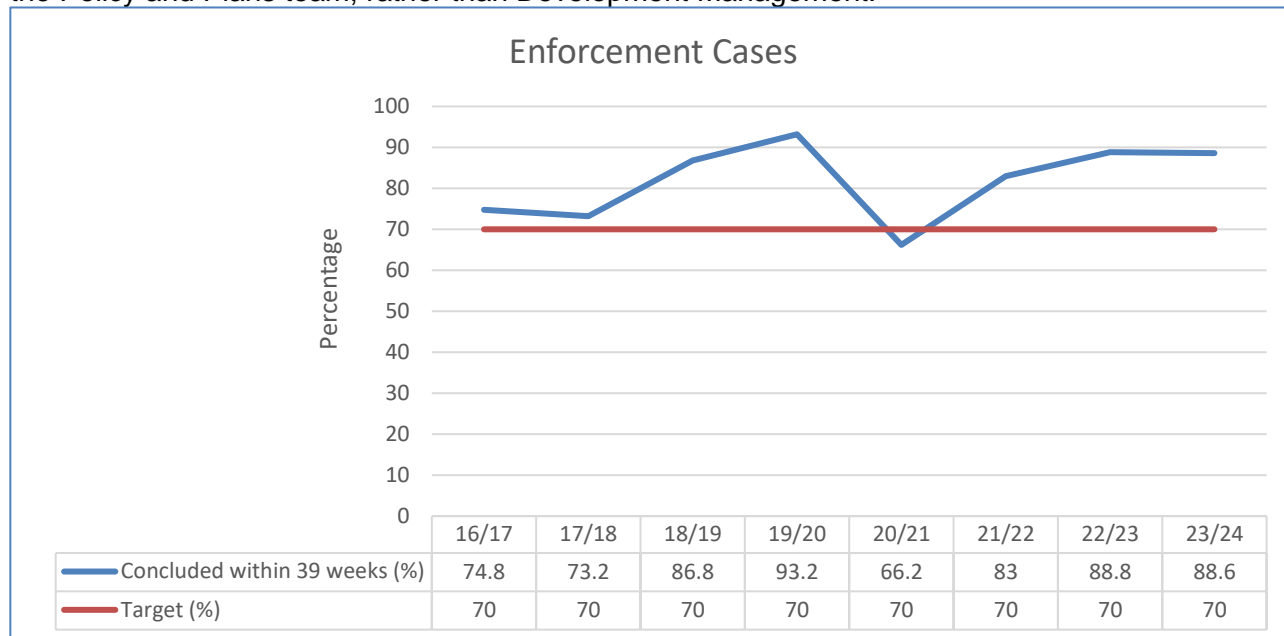


3.10 Current performance is an average processing time of 17.8 weeks against the target of 15 weeks. Performance for the past two months has been 15.4 weeks. This is currently a marked improvement over the performance for 2023/24. No detailed analysis of the 1,238 decisions from

2023/24 has been undertaken because of the size of the sample, but the general issues affecting performance and measures being taken to address them are set out below.

### Enforcement

3.11 The statutory KPI for enforcement is to conclude at least 70% of all cases within 39 weeks. The Planning Service has historically exceeded this target by some margin and continues to do so with last years performance of 88.6% cases concluded within 39 weeks. The Enforcement team sits in the Policy and Plans team, rather than Development Management.



### Regional performance

3.12 The official regional [planning statistics for 2023/24](#) were published by DfI on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024. Belfast City Council was above the regional average for Major applications (64.4 weeks compared to a regional average of 46.5 weeks) but was slightly below the regional average for Local applications (20.6 weeks compared to 20.8 weeks).

3.13 A number of councils in NI were able to meet the processing targets for both Major and Local applications as set out below:

| <b>Major applications</b>             |                                     |   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Authority</b>                      | <b>Number of Major applications</b> | <b>Determination timescales (weeks)</b> |
| <b>NI Average</b>                     | 12                                  | 46.5                                    |
| <b>Belfast</b>                        | 27                                  | 64.4                                    |
| <b>Antrim and Newtownabbey</b>        | 18                                  | 21.1                                    |
| <b>Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon</b> | 11                                  | 27.6                                    |
| <b>Fermanagh and Omagh</b>            | 12                                  | 22.9                                    |

| <b>Local applications</b>      |                                     |   |                       |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Authority</b>               | <b>Number of Local applications</b> | <b>Determination timescales (weeks)</b> | <b>Approval rates</b> |
| <b>NI Average</b>              | 872                                 | 20.8                                    | 95.4%                 |
| <b>Belfast</b>                 | 1,262                               | 20.6                                    | 98.1%                 |
| <b>Mid and East Antrim</b>     | 771                                 | 9.4                                     | 93.9%                 |
| <b>Antrim and Newtownabbey</b> | 591                                 | 13.0                                    | 89%                   |

| <b>Fermanagh and Omagh</b> | 799  | 13.2 | 98.7% |
|----------------------------|--|------|-------|
| 3.14                       | <p>Whilst direct comparisons with other Planning Authorities are difficult to make due to a lack of information on resources available or working practices, it is clear that Belfast City Council received and determined the most Major applications by some margin. We also received and determined the most local planning applications of any council in 2023/24, with an approval rate above the NI average and significantly above the two authorities that determined applications within the 15 week target, again demonstrating strong commitment to customer service and positive decision making.</p>  |      |       |
| <b>4</b>                   | <p><b><u>Challenges Specific to 2023/24</u></b></p>  |      |       |
| 4.1                        | <p>A <a href="#">report to the December 2023</a> Planning Committee highlighted significant challenges that the Planning Service had encountered over the previous 12 to 18 months. Firstly, implementation of the new regional Planning Portal in December 2022, which was not in a steady state until June 2023 had a significant impact on the ability to process applications, the throughput of applications and performance.</p>   |      |       |
| 4.2                        | <p>Secondly, whilst the adoption of the Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy in May 2023 was a significant step in the Council establishing its growth strategy and planning policy framework, its adoption had a significant impact on processing of applications. The adoption of a new policy framework required the 1,150 live applications to be re-assessed against the new policies in the Plan Strategy. Whilst adoption was anticipated for some time, the new policies could not be practically applied until the Plan Strategy had been adopted. This was still a significant undertaking, impacting on resources and resulting in significant delays to application processing times.</p> |      |       |
| 4.3                        | <p>In addition, staff turnover and long-term absence in 2023/24 significantly stretched resources at this time of significant pressure.</p>  |      |       |
| 4.4                        | <p>Finally, prior to COVID-19, the Planning Service had around 850 live applications. This grew to around 1,250 applications (45% increase) during the pandemic, increasing individual caseloads to unsustainable levels. Whilst the number of live cases was reduced to below 1,000 by November 2022, the challenges around implementation of the new Planning Portal in December 2022, adoption of the Plan Strategy in May 2023 and staff turnover/ long-term sickness in 2022 and 2023 contributed to an increase to the current 1,100 live cases.</p>   |      |       |
| <b>5</b>                   | <p><b>Ongoing Challenges and Opportunities</b></p>   |      |       |
| 5.1                        | <p><u>Regional improvement</u><br/> In <a href="#">April 2022</a> (item 6), the Planning Committee considered a report on the NI Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee reviews of the NI planning system. The Public Accounts Committee called for fundamental reform of planning at a regional level. An Interim Regional Planning Commission was established in February 2023 to oversee the regional improvement agenda, supported by a “Planning Improvement Programme” drawn up by DfI and local government. Belfast City Council continues to feed into this process and lobby for significant improvement at regional level.</p>   |      |       |
| 5.2                        | <p>The Planning Improvement Programme includes specific areas of focus for Development Management and the processing of applications including consideration of DfI’s oversight role, call-in criteria and call-in notification procedures, as well as review of PAD processes and development management application processing in local authorities.</p>   |      |       |
| 5.3                        | <p>As part of the Planning Improvement Programme Heads of Planning in NI have also been working to produce guidance on a Planning Performance Framework which could be produced by local authorities on a yearly basis. Such a framework would look to provide information on a range of</p>   |      |       |

|      |  |
|------|--|
|      | <p>qualitative and quantitative indicators for planning activity at a local level, going beyond the three basic KPIs currently published by the DfI.</p>   |
| 5.4  | <p>The production of such a framework follows established practice in Scotland and Wales and could ensure consistency for informal benchmarking as well as ease of accessing information. By reporting on the services provided, the contribution to outcomes (using case studies) and improvement actions, the performance framework will help to demonstrate the contribution that Planning decisions make to the economy, society and the environment as well as providing accountability in terms of performance of the planning system and improvements in the system at both a local and regional level.</p>   |
|      | <p><u>Quality of Applications</u></p>  |
| 5.5  | <p>Assessment undertaken of Major applications in 2023/24 and continued working knowledge of the processing of local applications, confirms the long held view that improvement to performance can only be realised through close working with our customers to improve the quality of applications entering the system. In 2018, the Planning Service published an <i>Application Checklist</i>, which sets out the minimum information requirements for applications on submission. Belfast City Council was the first Planning Authority in NI to publishes such guidance, and DfI has recognised the important role it has played in improving the application process, planning to introduce legislation later this year to make such checklists mandatory.</p> |
| 5.6  | <p>We have also worked to review and implement a new streamlined Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) service which seeks to increase value in PAD discussions and ensures that they are tailored to the needs of the potential applicant.</p>   |
| 5.7  | <p>The Planning Service is seeking to establish a collaborative partnership forum with customers to jointly improve the planning processes in the city. This will be a compact group that will meet quarterly and represent planning agents, developers and architects. The partnership will also have an important role in informing change and improvement to the NI planning system itself.</p>   |
|      | <p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p>   |
| 5.8  | <p>The Council is legally obliged to engage with statutory consultees other than on the most minor applications. Consultation responses are often returned outside the 21-day consultation period and in many cases require additional information (frequently related to the quality of submissions) which extends the application process. The consultation process is one of the principal barriers to effective performance.</p>   |
| 5.9  | <p>DfI publishes quarterly and annual reports on statutory consultee performance. The most recent statistics for 2023/24 Q3 show that 75% of consultation responses were responded to in time (i.e. within 21 days). By far the most prevalent consultee is DfI Roads (80% responses within time), followed by DAERA (73%), NI Water (96%), DfI Rivers (63%) and DfC Historic Environment Division (37%).</p>  |
| 5.10 | <p>Unfortunately, only regional data is available on statutory consultee performance. Officers believe that it is important for the Council to understand how statutory consultees perform in Belfast compared to regionally. The Planning Service has previously requested this information, but DfI have been unable to provide this breakdown. The Planning Service is therefore working to produce its own report on this data in conjunction with the ICF team which manages the contract for the new Planning Portal.</p>  |
| 5.11 | <p>The Planning Service also engages a range of non-statutory consultees, mainly other service areas within the Council, the most prevalent of which is Environmental Health. Environmental Health currently has a backlog of consultations dating back to April 2024, due to 43% staff vacancy within its planning consultations team (4 positions). Recruitment is currently underway and the</p>  |

|      |  |
|------|--|
|      | posts should be filled by the Autumn. In the meantime, the Planning Service and Environmental Health are continuing to work together closely on rationalising consultations issued to the team.  |
| 5.12 | <p><u>Internal structure and processes</u></p> <p>In June 2023, the Development Management teams were reorganised to provide a more suitable staffing structure. Since transfer of planning to the Council in 2015, the Planning Service had operated two DM teams – a small “Majors” team that processed Major applications (about 1% of all applications) and a much larger “Locals” team that processed the remainder (99%). This model was no longer considered fit for purpose and so the DM service has been reorganised into two geographical area teams covering North &amp; East; and South &amp; West respectively. Each area team deals with a mixture of Major and Local applications and led by a Principal Planning Officer under the overall management of the Planning Manager (Development Management).</p> |
| 5.13 | <p>There are several benefits of this new structure, notably:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More equitable roles, with responsibility for the review of work and sign-off of decisions spread across a greater number of Senior Officers to avoid blockages;</li> <li>• Greater flexibility in moving work between the two teams to respond to spikes in applications, PADs, appeals and other work; and</li> <li>• Providing better support for case officers and widening their experience and professional development. The new structure means that work on Major and strategic applications can be supported by more junior officers within the sub-teams, which widens experience and provide a broader “team approach” to strategic project work.</li> </ul>   |
| 5.14 | <p><u>Managing workload and the impact of Legacy applications</u></p> <p>As outlined earlier, the sheer number of applications currently in the system mean that some officers are carrying significant caseloads. There has been a specific focus in the Development Management team to reduce the overall numbers of applications and whilst the number constantly fluctuates, over the last 5 months the total live applications in the system has been reduced from 1,250 to 1,100.</p>  |
| 5.15 | <p>Importantly, there is renewed focus on how long current applications have been in the system, with RAG reports produced on a regular basis to identify those applications that are already beyond the 15 or 30 week target, and those that are nearing it. This is allowing more focused prioritisation of workloads. Working with the ICF for the Planning Portal the service is developing its own suite of performance management reports which will enable the production of much more detailed monitoring of performance at service, area team, sub-team and individual staff level.</p>   |
| 5.16 | <p>With a number of applications in the system already beyond the 15 or 30 week target, there is a need to recognise the potential impact of these on the Council’s KPI figures even if processes and systems are improved as outlined in the report. Every application that is determined (even if they are withdrawn) will impact on the average timescales reported in the KPI figure.</p>  |
| 5.17 | <p>Officers are classifying any application over two years old as a legacy application. There are currently 71 legacy applications in the system including a Major application that dates back to 2017; one Local application validated in each of 2018 and 2019; and 8 applications validated in 2020. The processing of these and other older applications means that performance may remain above the KPI target before it gets better.</p>   |
| 5.18 | <p>The focus on determining the older applications in 2024/25 and the improvements in train and proposed will enable the Planning Service to hit the ground running in terms of meeting performance targets for 2025/26.</p>   |
| 5.19 | <p><u>Section 76 planning agreements</u></p> <p>In June 2024 the Planning Committee considered a report which assessed the reasons why 29 planning applications that had been determined by Committee were yet to be issued. Of the 29</p>   |

|      |   |
|------|---|
|      | <p>applications 24 (83%) were awaiting completion of a Section 76 planning agreement. Three applications (10%) had been notified to the DfI and two applications (7%) were awaiting further consultation responses.</p>   |
| 5.20 | <p>The Committee were informed that historically focused negotiations on the detail of planning agreements have tended to take place once an application is scheduled to be presented to Committee. This was leading to delays post Committee whilst the detail of the agreement is worked through. Officers therefore proposed a streamlined process to frontload this work as much as possible before an application is presented to Committee.</p>   |
| 5.21 | <p>Model planning agreement clauses have been drafted that cover a wide range of issues typically included in s76 agreements. The Council's Application Checklist is being amended to give clarity on what will be expected from applicant namely the early submission of Heads of Terms which should include the proposed obligations contained in the schedule to the model agreement which are applicable, details of all owners and / or persons who have an estate in the land and contact details for the applicant's solicitor. Applications that require a s76 planning agreement will now not normally be reported to the Committee until the planning agreement has been agreed in principle by the Planning Service and applicant. The Planning Service will then aim to issue the decision notice within 10 working days of the end of the Committee decision call-in process.</p>  |
| 5.22 | <p>Reports on the applications that have been determined by Committee but which are yet to be issued will now be presented to Planning Committee meetings as part of the monthly report on decisions issued.</p>  |
|      | <p><u>Lean redesign experimentation</u></p>   |
| 5.23 | <p>In December 2022, the Planning Service reported to the Planning Committee on the experimentation that it has been undertaking, applying lean systems redesign principles. The experimentation has largely concentrated on small-scale proposals such as householder applications and advertisements, although it has also included a small number of large scale Local and Major applications.</p>   |
| 5.24 | <p>Between August 2022 and December 2023, a small project team within the Planning Service experimented with over 300 applications, with an approval rate of 98%. It was originally intended that the officers would be brought into work in the lean way on a staggered basis however because of the specific challenges experienced in 2023/24 set out above as well as turnover of staff, it was considered more pragmatic and beneficial to take the learning from the experimentation and roll this out more widely with particular focus on applying the principles to householder and advertisement applications as part of the pilot for improving minor application performance (see below).</p>   |
| 5.25 | <p>The key principles identified through the experimentation which will be applied to all applications include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Much faster check of the application on receipt to ensure that it has all the necessary information to determine it (validation and completeness check);</li> <li>• Initial assessment of the application at the same time as the validation/completeness check so that much earlier feedback is given to the applicant (or their agent);</li> <li>• Personal engagement with the applicant at this early feedback stage, which also provides opportunity to set out an indicative timescale for the decision (managing expectations) and build a relationship with the customer;</li> <li>• More focused consultation so that statutory and non-statutory consultees are only consulted where 1) there is a legislative requirement; and/or 2) the consultation will add genuine value to the process by helping the Council make a better decision.</li> </ul> |

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 5.26 | <p>Whilst the lean experimentation largely focused on smaller application, a small number of more significant applications have progressed in accordance with the principles set out above. These include three determined Major applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA04/2023/4737/F 459 bedroom PBMSA scheme at Dublin Road (24 weeks);</li> <li>• LA04/2023/4366/F erection of Grade A office building at Dublin Road (23.5 weeks); and</li> <li>• LA04/2023/4613/F erection of Grade A office building at City Quays (24 weeks).</li> </ul>   |
| 5.27 | <p>Two other Major applications that were subject to the same approach have however been significantly delayed, illustrating the problems described previously in this report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA04/2023/4181/F - an application for a new pumping station at Sydenham, east Belfast. The application was validated in October 2023 and the Planning Service is still awaiting a consultation response from DfI Roads, some 9 months after originally issuing the consultation.</li> <li>• LA04/2023/3799/F - an application for a replacement school in west Belfast. The application was validated in August 2023. DAERA responded three months later requesting further information in relation to bats. Further information was subsequently provided and DAERA subsequently requested a further bat survey which can only be carried out at the end of the summer. Further re-consultation with DAERA will be necessary once the survey is submitted and a decision may not be able to be made on the application until towards the end of the year. This would be some 16 months or 65 weeks or so after the application was first submitted. Whilst we could request the application is withdrawn to minimise the impact on our KPIs, the applicant is the trustees of the primary school and they would incur an additional £14,000 further planning application fee if they withdrew and resubmitted the application. The Planning Service has been lobbying for change to the fee regulations to address these scenarios.</li> </ul> |
|      | <p><u>Minor applications pilot</u></p>  |
| 5.28 | <p>Starting in June of this year, the pilot has seen the submission of 125 new minor applications (householder and advertisement) with 19 decisions at an average processing time of 5.15 weeks. The pilot involves the implementation of key learning from the Planning Service’s lean redesign experimentation, including streamlined validation processes, much earlier assessment and feedback to customers, resulting in improved processing times.</p>  |
|      | <p><u>Improvement Plan</u></p>  |
| 5.29 | <p>The Planning Service first published its Improvement Plan in 2018, following an independent review in 2017. Central to the recommendations of the independent review was the implementation of “10 Operating Principles”, aimed at improving the quality of applications on submission and providing a more efficient, effective and customer-focused service. A copy of the Council’s <i>Guide to the Planning Application Process</i>, including 10 Operating Principles, is provided at <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p>  |
| 5.30 | <p>Since 2018, the Planning Service has regularly updated its Improvement Plan and has periodically reported it to the Planning Committee. It was last reported to the Planning Committee on <a href="#">12th December 2023</a> (Item 15).</p>  |
| 5.31 | <p>The Planning service’s Improvement priorities for the next 12 months are referenced throughout this report, but are summarised below.</p>  |
|      | <p><b><u>Conclusions</u></b></p>  |
| 5.32 | <p>As set out, there are some positive signs of improvement to performance, and there are a number of further process improvements either being or to be implemented.</p>   |
| 5.33 | <p>In summary, the Planning Service improvement priorities for the next 12 months include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to influence positive change to the NI planning system.</li> </ul>   |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 5.34       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of more comprehensive performance information to provide narrative to the current KPI statistics and to illustrate more qualitative performance factors.</li> <li>• Establishment of a <i>Belfast Planning Partnership</i> as a forum for collaborative working with customers;</li> <li>• Development of Belfast specific information on statutory consultee performance;</li> <li>• Implementation of a comprehensive internal Performance monitoring of performance at service, area team, sub-team and individual staff level;</li> <li>• Implementation of the model planning agreements and new procedures to speed up the Section 76 planning agreement process;</li> <li>• Continued operational improvement of processes including the wider roll-out of learning from the lean redesign experimentation;</li> <li>• Adoption and publication of a validation checklist for mandating information requirements on submission of applications (based on the current Application Checklist);</li> <li>• Review of PAD fees and use of Planning Performance Agreements;</li> </ul> <p>As set out, it will be challenging for the Planning Service will meet the statutory KPIs targets until 2025/26. This is because of the need to bed-in new streamlined processes; reduce the backlog of live applications to more manageable levels; and clear “legacy” applications of more than two years old from the system.</p> |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>   |
| 6.1        | There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.   |
| <b>7.0</b> | <b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>  |
| 7.1        | There are no equality or good relations / rural needs implications associated with this report.  |
| <b>8.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>   |
|            | Appendix 1 – Guide to the Planning Application Process (including 10 Operating Principles)   |



# A guide to the planning application process

**Our aim is to help our customers get a timely planning decision that benefits our city.**

To help achieve this, we follow our ten operating principles (see Appendix 1).

## Introduction

**The planning process has a vital role to play in shaping our city for the better. It ensures that development is properly managed in the public interest, taking opportunities to further sustainable development that meets the needs of both current and future generations.**

Planning is also a significant tool in delivering the Belfast Agenda, the city's first Community Plan. Belfast has ambitious plans for growth including increasing the population of Belfast by 66,000 with 46,000 additional jobs by 2035. The planning process will help ensure that this change happens in a sustainable and managed way.

Belfast City Council has responsibility for most planning functions in the city, including:

- publishing a Local Development Plan that outlines how land should be used and developed in the future;
- making decisions on the majority of planning applications;
- making Tree Preservation Orders;
- investigating and enforcing breaches of planning control; and
- providing advice to customers on the planning process including our Pre-Application Discussion service.

This guidance is specifically aimed at the planning application process and how we deal with planning applications.

Our aim is to provide a responsive planning service that meets the needs of all citizens including applicants, developers, communities, businesses and interest groups.

Belfast City Council's Statement of Community Involvement ([https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/d850dbe7-009a-4527-b6b6-993b2454d200/AD001\\_SCI.pdf](https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/getmedia/d850dbe7-009a-4527-b6b6-993b2454d200/AD001_SCI.pdf))

sets out how we involve the community in making decisions on planning applications, as well as preparing our new Belfast Local Development Plan.

<sup>1</sup> Subject to the Planning (Control of Demolition in Conservation Areas) Direction 2015

## Legislation and policy context

The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 provides the legislative framework for the planning system in Northern Ireland.

The Act requires that planning applications are decided in accordance with the Local Development Plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

You can find more information about Belfast Local Development Plan at [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/LDP](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/LDP)

For guidance on what is a material consideration, go to the Planning Portal ([submissions.planningsystemni.gov.uk](http://submissions.planningsystemni.gov.uk))

The Department for Infrastructure is responsible for planning at regional level. It publishes regional planning policy which is a material consideration in the decision-making process. These include:

- Regional Development Strategy 2035 (RDS) (<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/regional-development-strategy-2035>)
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland 2015 (SPPS) (<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/strategic-planning-policy-statement>)

## Do I need to apply for planning permission?

### Different types of consent

You may need to apply to us for the following types of consent:

- Planning permission ([submissions.planningsystemni.gov.uk](http://submissions.planningsystemni.gov.uk)) for new buildings, structures, extensions, external alterations, changes to ground levels, change of use of land or buildings, and mining operations.
- Advertisement Consent for new signage
- Listed Building Consent for external or internal alterations to the built fabric of a Listed Building
- Conservation Area Consent<sup>1</sup> for demolition of a building or structure in a Conservation Area (where the structure exceeds 115 cubic metres) (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/demolition-advice#toc-3>)
- Works to a tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order (<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Development-plan-and-policy/Supplementary-planning-guidance/Tree-preservation-orders>)
- Works to a tree within a conservation area (<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Development-plan-and-policy/Supplementary-planning-guidance/Tree-preservation-orders>)



## Permitted development

Certain minor works or uses do not require planning permission from us and may be carried out as 'permitted development'.

The specific rules for permitted development are set out in the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/70/>). This includes certain proposals within the curtilage of a dwelling house, some changes of use and other minor operations.

You can find further advice on when planning permission is required on [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/planning-permission-when-apply](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/planning-permission-when-apply).

If you would like us to confirm whether your proposal requires planning permission, you can apply for a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development (Proposed) (<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/getting-help-planning>). This is a legally binding decision from the council and may be useful confirmation when you come to sell your home or property.

## Deemed advertisement consent

Certain adverts and signs can be erected without the need for Advertisement Consent. These circumstances are set out in Schedules 2 and 3 of the Advertisement Regulations. (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/66/contents/made>)

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## How do I submit a planning application?

You should submit your planning applications online using the Planning Portal ([submissions.planningsystemni.gov.uk](http://submissions.planningsystemni.gov.uk)). You can also hand deliver or post your planning applications although this may be slower.

The information requirements for submitting a planning application are set by legislation (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/72/contents/made>).

Our Application Checklist (<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Applying-for-planning-permission/Application-checklist>) sets out what information you need to provide with your planning application.

It is vital that applications are supported by the right information so that we can assess them properly and deal with them in a timely manner. If supporting information is missing, it can lead to delays or could even result in your application being refused.

## We therefore strongly encourage you to use our Application Checklist.

Our Pre-Application Discussion service provides opportunity for you to discuss your proposals with a planning officer before you make a planning application. We can advise you on how to make your application and what the likely issues will be when it is considered. For advice on smaller scale proposals such as domestic extensions, other home improvements and advertisements, we provide a Duty Planning Officer service (for further details see across page).

You can submit a planning application yourself or appoint an agent or architect to act on your behalf. Please note that if you use an agent or architect, our contact during the application process will always be with them.

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## Pre-Application Discussions

We offer a Pre-Application Discussion service<sup>2</sup> (<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Applying-for-planning-permission/Pre-application-advice>) so you have better chance of getting permission when you submit your application.

A Pre-Application Discussion should improve the quality of your proposal, reduce the time it takes to determine your application, and give you peace of mind that you are on the right lines before making a planning application.

We are committed to providing a quality planning service, both in terms of the quality of new development and the timescale in which we make our decisions. Good quality decisions, made in a timely manner need commitment and input from both our officers and applicants.

Please note that if you choose not to follow our advice given at the pre-application stage, this could lead to your planning application being refused. Applications that do not follow advice can undermine the Pre-Application Discussion process and our ability to process applications efficiently and in a timely manner.

## Duty Planning Officer

For general enquiries or advice on smaller scale proposals such as domestic extensions, other home improvements and advertisements, we provide a Duty Planning Officer service. The Duty Planning Officer is available between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday and can be contacted either by telephone (028 9050 0510) or in person (at the Cecil Ward Building, 4-10 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BP).

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## How do we process your application?

### Receipt of your application

When we receive your application, we will check if you have submitted the correct information using our Application Checklist (<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Applying-for-planning-permission/Application-checklist>).

If information is missing, we will write to you and ask for it to be provided with 14 days. If you are unable to provide the information in time we will arrange for the application to be returned (including the fee) so that you can submit it again when all the information we need is ready. We will phase in this new approach gradually.

If you choose to ask for your application to be decided without the necessary information then there is a risk that it will be refused and we will not return your fee.

When you submit a complete application with all the information we need, we will send you an acknowledgement and include the case officer's contact details, normally within seven days. The case officer will be responsible for managing your planning application and will be your point of contact throughout the process.

## Consultation

Once we have all the information we need we will carry out consultations on the application in accordance with the legislative requirements (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2015/72>).

We will:

- publish notice of the application in the press;
- notify neighbours by way of a letter;
- publish information about the application on the Planning Portal website (<https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/simple-search/>);
- notify statutory consultees such as government departments; and
- consult relevant non-statutory consultees such as other service areas within the council.

We are unable to give a decision on the application until at least 14 days from when notice of the application is published in the press or from when neighbours are notified, whichever is the later. We are also unable to give a decision until at least 21 days after we have consulted a statutory consultee. (Please note that applications requiring an Environmental Statement under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2017/83/made>) have a longer consultation period of 28 days).

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that there may be a charge for this service

## Site visits

In some cases, we will need to visit the application site to help our assessment of your planning application. The case officer aims to visit the site within 21 days of the complete application being submitted. We will not always advise you of when we will visit the site because planning officers frequently visit several sites on the same day and it is difficult to give a precise time. However, if the site is inaccessible we will contact you to arrange access to the site in advance.

## Feedback on your application

We will contact you once we have carried out our initial assessment of the application to tell you how the process is going. Normally this will be after the consultation period has ended.

If we find a problem with your application, we will let you know as soon as possible. Our aim will be to work with you to try to find a solution, where this is feasible. Please note that it will not always be possible to address the concerns under the current application and sometimes a new application may be required.

If we feel that an application should be refused, we will always let you know beforehand. Applications that have fundamental problems will be refused straightaway.

You can track the progress of a planning application on the Planning Portal website (<https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/simple-search>). This includes the option of registering for email notifications about tracked applications.

## Timely decision-making

We aim to decide local applications<sup>3</sup> within an average processing time of 15 weeks and major applications<sup>4</sup> within an average processing time of 30 weeks, in accordance with statutory indicators. In addition, we have introduced a further indicator for deciding householder applications<sup>5</sup> within an average processing time of 12 weeks.

These indicators are an average processing time and we will not be able to decide all applications within these time periods.

If there is a problem with your application, we will let you know. If it is not possible to resolve the issue within the above timeframes we may invite you to withdraw the application and submit a new application that addresses our concerns to avoid your original application being refused. We will not accept significant changes to a proposal once the application is submitted because this undermines our ability to make timely decisions. Therefore, you should use our Pre-Application Discussion service to resolve any issues first.

Our Pre-Application Discussion service (<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Applying-for-planning-permission/Pre-application-advice>) is aimed at identifying issues early and will give you a better chance of your application being determined more quickly.

## Case Officer report

In some cases, the Case Officer will write a report that sets out their recommendation as to whether the planning application should be approved or refused. In other cases, the Reason for Approval will be made clear on the decision notice. The report is a professional and impartial assessment of the relevant issues and other material planning considerations may be considered as part of the assessment. The officer recommendation is always authorised by another officer.

In the interests of transparency, the Case Officer report will be made publicly available once the decision is made so that reasons for the decision are clear. A copy of the report will be published on both the Planning Portal website (<https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/simple-search>) and planning application file.

## How we make decisions

Around 90% of planning applications are determined in accordance with the officer recommendation under 'delegated powers'. Our Scheme of Delegation (<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Documents/Scheme-of-delegation>) sets out in detail when decisions are delegated to officers and when they must be made by the Planning Committee.

## Planning Committee

Our Planning Committee meets monthly (other than July during the summer recess) and determines all applications for major development, those where the council has an estate and certain other applications set out in our Scheme of Delegation (<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Documents/Scheme-of-delegation>).

If you would like to speak at our Planning Committee about a planning application that it is going to be considered you will need to complete our online form (<https://dof.belfastcity.gov.uk/RequestToSpeak/Default.aspx>). You will need to submit the request at least 48 hours before the committee meeting. Once we receive your request we will get in touch with you with more information.

Speaking rights at the committee are limited to the applicant, anyone who has submitted a written response to the application, and elected representatives.

Please note that we will not notify you when an application is going to be heard by the Planning Committee. You can check the agenda for upcoming Planning Committees on [minutes3.belfastcity.gov.uk](https://minutes3.belfastcity.gov.uk)

## Regionally significant planning applications

The Department for Infrastructure has responsibility for dealing with planning applications that have regional significance (<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/planning/regionally-significant-developments-and-called-applications>). If you have a query relating to a regionally significant planning application you should contact the Department directly. Call 0300 200 7830 or email [planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:planning@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

## Making comments on an application

Anyone may make a comment on a planning application. Comments must be made in writing and may be made online on the Planning Portal website (<https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/simple-search>) or by email or post to the address at the bottom of this guidance.

We accept petitions but will only correspond with whoever submitted the petition and not with other signatories on the petition.

In assessing a planning application, we can only take account of material planning considerations. Any comments you make should be restricted to material planning considerations only. For example, we are unable to take into consideration civil disputes or issues which are regulated by other non-planning legislation.

The case officer will summarise any submitted comments in their report and the council will take them into consideration when it makes its decision.

If you have made a comment on an application, you can track the progress of the application on the Planning Portal website (<https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/simple-search>). This includes the option of registering for future email notifications.

Please note that we will not notify you when an application is going to be heard by the Planning Committee. You can check the agenda for upcoming Planning Committees on the council website (<https://minutes3.belfastcity.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=167&Year=0>).

<sup>3</sup> All other development that does not fall within the definition of major development

<sup>4</sup> The definition of a 'major' development is provided by the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

<sup>5</sup> Householder applications are for domestic proposals such as an extension, garage, outbuilding, shed or satellite dish, alterations to an access or driveway, and other home improvements

Due to volume, we are unable to respond to individual comments submitted on planning applications. We are also unable to advise the outcome of the application, however, you can check the decision on the Planning Portal website (<https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk/simple-search>).

## Post-decision

The making of a decision on a planning application is not the end of the planning application process.

As the applicant you must ensure that you carry out the proposal in accordance with the approved plans. You will also need to make sure that you comply with any condition/s specified on the planning permission. Failure to do so may be a breach of planning control.

## Discharging planning conditions

Sometimes we impose a planning condition that requires you to submit further details to us for approval before certain works or uses can commence. You should allow at least eight weeks for this information to be assessed following its submission and you should take this into account in your project timeline. More complex information may take longer to process. Failure to comply with these conditions could make your proposal unauthorised and liable to enforcement action.

## Monitoring Conditions and Planning Agreements

In the interest of compliance and identifying breaches of planning control, we actively monitor planning agreements made under Section 76 of the Act to ensure they are complied with. We may also monitor certain planning conditions to make sure they are followed.

## Other non-planning consents

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure compliance with any relevant non-planning legislation when they implement their permission or consent, such as licensing, roads, drainage, water or other environmental permits.

## Works or use of land without permission

We investigate complaints about unauthorised works or use of land carried out in breach of planning control. You can find further information about our planning enforcement service and how to make an enforcement complaint on our website. ([www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-enforcement](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-enforcement))

## Right of appeal

If you as the applicant are dissatisfied with our decision you have the right to lodge an appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission NI (<https://www.pacni.gov.uk>). Planning appeals may be made in respect of the following:

- refusal of permission or consent, or
- imposing of a planning condition on the decision.

Please note that the right of appeal is limited to the applicant only and appeals must be lodged within **four months** of the decision. There is no third-party right of appeal in Northern Ireland.

## Complaints

If you are unhappy with how we have dealt with an application or any aspect of the planning application process you can make a complaint which will be dealt with in accordance with Belfast City Council's corporate complaints procedure.

You can find further details on how to make a complaint via ([www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/complaints-comments-compliments](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/contact/complaints-comments-compliments))

## Contacting the Planning Service

You can contact our Planning Service in the following ways:

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

Tel: 028 9050 0510

Post: Belfast Planning Service  
Ground Floor  
Cecil Ward Building  
4-10 Linenhall Street  
Belfast, BT2 8BP

## Service standards

In order to provide an efficient and effective planning application service we will aim to meet the following service standards:

- Acknowledgement of planning application - within **seven days** of a complete application
- Site visit by Case Officer (where required) - **within 21 days** of a complete application
- Average time for processing major applications - **30 weeks**
- Average processing time for processing local applications - **15 weeks**
- Average processing time for processing householder applications - **12 weeks**

Re-issued January 2022 (previously issued in November 2018 and July 2020)

## Planning application process map



# Planning Applications – 10 Operating Principles

Helping our customers get a timely planning decision that benefits our city.

1



**We make sure we have the right information to support an application at the start of the process.**

- We tell our customers what information we need with their application before they submit it. Our **Application Checklist** will set out what information is required and when.
- We check if the required information has been submitted and ask for it if it is missing.
- If the information we need and ask for is not provided we may refuse permission.

6



**We inform the applicant or agent as soon as we know that there is a problem with an application and try to find a solution.**

- Our customers need to know our views on their application. We give them an opportunity to address problems as soon as possible, where there is a likely solution.

2



**We make sure we consult the right people.**

- We consult the right people at the beginning of the process and follow the correct consultation procedures.
- We will use a **Consultation Checklist** to help us do this.

7



**We provide a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) service so that issues can be identified at the beginning of the process, before the application is made.**

- This leads to better quality planning applications which should be determined in a more timely manner.
- If applications do not accord with officer advice pre-application, we may refuse permission. This is because it can undermine the PAD process and our ability to process applications quickly and efficiently.

3



**We get on site as soon as possible**

- We can only properly assess a proposal once we have been on site. We get on site no later than 21 days after an application is valid.
- We record site visits on the back-office system so that we can measure our ability to get on site quickly.

8



**If there's a fundamental problem with an application which can't be resolved following discussion with the applicant, we will immediately refuse the application.**

- Unacceptable applications should be determined as quickly as possible in the interests of the efficiency of the overall service.

4



**We make sure that we understand our customers' requirements**

- We need to understand why our customers have submitted their proposal and the timescales required for their project. This will enable us to help our customers achieve their objectives (if this is possible) within the planning rules.

9



**We take advice from technical consultees into consideration but always ask, "Must we follow this advice in this particular situation?"**

- While we're obliged to consult and take account of advice from the relevant technical consultees, we take a proportionate approach to the handling of each planning application.
- If we do not receive a response from technical consultees in time, we may need to ask ourselves whether we can go ahead and make the decision without it.

5



**We decide the 'path' of an application as soon as possible (whether it will be approved, refused or if changes are needed).**

- This means that any problems with an application are dealt with at the outset, where possible, and that our customers know at an early stage about how we will deal with their application.

10



**We keep the work moving at all times!**

- Any blockages in the process cause delays. We make sure that the blockage is never at our end. We constantly manage our work to make sure that the 'ball is always in the applicant's court, not ours'. We keep the work constantly moving!

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|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | City Innovation programme update                 |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024                                   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Sharon McNicholl, Director of Corporate Services |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Mark McCann, City Innovation manager (Acting)    |

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

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

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report</b>  |
| 1.1        | To update Members on City Innovation initiatives and to seek approval on a number of key projects developing over the next few months.  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1        | The Committee is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the launch of the £277,000 Belfast 5G competition call aimed at businesses across the Belfast Region.</li> <li>2. Note plans to test and launch the Immersive experience within the City Hall Exhibition in late September – and the invitation to Members to attend a preview on 20 September.</li> <li>3. Note the launch of the Augment the City Phase Two funding call in September with approx. £50,000 available to up to five companies.</li> <li>4. Note ongoing discussions to support an ‘meanwhile use’ inclusive innovation hub at Weaver's Cross.</li> </ol> |

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|            | <p>5. To approve the development of a collaborative area-based inclusive innovation project with Queen’s University’s Communities and Place team</p> <p>6. To note the request to work with Connected Places Catapult on forthcoming Horizon Europe inclusive innovation calls.</p>   |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |
| 3.1        | The Smart Belfast urban innovation programme encourages innovative collaboration between government, industry, SMEs, academia and communities. The aim is to harness digital innovation to address public policy challenges, while at the same time encouraging greater investment in innovation to stimulate economic growth. The following initiatives seek to contribute to both these aims:   |
| 3.2        | <p><b>(1) Belfast 5G Innovation Regions competition</b></p> <p>As part of the Belfast 5G Innovation Regions programme, funded by the Dept for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), Belfast City Council has launched a £277,000 competition aimed at businesses across the Belfast City Deal region.</p>  |
| 3.3        | The competition is designed to encourage the early commercial adoption of advanced wireless connectivity. The Council published full guidance on 20 August and the competition has already received 50 expressions of interest. Funded projects will run from October until March 2025 (when the main Belfast IR programme is due to end).  |
| 3.4        | <p><b>(2) Belfast City Hall Immersive experience</b></p> <p>Work is almost complete on the augmented reality immersive experience within the existing City Hall exhibition (located in three rooms on the east side of City Hall). This is a significant collaborative R&amp;D project with BT Northern Ireland.</p>  |
| 3.5        | Work is also underway on arrangements to manage the experience which is expected to go live in late September and run for six months. Officers are planning a Members preview on the afternoon of 20 September following the next SPR meeting. (An invite will be issued to Members once details are confirmed).  |
| 3.6        | <p><b>(3) Augment the City Challenge competition</b></p> <p>This City Deal funded competition is providing £575,000 across three phases to up ten organisations to work directly 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. The aim is to inform the future procurement and design of digital solutions for managing the story-collection aspects of Belfast Stories.</p> |

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| 3.7  | <p>Ten organisations received £10,000 each in phase one to develop concepts initial which were presented to a panel at a stakeholder workshop in June. The audience included representatives from the region’s Tourism sector and other local councils.</p>  |
| 3.8  | <p>Work is now underway for the launch of Phase 2 which will open in September. Up to five of the original 10 organisations will receive further funding to develop Proofs of Concepts that are more tailored to the specific needs of Belfast Stories. A third phase will follow with final working proto-types solutions being developed early in winter 2025.</p>   |
| 3.9  | <p><b>(4) Inclusive innovation</b></p> <p>At the June SPR committee, Members asked for an update on the Council’s work on inclusive innovation. The following sets out the current status of this work.</p>  |
| 3.10 | <p>In developing its Smart Belfast framework, Belfast City Council recognised the importance of integrating an inclusive approach to its urban innovation programme. The national Innovation Agency, NESTA, was commissioned in 2023 to engage with local innovation partners to identify opportunities for integrating such an approach into the activities, not only of Belfast City Council, but other innovation partners including Innovation City Belfast and the Belfast Region City Deal.</p>  |
| 3.11 | <p>The Nesta work identified two main drivers for inclusive innovation in Belfast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A commitment to a place-based, challenge-led approach that requires the ability of citizens and communities to collaborate with government, universities and industry to better understand and address complex urban problems. (and likewise the capacity of these other sectors to collaborate effectively with communities.) This includes a commitment to direct citizen participation and co-design in developing and delivering innovative solutions.</li> <li>• A commitment to building core competencies and skills with residents and communities to maximise the benefits of living in a society increasingly shaped by digital technology. This is not just about providing a pathway to training and employment but about supporting communities to address issues of data privacy, disinformation, and access to services.</li> </ul> |
| 3.11 | <p>Nesta indicated that forthcoming UK and EU funding for research and innovation will be increasingly predicated on the capacity of cities and institutions to integrate inclusive innovation into their approaches.</p>  |

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| 3.12 | Nesta noted that Belfast's existing community development infrastructure provides an important foundation on which to develop an inclusive innovation programme. And that the development of a core city programme would add significant value to existing approaches.  |
| 3.13 | In parallel with the Nesta work, the City Innovation Office has led on a number of inclusive innovation projects including the £2m Homes for Healthy Ageing project which brought together health companies and university researchers, to work with older people in the Market area to test medical technologies that sought to address issues of stress, anxiety and loneliness. Feedback from the people taking part in the project was extremely positive, while a number of the companies involved went on to develop successful products.           |
| 3.14 | The Office has also led on the three-year €675,000 'Hubs of Innovation' programme in partnership with the Belfast Maritime Trust. This EU funded project brought together communities along the city's waterfront, with tech innovators and creatives, to develop new ways to explore local cultural and heritage as part of the wider regeneration of the maritime mile.   |
| 3.15 | Lately, the City Innovation Office has been engaging with Ormeau Labs, Young Social Innovators, Queen's University and Ulster University on joint opportunities to take forward inclusive innovation projects.  |
| 3.16 | Professor Joan Condell from Ulster University is developing a programme similar in nature to Homes for Healthy Ageing that would work with carers, GPs and med tech companies. Professor Condell is awaiting a funding decision for the initiative and if successful is keen to work with Belfast City Council on accessing a city centre managed location close to inner city communities.   |
| 3.17 | With funding from Invest NI, Ormeau Labs and other partners, wish to develop a Tech for Good programme based in Belfast that would work with young people to develop entrepreneurial skills and opportunities to grow new businesses that address social issues such as climate change and health issues.   |
| 3.18 | Young Social Innovators (YSI) recently received €2.2 million from Peace Plus to deliver the IGNITE programme. This is aimed at 16 to 24 year olds across Northern Ireland and border counties and is designed to build innovation skills with people who are not in traditional education or skills pathways. IGNITE will build competencies in problem-solving, group work, leadership and the use of tech. While the programme covers all of Northern Ireland YSI are keen to have a city centre location to allow it to focus on cohorts in inner city |

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|      | <p>communities. YSI are working with Council officers to develop onward opportunities for people who take part in the IGNITE programme including training and apprenticeships.</p>  |
| 3.19 | <p>The Council has also been approached by Translink and their master developer, MRP, about the potential of making available a shared innovation space as part of a 'meanwhile use' social value programme at Great Victoria Street bus station (which is due to permanently close this autumn). They are currently in discussion with partners (including those above) to determine if such a space could add value to inclusive innovation projects and generate specific opportunities for communities close to Weaver's Cross. An update on this will be brought to Members in the coming months.</p>            |
| 3.20 | <p>Finally, the City Innovation Office has been engaging with Queen's University's Communities and Place (QCAP<sup>1</sup>) team. With funding from Queen's and the Dept of Communities, QCAP have been working with the Market Development Association to establish an inclusive innovation programme that provides local people with the research, tech, data and training necessary to harness digital innovation to understand and address local issues.</p>  |
| 3.21 | <p>Ultimately QCAP are interested in scaling their model across the entire city. As a next step they are keen to collaborate with Belfast City Council on a pilot, similar in nature to the Market project, but based in another inner-city community to explore local issues of climate and urban health. This would allow both QCAP and the Council to better understand how this unique approach can inform planning and service delivery within the Council and the public sector more broadly. Queen's have costed a one-year project at £64,000 and have asked Council to consider providing joint funding.</p> |
| 3.22 | <p>Members are asked to approve the development of a such collaborative project with QCAP. Following approval, the QCAP team and council officers will engage with local Members and community organisations on the merits and focus of such a project to determine how the existing Market model could be best adapted for another context. Officers would then engage with the relevant Area Working Group and bring a final proposal back to committee in the coming months for approval.</p>  |
| 3.23 | <p>Finally, it was noted above that inclusive innovation forms a major strand of several EU funding programmes including Horizon Europe. For example, there are two current calls each to the value of €90 million aimed at supporting work between government, industry, universities and the citizen. Belfast City Council has been approached by Connected Places Catapult which is engaging with other European cities to consider a joint bid to these or</p>  |

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/qcap/>

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|            | similar competitions. Work such as that undertaken by QCAP, YSI, Ormeau Labs and others would provide important foundations for Belfast's participation in such competitions.  |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>   |
| 4.1        | 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. Members have also approved £29,500 for an inclusive innovation pilot. |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>  |
| 5.1        | None.  |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>   |
| 6.1        | None   |



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| <b>Subject:</b>           | Physical Programme Update                      |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024                                 |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager              |

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| <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 style="width: 30px; 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> |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>   |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>After Committee Decision</b></p> <p><b>After Council Decision</b></p> <p><b>Sometime in the future</b></p> <p><b>Never</b></p>   | <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> |  |  |  |  |
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| <b>Call-in</b>                               |   |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>   |
| 1.1        | The Council's Physical Programme currently includes over 200 capital projects with investment of £150m+ via a range of internal and external funding streams, together with projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report presents requests for stage movement approvals under the Capital Programme, along with updates on capital letters of offer and contracts awarded.  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>   |
| 2.1        | <p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Capital Programme - Waste Plan - Expansion of kerbside glass collection</b> – Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> with a maximum budget of up to £802,000 and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.</li> <li>• <b>Capital Programme – IT Programme – Folder Inserter Equipment</b> – Agree that the project is moved to <i>Stage 3 – Committed</i> and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate 'framework' arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.</li> <li>• <b>Shared Island Funding</b> - that €46,620 in Shared Island funding has been secured as part of a joint funding application with Cork City Council to install solar photovoltaics (PV) on the roof of Donegal Pass Community Centre subject to acceptance of the grant offer.</li> <li>• <b>Capital Letters of Offer</b> – to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer in Q1 2024/25.</li> <li>• <b>Contracts awarded</b> – to note the update in relation to contracts awarded in Q1 2024/25.</li> </ul> |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>   |
|            | <u>Key Issues</u>  |
|            | <b>Capital Programme - Proposed Movements</b>  |
| 3.1        | Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. Members are   |

advised that the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange a site visit to any projects that have been completed or are underway.

3.2 Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving one capital project over another capital project. Members are asked to note the following activity on the Capital Programme:

| Project  | Overview  | Stage movement                     |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Waste Plan – Expansion of Glass Collection Scheme</b> | Part of the Waste Plan. The project involves the phased expansion of the kerbside glass collection scheme to households in the outer city/ blue bin area.                               | <b>Move to Stage 3 – Committed</b> |
| <b>IT Programme – Folder Inserter Equipment</b>          | Folder inserter equipment is hardware used for automated mailing processes within Digital Services. It is required for large volume communications processing for NIHE and the Council. | <b>Move to Stage 3 – Committed</b> |

3.3 **Waste Plan – Expansion of Glass Collection Scheme**

In March, SP&R Committee agreed to move the Waste Plan – Expansion of Glass Collection Scheme project to *Stage 2 – Uncommitted*. As per the three stage approvals process, an Outline Business Case has been completed and the project can now progress to delivery stage. The total costs of this capital project are estimated to be £1.6m. As reported to People & Communities Committee on 6 August 2024, the Council has recently been successful in securing an offer of match funding from DAERA for 50% of the total cost estimate, meaning that the funding required from the Council is up to a maximum of £802,000.

**Members are asked to agree that this project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* with a budget of up to £802,000. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.**

3.4 **IT Programme – Folder Inserter Equipment**

A new folder inserter is required to continue to provide a high volume enveloping service for NIHE mandated via a Service Level Agreement, and internally for council departments. The current hardware is coming to end of life. Maintenance requirements are now frequent and increasing in recent years, and sourcing parts for this machinery is no longer possible within the UK. This project aims to enable Digital Services to continue to provide SLA mail processing service for NIHE and for council departments.

**Members are asked to agree that the project is moved to *Stage 3 – Committed* and held at Tier 0 – Scheme at Risk pending further development of the project and a satisfactory tender return; and that necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of**

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|            | <p><b>tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.</b></p>  |
| <p>3.5</p> | <p><b>Shared Island Funding Awards</b></p> <p>In 2023 Belfast City Council partnered with Cork City Council on a Shared Island funded feasibility study that assessed the solar PV potential on a number of high consuming council sites in both Cork and Belfast. In Belfast, the potential solar PV generation for 25 council owned buildings was estimated and linked with consumption. The results of the study were then used to complete a joint application with Cork City Council last summer to access capital funding to install solar PV on three community centres with one of these being in Belfast (Donegall Pass Community Centre) and the other two in Cork. One of the conditions of the funding was that it had to have a community focus. Donegall Pass community centre was selected due to their high potential solar PV generation matched to high energy consumption levels as highlighted in the feasibility study. Members are asked to note that this a positive funding award and that once the solar panels are installed, the panels could generate 37,898 kWh/year against a current energy consumption of approximately 19,000kWh/year (ie the panels will produce approximately double the amount of energy currently used). This would reduce carbon emissions in the city by approximately 12.99 tonnes CO2e/kWh annually and save around £7,000 per year on the electricity bill. A contract for funding is currently being reviewed and will be signed by the Council and Cork City Council. The project will be delivered by Property &amp; Projects. <b>Members are asked to note the award of funding and necessary procurement processes (including the invitation of tenders and/or the use of appropriate ‘framework’ arrangements) be initiated with contract to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.</b></p> |
| <p>3.6</p> | <p>A further application was put in to test interventions in community growing within the net-zero (UP 2030) neighbourhood area – Donegall Pass, Sandy Row, Markets, Barrack Street and the Linen quarter. Interventions include horticulture/growing training sessions; co-design of urban sustainable food interventions; implementation of urban sustainable food interventions; promotion of active travel; promotion of energy saving and retrofit measures. The funding for this project is €15,000. There may be an opportunity to avail of an additional €15,000 through partnering with Wild Belfast to deliver biodiversity enhancements, making the potential total funding up to €30,000. As above a contract for funding is currently being reviewed and will be signed by the Council and Cork City Council. For this stream the Council will work with the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership to engage with the neighbourhoods in the UP2030 area</p>   |

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|      | to identify and deliver community growing projects within the timeframe that will help develop growing capacity and biodiversity improvements across the area.   |
| 3.7  | <p><b>Capital Letters of Offer</b></p> <p>Members are asked to note the update in relation to capital letters of offer accepted in Q1 2024/25 at Appendix 1.</p>   |
| 3.8  | <p><b>Contracts Awarded</b></p> <p>Members are asked to note the award of tenders for capital works including services related to works in Q1 2024/25 at Appendix 2.</p>   |
| 3.9  | <p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p><i>Financial Implications</i> – Waste Plan – Expansion of Glass Collection Scheme - a maximum of £810,000 is now allocated to this project. The Director of Finance has confirmed that this is within the affordability limits of the Council.</p> <p><i>Resource Implications</i> – Waste Plan – Expansion of Glass Collection Scheme – revenue funding is in place for 2024/25 as part of the rates setting process. Revenue requirements for 2025/26 onwards are subject to approval.</p> |
| 3.10 | <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process</p>  |
| 4.0  | <p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p> <p>Appendix 1 - Capital Letters of Offer in Q1 2024/25 – April to June 2024</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Contracts Awarded in Q1 2024/25 – April to June 2024</p>   |

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|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Contracts Update  |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 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                |

**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?**

|                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>After Committee Decision</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>After Council Decision</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Sometime in the future</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Never</b>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

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

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|            | <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 (STAs)</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 modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 2</b>)</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>Modification to Contract</b>  |
| 3.5        | <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 1 year and no change to contract value, for T2455 Procurement Advice for City Rengeneration, awarded to KPMG. Extension of time to existing contract (no modification to contract value) for procurement advice to deliver competitive dialogue procurements and financial due diligence to assist with addressing sustained housing demand from across the city and unlock regeneration potential across a number of strategic sites.</li> <li>Up to additional 6 months and £80,024.50, for T1856 - Provision of a facilities management service at the Mary Peters Track. Contract extension required to allow sufficient time for Council to complete stakeholder engagement, as requested by</li> </ul> |

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| 3.6  | <p>PGL, and allow time to explore alternative management options for the site following the stakeholder engagement. The original contract expiry date was 30/09/2023. The contract has been previously extended SP&amp;R as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 months extension and £65,000 approved by SP&amp;R in Aug 23.</li> <li>- 6 months extension and £110,073.50 approved by SP&amp;R in Mar 24.</li> </ul> <p>Further details on these contract modifications are set out in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 2</b>).</p> |
| <b>PCRs 2015 specific exclusions for service contracts</b> |  |
| 3.7  | <p>Section 10 of the PCRs sets out specific exclusions for service contracts meaning that the types of services listed are excluded from the obligations of the PCRs.</p>  |
| 3.8  | <p>The following excluded service contracts are being submitted for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract for up to £45,000, for up to 3 months, awarded to Belfast City Centre Management 'BCCM' for the use of eyebolts/lamp posts 'Wayleaves' for erection of festive lighting. BCCM own the infrastructure and have the permissions required to erect Christmas illuminations across the City Centre.</li> </ul>   |
| 3.9  | <p>As this spend requirement is related to a land/ property rental it is exempt under the Public Contracts Regulations under Reg 10 (1) (a) which reads:</p> <p><b>Specific exclusions for service contracts</b></p> <p>10.—(1) This Part does not apply to public service contracts—<br/> (a) for the acquisition or rental, by whatever financial means, of land, existing buildings or other immovable property, or which concern interests in or rights over any of them;</p>  |
| <b>STA and Contracts &lt;£30k Reporting</b>                |  |
| 3.10   | <p>At SP&amp;R in October 24 the Committee agreed that 'the quarterly finance report should, in future, include information on expenditure on Single Tender Actions and on the number and value of contracts under £30,000'.</p>   |
| 3.11   | <p>Information on expenditure broken down by individual STA contract records is not readily available from the Council's current financial system.</p>   |
| 3.12   | <p>However, CPS centrally record the number and maximum total value of STA contract records. Quarter 1 2024/25 is provided below:</p>  |

|            |  |  |
|------------|--|--|
|            | <b>STAs awarded FY 24/25 Qtr 1</b>   |  |
|            | <b>Number of STA contracts</b>   | <b>Total value of STA contracts</b>      |
|            | 15   | £360,093                                 |
| 3.13       | Records for contracts (including title; supplier name; value; duration etc) valued below £30,000 are not centrally held by CPS and are maintained on departmental registers. Below is a quarterly return by all departments on contracts awarded valued below £30,000 during FY 24/25 Qtr 1. |  |
|            | <b>Contracts &lt;£30k awarded FY 24/25 Qtr 1</b>   |  |
|            | <b>Number of &lt;£30k contracts</b>  | <b>Total value of &lt;£30k contracts</b> |
|            | 26   | £386,580                                 |
|            | <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>   |  |
|            | Appendix 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table 1 - Competitive Tenders</li> <li>• Table 2 - Modification to Contract</li> </ul>   |  |

**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

| Title of Tender   | Proposed Contract Duration | Est. Max Contract Value | SRO         | Short description of goods / services   |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|---|
| Provision of email filtering service  | Up to 3 years              | £57,000                 | P Gribben   | To reduce phishing and spam attacks and also virus scanning of attachments, therefore reducing the probability of an email cyber-attack.  |
| Concession contract for the Stables Café at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park. | Up to 5 years              | Income based contract   | D Sales     | Concession contract for the catering operations and management of the Stables Café at Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park.<br><br>Estimated annual revenue of £240,000 pa  |
| Supply of line marking products and equipment                               | Up to 4 years              | £156,000                | D Sales     | To support operational teams with pitch line marking.   |
| VMWare support contract renewal   | Up to 3 years              | £120,000                | S McNicholl | Support contract for VMWare products that host council's virtual server infrastructure  |
| Demolition of dangerous buildings in Belfast                                | Up to 5 years              | £200,000                | D Martin    | The safe and competent demolition of unsafe commercial, industrial, and residential properties, carrying out repairs to properties following demolition or to ensure that a safe environment is maintained and controlled around or within existing properties. |
| Repair and make safe historic structures (monuments and walls)              | Up to 3 years              | £400,000                | D Sales     | Specialist service to repair and make safe large historic monuments in its cemeteries which have become unstable and unsafe.  |
| 4 x 7.5ton wireless mobile column lifts                                     | One Off Purchase           | £50,000                 | D Sales     | The lifts are required to maintain/service/repair BCCs HGV/LGV vehicle fleet, to replace the 30year old static lifts that are beyond economical repair  |
| Strategic Assessment and Action Planning - Specialist and technical         | Up to 5 years              | £180,000                | D Sales     | Proposed 5-year contract would align with the 2025/2028 strategic plan period and take the learning into the next process.  |

## Appendix 1

|  |                 |                                     |                                       |  |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| support for the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership  |                 |                                     |                                       | This Contractor would deliver the 2029/2031 Strategic Assessment and 2031/2032 Action Plan.  |
| Benchmarking tool to support a new Entrepreneurship Support Service (ESS)<br><br>Approved SP&R March 2024. Duration and value have been revised. | Up to 3 years   | £106,000                            | D Martin                              | Belfast City Council is acting on behalf of the 11 Northern Ireland Councils to appoint a contractor to deliver a benchmarking tool to support a new Entrepreneurship Support Service (ESS). This tool will be used to enable new NI business owners to assess their progress against sector trends, to enable comparisons with business peers, provide NI businesses with good practice insights and provide case studies and success stories to help NI businesses to develop. |
| Hire of vehicles, mobile plant & glass collection vehicles   | Up to 5 years   | £1,000,000                          | D Sales                               | There is an operational requirement to hire small and medium commercial vehicles - up to and including 7.5 Ton GVW and specialized vehicles to meet work demands   |
| Page 312<br>Pest control services  | Up to 5 years   | £700,000                            | N Largey                              | To support sites/premises managers across the Council with pest control services required at Council owned sites. These are additional services to what the Council's internal Pest Contract Unit 'PCU' provides.<br><br>Consideration was given for the PCU to deliver these services in-house but not considered viable due to resourcing/workload pressures within the PCU and the specialist nature of the pest control services that this tender would cover.               |
| Supply of electricity  | Up to 5 years   | £20.5m                              | T Wallace                             | Supply of electricity for Council properties/ assets   |
| Provision of specialist sponsorship support services   | Up to 5 years   | £30k *<br><br>Income based contract | J Greer                               | Specialist support services to help the Council maximise income from advertising and sponsorship opportunities across Council assets and events.<br><br>* £30k spend value planned for initial scoping work with supplier. Future payments to supplier will be performance based linked to advertising/sponsorship income opportunities they generate i.e. % fee basis.  |
| Analysis and evaluation of city development and regeneration proposals   | Up to 18 months | £250,000                            | T Wallace/<br>D Martin/<br>C Reynolds | To appoint a suitably qualified professional consultancy to undertake analysis, evaluation and provide financial assurance,  |

Appendix 1

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  | funding advice and due diligence in relation to regeneration proposals involving 3rd parties and alternative funding mechanisms/ vehicles to support development and regeneration proposals. |
|--|--|--|--|--|

**Table 2: Modification to Contract**

| Title of Contract   | Original Contract Duration | Modification                       | SRO        | Description  | Supplier     |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|--|--------------|
| T2455 Procurement Advice for City Regeneration<br><br>Fully funded)           | Up to 1 year               | Additional 12 months               | C Reynolds | Extension of time to existing contract (no modification to contract value) for procurement advice to deliver competitive dialogue procurements and financial due diligence to assist with addressing sustained housing demand from across the city and unlock regeneration potential across a number of strategic sites. | KPMG         |
| T1856 - Provision of a facilities management service at the Mary Peters Track | Up to 6 years              | Additional 6 months and £80,024.50 | S Leonard  | Contract extension required to allow sufficient time for Council to complete stakeholder engagement, as requested by PGL, and allow time to explore alternative management options for the site following the stakeholder engagement.  | Athletics NI |

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|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 5 <sup>th</sup> August 2024 |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2024  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services                            |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager                                 |

|  |   |                          |                          |                        |                          |                        |                          |       |                          |
|--|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| <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 style="width: 30px; 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="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><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 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 5 <sup>th</sup> August 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 5 <sup>th</sup> August 2024 including:  |
| 2.2        | <p><b><u>SCP Membership</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ms Laura Euler has replaced Ms Caroline McMenamin as the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust representative, and that Council has corresponded with the Bishop of Down and Connor Diocese seeking the faith representative for the SCP.</li> </ul>   |
| 2.3        | <p><b><u>Request for presentation by Cross-Departmental Working Group</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCP will receive a presentation at its meeting on 9 September regarding the work of the Cross-Departmental Working Group (CDWG) which has been established by The Executive Office in response to the recent escalation in racist hate incidents and crime in our communities.</li> </ul>     |
| 2.4        | <p><b><u>Good Relations Q1 Report and LoO Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the Quarter 1 update on the delivery of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan including the allocation of £158,851 in grants through the Good Relations Small Grant Scheme, listed in Appendix 2</li> <li>Note receipt of the Letter of Offer from TEO for a reduced allocation of £369,809.69.</li> </ul> |
| 2.5        | <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 to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report</li> </ul>  |
| 2.6        | <p><b><u>AOB – Recent Disturbances</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A special SCP workshop to be convened to consider actions to address racism.</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 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee Papers of 10 June 2024</li> <li>• Update on Membership of the Shared City Partnership</li> <li>• Request for presentation from Cross Department Working Group on Race and Hate Crime</li> <li>• Good Relations Quarter 1 Report and LoO Update</li> <li>• PEACEPLUS – Theme 1.1 – Local Action Plan Update</li> <li>• Recent disturbances – Special SCP workshop</li> </ul> |
| 3.3 | <p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the minutes of the meeting attached in Appendix 1; and details of groups awarded Good Relations small grants for 2023/24 as outlined in Appendix 2.</p>   |
|     | <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>   |
| 3.4 | <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 5th August 2024</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Groups awarded Good Relations small grants for 2023/24</p>  |

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## SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Monday 8th August, 2024

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

Members present: Councillors Duffy (Chairperson);  
Councillors Abernethy and McLaughlin

External Members: Ms. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Mr. J. Donnelly, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Ms. L. Euler, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;  
Mr. L. Gunn, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;  
Ms. C. Guinness, Belfast Chamber;  
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;  
Ms. A. Tohill, Good Relations, TEO;  
Ms. A. Roberts, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Mr. G. Walker, Community and Voluntary Sector; and  
Ms. A. M. White, British Red Cross.

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

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported from Alderman Copeland and Councillor Smyth and also from Mr. P. Anderson, Ms. J. Irwin, Dr. W. Naeem and Superintendent Henry.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 10th June, 2024, were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Ms. A. Tohill, TEO, declared an interest in PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan Update (item 5) as the TEO was involved in the assessment process for the BCC PEACEPLUS application under IA1.1 and she left the meeting at this stage in proceedings.

#### **Verbal Update on Membership**

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer advised that Ms. Laura Euler had replaced Ms. Caroline McMenamin as the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust representative and welcomed her to her first meeting of the Partnership.

He further advised the Members that officers had corresponded with the Bishop of Down and Connor Diocese seeking a nomination for the Faith representative for the Partnership for the incoming year. He stated that he hoped to be in a position to provide an update at the September meeting of the Partnership.

The Chairperson also welcomed Ms. C. Guinness, Belfast Chamber, to her first meeting.

Noted.

### **Verbal - Slot Cross-Departmental Working Group Race Hate Crime**

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer advised the Members that the Executive Office had been chairing a Cross-Departmental Working Group (CDWG) in partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) in response to the recent escalation in racist hate incidents and crime in our communities. He detailed that the key objective of the CDWG was to foster open dialogue, share perspectives and to collaboratively explore actionable strategies to promote understanding and community cohesion.

He reported that, at the last meeting of the CDWG in April, it had been agreed to explore how best to link with Elected Members about the rise in race hate incidents and messaging to take a stance against such behaviours.

He advised that, upon discussion, officers had felt that it might be useful to invite members of the CDWG working group to the September meeting of the Partnership for a 20-minute slot to enable them to present on the role of the CSWG and to enable discussion with the SCP Members.

Following discussion in relation to the recent disturbances in the city, which it was agreed would be discussed in more detailed at the end of the meeting, the NIHE and TEO undertook to also provide an update on the Building Relationships in the Community Programme (BRIC) at the next meeting.

The Partnership agreed to invite representatives of the CDWG to the September meeting and to receive and update on the BRIC Programme.

### **Good Relations - Quarter 1 Report and LoO Update**

The Partnership considered the following report:

#### **“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 1 which covers the period April – June 2024.**

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

**2.1 That Members recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they note the contents of the report,**

including the allocation of £158,851 in grants through the Good Relations Small Grant Scheme.

### 3.0 Main Report

3.1 Members will be aware that the Council receives 75% of funding from The Executive Office (TEO) for the delivery of its annual Good Relations Action Plan.

3.2 The current Action Plan was agreed at the Partnership in February 2024 and subsequently submitted to TEO. The total value of the Action Plan at that stage was £758,584.36. The requested 75% TEO contribution towards this was £568,938.27.

3.3 Council received a letter of offer from TEO on July 22nd, detailing that its allocation to this years' Action Plan would be £369,809.69. This is 35% less than what the Council had bid for (which was the same amount as was bid for in 2022/23). While this is slightly more than the £301,537.28 allocated for 2023/24, it has meant that the Action Plan has had to be once again cut back.

3.4 As a result of this shortfall, the total value of the Action Plan is £493,079.59. Within this, the 75% contribution from TEO consists of £369,809.69, with the remaining 25%, or £123,269.90 being contributed by the Council. Of this overall total, £365,000 is allocated towards programmes.

3.5 It should also be noted that the Council contributes more to Good Relations work than merely its 25% match funding to the Action Plan. The overall Council contribution to Good Relations in 2023/24 was £413,320.10 and this figure will be similar for 2024/25

3.6 The following is a summary progress update on activity and allocations during Q1:

| Code | Project Summary                         | Budget   | Progress in Quarter 1  | Total allocated |
|------|---|----------|--|-----------------|
| BCC1 | Good Relations Small Grants Programme.  | £155,000 | 43 projects awarded funding for Good Relations projects. See appendix 2. | £158,851        |
| BCC2 | St Patrick's Day Civic Events programme | £20,000  | No activity in Quarter 1.  | £0              |

|       |   |   |   |                    |
|-------|---|---|---|--------------------|
| BCC3  | Positive Cultural Expression Programme                    | £20,000                                 | Beacon Programme ongoing.   | £0                 |
| BCC4  | Civic Engagement and Learning Programme                   | £20,000                                 | Day of Reflection delivered<br>Refugee Week events delivered            | £7,563.48          |
| BCC5  | Minority Ethnic Equality and Inclusion Programme          | £60,000<br>(original: £80,000)          | April meeting of migrant forum took place. 2 projects allocated support | £15,300            |
| BCC6  | Embedding Good Relations Programme                        | £0<br>(original: £30,000)               | This programme will not proceed as a result of budget shortfall         | £0                 |
| BCC7  | Interface Engagement and tackling sectarianism and racism | £60,000<br>(original: £80,000)          | Engagement with groups to develop proposals.                            | £0                 |
| BCC8  | Shared Education Schools Programme                        | £20,000<br>(original: £30,000)          | Programme planning for delivery ongoing.                                | £0                 |
| BCC 9 | Strategic Connections and Support Programme               | £10,000<br>(original: £60,000)          | No activity in Q1   | £0                 |
|       | <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>£365,000</b><br>(Original: £495,000) |   | <b>£181,714.48</b> |

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

All costs within the District Council's Good Relations Action Plan are covered within existing agreed budgets.

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

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.”

A Member expressed disappointment in the reduced funding allocation, which had resulted in the proposed Good Relations Action Plan having to be streamlined and stressed the need for flexibility regarding activity. In response to a query, the Acting Senior Good Relations Officer confirmed that, if necessary, funding could be reprofiled throughout the year to deal with emerging issues.

A further Member stressed the need for contingency funding, citing recent events as an example.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report, including the allocation of £158,851 in grants through the Good Relations Small Grant Scheme.

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

The PEACE Programme Manager advised that, as previously reported, approval of the PEACEPLUS Local Community Action Plan had been due to conclude, with approval by the SEUPB steering committee expected on 19th June 2024. She reported that there had, however, been delays in the approval process. The initial delay had been subject to ministerial approval and agreement by the Department of Finance. These approvals had subsequently been secured, and the SEUPB Steering Committee approval was now to be progressed. She reported that it was anticipated that a Steering Committee meeting would be held mid-August.

The Members were asked to note that the delays would have a slight impact on the delivery timeframe for the Action Plan. The PEACEPLUS Programme Board had recommended that mobilisation of the Action Plan be progressed as close to the original timeframe as possible, which might require condensed delivery to achieve targets by 1-2 months, with contract awards up to December 2027. The indicative timeframe (which had been circulated with the agenda) was subject to Letter of Offer and Terms and Conditions of funding which would be issued by SEUPB once approval had been confirmed.

In terms of the recruitment of the PEACEPLUS Team, she reported that this was progressing with the Finance and Claims Officer and three Project Managers now having taken up their respective positions. The Monitoring and Data Analyst would be in post by mid-August 2024. Re-advertisement was currently progressing for the Project Officer and Project Support Assistant posts.

The Members were advised that each Project Manager was responsible for the implementation, delivery and management of projects on a cross disciplinary approach across all three themes. An approach recommended in the PEACE IV Lessons Learnt. In addition, each Project Manager would be responsible for leading and co-ordinating the quarterly Thematic Steering Group meetings. The Members attention was drawn to the Project Portfolio Allocation which had been circulated with the agenda as an appendix.

The officer highlighted that feedback following the delivery of the Prepare to Procure Capacity Building Programme and Networking session had identified the need for an understanding regarding the role of lead contractors. Officers were currently liaising with Procurement Services to compile the content and schedule a further session early August on this element of further capacity building.

As previously advised, all expenditure associated with the PEACEPLUS LCAP would be eligible from the date of application submission, which was 14th December 2023. Therefore, all current expenditure was within the existing budget which would be claimed retrospectively from the SEUPB. As the assessment process was ongoing, advice on the drawdown of the £30K advance from the SEUPB would be progressed by the Programme Manager once the assessment process had been concluded.

Following a query, the PEACE Programme Manager provided an indicative timeline of the larger projects that would commence via procurement next month, subject to receipt and confirmations of the Letter of Offer and Terms and Conditions of funding from the SEUPB.

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

### **Any Other Business**

The Members referred to the recent violent destruction and racist intimidation that had occurred across the city against people from ethnic minorities living in Belfast, following the recent stabbing of three young children in Southport. Discussion ensued regarding specific incidences that had occurred within the Members respective communities and against businesses which had been targeted and consideration was given to ways in which the Council could provide tangible assistance to help.

The PEACE Programme Manager referred to an e-mail that had been received from Shared City Partnership Member (SCP), Dr. Wasif Naeem, advising that he had hoped to attend today's meeting but unfortunately given the ongoing situation he was unavailable and asking the SCP to consider releasing a statement condemning the violence. She further advised that she had spoken with him immediately prior to the meeting to offer the Council's support.

The Members unanimously condemned the activities of the far-right agitators and expressed their solidarity with those in our ethnic minorities cross the city. Whilst there was unanimous support for the SCP issuing a statement, it was noted that due to the SCP being a Working Group any such statement could not be released until the minutes had been ratified by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and subsequently the Council, which would be several weeks down the line.

The Chairperson advised the Members that a special meeting of the Council had been called and was being held at 6.00 p.m. this evening and that it was likely that the Council would be releasing a statement condemning the violence.

The Members also discussed the fact that MEARS had declined the Partnership's previous request to attend a meeting to address queries and, considering recent events, asked that they again be asked to attend a future meeting. At the request of a Member it was also agreed that an update be sought from them in respect of what security and support had been offered to asylum seekers in hotels and dispersal accommodation following the violent weekend activities (re: AASC contract-welfare and security of asylum seekers).

Following discussion, given the serious and ongoing nature of recent events, it was agreed that a SCP Workshop would be convened as soon as possible to further consider what practical and proactive steps the SCP could take to assist with rebuilding damaged relationships and businesses throughout the city.

Chairperson

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|    | <b>Ref</b> | <b>Grant</b>         |
|----|------------|----------------------|
| 1  | 25831      | Good Relations Grant |
| 2  | 25841      | Good Relations Grant |
| 3  | 24925      | Good Relations Grant |
| 4  | 25453      | Good Relations Grant |
| 5  | 25761      | Good Relations Grant |
| 6  | 25187      | Good Relations Grant |
| 7  | 25815      | Good Relations Grant |
| 8  | 25845      | Good Relations Grant |
| 9  | 25484      | Good Relations Grant |
| 10 | 25712      | Good Relations Grant |
| 11 | 25763      | Good Relations Grant |
| 12 | 25786      | Good Relations Grant |
| 13 | 25207      | Good Relations Grant |
| 14 | 24957      | Good Relations Grant |
| 15 | 25049      | Good Relations Grant |
| 16 | 25116      | Good Relations Grant |
| 17 | 25201      | Good Relations Grant |
| 18 | 25240      | Good Relations Grant |
| 19 | 25246      | Good Relations Grant |
| 20 | 25344      | Good Relations Grant |
| 21 | 25388      | Good Relations Grant |
| 22 | 25421      | Good Relations Grant |
| 23 | 25500      | Good Relations Grant |
| 24 | 25544      | Good Relations Grant |
| 25 | 25563      | Good Relations Grant |
| 26 | 25566      | Good Relations Grant |
| 27 | 25578      | Good Relations Grant |
| 28 | 25625      | Good Relations Grant |
| 29 | 25644      | Good Relations Grant |
| 30 | 25789      | Good Relations Grant |
| 31 | 25791      | Good Relations Grant |
| 32 | 25797      | Good Relations Grant |
| 33 | 25819      | Good Relations Grant |
| 34 | 25422      | Good Relations Grant |
| 35 | 25459      | Good Relations Grant |
| 36 | 25521      | Good Relations Grant |
| 37 | 25662      | Good Relations Grant |
| 38 | 25833      | Good Relations Grant |
| 39 | 25835      | Good Relations Grant |
| 40 | 24945      | Good Relations Grant |
| 41 | 25118      | Good Relations Grant |
| 42 | 25184      | Good Relations Grant |
| 43 | 25633      | Good Relations Grant |

| <b>Organisation</b>   | <b>Score %</b> |
|---|----------------|
| City Life Projects  | 93.75          |
| McDonald Centre   | 90             |
| Forthspring Inter Community Group                             | 87.5           |
| Black Mountain Shared Space                                   | 83.75          |
| Ardoyne Youth Club  | 83.75          |
| Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum                     | 82.5           |
| The HUBB Community Resource Centre                            | 82.5           |
| Tackling Awareness Of Mental Health Issues                    | 82.5           |
| St Matthew's Football Club                                    | 80             |
| Bloomfield Community Association                              | 80             |
| Ballynafeigh Community Development Association                | 80             |
| Holy Family Youth Centre                                      | 80             |
| 4 Corners Festival  | 77.5           |
| Youth Link : NI   | 75             |
| Newhill Football Club   | 75             |
| R City Youth CIC  | 75             |
| East End Great War Society                                    | 75             |
| Star Neighbourhood Centre                                     | 75             |
| Hannahstown Heritage And Cultural Society (HHCS)              | 75             |
| Springfield Charitable Association                            | 75             |
| Cedar Foundation  | 75             |
| Conway Education Centre                                       | 75             |
| ArdBone Festival  | 75             |
| Shorts Football Club Academy                                  | 75             |
| Blackmountain Action Group                                    | 75             |
| Whiterock Childrens Centre                                    | 75             |
| Market Development Association                                | 75             |
| Lower Oldpark Community Association                           | 75             |
| Ligoniel Primary School And Nursery Unit                      | 75             |
| Corpus Christi Youth Centre                                   | 75             |
| Dunmurry Community Association                                | 75             |
| Ethnic Minority Sports Organisation Northern Ireland (EMSONI) | 75             |
| Diverse Youth NI  | 75             |
| SOUL STUDIO - BELFAST CIC                                     | 72.5           |
| Falls Community Council                                       | 72.5           |
| Ligoniel Improvement Association                              | 72.5           |
| Cooltura Polish Community Centre                              | 72.5           |
| Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group                           | 72.5           |
| North Belfast Play Forum (NBPF)                               | 72.5           |
| Greater Village Regeneration Trust                            | 70             |
| Belfast YMCA  | 70             |
| Footprints Women's Centre                                     | 70             |
| PeacePlayers - Northern Ireland (PP-NI)                       | 70             |

| Awarded   |
|-----------|
| £2,880.00 |
| £3,960.00 |
| £5,000.00 |
| £4,920.00 |
| £4,050.00 |
| £4,940.00 |
| £3,900.00 |
| £5,000.00 |
| £4,000.00 |
| £3,336.00 |
| £3,975.00 |
| £4,450.00 |
| £4,400.00 |
| £4,360.00 |
| £4,160.00 |
| £3,090.00 |
| £3,330.00 |
| £2,500.00 |
| £4,620.00 |
| £1,825.00 |
| £2,446.00 |
| £3,420.00 |
| £1,700.00 |
| £3,900.00 |
| £3,290.00 |
| £4,999.00 |
| £3,250.00 |
| £3,660.00 |
| £3,500.00 |
| £4,640.00 |
| £4,725.00 |
| £3,600.00 |
| £4,660.00 |
| £2,830.00 |
| £3,940.00 |
| £2,625.00 |
| £2,400.00 |
| £3,070.00 |
| £2,305.00 |
| £3,805.00 |
| £3,510.00 |
| £3,180.00 |
| £4,700.00 |

£158,851.00

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## Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 15 August 2024

### Attendance

#### Members:

Councillor Jenna Maghie  
Councillor Ryan Murphy  
Councillor Áine Groogan  
Councillor Sarah Bunting  
Councillor Séamas de Faoite  
Councillor Ciaran Beattie

**Apologies:** Alderman Sonia Copeland

#### Officers:

John Walsh, Chief Executive  
Sharon McNicholl Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services  
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance  
Damien Martin, Strategic Director of Place & Economy  
David Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services  
Sinead Grimes, Director of Property and Projects  
Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Civic Services  
Lisa Toland, Senior Manager – Economy  
Lynsey Cameron, Executive Manager (Acting) (secretariat)

### 1. Finance Update

The Director of Finance presented the Quarter 1 Financial Report for 2024/25 and outlined the income, expenditure and projected underspend for the period. The recent HMRC settlement with regards a VAT issue was discussed. The upcoming rate setting process was also discussed with service pressures and inflation highlighted. A Quarter 1 report will be brought to August SP&R committee. The Director also provided an update on the Discretionary Fund, and outlined the applications received. A report with the detail discussed will be brought to SP&R Committee for Members consideration.

### 2. Belfast Stories

The Strategic Director of Place & Economy advised a report would be brought to August SP&R committee providing an update for committee members on the projects next steps, including key milestones. The report will also include details of a proposed members visit as well as details on an upcoming public consultation seeking views on the visitor experience, public space and creative hub within the development. Members noted that work will be starting on

the development of a business case which will be presented to members towards the end of the year.

### **3. Update on Ministerial Engagements**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy updated members on engagement with the Executive Ministers, noting that a meeting with the Finance Minister took place on 5 August and meetings with the Economy and Infrastructure Ministers are planned for 12 September and 2 October respectively. Discussion took place on the actions arising following the recent meeting with the Finance Minister.

### **4. ICS NI – Request for local Government representatives to be members of Area Integrated Partnership Boards**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy advised members that correspondence had been received from the Department of Health in relation to the development and implementation of the Integrated Care System for Northern Ireland (ICS NI). It has been agreed that council representation on AIPBs will be undertaken by local councillors. Members noted that the Department is seeking a single councillor nomination for a 4 year term. Discussion followed. The Director advised a report seeking a Belfast nomination would be brought to August SP&R committee.

### **5. 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.

### **6. AOB**

#### **Irish Language Policy – Consultation & Engagement Plan**

The City Solicitor confirmed that the consultation would be live next week. Members noted the bi-lingual approach to engagement, including staff and public events, including the consultation response itself. As a large number of responses are anticipated, it is expected an update will be brought to members in the Spring.

## **Illuminate Requests**

The City Solicitor outlined for Members a number of illuminate requests received which would be agreed under the City Solicitors delegated authority.

- **Childhood Cancer Awareness Month** – 2 Sept 2024
- **Palliative Care Week 2024** – 9 Sept 2024
- **Nexus NI 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** – 4 Nov 2024

## **Successful Bid - PEACEPLUS Programme**

The Director of Property and Projects advised that the Council has been successful in securing funding of almost £15 million through the PEACEPLUS Programme, through SEUPB.

Projects that are due to benefit from the funding include an LGBTQIA+ hub, Sanctuary Theatre, Distillery Street Redevelopment Project, Annadale Open Space, and Access to the Hills.

Members asked for their thanks to be passed on to officers for their hard work in this regard.

## **Electric Vehicle Strategy**

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy advised that a report will be brought to August SP&R committee seeking member approval for the first stage of the strategy which will include a commercial assessment of the Councils land assets, engaging with the market and developing a sustainable and affordable model, a recommendation for which, will be brought back to members.

## **Innovation**

The Deputy Chief Executive provided an update on the Innovation programme of work and inclusive innovation at a local level, which will be wrapped around existing programmes.

Members were reminded of the recent recruitment exercise for an Innovation Commissioner. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that a candidate has been offered the position and are in the process of agreeing terms. More details will follow in due course.

### **Northern Ireland Water Correspondence – Budgetary Constraints**

Discussion took place on recent correspondence received from NI Water on budgetary constraints and the implications this will have on Belfast's growth ambition. The Chief Executive advised the Council will be writing to NI Water outlining this concern. A report on the matter will also be brought to members in due course.

### **Update on recent protests – operational response**

The Senior Manager - Economy provided an update on the engagement with affected businesses to date and the initial proposed areas of advice and support. A report will be brought to the Special SP&R committee scheduled for 16 August for member consideration.

Members noted that Botanic Gardens will be closed on Saturday 17 August to facilitate preparations for the Belfast Mela.

### **In-house Agency Research Report – Findings**

The Deputy Chief Executive outlined the report, including its recommendation, which would be brought to August SP&R committee.



|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality   |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024   |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager                   |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <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 style="width: 30px; 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> |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>   |  |  |  |  |  |
| <p><b>After Committee Decision</b></p> <p><b>After Council Decision</b></p> <p><b>Sometime in the future</b></p> <p><b>Never</b></p>   | <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> |  |  |  |  |
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| <b>Call-in</b>                               |   |
| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

|            |   |
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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>                                       |
| 1.1        | This paper, together with the attached appendix, contains the recommended approach in |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
|            | respect of each of the requests by external organisations for access to the City Hall function rooms received up to 9 August 2024.  |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1        | The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |
|            | <u>Background Information</u>   |
| 3.1        | The current criteria for use of the function rooms used to review external applications is set out below.   |
| 3.2        | Functions permitted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• functions which support other events in the city and which are of demonstrable economic benefit to Belfast whether organised by the council or not.</li> <li>• functions which demonstrably enhance the city’s image nationally or internationally as a desirable commercial, business or tourist destination.</li> <li>• functions designed to celebrate or commemorate a notable achievement or significant anniversary (25, 50, 100 years) by an organisation or body with close links to the city or province.</li> <li>• functions organised by recognised local community or voluntary sector groups for non-profit and non-political purposes.</li> </ul>   |
| 3.3        | Functions not permitted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conferences, meetings, seminars, performances, wedding receptions, private parties or receptions and similar booking requests in the prestige function rooms.</li> <li>• functions, which have as their principal purpose the generation of commercial gain for the organisers. Charity-fundraising functions are managed by the Lord Mayor’s Office.</li> <li>• functions which have no compelling links to the council or the city specifically and which could instead use local private sector facilities.</li> <li>• functions which have as their primary purpose the advancement of any political or religious cause or campaign or are otherwise potentially contentious or involve significant reputation risks for the council.</li> <li>• functions which involve exceptionally large or disruptive set-ups or pose a real and tangible risk to the fabric of the building or grounds.</li> </ul> |
|            | <u>Key Issues</u>   |
| 3.4        | Committee will recall that at its meeting on 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2024, it considered an update on the City Hall Income Generation Project. Committee was advised that charging for the use of  |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| 3.5        | <p>the Council's function rooms will be considered as part of a later stage of this project. This will include looking at a review of the current pricing structure and the provision of hospitality. Pending this work being brought to Committee, delegated authority was given to the City Solicitor and Director of Legal &amp; Civic Services to depart from the existing charging structure and negotiate room hire charges for commercial type events.</p> <p>Committee will note that it is proposed that a commercial fee is applied to one event listed in the Schedule at Appendix 1. The current standard charging structure will apply to the other events taking place in 2024, with charging for events from 2025 onwards to be determined.</p> <p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p> |
| 3.6        | <p>None, any recommendations for hospitality will be met from existing budgets.</p>   |
| 3.7        | <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>  |
|            | Appendix 1 - Schedule of function requests received up to 9 August 2024   |

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## AUGUST 2024 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

| NAME OF ORGANISATION   | FUNCTION DATE                   | FUNCTION DESCRIPTION  | CRITERIA MET | ROOM CHARGE  | HOSPITALITY OFFERED                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--------------|--|---|
| Áras Uí Chonghaile / The James Connolly Visitor Centre         | 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 | Small reception for an American Trade Union delegation being hosted in the City by Áras Uí Chonghaile / The James Connolly Visitor Centre<br><br>Numbers attending 60   | B            | Small-scale daytime; £115  | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception                       |
| Ferrari c/o Richmond Marketing                                 | 20 September 2024               | <b>Media Launch of Ferrari/ Pernod 0.0</b> – reception event to launch the 3-day outdoor event in the grounds of City Hall showcasing the Ferrari F1 car.<br><br>Numbers attending – 50   | B            | *Part of wider commercial outdoor event previously approved – charge TBC by City Solicitor | No hospitality                                      |
| Falls Women’s Centre and Blackie River Community Organisations | 12 October 2024                 | <b>Student Graduation for</b> adult learners on achievement at Levels 3,4 and 5, in Supporting Teaching and Learning, Health and Social Care, and Counselling. The event will promote community-based education programmes for adult learners.<br><br>Numbers attending – 150 | C & D        | Current rate free as <b>charity</b>  | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as charity/ community |
| Confederation of British Industry (NI)                         | 18 October 2024                 | <b>CBI NI Business Breakfast</b> – to demonstrate to our invited guests from the UK, that Northern Ireland business is driving the economy forward, creating jobs and prosperity.<br><br>Numbers attending – 200 - 300  | B            | £300   | No hospitality                                      |
| Royal British Legion NI  | 25 October 2024                 | <b>2024 RBL Poppy Launch</b> reception including photos and speeches.   | B            | Current rate free as <b>charity</b>  | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as charity/ community |

## AUGUST 2024 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

|   |                  |  |   |                                     |   |
|---|------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|
|   |                  | Numbers attending – 100  |   |                                     |   |
| Rethinking Conflict                         | 28 October 2024  | <p><b>Reception for the Abraham Initiative</b> – a group of Arabs and Jews working together and visiting NI to reflect on NI peace process and lessons learned, shared spaces.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 50</p>   | B | Current rate free as <b>charity</b> | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as charity/ community |
| Podium                                      | 4 December 2024  | <p><b>Celebration &amp; Recognition of Female Entrepreneurship</b> – as part of Belfast City Council’s Enterprise Pathway Programme which Podiem is delivering. The event will bring together 300 17–18-year-old females who are participating in a wider leadership initiative and celebrate the role of female entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 300</p> | C | £300                                | No hospitality.                                     |
| British-Irish Intergovernmental Secretariat | 17 December 2024 | <p><b>25th Anniversary of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference</b> - a forum established by the Good Friday Agreement and chaired jointly by the Secretary of State for NI and Irish Tánaiste. Drinks Reception event to mark this anniversary and speeches to reflect on BIIGC work.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 250</p>                                 | B | £825                                | No hospitality                                      |
| <b>2025 Events</b>                          |                  |  |   |                                     |   |
| Co-operation Ireland                        | 16 January 2025  | Co-operation Ireland Entwined Futures Programme – Showcase and   | D | TBC                                 | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as charity/ community |

## AUGUST 2024 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

|  |                 |  |          |     |   |
|--|-----------------|--|----------|-----|---|
|  |                 | <p>Celebration Event for 8 schools who work in partnership on a cross community and cross border basis, based in Belfast, Lisburn and Dundalk and Drogheda.</p> <p>Numbers attending - 220</p>   |          |     |   |
| Chinese Chamber of Commerce & the Chinese Welfare Association N.I. | 27 January 2025 | <p><b>Chinese New Year Celebration</b> - introducing attendees to Chinese traditions, music, dance, and cultural performance, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture and promoting community spirit and inclusivity.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 300-400</p>  | A, B & D | TBC | Yes, Tea and Coffee Reception as charity/ community |
| Department for the Economy   | 26 March 2025   | <p><b>Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Awards 2025</b> - recognises excellence and achievement in training and qualifications. The NIAA showcase and celebrate the depth of quality of our apprentices, and their mentors who have demonstrated exceptional progress as well as personal achievement and commitment.</p> <p>Numbers attending – 160</p> | C & D    | TBC | No hospitality.                                     |
| British Irish Commercial Bar Association (BICBA)                   | 10 April 2025   | <p><b>BICBA Law Forum Dinner</b> for guests attending a one-day conference taking place at Royal Courts of Justice.</p>  | A & B    | TBC | No hospitality                                      |

## AUGUST 2024 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

|   |                        |  |          |     |   |
|---|------------------------|--|----------|-----|---|
|   |                        | Numbers attending –<br>80 - 100  |          |     |   |
| Queens University<br>Belfast                                    | 8 June 2025            | <b>Welcome Reception for INSAP 13 'Conferences of the Inspiration of Astronomical Phenomena'</b> for guests attending the 5 day conference taking place at QUB.<br><br>Numbers attending –<br>50 - 60  | A & B    | TBC | No hospitality  |
| QUADRAT c/o<br>University of<br>Aberdeen                        | 9 October<br>2025      | <b>QUADRAT Annual Science Meeting Drinks Reception</b> for guests attending the 5 day conference taking place at QUB.<br><br>Numbers attending –<br>100 – 120  | A & B    | TBC | No hospitality  |
| Pharmaceutical<br>Society of Northern<br>Ireland                | 22<br>November<br>2025 | <b>Anniversary Ball to celebrate 100 years of local pharmacy -</b> Drinks Reception, Dinner, Speeches, and entertainment.<br><br>Numbers attending –<br>330  | C        | TBC | Yes,<br>Wine Reception as<br>significant<br>anniversary |
| <b>2026 Events</b>  |                        |  |          |     |   |
| Molony & Kelly<br>(Destination<br>Management<br>Consultants)    | 26 April 2026          | <b>TELUS Incentive - Welcome to Ireland</b> – a gala dinner staff recognition event for the top performers as part of a 5 day incentive trip to NI. Telus International is worldwide a Digital and Data Solutions company.<br><br>Numbers attending<br>180 - 200 | A, B & C | TBC | No hospitality  |
| British Association<br>of Oral and<br>Maxillofacial<br>Surgeons | 25 June 2026           | <b>BAOMS Annual Gala Dinner and Dance</b> for guests attending the 3-day conference taking place at ICC Belfast.<br><br>Numbers attending –<br>150 - 200   | A & B    | TBC | No hospitality  |



|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Request for use of City Hall grounds for sleepout to raise awareness of homelessness. |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 23 August 2024  |
| <b>Reporting Officer:</b> | Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services                  |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b>   | Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager                                    |

|  |   |  |  |  |  |
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| <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 style="width: 30px; 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> |   |  |  |  |  |
| <b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>   |   |  |  |  |  |
| <p style="margin: 0;"><b>After Committee Decision</b></p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>After Council Decision</b></p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Sometime in the future</b></p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Never</b></p>   | <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table> |  |  |  |  |
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| <b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|---|

|            |  |
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| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>                                 |
| 1.1        | To consider request from Price Waterhouse Coopers for the use of City Hall grounds |

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Recommendations</b>  |
| 2.1        | <p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider the request to use City Hall grounds on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 by PWC for a staff sleep out to raise awareness of homelessness.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Main report</b>  |
|            | <u>Background Information</u>   |
| 3.1        | Members will be aware that requests for the use of City Hall are normally dealt with under the authority delegated by the Committee to the Director of Legal and Civic Services using criteria agreed for this purpose. Occasionally however, it is necessary to place such requests directly before the Committee, and the request set out below falls into this category.   |
|            | <u>Key Issues</u>   |
| 3.2        | Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) have approached the Council to seek permission for a second PWC staff sleep out in the grounds of City Hall on Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 to raise awareness of homelessness.  |
|            | <u>The Proposed event</u>   |
| 3.3        | PWC held a similar event on 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 and the event was successful with no incidents, hence PWC requesting a second event.  |
| 3.4        | This proposed sleep would take place along the West façade of City Hall, with participants sleeping overnight on the pathways, ensuring a safe distance from the intruder alarms situated along façade. Their preference is concrete rather than the grass lawns. City Hall building and grounds will be closed to the public as normal at this time.   |
| 3.5        | The only Infrastructure onsite is portaloos, no catering provision is planned, and participants will bring their own sleeping materials. A wet weather alternative is not available inside City Hall.   |
| 3.6        | PWC staff will fundraise in advance of this event and monies raised will be donated to charities helping with homelessness. PWC will provide all stewarding/marshalling staff & have first aiders present. PWC will risk assess the event and participants should complete medical checks in advance. PWC would have to comply with the usual conditions including indemnities for damage and submission of a formal event-management plan and insurance. |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 3.7        | <p><u>Point for consideration:</u></p> <p>Committee are asked to note the city centre is very busy on Friday evenings and therefore there may be a requirement for the organiser to pay for additional security depending upon the event management plan and risk assessment.</p>  |
| 3.8        | <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There would be no costs for the council as the various organisers would bear any/all stewarding and equipment costs etc themselves. The normal event support in the form of electrical and water provision in the grounds is not required for this event.</p> <p>There are no concerns from an asset management point of view, although the organisers would be required to provide the usual insurances, indemnities, and obligations.</p> |
| 3.9        | <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>There are no direct good relations or rural needs implications arising from this report.</p>   |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>   |
|            | None   |

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## Social Policy Working Group

Tuesday, 13th August, 2024

### MEETING OF THE SOCIAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND  
REMOVED VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Doherty (Chairperson); and  
Councillors F. McAteer, I. McLaughlin and  
Smyth.

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;  
Mr. K. Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty;  
Ms. C. Patterson, Policy and Programme Manager,  
Inclusive Growth;  
Mr. L. Murray, Strategic Category Manager;  
Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor;  
Mr. K. Quinn, Employability and Skills Officer; and  
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

### **Election of Chairperson**

Moved by Councillor Smyth,  
Seconded by Councillor I. McLaughlin and

Resolved – that Councillor Doherty be elected to serve as the  
Chairperson of the Working Group .until the date of the Annual Meeting of  
the Council.

### **Apologies**

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Copeland and  
Councillor R. McLaughlin.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 4th May, 2024 were approved by the Working  
Group.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were recorded.

## Actions Update

The Working Group noted the update on the Decision and Actions Tracker.

### "Right to Food" Notice of Motion – Response from Department for Education

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

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

**1.1 At their meeting in November 2023, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee have referred the attached response from the Department for Education in relation to the Notice of Motion on ‘Right to Food’ to the SPWG for consideration.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 Members are asked to**

- (i) consider the attached response received from the Department for Education.**
- (ii) note the continued commitment of Council to work with partners to help alleviate the impact of food poverty within the city.**

#### **3.0 Main report**

##### **Key Issues**

**3.1 The Council adopted the ‘Right to Food’ Notice of Motion at their meeting in November 2023 which recognised the impact of food poverty in the city and agreed to support the Right to Food campaign and to join other cities such as Manchester and Liverpool in becoming a Right to Food city. In addition, the Council agreed to write to the Department for Education Permanent Secretary calling for the restoration of the School Holiday Food Grant Scheme and to prioritise the needs of the most disadvantaged children and young people when allocating resources.**

**3.2 Attached at Appendix 1 is a copy of the SP&R report and the associated response received back from the Department of Education. The correspondence states that the DoE recognises the challenges faced by many families in accessing affordable and nutritious food and recognises the role of the Department in helping to tackle food poverty in the context of the work being led by the Department for Communities to develop the Executive’s Anti-Poverty Strategy. In its response, the Department acknowledges the important support provided through the School Holiday Food Grant (SHFG) to low-income families, however, states that**

with the challenging financial pressures and significant budgetary cuts it had no alternative to discontinuing the SHFG from 31 March 2023.

- 3.3 As the Council's inclusive growth strategy recognises the imperative of tackling poverty and inequality in order to create a more inclusive city where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed and fulfil their potential, the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee have referred the response from the Department for Education to the SPWG for consideration.
- 3.4 Members will be fully aware of the complex challenges facing many individuals and families experiencing the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Many people are in the position of having to make hard choices around spending which is impacting on health and wellbeing and widening inequalities across the city.
- 3.5 The recently published refreshed Belfast Agenda (2024-2028) sets out a clear commitment to work with partners to tackle the deep and persistent inequalities that may hold people back and restrict their life chances, such as education, health, housing and income. Given the cross-cutting nature of inclusive growth and anti-poverty, there are specific actions Council are taking forward, in partnership, under the auspices of the Belfast Agenda. These include, for example:
- **Hardship Scheme** - delivery of a £1million+ hardship programme in 2023/24 which provided assistance to a range of cohorts including children and families, vulnerable individuals and families in emergency need and to enhancing the capacity of existing and high-impact support programmes. The scheme supported 121 schools to deliver food initiatives to 21,000 children across the city; supported 23 community day care provides to deliver 16,042 hot nutritious meals to 1,187 children across the city; enabled Trussell Trust to support 4,514 people through 3 food banks and enabled Fareshare to distribute over 37 tonnes of food to their network of community food banks in the city.
  - **Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership** – Council officers continue to lead the coordination and work of this partnership, identifying and maximising opportunities to support community-based approaches to sustainable food and work towards the development of a city-wide Sustainable Food Strategy. A food access working group has been convened by Dr Sinead Furey from Ulster University under the Partnership and is currently working collaboratively with city partners to identify priorities for the next

**3 years with the goal of increasing access to healthy, nutritious and sustainable food across the city.**

- 3.6 Members may be aware that the Council has sought a series of All-Party meetings with the incoming new Executive Ministers with a view to discussing the key challenges and opportunities facing the city (and wider region) and advocate on key strategic issues including the need to bring forward the Anti-Poverty Strategy and to address inequalities which exist. A date for Party Leaders to meet with the Minister for Education is to be confirmed. The Minister for Communities has declined the offer to meet and directed the Council to the Partnership Panel which has been established to provide a formal means for political and policy liaison between Executive Ministers and local government elected members on matters of mutual interest or concern.**
- 3.7 Members will also recall that the Inclusive Growth Toolkit is being piloted with both the Hardship scheme and Sustainable Food Strategy (Food Access) to practically test and improve how we can add value to the decision-making process in order to increase the inclusive growth impact of projects/programmes. Following this pilot period, the Toolkit will to be shared with community planning partners as a tool to assist organisations deliver more inclusive practices. The SPWG will be kept informed of progress and views sought following the pilot period.”**

A number of Members thanked the officers for the work which had been done to date and commended them on taking action so quickly.

During discussion, a number of Members stated that the NI Executive needed to take urgent action to address food poverty and to respond to the impact of the increasing cost-of-living crisis experienced across Northern Ireland. The Members highlighted the need for the long-awaited Anti-Poverty Strategy to be brought forward by the NI Executive.

The Working Group adopted the recommendations.

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

#### **Social Value Procurement Policy Delivery Reports**

The Strategic Category Manager provided the Working Group with an update on the delivery of social value outcomes via open tender competitions awarded in accordance with the Council's Social Value Procurement Policy (SVPP).

He also provided an update on tenders which had been awarded by the Property and Projects Department where, due to project funding rules, social value had been considered and included in accordance with the CPD Buy Social model.

The Working Group was reminded that SVPP applied to any new applicable open tender exercises with approval dated from 1st June, 2022.

The Category Manager explained that, in order to help officers and suppliers understanding the SVPP and how to apply it to applicable tender competitions, the Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team had developed:

- online guidance on interlink which took 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 2022;
- a new Supplier Guidance document had been launched in September 2023 which included step by step guidance for suppliers in how to offer social value as part of their tender and how their social value offers were evaluated (new innovative approach); and
- Social value evaluation training based on the new approach developed from September 2023. That had been rolled out between October 2023 - January 2024 and was now included in CPS evaluation training.

The Working Group was advised that the Supplier Guidance would be made available on the Council's website but that officers wanted to ensure it was fully tested before doing so. He advised the Members of the two key parts to the consideration under SVPP.

In relation to the CPD Buy Social Model, he explained that it was applied where external central government funding of 50% or greater was provided for a capital/works project managed by Property and Projects. The CPD Buy Social Model was broadly similar to the Council's SVPP in terms of achieving the social value outcomes.

The Working Group was provided with the details of tenders valued over £30k which had been awarded during the reporting period.

It was reported that a Social Value Review Team had been established to review how the SVPP was being implemented and any lessons learned that needed to be applied following the conclusion of tender competitions. The Team was currently reviewing:

1. trends in the use of Reserved Contracts and any further guidance required for officers on when those should be used;
2. trends in the selection of Social Value Organisational Behaviours by officers when using the Social Value Toolkit and any further guidance which would be required for officers on when those should be applied;
3. the quality of social value offers by suppliers (the evaluated submissions) and if further guidance was required in terms of how those are evaluated by officers. In addition, any further guidance required for suppliers to improve their understanding the Council's expectations in line with the Belfast Agenda aims and associated strategies.

In response to a Member's query, the Strategic Category Manager advised the Working Group that social value had been overlooked in two tenders in the reporting period and that training to raise awareness with the relevant officers had since taken place to prevent it from happening again.

During discussion a Member also raised that the Belfast Stories project should seek to benefit the working class communities who lived closest to it. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that officers were cognisant of that, and she reassured the Members that there was an entire programme regarding inclusion opportunities which were planned as part of the project which was discussed at the Members' Belfast Stories Working Group. She advised the Working Group that officers would seek to make those plans more visible to all Members.

Noted.

### **Belfast Business Promise (verbal update)**

The Employability and Skills Officer provided the Working Group with an update on the Belfast Business Promise. He advised the Members that Belfast City Airport and the West Belfast Partnership had recently signed up as supporters, with a total of 49 organisations now on board.

He provided an overview of the next steps, which included quarterly meetings of the Technical Panel scheduled for 2024/25, including a meeting in September. He outlined that further development of the website was planned to enhance visibility and to enable resources to be shared across the Belfast Business Promise Network. The Working Group was provided with an update on the intention to bring a report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August, outlining proposals to bring forward a JAM Card Friendly bursary scheme for up to 40 organisations (Micro, small businesses and VCSE) in 2024/25.

Noted.

### **Maximising Corporate Social Responsibility – proposed approach (verbal report)**

The Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty provided the Working Group with an update on exploratory work underway to consider how the Council could engage with key business partners to identify opportunities to align corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments to support the delivery of City priorities. He explained that the approach would build on the interest and support that the Belfast Business Promise had generated as well as the implementation of the social value procurement policy. He provided some examples to the Working Group of initiatives that CSR could support.

A number of Members suggested that a Workshop could be held on the topic to help inform any emerging approach.

In response to a Member's query, the Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty agreed to check whether an officer had been employed regarding alleyway regeneration in the City.

Noted.

Chairperson