

Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast
City Council**

19 March, 2025

MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall and via Teams on Friday, 21st March, 2025 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) In- housing of external security services (Pages 1 - 6)
- (b) Support for businesses affected by August disorder - update (To Follow)
- (c) Update on Hardship Programme 2024/25 (Pages 7 - 26)
- (d) Social Supermarket Fund (Pages 27 - 36)
- (e) Contracts Update (Pages 37 - 46)

3. Matters referred back from Council/Motions

- (a) Notice of Motion – Action to Address Empty Homes (Pages 47 - 50)
 - (b) Notice of Motion Developing a Sponsorship and Philanthropy Network in the City (Pages 51 - 54)
4. **Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**
- (a) Summer Community Diversionary Programme Assessments (Pages 55 - 74)
 - (b) Community Support Plan (CSP) 25/29 including a Review of Community Support Large Grants (Pages 75 - 108)
 - (c) Planning Update (Pages 109 - 122)
 - (d) Proposed Planning Application Validation Checklist (Pages 123 - 330)
5. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**
- (a) Physical Programme (Pages 331 - 338)
 - (b) Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (To Follow)
 - (c) Update on Area Working Groups (Pages 339 - 380)
6. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**
- (a) CIPFA Prudential Code Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators 2025-26 (Pages 381 - 400)
 - (b) Audit and Risk Panel Report and Minutes of Meeting of 4 March 2025 (Pages 401 - 432)
7. **Equality and Good Relations**
- (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 10th March 2025 (Pages 433 - 450)
8. **Operational Issues**
- (a) Minutes of the Meeting of the Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 451 - 456)
 - (b) Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality (To Follow)
 - (c) Request for the use of Barnetts Demesne and the Cenotaph at the City Hall (To Follow)
 - (d) Minutes of the Meeting of the Cost of Living Working Group 6 March (Pages 457 - 460)
 - (e) Minutes of the Meeting of the City Centre Working Group 7 March (Pages 461 - 464)
 - (f) Minutes of Belfast Stories Working Group 11 March (Pages 465 - 466)

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Notice of Motion – Action to Address Empty Homes
Date:	21st March, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes 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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to Action to Address Empty Homes, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 20 th February.
2.0	Recommendation
	<p>Members are asked to note that in accordance with Standing Order 13(i) that Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.</p> <p>At this time Members are only asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that, if agreed, a subsequent report will be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 20th February, referred the following motion to the Committee for consideration:</p> <p>“This Council notes with concern the growing number of households (48,000) on the housing waiting list.</p> <p>The Council also notes with concern that despite the huge demand for public housing: there remains a substantial number of homes in Belfast which are empty. According to Land and Property this figure sits at 3,694 for the Belfast area.</p> <p>As a local authority, the Council commits to working with the relevant departments to try to bring empty homes back into use as affordable and social housing. Council notes that the DFC Empty Homes strategy, which aimed to do this, ended in 2018.</p> <p>The Council therefore commits to developing a strategy alongside DFC, the Housing Executive and other statutory bodies to ensure there is a coordinated action plan to bring disused homes into public use. This action plan will be funded and appropriate measures such as an empty homes rates premium, strengthened compulsory purchase powers and financing support for converting empty homes into social housing are brought forward to ensure it is able to be delivered.</p> <p>The Council will seek to establish an Empty Homes Partnership, similar to the Scottish model, which will coordinate these efforts with the relevant bodies.</p> <p>The Council will also seek funding from DFC to appoint an Empty Homes Officer in order to liaise directly with the owners of empty homes, to understand why the home is empty, and to offer tailored solutions to turn it into a home again.”</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Michael Collins</p>

3.2	<p>Seconder: Councillor Áine Groogan</p> <p>The motion calls upon the Council to undertake a number of actions in relation to empty homes, including developing a strategy, establishing a partnership and appointing an empty homes officer - the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for strategic policy, working with partners to lead on the Belfast Agenda and also agreeing the Local Development Plan and accordingly the motion was referred to this Committee.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None at this stage as there is no commitment to proceed with the Notice of Motion. Details of any financial and resource implications will be reported at a subsequent meeting.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>
3.3	
3.4	
4.0	Documents Attached
	None

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Notice of Motion – Developing a Sponsorship and Philanthropy Network in the City
Date:	21st March, 2025
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services and Governance Manager

Restricted Reports					
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.					
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 					
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?					
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<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>				

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
	To bring to Members' attention a motion in relation to Developing a Sponsorship and Philanthropy Network in the City, which the Standards and Business Committee considered at its meeting on 20 th February.
2.0	Recommendation
	<p>Members are asked to note that in accordance with Standing Order 13(i) that Notices of Motion which commit the Council to expenditure must be referred to the appropriate committee for consideration and report.</p> <p>Committee is asked to note that the Notice of Motion has been received and that, if agreed, a subsequent report will be brought to Committee outlining a detailed consideration of the Notice of Motion and the potential costs implications. However, this Notice of Motion aligns with ongoing work by the Social Value Policy Working Group which considered a report on Corporate Social Responsibility and Tackling City Challenges and Maximising Social Impact at its most recent meeting on 11th February 2025.</p> <p>Committee may therefore wish to refer this Notice of Motion to the Social Value Policy Working Group to be taken forward.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 20th February, referred the following motion to the Committee for consideration:</p> <p>'This Council agrees to take on a lead role in developing a sponsorship and philanthropy network in the city, in order to understand how we can align and strengthen the corporate responsibility commitments of organisations and institutions to practically deliver city and community priorities.</p> <p>This would encourage businesses and individuals to contribute their skills, time and financial support to building a better Belfast.'</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Michael Long</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Fiona McAteer</p> <p>The motion calls upon the Council to developing a sponsorship and philanthropy network in the city - the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for strategic policy and working with partners to lead on the Belfast Agenda and also agreeing the Local Development Plan and the motion and therefore the motion was referred to this Committee.</p>

3.2	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None at this stage as there is no commitment to proceed with the Notice of Motion. Details of any financial and resource implications will be reported at a subsequent meeting.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.3	<p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	None

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Summer Community Diversionary Programme Assessments
Date:	21st March 2025
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director, City & Neighbourhoods
Contact Officer:	Pól Hamilton, Lead Officer

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with the detail of the assessments undertaken by officers and seek approval to award funding for the 2025 – 2027 Summer Community Diversionary Programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine which projects are awarded funding, totalling the amounts within the scope of the programme, £300,000 for projects focused on 11th July and £300,000 for projects focused on 8th August as outlined in Tables 1 and 2. • Note that any funding awarded is subject to further engagement with groups and analysis of projects and associated budgets in line with Council due diligence

	<p>procedures, this will include any outstanding financial and monitoring returns with regards to other Council funding. Funding will not be awarded until approved contracts are issued and signed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve permission for those organisations which are successful to use Belfast Parks for their event or activity and to delegate authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to ensure the following: • Negotiate satisfactory terms and conditions of use via an appropriate legal agreement prepared by the City Solicitor, including managing final booking confirmation dates and flexibility around 'set up' & take down' periods, and booking amendments, subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The completion of an appropriate management plan, - The promoter resolving any operational issues to the Council's satisfaction; - The promoter meeting all the statutory requirements of the Planning and Building Control Service including the terms and conditions of the Park's Entertainment Licence
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p>Background</p> <p>Members agreed to deliver an updated Summer Community Diversionary Programme (SCDP) for 2025 – 2027. Changes were agreed and implemented for the 2025 application process including the definition of 'Community Diversionary Activity', the criteria against which application would be assessed and the introduction of a 3 year funding model.</p> <p>Applicants were expected to adequately demonstrate how their programme meets the following criteria at each assessment stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How the proposal will be diversionary around the two specified contentious periods of the summer. ○ How the proposed diversionary activity will reduce summer community tensions and anti-social behaviour. ○ Provide evidence and a clear rationale of what 'key areas' the programme will work within and why. ○ Provide evidence and a clear rationale of which bonfire site/s and/or issues linked to bonfires it is seeking to address. ○ How the proposal will reduce anti-social behaviour or reduce community tension in the areas where the proposal is being delivered. ○ How the project will promote positive cultural expression by increasing participants sense of community belonging and celebrating cultural diversity.

- Providing evidence of project planning and management arrangements for the proposal including project expenditure.

3.3 **Definition of ‘Community Diversionary Activity’**

The Summer Community Diversionary Programme (SCDP) provides support for the delivery of community-based diversionary and festivals programmes. All funded activity must make a significant contribution to the reduction of anti-social behaviour linked to key areas, bonfires and dates over the summer period specifically 11th July and 8th August.

3.4 **Eligibility Criteria 2025 - 2027**

- Applications must be received by constituted community/voluntary organisations based in the Belfast City Council area.
- The total programme budget is £600,000, with £300,000 allocated to the July programme and £300,000 allocated to the August programme.
- £25,000 (min) and £100,000 (max) funding is available for successful applicants.
- Groups were asked to identify which timeframe their programme would be delivered within, either the 11th July or 8th August, with a 14-day window before and a 7-day after those dates to deliver activities.

3.5 **Two stage Eligibility Assessment Process**

Officers undertook a two Stage assessment process for 2025.

- **Stage 1 (minimum benchmark score 60)**
 - Capacity to deliver
- **Stage 2 (minimum benchmark score 50)**
 - Contribution to objectives of the programme

Applicants need to score at least **60** out of 100 at stage 1 to progress to Stage 2. Failure to reach this benchmark, will result in the proposal not being recommended for funding.

3.6 **Process**

The following process has been followed to deliver the 2025 - 2027 SCDP;

- The programme was advertised via an open call;
- Programme Opened – 31st January 2025
- Programme Closed – 28th February 2025
- 50+ Application Forms & Guidance Notes Issued

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Information Sessions Held - (30 Groups/Individuals Registered to attend) • Completed Applications Received – 15 • July – 11 & August – 4 • Assessments Completed 5th March 2025 • During the open application process, officers were available to advise groups on the necessary due diligence requirements that must be met to enable groups to be considered suitable for funding; • Officers held Information sessions for groups who were interested in applying, these were delivered online; • All applicants submitted an application form by an agreed date; • Officers have undertaken a preliminary assessment of each application against the agreed criteria and are now seeking a decision from the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on projects that are awarded funding.
3.7	<p>Officer Assessments - July Programme</p> <p>11 applications were received for the July programme. Following assessment using an agreed scoring matrix, reflecting the agreed changes to the 2025 – 2027 programme, 6 applications reached the threshold to be recommended for funding.</p> <p>The total amount available for programmes delivering in July is £300,000. The total funding requested by groups meeting the threshold is £395,634.32, an oversubscription of £95,634.32</p> <p>Table 1 outlines groups who have met the threshold and the amount of funding they have requested. Applicants have been ranked 1 – 6 in relation to their overall score.</p> <p>Please note, this is only a proposed amount to be awarded to groups, as in previous years, the SCDF is a member’s led programme, final decisions on allocated amounts will be made by the SP&R committee.</p>

Table 1 – Overview of Assessment

July Applications	Organisation Name	Amount Requested
1	Twaddell and Woodvale Residents' Association	£100,000.00
2	Lower Oldpark Community Assoc (LOCA)	£26,957.00
3	EastSide Partnership	£73,676.80
4	C.H.A.R.T.E.R for Northern Ireland (Charter NI)	£65,684.00
5	Upper Springfield Development Trust - Newhill Youth & Community Centre	£29,650.00
6	Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)	£99,666.52
	Total	£395,634.32

6 groups have reached the threshold to be recommended for funding however demand for funding exceeds the available budget, members may wish to consider the following options.

Option 1 – 100% Funding

- Fund groups 1 – 5 (Table 1) at 100% requested
- Total Budget Requested **£295,967.80**

Option 2 – 75.8% Funding

- Fund groups 1- 6 (Table 1) at 75.8% of requested budget
- Total Budget Requested **£299,890.81**
- Financial impact on each application outlined below in table 1a

Table 1a

	Organisation Name	Amount Requested	75.8% Funding
1	Twaddell and Woodvale Residents' Association	£100,000.00	£75,800.00
2	Lower Oldpark Community Assoc (LOCA)	£26,957.00	£20,433.41
3	EastSide Partnership	£73,676.80	£55,847.01

4	C.H.A.R.T.E.R for Northern Ireland (Charter NI)	£65,684.00	£49,788.47
5	Upper Springfield Development Trust - Newhill Youth & Community Centre	£29,650.00	£22,474.70
6	Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)	£99,666.52	£75,547.22
Total		£395,634.32	£299,890.81

3.8 Officer Assessments - August Programme

4 applications were received for the August programme. Following assessment using an agreed scoring matrix, reflecting the agreed changes to the 2025 – 2027 programme, all 4 applications reached the threshold to be recommended for funding.

The total amount available for programmes delivering in August is **£300,000**. The total funding requested by groups meeting the threshold is **£299,212**, which is **£788** under the available budget.

Table 2 outlines groups who have met the threshold and the amount of funding they have requested. Applicants have been ranked 1 – 4 in relation to their overall score.

Please note, this is only a proposed amount to be awarded to groups, as in previous years, the SCDF is a member’s led programme, final decisions on allocated amounts will be made by the SP&R committee.

Table 2 - Overview of Assessment

August Applications	Organisation Name	Amount Requested
1	<i>Féile an Phobail</i>	£100,000.00
2	<i>Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG)</i>	£75,000.00
3	<i>Ashton Community Trust</i>	£98,723.00
4	<i>Saints Youth Centre</i>	£25,489.00
Total Amount Requested		£299,212.00

<p>3.9</p> <p>3.10</p> <p>3.11</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <p>Officers are requesting members approve the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. August - Approve 4 applications for August Activity at 100% requested amount 2. July – Consider options 1 & 2 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Option 1 – Groups 1 – 5 at 100% Requested amount b. Option 2 – Groups 1 – 6 at 75.8% Requested amount <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Budget is included within this year’s revenue estimates.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This programme is being included as part of an equality screening process for our overall approach to Bonfires</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Programme Summary</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1 – Summer Community Diversionary Programme – Proposed Activity

July Programme - Applicant Programme Descriptions

Page 63	<p>1. Twaddell and Woodvale Residents' Association</p>	<p>The 2025 programme consists of a series of major headline events alongside a community engagement and cultural programme incorporating sport, creative arts, traditional culture, and other positive community activities. Key partners include TWRA, Woodvale Hub, local marching bands and cultural groups, ACT Initiative, Cairn Lodge Boxing Club, Glasgow Rangers Academy, R-City, and Northern Ireland Alternatives.</p> <p>Community engagement begins on 1st July, with youth outreach activities targeting interface areas and known hotspots, encouraging participation in the festival programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first headline event is on Friday 4th July, featuring a Club Nation music concert, followed by a trance music event on Saturday 5th July. and a ticketed dance music night on Wednesday 9th July. These events have consistently received positive feedback from PSNI and have proven effective in diverting people away from high-risk areas during peak tension periods. The final headline ticketed event takes place on 6th July, featuring an all-day licensed outdoor boxing event in partnership with Cairn Lodge Boxing Club. A Cultural Showcase takes place on 11th July, bringing together local bands and cultural associations to promote positive cultural expression and to reduce tensions on this date. <p>Alongside the headline events, a range of community-focused activities run throughout the festival. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport Against Harm Initiative – A five-day coaching programme delivered in partnership with Glasgow Rangers Academy, engaging young people in positive sporting activity. • Good Relations Programme – Workshops delivered in partnership with Nil By Mouth, an anti-sectarian charity from Scotland. • Creative Arts Workshops – Interactive sessions for children and young people. • Annual Family Event – Taking place on 11th July, this event provides a safe and inclusive space for families to enjoy the celebrations. <p>With an expected attendance of over 10,000 people, the 2025 festival will continue to provide a strong platform for community engagement, reducing anti-social behaviour while fostering a sense of civic pride and positive cultural identity.</p>
---------	--	--

2.	Lower Oldpark Community Assoc (LOCA)	<p>The Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) would like to organise a comprehensive diversionary project aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and fostering community engagement, particularly during a period of heightened tensions between loyalist and nationalist communities. The project will include team building and community engagement activities leading up to a residential, followed by a two-day cultural celebration event on the 10th and 11th of July 2025.</p> <p>In the lead-up to the residential, we will conduct a series of team building and community engagement activities designed to provide positive and constructive experiences for young people. These activities will include educational and skill-building workshops aimed at enhancing personal development and fostering a sense of community. Participants will engage in various collaborative projects, outdoor adventures, and interactive sessions that promote teamwork, leadership, and conflict resolution. This proactive approach is intended to divert youth from potential anti-social behaviour and criminal activities, providing them with valuable skills and experiences in a supportive environment.</p> <p>The residential programme will be, scheduled for the 07/07/25 – 09/07/25 ahead of the 11th and 12th of July celebrations, it will involve taking 20 “at risk” youths away from the interface for team-building activities and educational workshops. These activities will focus on enhancing communication, cooperation, and problem-solving skills while promoting mutual understanding and respect among participants. By immersing young individuals in a positive and enriching environment, we aim to mitigate the risks faced by those most at risk of getting involved in ASB at the Cliftonpark Avenue interface.</p> <p>The two-day cultural celebration event will commence on the 10th of July with a series of engaging activities designed to foster community spirit and cultural appreciation. The day will begin with an Arts and Crafts Workshop focused on band pole making at LOCA, followed by a Flower Planting Workshop where participants will plant orange lilies. In the evening, there will be a Family Movie Night in John Hewitt Park, with prior licensing secured from Belfast City Council. This day of activities aims to create a festive and inclusive atmosphere, encouraging community members to come together and celebrate their shared heritage.</p> <p>On the 11th of July, the festival will continue with a Cultural Family Fun Day event featuring a variety of activities designed to engage and entertain participants of all ages. The day will include two historical workshops, focusing on the commemoration of the Battle of the Boyne and the history of bonfires, with local historians invited to speak. Additionally, the event will offer a range of family-friendly attractions, including bouncy castles, a petting zoo/mobile aquarium, arts and crafts stations, a climbing wall, and refreshments.</p> <p>This diversionary project aims to engage the community and reduce ASB and criminal activity by providing positive and educational activities that build community engagement and foster a sense of belonging. By involving residents in culturally enriching experiences, the festival seeks to create a safer and more harmonious environment during a time of heightened tensions between the loyalist and</p>
----	--------------------------------------	--

		nationalist communities. Through our efforts, we hope to promote understanding, cooperation, and a sense of unity within the Lower Oldpark area.
3.	EastSide Partnership	<p>EASTival – A programme of cultural events and activities in local neighbourhoods to instill civic pride and encourage community bonding activity in the lead up to 11th July 2025. The events and activities will cater for different needs and interests in areas where anti social behaviour is known to be an issue based on community knowledge as well as information from PSNI and Belfast City Council.</p> <p>The programme has been shaped in consultation with Inner East Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and if successful will utilise this vehicle to shape the programme in future years based on ongoing review. The programme is not exclusive to IENP and EastSide Partnership as a convening organisation are open to work with groups and organisations across east Belfast to shape the project on an ongoing basis to meet the criteria of the programme.</p> <p>Activities to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On street detached work - 27th June to 11th July including follow up work in the week after <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Various times depending on need ○ Lismore Street ○ Flora Street Walkway ○ Orangefield Park ○ *Not exclusive to these areas and will respond to issues as they arise • A week long celebration of local culture and heritage including sports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 30th June to 4th July ○ Various times tbc ○ Nettlefield Multi Sports • 2nd July to 10th July <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth engagement activities ○ Various times tbc ○ Pitt Park/ The Gathering Church • Family Music Event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Friday 4th July ○ (USA Bastille Day themed)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evening C.S. Lewis Square • Music Event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Saturday 5th July ○ Evening C.S. Lewis Square • 11th July - afternoon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Orangefield Park bowling pavilion (outside space) • 12th July - afternoon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Short Strand Interface at Albertbridge Road ○ Short Strand Community Forum will lead on diversionary activity to reduce asb at the interface during the 12th July parade. • 3rd, 10th, 17th July - afternoon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EastSide Visitor Centre ○ A project in partnership with EastSide Arts and local writer Beano Niblock; Beano will hold writing workshops with local young people/adults about PUL cultural identity which will lead to a future play/performance in the 2026 programme (if successful)
4.	C.H.A.R.T.E.R for Northern Ireland (Charter NI)	<p>Charter NI are seeking support from Belfast City Council for its 'Increasing Cultural Confidence and Tolerance Amongst Young People 2025-2027' which will enhance and compliment the success of the last three years, and the cultural celebrations in the lead up to the Twelfth of July celebrations and shortly after, by positively promoting heritage, educating on the broader cultural contexts surrounding the Twelfth of July period, as well as showcasing artistry in the development of new creative work for young people and providing a chance for young people to share their voice on what the Twelfth of July means to them, and where it sits in a wider context of their cultural identity.</p> <p>The following activities will take place, linking Outer East Belfast to Inner East: - 3 rd July 2025 Meet the Panel Event. - 4 th July 2025 Tullycarnet Boxing Club Cultural Boxing Exhibition. - 6 th July 2025 Cultural Football Tournament - 7 th July 2025 Site visits to traditional bonfire sites in Belfast - 7 th July – 9 th July 2025 East Band Workshops. This will involve Tullycarnet Community Centre, Lord Street, and Knocknagoney Linear Park. - 7 th July – 10th July 2025 Creative Art Projects – Involving cultural clay making, cultural arts and crafts. - 10th July 2025 Cultural Event at Severn Street from 2pm-5pm. - 11th July 2025 Cultural Event at Tullycarnet from 5pm-11:30pm. - 11th July 2025 Cultural Event at Knocknagoney from 5pm to 11pm. - 11th July 2025 Cultural Event at Clara Street from 2pm to 5pm. - 11th</p>

		<p>July 2025 Cultural Event at Clarawood from 2pm-5pm. - 12th July 2025 Cultural Event at Lord Street/Kingswood Street from 1pm-6pm. - 14th July 2025 'Big Love' Teen Festival at Shorts Playing Fields from 6pm to 10pm. Ongoing throughout entire project: - 3rd July 2025 to 14th July 2025 Virtual Reality Cultural Production.</p> <p>Charter NI is excited to introduce three new elements to the Increasing Cultural Confidence and Tolerance Amongst Young People 2025-2027 programme: the Tullycarnet Boxing Club Cultural Boxing Exhibition, the 'Big Love' Teen Festival on July 14th, and the Virtual Reality Culture Production (July 3rd-14th).</p> <p>These will promote cultural expression and help prevent anti-social behaviour during the Twelfth fortnight, aligning with Belfast City Council's Diversionary Funding goals. The Tullycarnet Boxing Club Cultural Boxing Exhibition will invite groups from Inner East to Outer East and will be a mainly cross-community sporting event, encouraging young people to be diverted from anti-social behaviour and learn from other cultures, promoting cultural diversity.</p> <p>Belfast City Council Summer Community Diversionary Programme 2025 – 2027 Application Form The Big Love Teen Festival, hosted at the neutral Shorts Playing Fields, will bring together 11–16-year-olds to build friendships and community connections. PSNI, St John's Ambulance, and local entertainers will support the event, with Charter NI staff holding valid SIA Security licences. The Virtual Reality Culture Production will document bonfires across East Belfast (Severn Street, Tullycarnet, Knocknagoney, Clara Street, Clarawood, Lord Street/Kingswood Street). This initiative will give young people a platform to share their cultural perspectives and educate others.</p>
5.	Upper Springfield Development Trust - Newhill Youth & Community Centre	<p>The Million Brick Wall Community Summer Intervention Project will provide a comprehensive full community response to the unique challenges presented within the Upper Springfield and Whiterock area from 'anti-social' behaviour, tensions at the Springmartin & Springfield Road interface, and unwanted bonfires.</p> <p>Within those communities that live in the shadow of the 'million brick wall' interface the July fortnight and the summer in general can become a time to 'dread' in which 'street drinking', 'vandalism', 'bonfires', 'sectarian tension' and so called 'anti-social' behaviour become more visible and prevalent for residents. During the summer young people have much more 'free time' than normal; this can lead to 'boredom', with many young people complaining of 'having nothing to do'. It can also be a stressful period for parents from the area who struggle with the time and affordability required to keep their children occupied and stimulated. While for young people the increased spare time spent with peers can lead to greater pressure to become involved in 'risk taking' behaviour. The need for effective community engagement strategies for young people and their families is an obvious but difficult challenge.</p> <p>This full community response will take a holistic approach to tackling these issues with a specific focus on diverting young people from negative and destructive behaviours into positive community youth work activities. The programme will also provide them with</p>

Page 68		<p>opportunities to learn and grow while enhancing their awareness of the importance of ‘community solidarity’, and respect for ‘other’ communities. Crucially however this full community response will also support, divert and empower local families suffering from the cost-of-living crisis who have children and adolescent siblings but are struggling to keep them occupied and engaged positively over the 12th of July period.</p> <p>The programme itself will focus on engaging, supporting and diverting three separate cohorts or groups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people aged 9 to 13 years of age ‘at risk’ of getting drawn into troubling behaviour at the interface ‘peace wall’. 2. Young people aged 14 to 18 years of age ‘at risk’ of getting involved in sectarian ‘trouble’ at the ‘peace wall’ interface, and ‘anti-social’ behaviour in the Falls Park and City Cemetery weekend ‘hotspots’. 3. Families struggling with the cost-of-living crisis who have both young children and adolescents who live directly in the shadow of the ‘million brick wall’ interface. <p>The programme itself will be delivered between the 29th of June and the 19th of July and will involve events and activities for the three target groups running parallel on a daily basis.</p> <p>The programme will be launched via a community information and fun day which will be widely promoted via leaflets and social media as a ‘schools out event’ and will be attended by over 200 local families. Daily activities will include day trips, outdoor activities, sports, informal education workshops, social action events, overnight adventure learning and residential programmes. Crucially the programme will involve intensive diversionary activities on the 11th and 12th of July.</p>
6.	<p>Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT)</p>	<p>In 2019 GVRT facilitated the members of this consortium to come together to collaborate and organise a wide range of diversionary and culturally appropriate activities to ensure that each area has sufficient provision to deliver community- based festivals and programmes which promote positive cultural expression and reduce anti-social behaviour which is often linked to contentious times over the summer period. 2024 sees this relationship continue and indeed sees the expansion of the consortium with new groups becoming involved which we see as a natural evolution from we very first came together back in 2019 .</p> <p>The consortium structure allows each individual organisation to deliver a project that deals with the often-unique issues each locality is facing . As will be discussed below, each area has a unique set of local issues which each group in the consortium is best suited to combat. GVRT been extremely efficient in being the lead organisation for this fund but also has an extremely rigorous reputation from managing this consortium. As the lead organisation of this consortium, we have been working with the small organisations to provide capacity support and to assist them to be able to avail of a larger funding stream such as Summer Diversionary.</p>

All events and projects have an undisputable focus upon culture, education, and identity work, whilst having fun, learning new skills, and encouraging participation across the consortium and indeed across South Belfast. The events and programmes include drumming workshops, cultural festivals, diversionary educational trips to name a few and they are all designed with the aim of reducing ASB and Interface Tensions which are particularly present in the July and August periods.

For the purposes of This Consortium the areas involved are as follows :

Village

Sandy Row

Suffolk

Donegal Pass

Taughmonagh

Donegal Road

Roden Street

Ballynafeigh

In addition to the groups, we have worked with over the last few years, we have some new groups represented this year, including:

South Belfast Protestant Boys Flute Band

Roden Street Residents

Kelvin Football Club.

The increase in participation and the groups involved gives a wider reach in terms of being to access and diver more young people away from ASB and interface tensions during the summer months which can only be more beneficial for the communities directly involved but also for wider society.

August Programme - Applicant Programme Descriptions

1.	Féile an Phobail	The project being undertaken by Féile an Phobail, with partnership initiatives in North, South and East Belfast, aims to address many of the issues associated with unwanted bonfires in West, North, South and East Belfast in the lead up to and over the 8th August in Belfast. Unfortunately, in some instances, these key dates are often characterised by incidents of anti-social activity resulting in Belfast's image to the world being portrayed negatively and leading to increased tension within and between local communities.
----	------------------	---

		<p>The main aim of the proposal is the delivery of a world class diversionary event in the form of an internationally quality community festival dance night, attracting some of the biggest DJ's in the World, providing positive outlets for expressions of community culture and youth engagement. Ultimately, the programme of events and programmes will aim to reduce / replace instances of 'negatively perceived' bonfires across the City, particularly those that have the potential to cause a threat to life or property or display offensive materials and which result in anti-social behaviors in local communities.</p> <p>Féile will work in a coordinated manner across the City, and will aim to engage directly with those young people most susceptible of engaging in anti-social behavior in and around these key dates alongside key stakeholders.</p> <p>This project is about increasing community engagement within some of the most socially and economically deprived areas in Belfast. It is about preventing, reducing and tackling anti-social behavior and crime through building confidence in local policing, challenging negative perceptions and building a safer community for all.</p> <p>Sunday 8th August – Féile Dance Night – The 8th of August is traditionally the date when Republican and Nationalist communities would have commemorated the anniversary of internment, and when bonfires were lit in nationalist / republican communities. Féile will host a world class headline DJ night in our festival event space in the Falls Park, where local up and coming DJ's as well as Internationally renowned DJ's will perform. The Falls Park event space is capable of hosting up to 12,500 people for an event and is staffed by a professional event safety and management company.</p> <p>Our Project specifically targets young people within the most 'at risk' areas, such as Divis, Lower Falls (specific diversionary activities organized at Distillery Street and Divis streets), Upper Falls, Upper Springfield, Colin area, as well allocating up to 2000 tickets in North, South and East Belfast targeting areas such as the New Lodge, Shankill Road, Ardoyne, The Village, The Market, Ormeau Rd and Short Strand etc. Féile will work with local reps in the weeks/months leading up to the 8th August to provide tickets targeting specifically those areas and young people engaged in building unwanted bonfires.</p> <p>The project will also focus resources on two community led focused interventions in Distillery Street and the Divis area in West Belfast, which unfortunately over the last number of years has seen increases in anti-social behaviors in the lead up to and around the 8th August.</p>
2.	Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG)	Féile na hAbhann is a grassroots community led diversionary festival delivered over the 8th August period to bring about positive community cultural celebrations across South and East Belfast communities.

		<p>The proposal aim is to target and engage young people within the Lower Ormeau, Market and Short Strand communities of South and East Belfast. We hope that through positive engagement and youth work interventions that services will provide preventative measures that divert children and young people from partaking in ASB (Anti Social Behaviour) and risk taking behaviours whilst reducing the likelihood of becoming involved in the criminal justice system.</p> <p>The profile of the target group will vary between each organisation (3 in total) LORAG, Market Development Association and Short Strand Community Forum. Each unit will identify a diverse group of young people to engage with in preventative and diversionary opportunities. The 800 young people targeted will be of mix gender with the focus of contact being with young people Aged 12 – 20 years.</p> <p>The secondary beneficiaries will be the local community and families as the Féile will create a celebration atmosphere in the local area, reduce anti social behaviour and re frame open spaces as community spaces and for positive activity.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 71</p>	<p>3. Ashton Community Trust</p>	<p>In North Belfast, Unwanted bonfires pose serious and considerable risk to public safety and public property as well as portraying the area, and community, negatively and leading to intra-community tension and conflict. The issue with any illegal and unwanted bonfire in North Belfast area is multifaceted with increases in antisocial behaviour, youth crime, vandalism, underage drinking and community violence.</p> <p>The proposed 2025 festival has been developed by the festival steering group which consists of representatives from all the partners' organisations. Building on the experience and success of delivering a successful North Belfast diversionary community festival during August IN 2022, 2023 and 2024 has worked together to deliver a series of youth-led diversionary activities in Catholic, Nationalist, Republican (CNR) areas of Multiple deprivation across North Belfast in the lead up to the August.2025.</p> <p>The proposed 2025 festival programme will provided inclusive alternative activities for effective youth engagement and development and expressions of positive community culture rather than the anti-social call of unwanted bonfires.</p> <p>The core aims of the inclusive planning committee remain :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ To work together as a North Belfast Community Collective to secure the necessary resources to deliver a successful collaborative community diversionary festival designed to promote positive expression of CNR culture. ☐ To support engage young people at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour in the planning , design and delivery of a community diversionary festival activity which will it is anticipated divert their potential engagement in less positive expressions of celebrating their culture.

		<p>☒ To develop a legacy of local community capacity (skills , knowledge and confidence) where to deliver positive community diversionary festival activities within their immediate locality where there remains the potential of communities being coerced into expressing their culture in a negative anti – community illegal manner.</p> <p>Our festival project specifically targets, through positive engagement opportunities those young people within the most ‘at risk’ North Belfast areas, of the Greater New Lodge; Ardoyne , Deerpark, Oldpark Road, Cliftonpark Avenue; Girdwood; Flax Street; Marrowbone and Ligoniel</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 72</p>	<p>4. Saints Youth Centre</p>	<p>Attracting Teens Through Art and Outdoor Activities to Prevent Antisocial Behaviour & Enhance Cultural Awareness in the Collin Area of West Belfast for July & August 2025 onwards.</p> <p>July & August can be a challenging time for teenagers, peer influences, and sometimes limited opportunities for positive engagement. Without meaningful activities, some may be drawn into antisocial behaviour, which can negatively impact their future and community. However, by providing structured and inspiring alternatives, such as creative art and outdoor experiences, we can divert their attention and help them develop cultural awareness, creativity, and a sense of belonging in a safe warm welcoming environment.</p> <p>Art as a Tool for Cultural Awareness and Self-Expression Art is a powerful medium for self-expression, emotional release, and cultural exploration. Many teenagers struggle with their emotions, identities, and social pressures, and artistic activities offer a constructive outlet. By engaging in painting, graffiti workshops, mural projects, and digital art, they can channel their energy into something meaningful.</p> <p>For example, organising a community mural project will encourage teamwork while giving them a sense of ownership over a public space. They can explore themes related to their cultural backgrounds, history, or local identity, fostering pride and awareness of different traditions. Additionally, art workshops focused on global cultures—such as African mask- making, Japanese calligraphy, or Indigenous storytelling through illustration—can introduce them to diverse artistic traditions, broadening their perspectives.</p> <p>Street art and urban sketching can also provide an exciting way for teenagers to engage creatively in their environment. Instead of viewing walls and public spaces as places for vandalism, they can learn about legal street art, the history of graffiti culture, and its impact on social movements. Inviting professional artists to mentor them can inspire new career paths and personal development.</p> <p>Outdoor Activities as a Positive Distraction</p>

Spending time outdoors in structured activities reduces stress, improves mental health, and keeps teenagers physically active, preventing them from engaging in negative behaviours. Adventure-based programs like hiking, kayaking, or team sports can build resilience and teamwork while keeping them engaged in positive experiences.

For example, organising a weekend residential trip can provide a break from negative influences and create opportunities for self-reflection and leadership development.

Activities like orienteering, survival skills workshops, or nature photography can foster problem-solving skills and an appreciation for the environment.

Alternatively, outdoor art can combine creative expression with physical activity. Encouraging teenagers to participate in street work, in public spaces can help them build confidence while promoting positive engagement with the community.

Building a Lasting Impact

To ensure the success of these initiatives, it's essential to involve community leaders, youth workers, and mentors who can serve as positive role models. Partnering with local artists, outdoor educators, and cultural organisations can provide valuable expertise and create sustainable programmes.

Additionally, showcasing their artistic and outdoor achievements—such as hosting an exhibition, or public mural unveiling—can reinforce their sense of accomplishment and encourage ongoing participation.

By using art and outdoor experiences as tools for engagement, we can transform August from a period of potential antisocial behaviour into an opportunity for personal growth, cultural enrichment, and positive community impact.

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Community Support Plan (CSP) 25/29 including a Review of Community Support Large Grants
Date:	21 March 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, Community Provision

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update members on the Community Support Plan and associated timeframe to develop the funding programme contained within the Plan which was deferred by P&C Committee on 4 th March 2025.

1.2	This report will outline a suggested way forward to undertake engagement with current funded groups and a public consultation on the overall Community Support Plan.							
2.0	Recommendation							
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the contents of the report. ii. Note the March P&C committee report and appendices (appendices i, ii, iii). iii. Note the specific questions that are suggested as part of Stage 1 Engagement that was agreed at March P&C committee. iv. Advise if members are content that the proposal for one large funding programme as outlined in the draft CSP that will replace the current Capacity and Revenue grants and that this is consulted on in the coming weeks as Stage 2 of the process. v. Consider the options for what officers include in the public consultation process with regards to possible funding amounts and maximum limits for the Community Support Large Grants Programme. vi. Agree that a detailed update on the 2 stage engagement process findings is brought back to SP&R Committee in June. vii. Agree that the June report should also include information on the programming, footfall and activity in our community centres, as well as the total cost for running each council and independently managed community centre. 							
3.0	Main Report							
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The background to the development of the new Community Support Plan is included in the following appendices;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. March P&C Committee report II. Community Support Grant options III. Draft community support plan 							
3.2	<p>The decision register from People and Communities March Committee states:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members did not agree a financial budget for 2025/26 year and requested that officers engage with 30 community organisations, already funded through CSP, to ascertain their current revenue costs 2. Members proposed to change the application assessment to complete by December 2025, and to change the timeline for Committee approval to January 2026; <p>Following further political engagement officers are requesting that we complete the above two processes in tandem.</p>							
3.3	<p>Stage 1 Engagement with Current Groups</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th> <th>Date by</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Engagement with selection of current grant recipients (sample of 30 across city, Capacity and Revenue grants) and collation of findings as requested by March P&C</td> <td>April 25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Incorporate findings with public consultation findings and bring final draft CSP back to SP&R.</td> <td>20 June 2025</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Action	Date by	Engagement with selection of current grant recipients (sample of 30 across city, Capacity and Revenue grants) and collation of findings as requested by March P&C	April 25	Incorporate findings with public consultation findings and bring final draft CSP back to SP&R.	20 June 2025
Action	Date by							
Engagement with selection of current grant recipients (sample of 30 across city, Capacity and Revenue grants) and collation of findings as requested by March P&C	April 25							
Incorporate findings with public consultation findings and bring final draft CSP back to SP&R.	20 June 2025							

3.4 **Questions for Funded Groups**
 During this Engagement with 30 Community organisations who are currently receiving either capacity or revenue grants we are seeking approval to ask the following 4 questions:

1. How much were your running costs for 24/25?
2. How much did you receive from Council for these costs in 24/25?
3. How much did you receive from other sources for these costs in 24/25?
4. What was the deficit you faced in 24/25 in relation to these costs?

Officers will ask for evidence of the above information.

3.5 **Stage 2 - Consultation**
 At P&C Committee members changed the application assessment timeline to completion by December 2025, and changed the timeline for Committee approval to January 2026.

Officers are required to complete a formal consultation process. However, due to the tight timeframe to complete the process for January 2026, we request that the consultation process is reduced from the recommended 12 weeks to 7 weeks (this will include Easter holidays).

The consultation process will seek views on the following elements within the CSP:

- One large community support grant for ongoing activity/programmes in community-based facilities that contribute to CSP outcomes
- Small community support grant for projects that contribute to CSP outcomes
- Community Support Plan Outcomes Framework

3.6 **Funding limit options for consultation**
 Members are asked to consider the options below and recommend one approach that will be used in the consultation documents.

1. No proposed upper or lower limit financial information for a new funding programme.
2. Include information on previous capacity (£50k) and revenue (£20k) and advise that this will be amalgamated into one large community support grant and ask for feedback on possible upper limits.
3. Include a range of upper limit funding between £40 and £60k

3.7 **Consultation Timeline**

Action	Completion Date
Report to March SP&R seeking permission to carry out consultation on draft CSP plan	21 March 25
Stage 2: Consultation on draft CSP (following April Council ratification and call in)	14 April – 30 May 25
Consultation feedback reviewed, required changes included in draft CSP (3 weeks normally 6-8 weeks) and presented to SP&R committee	20 June 25
Final plan approved by Council (subject to call in)	1 July 25

3.8 Community Centre Scoping exercise
 Through recent Member engagement, officers have been asked to undertake an analysis of current council investment in council run community centre assets and bring this back to members as part of the overall work to develop the community support plan.

This analysis will include;

- The cost of running each community centre and total amount across the city
- The number of programmes that are delivered in each centre
- The footfall / number of people who are using each centre

3.9 Presentation of Consultation, Engagement & Scoping exercise
 SP&R committee will receive a report in June which will outline the results of:
 Process 1 – Finding from the engagement with the 30 Organisations
 Process 2 – Finding from the consultation including the question around the protentional funding allocation.
 Process 3 – Findings from the Community Centre Scoping Exercise

Members will be asked to review the above evidence and agree a final Community Support Plan and the financial amount which community organisations can apply for the new large community support grants and small grants.

3.10 Timeline for implementation
 Members should note that there are significant tight timeframes around the delivery of above, should these timescales be met, there will be further tight timeframes for implementing a new funding programme (see below).

Members should note that there is no scope for delay in the current timescale if officers are to meet the deadline of December 2025 for completion of assessments to the new grant programme.

Action	Completion Date
Open call for application submissions (following call in period)	28 July
Submission deadline for application	26 September
Eligibility check applications by CGU	19 September – 17 October
Applications passed by CGU to Officers for scoring	26 September – 24 October
Officer Scoring (including internal Unit moderation panelling)	29 September – 28 November
CGU check of final recommendations and duplicate check	2 December
CGU Independent Assessment Panel	5 December
Committee Approval of awards	January 26

	Financial & Resource Implications
3.11	Staff and financial resources to complete this work will be taken from existing budgets. The council element is included in existing budgets and the DfC contribution comes from the Community Support Programme LoO.
3.12	The CSP LoO provides a one-year commitment from DfC for funding on an annual basis, although the CSP has been in place across all councils for a number of years. Members may wish to note that in 24/25 DfC is providing £831,192 toward the Capacity and Revenue grants. Council increased its financial allocation in March 2023 by almost £1.4 million per annum providing an annual commitment of £2,446,918. This combined amount provides the overall budget of £3,278,110.
3.13	A one off annual increase to the Revenue Programme totaling £1.5million was included for the 25/26 year.
3.14	Members should note that any increases to the recurrent budget would impact on the rate. These impacts would be approximately as follows for 26/27; £1m 0.45%, £1.5m 0.675%, £3m 1.35%, £4.5m 2.025%
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.15	Given the significant impact which any changes to the large grant funding programme will have on the VCSE sector and communities across the city, an equality screening exercise and rural impact assessment are being undertaken on any resulting change in policy/programme. Any potential additional equality considerations have been factored into the timeline.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – March P&C report Appendix 2 – March P&C Community Support Grants Options - Restricted Appendix 3 - Draft Community Support Plan

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Community Support Plan (CSP) 25/29 including a Review of Community Support Large Grants
Date:	4 th March 2025
Reporting Officer:	Jim Girvan, Director Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer, Community Provision

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
<p>After Committee Decision</p> <p>After Council Decision</p> <p>Sometime in the future</p> <p>Never</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
------------	---

1.1	<p>To update members that we will continue to implement the business as usual aspects of the draft Community Support Plan, including Council direct delivery and ongoing allocation of funding programmes which are not being reviewed as part of this work.</p> <p>This report will also outline the requirement to start to develop the processes for the new funding programme (replacing the capacity and revenue funding) which is being reviewed as part of this work and the risk that we may not be able to deliver on a new funding programme by April 2026.</p>
2.0	<p>Recommendation</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the contents of the report. ii. Note the business as usual and improvement aspects of the draft community support plan (Appendix i) will proceed, this will include funding programmes that are not under review. Note that our continuous improvement actions in the plan have been informed by our engagement processes. iii. Due to the tight timeframe for developing a new funding programme to replace the current Community Development Large Grants (Capacity and Revenue), advise they are content that the proposal for one funding programme as outlined in the draft CSP will replace the current capacity and revenue programme; and agree that officers start to develop the processes for a new programme for 26/27. iv. Consider the options for future budget allocation and maximum limits for the Community Support Large Grants Programme and recommend an option that will be included in the draft Community Support Plan. If this is an option that exceeds the current budget of £3.3 million recommend that this is considered by SP&R, given the implications for 26/27 rate setting. v. Note that the draft CSP plan, including the funding approach, is undergoing an equality and rural needs screening which will form part of our consultation approach. It is expected that once we agree a final Community Support Plan, we may have to undertake a formal consultation in Spring/Summer 2025. In keeping with our policy around screening and consultation, this work has already begun. vi. Agree that following completion of the required screening/consultation exercise, a paper will be brought to committee in summer 2025 outlining feedback and seeking agreement on the final Community Support Plan. Officers will deliver on this plan in 25/26 but the plan is subject to change based on any feedback that may be received from formal consultation. vii. Agree that a final detailed update on the Funding Programme is brought back to members in advance of going to open call in late Summer 2025.
3.0	<p>Main Report</p>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>In January 2024, the People and Communities committee agreed to the following – “That officers produce a Council Community Support Plan (25/29) and at the same time, undertake a review of current community support large grants schemes”. Members will know that the community support large grants schemes form part of our overall funding package that is included in the Community Support Plan.</p>
3.2	<p>Further updates have been brought to members at P&C Committee which detailed progress to develop the CSP. At December committee, officers brought in a draft Community Support Plan (Appendix i) seeking members approval to proceed with implementing the plan. This included</p>

priorities for Council Delivery and options on a new funding model. At the December meeting, committee agreed to defer consideration of the Community Support Plan to enable further examination and discussion to be undertaken between political parties and officers, particularly in respect of the viability of the funding model with a view that the matter be considered also within the wider rate-setting process for 2025/26. For all of this, members should be aware that while we will deliver on what is contained within the draft plan including areas of improvement, this is subject to change following any formal consultation that we have to undertake.

3.3

Ongoing Community Support Provision

While the above action is being progressed, officers are seeking approval from members to start to progress work that is contained within the new draft Community Support Plan on the basis that it is business as usual (and improvement) work that is already being delivered by our staff and within our community centres and independent community centres. The new plan outlines work on 2 areas:

- **How the Council will directly support the local community/voluntary sector and the communities that it serves** through our community support, assets, people and programming.
- **How our funding will support community activity**

3.4

Council Direct Delivery

The related work that we wish to continue and improve on includes the following;

- Leading networking / co-ordination & partnership development in local communities to create active, engaged and resilient communities.
- Supporting volunteering by creating new and better opportunities for people to give their time and make a difference to their communities and the issues they care about.
- Providing access to mentoring / training and ongoing support for community organisations
- Improving current systems and processes - eg developing an electronic booking system for Community Centres
- Delivery and co-ordination of activity programmes including reviewing the current programmes within council facilities across the city to ensure that they meet identified need.
- Ensuring all BCC facilities meet quality standards
- Supporting organisations that receive funding and facilitating networking amongst groups

3.5

CSP Funding

While we are undertaking a review of the large community development grants (Capacity & Revenue), members should note that there are three funding programmes that are not currently being reviewed (see table below). To continue to provide funding support we will continue to deliver these funding programmes and bring updates to members. Members will note that there is a separate paper for this committee meeting in relation to the 25/26 CSP Letter of Offer from DfC and programmes funded through that resource.

Current Funding included in the Community Support Plan

Grant	No. Groups Currently Funded
Under Review	
Capacity Building (up to £50k)	43
Revenue for Community Buildings (up to £20k)	87
Not Under Review	
Summer Schemes	98

Advice Services	14
Social Supermarkets	21

Funding Under Review

3.6 We are reviewing a significant part of our funding offering, our large, multi-annual capacity and revenue grants which currently provide £3.3million to 130 groups across the city. Feedback received from our engagement on funding priorities suggested a need to include the following when developing the new funding approach;

- Funding levels for revenue related costs should increase
- Funding should be available for both core revenue/running costs and activity/programmes
- Applications should be assessed against the impact that they make to overall outcomes
- Application requirements should be proportionate & timely
- Funding levels to include small grants

Members should note that there are significant tight timeframes around the development of a new scheme and application process. Members are asked to;

- Agree that from April 2026 the capacity and revenue programme will be replaced by one Community Support large Grant that will support delivery on outcomes as outlined in the draft CSP.
- Agree that officers start to draft the application, assessment, monitoring, training and other relevant processes that will be required to put in place a new funding programme and which will allow Council to be ready to go to open call as early as possible.

Members will recall that consideration of the draft CSP was deferred at December 24 committee to allow further consideration of the available finance for community support grants. Members will also know that as part of growth bids an additional non recurrent budget of £1.5 million has been agreed for 25/26 to enhance Revenue grants.

3.7 Options in Appendix 1 are provided for the current budget of £3.3million and for an additional £1.5million which would create a budget of £4.8million. If this funding was made recurrent from 26/27, it would require agreement through the 26/27 rate setting exercise. Given the financial implications and the additional impact on the rates for 26/27, this would necessitate consideration at SP&R.

The timeline outlined below is based on final approval dates by council following committee consideration the previous month. Members should note that there is no scope for delay in the current timescale.

Action	Completion Date
Final approval to proceed with the Funding model in the Community Support Plan	March 25
Equality & Rural Needs Screening and Consultation	April to July 25
Final CSP agreed including new funding programme which incorporates Equality screening & feedback from consultation	August 25
Final systems and processes agreed by members for funding programme	October 25

	New funding programme open – 8 weeks application period	November 25
	Deadline for applications	December 25
	Assessment	Mid Feb 26
	Committee approval of awards	March 26
	Notification to applicants of funding allocation	May 26
3.8	<p><u>Further Engagement with Stakeholders</u> Members will be aware that there is significant interest in this work, particularly the funding element and it is important that we continue to engage with stakeholders on the development and implementation of the CSP. If members agree to the recommendations in this paper officers will consider the best way to engage with stakeholders, which may include information sessions with stakeholders in March/April, further details will be provided when available.</p> <p>Given the potential impacts on existing grant holders of any change to the funding programme, officers will also engage with those organisations to provide information. Officers will continue to engage with organisations to provide support in preparing project ideas and will offer support to potential applicants when the new programme opens. Further detail on the programme of support will be provided in the paper to committee prior to the Scheme opening.</p>	
4.0	Financial & Resource Implications	
4.1	<p>Staff and financial resources to complete this work will be taken from existing budgets. The council element is included in existing budgets and the DfC contribution comes from the Community Support Programme LoO.</p> <p>The CSP LoO provides a one-year commitment from DfC for funding on an annual basis, although the CSP has been in place across all councils for a number of years Members may wish to note that in 24/25 DfC is providing £831,192 toward the Capacity and Revenue grants. Council increased its financial allocation in March 2023 by almost £1.4 million per annum providing an annual commitment of £2,446,918. In 2025/26 financial year, members agreed a non-recurrent budget of £1.5 million for Revenue grants. This combined amount provides the overall budget of £4,778,110 for the 2025/26 year.</p>	
5.0	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment	
5.1	<p>Given the significant impact which any changes to the large grant funding programme will have on the VCSE sector and communities across the city, an equality screening exercise and rural impact assessment are being undertaken on any resulting change in policy/programme. Any potential additional equality considerations have been factored into the timeline.</p>	
6.0	Appendices	
6.1	<p>Appendix i – Community Support Grants Options</p> <p>Appendix II - Draft Community Support Plan</p>	

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Belfast

Community Support Plan

2025 - 2029



Belfast
City Council



Belfast

Contents

Introduction	2
Background -----	2
What’s included in the Community Support Plan -----	3
Our Supports	3
Department for Communities -----	2
Development of a community support plan	7
Engagement - Methodology -----	7
Need and demand for community support - What you told us: -----	7
Our Plan to support you 2025 - 2029	9
Our Vision -----	9
Our guiding principles -----	9
Our proposed priorities -----	9
How we will measure success -----	10
Table 1 Outcomes and Success Measures -----	11
Our implementation plan	12
How we will implement our community support -----	12
Our Council service delivery priorities -----	12
Our funding plan -----	12
Aligning Council and funded services -----	13
How we will continue to include you -----	15
Annex 1: Community Centre Locations -----	16
Annex 2: Research - Funding Sources Considered -----	17
Annex 3: Community Support Plan – Overview of Engagement sessions and Public Survey -----	17
Annex 4: Community Support Plan – Public Survey Questions -----	18

Introduction

The Council's Community Support Plan outlines how we seek to support a better engaged and more resourceful community. We do this through our resources and community facilities and the support we provide to community and voluntary organisations that provide relevant services. It also provides priorities for some Council investment including funding and is used to access funding from the Department for Communities through its Community Support programme which provides central government support to all council areas.

Background

In 2024 Belfast City Council elected members agreed that officers would engage and consult with stakeholders to review existing approaches and to inform the development of a new Community Support Plan (CSP). Through the CSP, Council makes a significant investment to support local communities and it was identified that, given the changes in the external environment since the last Plan, the impacts of Covid 19 and the current pressures that our local communities are facing, this was an opportune time to engage with the sector and local communities to develop a new Community Support Plan.

In addition, a number of other key policies have had reviews completed, or were underway at the time of engagement, which further emphasised the need to develop a new plan. These included;

- Belfast City Council - Belfast Agenda (the community plan for Belfast), Corporate Plan and Peace Plus Local Action Plan.
- Department for Communities – Support for Community Voluntary Sector Infrastructure, People and Place Review (Neighbourhood Renewal) and Review of Advice Provision.

As part of this review, it was also decided Council would review some of the key funding that is included in this plan, namely, the Community Development Large Grants which had an allocation of £3.3 million to over 130 community organisations in 2023.

One of the overarching reasons to develop a new plan was that Council needs to review and articulate its position in terms of its community support priorities and service provision, including funding priorities and approaches and how these will inform resource allocation.

The implementation of the plan will help:

- To improve what we do within our wider Community Services offering
- To better articulate who we are, what we do and how we engage better with our community
- To engage and support those communities most at need
- To outline how funding is allocated

We want to support our community & voluntary sector to be well structured, skilled and have the necessary resources to deliver on priorities for better engaged and more resourceful communities.

It is important to note that the Community Support Plan **does not** include everything we deliver and fund in local communities. This plan outlines how Council will direct the funding, assets, people and programming that we deliver through **our Community Support Teams & Neighbourhood Integration and Assets & Programming Portfolios** within our City & Neighbourhood Services Department.

Proposals are based on the current resources that we have available within these teams, both human and financial. These are subject to change depending on annual budgets being agreed by Council and DfC.

This Community Support Plan will outline:

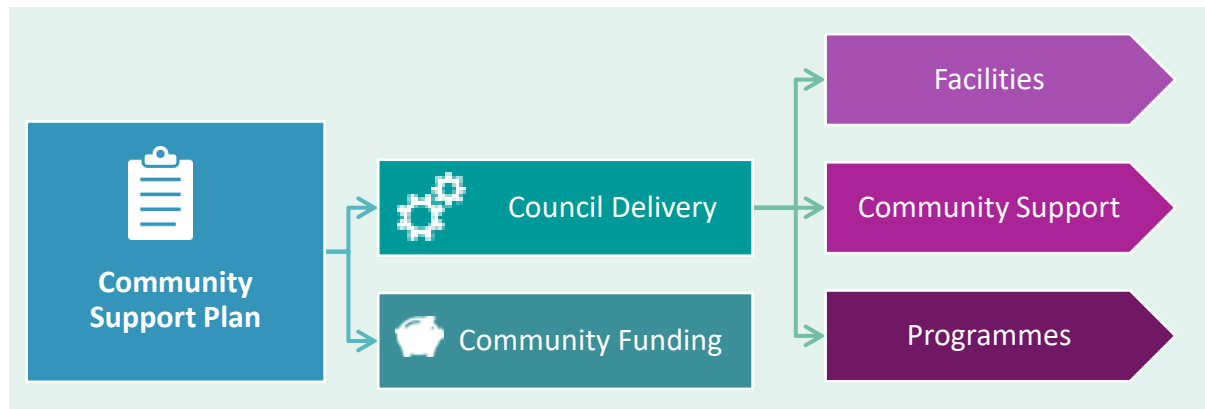
- Outcomes and priorities for Community Support that will drive the delivery of activity from 2025-2029.
- How priorities will be supported through Council delivery and outline the resources required to deliver on these priorities.
- How priorities will be supported through a funding / investment programme 2026-2029.

Using the resources we have available, our focus will be on supporting local communities and we acknowledge that there are structural inequalities such as gender, race, age and disability which we need to address.

What's included in the Community Support Plan

The Community Support Plan (CSP) covers

1. Council community service delivery; and
2. Funding made available by Council to community and voluntary sector organisations across the city.



Our Supports

The community support opportunities included within the Community Support Plan is significant. It is therefore important that our new plan is fit for purpose and meets the expectations of our local community. In general, it includes the current community facilities that we manage and maintain, programmes that we deliver, various grant programmes that we allocate and support that our Community Services staff provide.

Council Community Services activities are delivered in three key areas:

Facilities

- We manage and maintain 27 high quality, multi-purpose, accessible facilities in local neighbourhoods which are used to deliver activities that cater for a range of uses. We also support service delivery via 8 independently managed community centres.

Programming

- We deliver programmes in council community centres and other venues that meet the needs of residents, improve quality of community life and measure their success.

Community Support



- We provide a range of support to enable local communities to identify their needs, plan and take action on local priorities. This includes delivery of relevant grant programmes to fund community activities and services.

The current resources we have to deliver our community support are:

1. Council owned Community Centres

- Provision of 27 Community Centres that are managed by council staff
- Provision of support to 8 independently managed centres

2. Funding – In 2024/25 this included:

 Grant	£ Annual Award	 Number of Groups Supported
Capacity Building	£1.85 million	43
Revenue for Community Buildings	£1.43 million	87
Advice Services	£1.46 million	14
Summer Scheme	£0.2 million	98
Social Supermarkets	£0.78 million	21

3. People

We have staff in full and part time roles, supporting the local community, developing programmes and running our facilities. There are 3 teams as listed below:

Area Support Unit – 39 staff which includes 14 Community Development Officers and 23 assistant Community Development Officers who deliver a wide range of programmes and activities to meet the needs of CYP, older people, residents, and local community groups. They also provide support and advice to the VCSE organisations across the city including representation on geographical and thematic partnerships. The CDOs also manage the summer scheme small grants programme.

Community Facilities Unit – 111 staff including 9 Community Development Officers and facilities supervisors who directly manage and maintain 27 community centres across the city as well as providing support to 8 voluntary managed community centres. The community centres provide affordable high-quality facilities to the VCSE organisations. (see Annex 1 for centre locations)

Community Support Unit – 10 staff including 6 Community Development Officers provide developmental support and training for VCSE organisations across the city. They also manage delivery of relevant funding including Advice and Social Supermarket programmes. This team supports the Belfast City Youth Council and Digital Inclusion through access to devices, training and support.



Strategic context

In order to maximise our support to our local community and voluntary sector organisations and the communities they serve, we must align with other key strategies and action plans across the Council and those regional strategies that are of importance. We must also ensure that, as key funders of the Community Support Plan, we align with the outcomes that are agreed by DfC as part of their Community Support Programme and other relevant DfC strategies.

Strategy development is ongoing at the time of this review, however the Belfast Community Support Plan recognises these issues and will seek to address them through Council service delivery and community support funding. This Community Support Plan has been developed to ensure that it aligns to key Belfast and regional strategies including the draft Programme for Government.



The Belfast Agenda

Our Community Support Plan seeks to support the achievement of the Belfast Agenda, our Community Plan for the City.

The Belfast Agenda sets out our vision for Belfast in 2025 as:

Belfast will be a city re-imagined and resurgent.

A great place to live and work for everyone.

Our Outcomes:
The five things people want by 2035.
Belfast will be a city:

- 1. Where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy**
- 2. That is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all**
- 3. That is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable**
- 4. Where everyone experiences good health and well being**
- 5. Where everyone fulfils their potential**

To make this happen we have identified 5 key themes that through the Community Support Plan, we will actively strive to deliver against the 5 themes in the Belfast Agenda

Theme 1: Our services

Delivering responsive and value for money services.

Theme 2: Our organisation

Ensuring the correct foundations are in place and we continue to be a fit-for-purpose organisation.

Theme 3: Our people and communities

Making life better for all our residents.

Theme 4: Our economy

Creating inclusive, innovative and sustainable growth, learning and opportunity.

Theme 5: Our place

Creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city.

Theme 6: Our planet

Creating a sustainable and nature-positive city.

Theme 7: Compassionate city

Making Belfast a welcoming, caring, fair and inclusive city- leaving no one behind.

Department for Communities

Draft Framework for Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support (2023)

This framework was developed following extensive regional consultation and engagement. It identified the need for infrastructure support across four headline areas:

- Leadership and Advocacy
- Collaboration and Partnerships
- Capacity building (practical skills and resilience)
- Volunteering

The vision for investment support for the sector is for: *“A confident, independent and collaborative sector which empowers and sustains local action*

and volunteering; a sector that represents the diversity of our communities and supports the delivery of inclusive and accessible services and programme for government outcomes through partnership, innovation and challenge”

The Belfast Community Support Plan will seek to embed these core values and headline priorities for support in local community development activity to assist in the realisation of this vision. It will also incorporate the Fair Funding Principles in future investment/funding approaches.

People and Place review - A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

This review has been progressed using a co-design approach engaging communities, including representatives from the Belfast City Council area, in identifying key needs and new actions for future programme delivery. A range of issues, challenges and opportunities have been identified. These include:

- A need for simplification of neighbourhood renewal funding and governance arrangements
- Opportunities for increased participation by local communities in needs identification and programme delivery
- An understanding that poverty exists even in perceived affluent areas
- A need to support more running costs, core staff costs and activity costs

The development of the Community Support Plan has also reflected on other funding mechanisms which are available to support community activities. The plan proposed seeks to complement

- An opportunity exists to be more flexible and adaptive thereby meeting need and encouraging innovation
- Need for increased longevity of funding provision via multi-annual funding
- Need to support capacity development, education and training in the VCS sector and thereby improve its sustainability and resilience
- Opportunities to develop more effective collaboration and partnership delivery including links to community planning at local level
- Need to focus on outcomes when measuring impacts of investments made

these other resources and to plug remaining funding gaps for the Community and Voluntary sector. An overview of the funding resources considered is included in Annex 2.

Development of a community support plan

Belfast City Council agreed that, as part of the development of the Community Support Plan, a co-design process should be followed to involve and empower local community groups and residents to self-determine what should be included in the Council's new Community Support Plan. To do this, since June 2024, Council have undertaken to develop a new Community Support Plan (and review of part of the funding that is included in the plan) via a 3-stage process:

- Stage 1 – Understanding and identifying the key issues across the city through local consultation and stakeholder engagement and desktop research.
- Stage 2 – Agree the outcomes and priorities to be included in the new Community Support Plan.
- Stage 3 – Agreement on the new plan and implementation.

Engagement - Methodology

It was agreed the Stage 1 engagement process would comprise of online and public meetings, as well as strategic review, as follows:

- Public meetings across the city
- Meetings with key stakeholders where appropriate
- An online e-survey
- Desktop research

To deliver on this a series of public meetings took place across the city in June 24.

The purpose of these sessions was to:

- advise residents, community partners and wider stakeholders of the opportunities under the development of a new Community Support Plan

- to allow stakeholders to shape the priorities for the plan and
- improve how we allocate funding to our local community partners.

A total of 9 public sessions were facilitated as part of this pre-engagement with a total of 122 in attendance

An online e-survey was also agreed and circulated widely by Council across existing networks. In total, 94 people completed the e-survey. See Annex 3 and 4 for further details on Stage 1 engagement.

Need and demand for community support - What you told us:

Through the different consultation and engagement approaches used in the first stage of developing this CSP, we sought the views of participants on the following areas:

1. **What the current key priorities are facing communities.**
2. **What support for communities, Council should provide directly via Council staff and facilities.**
3. **What type of community support / activities Council should fund so they can be delivered via community / voluntary based organisations.**

4. **How Council should provide investment to support delivery of Community Support Plan priorities.**
5. **What outcomes and measures of success should Council apply to ensure funding achieves positive change within and for our communities.**
6. **What the barriers are to effective community support.**

“*Development of a community support infrastructure means Council directly supporting the community infrastructure to do it for themselves.*”

We consolidated your feedback on the above into the following two key areas:

Supports and services Council should Deliver

In general, throughout the engagement process stakeholders acknowledged they value the support that Council provides and were positive about how Council officers were helpful to residents and local communities. They did outline ways in which Council service delivery and funding, can be improved.

The key issues and areas for improvement that were highlighted, are summarised below:

- Communities welcome the provision of Council owned and operated community centres / community spaces. These offer a low cost, safe and accessible space for community activities and service delivery.
- It was suggested that access to facilities could be enhanced through increased promotion of centre facilities and services / activities; increased consistency of services delivered and ensuring that local facilities deliver activity that meets the needs of user communities.
- There was feedback that provision of facilities is not always consistent across the city and that some facilities need modernisation.
- Council playing a lead role in facilitating / stimulating networking and collaboration between community organisations at local level.
- Proactively encouraging and facilitating collaboration between Council community centres and wider stakeholders to ensure community support and programming is delivered in a co-ordinated way that adds value and reduces duplication.
- Provision of appropriate training / coaching / mentoring for community organisations, ensuring non-duplication with what is already being delivered.
- Supporting volunteer development, including additional volunteer capacity and increased volunteer skills.

“Council should provide assistance to grass roots voluntary, community organisations.”

Supports and services that should be delivered via community / voluntary based organisations through council funding

- Communities need ongoing support from Council to deliver community services and activities. Suggested priorities for Council funding included:
- Providing ongoing and increased funding for core running costs of community operated facilities.
- Funding for core costs of running a community or voluntary organisation not linked to the provision of buildings / community facilities.
- Funding for capacity building activities to addresses identified gaps / deficits
- Grant programmes should offer an opportunity for consortia / collaborative bids for programme / service delivery.
- Grant programmes should offer a variety of funding scales from small short-term grants for community activities to multi-annual grants for programme / service delivery.
- The maximum grant available for community facility revenue costs should be increased recognising increased utilities and running costs experienced by community organisations.

“Core costs and staff costs are an ongoing major concern within the community sector and there are not enough funding pots to ensure ongoing access to programmes that people are now dependent on.”

“More cohesive and cross cutting linkages between directly managed facilities and the voluntary-community delivery partners. Many community organisations have the skills, knowledge and structure to deliver a number of community support themes.”

Our Plan to support you 2025 - 2029

Our Vision

Vibrant, inclusive communities where everyone has opportunities for involvement and development.

Our guiding principles

We will be guided by the following principles when supporting communities through our facilities, our staff activities and the funding we make available:

- We are **accountable** for the services and supports we deliver and will act with integrity and professionalism.
- **Promoting, equity, diversity and inclusion** – we will promote and support equality of access and participation in community services through our support for community and voluntary sector organisations.
- **Outcomes focused** – we will use our facilities, staff and funding opportunities to deliver Community Support outcomes agreed by Council.
- **Involving communities** – we will empower communities to be involved in the design, development and delivery of activities.
- **Needs driven** – we will endeavour to target those most in need and align with our inclusive growth framework.
- **Adding value** – we will add value to what is already in existence and will work with relevant partners to achieve this.
- **Promoting collaboration** – we will promote collaboration and joint working, breaking down barriers between communities.
- **Ensuring flexibility** - We will be flexible and responsive to changing community needs and priorities.

Our proposed priorities

One of the key messages from engagement and consultation was that the Belfast City Council Community Support Plan should move to an Outcomes Approach. This means that all of our support, either through funding or direct service delivery, should focus on contributing to overarching strategic outcomes.

For the purposes of this plan, we are using the outcomes that have been agreed as part of the Belfast Agenda and included in its refreshed action plan which is outlined in Table 1. We believe that the Belfast Agenda outcomes align with other relevant strategies such as the DFC Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Support Framework. The Priorities that we have identified for the Community Support Plan will enable delivery that supports the achievement of the overall outcomes.

Priorities

Based on your feedback and our knowledge of wider issues which are impacting community services and activities, we have identified the following priorities for the new Community Support Plan:

1. **Creating active, engaged and resilient communities**
2. **Ensuring access to quality community facilities**
3. **Joining up community support through partnership development and collaboration**



Cross cutting themes

Improving health and wellbeing and reducing the negative impacts of poverty in Belfast are considered fundamental to our work and as such, will represent cross cutting themes for the Community Support Plan.

We will seek to ensure that through the delivery of Council services and allocation of our external funding, we make a positive contribution to tackling both of these issues.

We will seek to:

- Contribute to an increase in the wellbeing experienced by local residents and community members. By wellbeing we mean: both the physical and mental health experienced by individuals, their families and the wider community.
- Contribute to tackling poverty through community support services through proactive measures / activity which seek to positively change the life experiences of local communities and their residents.

How we will measure success

Our aspiration is that all activity contained in the Community Support Plan, both direct council delivery and activity delivered through Council funding will contribute to the outcomes in the Belfast Agenda and priority areas highlighted above.

In order to ensure achievement of these ambitions, we will focus on our priorities which are explained in more detail below. Council programmes and funding programmes will use relevant measures of success from the framework included in the tables below.

1. Evidence of more active, engaged and resilient communities

- By active we mean: residents are active and participate in community activities, community organisations and wider community relationships in positive ways.
- By engaged we mean: residents are active and involved in their community in the delivery of services, designing the type of services on offer and benefiting from the supports provided.
- By resilient we mean: local communities and the community organisations that serve them will have the skills and access to sustainable human and financial resources that support delivery of effective community support.

2. Ensuring access to quality community facilities

- By access we mean: communities will have access to community buildings and spaces which enable delivery of community based services and activities.
- By quality we mean: facilities will be available which are fit for purpose, and which make provision for the range of service needs presented by the community.

3. Joining up community support through partnership development and collaboration

- By joined up we mean: statutory and community and voluntary sector organisations collaborate and work together to deliver services, raise awareness, or sign-post to other service providers.
- By partnership we mean: creation and implementation of formal joint working relationships for service development, service delivery, or advocacy.

Table 1 Outcomes and Success Measures

The table below outlines how we will define and measure delivery against these outcomes.

Belfast Agenda Theme 1. Our people and communities, making life better for our people and communities		
Desired Outcome	CSP Strategic priority	Success Measures
<p>Where everyone fulfils their potential.</p> <p>Where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing.</p> <p>That is welcoming, safe, fair, and inclusive for all.</p>	<p>Active Communities - residents are active and participate in community activities, community organisations and wider community relationships in positive ways.</p>	<p>% people within the community who feel that they have access to participation in a wide range of Voluntary Community Social Enterprise activities.</p> <p>% people within the community who feel that they have access to participation in a wide range of Council delivered activities</p> <p>Number of individuals participating in community activities.</p> <p>% who have been involved in previous 12 months</p>
	<p>Engaged communities - residents are active and involved in their community in the delivery of services, designing the type of services on offer and benefiting from the supports provided.</p>	<p>Number of active volunteers within projects</p> <p>Number of individuals accessing community support services</p> <p>Participant satisfaction levels by service</p>
	<p>Resilient communities – local communities and the community organisations that serve them will have the skills and access to sustainable human and financial resources that support delivery of effective community support.</p>	<p>% of VCSE organisations that feel that they have sufficient skills within their staff and volunteer to operate effectively for the next 12 months</p> <p>% of VCSE organisations that feel that they have sufficient resources to operate effectively for the next 12 months</p> <p>Number of VCSE staff/ volunteers achieving accredited qualifications</p> <p>Number of VCSE organisations receiving support from BCC Community Services staff to develop leadership / community development and governance skills</p> <p>Amount of income that is drawn from other sources</p>
Belfast Agenda Theme 2. Our Place, creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city.		
Desired Outcome	CSP Strategic priority	Success Measures
<p>That is a welcoming, safe, fair, and inclusive for all.</p>	<p>Access: communities will have access to community buildings and spaces which enable delivery of community based services and activities.</p>	<p>Number of community, voluntary and social enterprise facilities used for the delivery of community services</p> <p>Participant numbers using community facilities</p> <p>% reporting awareness of community facilities and services on offer</p>
	<p>Quality: facilities will be available which are fit for purpose, and which make provision for the range of service needs presented by the community.</p>	<p>% reporting that community facilities are welcoming, accessible, high quality and safe.</p> <p>% of people reporting that they are satisfied with facilities' provision</p>
Belfast Agenda Theme 3. Our Place, creating a liveable and connected, vibrant and competitive city.		
Desired Outcome	CSP Strategic priority	Success Measures
<p>Where everyone fulfils their potential.</p> <p>Where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing.</p> <p>That is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all.</p>	<p>Joined up: statutory and community and voluntary sector organisations collaborate and work together to deliver services, raise awareness, or sign-post to other service providers.</p>	<p>Number of joint services and activity programmes delivered via partnership arrangements.</p>
	<p>Partnership: creation and implementation of formal joint working relationships for service development, service delivery, or advocacy.</p>	<p>Number of formal partnerships established</p> <p>Number of joint services and activity programmes delivered via formal partnership arrangements.</p>

Our implementation plan

How we will implement our community support

To achieve our Vision, we will:

- Develop operational action plans under key priorities, ensuring Council community facilities and staff resources are targeted towards realising our identified priorities.
- We will refresh and update our funding programmes to reflect current and projected future community support needs.
- We will seek to actively develop enhanced connections and collaboration between communities, Council supports and wider agencies, thereby maximising the impacts of our work. We will prioritise our work to meet community needs and add value to other programmes and support services, rather than duplicating existing provision.
- We will retain flexibility in our approach so that emerging community needs and priorities can be addressed through the delivery of Council services and our funding programmes.

Our Council service delivery priorities

Council recognises that public services are under increasing pressure from increasing community need, changing demographics and social patterns and increased pressure on budgets available. The Council will therefore undertake to work more effectively in partnership with the local community and the community and voluntary sector in meeting these challenges. In the delivery of community development activity, the Council will strive to better meet the community needs captured during this review to focus its priorities on:

- Leading networking / co-ordination & partnership development in local communities
- Supporting volunteering by creating new and better opportunities for people to give their time and make a difference to their communities and the issues they care about.
- Providing access to mentoring / training for community organisations
- Reviewing the current provision of council facilities across the city to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet identified need.
- Delivery and co-ordination of activity programmes.

Our funding plan

Our funding programmes will change to ensure they are better able to meet current and future community needs. From 2026 we will offer funding through the following approach.

	Funding Scale	Key Features
1	Large Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Value (tbc by members) per annum. ● Multi-annual funding – up to a 3 year programme. ● Eligible costs will include core running /staffing and programming costs for activity that meets agreed outcomes.
2	Small Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Value up to (tbc by members) per annum ● Delivered within 1 year period. ● Annual application.
3	Social Supermarkets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Value up to £50k ● Delivered within 1 year period. ● Annual open call application ● Subject to Department for Communities annual funding
4	Advice	<p>Services which provide free, independent, accessible advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This funding supports 5 area based advice consortia to deliver advice services across the city.
5	Summer Schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Value up to £2,500 ● Delivered during school summer holiday period ● Annual application

Aligning Council and funded services

Throughout the consultation process and development of the Community Support Plan it has been clear Council service delivery and funded community service delivery should align and strive to meet the same overall priorities and objectives. The table below illustrates how this will be achieved:

Priority	Council Delivery (Programming / Support / Facilities)	Funding Support
Active, engaged and resilient communities		
<p>Active Communities: residents are active and involved in community activities, community organisations and wider community relationships in positive ways.</p>	<p>BCC will develop and deliver a broad programme of activities in our facilities that meets local needs and caters to a diverse range of people.</p> <p>BCC will work with VCSE and statutory partners to co-ordinate programmes/activities in communities and foster collaboration.</p> <p>BCC will ensure that resources are used effectively to deliver complementary programmes and avoid duplication.</p> <p>BCC will manage relevant grant programmes and report on outcomes achieved on an annual basis.</p> <p>BCC will support organisations to make applications to deliver projects for local communities both to council and other funders.</p>	<p>Small grant programme will support activities that will contribute to Active Communities priority.</p> <p>Funded activity could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Programme of activities ■ Community events ■ Costs for recruiting, involving, managing and supporting volunteers for related activity
<p>Engaged communities: residents are active and involved in their community in the delivery of services, designing the type of services on offer and benefiting from the supports provided</p>	<p>BCC will provide a range of support and advice to current and new community organisations and will take a needs based approach to working in communities.</p> <p>BCC will work with VCSE and statutory partners to foster collaboration to ensure that resources are used effectively to meets local needs and priorities.</p> <p>BCC will ensure that work delivered through the Community Support Plan aligns with other programmes delivered by council including Good Relations, Community Safety, Leisure Development, Health Development and other relevant services.</p>	<p>Grant programme to support VCSE organisations to deliver projects that meet local needs within neighbourhood facilities.</p> <p>Funded activity could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff costs for development/project worker ■ Costs to facilitate community involvement such as core running costs, venue hire, facilitation, volunteer expenses.
<p>Resilient communities: local communities and the community organisations that serve them will have access to resources that support delivery of effective community support.</p>	<p>BCC will provide a range of support and advice to current and new community organisations to develop their skills and support sustainability.</p> <p>Council will support organisations that receive financial support from council funding programmes through individual and networking meetings to address issues and identify areas for collaboration. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Advice ■ Social Supermarkets ■ Community Support Grants ■ Independently Managed Community Centres 	<p>Council will provide funding for projects/services that directly meet identified community need. These will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Advice Services – community based services across the city that can provide free, independent advice on a range of issues. ■ Social Supermarkets – projects that provide food support to the most vulnerable alongside other wraparound services. ■ Community Support Grants - support VCSE organisations to meet local need, develop their skills and support sustainability.

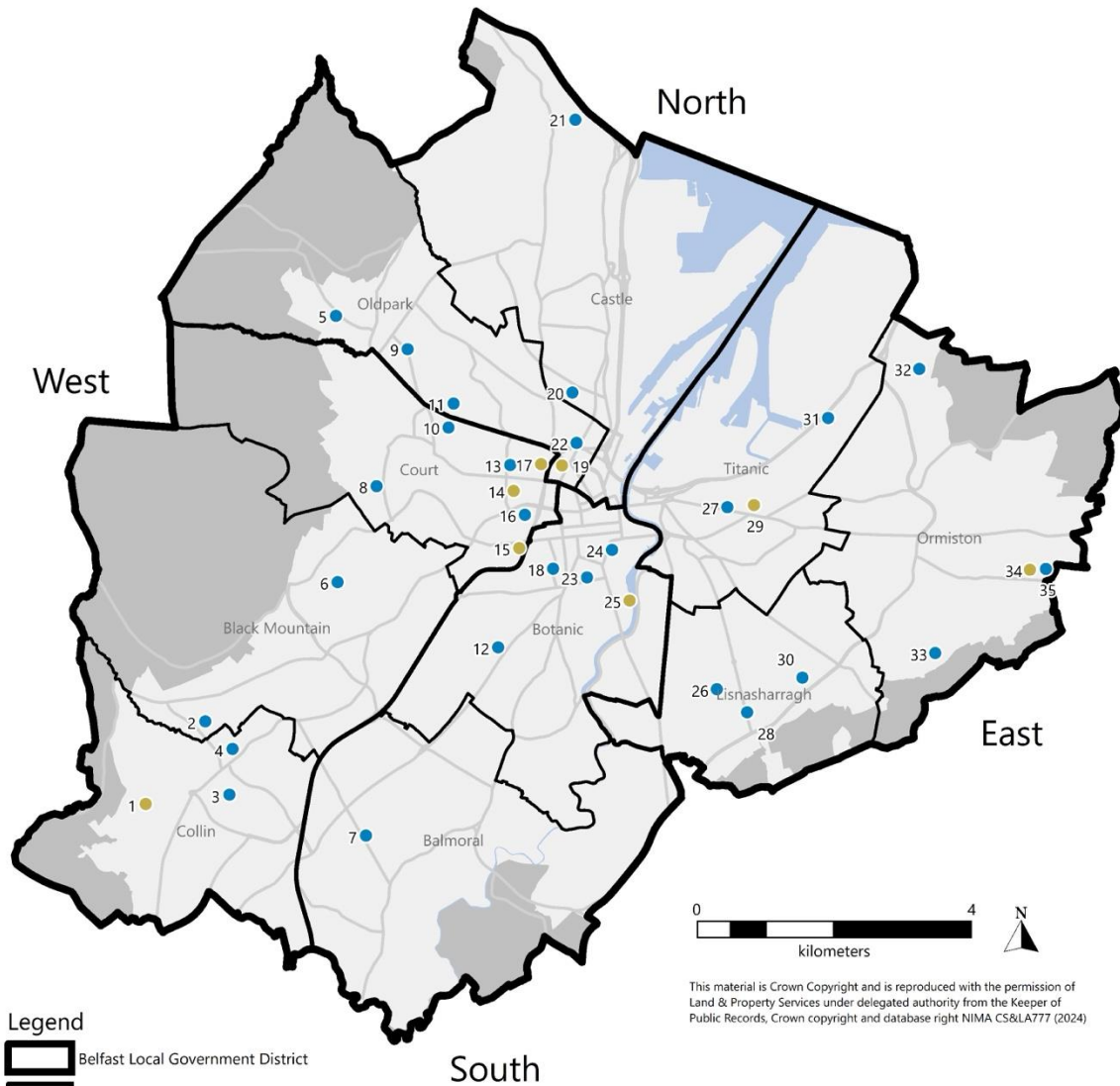
Priority	Council Delivery (Programming / Support / Facilities)	Funding Support
Access to quality community facilities		
<p>Access: communities will have access to community buildings and spaces which enable delivery of community based services and activities.</p>	<p>BCC will work with VCSE and statutory partners to co-ordinate programmes/activities in communities and foster collaboration.</p> <p>BCC will ensure that resources are used effectively to deliver complementary programmes and avoid duplication.</p> <p>Develop a programme of work to increase the number of programmes and activities that are delivered in BCC facilities through direct service provision and by local organisations.</p> <p>Increase the number of Council programmes across wider council teams that are delivered in our facilities.</p> <p>Implement a new electronic booking system for council owned community centres.</p> <p>Council will provide training and ongoing support to VCSE organisations funded through Community Support to ensure that they are aware of good practice in terms of facility management and application of appropriate policies/requirements.</p>	<p>Support community managed facilities through grant aid (Community Support) and service agreements.</p>
<p>Quality: facilities will be available which are fit for purpose, and which make provision for the range of service needs presented by the community. their respective geographical / sectoral communities.</p>	<p>Council will ensure that all BCC community centres meet agreed quality standards.</p> <p>Council will provide training and ongoing support to VCSE organisations funded through Community Support to ensure that they are aware of good practice in terms of facility management and application of appropriate policies/requirements and will provide training where appropriate.</p>	<p>Support community managed facilities through grant aid (Community Support) and service agreements.</p>
3. Joining up community support through partnership development and collaboration		
<p>Joined up: community and voluntary sector organisations collaborating and working together to deliver services, raise awareness, or sign-post to other service providers.</p>	<p>BCC will lead on collaboration in local areas, working with the community to coordinate voluntary groups and networks that provide support to the community.</p>	<p>Council will provide funding for projects/services that take a collaborative approach to directly meeting identified community need.</p>
<p>Partnership: creation and implementation of formal joint working relationships for service development, service delivery, or advocacy.</p>	<p>Develop a plan for the creation and development of formal working relationships in local communities to improve delivery of services.</p> <p>Council will support organisations that receive financial support from council funding programmes through quarterly individual and networking meetings to address issues and identify areas for collaboration. This will include, advice, social supermarkets, community Support and independently managed community centres.</p>	<p>Council will provide funding for projects/services that directly meet identified community need. This can include costs for partnership development and delivery.</p>

How we will continue to include you

Our Community Support Plan has been developed based on feedback from communities for communities. Your involvement is important to us and as we move forwards through Plan implementation we will:

- Continue to engage with community representatives gaining regular updates on key issues and needs impacting local community services.
- Seek your feedback on the effectiveness of Council community service delivery, including community facilities and targeting of wider community support resources.
- Engage with grant recipients to gain an understanding of how funded projects are delivering against their proposed impacts and outcomes.
- Seek your feedback on how funding programmes are enabling and effecting desired community change.
- Where and when we decide there is a need and / or benefit in making further changes to our grant programmes and service delivery we will communicate these proposals to communities that may be affected.

Annex 1: Community Centre Locations



This material is Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of Land & Property Services under delegated authority from the Keeper of Public Records, Crown copyright and database right NIMA CS&LA777 (2024)

Legend

- Belfast Local Government District
- Belfast Quadrant
- Belfast District Electoral Area

Belfast City Council managed community centre

- 2 Glen Road Community Centre
- 3 Suffolk Community Centre
- 4 Horn Drive Community Centre
- 5 Ligoniel Community Centre
- 6 Whiterock Community Centre and Playcentre
- 7 Finaghy Community Centre
- 8 Highfield Community Centre
- 9 Concorde Community Centre
- 10 Woodvale Community Centre
- 11 Ardoyne Community Centre
- 12 Morton Community Centre
- 13 Hammer Community Centre
- 16 Divis Community Centre
- 18 Sandy Row Community Centre
- 20 Duncairn Community Centre
- 21 Whiterock Community Centre
- 22 North Queen Street Community Centre
- 23 Donegall Pass Community Centre
- 24 Markets Community Centre

South

- 26 Cregagh Youth and Community Centre
 - 27 Dee Street Community Centre
 - 28 Downshire Community Hall
 - 30 Clonduff Drive Community Centre
 - 31 Inverary Community Centre
 - 32 Knocknagoney Community Centre
 - 33 Braniel Community Centre
 - 35 Tullycarnet Community Centre
- Independently managed community centre
- 1 Sally Gardens Community Centre
 - 14 Percy Street Community Centre
 - 15 Grosvenor Community Centre
 - 17 Denmark Street Community Centre
 - 19 Carrickhill Community Centre
 - 25 Shaftesbury Community and Recreation Centre
 - 29 Ballymacarrett Community Centre
 - 34 Hanwood Centre

Annex 2: Research - Funding Sources Considered

Funding Source	Fund	Value
National Lottery Community Fund	Awards for All	£300 to £20,000
National Lottery Community Fund	Sustainable Community Buildings	Up to £50,000
National Lottery Community Fund	The UK Fund (including Empowering Young People)	£500,000 - £5 million
National Lottery Community Fund	Dormant Accounts Fund NI	Variable
PEACEPLUS Programme	Empowering Communities Cross Community Change Maker Fund	Up to €100,000
Community Relations Council	Cultural Diversity Grant Scheme	Up to £10,000
Community Foundation for NI	Variable – currently small grants linked to renewable energy providers.	Variable
Belfast City Council	Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund	Variable
Belfast City Council	Multi-annual Cultural Grants	Variable
Department for Communities	Community Cohesion Fund Small Pockets Deprivation Fund NIHE Enterprise Plus	Variable

Annex 3: Community Support Plan – Overview of Engagement sessions and Public Survey

Date	Time	Venue	Attendance
Wednesday 5 June	2.00 – 4.00	City Hall	18
Tuesday 11 June	10.00 – 12.00	Girdwood	20
Tuesday 11 June	2.00 – 4.00	Cregagh CC	12
Wednesday 12 June	10.00 – 12.00	Olympia	6
Friday 14 June	10.00 – 12.00	Horn Drive CC	19
Friday 14 June	2.00 – 4.00	Hammer CC	6
Tuesday 18 June (Sec 75)	2.00 – 4.00	City Hall	24
Wednesday 19 June	7.00 – 9.00	Olympia	3
Wednesday 26 th June	6.30 – 8.00	On-line / virtual	14
Survey			94
Total Participants			216

Annex 4: Community Support Plan – Public Survey Questions


94 responses were received to the following questions:

1. Which of the following community support priorities do you think are the most important?
2. Which of the following community support services do you believe council should provide directly?
3. Looking at the list of community support activities, please indicate which activities, if any, that you think council should provide funding for i.e. so that community and voluntary organisations can deliver support?
4. Do you have any other comments about community support priorities in your area?
5. What time frame should funding be offered over?
6. What type of outcomes or measures of success should council consider to ensure funding achieves positive change within and for our communities?
7. If there are other types of funding opportunities not listed, that you think should be available via our Community Support Plan, please tell us.
8. Have you any other comments you would like to make about the priorities for supporting or funding community services in Belfast?

Contact us:

Department/ Team
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

 xxx@belfastcity.gov.uk

 028 9050 xxx

 www.belfastcity.gov.uk



Belfast
City Council



Subject:	Planning Information
Date:	21 March 2025
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	Ed Baker, Planning Manager (Development Management)

Restricted Reports													
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>												
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 													
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td></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"/>											

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To provide an update on Major planning applications and applications that have been determined by the Planning Committee.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The report is for notation.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	The Committee received an update on Planning Performance at its meeting on the 27 th August 2024. At that meeting and previously, the Committee sought a regular update on Major applications and applications that have been determined by the Planning Committee, especially those where a Decision Notice has yet to be issued.
3.2	All Major applications must be determined by the Planning Committee. The Key Performance Indicator (given in weeks) is calculated from when an application is considered to be valid to when the Decision Notice (“Green Form”) is issued. This means that any delays either pre- or post- committee will impact on the KPI. The target for determining a Major application is 30 weeks.
	<u>Major applications</u>
3.3	Appendix 1 sets out the Major applications that are currently with the Council to determine. Details are given on the location, proposal, the validation date and target date for determination (using the 30 week target set out in the Key Performance Indicator) as well as a status update.
	<u>Applications determined by Committee</u>
3.4	Appendix 2 sets out the applications that have been determined by Committee since February 2022 which are yet to issue. For completeness information is also given on those applications determined by Committee which have had their Decision Notice issued. Details are given on the time taken (in weeks) to bring the applications before Committee and where decisions are yet to be issued, information is given relating to the main reason for the delay.
	<u>Conclusion</u>
3.5	This report will be brought to each Planning Committee and to each Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for information on an ongoing basis
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.6	There are no financial or resource implications associated with this report.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.7	There are no equality or good relations / rural needs implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Major planning applications at March 2025 Appendix 2 – Applications determined by Committee at March 2025

Live Major Applications not previously considered by Committee @ 11.03.25

Number	Application No.	Category	Location	Proposal	Date Valid	Target Date	Status
1	LA04/2022/0809/F	Major	Lands to the south and west of Woodland Grange to the north of Blacks Gate and to the east of Moor Park Mews Belfast.	Amendments to approved schemes ref. Z/2008/0993/F (erection of 53 No. dwellings) & ref. Z/2013/0120/F (erection of 46 No. dwellings); to reduce overall density from 99 No. dwellings to 94 No. dwellings and associated and ancillary works.	21-Apr-22	17-Nov-22	UNDER CONSIDERATION
2	LA04/2023/2633/F	Major	St Teresa's GAC, 2 Glen Road Heights, Belfast BT11 8ER	Proposed extension to existing clubhouse to provide indoor sports hall, changing rooms, reception, and fitness suite. Proposed relocation of grass pitch and new 4G training pitch with integrated ball walls. Proposed annex building with club store and matchday shop. Site works including increased parking, fencing, catch nets, floodlighting, dugouts, paths, and other associated amenities.	14-Mar-23	10-Oct-23	UNDER CONSIDERATION
3	LA04/2023/3799/F	Major	Vacant lands (partial site of the former Wolfhill Flax Spinning Mill) located to the south, of Wolfhill Manor, north of Wolfhill Grove and west of Mill Avenue, Ligoniel Road, Belfast, BT14 8NR	New single storey 10-class based primary school, separate nursery school accommodation and school meals accommodation to facilitate the relocation of St. Vincent De Paul Primary School and Nursery from existing site on Ligoniel Road, Belfast. Proposal includes new pedestrian and vehicular accesses onto Mill Avenue, car parking, covered cycle storage area and hard play areas. Hard and soft landscaping including wildlife walkway, fencing, retaining walls, underground drainage system to include the reinstatement of underground storm sewer and headwall into adjacent DFI River wayleave. Includes temporary contractors compound and all associated site works.	09-Oct-23	06-May-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION
4	LA04/2023/4181/F	Major	Lands comprising the existing Sydenham Wastewater Pumping Station west of Park Avenue, Connswater River and King George V Playing Fields, to the south of the Sydenham By-Pass, east of The Oval football stadium, north and east of Parkgate Gardens and north of Parkgate Crescent, Parkgate Parade and Mersey Street, Belfast	Demolition of existing Wastewater Pumping Station (WwPS) with reinstatement of site as a landscaped area. Construction of a replacement WwPS including associated control building and hardstanding, the raising of site levels, in-channel works, provision of new rising main, other ancillary buildings, the creation of an access road on lands within the King George V Playing Fields to serve the facility, landscaping and other ancillary works. Provision of a temporary working area on lands within the King George V Playing Fields, the creation of a temporary access road from Mersey Street to facilitate construction traffic on lands to the rear of 1-35 Parkgate Gardens, the creation of a temporary footway adjacent to 88 Park Avenue and other ancillary development and landscaping restoration works.	14-Nov-23	11-Jun-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION
5	LA04/2024/0015/F	Major	Lands at Cabin Hill, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4	Erection of 53 residential units (including 43 dwellings and 10 apartments) including creation of access, internal roads, landscaping and associated works (amended description and plans).	22-Dec-23	19-Jul-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION
6	LA04/2024/0211/F	Major	Existing Football Stadium The Oval Parkgate Drive Belfast BT4 1EW.	Redevelopment of the existing stadium by way of demolition of both existing stands and construction of two new spectator stands with reconfiguration of existing standing terracing at goal ends, new turnstiles and associated siteworks including new floodlighting, additional car parking and improved circulation routes to provide an overall capacity for 6000 spectators on site.	15-Mar-24	11-Oct-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION

7	LA04/2024/0285/F	Major	Ardoyne Youth Club, Old Beltex Mill, Flax Street, Belfast, BT14 7EJ	Demolition of existing building and erection of a new purpose-built youth facility including retention of existing chimney. (Renewal of planning permission reference LA04/2018/1998/F)	20-Feb-24	17-Sep-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION
8	LA04/2024/0429/F	Major	Lands bound by North Street, Royal Avenue, Rosemary Street and building south of Lower Garfield Street located approximately 400m west of Laganside bus station 300m northeast of City Hall and 1km northwest of Central Train Station.	Renewal of planning permission LA04/2017/2126/F (Phase 1B Tribeca) for redevelopment including the construction of a new six storey building on the existing surface level car park, part change of use to create a mixed use development comprising retail units, restaurants and cafes, residential units, offices, church and related community floor space, new streets and public realm works. Demolition of 53 Royal Avenue and 27-31 Rosemary Street and restoration of Central Halls (37-39 Rosemary Street), Masonic Hall (15 Rosemary Street), 43/43a Rosemary Street and retention of 30-34 North Street.	08-Mar-24	04-Oct-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION
9	LA04/2024/0569/O	Major	STORMONT HOTEL 587 UPPER NEWTOWNARDS ROAD BALLYCLOGHAN BELFAST BT4 3LP	Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for independent living and assisted living retirement apartments (Use Class C3), associated internal access roads, communal open space, revised access from Castlevue Road, associated car parking, servicing, amenity space and landscaping.	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION
10	LA04/2024/0570/F	Major	Stormont Hotel, 587 Upper Newtownards Road BT4 3LP and adjacent properties at Castlevue Road (nos. 2, 4, 6, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 & 30), Summerhill Parade (nos. 18, 20 & 22), and Summerhill Park (nos. 37 & 39).	Change of use of from hotel, conference centre and offices (sui generis) to a 97-bed care home (Use Class C3(b)) and 1,559sqm diagnostic medical facility (Use Class D1(a)), associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space.	04-Apr-24	31-Oct-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION
11	LA04/2024/0675/F	Major	The Arches Centre 11-13 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5AA	Change of Use of first and second floor to 39 No. apartments; extension to second floor for 6 No. apartments and erection of new third floor for 19 No. apartments (all social housing dwellings, 64 No. in total), and ancillary/associated works. Solar panels on roof (amended plans and description).	13-May-24	09-Dec-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION
12	LA04/2024/0910/F	Major	70 whitewell Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 7ES Site at Hazelwood Integrated College	Redevelopment of Hazelwood Integrated College to include demolition of existing building and development of new school campus, new sports pitch, outdoor play areas, car parking, hard and soft landscaping and retention and refurbishment of the Listed Building (Graymount House) and other associated site works including a temporary mobile village during the construction process.	23-May-24	19-Dec-24	UNDER CONSIDERATION

13	LA04/2024/1385/F	Major	Olympic House, Titanic Quarter, 5 Queens Road, Belfast, BT3 9DH	Amendment to planning permission Z/2013/0931/F to permit occupation for Class B1(a) office and/or Class B1(c) research and development. (amended description)	09-Aug-24	07-Mar-25	UNDER CONSIDERATION
14	LA04/2024/1592/F	Major	Marlborough House, (no. 28-32 Victoria Street), and no. 8 Marlborough Street, Belfast BT1 3GG	Residential development comprising the demolition of no. 8 Marlborough Street, partial demolition of existing Marlborough House, and the refurbishment of existing Listed Building (Princes Court) (3 storeys), for the erection of 103 no. apartments (mix of 1-bed, 2-bed and 3 bed units) (7 storeys), with provision of private amenity, and internal and external communal amenity spaces; and associated site and infrastructure works.	20-Sep-24	18-Apr-25	UNDER CONSIDERATION
15	LA04/2024/1761/RM	Major	Land forming Plot 9 of the Kings Hall development as approved by LA04/2020/0845/O.	Application for approval of reserved matters application for a medical facility in accordance with outline planning permission LA04/2020/0845/O, seeking approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping details	15-Oct-24	13-May-25	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Page 113	LA04/2024/1836/F	Major	Lands between Ballygomartin Road and Upper Whiterock Road and to the west (rear) of Moyard Parade and New Barnsley Crescent, Belfast Co. Antrim BT13 3QZ	Proposed development of new walking trails linking Black Mountain Shared Space Project building (approved under LA04/2022/0853/F) on the Ballygomartin Road with the Upper Whiterock Road and Moyard Parade. Proposal to include gated accesses, stockproof fencing, seated areas, information signage, landscaping and associated site works.	25-Nov-24	23-Jun-25	UNDER CONSIDERATION
	17	LA04/2024/2044/F	Major	Lands at 39 Corporation Street, Belfast, BT1 3BA	Erection of 895 room Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) across 9-20 storey building blocks with communal facilities, internal and external communal amenity space including landscaped courtyard and roof terraces and ancillary accommodation. With additional use outside term time (no more than 50% of the rooms) as short-term let accommodation and (no more than 50% of the rooms) accommodation for use by further or higher education institutions	26-Nov-24	24-Jun-25
18	LA04/2024/2077/F	Major	Adelaide Business Centre 2-6 Apollo Road, Belfast, BT12 6HP	Proposed change of use from office space to Bowling Alley, Restaurant, Indoor Golf, Children's Soft Play, VR Zone & Amusements, Smoking Area, Car Parking and Associated Site Works.	29-Jan-25	27-Aug-25	UNDER CONSIDERATION
19	LA04/2024/2131/F	Major	38-52 Lisburn Road, Malone Lower, Belfast, BT9 6AA	Section 54 planning application to revise the wording of the planning condition numbers 13 and 15 (Relating access gradient and visibility splays) of planning approval LA04/2023/3778/F.	31-Jan-25	16-May-25	UNDER CONSIDERATION

20	LA04/2024/2134/F	Major	Site of the former Dunmurry Cricket Club, Ashley Park, Dunmurry, Belfast BT17 0QQ, located north of 1-10 Ashley Park and south of 1-20 Areema Grove and Areema Drive, Dunmurry.	Mixed use scheme for new community recreational facilities, including basketball court, parkland and residential development comprising 40no social/affordable housing units with landscaping and associated works.	21-Dec-24	19-Jul-25	UNDER CONSIDERATION
21	LA04/2024/2145/F	Major	Lands at North Foreshore / Giant's Park Dargan Road, Belfast, BT3 9LZ	Creation of a new Adventure Park comprising a community / visitor hub building including café, creche, flexible exhibition / community space, ancillary office space and maintenance yard. Development includes community gardens, bmx track, crazy golf, dog park, walking/running/cycle paths, outdoor amphitheatre, bio diversity zones, and recreational facilities. Associated landscaping and infrastructure (drainage, lighting, car / coach parking, WC block etc).	15-Jan-25	13-Aug-25	UNDER CONSIDERATION
Page 14	LA04/2025/0012/F	Major	Lands at the Waterworks Park, located off the Cavehill Road; and lands at Alexandra Park, located between Castleton Gardens and Deacon Street; extending along Castleton Gardens and Camberwell Terrace to the road junction approximately 30 metres to the north west of 347 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2HF	<p>Refurbishment and safety work to the Waterworks upper and lower reservoirs, and Alexandra Park Lake reservoir, to be complemented with wider environmental, landscape and connectivity improvements.</p> <p>The reservoir works comprise of a new overflow structure with reinforcement and protection of the return embankment parallel to the by-wash channel at Waterworks Upper reservoir. Repairs to the upstream face of Waterworks Lower reservoir with the addition of wetland planting to reduce the overall capacity of the reservoir.</p> <p>Removal of an existing parapet wall and embankment reinforcement at the Alexandra Park Lake reservoir.</p> <p>Improvements at Waterworks Park comprise the demolition of the existing Waterworks Bothy and replacement with a new building to include public toilets, Changing facilities, multi-purpose community room and kitchenette. Extension to existing Cavehill Road gatehouse building. Entrance improvements, new events space including multipurpose decking; resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; a dog park; replacement platforms and viewing area. New 3-on-3 basketball court; replacement surface to existing small sided 3G pitch; and upgrades to existing Queen Mary's playground.</p> <p>Improvements at Alexandra Park include the resurfacing of footways; new pedestrian lighting along key routes; new reinforced grass event space; new lake viewing area; new public toilets and changing places; entrance improvements. 2no existing bridges replaced; new pedestrian entrance; reimagined peace wall; new multi-sport synthetic surface with cover; and upgrades to existing play parks.</p> <p>Streetscape improvements along Camberwell Terrace and Castleton Gardens include resurfacing of footways with new kerbs; resurfaced carriageways and new tactile paving at pedestrian crossings; and all associated works.</p>	20-Dec-24	18-Jul-25	UNDER CONSIDERATION

Planning Applications Discussed at Committee Between 01 Apr 2019 and 11 Mar 2025

Decision Description	Totals
	28
Consent Granted	
Consent Refused	
Permission Granted	1
Permission Refused	
Total	29

Application No.	Location	Proposal	Category	Date Valid	Delegated Committee	Committee Date	Weeks between Valid date and Comm date	Weeks Since Committee	Weeks between Comm Date and Issued Date 2	Decision	Issue date	Today's Date	Reason decision not issued
LA04/2021/547/F	Lands at 124-126 Lisburn Road Belfast BT9 6AH	Demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment of site for 2 no. commercial units on ground floor; 11 no. 1 & 2 bed apartments; landscaped communal courtyard; and all associated site works.	LOC	30-Mar-21	C	15/02/2022	46	160	No Issue Date	Permission Granted		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2022/2059/F	Lands south of 56 Highcain Drive Belfast BT13 3RU Site located at junction between Highcain Drive and Dunboyne Park Belfast.	Proposed Social Housing Development Comprising of 12 no. 3p/2b semi-detached dwelling houses with incurtilage parking and associated site works. (amended description and site location plan)	LOC	04-Nov-22	C	29/06/2023	33	88	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2022/1924/F	160-164 Kingsway Dunmurry BT17 9RZ.	Mixed-use proposal comprising 13 apartments (with 13 car parking spaces) and coffee shop.	LOC	19-Oct-22	C	29/06/2023	36	88	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2023/2324/F	MOUNTAIN VIEW CENTRE NORGLLEN GARDENS BALLYMURPHY BELFAST ANTRIM BT11 8EL	Proposed redevelopment comprising demolition of an extant building and development of two apartment blocks (12 units category 1 over 55s tenure) and change of use/alterations of existing retail unit to apartments (8 units private tenure), communal amenity, parking, site access alterations, landscaping and ancillary site works	LOC	13-Dec-22	C	17/10/2023	44	73	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

LA04/2020/1858/F	Hillview Retail Park Crumlin Road Belfast.	Proposed residential development of 18 no. social housing units, comprising two terraces. Development includes associated car parking, gardens, landscaping, site access and all other site works. (amended plans uploaded to the Planning Portal on the 5th April 2023 that revise the proposed access and road layout, including the introduction of a traffic island).	LOC	08-Jan-21	C	14/11/2023	148	69	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2021/2016/F	21-29 Corporation Street & 18-24 Tomb Street Belfast.	Demolition of existing multi-storey car park and the erection of 298no. build for rent apartments (19 storey) including ground floor commercial unit (A1/A2), car/cycle parking provision along with associated development. (Further information received).	MAJ	26-Aug-21	C	16/01/2024	124	60	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2022/1219/F	177-183 Victoria Street 66-72 May Street and 4-8 Gloucester Street Belfast	Demolition of existing building and erection of 11 storey building (May Street/Victoria Street) and 4 storey building (Gloucester Street) comprising 77 apartments with communal areas, ground floor retail services (A2) unit, cycle and car parking, and vehicular access via Gloucester Street	MAJ	21-Jun-22	C	16/01/2024	82	60	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2022/0097/F	22-30 Hopefield Avenue Belfast BT15 5AP	Proposed three and a half storey residential development comprising of 18no. units (3no. wheelchair apartments and 15no. Category 1 - Social Housing) and associated access, bin storage, boundary treatments, bike stands, car parking and site and landscaping works (Amended Drawings)	LOC	04-Apr-22	C	13/02/2024	97	56	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

LA04/2017/1991/F	Land adjacent to Concourse Buildings Queens Road Belfast BT3 9DT.	Construction of a new 5 storey office development for science and I.T. based business and associated car parking and public realm works.	MAJ	20-Sep-17	C	19/03/2024	338	51	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2020/2105/F	1-5 Gaffikin Street Belfast BT12 5FH	Residential development comprising 55no. apartments comprising 12 no social, and 43 no private apartments and associated site works.	MAJ	21-Oct-20	C	19/03/2024	177	51	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2022/0612/F	Lands at the junction of Shankill Road, Lanark Way, and bound by Caledon Street, Belfast.	Residential scheme of 53 no. dwellings comprising 34 no. semi-detached and 4 no. detached) and 15 no. apartments (7 no. 2-bed and 8 no. 1-bed), amenity space, bin and bicycle storage, landscaping, access, car parking and all associated site works.(revised description & amended plans).	MAJ	15-Apr-22	C	18/06/2024	113	38	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0483/F	34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast	Proposed change of use from Office (B1) and restaurant (Sui Generis) to Hotel comprising of 88 no. bedrooms, two storey rooftop extension, restaurant and bar offerings, gym facilities, including new dormer windows on roof, internal and external refurbishment and alterations, and all associated site works.	MAJ	19-Mar-24	C	15/10/2024	30	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0480/DCA	34-44 Bedford Street and 6 Clarence Street, Belfast	Part demolition of existing buildings (stripping back of roof, shopfront and other external alterations to facilitate change of use and extension of buildings to hotel use.	LOC	29-Mar-24	C	15/10/2024	28	21	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0393/F	ECIT Building Queen's Road, Queen's Island, Belfast, BT3 9DT	Proposed 5 storey extension to the East of the ECIT Building (Institute of Electronics, Communications and Information Technology), and 3 storey extension to the West, to provide additional research and development space with associated landscaping and site works	MAJ	21-Mar-24	C	12/11/2024	33	17	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

LA04/2024/0369/F	Lands at Former Monarch Laundry site, and Broadway Hall Site, No's 451 - 457 Donegall Road, Belfast, BT12 6HD.	Proposed Specialist Nursing and Residential Care Facility comprising approximately 158 no. beds, day/dining rooms, treatment rooms, staff rooms, office/store rooms, including car parking provision, cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping, and associated site and access works.	MAJ	08-Feb-24	C	12/11/2024	39	17	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0122/F	Former Belfast Metropolitan College Campus, Whiterock Road, Belfast, BT12 7PG	Proposed mixed use development comprising of 62No. social housing units (mix of dwellings and apartments) and a new children's centre, car parking, landscaping, open space and all associated site and access works.	MAJ	19-Jan-24	C	10/12/2024	46	13	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/1138/F	Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street, Belfast.	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of Purpose Built Multi Storey Managed Student Accommodation (821no. rooms) with additional Short Term use outside of term time. Proposed heights of between 6-9 storeys and associated shared/ancillary spaces with ground floor retail/retail service units, resident's gym/cinema and ancillary development/uses. (Amended Description)	MAJ	16-Oct-24	C	10/12/2024	7	13	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/1141/DCA	Lands including and to the rear of 24-54 Castle Street, 2-6 Queen Street, 1-7 & 21 Fountain Street, Belfast	Demolition of existing buildings and construction of Purpose Built Multi Storey Managed Student Accommodation (821no. rooms) with heights of between 6-9 storeys and associated shared/ancillary spaces with ground floor retail/retail service units, resident's gym/cinema and ancillary development/uses	LOC	28-Jun-24	C	10/12/2024	23	13	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/1744/LBC	Belfast City Hall, 2 Donegall Square North, Belfast, BT1 5GS	Installation of metal gates to the Titanic Memorial Garden at the ground of Belfast City Hall	LOC	16-Oct-24	C	10/12/2024	7	13	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Deferred for Site Visit

LA04/2024/0626/F	1 Havelock House Havelock Place, Ormeau, Belfast, BT7 1EB .	Erection of 104no. social rented residential units (comprising a mix of General Social Housing and Category 1 over 55's accommodation) across two detached blocks [ranging between 3 and 5 storeys], landscaping, communal and private amenity space, ancillary cycle and car parking provision, and other associated site works	MAJ	17-Apr-24	C	10/12/2024	33	13	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2023/2557/F	Lands East of Meadowhill, North of Glencolin Court, North and East of Glencolin Rise, East of Glencolin Grove, North and West of Glen Road Rise, and North of Glen Road Grove. Belfast.	260 no. dwellings, children's play area and other ancillary and associated works.	MAJ	24-Feb-23	C	10/12/2024	93	13	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
LA04/2024/0714/F	Units 2A and 2B at 38 Boucher Road, Belfast, BT12 6HR.	Proposed development to create a private medical facility (a hospital within Class C3) comprising of the change of use of part of retail warehouse and the extension of the building to create a private medical facility with a significant element of overnight residential care together with all associated ancillary development.	MAJ	14-Feb-25	C	21/01/2025	-3	7	No Issue Date	Permission Granted		11/03/2025	Awaiting issuing
LA04/2024/0754/F	Lands immediately north and south of existing film studios, north of Dargan Road (within wider Belfast City Council lands known at North Foreshore/Giants Park), Belfast.	Retrospective application for the construction of a landscaped earth mound, new fencing, the reconfiguration of internal access arrangements to provide a new turning head, and associated site works. (Amended description and plans)	LOC	26-Apr-24	C	21/01/2025	38	7	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Issuing

LA04/2024/1458/F	Divis and The Black Mountain National Trust Site, Divis Road, Hannahstown, Belfast, BT17 0NG.	Alterations to the site include refurbishing and repurposing of 3no existing vernacular buildings to provide visitor facilities and replacing 1 shed, a small garage and an agricultural structure with a new amenity building. Enhancements to the existing pond network, introduction of signage interpretation and a suite of site-appropriate furniture. Wider site improvement works are proposed including path enhancements and new routes, installation of site furniture and interpretation signage.	MAJ	20-Sep-24	C	11/02/2025	20	4	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Consultees
LA04/2024/1837/F	Lands north of 14 Mill Race and 15 Belfield Heights and south of 2-15 St Gerards Manor Ballymurphy Belfast Co. Antrim	Variation of condition No. 20 of planning permission LA04/2022/0129/F to amend trigger point for implementation of approved foul and surface water drainage programme, from prior to commencement to prior to occupation.	MAJ	17-Nov-24	C	11/02/2025	12	4	4	Permission Granted	11 Mar 2025	11/03/2025	
LA04/2024/1623/F	49 Woodcot Avenue, Belfast, BT5 5JB	Change of use from 4 bed dwelling (C1) to 4 bed House of Multiple Occupancy (Sui Generis)	LOC	26-Sep-24	C	11/02/2025	19	4	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Deferred for Site Visit
LA04/2024/1551/F	Cathedral Gardens (Buoy Park), Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2GT	Public Realm Environmental Improvement scheme	LOC	26-Sep-24	C	11/02/2025	19	4	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Consultees
LA04/2020/2325/F	Lands at Former Maple Leaf Club 41-43 Park Avenue Belfast.	Proposed erection 21no. dwellings (social/affordable housing units comprising 17no. townhouses and 4no. semi-detached), car parking, landscaping and all associated site and access works (Amended drawings, additional information)	LOC	06-Nov-20	C	11/02/2025	222	4	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement

LA04/2019/0081/F	Lands at former Maple Leaf Club 41-43 Park Avenue Belfast.	Erection of 12No. apartments (social/affordable housing units comprising 3No. one bed & 9No. two bed) with provision of community pocket park, car parking, landscaping and all associated site and access works (Amended site location plan / site layout)	LOC	04-Oct-24	C	11/02/2025	18	4	No Issue Date	Decision To Be Issued		11/03/2025	Awaiting Section 76 Agreement
------------------	--	---	-----	-----------	---	------------	----	---	---------------	-----------------------	--	------------	-------------------------------

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	Proposed Planning Application Validation Checklist
Date:	21 st March 2025
Reporting Officer(s):	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer(s):	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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The Council has completed consultation on its Draft Planning Application Validation Checklist. The checklist has been amended to take account of consultation responses, where appropriate, and is proposed for adoption by the Council.
1.2	This report provides a summary of the consultation responses and sets out the proposed changes to the checklist, with the proposed Planning Application Validation Checklist appended (Appendix 3). The proposed checklist is to be considered by the Planning Committee on 18 th March 2025 for notation and comment, the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for agreement and Full Council for ratification and adoption.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the proposed Planning Application Validation Checklist at Appendix 3 for adoption.
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	The Council has completed consultation on its Draft Planning Application Validation Checklist. The Validation Checklist, once adopted, will set out additional statutory information requirements for applications for full planning permission, outline planning permission and approval of reserved matters over and above the current minimum statutory requirements (which remain unchanged).
3.2	The Committee agreed the preparation of and consultation on the draft Planning Application Validation Checklist at its meeting on 25 th October 2024. The report to that Committee sets out the reasons for the Validation Checklist and background to the consultation, and can be viewed here (item 5f).
3.3	The purpose of the Validation Checklist is to ensure that all the information that the Council needs to fully consider an application is provided at the beginning of the process when it is submitted. The checklist will provide certainty and clarity to applicants as to the information that is required and improve the quality of applications on submission, resulting in quicker decisions against statutory KPIs and more efficient consultation responses.

3.4	<p>The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has recently published Development Management Practice Note 8: Planning Application Validation Checklists, which provides guidance to councils on their preparation and implementation of validation checklists. The proposed checklist is consistent with this guidance.</p>
	<p><u>Format of Public Consultation</u></p>
3.5	<p>The public consultation ran from 03 December 2024 to 10 February 2025 (10 weeks). It included the following:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey on the Council’s website (promoted directly to customers, in staff email banners and through the Council’s various multimedia channels). • Engagement workshops with non-statutory consultees on 22nd January 2025 and statutory consultees on 23rd January 2025 (both online). • Customer workshop with planning agents, architects and applicants on 31st January 2025 (in person in City Hall). • One-to-one meetings with Shared Environmental Services (SES), DfI Rivers and NI Water on 10th February 2025 (online). • Discussion at the Planning Committee meeting on 11th February 2025.
3.6	<p>A copy of the Draft Planning Application Checklist that was subject to the public consultation is provided at Appendix 1.</p>
	<p><u>Consultation Responses</u></p>
3.7	<p>There were 31 responses to the online survey and eight responses received outside the online survey. A consultation report is provided at Appendix 2, which includes:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • background to the consultation • overview of the consultation process • summary of the respondents and key themes raised • detailed summary of each response, together with officer commentary and proposed changes to the final checklist.
	<p><u>Summary of representations</u></p>
3.8	<p>The main themes arising from the consultation included:</p>

- Broad agreement that the checklist is relevant and necessary.
- No consensus on how user friendly the checklist is – some felt that it was user friendly, others not, and most neither agreed nor disagreed.
- Some criticism as to the complexity of the checklist and that the information requirements may be onerous. In contrast, views that the information is needed, provided that it is reasonable and proportionate.
- Recognition that the indicative guide as to information requirements by type of planning application is overall very helpful.
- Some views that it would be useful to have some best practice examples of some of the requirements
- Desire for information requirements to be discussed with the Planning Service through a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD). Also, that information can be discussed and negotiated where appropriate as part of the validation process.
- Queries as to whether the various statements and assessments can be provided as part of another document (such as a planning statement or Design and Access Statement) or whether standalone documents are required – officers advise the former.
- General view that there should not be additional validation requirements for Householder applications (for example, neither a Biodiversity Checklist nor Climate Change Statement should be required).
- Assertion that information should only be required by the Council where it is relevant, reasonable and proportionate
- Specific suggestions on how parts of the checklist can be improved to make its implementation clearer and more reflective of planning policy.

Planning Committee

3.9

The draft checklist was discussed by the Planning Committee at its 11th February 2025 meeting. The Planning Committee suggested that it would be beneficial for the Council to provide an example of a Climate Change Statement to help Householders prepare their applications. As the Committee will note from this report, it is recommended that additional validation requirements for Householder applications are removed. Nevertheless, the Planning Service intends to make available clearer guidance for householders on the planning process generally, including the circumstances when planning permission is required and not needed (permitted development), how to make a planning application and examples of plans and supporting documentation with applications.

3.10	<p>The Chair of the Planning Committee asked that a glossary be included with plain language explanation of technical terms; this will be included in the final checklist.</p>
<p><u>Proposed Validation Checklist</u></p>	
3.11	<p>In response to the consultation, the following main changes are proposed in the final checklist.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The final checklist makes it clear that information can be provided in different formats, either as a standalone document or part of another document such as a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement. ii. The final checklist is explicit that information requirements will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and that information will be sought where it is relevant, reasonable and proportionate. Furthermore, that the checklist does not preclude the requirement for further information during the application process. iii. Establishment of service standards around timeliness of the validation process. iv. Removal of specific additional validation requirements for Householder applications. v. Inclusion of a non-technical glossary of terms and use of plain language throughout the checklist where possible. vi. Amendments to the indicative guide of requirements by type of planning application. vii. Various amendments to some of the specific information requirements. viii. Additional information requirement of a Waste Storage Plan. 	
3.12	<p>The final checklist recommended for agreement and adoption by the Council is provided at Appendix 3. The proposed changes to the draft checklist are highlighted in yellow for ease of reference.</p>
<p><u>Next steps</u></p>	
3.13	<p>Subject to approval by the Committee, adoption of the Planning Application Validation Checklist will be ratified by Full Council on 1st April 2025 to coincide with the beginning of the Planning Service's new performance year 2025/26.</p>
3.14	<p>The Planning Application Validation Checklist will be implemented from its publication on the Council's website, expected to be from 2nd April 2025. This will be formally announced through the website, social media and directly to customers on the Planning Service's customer list.</p>

	Financial & Resource Implications
3.15	The Council's ability to specify information requirements for particular types of application will have a beneficial impact on efficiency and timely processing of planning applications.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.16	The draft Validation Checklist has been subject to a Section 75 Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment. The consultation on these has informed the proposed final Planning Application Validation Checklist.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Copy of Draft Planning Application Validation Checklist (consultation)</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Consultation Report</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Proposed Planning Application Validation Checklist (final)</p> <p>Appendix 4 - Proposed Planning Application Validation Checklist Glossary</p>



Draft Planning Application Validation Checklist

For Consultation

December 2024



Guidelines

What is it?

On 1st October 2024, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) published legislation¹ that permits Councils to publish a “Validation Checklist”. The new legislation comes into operation on 1st April 2025, which gives councils time to prepare and consult on their proposed Validation Checklist.

A Validation Checklist informs applicants of the level and type of information required to be submitted (above the current minimum mandatory information which remains unchanged) for an application to be “valid” and processed by the Council. The purpose is to provide certainty and clarity to applicants and improve the quality of applications on submission, resulting in quicker decisions and more efficient consultee responses.

The Validation Checklist is aimed at applicants and planning agents. However, it will also be of interest to other stakeholders including consultees, communities and businesses in providing greater certainty as to the information required with applications at the start of the process.

The draft Validation Checklist is based on the Council’s “Application Checklist”, which was first published in 2018 and has become established for planning applications in Belfast.

DfI is intending to publish a [Development Management Practice Note](#) on the preparation and implementation of Validation Checklists.

How will it be applied?

The Validation Checklist applies to applications for full permission, outline permission and approval of reserved matters. It sets out the information that should be submitted, having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposal. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and the submitted information should be proportionate and sufficient to enable the appropriate consideration of the proposal.

We will review the planning application on submission to make sure it includes the current minimum mandatory information set by legislation and any additional information specified by the Validation Checklist. If information is missing, we will contact the applicant (or their agent) and request it. We will only require information in the Validation Checklist where it is reasonable (and proportionate) and we think it will be relevant, necessary and material to the consideration of the application.

To help customers, we have provided an [indicative guide](#) as to the typical information requirements by type of application. We are proposing that Householder applications (e.g. for domestic extensions, garages and outbuildings) only need to be accompanied by a Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for a Biodiversity Survey) and a short and succinct Climate Change Statement. Applications for other types of proposal will likely require additional information.

We recommend that each information type is provided as a separate document. However, it can alternatively be provided as part of another document such as a Planning Statement

¹ Planning (General Development Procedure Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

or Design and Access Statement. Where provided as part of another document, the applicant should clearly state in a covering letter where the information can be found.

We intend to publish a “checklist” alongside the final Validation Checklist that applicants can use as a prompt and to confirm/record which information they have provided with their application for administrative purposes.

Information that should be provided with an application in accordance with the Validation Checklist can be discussed with the Planning Service as part of a Pre-Application Discussion.

Is there a right of appeal?

Yes, if agreement is not reached between the Council and applicant (or their agent) on the need for the information, the Council will issue a “Notice” formally confirming the invalidity of the application to the applicant. The applicant may lodge an appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission concerning the invalidity of the application within 14 days of the date of the Notice.

It is expected that further information on the appeals process will become available on the [Planning Appeals Commission's website](#).

Indicative Guide - Information Requirements by Type of Application

The following is an indicative guide as to the information typically required for certain types of planning application.

Additional information may be required on a case-by-case basis according to the nature, scale and location of the proposal.

Hotel

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Odour Impact Assessment
- Waste Management Plan

Householder

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement

Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO)

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Parking Survey
- Residential Quality Statement
- Waste Management Plan

Major development

- Biodiversity Checklist with potential Biodiversity Survey
- Climate Change Statement
- Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Contextual Design Information
- Economic Statement
- Employability and Skills Profile (except for applications for environmental improvements and Multi-Use Game Areas)
- Health Impact Assessment
- Masterplanning Statement
- Open Space Statement
- Phasing Plan
- Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment Form (with potential for Transport Assessment)

Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement (including a Wheelchair Accessibility Statement)
- Biodiversity Checklist with potential Biodiversity Survey
- Climate Change Statement
- PBMSA Statement
- Residential Quality Statement
- Transport Assessment Form (with potential for Transport Assessment)

- Waste Management Plan

Residential Development – 1 to 4 Residential Units

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement
- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Residential Quality Statement

Residential Development – 5 to 9 Residential Units (or greater than 0.1ha)

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement
- Affordable Housing Proposal Form
- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Housing Mix Statement
- Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
- Residential Quality Statement

Residential Development – 10 to 49 Residential Units

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement (including a Wheelchair Accessibility Statement)
- Affordable Housing Proposal Form
- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Drainage Assessment
- Housing Mix Statement
- Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
- Residential Quality Statement
- Transport Assessment Form

Residential Development – 50 or more Residential Units (Major development)

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement (including a Wheelchair Accessibility Statement)
- Affordable Housing Proposal Form
- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Drainage Assessment
- Economic Statement
- Health Impact Assessment
- Housing Mix Statement
- Masterplanning Statement
- Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
- Planning Statement
- Residential Quality Statement
- Transport Assessment Form (with potential for Transport Assessment)

Short-term Let Accommodation For example, short-term holiday lets, self-catering apartments, apart-hotels and serviced apartments.

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Short-term Let Accommodation Statement

Specialist residential accommodation For example, sheltered housing, extra care housing, nursing homes and residential care homes.

- Biodiversity Checklist with potential Biodiversity Survey
- Climate Change Statement
- Specialist Housing Statement

Telecommunications Infrastructure For example, masts, antennae and base stations.

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Tele-communications Supporting Statement

Town Centre uses (cultural and community facilities, retail, leisure, entertainment and businesses)

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Offices: Office Impact Assessment
- Open Space Statement
- Retail or other main town centre uses: Retail Impact Assessment
- Retail or other main town centre uses: Sequential Test
- Transport Assessment Form (with potential for Transport Assessment)

Validation checklist

1. Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement
2. Affordable Housing Proposal Form
3. Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA)
4. Archaeological Impact Assessment
5. Archaeological Site Evaluation
6. Biodiversity Checklist
7. Biodiversity Survey
8. Climate Change Statement
9. Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement
10. (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
11. Contaminated Land Assessment
12. Contextual Design Information
13. Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment
14. Demolition Justification Statement
15. Drainage Assessment
16. Economic Statement
17. Employability and Skills Profile
18. Event Management Plan
19. Environmental Statement (EIA)
20. Flood Risk Assessment
21. Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
22. Heritage Impact Assessment
23. Housing Mix Statement
24. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)
25. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)
26. Lighting Impact Assessment
27. Marketing Statement
28. Masterplanning Statement
29. Noise Impact Assessment (NIA)
30. Odour Impact Assessment
31. Office Impact Assessment
32. Open Space Statement
33. Parking Survey
34. PBMSA Statement
35. Phasing Plan
36. Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)

37. Planning Statement Planning Policy Belfast LDP Plan Strategy – various policies
38. Residential Quality Statement
39. Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)
40. Sequential Test (main town centre uses)
41. Short-term Let Accommodation Statement
42. Specialist Housing Statement
43. Tall Buildings Design Statement
44. Tele-communications Supporting Statement
45. Transport Assessment
46. Transport Assessment Form
47. Travel Plan
48. Tree Report
49. Viability Assessment
50. Waste Management Plan
51. Wind Energy Statement

1. Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement

Planning Policy

Policy HOU7 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.297

SPG

Residential Design (Including Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation) Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy HOU7 of the Plan Strategy requires that all new homes should be designed in a flexible way to ensure that housing is adaptable throughout all stages of life, maximising the ability for occupants to remain in their homes and live independent lives for as long as possible.

An **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** sets out how the planning application addresses the requirements of Policy HOU7.

When is it required?

An **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** should be provided with all applications for permanent accommodation including:

- new homes including dwellings, apartments, maisonettes and other forms of permanent accommodation;
- Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation;
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

In addition, for applications for 10 residential units or more, the **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** should include a supplementary **“Wheelchair Accessibility Statement”**.

What should be included?

An **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** should include:

1. A written statement that sets out how each of the policy criteria a. to f. inclusive in Policy HOU7 are addressed. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.
2. Annotated scale drawings (or clear cross reference to such drawings provided with the application) that demonstrate how each of the satisfied criteria are addressed.

For applications for **10 residential units** or more, the **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** should include a supplemental **“Wheelchair Accessibility Statement”**, including:

1. a written statement that sets out how each of criteria g. to o. inclusive are addressed for at least 10% of the homes. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.
2. Annotated scale drawings (or clear cross reference to such drawings provided with the application) that demonstrate how each of the satisfied criteria are addressed.

Guidance

Further guidance is contained in the [Residential Design \(Including Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation\) Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).



2. Affordable Housing Proposal Form

Planning Policy

Policy HOU5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.143

SPG

Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy requires residential sites of a certain size or number of units to provide a minimum of 20% of the units as affordable housing. Affordable housing includes social rented housing; intermediate housing for sale; and intermediate housing for rent.

An **Affordable Housing Proposal Form** provides information on how Policy HOU5 is addressed by the application.

When is it required?

An **Affordable Housing Proposal Form** should be provided with applications for sites greater than 0.1 hectares and/or containing 5 or more residential units. It is required for proposals for general housing including dwelling houses, apartments and maisonettes, mixed-use developments, conversions, sub-divisions and changes of use.

For the avoidance of doubt, an **Affordable Housing Proposal Form** is not required for specialist housing including Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation and residential institutions such as care homes, nursing homes and supported housing schemes.

What should be included?

Applicants should complete and submit the **Affordable Housing Proposal Form** at "Appendix 1" of the [Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

A copy of the Affordable Housing Form can be obtained by emailing planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

Where Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy applies, and less than 20% affordable housing is proposed, a written statement should be provided that sets out why the minimum level of affordable housing is not proposed. For example, this could be based on grounds of either a) sustainability; and/or b) viability. Where the justification is on viability grounds, a **Viability Assessment** should be provided (see section 49).

Guidance

Further guidance is provided by the Council's [Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

3. Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA)

Planning Policy

Policy ENV1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.11- 4.12, Annex A

Guidance

Belfast Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026

What is it?

Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including air quality.

Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) is a process for determining the significance of the impact of proposed development on ambient air quality or determining the significance of the impact of local ambient air quality on proposed development. These impacts may need to be quantified and evaluated in the context of existing air quality, air quality objectives or limits.

When is it required?

An **AQIA** should be provided where the proposal:

- is to be located in an existing area of poor air quality such as in the case of an application for residential development;
- will cause a significant increase in road traffic flows or changes the proximity to receptors, e.g. car parks, realigned roads, junctions etc;
- introduces one or more substantial combustion processes, e.g. centralised boilers, generators, CHP plant or biomass, where there is a risk of impact at relevant receptors; or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives rise to potentially unacceptable air pollution impacts (such as dust) at nearby sensitive locations during demolition or construction processes. <p>What should be included? An AQIA should be undertaken with reference to the Government's local air quality management technical guidance (LAQM.TG (16) and associated air quality screening and assessment tools. Where necessary, the AQIA should also have regard to the requirements of the IAQM Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction. The AQIA may take the form of either a simple or detailed assessment but it must be sufficient to determine the significance of air quality impacts.</p> <p>Where the AQIA predicts that new development may give rise to, or experience a significant adverse air quality impact, the assessment should set out the measures to avoid, reduce and, where appropriate, offset the impact to ensure that relevant receptors are not exposed to pollution levels in excess of ambient air quality objectives or limits.</p> <p>Guidance In determining whether new development requires an AQIA, the Council refers to best practice guidance such as Environmental Protection UK and the Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality (January 2017).</p> <p>Information about current and historic ambient pollution levels, Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and the Council's various air quality reports can be found at: www.airqualityni.co.uk</p> <p>The Belfast City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2021 to 2026 can be found at: Air Quality Action Plan.</p>
<p>4. Archaeological Impact Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy BH5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Pars. 6.8-11</p>	<p>What is it? Policy BH5 of the Plan Strategy seeks to conserve and protect and where possible enhance archaeological assets. Where the impact of a development proposal on important archaeological remains is unclear, or the relative importance of such remains is uncertain, the council will normally require developers to provide further information in the form of an archaeological assessment or an archaeological evaluation.</p> <p>An Archaeological Impact Assessment identifies the potential impacts of the proposal upon archaeological assets, and upon potential new archaeological sites and features. It assesses the significance of assets, the magnitude of impact of development, and recommends mitigation. It is largely a desk-based exercise, incorporating the results of a site walkover survey and other specialist surveys as required.</p> <p>When is it required? An Archaeological Impact Assessment should be provided for proposals within an Area of Archaeological Interest or Potential where it involves the breaking of ground (i.e. an Archaeological Impact Assessment is not required for proposals that only involve the change of use of land or property).</p> <p>What should be included? An Archaeological Impact Assessment should be prepared by a qualified archaeologist and include a desk-based assessment to identify the known archaeological and related historic environment assets within the application site and within an appropriate study area.</p> <p>Guidance on what should be included in an Archaeological Impact Assessment is provided by the Department for Communities'</p>

	<p>“Development and Archaeology: Guidance on Archaeological Works in the Planning Process”.</p> <p>Guidance Applicants should take into account archaeological considerations and deal with them from the beginning of the development management process. The needs of archaeology and development can often be reconciled, and potential conflict avoided or much reduced, if applicants discuss their proposals early. The first step is for applicants to consult the Department for Communities’ Historic environment map viewer for known archaeological sites and monuments.</p>
<p>5. Archaeological Site Evaluation</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy BH5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Pars. 6.8-11.</p>	<p>What is it? Policy BH5 of the Plan Strategy seeks to conserve and protect and where possible enhance archaeological assets. Where the impact of a development proposal on important archaeological remains is unclear, or the relative importance of such remains is uncertain, the council will normally require developers to provide further information in the form of an archaeological assessment or an archaeological evaluation.</p> <p>An Archaeological Site Evaluation usually involves a targeted archaeological excavation, of limited scope, carried out by a licensed archaeologist. It is quite distinct from a full archaeological excavation. It aims to clarify the nature and extent of below-ground archaeological remains within a proposed development site. Evaluations may also be carried out to inform an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) for a site, particularly where areas of heightened archaeological potential have been identified.</p> <p>Evaluations can clarify the potential archaeological risks and constraints of a development site early in the planning process, including identifying areas where development may not be acceptable to planning policy. Evaluations may also influence the design and layout of a development to avoid or minimise archaeological impacts.</p> <p>When is it required? An Archaeological Site Evaluation should be provided with applications where it is essential to clarify if a proposal or aspects of it are acceptable having regard to Policy BH5 and if there is uncertainty as to whether the proposal would be acceptable in principle (i.e. such information cannot be provided after a planning decision through planning conditions).</p> <p>What should be included? An Archaeological Site Evaluation should be prepared by a qualified archaeologist. Guidance on what should be included in an Archaeological Impact Assessment is provided by the Department for Communities “Development and Archaeology: Guidance on Archaeological Works in the Planning Process”.</p> <p>Guidance Applicants should take into account archaeological considerations and deal with them from the beginning of the development management process. The needs of archaeology and development can often be reconciled, and potential conflict avoided or much reduced, if applicants discuss their proposals early. The first step is for applicants to consult the Department for Communities’ Historic environment map viewer for known archaeological sites and monuments.</p>
<p>6. Biodiversity Checklist</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy NH1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p>	<p>What is it? Policy NH1 of the Plan Strategy states that in assessing proposals, the Council will seek to ensure the protection of the district’s natural heritage and biodiversity.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Checklist is a ‘step by step’ tool which is used by applicants to help identify if a development proposal is likely to adversely</p>

<p>SPPS Par. 6.168-198</p>	<p>affect any biodiversity and natural heritage interests and whether further ecological assessments / surveys are required.</p> <p>When is it required? The Biodiversity Checklist should be provided with all applications where another biodiversity or ecological survey has not already been completed.</p> <p>What should be included? Applicants should complete and submit the Biodiversity Checklist available on DAERA's website.</p> <p>Guidance The Council has a statutory duty under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of policy or decision making and in drawing up development plans.</p> <p>DAERA provides standing advice on the development of land that may affect natural heritage interests.</p>
<p>7. Biodiversity Survey</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy NH1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Par. 6.168-198</p>	<p>What is it? Policy NH1 of the Plan Strategy states that in assessing proposals, the Council will seek to ensure the protection of the district's natural heritage and biodiversity. The council will require developers to undertake appropriate site surveys and assessments for consideration prior to planning applications being determined.</p> <p>A Biodiversity Survey (or ecological or wildlife survey) assesses the specific impacts of development proposals on natural heritage, including designated sites and priority habitats; and protected and priority species.</p> <p>When is it required? A Biodiversity Survey is required where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the need for a survey is identified as part of the completion of the Biodiversity Checklist (see section 6 above); or the proposal would impact or have the potential to impact on natural heritage, including designated sites and priority habitats; or protected and priority species. <p>Guidance The Council has a statutory duty under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of policy or decision making and in drawing up development plans.</p> <p>The DAERA provides standing advice on the development of land that may affect natural heritage interests.</p> <p>Further planning advice and guidance is provided on DAERA's website.</p>
<p>8. Climate Change Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5 and TRE1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.13 and 6.137</p> <p>SPG</p>	<p>What is it? Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5 of the Plan Strategy require proposals to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and include, where appropriate, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).</p> <p>Policy TRE1 seeks to ensure a net gain in tree numbers as a result of built development, in the interests of natural heritage, amenity, environmental quality and resilience. All proposals for new built development should seek to provide for additional tree planting appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the development.</p>

A **Climate Change Statement** sets out how the requirements of Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5 and TRE1 are addressed.

When is it required?

A **Climate Change Statement** should be submitted with all applications for new development (including new build, extensions, conversion of buildings and changes of use).

What should be included?

A **Climate Change Statement** should address Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5 and TRE1 of the Plan Strategy and be proportionate to the proposal and its context. Householder proposals (e.g. domestic extensions, garages and outbuildings) only require a short and succinct written statement about how climate change policy requirements have been addressed.

Annotated scale drawings should be provided (or clear cross reference to such drawings provided with the application) that demonstrate how each of the requirements are met.

Major applications

For applications for Major development, the **Climate Change Statement** should include the following. Where a requirement or criterion is not met, the statement must provide justification as to why this is the case.

Policy ENV2:

1. How the proposal incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce Green House Gases (GHG) by promoting sustainable patterns of development;
2. How the proposal maximises opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features where feasible (such as grey water recycling, green roofs, maximising use of recycled materials, orientating buildings to optimise solar gain, energy efficiency); and
3. How the proposal, where appropriate, demonstrates the highest feasible and viable sustainability standards in the design, construction, operation and “end of life” phases of development in line with the ‘nearly zero carbon buildings’ strategy set out in the EU energy performance and buildings directive, where all new buildings are required to be ‘nearly zero carbon’ by 2020.

Policy ENV3:

4. A written statement that sets out how each of the policy criteria a. to i. inclusive in Policy ENV3 are addressed. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.

Policy ENV5:

5. How the proposal addresses the need to include SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water runoff and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere. The following potential measures should be addressed:
 - Green roofs (intensive and/or extensive systems);
 - Swales;
 - Filter strips and filter drains;
 - Permeable or porous paving;
 - Detention basins;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open areas, ponds and wetlands; and • Trees and landscaping. <p><i>Policy TRE1:</i></p> <p>6. Proposals for a net gain in tree numbers (proposals for built development only).</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is provided by the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>9. Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy CGR1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.17</p>	<p>What is it? Policy CGR1 of the Plan Strategy relate to the consideration of community cohesion and good relations in respect of proposals at interface locations, in close proximity to peace infrastructure and are judged to impact on contested space.</p> <p>A Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement sets out how the requirements of Policy CGR1 are addressed.</p> <p>When is it required? A Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement should be provided with all applications for development at interface locations, in close proximity to peace infrastructure, or which would impact upon contested space. However, this does not include minor planning applications such as householder proposals.</p> <p>What must be included? A Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement should set out how each of the policy criteria a. to e. inclusive in Policy CRG1 are addressed. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.</p>
<p>10. (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies ENV1 and NH1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.11-4.12, Annex A</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including consideration of ground contamination, air quality, water quality, noise and light pollution.</p> <p>Policy NH1 of the Plan Strategy seeks to ensure the protection of the district's natural heritage and biodiversity.</p> <p>An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan provides a framework from which a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be developed to avoid, minimise or mitigate any construction effects on the environment.</p> <p>When is it required? An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan should be provided with applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIA development (see section 19); or • Major development in sensitive coastal and harbour areas; and within or in close proximity to, or hydrologically linked to, protected designated sites such as Special Protection Areas (SPA), RAMSAR sites and Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI). <p>What should be included? An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan should include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of all proposed site works, excavations and construction; • details of all areas to be used for the storage of substrate/spoil including a suitable buffer between location for storage of excavated spoil and construction materials and any watercourses or surface drain present on site or adjacent to site; • details of the pollution prevention measures to be employed during construction and operation including noise, vibration, dust, ambient air quality and contamination of both land and the water environment; • detailed drawing plans, demonstrating a suitable buffer between locations for refueling, storage of oil/fuel, concrete mixing and washing areas and any watercourses or surface drain present on site or adjacent to the site; and • a proposed storm drainage plan designed to the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in order to minimise the polluting effects of storm water on waterways. <p>Guidance Further guidance is available on DAERA's website.</p>
<p>11. Contaminated Land Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy ENV1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protect communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including from ground contamination.</p> <p>Land contamination can harm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human health; • drinking water supplies, groundwater and surface water; • soils; • ecosystems including wildlife, animals and wetlands; • property. <p>In accordance with the Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) guidance published by the UK Environment Agency, the Contaminated Land Assessment process is used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and assess if there is an unacceptable risk; • assess what remediation options are suitable to manage the risk; • plan and carry out remediation; • verify that remediation has worked. <p>When is it required? A Contaminated Land Assessment should be submitted with applications for proposals on, or close to, land which has a current or previous use that has the potential for harmful contamination.</p> <p>What should be included? A Contaminated Land Assessment should be produced by a competent person in accordance with the staged risk based approach presented in the LCRM guidance. There are 3 stages and each stage is broken down into tiers or steps.</p> <p><u>Stage 1: Risk assessment</u> The LCRM presents a tiered approach to risk assessment. The 3 tiers are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preliminary risk assessment. 2. Generic quantitative risk assessment. 3. Detailed quantitative risk assessment. <p><u>Stage 2: Options appraisal</u> There are 3 steps to follow.</p>

1. [Identify feasible remediation options.](#)
2. [Do a detailed evaluation of options.](#)
3. [Select the final remediation option.](#)

Stage 3: Remediation and verification

There are 4 steps to follow.

1. [Develop a remediation strategy.](#)
2. [Remediate.](#)
3. [Produce a verification report.](#)
4. [Do long term monitoring and maintenance, if required.](#)

Where a **Contaminated Land Assessment** is required, a preliminary risk assessment should be provided. The stages outlined above should then be followed; the risk assessment process may be exited at various stages if the assessment confirms that there are no unacceptable risks and that no further action is needed. All of the relevant reports (identified as being required through the process), up to and including the remediation strategy, should be submitted.

Guidance

A few examples of potentially contaminated land include:

- previously developed land (brownfield sites);
- former industrial land (for example engineering or chemical works, textile works and foundries);
- petrol filling stations and garages (and other land uses associated with fuel storage);
- waste facilities; and
- areas that have been subject to in-filling and/or reclamation.

Further information may be obtained by referring to [DoE Industry Profiles](#).

It should be noted that references to the Part 2A contaminated land regime within the LCRM do not apply in Northern Ireland.

All Contaminated Land Assessments should be undertaken in accordance with relevant British Standards and industry best practice (as outlined within the [LCRM guidance](#)).

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Land Use Database contains a record of approximately 14,000 sites across Northern Ireland that have had previous industrial land use(s). This database is available via the OSNI Spatial NI - Map Viewer. Other important sources of information in regard to land contamination assessments include historical maps (such as those provided within the PRONI Historical Maps viewer) and geological and hydrogeological information (such as that provided within the GSNI GeoIndex map viewer). It may also be useful to seek environmental information on specific sites from relevant authorities, including the Environmental Health Service in the Council.

12. Contextual Design Information

Planning Policy

Policies DES1, BH1, BH2 and BH3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.23- 4.40

SPG

Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy DES1 of the Plan Strategy relates to the principles of urban design and states that planning permission will be granted for new development that accords with design criteria relating to high quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking.

Policy BH1 relates to proposals affecting a Listed Building.

Policy BH2 relates to new development within or affect the setting of a Conservation Area.

Policy BH3 relates to new development within an Area of Townscape Character.

Contextual Design Information is visual material, such as drawings or CGIs, which accurately reflects the proposal in its immediate and local context, usually the existing street scene into which the development is to

<p>Residential Design Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>be placed. It is used to help assess the impact and suitability of the design of the proposal within its surrounding context.</p> <p>When is it required? Contextual Design Information will be required for the following (other than where they only involve a material change of use):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applications for Major development; • proposals that impact on built heritage including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, historic monuments/gardens, Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character; or • proposals that may significantly impact on the street-scene or townscape. <p>What should it include? The type of Contextual Design Information that is required will depend on the nature of the proposal, its location, scale and the potential impacts.</p> <p>Examples of Contextual Design Information include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extended scaled elevations, both existing and proposed, which illustrate the existing context and how the proposal responds to this context in relation to neighbouring buildings and the wider street-scene; • site sections; • photomontages showing existing and proposed key views; • axonometric drawings; and • 3D modelling such as use of VU.CITY: Belfast (an accurate 3D model of most of Belfast).
<p>13. Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies DES1 and RD1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.23- 4.40</p> <p>SPG Residential Design Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy DES1 of the Plan Strategy requires that proposals ensure no undue effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties or public spaces by minimising the impact of overshadowing and loss of daylight.</p> <p>Policy RD1 requires that proposals do not unduly affect the amenity of neighbouring residents, including loss of light and overshadowing.</p> <p>A Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment assesses the impact of the proposal on existing surrounding properties and open spaces in terms of daylight and sunlight. It may also assess the performance of the development for future occupants.</p> <p>When is it required? A Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment should be provided with all applications involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • buildings exceeding four storeys in height where adjoining other developed land or public open spaces; or • where proposed buildings or extensions could lead to harmful overshadowing of adjacent or other proposed buildings or spaces within or outside the site; or • where the proposed development would itself be subject to significant shading from adjoining buildings or trees, or the proposed development itself. <p>What should it include? A Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an aerial plan that shows shadowing impacts on adjacent buildings and public open spaces within and outside the site in respect of <u>both</u> the existing situation and proposed situation following implementation of the proposal. The assessment should

	<p>be provided at the Spring Equinox (20th or 21st March) and during the following times of day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8am; 10am; 12pm; 2pm; 4pm; and 6pm. <p>For applications for Major development, the assessment should include an assessment consistent with the latest relevant Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidance.</p> <p>2. an assessment of daylight and sunlight levels within the proposed development itself.</p> <p>For applications for Major development, the assessment should include an assessment consistent with the latest relevant Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidance.</p>
<p>14. Demolition Justification Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies BH2, BH3 and ENV2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.13, 6.15, 6.18s, 6.19 and 6.22</p>	<p>What is it? In the interests of mitigating climate change, Policy ENV2 of the Plan Strategy seeks to avoid demolition, where feasible, with consideration given to how existing buildings or main structures can be re-used.</p> <p>Policies BH2 and BH3 of the Plan Strategy state that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character respectively.</p> <p>A Demolition Justification Statement demonstrates why a building or structure that is normally protected by planning policy is not proposed to be retained and re-used.</p> <p>When is it required? A Demolition Justification Statement should be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the proposal involves demolition and replacement of a building or main structure, having regard to Policy ENV2 of the Plan Strategy. This information will also be sought where demolition has already taken place; or • for demolition of a building that makes a material contribution to a Conservation Area, having regard to Policy BH2 of the Plan Strategy; or • for demolition of a building that makes a material contribution to the distinctive character of an Area of Townscape Character, having regard to Policy BH3 of the Plan Strategy. <p>What should it include? The level of detail included in the Demolition Justification Statement should be proportionate to the nature and function of the building and the issues involved.</p> <p>The Demolition Justification Statement should explain why it is not feasible to retain and re-use the existing building/s or main structure/s that are proposed to be demolished and replaced. Factors may include the suitability of the building for the proposed use; its structural condition and/or financial viability and need to be evidenced. In these regards, the application may also require a Marketing Statement (see section 27) and/or Viability Assessment (see section 49).</p> <p>The Demolition Justification Statement should also include measures to minimise any waste through the re-use of as much building and sites materials as possible. If acceptable, those measures may be a secured as a planning condition were planning permission to be granted.</p>

15. Drainage Assessment

Planning Policy

Policies ENV4 and ENV5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.104 and 6.113

SPG

Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy ENV4 of the Plan Strategy states that in all circumstances the Council will adopt a precautionary approach in assessing proposals in areas that may be liable to flood risk presently or in the future.

Policy ENV5 of the Plan Strategy states that all built development should include, where appropriate, SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface runoff and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere.

A **Drainage Assessment** is a statement of the drainage issues relevant to a development proposal and the measures to provide the appropriate standard of drainage. The detail of the assessment will be proportionate to the nature of the proposal. (It may also be called a Drainage Impact Assessment).

When is it required?

In accordance with the [Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance](#), a **Drainage Assessment** should be provided for all development proposals that meet or exceed any of the following thresholds.

- new residential development comprising of 10 or more residential units; or
- a development site in excess of 1 hectare; or
- change of use involving new buildings and/or hardstanding surface exceeding 1,000 sqm in area.

A **Drainage Assessment** should also be provided for any development proposal, except for minor development, where:

- the proposed development is located in an area where there is evidence of a history of surface water flooding; or
- surface water run-off from the development may adversely impact upon other development or features of importance to nature conservation, archaeology or the built heritage.

What should be included?

Guidance on the information that should be contained in a **Drainage Assessment** is provided in Annex E of the [Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

16. Economic Statement

Planning Policy

Policies EC1, EC2, EC3, , EC5, EC6 and EC7 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.79-98

Guidance

Chapter 9 of the Developer Contributions Framework

What is it?

Policies EC1, EC2, EC3, EC5, EC6 and EC7 relate to proposals that have economic development impacts. Economic impacts of a proposal, such as investment, job creation and contribution to rates, are a material planning consideration relevant to the assessment of applications.

An **Economic Statement** sets out the economic impacts of new development on the area, whether specific to the neighbourhood in which the proposal would be located, city-wide, regional or international.

When is it required?

An **Economic Statement** should be submitted with all applications for Major development.

What should be included?

An Economic Statement should include:

- the level of economic investment;
- GDV impact on the local and, where relevant, regional economy;
- the number and type of jobs to be created both during the construction phase and on occupation, specifying whether the jobs are part time or full time;
- impact on rates;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any commitments to employability and skills and inclusive growth (also see section 17, Employability and Skills Profile); • whether the proposal is speculative or if there is a specific end user; • the timeframe for delivery of the development; • any wider benefits of the proposal to the economy. <p>Guidance Further guidance is provided in Chapter 9 of the Council's Developer Contributions Framework.</p>
<p>17. Employability and Skills Profile</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies EC1, EC2, EC3, EC5, EC6 and EC7 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.79-98</p> <p>Guidance Chapter 9 of the Developer Contributions Framework</p>	<p>What is it? Inclusive growth is a core aim of the Plan Strategy. Policies SP4, EC1, EC2, EC3, EC5, EC6 and EC7 relate to proposals that have economic development impacts. Policy EC4 seeks to protect zoned employment land.</p> <p>Chapter 9 of the Developer Contributions Framework sets out the circumstances in which developers will be required to make contributions to employability and skills.</p> <p>An Employability and Skills Profile provides a breakdown of proposed uses and an estimate of potential jobs to be created/displaced as a result of the development. This information enables the Council to undertake a “skills assessment”, which will inform whether employability and skills interventions are needed as a result of the development.</p> <p>When is it required? An Employability and Skills Profile should be provided with all applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major development (<u>except</u> for applications for environmental improvements and Multi-Use Game Areas); • proposals resulting in the loss of economic development uses. <p>Guidance An Employability and Skills Profile should include:</p> <p><u>Construction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of the “construction phase” including: estimated construction costs; period for construction including estimate start date and completion date; and any relevant phasing information (including demolition); • the number and type of Full Time Employment (FTE) jobs that will be created during the construction stage of the development including job occupations; • The approximate number and type of jobs that will be created during the occupation stage of the development based on purpose/use of development, including displacement calculations; and • For public sector construction, confirmation that Social Value applies. A Construction Employability and Skills Plan is not necessary in such cases. <p><u>Operation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the “operational phase” including: breakdown of floor space by use/number of bedrooms as applicable; • the number and type of Full Time Employment (FTE) jobs that will be created during the operational/occupation stage of the development based on purpose/use of development including displacement calculations; • for mixed use developments the expected breakdown of uses as related to the employment sectors, the approximate number and

	<p>type of jobs that will be created during the occupation stage of the development based on purpose/use of development; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the developer should base the provided figures on recognised employment densities and provide information on any assumption they have adopted. <p>Guidance The submitted information should be sufficient for the Council to carry out a “skills assessment” to establish whether employability and skills interventions are required.</p> <p>Where interventions are required, the applicant will be required to provide an Employability and Skills Plan. This will normally be secured through a Section 76 Planning Agreement (see section 36 Planning Agreements (Heads of Terms Form)).</p> <p>Further guidance is provided by the Council’s Developer Contributions Framework.</p>
<p>18. Event Management Plan</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies TRAN 3 and TRAN 6 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.11, 6.90 and 6.208. 6.213, Annex A</p>	<p>What is it? Policy TRAN 3 of the Plan Strategy requires a transport assessment to evaluate the transport implications of a development proposal, which is likely to have significant travel generating uses.</p> <p>Policy TRAN 6 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals involving direct access, or the intensification of the use of an existing access, onto a public road.</p> <p>An Event Management Plan sets out how the proposal seeks to minimise the transportation impacts of events that would be held as a result of the proposal.</p> <p>When is it required? An Event Management Plan should be provided with applications for proposals for commercial, recreational, cultural and community proposals which involve the hosting of events that generate significant large numbers of attendees and could result in significant travel disruption.</p> <p>What should be included? An Event Management Plan should consider the types of trips, in all modes, likely to visit the site, to ensure they can arrive, park if necessary and depart without causing a traffic safety hazard or disruption to other traffic on the network.</p> <p>Where disruption to the network is anticipated, the Event Management Plan should propose measures that are co-ordinated with PSNI, Department for Infrastructure Roads, and the local community as necessary, to mitigate these impacts. Evidence should be provided of the engagement and input of those bodies into the Event Management Plan.</p> <p>The Events Management Plan should consider measures to encourage sustainable travel, such as public transport, the use of coaches and off-site park and ride and shuttle bus facilities.</p>
<p>19. Environmental Statement (EIA)</p> <p>Legislation The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017</p>	<p>What is it? The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 (“the Regulations”) specifies the circumstances in which a proposal is “EIA” development and requires an Environmental Statement to be submitted alongside the planning application.</p> <p>An Environmental Statement sets out the likely significant effects of the proposal – whether positive or negative – and can relate to environmental, social or economic impacts.</p> <p>When is it required? An Environmental Statement should be submitted where:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development proposal falls under Schedule 1 of the Regulations; or • the development proposal falls under Schedule 2 of the Regulations and the Council has given a screening opinion that the proposal is “EIA” development and that an Environmental Statement is required; or • the applicant intends to submit an Environmental Statement alongside the planning application. <p>What should be included? Applicants should seek a “Scoping Opinion” from the Council as to the recommended content of the Environmental Statement before it is prepared.</p> <p>Guidance If the development proposal falls under Schedule 2 of the Regulations, the applicant is strongly advised to submit a formal request to the City Council for a “screening opinion” as to whether the proposal is EIA prior to submitting the application.</p> <p>Where an Environmental Statement is deemed to be required, the applicant is advised to seek a scoping opinion from the Council on its content.</p>
<p>20. Flood Risk Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy ENV4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.99-132</p> <p>SPG Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV4 of the Plan Strategy requires that planning applications in flood risk areas are accompanied by an assessment of the flood risk in the form of a Flood Risk Assessment.</p> <p>A Flood Risk Assessment is an assessment of the risk of flooding from all flooding mechanisms, the identification of flood mitigation measures and should provide advice on actions to be taken before and during a flood.</p> <p>When is it required? A Flood Risk Assessment should be provided with applications where the following circumstances apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when the proposed development is within fluvial / coastal flood plain / reservoir flood inundation area; or • where a more accurate definition of the flood plain and its extents is needed. <p>What should be included? Guidance on the information that should be contained in a Flood Risk Assessment is provided in Annex E of the Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Guidance Flood Maps can be viewed on the Department for Infrastructure website.</p>
<p>21. Health Impact Assessment (HIA)</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy HC1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.2, 4.3-4.10</p>	<p>What is it? Policy HC1 of the Plan Strategy seeks to ensure that all new developments maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles.</p> <p>A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) helps to ensure that health and wellbeing are properly considered in development proposals. In looking at how a proposal might affect people’s health, an HIA can identify ways to amend the proposal to reduce possible harmful effects and increase possible beneficial effects. HIAs can be done at any stage in the</p>

	<p>development process but are best done at the earliest stage possible in project design to allow scope for mitigations and other improvements.</p> <p>When is it required? A Health Impact Assessment should be provided with applications for Major residential, commercial and industrial development.</p> <p>A Health Impact Assessment may also be required for other forms of development with potential to have a significant adverse effect on public health and wellbeing.</p> <p>What should be included? The Health Impact Assessment should follow the methodology provided in the Council's Promoting Healthy Communities Technical Advice Note 1 and associated Appendix 1: Health Impact Assessment Screening Guide.</p>
<p>22. Heritage Impact Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies BH1 and BH2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.12, 6.13, 6.18 and 6.19</p>	<p>What is it? Policy BH1 relates to development affecting the setting of a Listed Building. Planning legislation requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving a Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.</p> <p>Policy BH2 relates to proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area. Planning legislation requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the character or appearance of a Conservation Area where opportunity does not arise to enhance it; and to enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area where an opportunity to do so does arise.</p> <p>A Heritage Impact Assessment assesses the impact of new development on built heritage, including the setting of a Listed Building or Scheduled Monument; or the character or appearance of a Conservation Area and its setting.</p> <p>When is it required? A Heritage Impact Assessment is required with planning applications for proposals that would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • likely significantly impact on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area or its setting; or • likely significantly impact on the setting of a Listed Building or Scheduled Monument. <p>What should be included? A Heritage Impact Assessment should identify the impacted heritage assets; define and analyse its setting; and assess the change.</p> <p>Guidance A Heritage Impact Assessment can form part of a Design and Access Statement.</p> <p>Historic environment advice and guidance in the planning process is provided on the Department for Communities' website.</p>
<p>23. Housing Mix Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy HOU6 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p>	<p>What is it? Policy HOU6 of the Plan Strategy requires housing proposals of a certain scale to provide a suitable mix of house types and sizes. The aim is to promote choice and assist in meeting community needs. There should be particular emphasis on provision for smaller homes across all tenures to meet future household requirements.</p> <p>A Housing Mix Statement provides details of the proposed mix of house types and sizes.</p>

SPG

Affordable Housing and Housing Mix SPG

When is it required?

A **Housing Mix Statement** should be provided with applications for new residential development on sites greater than 0.1 ha and/or containing 5 or more residential units. It is required for proposals for general housing including dwelling houses, apartments and maisonettes, mixed-use developments, conversions, sub-divisions and changes of use.

For the avoidance of doubt, a **Housing Mix Statement** is not required for specialist housing including Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation and residential institutions such as care homes, nursing homes and supported housing schemes.

What should be included?

The **Housing Mix Statement** should include the following:

1. A “housing mix schedule”, providing information on the number, type and size of each residential unit.

House type	Size (sqm)	Number of units
E.g. three-bedroom four person detached dwelling		
Etc.		

2. A written statement that demonstrates how the proposed housing mix has been informed by the following:
 - a. analysis of prevailing housing need in the area;
 - b. the location and size of the site;
 - c. specific characteristics of the development; and
 - d. the creation of balanced and sustainable communities.

Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.

Guidance

Further guidance is provided by the Council's [Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

24. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Planning Policy ss

Policies LC1, LC1A, LC1B, LC1C, LDCD, LC2, LC3 and LC4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.39 and 6.76

SPG

Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance

Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy LC1 of the Plan Strategy states that new development should seek to protect and, where appropriate, restore or improve the quality and amenity of the landscape. The Council will adopt the precautionary approach in assessing development proposals in any designated landscape, giving careful consideration to a range of criteria.

Policies LC1A (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), LC1B, (Areas of High Scenic Value), LC1C (Local Landscape Policy Areas) and LC1D (Landscape wedges), LC2 (Lagan valley regional park) and LC3 (Belfast Hills), LC4 (coastal areas) set out further specific landscape policy requirements.

A **Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)** is the process of evaluating the effects of a proposal on views and on the landscape itself (“townscape” is defined as the landscape within the built-up area).

When is it required?

A **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** should be provided for all “EIA development” where the proposal would likely have significant environmental effects on the landscape/townscape (also see section 19, **Environmental Statement**).

What should be included?

	<p>A Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment should follow the methodology set out in the Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.</p>
<p>25. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies LC1, LC1A, LC1B, LC1C, LDCD, LC2, LC3 and LC4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.39 and 6.76</p> <p>SPG Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy LC1 of the Plan Strategy states that new development should seek to protect and, where appropriate, restore or improve the quality and amenity of the landscape. The Council will adopt the precautionary approach in assessing development proposals in any designated landscape, giving careful consideration to a range of criteria.</p> <p>Policies LC1A (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), LC1B, (Areas of High Scenic Value), LC1C (Local Landscape Policy Areas) and LC1D (Landscape wedges), LC2 (Lagan valley regional park) and LC3 (Belfast Hills), LC4 (coastal areas) set out further specific landscape policy requirements.</p> <p>A Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) is the process of evaluating the effects of a proposal on views and on the landscape itself (“townscape” is defined as the landscape within the built-up area).</p> <p>When is it required? A Landscape and Visual Appraisal should be provided with applications for the following where the proposal is <u>not</u> EIA Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposals in the countryside which are likely to have a significant visual impact within the landscape, and for any Major applications within or affecting the setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; or • proposals in the urban area which are likely to have a significant visual impact on the townscape; or • proposals for wind turbines where their overall height would exceed 15 metres and where Environmental Impact Assessment is required. <p>What should be included? A Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal should follow the methodology set out in the Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. A LVA typically follows the format of an LVIA but, by definition, does not consider significance, with no requirement to give a judgement on the significance of effects.</p> <p>Further guidance is contained in the Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>26. Lighting Impact Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies ENV1, OS5 and OS7 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.11 and 6.213</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including light pollution.</p> <p>Policy OS5 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for intensive sports facilities. There should be no unacceptable impact on amenities of people living nearby including light pollution likely to be generated.</p> <p>Policy OS7 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for floodlighting. The council will only support the development of floodlighting associated with sports and outdoor recreational facilities where all the criteria in the policy are met.</p>

	<p>A Lighting Impact Assessment explains how proposals that include largescale external lighting, such as floodlighting, will impact on the visual amenity of the area, and living conditions of local people.</p> <p>When is it required? A Lighting Impact Assessment should be provided with applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposals involving largescale artificial lighting (such as floodlighting of sports pitches); or • proposals for sensitive receptors close to a largescale existing artificial light source. <p>What should be included? A Lighting Impact Assessment should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. technical specification of the external lighting, including a layout plan with beam orientation and a schedule of the equipment in the design; 2. details of any directional hoods or other forms of mitigation; 3. proposed hours of illumination; 4. a light overspill diagram with a vertical lux contour plot and calculated vertical lux levels at appropriate façade heights at sensitive premises, taking account of topography; 5. identification of the appropriate environmental zone as outlined in the relevant Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance document: and 6. the design and layout details of the proposal should demonstrate that any existing light sources will have no negative impact on habitable rooms. <p>Guidance Detailed guidance on lighting impact can be found on the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) website. This includes the ILP Guidance on Undertaking Environmental Lighting Impact Assessments and Guidance Note for the reduction of obtrusive light.</p> <p>Guidance is also provided by Sport England – Outdoor Sports Lighting Briefing Note.</p>
<p>27. Marketing Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies BH2, EC4 and TLC2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPG Loss of Zoned Employment Land Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policies BH2 and BH3 of the Plan Strategy seek to safeguard buildings that makes a material contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character from demolition.</p> <p>Policy EC4 of the Plan Strategy states that only in exceptional circumstances will the loss of zoned employment land be considered acceptable.</p> <p>Policy TLC2 of the Plan Strategy states that only in exceptional circumstances will the loss of existing tourism and leisure and cultural facilities and assets be considered acceptable.</p> <p>A Marketing Statement informs whether the existing use of a building or land is viable or likely to be viable in the context of market testing. The Council expects land premises to be actively marketed for at least 18 months before the application is made.</p> <p>When is it required? A Marketing Statement should be provided where the applicant seeks to demonstrate through market testing that the current use of a building or land is no longer viable, or is unlikely to be viable, and believes that this is</p>

	<p>an important material consideration when the planning application is assessed.</p> <p>For example, a Marketing Statement may be used to support applications which involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demolition of a building which makes a material contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character, having regard to Policies BH2 and BH3 of the Plan Strategy; or • loss of zoned employment land, having regard to Policy EC4 of the Plan Strategy; or • loss of existing tourism, leisure and cultural provision and assets, having regard to Policy TLC2 of the Plan Strategy <p>What should be included?</p> <p>The Marketing Statement should include the information specified at paragraphs 3.3.7 and 3.3.8 of the Loss of Zoned Employment Land Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>28. Masterplanning Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy DES2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.3, 4.2, 4.11, 4.12, 4.23-4.36</p> <p>SPG Masterplanning Approach for Major Development Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy DES2 of the Plan Strategy requires a masterplanning approach for Major development.</p> <p>A Masterplanning Statement sets out how proposals for Major development accord with the masterplanning principles set out in Policy DES2 of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p>When is it required? A Masterplanning Statement should be provided with all applications for Major development.</p> <p>What should be included? A Masterplanning Statement should set out how the proposal addresses criteria a. to h. inclusive of Policy DES2. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Masterplanning Approach for Major Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>29. Noise Impact Assessment (NIA)</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy ENV1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.11-4.12, Annex A</p> <p>SPG Evening and Night-time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Sensitive Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Guidance Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Advice Note 1 (EPAN 1)</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including noise.</p> <p>A Noise Impact Assessment sets out the potential for new development to impact on its surroundings by way of noise and/or vibration. Where necessary, it will include measures to mitigate noise and vibration impacts, particularly if the site is surrounded by sensitive premises such as housing and other residential uses.</p> <p>When is it required? A Noise Impact Assessment should be provided with applications where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noise and/or vibration arising from the proposed development has potential to adversely impact on nearby residential property or other noise sensitive premises such as schools or hospitals; or • proposed noise sensitive premises or development is likely to be exposed to adverse noise and/or vibration from an existing noise

	<p>source (e.g. from road traffic/railway/ entertainment venues/sports/leisure facilities/plant noise).</p> <p>What should be included? The Noise Impact Assessment should include the information and follow the guidance contained in the Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Advice Note 1 (EPAN 1).</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Sensitive Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance and Evening and Night-time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>30. Odour Impact Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy ENV1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.11 and 6.90</p> <p>SPG Sensitive Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Evening and Night-time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including air quality.</p> <p>An Odour Impact Assessment assesses the impact of odour generating uses on sensitive receptors; or the impact of existing nearby odour generating uses on proposals whose use/s are sensitive by nature.</p> <p>Where necessary and appropriate, the assessment should include measures to mitigate odour impacts. This shall include details of proposed odour abatement system controls and demonstrate that the proposed controls are fit for purpose.</p> <p>When is it required? An Odour Impact Assessment should be provided with applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposals for use/s which generate odour and have the potential to impact on the amenity of nearby sensitive receptors. Examples of odour generating uses include commercial kitchens, industrial processes, breweries/distilleries, waste transfer stations, sewage treatment/pumping stations; • proposals for sensitive uses which have the potential to be impacted by existing odour generating uses in the locality. Examples of sensitive uses include new housing proposals, offices, hotels and tourist accommodation. <p>What should be included? An Odour Impact Assessment should be carried out by competent person/s and in line with current best practice and guidance. Applicants are referred to guidance provided by the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM): Guidance on the Assessment of Odour for Planning.</p> <p>Details of an odour abatement system should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. scale floor plans and elevations showing the positioning and design of ventilation, flue/s and extraction equipment including termination points; 2. manufacturers details of the equipment proposed including odour abatement techniques; and 3. assessment of certain processes may require odour dispersion modelling to predict impact at sensitive receptors. <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Sensitive Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance and Evening and Night-time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Useful guidance is provided by DEFRA – Guidance on the Control of Odour and Noise from Commercial Kitchen Exhaust Systems (2005)</p>

	<p>(This guidance was officially withdrawn in 2017 but remains a useful reference point).</p> <p>A Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment may also be required (see section 30).</p>
<p>31. Office Impact Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies SD2, EC6 and RET2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.85 and 6.95</p> <p>SPG Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy EC6 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for office development. Proposals for Use Class B1(a) general offices outside specified areas must comply with the sequential approach with those in excess of 1,000 sqm gross floor space accompanied with an impact assessment and an assessment of need as set out in Policy RET2.</p> <p>Policy RET2 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for main town centre uses, including businesses (and offices). Proposals must demonstrate that there is not a sequentially preferable site in, or on the edge of, centres having regard to criteria of suitability, availability and viability; and submit a retail impact assessment of need for proposals that have a floor space of 1,000 sqm gross and above.</p> <p>An Office Impact Assessment sets out how the requirements of Policies EC6 and RET2 are addressed in respect of larger scale office proposals.</p> <p>When is it required? An Office Impact Assessment is required with planning applications for Use Class B1(a) general offices of 1,000 sqm gross floor space or greater outside the specified areas described in Policy EC6 of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p>What should be included? An Office Impact Assessment should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate that there is not a sequentially preferable site in, or on the edge of, centres having regard to criteria of suitability, availability and viability; and • include a retail impact assessment that demonstrates the impact of the proposal either by itself, or in combination with other committed development proposals, on the vitality and viability of centres within Belfast and its catchment. <p>Applicants should refer to the by step approach set out in paragraph 3.3 and paragraph 3.5 of the Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>

32. Open Space Statement

Planning Policy

Policy OS3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Paras 4.4, 4.8, 6.199, 6.200, 6.201 and 6.211

SPG

Residential Development Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy OS3 of the Plan Strategy requires all new development to include appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development.

Where the provision of public open space is proposed or required under Policy OS3, the precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to the following:

- a. a normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and
- b. complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development.

An **Open Space Statement** sets out how the requirements of Policy OS3 have been addressed.

When is it required?

An **Open Space Statement** should be provided with all applications for Major development for non-residential uses such as employment, retail, leisure, tourism, cultural and community uses.

Note: the requirement for open space for residential housing proposals are dealt with through a separate Residential Quality Statement (see section 38).

What should be included?

An **Open Space Statement** should address the requirements in Policy OS3 of the Plan Strategy, including the following.

1. how the policy requirement for at least 10% of the site area to be provided as public open space has been met – this should include a written description and annotated and scale plan showing the location of the open space;
2. how the policy requirement for complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, are incorporated into the design of the development;
3. where the requirements of Policy OS3 are not fully met, the reasoning must be explained.

33. Parking Survey

Planning Policy

Policy TRAN8 and TRAN9 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.296, 6.297 and 6.304

Guidance

Parking Standards (DfI)

Creating Places (DfI)

What is it?

Policy TRAN 8 of the Plan Strategy requires development proposals to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangement.

Parking standards are set out in the Department's [Parking Standards](#) guidance, currently under review.

A reduced level of car parking provision may be acceptable in a number of circumstances, including where the development would benefit from spare capacity available in nearby public car parks or adjacent on street car parking.

A **Parking Survey** assesses the number and location of parked vehicles and available space at any one time in the vicinity of the application site, either on street or in existing car parks, and provides an indication of parking trends and any available capacity that could serve the proposed development.

	<p>When is it required? A Parking Survey should be submitted when there is an identified parking need that cannot be accommodated within the application site.</p> <p>What should be included? A Parking Survey should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A survey of parked vehicles and available parking spaces within 200 metres radius (400 metres diameter) of the application site; 2. Parked vehicles and available spaces are to be shown on a plan; 3. Timed and dated photographs; 4. Areas of parking restriction (e.g. single yellow lines, double yellow lines, disabled parking spaces, waiting bays and other restrictions) must not be included and must be indicated on the plan; 5. Spaces within 15 metres of a junction should also not be included; 6. The survey should be undertaken over at least three days during the working week (i.e. Monday to Friday) and at least one day during the weekend; 7. Residential Parking Survey (in support of residential proposals) – the survey should take place between 7pm and 7am; and 8. Commercial Parking Survey (in support of commercial proposals) – the survey should take place between 7am and 7pm. <p>Guidance Parking standards are set out in the Department's Parking Standards guidance, currently under review.</p>
<p>34. PBMSA Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy HOU12 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPG PBMSA Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy HOU12 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for large-scale Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) where certain criteria are met.</p> <p>A PBMSA Statement sets out how the requirements of Policy HOU12 are addressed.</p> <p>When is it required? A PBMSA Statement should be submitted with all applications for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation.</p> <p>What must be included? The PBMSA Statement should set out how the proposal addresses criteria a. to e. inclusive of Policy HOU12 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.</p> <p>In respect of criterion e., a “statement of student housing need” should be submitted, which addresses the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the specific need that is being addressed, with reference to relevant Corporate Plans published by the city's further and higher education institutions; 2. why this need is currently unmet by existing student accommodation stock, implemented and un-implemented planning permissions for PBMSA; 3. the type of existing accommodation the potential student occupiers are likely to be drawn from; 4. any recorded increase in student numbers; 5. university support, if available;

	<p>6. current waiting lists for student accommodation;</p> <p>7. bedspace to student population ratio/percentage comparison to other university cities; and</p> <p>8. bank funding available to deliver proposals.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Draft Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>35. Phasing Plan</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies DES1 and DES2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Par. 6.301</p> <p>SPG Masterplanning Approach For Major Development Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy DES1 of the Plan Strategy relates to the principles of urban design.</p> <p>Policy DES2 of the Plan Strategy requires proposals for Major development to comply with specified masterplanning principles.</p> <p>A Phasing Plan sets out the sequence in which the various parts of a larger development scheme will be brought forward. The phasing is indicated on a diagrammatic plan with supporting narrative that describes the sequencing and why it is to take place in that order.</p> <p>When is it required? A Phasing Plan should be provided with applications for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major development; or • proposals intended to be implemented in phases. <p>What should be included? A Phasing Plan should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A plan demarcating the various proposed phases of the development; 2. Supporting narrative that describes the sequencing of the phases and why the proposal is proposed to be implemented in that order; 3. The sequencing of delivery of any infrastructure necessary to support the proposal; 4. If necessary, financial viability information to support the case for phasing of the development (also see section 49, Viability Assessment). <p>Guidance Further guidance is provided by the Masterplanning Approach For Major Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>36. Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies DES1, HOU5, HOU12, RD1, CRG1, HC1, CI1, CC1, TRAN8, ENV5 and OS3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 5.66, 5.67, 5.69 and 5.77</p> <p>Guidance Developer Contributions Framework</p>	<p>What is it? The Plan Strategy includes a range of planning policies that identify the potential requirement for a Planning Agreement to secure developer contributions, infrastructure or other forms of planning obligation to make the proposed development acceptable.</p> <p>A Heads of Terms Form sets out the applicant's intention to enter into a Planning Agreement as part of the planning application process, and describes the planning obligations that it is expected to contain. The Heads of Terms Form also provides important administrative information to assist the preparation of the Planning Agreement including details of ownership of the site and the solicitor acting on behalf of the applicant.</p> <p>When is it required? A Heads of Terms Form should be provided with all applications where it is expected that a Planning Agreement will be a prerequisite to the granting of planning permission, having regard to the planning policies in the Plan Strategy.</p>

	<p>What should be included? Applicants should complete the Heads of Terms Form template, which can be obtained by emailing planning@belfastcity.gov.uk</p> <p>Guidance The Council will draft the Planning Agreement based on a review of the Heads of Terms Form by the Planning Service.</p> <p>The Council's Developer Contribution Framework sets out circumstances when a Planning Agreement will be required to secure developer contributions.</p> <p>Further guidance on planning agreements is provided by Development Management Practice Note 21: Section 76 Planning Agreements</p>
<p>37. Planning Statement Planning Policy Belfast LDP Plan Strategy – various policies</p> <p>Planning Policy Belfast LDP Plan Strategy – various policies</p>	<p>What is it? A Planning Statement is a written document that explains the rationale for the proposal and provides an assessment in the context of the relevant local and regional planning policies.</p> <p>When is it required? A Planning Statement should be provided with applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major development; • proposals that would result in the loss of existing open space, having regard to Policy OS1 of the Plan Strategy; • proposals that would result in the loss of employment land; having regard to Policy EC4 of the Plan Strategy; • proposals that would result in the loss of community infrastructure, having regard to Policy CI1 of the Plan Strategy; • proposals that require the exceptions test to be applied as described in the Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance, having regard to Policy ENV4 of the Plan Strategy; and • proposals that would result in the demolition or part demolition of either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a Listed Building (Policy BH1); or - an un-listed building within a Conservation Area that makes a material contribution to the character or appearance of that Conservation Area (Policy BH2); or - an un-listed building within an Area of Townscape Character (including draft) that makes a material contribution to the character or appearance of that Area of Townscape Character (Policy BH3). <p>What should be included? The Planning Statement should set out how a development proposal takes account of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. It should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a description of the site and its surrounding context; 2. a description of the proposal and why it is needed; 3. relevant planning history; 4. summary of the relevant regional and local planning policies, including the Local Development Plan, and how those planning policies have been applied; 5. other relevant material considerations; 6. assessment of how the proposal addresses the key planning issues;

7. explanation if the proposal is contrary to any of the relevant planning policies (e.g. loss of open space);
8. suggested draft planning conditions in the event that planning permission is granted.

38. Residential Quality Statement

Planning Policy

Policies RD1 and OS3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.4, 4.8, 4.9, 6.199, 6.200, 6.201 and 6.211

SPG

Residential Design Supplementary Planning Guidance

Guidance

Creating Places

What is it?

Policy RD1 of the Plan Strategy requires new residential development to provide appropriate open space; to create a quality and sustainable residential environment in accordance with the space standards set out in Appendix C; and to ensure that living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms have access to natural light.

Policy OS3 of the Plan Strategy requires all new development to include appropriate provision for open space. Specific requirements are set out for residential development including the provision of integral public open space and an equipped children's play area for certain scale residential proposals.

Creating Places (Departmental guidance) provides guidance on garden and amenity standards. For dwellinghouses, the average space garden size should be around 70 sqm or greater. For any individual house, however, an area less than around 40 sqm will generally be unacceptable. In the case of apartment or flat developments, or 1 and 2 bedroomed houses on small urban infill sites, private communal open space will be acceptable in the form of landscaped areas, courtyards or roof gardens. These should range from a minimum of 10 sqm per unit to around 30 sqm per unit. The appropriate level of provision should be determined by having regard to the particular context of the development and the overall design concept.

A **Residential Quality Statement** sets out how proposals for new residential development addresses policy requirements and guidance around open space, amenity space, space standards and natural light.

When is it required?

A **Residential Quality Statement** should be provided with applications for the following forms of residential accommodation, including new build, conversion, sub-division and material changes of use:

- new residential housing (including dwelling houses, apartments, flats and maisonettes);
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs); and
- Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) accommodation.

What should be included?

A **Residential Quality Statement** should:

1. For proposals of 25 or more units, set out the proposals for integral public open space and an equipped children's play area within the development as per the requirements of Policy OS3. Where the requirements are not met, the statement shall provide justification as to why this is the case.
2. Detail the proposed amenity space (external and internal) for each proposed residential unit, based on the following table:

Unit / Plot	External Amenity Space (sqm)	Internal Amenity Space (sqm)	Total Amenity Space (Sqm)
1			
2			
3			
Communal			
Total			
Average			

3. The size of each proposed residential unit (sqm) against the space standards in Appendix C of the Plan Strategy, based on the following table:

Unit type	Minimum space standard in Appendix C (sqm)	Proposed floor space (sqm).	No. of Units
e.g. 2 person / 1 bed	50	55	
e.g. 4 person / 3 bed (two storey)	80	95	
Etc.			

Guidance

Further guidance is provided by the [Residential Design Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

Applicants should also refer to the Department's [Creating Places: Achieving Quality in Residential Environments](#).

39. Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)

Planning Policy
Policies SD2, RET1, RET2, RET3 and RET4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.283 and 6.290

SPG
Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy RET1 of the Plan Strategy establishes a retail hierarchy to focus new retail development in existing centres in order of preference according to their type.

Policy RET2 requires proposals for main town centre uses outside of existing centres to be supported by a **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** for proposals that have a floorspace of 1,000 sqm gross and above.

A **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** considers the impacts of proposals for retail or other main town centre uses on the vitality and viability of Belfast City Centre, District centres and Local centres.

When is it required?

A **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** should be provided with applications for retail or other main town centre uses (including cultural and community facilities, retail, leisure, entertainment and businesses) outside of existing centres that have a floor space of 1,000 sqm gross and above.

What should be included?

A **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** should consider:

- the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
- the impact of the proposal on the vitality and viability of centres, including local consumer choice and trade

The **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** should adopt the step by step methodology as referred to in paragraph 3.3 of the [Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

In addition, the following information should be provided:

- detail the nature of and reasons for the proposal;
- identify and justify a catchment area from which the proposal will draw trade and customers taking account of factors including the nature of retailing of the proposal and transport links. Where a designated centre is located outside but adjacent to the

catchment, that centre should also be included in the assessment;

- identify a catchment area based on drive time journeys from the application site, sub-divided into 5-minute isochrone intervals, and clearly identified on a supporting catchment area map;
- include commentary on the vitality and viability of existing centres within the catchment;
- use an appropriate base and design year. The design year should generally be not less than 4 years after the base year, and include justification for the chosen design year;
- identify and use public published evidence sources for establishing existing and projected population, expenditure, and turnovers of existing retail developments for base and design years;
- justify trade diversion figures from existing facilities and any perceived diversions from outside the catchment area of the proposal;
- identify, consider, and justify the cumulative impacts of extant permissions and taking account of the proposal;
- examine the 'no development' scenario;
- impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in centres in the catchment area of the proposal;
- impact of the proposal on the vitality and viability of centres, including local consumer choice and trade; and
- an electronic copy of all supporting figures and tables.

Guidance

Further guidance is contained in the Council's [Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

40. Sequential Test (main town centre uses)

Planning Policy

Policies SD2, RET1, RET2, RET3 and RET4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Par. 6.280

SPG

Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy RET1 of the Plan Strategy establishes a retail hierarchy to focus new retail development in existing centres in order of preference according to their type. Policy RET2 requires proposals for main town centre uses outside of existing centres to demonstrate that there is not a sequentially preferable site in, or on the edge of, centres having regard to criteria of suitability, availability and viability.

The **Sequential Test** guides main town centre uses to sites within centres locations first. If no centre sites are available, developers should consider an edge of centre location. Only when centre locations or edge of centre locations are unavailable, can consideration be given to an out of centre location. In such cases the developer will still be required to demonstrate that the proposal will not harm existing centres.

When is it required?

The **Sequential Test** should be provided with applications for retail or other main town centre development (including cultural and community facilities, retail, leisure, entertainment and businesses) is proposed either in an edge of centre or an out of centre location. This advice is at officer level only and does not prejudice any future formal decision that the Council may wish to make. includes proposals for new build, extensions and changes of use.

What should be included?

A **Sequential Test** should follow the step by step approach set out in section 3.1 of the [Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

	<p>The Sequential Test should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be proportionate and appropriate for the proposal; • establish the appropriate catchment for the proposal based on the areas from which customers/visitors/users would be attracted. Catchments should include, where appropriate, an assessment of centres outside of the Council boundary, where relevant; • identify a catchment area based on drive time journeys from the proposed site, sub-divided into 5-minute isochrone intervals, and clearly identified on a supporting catchment area map; • identify which designated centres should be assessed. Where a designated centre is located outside but adjacent to the catchment, that centre should also be included in the assessment; • identify the sequentially preferable sites which should be assessed; and • assess the suitability, availability and viability of those sites; and • include scope for flexibility in the format and scale of the proposed development. <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>41. Short-term Let Accommodation Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies HOU3 HOU13 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.135, 6.136 and 6.137</p>	<p>What is it? Policy HOU3 of the Plan Strategy seeks to protect existing residential accommodation.</p> <p>Policy HOU13 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for short-term let accommodation and sets out criteria for assessing planning applications for such uses.</p> <p>A Short-term Let Accommodation Statement demonstrates how proposals for short-term let accommodation meet the requirements of Policy HOU13.</p> <p>When is it required? A Short-term Let Accommodation Statement should be provided with applications for short-term let accommodation – including short-term holiday lets; self-catering apartments; apart-hotels and serviced apartments.</p> <p>What should be included? The Short-term Let Accommodation Statement should address criteria a. to f. inclusive of Policy HOU13 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not fully met, this must be justified.</p>
<p>42. Specialist Housing Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy HOU8 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.14. 4.16. 6.137</p>	<p>What is it? Policy HOU8 of the Plan Strategy sets out the circumstances where planning permission will be granted for specialist residential accommodation, including retirement villages and care facilities.</p> <p>A Specialist Housing Statement demonstrates how proposals for specialist residential accommodation meet the requirements of Policy HOU8.</p> <p>When is it required? A Specialist Housing Statement should be provided with applications for specialist residential accommodation – including both new build and extensions – such as sheltered housing, extra care housing, nursing homes and residential care homes.</p>

	<p>What should be included? The Specialist Housing Statement should address criteria a. and b. inclusive of Policy HOU8 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not fully met, this must be justified.</p>
<p>43. Tall Buildings Design Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy DES3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.3, 4.2, 4.11, 4.12, 4.23-4.36</p> <p>SPG Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What it is? Policy DES3 of the Plan Strategy provides criteria for assessing proposals for tall buildings, defined as any building 35m above ordnance datum (AOD) or taller or those which are significantly higher than their surroundings.</p> <p>A Tall Buildings Design Statement sets out how proposals for tall buildings address the design criteria in Policy DES3.</p> <p>When is it required? A Tall Buildings Design Statement should be provided with applications for a tall building, defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any building 35 metres above ordnance datum (AOD) or taller; or • any building which is significantly higher than their surroundings. <p>What should be included? The Tall Buildings Design Statement should address criteria a. to h. inclusive of Policy DES3 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not met, this must be justified.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>44. Tele-communications Supporting Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy ITU 1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.235-250</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ITU 1 of the Plan Strategy sets out the requirements for proposals for telecommunications development.</p> <p>A Telecommunications Supporting Statement sets out the proposal addresses the requirements of Policy ITU 1, including technical justification for the proposals and demonstration as to how it has been sited and designed to minimise visual and environmental impact, including investigation of mast sharing.</p> <p>When is it required? A Telecommunications Supporting Statement should be provided with applications for telecommunications infrastructure comprising masts, antennae and base stations.</p> <p>What should be included? A Telecommunications Supporting Statement should address criteria a. to h. inclusive of Policy ITU 1 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not met, this must be justified.</p>

45. Transport Assessment

Planning Policy

Policy TRAN3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.303

SPG

Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance

Guidance

Chapter 10 of the Developer Contributions Framework

What is it?

Policy TRAN 3 of the Plan Strategy states that a transport assessment will be required to evaluate the transport implications of the development proposal, where it is likely to have significant travel generating uses.

A **Transport Assessment** is a comprehensive and systematic process that sets out various transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme in relation to all forms of travel. Where that mitigation relates to matters that can be addressed by management arrangements, the mitigation may inform the preparation of Travel Plans. Its purpose is to provide enough information for the Council and Department for Infrastructure (Roads) to understand how the proposal is likely to function in transport terms.

When is it required?

A **Transport Assessment** should be provided with applications for proposed development that would likely have significant transport implications.

Applicants should complete a Transport Assessment Form (TAF) to help establish if a detailed **Transport Assessment** is needed (also see section 46).

The following table provides a guide as to when a Transport Assessment may be required.

Food retail - 1,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Non-food retail - 1,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Cinemas and conference facilities - 1,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Leisure facilities - 1,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Business - 2,500 sqm Gross Floor Area
Industry - 5,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Distribution and warehousing - 10,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Hospitals - 2,500 sqm Gross Floor Area
Higher and further education 2,500 sqm Gross Floor Area
Stadia - 1,500 seats
Housing – 100 units

What should be included?

The requirement for and scope of a **Transport Assessment** should be discussed with the Council's Planning Service and DfI Roads as part of a Pre-Application Discussion.

Detailed guidance is provided by the Department's [Transport Assessment: Guidelines for Development Proposals in Northern Ireland \(November 2006\)](#) (currently under review).

[Further guidance is provided by the Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance.](#)

46. Transport Assessment Form

Planning Policy

Policies TRAN 1, TRAN 2, TRAN 4 and TRAN 6 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Par. 6.293-305

What is it?

Policy TRAN 1 of the Plan Strategy promotes active travel – walking and cycling. Policy TRAN 2 relates to creating an accessible environment. Policy TRAN 4 requires travel plans to be submitted for proposals for significant travel generating uses. Policy TRAN 6 relates to proposals involving access to public roads.

A **Transport Assessment Form** is a tool that applicants can use to screen out those applications where no further information on the transport impacts of the proposal is required. It helps the Council and DfI

<p>SPG Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>Roads understand the transport impacts of the proposal and how those impacts may be mitigated.</p> <p>When is it required? A Transport Assessment Form (TAF) should be submitted with applications for the following proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residential comprising 10 or more units; • non-residential with a gross floor area of 500 sqm or more; • likely to generate 30 or more vehicle movements per hour; • likely to generate 10 or more freight movements per day or 5 in any given hour. <p>What should be included? Applicants should complete the Transport Assessment Form at Appendix A of the Department’s Transport Assessment: Guidelines for Development Proposals in Northern Ireland (November 2006) (currently under review).</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is provided by the Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Further advice can be found on the Department of Infrastructure Roads website</p>
<p>47. Travel Plan</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy TRAN4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Par. 6.293-305</p> <p>SPG Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Guidance Chapter 10 of the Developer Contributions Framework</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV4 of the Plan Strategy states that proposals for significant travel generating uses will require a travel plan.</p> <p>A Travel Plan sets out a package of complementary measures for the delivery of sustainable travel. The objective of a Travel Plan is to reduce single occupancy car travel. However, a Travel Plan should not be used to make a development acceptable. A Travel Plan is a long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed. As such, critical elements of all successful Travel Plans include setting targets to improve sustainable travel, monitoring and review.</p> <p>When is it required? The requirement for a Travel Plan will be informed by the criteria set out in paragraph 3.4.3 of the Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>What should be included? Further guidance is provided by the Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>48. Tree Report</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies TRE1 and LC1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.192</p> <p>SPG Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Guidance Creating Places</p>	<p>What is it? Policy TRE1 of the Plan Strategy seeks to protect existing trees from new development, particularly those that are of visual, biodiversity or amenity quality and significance, and there will be a presumption in favour of retaining and safeguarding trees that make a valuable contribution to the environment and amenity. The council will adopt the precautionary principle when considering the impacts of a proposed development on trees of visual, biodiversity or amenity quality and significance.</p> <p>A Tree Report assesses the likely impact of new development on existing trees within or adjacent to the site. It assesses the health, condition and amenity value of the affected trees and proposes mitigation where appropriate. The Tree Report should also set out measures to protect the trees during construction.</p>

	<p>When is it required? A Tree Report should be provided with applications for proposals that have the potential to impact on existing trees on or adjacent to the site (including street trees).</p> <p>What should be included? The Tree Report should include the information set out at paragraph 3.3.1 of the Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>49. Viability Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies HOU5, BH1, BH2 and BH3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.13</p> <p>SPG Development Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? A scheme is viability where, after taking account of all costs, the proposal provides a competitive return to the developer to ensure that development takes pace and generates a land value sufficient to persuade a land owner to sell the land for the development proposed. If these conditions are not met, a scheme will not be delivered.</p> <p>The Plan Strategy recognises that certain planning policy requirements may raise the issue of viability, such as the requirement to provide affordable housing under Policy HOU5, demolition of a building under Policy BH2 or loss of tourism leisure and cultural facilities and assets under Policy TLC2.</p> <p>The financial viability of proposals may therefore in some circumstances be a material planning consideration.</p> <p>A Viability Assessment assesses whether a development proposal is viable.</p> <p>When is it required? A Viability Assessment should be provided with applications where the normal planning policy requirement cannot be achieved on grounds of viability, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy • demolition of a building that makes a material contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, having regard to Policy BH2 of the Plan Strategy • loss of existing tourism or cultural facilities in the context of Policy TLC2 of the Plan Strategy <p>What should be included? The Viability Assessment should be based on the factors set out at paragraph 6.2.2 of the Development Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>It should include an “Executive Summary” based on the template at Appendix 2 of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (Please note that the Executive Summary will be published on the NI Planning Portal alongside the other main application documents).</p> <p>Guidance A Viability Assessment should be carried out by a suitably qualified professional such as a quantity surveyor.</p> <p>The Council may choose to commission an independent review of the Viability Assessment the cost of which will be met by the applicant.</p> <p>The Viability Assessment will often contain sensitive commercial information and will not be published on the NI Planning Portal. However,</p>

	<p>the Executive Summary provided as part of the Viability Assessment will be published.</p> <p>Further guidance is provided by the Council's Development Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>50. Waste Management Plan</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy DES1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.3, 4.2, 4.11, 4.12, 4.23-4.36</p> <p>SPG Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy DES1 sets out principles for urban design including protection of amenity and effective placemaking.</p> <p>A Waste Management Plan ensures that appropriate provision is made for accommodating the total waste generated from a development; facilitating the segregation of waste as necessary; and allowing convenient and safe access and egress for the storage and collection of waste.</p> <p>When is it required? A Waste Management Plan should be provided with applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new commercial or mixed use developments of 500 sqm or greater; or • development that proposes use of communal waste storage (such as apartments, flats, sheltered housing, HMOs and Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation). <p>What should be included? The Waste Management Plan should include the information contained in Table 2 (paragraph 4.3.1) of the Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance on waste management is contained in the Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>51. Wind Energy Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy ITU 4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.227, 6.230, 6.233</p> <p>Guidance Wind Energy Developments in Northern Ireland's Landscapes Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ITU 4 of the Plan Strategy sets out the circumstances when planning permission will be granted for wind energy development.</p> <p>A Wind Energy Statement demonstrates how the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy ITU 4.</p> <p>When is it required? A Wind Energy Statement should be provided with applications for commercial wind energy development.</p> <p>What should be included? The Wind Energy Statement should set out how each of the policy criteria a. to l. inclusive in Policy ITU 4 of the Plan Strategy are addressed. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Department for Infrastructure's Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank



Belfast
City Council

Planning Service

Draft Planning Application Validation Checklist

Consultation Report, March 2025



Introduction

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report details the engagement process undertaken in consulting on the Planning Service's Draft Planning Application Validation Checklist. It outlines the results of this consultation, including a summary of the key issues raised through representations on the draft checklist. It provides the Council's response to the detailed comments provided by respondents and outlines the recommended changes to the final checklist.

Background to the consultation

- 1.2 In October 2024, the Planning Committee and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee endorsed the Planning Service's consultation on its Draft Planning Application Validation Checklist.
- 1.3 The draft checklist was prepared in the context of the Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024, that permits councils to prepare and publish a Planning Application Validation Checklist, which sets out mandatory additional information requirements for planning applications above the current minimum basic requirements (which remain unchanged).
- 1.4 The intention of a Planning Application Validation Checklist is to improve the quality of planning applications, resulting in quicker processing times and more efficient consultation process.

Overview of the consultation process

- 1.5 The public consultation ran from 03 December 2024 to 10 February 2025 (10 weeks). It included the following:
 - Online survey on the Council's website using the Your say Belfast platform.
 - Engagement workshops with non-statutory consultees on 22nd January 2025 and statutory consultees on 23rd January 2025 (both online).
 - Customer workshop with planning agents, architects and applicants on 31st January 2025 (in person in City Hall).
 - One-to-one meetings with Shared Environmental Services (SES), DfI Rivers and NI Water on 10th February 2025 (online).
- 1.6 The Planning Committee provided comments on the draft checklist at its meeting on 11th February 2025.

Consultation

- 1.7 The online survey was promoted via the Council's various social media channels.
- 1.8 Planning agents, architects and developers on the Planning Service's official customer list were made aware of the consultation via correspondence and invited to attend the Customer workshop on 31st January 2025.
- 1.9 The consultation was further promoted by email banners on staff emails.
- 1.10 The online survey was accompanied by a draft Section 75 Equality Screening and draft Rural Needs Impact Assessment. An editable Word version of the draft checklist was also made available for ease of review and comment.

Summary of responses received

2.1 A total of 39 representations were made in response to the consultation, including 31 responses to the online survey and 8 other responses. Feedback was also received and captured from the in-person Customer workshop on 31st January 2025.

Online survey

2.2 31 responses were received to the online survey from a variety of different stakeholders, including:

- Planning agents (35.5%)
- Private individuals (25.8%)
- Statutory consultees (22.6%)
- Non-statutory consultees (6.5%)
- Businesses (3.2%)
- Community groups (3.2%)

2.3 Some of the responses were anonymous. The respondents who agreed to share their details included:

- Erin Donaldson RTPI – Planning agent
- Community Places
- PSNI
- NI Water
- DAERA
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
- Belfast City Council Waste Management Unit
- DfI Rivers
- Arc Design (NI)
- Turley
- Translink

Other responses

2.4 Other representations were received outside the online survey from:

- Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)
- Radius Housing (Housing Association)
- DAERA NIEA
- DAERA Fisheries
- DfC HED
- Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI)
- Belfast City Council Environmental Health
- Belfast City Council Access

Overview of key issues raised

2.5 The main themes arising from the consultation included:

- Broad agreement that the checklist is relevant and necessary.
- However, no consensus on how user friendly the checklist is – some felt that it was user friendly, others not, and most neither agreed nor disagreed.
- Some criticism as to the complexity of the checklist and that the information requirements may be onerous. In contrast, views that the information is needed, provided that it is reasonable and proportionate.
- Recognition that the indicative guide as to information requirements by type of planning application is overall very helpful.
- It would be useful to have some best practice examples of some of the requirements
- Desire for information requirements to be discussed with the Planning Service through a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD). Also, that information can be discussed and negotiated where appropriate as part of the validation process.
- Queries as to whether the various statements and assessments can be provided as part of another document (such as a planning statement or Design and Access Statement) or whether standalone documents are required – officers advise the former.
- General view that there should not be additional validation requirements for Householder applications (for example, neither a Biodiversity Checklist nor Climate Change Statement should be required).
- That information should only be required by the Council where it is relevant, reasonable and proportionate
- Specific suggestions on how parts of the checklist can be improved to make its implementation clearer and more reflective of planning policy.

Appendix 1: Council responses to key issues raised raised through online survey

For ease of reference, proposed changes to the checklist in response to representations are highlighted in red text.

What is good about the checklist and what can we do to improve it?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
The process is cumbersome and time consuming for private practices. A bespoke checklist should be issued to applicants. This will help understanding of costs. Applicants are hesitant to commission reports unless they know they are essential.	The Planning Service does not have the resources to issue a bespoke checklist on each proposal. The checklist is intended to provide clear guidance to customers as to what information is required and when. The indicative guide sets out requirements per type of application. Information requirements can also be discussed with the Planning Service as part of a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD).	No change recommended.
The checklist is essential. However, it is overcomplicated and requires too much information. A Climate Change Statement and Health Impact Assessment should not be a requirement for most applications. A checklist that involves step by step questions which can generate a final validation list for a specific application would be really useful.	Climate change policies (Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5) apply to all development proposals. Policy HC1 requires a Health Impact Assessment for Major residential, commercial and industrial developments. A step-by-step questionnaire to create a bespoke checklist has merit but would involve dedicated IT software and could be investigated at a later date.	No change recommended.

<p>The pdf version cannot be edited and an editable version would be useful. Some occasional reports are not covered and so an option for "Other" type of report would be useful. Some topics are already covered in a Design and Access Statement or Planning Service, and the checklist should allow the applicant to direct the Council to this information.</p>	<p>An editable Word version of the checklist was subsequently made available on the online consultation hub. The Planning Service will permit information to be provided in different formats, such as part of a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement, and it will not be stipulated that each has to be provided as a standalone document.</p>	<p>The final checklist will make it clear that information can be provided in different formats, either as standalone document or part of another document such as a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement. Where provided as part of another document, the applicant will be advised to clearly signpost this.</p>
<p>The checklist makes no mention of Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7) in relation to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. Nor the importance of incorporate security measures in the design of buildings, and providing natural surveillance, particularly of pedestrian and cycle routes. PPS 7 states that developers should take account of specialist advice when developing their proposals.</p>	<p>PPS 7 no longer applies as it has been superseded by the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy. Safety and security are covered by policies in the Plan including Policies DES1 (Principles of urban design) and RD1 (New residential developments). These remain important material planning considerations and will continue to be considered as part of the assessment of planning applications. It is considered that there are no specific validation information requirements around these areas, however, it is recommended that this is kept under review.</p>	<p>No change recommended at this time.</p>
<p>It is unclear which information is required for certain types of application. A questionnaire that triggers the need for certain reports/surveys would be helpful</p>	<p>The indicative guide is intended to provide clear guidance as to typical information requirements by type of application. A step-by-step questionnaire to create a bespoke checklist has merit but would involve dedicated IT software and could be investigated at a later date.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>It should be a pre-condition of submitting a planning application that the developer achieves agreement with NI Water and other statutory consultees on if and how a site can be serviced.</p>	<p>The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

	<p>matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.</p>	
<p>There are far too many reports to accompany a planning application. The cost of these are affecting developers appraisals and is unsustainable. The information requirements in the checklist should be reduced.</p>	<p>The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>In some cases, the checklist will drive applicants to frontload their applications with expensive reports, which may not be ultimately required. It would be better if the reports could be sought once its know that there will be a positive outcome to the application. The expense of submitting reports may result in less applications being made to the council.</p>	<p>The Council's Pre-Application Discussion provides opportunity for applicants to discuss their proposals in advance of making an application, providing indication as to whether a proposal is likely to be acceptable in principle.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>The checklist is too general and doesn't set out specific circumstances when reports are required.</p>	<p>It is considered that the checklist does provide clarity and certainty as to when certain information is required with applications. Furthermore, the indicative guide provides guidance as to information requirements by type of application.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>There are too many items on the checklist. The majority are not relevant. Some requirements may require specialist advice to determine when the information is needed (not possible to determine by admin staff or planners).</p>	<p>The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted. The checklist provides clear guidance as to the</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

	<p>circumstances when certain information is required.</p>	
<p>The checklist is useful to agents and applicants to determine which information is required with applications and to front-load the application process. It should improve the quality of applications and therefore reduce delays. The checklist should emphasise that the requirements are indicative and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. It is also important that applicants are aware that further information can be requested during the application process once the application is valid. It would be more useful if tailored checklist forms could be produced by type of application as set out in the indicative guide. We welcome the intention to publish an accompanying "checklist" that applicants can use to cross reference their submission. Sign-posting could be given to the Duty Planner who could assist with checklist requirements. The link to the DAERA website is broken – links should be regularly checked to make sure they are working. The process for validation is likely to be lengthy for planners and it would be useful for the timescale for validation to be set. The requirement for a Pre-Development Enquiry with NI Water could be highlighted to make sure waste water capacity issues are dealt with at an early stage in the process. There is no reference to the requirement for a Design and Access Statement within the checklist. Clarity could be included in the checklist. The checklist should be reviewed to ensure its continued relevance.</p>	<p>The guidance accompanying the checklist makes it clear that information requirements for applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and that information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate. Furthermore, that the checklist does not preclude the requirement for further information during the application process. However, the final guidance will ensure that these areas are explicit. The Duty Planner guidance is clear that customers can avail of the service to discussion application information requirements. All hyperlinks on the final checklist will be checked and fixed where needed. The Council routinely monitors hyperlinks to ensure they are working. The Planning Service will set internal targets for validation processes. The draft checklist is focused on the proposed new "local" information requirements and not pre-existing validation requirements. However, the final checklist will include current validation requirements for completeness (as the Council's existing <i>Application Checklist</i> does). The legislation requires the Validation Checklist to be reviewed every 3 years.</p>	<p>The final checklist will be explicit that information requirements will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and that information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate. Furthermore, that the checklist does not preclude the requirement for further information during the application process.</p> <p>Broken hyperlinks to be fixed.</p> <p>Service standards will be set in relation to the validation process.</p> <p>The final checklist will also include current legislative requirements around validation.</p>

<p>The checklist is a good idea (from a waste management perspective) and is probably as user friendly as it can get.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>The checklist is not over friendly for application types such as HMOs proposals.</p>	<p>Refer to section summarising comments on the draft indicative guide for information requirements for HMO applications.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>A best practice example for each type of application would be useful. It should be clarified that the information requirements can be contained in a single document such as a Planning Statement. Confirmation should be provided of how detailed each document should be, for consistency in approach and proportionality.</p>	<p>The Planning Service may bring forward "example" information documents in the future, such as for Householder applications, however, these will not be available initially. The Council will permit information to be provided in different formats, such as part of a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement, and it will not be stipulated that each has to be provided as a standalone document. The final checklist will be clear that the level of detail in information documents should be commensurate to the scale and complexity of the proposal.</p>	<p>The final checklist will be clear that the level of detail in information documents should be commensurate to the scale and complexity of the proposal.</p>
<p>The checklist gives clarity as to which information is required and when, and cross references planning policy.</p>	<p>Commented noted.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>Making it more robust should speed up the application process, placing the requirement on applicants to provide the necessary information upfront.</p>	<p>Commented noted.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>Step by step guidance should be provided as to whether a proposal is development that requires planning permission.</p>	<p>This comment does not relate to the checklist but a separate issue as to whether a proposal constitutes development that requires a planning application to be made. The Planning Service provides other forums for</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

	providing advice to customers on whether planning permission is required including general enquires, Duty Planner service, Pre-Application Discussions and applications for a Certificate of Lawfulness.	
--	--	--

The checklist advises that Householder applications are accompanied by a Biodiversity Checklist and a short and succinct Climate Change Statement.		
Is there any other information that should be included or removed from Householder applications?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
This adds another level of complication to a process that is already not simple. There should not be specific information requirements for Householder applications.	The majority of feedback from the consultation supports the removal of specific additional validation requirements for Householder applications. Officers advise that these specific requirements are removed in view of the consultation responses and the potential for these requirements to result in excessive delays to the validation process. This is particularly important given that Householder proposals make up approximately 40% of all applications. The Planning Service will look to bring forward specific plain English guidance for Householders at a later stage. It is recommended that Householder information requirements are kept under review.	It is recommended that specific additional validation requirements for Householder applications are removed.
The majority of Householder applications should not require this additional information. An ecologist is required to complete the Biodiversity Checklist. A template Climate Change Statement for Householder applications should be provided.	See above.	See above.
The provision of a Climate Change Statement could be difficult if the applicant is not using a planning agent.	See above.	See above.
The requirement for a Biodiversity Checklist and Climate Change Statement are excessive and potentially unnecessary. The information may not	See above.	See above.

be material to the specific proposal. The requirements are a further financial burden and barrier to the process which should be inclusive and equitable. There is no clarity on how the checklist will be applied on a case by case basis, creating uncertainty for applicants.		
Information from statutory consultees on how a site can be serviced, specifically NI Water.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
Requirement for biodiversity checklist should be removed.	See above.	See above.
The inclusion of these reports will be very onerous for householder. Red tape should be decreased, not increased.	See above.	See above.
Biodiversity Checklists always lead to further information and most likely a bat survey. The fees for these reports will far outweigh the planning fee and architect's fee for a simple addition to a private dwelling.	See above.	See above.
A Climate Change Statement is irrelevant for most householder proposals.	See above.	See above.

<p>Additional guidance could be provided in the form of examples of specific information requirements. Links could be provided to templates or good practice.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>The maps section, it should not be required for HMO applications where there is no change to the footprint of the building.</p>	<p>See comments later table in respect of the indicative list of information requirements for HMOs.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>The Council will have evidence of whether a Biodiversity Checklist has been a requirement of Householder applications such as proposals for single storey extensions. It would seem disproportionate for Householder applications and would place an additional burden on householders and costs. Similarly queries the requirement for a Climate Change Statement. Many applications are submitted by homeowners who will not have the expertise to produce these documents.</p>	<p>See above. Data for the last 12 months shows that there were only 2 consultations to DAERA for Householder applications.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>Putting applicants for minor proposals at additional cost for these reports is unreasonable.</p>	<p>See above.</p>	<p>See above.</p>

What do you find good about the indicative guide and how could we improve it?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Whilst the indicative is useful, it could be substantially simplified for Householder applications.	As previously mentioned, it is recommended that additional information validation requirements for Householder applications are removed.	No change recommended.
It needs to be as clear and concise as possible. The language is too technical at the minute.	The indicative guide is already simple and uses plain language. However, a non-technical glossary of terms will be added to the final checklist as recommended by the chair of the Planning Committee.	It is recommended that a non-technical glossary of terms is included in the final checklist.
It should be accepted that the information can be provided in different forms, such as through a Design and Access Statement. Otherwise, there will be overlap and this will avoid duplication and confusion for the public and consultees.	The Planning Service will permit information to be provided in different formats, such as part of a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement, and it will not be stipulated that each has to be provided as a standalone document.	The final checklist will make it clear that information can be provided in different formats, either as standalone document or part of another document such as a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement. Where provided as part of another document, the applicant will be advised to clearly signpost this.
There is no guidance on the level of detail required in the succinct and concise Climate Change Statement. Plain English guidance would be welcomed for smaller scale proposals.	As previously mentioned, it is recommended that additional information validation requirements for Householder applications are removed.	No change recommended.
It offers a more specific route for what requirements there are, because each development type is so different.	The indicative guide is aimed at providing specific guidance as to information requirements by type of application.	No change recommended.

You are not requesting sufficient information upfront in terms of availability of services.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
Clearly laid out and contains step by step instructions.	Comment noted.	No change recommended.
Householder applications should only consist of existing and proposed drawings.	As previously mentioned, it is recommended that additional information validation requirements for Householder applications are removed.	No change recommended.
If the information is unnecessary and expensive it will put off applicants undertaking projects.	Information will only be required in accordance with the checklist where it is reasonable and proportionate.	No change recommended.
Applications forms are complex enough without additional guidance to navigate. The barriers to the public submitting applications are increasing rather than decreasing.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted.	No change recommended.
It is clear and succinct and will be useful to applicants and agents preparing applications. More instructive guidance should be provided on which information requirements are mandatory. Under the 1-4 Residential Unit category, it should	In terms of whether information is mandatory, the checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and information will only be sought for an individual application where it is reasonable and proportionate. The indicative guide should be amended to	It is recommended that the indicative guide is amended to clarify that an Affordable Housing Form may be required for schemes of 1-4 Residential units where the site area exceeds 0.1 ha.

be clarified that sites greater than 0.1 ha also trigger affordable housing requirements.	clarify that an Affordable Housing Form may be required for schemes of 1-4 Residential units where the site area exceeds 0.1 ha.	
It is a good idea but some of the application types may warrant a Waste Management Plan (e.g. specialist housing accommodation and some non-domestic proposals).	The indicative guide should be amended to clarify that a Waste Management Plan is likely to be required with applications for Specialist residential accommodation.	It is recommended that the indicative guide is amended to clarify that a Waste Management Plan is likely to be required with applications for Specialist residential accommodation.
Covers general items.	Comment noted.	No change recommended.
It is useful but clarification should be provided as to the level of detail required to ensure a proportionate approach according to the type and scale of the proposal. It should be clarified that subject to discussion with Belfast City Council, not all reports will be required.	The final checklist should be clear that the level of detail in information documents should be commensurate to the scale and complexity of the proposal. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis. There will be negotiation with applicants where information is requested but they do not believe it is required.	It is recommended that the final checklist is that the level of detail in information documents should be commensurate to the scale and complexity of the proposal. It is also recommended that the final checklist is clear that there will be an initial process of negotiation where information is requested but applicants believe it is not required.
Advice is always welcome given how complex the process is, how many policies there are in the Local Development Plan and how many consultees.	Comment noted.	No change recommended.

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for hotels?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
There should be no need for a Biodiversity Checklist or Climate Change Statement.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1. Climate change policies (Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5) apply to all developments and this information is necessary to ascertain whether proposals meet the requirements of these policies.	No change recommended.
The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland's marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement,	Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, Noise Impact	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment,

Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.	Assessment, Landscape/Townscape Visual Assessment and Appraisal. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.	Heritage Impact Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment, Landscape/Townscape Visual Impact Assessment or Appraisal.
Biodiversity and Climate Change Statement.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals. Climate change policies (Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5) apply to all developments.	No change recommended.
Some sort of screening should take place to determine whether listed information is actually required. For example, are a Biodiversity Checklist and Climate Change Statement really required for sites in the City Centre?	The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the information is required for the specific application proposal.	No change recommended.
Climate Change Statements should be removed as they add no value to the process.	Climate change policies (Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5) apply to all developments and this information is necessary to ascertain whether proposals meet the requirements of these policies.	No change recommended.
A Biodiversity Checklist may be required, however, there are so many variables and application types. It should not be at odds with DAERA standing advice.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.
Agrees other than the exception of the Biodiversity Checklist. Many City Centre sites are covered by hardstanding or an existing occupied building.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the information is required for the specific application proposal.	No change recommended.

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for HMOs?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
There should be no need for a Biodiversity Checklist or Climate Change Statement.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1. Climate change policies (Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5) apply to all developments and a Climate Change is necessary to ascertain whether proposals meet the requirements of these policies.	No change recommended.
Remove Parking Survey, Residential Quality Statement and Waste Management Plan. These property structures are existing and unchanged. Unnecessary additional red tape and reducing the delivery of housing due to delays.	A Parking Survey may be required for an HMO use given the potential to increase parking demand. A Residential Quality Statement is necessary because of the requirement in Policy RD1 to meet space	It is recommended that this requirement for a Waste Management Plan for HMO applications is replaced with the requirement to show a Waste Storage Area.

	standards. On reflection, it is considered disproportionate to routinely require a Waste Management Plan for HMOs. However, it is recommended that this requirement is replaced with the new for applications for HMOs to show a Waste Storage Area.	
The requirement for a Parking Survey will be site specific, this should be clarified. Any Residential Quality Statement should be proportionate. The completion of tables and in addition to drawings causes duplication of work for planners to review and verify.	A Parking Survey may be required for an HMO use given the potential to increase parking demand. A Residential Quality Statement is necessary because of the requirement in Policy RD1 to meet space standards. It is recommended that the tables are completed because it is much easier to decipher the space standards than from the submitted drawings.	No change recommended.
Could include a Plan Compliance Statement.	Planning Service will permit information to be provided in different formats, such as part of a Compliance Statement, Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement, and it will not be stipulated that each has to be provided as a standalone document.	No change recommended.

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Major developments?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the process if the developer does not know if the site can be connected.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
Employability and Skills Profile – perhaps add in where social value applies in the case of public sector schemes. Make it clear that it applies where there is a skills shortage.	The checklist states: 'For public sector construction, confirmation that Social Value applies. A Construction Employability and Skills Plan is not necessary in such cases.' The checklist should be amended to state that an Employability and Skills Profile may be required where there is a skills shortage.	It is recommended that the final checklist is clear that an Employability and Skills Profile may be required where there is a skills shortage.
There should be no need for a Biodiversity Checklist, Climate Change Statement, CEMP,	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1. Climate change policies (Policies	No change recommended.

<p>Employability and Skills Profile or Health Impact Assessment.</p>	<p>ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5) apply to all developments and a Climate Change is necessary to ascertain whether proposals meet the requirements of these policies. An (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) may be required given the significant scale of Major development. An Employability and Skills Profile is advised by the Council's Developer Contribution Framework and to help address inclusive growth, a core aim of the <i>Belfast Agenda</i> Community Plan. A Health Impact Assessment is required for Major developments by Policy HC1.</p>	
<p>The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland's marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.</p>	<p>Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.</p>	<p>It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>It is questionable as to whether some of the listed information is required to determine an application, never mind validate one. It is imperative that there is flexibility and that judgement is applied as to the requirement for information.</p>	<p>The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>Depends on proposal.</p>	<p>Commented noted.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

<p>The requirement for a phasing plan will be specific. Clarification that only required where a scheme is to be phased. A Design and Access Statement is a validation requirement for all applications for Major development. Additional design information should be a matter for during the application process. Determining open space requirements should be a matter for officers to assess during the application. The checklist does not accurately reflect the requirements of Policy OS3; there are two separate tests – one for hard and soft landscaping and the other for open space. The checklist should reflect the policy in full. A CEMP will be site specific.</p>	<p>Where the applicant confirms that the proposed development is not intended to be phased, then a Phasing Plan may not be required (depending on the circumstances of the case). A Design and Access Statement is an existing basic validation requirement and remains unchanged by the checklist. An Open Space Statement is intended to clearly set out the applicant’s approach to Policy OS3. Its principle purpose is to address requirements around open space for Major developments. The checklist should be amended so that the Residential Quality Statement section more accurately reflects the requirements of Policy OS3. The requirement for a CEMP will be assessed on a case-by-case basis but it likely to be required due to scale of Major development.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Residential Quality Statement section of the checklist is amended to more accurately reflect the requirements of Policy OS3.</p>
<p>Provide details of adjoining land use and ownership so that the likelihood of further development can be established. Travel Plan with meaningful modal shift targets.</p>	<p>It is an existing basic validation requirement that applicants indicate adjacent land they control on a site location plan (blue line). It is agreed that a Travel Plan should be included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for Major development.</p>	<p>It is recommended that a Travel Plan is included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for Major development.</p>

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the process if the developer does not know if the site can be connected.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
Employability and Skills Profile.	It is agreed that an Employability and Skills Profile should be included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for PBMSA.	It is recommended that an Employability and Skills Profile is included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for PBMSA.
There should be no need for a Biodiversity Checklist or Climate Change Statement. The height should be in keeping with surrounding buildings. Sufficient light should be provided to lightwells.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1. Climate change policies (Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5) apply to all developments and a Climate Change is necessary to ascertain whether proposals	It is recommended that a Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment is included in the indicative information requirements for applications for PBMSA, as minimum to ensure satisfactory levels of sunlight and daylight to rooms.

	meet the requirements of these policies. It is agreed that a Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment should be provided with applications for PBMSA, as minimum to ensure satisfactory levels of sunlight and daylight to rooms.	
The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland’s marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.	Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.
It is questionable as to whether some of the listed information is required to determine an application, never mind validate one. It is imperative that there is flexibility and that judgement is applied as to the requirement for information.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate.	No change recommended.
Parking Surveys and parking facilities – students use cars as well.	A Parking Survey may be required on a case-by-case basis and is not considered a routine requirement for PBMSA proposals.	No change recommended.
Policy HOU7 (adaptable and accessible accommodation) applies to new homes and not to PBMSA proposals as its not permanent accommodation. This is not a reasonable validation requirement.	The Council’s new PBMSA SPG confirms that Policy HOU7 applies to PBMSA proposals as it is residential by nature.	No change recommended.

Travel Plan.	It is agreed that a Travel Plan should be included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for PBMSA.	It is recommended that a Travel Plan is included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for PBMSA.
--------------	---	---

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Residential Developments of 1 to 4 units inclusive?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the process if the developer does not know if the site can be connected.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
None of the listed reports should need to be provided as too onerous.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate.	No change recommended.

<p>The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland’s marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.</p>	<p>Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.</p>	<p>It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>Climate Change Statement.</p>	<p>A Climate Change is already included in the indicative guidance for applications for 1 – 4 Residential Units.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>Biodiversity Checklist. The requirement for reports should be proportionate.</p>	<p>Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1. Information will only ever be sought where its reasonable and proportionate.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Residential Developments of 5 to 9 units inclusive?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the process if the developer does not know if the site can be connected.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
None of the listed reports should need to be provided as too onerous. Affordable housing should be provided by each Authority and not the private sector. This practice is leading developers to consider projects outside Belfast.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate. The comment about affordable housing relates to the appropriateness of Policy HOU5, which is not a matter for the checklist. The Council will	No change recommended.

	consider issues of viability as a material consideration in accordance with the Development Viability SPG.	
The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland's marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.	Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.
Climate Change Statement.	A Climate Change is already included in the indicative guidance for applications for 5 – 9 Residential Units.	No change recommended.
No.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.
Threshold too low.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate.	No change recommended.
Heads of Terms should not be required for Local applications unless circumstances require it. The drawings show the types of houses and therefore additional information is duplication, creating two documents to review. This will not save time.	Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form) is listed in the indicative information requirements because of the policy requirement for schemes of 5 – 9 Residential Units to provide an element of affordable housing (Policy HOU5).	No change recommended.

<p>Applications of this scale should not attract the requirement for a Section 76 planning agreement.</p>	<p>Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form) is listed in the indicative information requirements because of the policy requirement for schemes of 5 – 9 Residential Units to provide an element of affordable housing (Policy HOU5).</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
---	--	-------------------------------

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Residential Developments of 10 to 49 units inclusive?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the process if the developer does not know if the site can be connected.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
None of the listed reports should need to be provided as too onerous. Affordable housing should be provided by each Authority and not the private sector. This practice is leading developers to consider projects outside Belfast.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate. The comment about affordable housing relates to the appropriateness of Policy HOU5, which is not a matter for the checklist. The Council will	No change recommended.

	consider issues of viability as a material consideration in accordance with the Development Viability SPG.	
The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland's marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.	Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.
Residential Quality Statement?	A Residential Quality Statement is required to address the requirements of Policies DES1 and RD1 in relation to space standards and amenity space.	No change recommended.
No.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.
Threshold too low.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted. The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate.	No change recommended.
Biodiversity Statement should not be required. Heads of Terms should not be required for Local applications unless circumstances require it. The drawings show the types of houses and therefore additional information is duplication, creating two documents to review. This will not save time.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1. Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form) is listed in the indicative information requirements because of the	No change recommended.

	policy requirement for schemes of 5 – 9 Residential Units to provide an element of affordable housing (Policy HOU5).	
Travel Plan with meaningful modal shift targets. Details of adjoining lands to determine if further development will take place.	It is agreed that a Travel Plan should be included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for 10 – 49 units. Adjoining land is considered as part of the assessment of the application.	It is recommended that a Travel Plan is included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for 10 – 49 Residential Units.

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Residential Developments of 50 units or above?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the process if the developer does not know if the site can be connected.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
Employability and Skills Profile.	It is agreed that an Employability and Skills Profile should be included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for PBMSA.	It is recommended that an Employability and Skills Profile is included in the indicative list of information requirements.
The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland’s marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage	Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity

Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.	Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.	Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.
Residential Quality Statement?	A Residential Quality Statement is required to address the requirements of Policies DES1 and RD1 in relation to space standards and amenity space.	No change recommended.
Design and Access Statement should be included.	A Design and Access Statement is an existing basic validation requirement and remains unchanged by the checklist.	No change recommended.
Is a Health Impact Assessment necessary?	Policy HC1 requires a Health Impact Assessment to be provided with applications for Major development.	No change recommended.
Biodiversity Statement should not be required. Heads of Terms should not be required for Local applications unless circumstances require it. The drawings show the types of houses and therefore additional information is duplication, creating two documents to review. This will not save time.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1. Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form) is listed in the indicative information requirements because of the requirement for schemes of 5 units or more, or sites of 0.1 ha or greater, to provide an element of affordable housing (Policy HOU5).	No change recommended.
Travel Plan with meaningful modal shift targets. Details of adjoining lands to determine if further development will take place.	It is agreed that a Travel Plan should be included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for 50 plus units. Adjoining land is considered as part of the assessment of the application.	It is recommended that a Travel Plan is included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for 50 plus Residential Units.

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Short Term Let Accommodation?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the process if the developer does not know if the site can be connected.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
None of the reports ought to be required.	Most applications for short-term let accommodation involve a change of use only with no external alterations. On reflection, it is advised that only a Short-Term Let Accommodation Statement is required with the requirement for a Biodiversity Checklist and Climate Change Statement removed from the indicative list (the indicative guide should be updated to state that these documents may be required where external alterations are proposed).	It is recommended that the requirement for a Biodiversity Checklist and Climate Change are Statement removed from the indicative list and only potentially required where external alterations are proposed.

<p>But not for single standalone units. Yes, to proposals of four units or greater.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland’s marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.</p>	<p>Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.</p>	<p>It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>A Biodiversity Checklist and Climate Change Statement are unnecessary if the proposal only involves a change of use.</p>	<p>Most applications for short-term let accommodation involve a change of use only with no external alterations. On reflection, it is advised that only a Short-Term Let Accommodation Statement is required with the requirement for a Biodiversity Checklist and Climate Change Statement removed from the indicative list (the indicative guide should be updated to state that these documents may be required where external alterations are proposed).</p>	<p>It is recommended that the requirement for a Biodiversity Checklist and Climate Change are Statement removed from the indicative list and only potentially required where external alterations are proposed.</p>

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Specialist Residential Accommodation?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the process if the developer does not know if the site can be connected.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
Only a Transport Assessment Form should be required.	It is agreed that a Transport Assessment Form (with potential for a Transport Assessment) should be included in the indicative list.	It is recommended that a Transport Assessment Form (with potential for a Transport Assessment) is included in the indicative list for applications for special residential accommodation.
Yes, but only for proposals of four units or greater.	Comment noted.	No change recommended.
The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland’s marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the	Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey,	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist

<p>UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.</p>	<p>Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.</p>	<p>information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>A Biodiversity Checklist is unnecessary.</p>	<p>Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>Travel Plan.</p>	<p>It is agreed that a Travel Plan should be included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for specialist residential accommodation.</p>	<p>It is recommended that a Travel Plan is included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for specialist residential accommodation.</p>

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Telecommunications development?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
None of the listed reports ought to be required.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted.	No change recommended.
The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland's marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.	Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.
Does the Council really consider that a Climate Change Statement is required for a telecommunications mast?	It is agreed that a Climate Change Statement is unlikely to be required with most telecommunications applications. Therefore, it is advised that the requirement for a Climate Change Statement should be removed from the indicative guide for applications for telecommunications development.	It is recommended that the requirement for a Climate Change Statement is removed from the indicative guide for applications for telecommunications development.

<p>A Biodiversity Checklist is unnecessary.</p>	<p>Telecommunication proposals may result in tree loss, removal of hedgerows and clearance of vegetation. Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
---	--	-------------------------------

Indicative guide – is there any other information that should be included or removed from planning applications for Town Centre Uses?		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There may be other specific site requirements and the scale of information should be appropriate to the development.	The indicative guide acknowledges that there may be other information requirements in addition to those listed depending on the location and specific characteristics of the proposal.	No change recommended.
You may need information on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water – water and waste water infrastructure and availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the process if the developer does not know if the site can be connected.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
The following documents are not required: Biodiversity Statement, Climate Change Statement and Office Impact Assessment.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals. Climate change policies (Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5) apply to all developments. An Office Impact Assessment is required for office proposals of 1,000 sqm gross or greater outside centres to address Policy EC6 of the Plan Strategy.	No change recommended.

<p>Developments in Town Centres and Rural Areas should be treated the same. This would be a less bureaucratic/administrative burden.</p>	<p>This is a comment on planning policy and not directly related to the checklist.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>The checklist should include questions around whether proposals may affect any part of Northern Ireland’s marine areas. Marine information may be required as outlined in the UK MPS and draft Marine Plan. For example, this could include a Water Quality Statement, Heritage Statement, Seascape Assessment, Land and Sea Interactions etc.</p>	<p>Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.</p>	<p>It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>We would question the need for an Open Space Statement in instances of change of use.</p>	<p>Policy OS3 requires open space to be provided equivalent to at least 10% of the total site area, irrespective of whether the proposal only involves a change of use. Therefore, an Open Space Statement is considered necessary.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>Don’t agree with why a Retail Impact Assessment, Sequential Test and Office Impact Assessment is required for Town Centre Uses in the City Centre or town centre. Better to have two options – for inside and outside the City Centre/town centre. Open space unlikely to be feasible for developments in the City Centre where there are high buildings to footprint ratios.</p>	<p>The checklist is clear that a Retail Impact Assessment, Sequent Test and Office Impact Assessment are only required for town centre uses “outside” a centre. Policy OS3 applies to all proposals including high buildings with small footprints (for example, the roof space may be able to be utilised for open space).</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>Travel Plan and existing sustainable transport links.</p>	<p>It is agreed that a Travel Plan should be included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for town centre uses.</p>	<p>It is recommended that a Travel Plan is included in the indicative list of information requirements for applications for town centre uses.</p>

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Further comments on Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Not needed – current regulations are sufficient.	Policy HOU7 goes beyond the requirements of current Building Regulations in relation to adaptable and accessible accommodation. An Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation is required to address the requirements of this policy.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Affordable Housing Proposal Form		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Affordable housing should be provided by the public sector.	The comment relates to the appropriateness of Policy HOU5 (affordable housing), which is not a matter for the checklist.	No change recommended.
This is holding up applications. Planning should not be involved in affordable housing; the free market will decide.	The comment relates to the appropriateness of Policy HOU5 (affordable housing), which is not a matter for the checklist.	No change recommended.
This sets out a duplication of work alongside the planning drawings.	The information covered in the Affordable Housing Form goes beyond that shown in the proposed drawings and is therefore required.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Air Quality Impact Assessment		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of air quality issues on the marine area to ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Consideration of potential impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of Air Quality Impact Assessment.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of air quality impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance section of Air Quality Impact Assessment.
In specific circumstances but cannot apply generally.	Comment noted.	No change required.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Archaeological Impact Assessment		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of impacts on marine archaeology to ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Consideration of potential impacts on the marine archaeology should be added to the Guidance sections of Archaeological Impact Assessment.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration impacts on marine archaeology is added to the Guidance section of Archaeological Impact Assessment.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Archaeological Site Evaluation		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of impacts on marine archaeology to ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Consideration of potential impacts on the marine archaeology should be added to the Guidance sections of Archaeological Site Evaluation.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration impacts on marine archaeology is added to the Guidance section of Archaeological Site Evaluation.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Biodiversity Checklist		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
This should only be required in very nature sensitive locations, and not be a blanket requirement.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1.	No change recommended.
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of impacts on marine biodiversity, taking account of the biodiversity duty, and ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Consideration of potential impacts on the marine biodiversity should be added to the Guidance sections of Biodiversity Survey.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration impacts on marine biodiversity is added to the Guidance section of Biodiversity Survey.
Specific circumstances yes, but not for Householder applications.	The majority of feedback from the consultation supports the removal of specific additional validation requirements for Householder applications. Officers advise that these specific requirements, including Biodiversity Checklist,	It is recommended that the requirement for a Biodiversity Checklist for Householder applications is removed from the final checklist.

	are removed in view of the consultation responses and the potential for these requirements to result in excessive delays to the validation process.	
--	---	--

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Biodiversity Survey		
Comment	Officer response:	Changes to Checklist
This should only be required in very nature sensitive locations, and not be a blanket requirement.	Completion of a Biodiversity Checklist is recommended by DAERA for all proposals and is required to inform compliance with Policy NH1.	No change recommended.
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of impacts on marine biodiversity, taking account of the biodiversity duty, and ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Consideration of potential impacts on the marine biodiversity should be added to the Guidance sections of Biodiversity Survey.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration impacts on marine biodiversity is added to the Guidance section of Biodiversity Survey.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Climate Change Statement		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Not needed. Current Building Regulations are sufficient.	Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5 go beyond the requirements of current Building Regulations in relation to climate change. A Climate Change Statement is required to address the requirements of these policies.	No change recommended.
This statement should include consideration of whether a proposal has the potential to generate or cause an increase in greenhouse gas emissions and the ability of a proposal to adapt to a changing climate that incorporates nature-based solutions. This will ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Where applicable, it is considered that this should be dealt with as part of a Climate Change Statement. This should be referenced in the guidance section of Climate Change Statement.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of climate change impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance section of the Climate Change Statement.
Needs to be meaningful rather than a tick box exercise.	Comment noted.	No change proposed.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
This goes too far as a requirement. Developers should not be required to engage with social engineering.	A Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement is intended to address the requirements of Policy CRG1.	No change recommended.
Confirmation that this statement can be provided as part of a Planning Statement rather than a separate document.	Planning Service will permit information to be provided in different formats, such as part of a Compliance Statement, Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement, and it will not be stipulated that each has to be provided as a standalone document.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Not needed. Current regulations are sufficient.	Building Regulations do not address mitigation of environmental impacts during construction and an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan may be required in certain instances.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Contaminated Land Assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>This statement should include consideration of the impact on transitional, coastal and marine water quality. It should also include an assessment on compliance with the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 and other legislation that drives the protection and improvement in the quality of transitional, coastal and marine waters. This will ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.</p>	<p>Where applicable, it is considered that this should be dealt with as part of a Land Contamination Assessment. This should be referenced in the guidance section of Contaminated Land Assessment.</p>	<p>It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on marine water quality is added to the Guidance section of Contaminated Land Assessment.</p>

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Contextual Design Information		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>As previously stated, a Design and Access Statement is a validation requirement and will be read alongside the planning drawings. A level of assessment needs to be undertaken to understand the need for any further design information over and above. Making this a validation requirement needs to be very clear on what is required at the outset as opinions will vary widely on what is reasonably necessary to determine a planning application.</p>	<p>The potential requirement for Contextual Design Information will be scrutinised very carefully by officers at the validation stage and will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
This will affect density and risks ending up making our cities spread out into one large suburb.	Impact of proposals on daylight, sunlight and overshadowing is one of many planning considerations relevant to the assessment of applications, and will be balanced against objectives of making effective use of land (density) and other factors.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Demolition Justification Statement		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Regard must be given to the fact that the demolition of buildings, which are not located within an area of townscape character or area of village character, is permitted development. Clarification that this statement is not required, under particular circumstances, would be welcomed.	It is recognised that the demolition of unprotected buildings in non-designated areas is normally permitted development. However, Policy ENV2 remains applicable and a Demolition Justification Statement should be provided.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Drainage Assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
You need to seek confirmation from the developer on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water - water and waste water infrastructure and the availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the planning process where the developer does not know if the site can be connected to the water and waste water infrastructure. A drainage assessment needs to include how or if the site can be serviced in terms of waste water - not just the onsite drainage. How the site impacts on the existing offsite waste water infrastructure.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist. The Council's Planning and Flood Risk SPG confirms that the main purpose of a Drainage Assessment is to consider the risks of surface water run-off, including impact on flooding where applicable.	No change recommended.
This statement should include consideration of the impact on transitional, coastal and marine water quality. It should also include an assessment on compliance with the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 and other legislation that drives the protection and improvement in the quality of transitional, coastal and marine waters. This will ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	DfI Rivers has advised that specific permissions are required to discharge into tidal waters. As such, there is no requirement for any changes.	No change recommended.

<p>Content with the information required in the validation checklist – this reflects the policy position. Additionally, it may be useful to advise the applicant of their need to obtain other permissions from DfI Rivers Directorate or NI Water regarding the requirement for safe disposal of stormwater/site runoff, as the time to obtain these consents can lead to delays in the planning process.</p>	<p>The checklist should be amended to include reference to the potential need to obtain other permissions from DfI Rivers regarding safe disposal of storm water/surface water run-off.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the checklist is amended to include reference to the potential need to obtain other permissions from DfI Rivers regarding safe disposal of storm water/surface water run-off.</p>
--	---	---

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Economic Statement		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>Why is such a thing necessary? We live in a capitalist society – the market will determine private investment.</p>	<p>The economic impacts of development, whether positive or negative, can be a material consideration relevant to assessment of a planning application.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>If the circumstances require the statement, but not in general.</p>	<p>Commented noted.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Employability and Skills Profile		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
This comment is for council internal use. Once the policy is agreed, it will be useful for Planning and Employability and Skills teams to have a meeting to discuss planning applications where we have recommended the contractor provides a skills and employability plan, particularly in analysing what we need for construction.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.
Why is such a thing necessary? We live in a capitalist society – the market will determine private investment.	An Employability and Skills Profile is advised by the Council’s Developer Contribution Framework and to help address inclusive growth, a core aim of the <i>Belfast Agenda</i> Community Plan. Economic prosperity is a material planning consideration.	No change recommended.
Why does the Council require such information to determine a planning application when other schemes cover this same criteria outside the planning process.	An Employability and Skills Profile is advised by the Council’s Developer Contribution Framework and to help address inclusive growth, a core aim of the <i>Belfast Agenda</i> Community Plan. Economic prosperity is a material planning consideration. The checklist is clear that where Social Value clauses apply, there is no requirement for a Construction Employability and Skills Plan.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Environmental Statement (EIA)		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>An Environmental Impact Assessment is subject to separate legislation and it is not currently a legal requirement for submission of an ES with applications. The EIA process is also a distinct process of assessment of likely significant environmental effects and those can be determined through a scoping exercise. It would not be reasonable or necessary for this checklist to add further assessments to be included in EIA development or suggest that an ES is deficient in anyway through separate legislation. This could have unintentional consequences for a planning application for EIA development. Applications can be determined EIA post submission and therefore it is unclear what the council's intentions will be for an application if an ES is requested post submission.</p>	<p>The checklist proposes that an Environmental Statement is a validation requirement where the proposal is Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development (either required as Schedule 1 development or Schedule 2 development following a positive EIA screening process). The checklist is not proposing any additional information over and above this in respect of EIA.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Flood Risk Assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>You need to seek confirmation from the developer on how the development can be serviced in terms of NI Water - water and waste water infrastructure and the availability of essential services to accommodate the development. Applications should not be accepted into the planning process where the developer does not know if the site can be connected to the water and waste water infrastructure. A drainage assessment needs to include how or if the site can be serviced in terms of waste water - not just the onsite drainage. How the site impacts on the existing offsite waste water infrastructure.</p>	<p>The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist. The Council's Planning and Flood Risk SPG confirms that the main purpose of a Drainage Assessment is to consider the risks of surface water run-off, including impact on flooding where applicable.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>In relation to the information required at the validation checklist stage, the checklist states that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be provided with applications where the following circumstances apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when the proposed development is within fluvial / coastal flood plain / reservoir flood inundation area; or • where a more accurate definition of the flood plain and its extents is needed. However, whilst the above information is correct, in relation to fluvial and coastal flood risk, the process of arriving at the requirement to need an FRA is sequential i.e. the principle of 	<p>The checklist should be amended to make it clear that development in a flood plain should meet the Exceptions Test and that where the Council confirms that the proposal is an exception, a Flood Risk Assessment will then need to be prepared. It is further advised that whether a proposal is considered an Exception should be discussed with the Planning Service as part of a PAD in advance.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the checklist is amended to make it clear that development in a flood plain should meet the Exceptions Test and that where the Council confirms that the proposal is an exception, a Flood Risk Assessment will then need to be prepared. In the Guidance section, it should further advised that whether a proposal is considered an Exception should be discussed with the Planning Service as part of a PAD in advance.</p>

<p>development is to be accepted by the Council through meeting an exception to policy, prior to a FRA being undertaken. This sequential process, along with the defined exceptions, is laid out in the Council's publication, SPG 15 – Planning and Flood Risk. The issue that potentially could arise is that an applicant could prepare a FRA, at potentially significant cost, on foot of the instruction in the checklist, only to be subsequently told at their application doesn't meet any of the exceptions listed within the SPG.</p> <p>In relation to the FRA requirement for development in proximity to reservoirs, we would suggest that the validation checklist includes a link to the published Technical Guidance Note 25, "TGN 25 – The Practical Application of Strategic Planning Policy for 'Development in Proximity to Reservoirs'" and also a link to the online reservoir maps. This may require applicants to liaise with DfI Reservoirs Authority to determine the status of the reservoir affecting their site which may have implications on development proposals. We note that these links are already included in the publication, SPG 15 - Planning and Flood Risk (paragraph 4.10.10), however, to make it clear to the applicant that they need additional information on the affecting reservoir, we are of the opinion that they should be included in the validation checklist</p>	<p>The checklist should be amended to include reference to flood risk in relation to reservoirs and TGN 25 and link to online reservoir maps.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the checklist is amended to include reference to flood risk in relation to reservoirs and TGN 25 and link to online reservoir maps. In addition, the potential need for liaison with DfI Reservoirs Authority in respect of determining the status of a reservoir affecting a development site.</p>
--	---	---

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Health Impact Assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Not sure what this is?	A Health Impact Assessment helps to ensure that health and wellbeing are properly considered in planning policies and development proposals. It is a requirement for applications for Major development or proposals with potential to have a significant adverse impact on health or wellbeing.	No change recommended.
The policy requires a HIA for major applications in instances where there is potential for significant adverse effect and a mandatory requirement beyond those circumstance would be an unreasonable validation requirement.	This is incorrect: Policy HC1 requires an HIA where its Major development (residential, commercial or industrial) or any other form of proposal (i.e. another type of Major development or Local development) which has potential to have significant adverse effect on public health and wellbeing.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Heritage Impact Assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of impacts on marine heritage assets to ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Where applicable, it is considered that this should be dealt with as part of a Heritage Impact Assessment. This should be referenced in the guidance section of Heritage Impact Assessment.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on marine heritage quality is added to the Guidance section of Heritage Impact Assessment.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Housing Mix Statement		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There is potential for duplication of work for this statement in addition to the planning drawings that will provide this information. Confirmation that the requirements of this statement can be included in the assessment of a proposal against policy detailed within a Supporting Planning Statement, rather than a separate document, would be welcomed.	The table and information in the Housing Mix Statement provides information over and above that necessarily provided in the drawings. The information will also help the Planning Service save time in cross referencing drawings, particularly for larger schemes where there are many plans. Planning Service will permit information to be provided in different formats, such as part of a Compliance Statement, Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement, and it will not be stipulated that each has to be provided as a standalone document.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Landscape/Town Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of impacts on seascape to ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Where applicable, it is considered that this should be dealt with as part of an LVIA or LVA. This should be referenced in the guidance sections of LVIA and LVA.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on seascape is added to the Guidance section of LVIA and LVA.
This will be case specific and subject to the EIA Regulations.	An LVIA will be required on a case-by-case basis and only where it is reasonable and proportionate. The checklist confirms that where it is required, it will only be where the proposal is EIA development.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Landscape/Town Visual Appraisal (LVA)		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of impacts on seascape, taking account of existing character and quality; its value, sensitivity and capacity to accommodate change. This will ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Where applicable, it is considered that this should be dealt with as part of an LVIA or LVA. This should be referenced in the guidance sections of LVIA and LVA.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on seascape is added to the Guidance section of LVIA and LVA.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Lighting Impact Assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of light pollution on coastal communities, marine activities, uses and/or the marine area to ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Where applicable, it is considered that this should be dealt with as part of a Lighting Impact Assessment. This should be referenced in the guidance section of Lighting Impact Assessment.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts of lighting on the marine environment is added to the Guidance section of Lighting Impact Assessment.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Marketing Statement		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Not sure why this would be needed. Too much control here.	A Marketing Statement is intended to provide information required from applicants to address Policies BH2, EC4 and TLC2 in respect of demolition of buildings in a Conservation Area; loss of zoned employment land; and loss of tourism, leisure and cultural assets.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Masterplanning Statement		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Confirmation that the requirements of this statement can be included in the assessment of a proposal against policy detailed within a Design and Access Statement, rather than a separate document, would be welcomed. This is about the approach to design which potentially starts at first principles.	The Planning Service will permit information to be provided in different formats, such as part of a Compliance Statement, Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement, and it will not be stipulated that each has to be provided as a standalone document.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Noise Impact Assessment (NIA)		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Where a proposal affects or might affect the whole or any part of Northern Ireland’s marine area the assessment should incorporate consideration of noise and vibration on the amenity of coastal communities, marine activities, uses and/or the marine area to ensure compliance with Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013.	Where applicable, it is considered that this should be dealt with as part of a Noise Impact Assessment. This should be referenced in the guidance section of Noise Impact Assessment.	It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts of noise and vibration on the marine environment is added to the Guidance section of Noise Impact Assessment.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Office Impact Assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Not sure why this would be needed. Too much control here.	An Office Impact Assessment is intended to provide information required from applicants to address Policy EC6 in respect of the impacts of larger office developments outside the City Centre and other centres.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Parking Survey		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Parking surveys for HMOs is ridiculous. They are existing properties. Yet, on another note, parking surveys are not required for purpose built student accommodation, it does not make sense to suggest that students do not drive. Case in point, recently approved planning application for purpose built student accommodation had over 700 rooms yet 11 parking spaces.	A Parking Survey may be required for an HMO use given the potential to increase parking demand. A Parking Survey may be required for PBMSA proposals on a case-by-case basis depending on the site location.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation Statement		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Confirmation that the requirements of this statement can be included in the assessment of a proposal against policy detailed within a Planning Statement, rather than a separate document, would be welcomed. This is a development specific requirement, and where accompanied by a Planning Statement this will address Policy HOU12 in any event. In our experience most PBMSA is major and it is not necessary to have both a planning statement and Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation statement saying the same thing.	The Planning Service will permit information to be provided in different formats, such as part of a Compliance Statement, Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement, and it will not be stipulated that each has to be provided as a standalone document.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Phasing Plan		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
A phasing plan is necessary to ensure sustainable transport modes are available as early as possible in major housing and mixed used developments.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Planning Agreements (Heads of Term Form)		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
It would be useful if the Heads of Terms template/form was published on the website to inform applicants, agents and interested parties.	It is corporate policy not to publish templates and forms on the Council's website. However, a copy of the Heads of Terms Form has previously been circulated to customers and is available electronically on request to the Planning Service.	No change recommended.
These are used much too often and are adding significant delay and cost to the process. No other Councils use S76 agreements in this way (social housing).	The Council uses Section 76 planning agreements where it is the most appropriate vehicle for securing the planning obligation necessary to make the proposed development acceptable, such as to secure affordable housing, a Financial Developer Contribution or ensure appropriate enforcement of the obligation. The Council has introduced new processes (announced at the June 2024 Planning Committee) to front-load, speed-up and improve the planning agreement process.	No change recommended.
If identified and agreed in advance of the planning application being submitted it will speed up the process.	Commented noted (also see officer commentary on point above).	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Short-term Let Accommodation Statement		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Not sure why this would be needed. Too much control here.	A Short-term Let Accommodation Statement is intended to provide information required from applicants to address Policy HOU13 and is considered necessary.	No change recommended.
At this moment in time, a short-term let refers to the duration someone is staying in a dwelling. It does not require planning permission unless it exceeds six residents or results in a material change of use, which, in the majority of cases, it does not. The internal characteristics of the dwelling house remain unchanged, as do the surrounding areas. Currently, a short-term let falls under Class C1 dwelling house (whether or not it is the sole or main residence). If any issues arise within the property, they would first be escalate through Environmental Health before it could be deemed to constitute a material change of use in the surrounding area. Recent High Court Ruling Mr. Justice Humphreys ruled that these buildings should be treated as dwellings. He also stated that policy does not override the law and serves only as guidance and direction. The judge’s words: “Planning policies are measures of guidance and direction, not to be construed by applying the tools and standards appropriate to the construction of a statute or legal instrument.” An experienced planning officer, if conducting a thorough examination,	The checklist applies to proposals for short-term let accommodation where there is a material change of use and planning permission is required. Whether a specific proposal constitutes development is not a matter for the checklist. The comment about retaining part of the property as permanent housing (criterion f. of Policy HOU13) relates to merits of the policy itself which again is not a matter for the checklist.	No change recommended.

<p>would know full well that a short-term let, in reality, retains its status as a dwelling. The physical building itself remains a dwelling regardless of how it is occupied. This has been proven in multiple court cases across the United Kingdom. Until a law is enacted to regulate short-term lets, this remains a waste of planning departments' resources. The justification for applications based on retaining a form of residency within the dwelling is misleading, as common sense dictates that this is not enforceable and cannot be effectively governed.</p>		
--	--	--

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Travel Plan		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>Should be concise and robust – not a copy from previous applications submitted.</p>	<p>Commented noted. The checklist recommends that the content of Travels Plans follows the advice contained in the Council's Transportation SPG.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Viability Assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Not sure why this would be needed. Too much control here.	Viability can be a material consideration relevant to consideration of a planning application. It is particularly relevant to cases where it may not be viable to provide affordable housing (Policy HOU5); justification for demolition of a building that makes a material contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area (Policy BH2); or loss of a tourism, leisure or cultural asset (Policy TLC2). Further guidance is contained in the Council’s Development Viability SPG.	No change recommended.
The title of this section could perhaps be “Financial Viability Assessment” to differentiate from sustainability in the context of affordable housing.	Viability Assessment is consistent with the terminology used in the Development Viability SPG and should be retained.	No change recommended.

Specific Validation Checklist information requirements – Wind Energy Statement		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Not sure why this would be needed. Too much control here.	A Wind Energy Statement is intended to provide information required from applicants to address ITU 4 and is considered necessary.	No change recommended.

Have you any other comments about the Draft Planning Application Validation Checklist?		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There are too many information requirements (51). This complicates an already cumbersome process. It's simply too much information and is overwhelming for Clients and for Agents to navigate with some clients.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted.	No change recommended.
It should not be used as a hard and fast rule to request information that may not be appropriate or required. There should be an ability to discuss any differences in opinion and a level of flexibility allowed.	The checklist will be applied on a case-by-case basis and information will only be sought where it is reasonable and proportionate. There will be opportunity for applicants to discuss any differences of opinion through negotiation with the Planning Service. Where agreement cannot ultimately be reached, the Council will then issue a Notice of invalidity which the applicant can then appeal to the PAC if they so wish.	No change recommended.
Community Places welcomes mechanisms that support the provision of quality planning applications, however, would note that the absence of any requirements for renewable energy projects that fall below the major threshold, such as Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), Anaerobic Digestors or single turbines. These types of developments can have significant and far reaching impacts, much in excess of small scale householder development, yet there has been no consideration in respect of the necessary information required at the outset of the planning application process.	The checklist may require specific information for BESS, Anaerobic Digesters or single wind turbines such as a Biodiversity Statement, Landscape/Townscape Visual Assessment or Appraisal, Noise Impact Assessment and Wind Energy Statement.	No change recommended.

Thank you for going above and beyond to help applicants. I wish more councils were this thorough with their information and this easy to work with.	Comment noted.	No change recommended.
The validation checklist whilst welcome does not go far enough in terms of the impact proposed development will have on water and waste water infrastructure. Applications are being accepted into the planning process where it is entirely possible that there is no water (potable) or waste water infrastructure capacity available to service the development. Ignoring this key issue will result in developments approved which if constructed can't be occupied.	The checklist is intended to ensure that the right information is provided with applications on submission; it cannot ensure the acceptability of proposals which is a matter for the assessment of the application. The standard application form requires information about how development proposals are expected to deal with surface water and foul sewage disposal. No specific additional information requirements are identified for the checklist.	No change recommended.
Thanks for giving this opportunity to respond.	Comment noted.	No change recommended.
It's too long because the requirements are too numerous. Unsustainable.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted.	No change recommended.
The checklist is not needed; it will add thousands of pounds in expense to customers and ultimately reduce the number of applications being submitted. This provides no positive outcome for anyone.	The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted.	No change recommended.

<p>The Planning Application Validation Checklist should make for more complete planning applications, reduce unnecessary correspondence between planners and applicants and lead to quicker response from the planners as there is less scope to not to make decisions. Lack of decision making by planners is a major problem.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>When taking any 'authorisation or enforcement' decision relating to any act which affects or might affect the whole or any part of the marine area, Section 58 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA) and Section 8 of the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013, require that a public authority must make such decisions in accordance with the appropriate marine policy documents; unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise. If you do not make a decision in accordance with the UK MPS and the Marine Plan (when adopted) the legislation further requires you, as the Public Authority, to state your reasons for not doing so.</p>	<p>Consideration of impacts on the marine environment should be added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment, Landscape/Townscape Visual Assessment and Appraisal. It can then be kept under review as to whether a specific Marine Impact Assessment should be added to the checklist at a later date.</p>	<p>It is recommended that reference to the consideration of impacts on the marine environment is added to the Guidance sections of the following checklist information requirements: Biodiversity Survey, Contaminated Land Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment, Landscape/Townscape Visual Impact Assessment or Appraisal.</p>
<p>Far too many items listed in the validation checklist. Perhaps the council should consider splitting these items between a 'validation checklist' and a 'determination checklist' - as many assessments require specialist input (from statutory consultees) as to whether they are actually required or not. Such advice can only be obtained following validation.</p>	<p>The checklist reflects planning policy requirements and the information that is required for applications to be fully assessed. Without the information, it is unlikely that planning permission could be granted. The checklist does not preclude additional information being required at later date, for example, in response to a request for a statutory or non-statutory consultee.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

<p>The Housing Executive welcomes the Council’s proposal to introduce a Validation Checklist which is in response to legislation published by DfI in October 2024, which comes into effect on 1st April 2025. We note that the Validation Checklist is based on the Council’s existing “Application Checklist” which is a useful aid for applicants and agents when submitting planning applications. The new validation checklist can also better reflect policy requirements contained in the new LDP. We believe that the Validation Checklist can help ensure all relevant information needed to make a planning application determination is received at the outset of an application submission, thereby leading to quicker response times from statutory consultees. The processing of applications is often delayed as additional information is requested from applicants and often takes time to be collated and submitted. We also believe that the Validation Checklist will help promote higher quality, frontloaded applications, with applicants becoming more aware of information requirements. As a statutory consultee we believe that fuller information will help us assess applications more quickly and can reduce the instances that a re-consultation is required, as new plans or documents are received. A high number of our consultations are re-consultations on applications as new plans or information is submitted often in a fragmented approach. We therefore strongly support mechanisms such as</p>	<p>Commented noted. One of the main objectives of a Validation Checklist is to improve the efficiency of the statutory and non-statutory consultation process, and this is recognised by NIHE.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
---	--	-------------------------------

<p>the Validation Checklist, which can lead to a reduction in re-consultations; this will lower our workload and can help improve statutory consultation response timescales.</p>		
<p>The legislation requires the checklist to be reasonable and it is to ensure necessary information is available to determine an application. That will not always be possible at validation stage and cannot be foreseen by any checklist but also, it will require planning judgement during an application process that will not always require the completion of a report. The checklist should ensure that the information reasonably required for statutory consultees is provided. Avoiding duplication of work on all sides is fundamental to a more efficient planning process. In instances of pre application discussion, those reports considered necessary and agreement on how the supporting reports can be presented, should be confirmed by the council in writing, prior to submission of applications to support the validation process.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

Please provide any comments or suggestions for improvements relating to the draft equality screening document		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
As noted previously, the vast majority of applications submitted are householder applications. The requirement for completion of Biodiversity Checklists and Climate Change Statements may warrant use of an agent which is an additional cost. The process should be straightforward enough and introduction of this additional information may cause difficulty for applicants who do not wish to use an agent if they have additional needs (e.g. dyslexia) or language difficulties. Perhaps this is where Community Places NI can assist and would recommend they are consulted as part of this process.	As previously mentioned, it is proposed to remove additional validation information requirements (i.e. Biodiversity Checklist and Climate Change Statement) for Householder applications.	It is recommended that the final checklist removes additional information requirements for Householder applications.
If everyone is equal in the eyes of the law, then there should not be "different groups of customers, service users, staff and visitors".	Comment noted.	No change recommended.

Please provide any comments or suggestions for improvements relating to the draft rural needs assessment		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
There were no responses to this question.		

Are you aware of any other impacts, equality considerations, or rural needs that we haven't identified?		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Actual needs of rural environments and the type of development in these areas.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.
Considerations and proper weight needs to be given to the environmental impact of new development on the overloaded water and waste water infrastructure.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.

Appendix 2: Council responses to other key issues raised raised outside the online survey

For ease of reference, proposed changes to the checklist in response to representations are highlighted in red text.

Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)		
RSUA states that it is the professional body for architects in Northern Ireland. It has 870 chartered members and over 300 student members. RSUA strives to enhance the built environment of Northern Ireland for the benefit of all through the promotion of architecture.		
Comment:	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>RSUA is generally content with the Council using a new Planning Application Validation Checklist.</p> <p>However, it advises caution regarding the additional information requirements for applicants outlined in the new Checklist.</p> <p>The Council should be careful to avoid a situation where, after requesting an applicant to assess which additional information is necessary, it then asks for further extensive reports, only for these reports to later be deemed superfluous or unnecessary by statutory consultees.</p> <p>The importance of this point is underscored by the fact that RSUA members have previously expressed confusion regarding the specific detail required of them when asked by BCC to</p>	<p>The Planning Service is mindful of the cost and time involved in applicants preparing information in support of their planning applications. The Council will only require information – whether at validation stage or later in the process – where it is reasonable and proportionate.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

<p>report on meeting any of its given additional information requirement(s).</p> <p>By only requesting the additional information essential to the progress and approval of an application, the Council can prevent the new Checklist from generating unnecessary work and wasting resources for all parties involved in the planning process.</p>		
--	--	--

Radius Housing (Housing Association)		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>The idea of a checklist has merit in terms of front-loading planning applications, and the expectation then would be that there is a knock-on reduction in processing times once an application has been received as valid and 'complete.' The concern would be if the process became overly onerous and reports/ surveys would be required as standard, rather than because of the site-specific circumstances or context.</p> <p>It is assumed that the actual requirements for a project application could be determined through the more bespoke PAD process that had been the aspiration of Council.</p> <p>A more in-depth pre-application process across all councils would help identify information required at application stage and would allow applicants sufficient time to prepare.</p>	<p>The Council will only require information – whether at validation stage or later in the process – where it is reasonable and proportionate.</p> <p>The Validation Checklist and information requirements for specific proposals can be discussed as part of a PAD.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

DAERA NIEA		
DAERA NIEA has provided comments from its Drinking Water Inspectorate, Water Management Unit and Inland Fisheries, and Marine and Fisheries Division.		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>Drinking Water Inspectorate</p> <p>DWI think that an application should provide assurance that a drinking water supply is available for a development, whether this be from the mains supply provided by the Statutory Water Undertaker (NI Water Ltd) or via a private water supply (borehole / well / spring). DWI would suggest looking for assurance that the developer has confirmed sufficient available capacity of the mains networks or aquifer unit.</p>	<p>The availability of drinking water is not a specific planning policy requirement, although Policy SP1a (strategic policy) does require necessary supporting infrastructure requirements to be met. In the absence of a specific policy requirement, it is not recommended that the checklist requires applicants to provide information around drinking water supply.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
<p>Water Management Unit and Inland Fisheries</p> <p>Water Management Unit and Inland Fisheries commented that the consultation format currently issued may limit the value of the responses from our planning consultation teams. Water Management Unit and Inland Fisheries (including Marine colleagues) would be keen on attending any workshops or discussions to provide advice and input on issues which if resolved would assist applicants in providing the required information and content to facilitate an assessment of the application.</p>	<p>Officers have sought a meeting with DAERA to discuss its comments further, however, it was not possible to arrange due to DAERA's availability. It is advised that DAERA's observations can be revisited as part of the review of the checklist.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

<p>Marine Conservation Branch response</p> <p>Marine Conservation Branch has reviewed the Planning Application Validation checklist for Belfast Council and has the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 6. Biodiversity Checklist: We advise the following policies and legislation are also considered: The UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS), the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended), The Environment Order (Northern Ireland) 2002, the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, The Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 and the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended). • Section 6. Biodiversity Checklist: We advise that DAERA is currently undergoing an internal review to update the NI Biodiversity Checklist documents in the DAERA's website linked in this section. This work is to include further information requests and criteria for the Marine Environment. • Section 6. Biodiversity Checklist: We advise that the following hyperlinks are also included under the 'Guidance section' relating Marine Conservation Advice: 	<p>It is advised that reference is made in the final checklist to the importance of applicant's addressing marine impacts in the Guidance sections of the Biodiversity Checklist and Biodiversity Survey.</p> <p>Commented noted.</p> <p>A general reference to consideration of potential marine impacts should be included in the Biodiversity Survey section of the checklist. However, the additional hyperlinks are considered unnecessary given that the Biodiversity Checklist is a set document.</p>	<p>It is recommended that reference is made the importance of applicant's addressing marine impacts in the Guidance section of Biodiversity Survey.</p> <p>No change recommended.</p> <p>It is recommended that reference is made to potential marine impacts in guidance sub-section of the Biodiversity Survey section of the checklist.</p>
---	--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marine Guidance Documents Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ○ Marine Invasive Non-native Species Guidance Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ○ Marine Wildlife Disturbance ● Section 7. Biodiversity Survey: We advise that the following hyperlinks are also included under the 'Guidance section' relating Marine Conservation Advice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maps Northern Ireland Coastal Observatory ○ Northern Ireland Marine Map Viewer ○ Marine Guidance Documents Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ○ Section 8. Climate Change Statement. We advise the inclusion of the hyperlink to the NI coastal observatory: Maps Northern Ireland Coastal ● Observatory and the addition of coastal erosion and sea level rise considerations. ● Section 10. (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): 	<p>A hyperlink should be included to the Marine Guidance documents on the DAERA website.</p> <p>These issues are considered to be too specific for inclusion in the checklist.</p> <p>A specific methodology for piling can be secured by a planning condition where necessary. No need to amend the checklist.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Guidance sub-section of the Biodiversity Checklist section of the final checklist includes a hyperlink to the Marine Guidance documents on the DAERA website.</p> <p>No change recommended.</p> <p>No change recommended.</p>
---	---	---

<p>We advise the inclusion of construction methodology of 'Piling' if required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 10. (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): We advise the inclusion of biosecurity plans. • Section 10. (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): We advise that the following hyperlinks are also included under the 'Guidance section': Planning in the Coastal Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DAERA Standing Advice - WTR - Pollution Prevention Guidance - Sept 2022 Final.pdf (daera-ni.gov.uk) ○ DAERA Standing Advice - Marine Litter.pdf (daera-ni.gov.uk) ○ Marine Invasive Non-native Species Guidance Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ○ Marine Wildlife Disturbance <p>Sections 24 & 25: We advise that 'Seascape' is considered in sections 24 and 25</p>	<p>Reference to biosecurity plan should be added to the Guidance section of (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan.</p> <p>It is considered that the inclusion of these hyperlinks would result in too much information in the Guidance sub-section, but that the issue can be covered by general reference to potential marine impacts.</p> <p>Potential impact on seascape should be referenced in the Guidance sections of Landscape/Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Landscape/Townscape Visual Appraisal (LVA).</p>	<p>It is recommended that reference to biosecurity plan should be added to the Guidance section of (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan.</p> <p>No change recommended.</p> <p>It is recommended that potential impact on seascape should be referenced in the Guidance sections of Landscape/Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Landscape/Townscape Visual Appraisal (LVA).</p>
---	---	--

DfC Historic Environment Division		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p><u>Heritage Impact Assessment</u></p> <p>Typo in description of this information type.</p> <p>Reference should be made to “heritage assets” rather than “built heritage”.</p> <p>In term of when a Heritage Impact Assessment is required, this should be for proposals that would “likely impact” (rather than “likely significantly impact”). It should be also required where it would likely impact on the setting of a Listed Building or Scheduled Monument.</p> <p>Regarding what should be included in a Heritage Impact Assessment, this should be changed to: ‘Identify, analyse, and evaluate the heritage asset(s) and setting; evaluate proposed changes; assess the impact of the proposals on the heritage asset; justify the design solution.’</p>	<p>The final checklist should be amended in line with the advice from DfC HED.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the final checklist incorporates the changes recommended by DfC HED.</p>
<p><u>Archaeological Impact Assessment</u></p> <p>The “When is it required?” section should be amended to: ‘An Archaeological Impact Assessment should be provided for large-scale development proposals which may involve significant archaeological impacts, to include assessment of direct physical impacts and impacts upon the setting of archaeological assets and designations.’</p> <p>The checklist’s assertion that that an Archaeological Impact Assessment is only</p>	<p>The advice that an Archaeological Impact Assessment should only apply to “large-scale development proposals...” is too ambiguous and should be removed. Otherwise, reference to “significant archaeological impacts” is considered appropriate. The suggested wording goes onto refer to what should be included in the assessment, but this is referred to in the next sub-section of the checklist.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the final checklist is modified to include reference to “significant archaeological impacts”.</p>

<p>required where proposals involve breaking the ground is incorrect.</p>	<p>It is considered unreasonable to require the assessment where the proposal is for change of use only.</p>	
<p><u>Archaeological Site Evaluation</u> Under the "When is it required?" sub-section, advises that the following passage is added: 'Archaeological site evaluations will normally be specifically requested in DfC Historic Environment Division consultation advice. Please consult the consultation response for specific details.'</p>	<p>The purpose of the checklist is to "front-load" information at the beginning of the process, therefore including advice that the evaluation will also be requested through consultation advice is unnecessary. Advice from HED that an evaluation is required could have also been provided through a Pre-Application Discussion and this principle will be referenced in the final checklist.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

DAERA Inland Fisheries		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p><u>Biodiversity Checklist and Biodiversity Survey</u></p> <p>Welcomes the inclusion of a Biodiversity Checklist and Biodiversity Survey as part of the checklist.</p> <p>Advises that a hyperlink is included in each to DAERA standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment.</p>	<p>The additional hyperlink is considered unnecessary given that the Biodiversity Checklist is a set document. However, it is recommended that the hyperlink is included in the Biodiversity Survey section of the checklist.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the checklist includes a hyperlink to DAERA standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment.</p>
<p><u>(Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan.</u></p> <p>Welcomes the inclusion of an (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan.</p> <p>Under the “When is it required?” section, reference should also be made to artificial modification of watercourses, including culverting.</p> <p>Advises that a hyperlink is included to DAERA standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment.</p>	<p>Reference to artificial modification of watercourses, including culverting is not considered necessary as such works are likely to require planning permission in their own right.</p> <p>It is recommended that the hyperlink is included in the (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan section of the checklist.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the checklist includes a hyperlink to DAERA standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment.</p>
<p><u>Drainage Assessment</u></p> <p>Advises that a hyperlink is included to DAERA standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment.</p>	<p>It is considered that this is more appropriate for the Contaminated Land Assessment section of the checklist.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Contaminated Land section of the checklist includes a hyperlink to DAERA standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment.</p>

<p><u>Lighting Impact Assessment</u></p> <p>Lighting impact assessments are useful from a biodiversity perspective; artificial lighting can impact on the natural behaviours of fish species. To ensure this aspect is considered the “When is it required?” section should include Sensitive Receptors such as the aquatic environment.</p>	<p>The “When is it required?” section should be amended to include reference to impact on sensitive aquatic environment receptors.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the “When is it required?” sub-section is amended to include reference to impact on sensitive aquatic environment.</p>
<p><u>Noise Impact Assessment (NIA)</u></p> <p>This section also includes vibration. Inland Fisheries would recommend that the guidance section has the link to: Standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment (including groundwater and fisheries).</p>	<p>It is recommended that the hyperlink is included in the Noise Impact Assessment section of the checklist.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the checklist includes a hyperlink to DAERA standing advice for development that may have an effect on the water environment.</p>

Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI)		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
Looking through the documentation the checklists seem to be targeting mainly residential type developments and industrial or utilities are not the focus. Is this to reflect the number of applications in these areas and industrial type applications are so specialised, checklists would have limited application?	The checklist's focus on residential types of development is because of the greater range of planning policies – and resulting information requirements – relating to residential proposals. Employment and commercial applications will generally require more generic information such as a Contaminated Land Assessment, Noise Impact Assessments, Transport Assessment Form (TAF) or Transport Assessment etc.	No change recommended.
Follow up comment following the Officer response above: We agree with the approach, for the less frequent consultations with the likes of HSENI, there are various types of meetings such as PADs, site visits, etc to clarify the information we need to advise the Council.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.

Environmental Health (BCC)		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>Air Quality Impact Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title should be changed to Ambient Air Quality Impact Assessment Outline Construction Environmental Management should be referred to as such through the document (to replace "Environment") Suggested amendments to the wording of this information requirement. 	<p>Terminology to be amended throughout the checklist.</p> <p>Change accepted.</p> <p>Changes accepted.</p>	<p>It is recommended that terminology is amended throughout the checklist.</p> <p>It is recommended that Outline Construction Environmental Management is referred to as such through the document (to replace "Environment").</p> <p>It is recommended that the wording of this section is amended as advised by Environmental Health.</p>
<p>(Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested amendments to the wording of this information requirement. 	<p>Changes accepted.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the wording of this section is amended as advised by Environmental Health.</p>
<p>Contaminated Land Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested amendments to the wording of this information requirement. 	<p>Changes accepted.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the wording of this section is amended as advised by Environmental Health.</p>
<p>Lighting Impact Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested amendments to the wording of this information requirement. 	<p>Changes accepted.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the wording of this section is amended as advised by Environmental Health.</p>

<p>Noise Impact Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested amendments to the wording of this information requirement. • Confirmation of other types of sensitive receptor. 	<p>Changes accepted.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the wording of this section is amended as advised by Environmental Health.</p>
<p>Odour Impact Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested amendments to the wording of this information requirement. 	<p>Changes accepted.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the wording of this section is amended as advised by Environmental Health.</p>

Access (BCC)		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
<p>Unable to ascertain where that the role of public rights of way is mentioned in the checklist. This is a very complex matter and normally it is only explored if there is an asserted public right of way. However, there is a possibility that public rights of way which the Council are unaware of may be affected by an application of any scale.</p>	<p>The issues raised by the City & Neighbourhoods Department relates to how the Planning Service engages with it around rights of way issues generally and is a matter that will be taken forward separately. The comments do not specifically relate to the checklist itself.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>

Feedback from Customer Workshop on 31 st January 2025		
Comment	Officer response	Changes to Checklist
The checklist is useful in providing clarity and removing uncertainty around information requirements with applications.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.
The Council's current <i>Application Checklist</i> is due a refresh. Cannot see circumstances where an appeal would be lodged against a Notice of invalidity.	Commented noted.	No change recommended.
It's important that the information submitted in support of an application is of sufficient quality.	The checklist sets out guidance as to the type, level and detail of information that should be included within specific information requirements, with a view to promoting the quality of that documentation.	No change recommended.
We would welcome an editable pdf of the draft checklist to make it easier to comment on it.	An editable Word version of the checklist was made available on the online consultation hub.	No change recommended.
Queries the inclusion of an Environmental Statement as an information requirement in the checklist.	The checklist proposes that an Environmental Statement is a validation requirement where the proposal is Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development (either required as Schedule 1 development or Schedule 2 development following a positive EIA screening process). The checklist is not proposing any additional information over and above this in respect of EIA.	No change recommended.
The indicative guide on information requirements by type of application is helpful and user-friendly.	Comment noted.	No change recommended.

It would be good to have some best practice examples of the information types.	This is an area that the Planning Service may follow up later and can be considered as part of the review of the checklist.	No change recommended.
Can the documentation be submitted as part of a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement or other single document rather than mandating that it is standalone for each information type?	The Planning Service will permit information to be provided in different formats, such as part of a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement, and it will not be stipulated that each has to be provided as a standalone document.	The final checklist will make it clear that information can be provided in different formats, either as standalone document or part of another document such as a Design and Access Statement or Planning Statement. Where provided as part of another document, the applicant will be advised to clearly signpost this.
It important that the checklist is applied consistently.	The checklist is considered to provide clear guidance as to the circumstances when an information type is required and what should be contained in the documentation. Furthermore, staff training will be rolled out to ensure consistency of approach. Concerns about consistency raised by staff, managers, customers and other interested parties to be considered and remedied.	No change recommended.
Checklist requirements should be reasonable.	The Council will be applied on a case-by-case basis and only require information where its reasonable and proportionate.	No change recommended.
We would like there to be opportunity to discuss additional information required by the Council with officers before a Notice of invalidity is issued.	There will be an initial process of negotiation where information is requested but applicants believe it is not required.	It is recommended that the final checklist is clear that there will be an initial process of negotiation where information is requested but applicants believe it is not required.

It is important that levels information is provided on drawings.	This is a current basic validation requirement and will remain so.	No change recommended.
What are the different information requirements for applications for outline planning permission?	Outline planning permissions establish the principle of development and so any matters that relate to the principle, including relevant information requirements, require to be addressed at the outline application stage. The Planning Service will look to bring forward specific customer guidance on outline applications in the future.	No change recommended.
What are the implications if a bat survey cannot be submitted for several months, and the Biodiversity Checklist cannot be finalised? Can the remainder of the application be progressed?	Where there is a reasonable and proportionate requirement for the information, if it is outstanding the application will remain invalid until it is provided.	No change recommended.
Will there be targets for the time taken for the Planning Service to validate an application?	The Planning Service will set internal targets and customer standards around its validation processes.	Service standards will be set in relation to the validation process.
Will there be a time period for returning the application if it is invalid and the additional information is not provided by the applicant?	The Planning Service is finalising its internal processes around administration of the checklist. Where the application is invalid and the information is not provided, the Council will issue a Notice of invalidity to which the applicant may appeal to the PAC.	No change recommended.
The checklist could result in more requests for a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD) as customers wish to speak to the Planning Service about information requirements for their application.	The checklist and information requirements for a specific application can be discussed with the Planning Service as part of a PAD.	No change recommended.

<p>Good quality application submissions should be rewarded and poor quality penalised.</p>	<p>The checklist is expected to improve the quality of applications which should result in quicker decisions. Where an application is of insufficient quality, it will result in delays and potentially refusal of permission.</p>	<p>No change recommended.</p>
--	--	-------------------------------



Belfast
City Council

Planning Service Planning Application Validation Checklist

For Adoption on 01 April 2025



Planning Application Validation Checklist

A guide for customers who intend to submit a planning application

We're committed to helping our customers get a timely planning decision that benefits the city

To help achieve this, we want to make sure planning applications are supported by the right information at the start of the process.

Having all the relevant information from the outset enables us to assess applications properly. If supporting information is missing, it can lead to delays or could even result in refusal of your application.

Our Planning Application Validation Checklist sets out the information that you need to submit with your application for it to be "valid" and processed by the Council.

The information we need will fall into two categories:

- **Basic information** – this information is set regionally and applies to the whole of Northern Ireland (**Appendix 2**).
- **Additional information** – additional information required by Belfast City Council to fully assess applications across the city (**Appendix 3**).

Basic information

Planning legislation¹ sets out the minimum information that you must submit with when making a planning application. Without this information, your application is not valid and we cannot lawfully process it.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the types of Basic information that may be required with your application depending on its nature, scale and location. **Appendix 2** of this Checklist provides detailed guidance on which Basic information you will need to submit. This explains the different information types and which are needed by type of application.

Table 1: Basic information (see Appendix 2)
Application form
Ownership certificate
Site location plan
Plans and drawings
Pre-Application Community Consultation Report ²
Design and Access Statement ³
Fee

¹ Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

² Required with all applications for Major development

³ Required with certain types of application – See Appendix 2 ("Design and Access Statement")

Additional information

New legislation⁴ enables a council to publish a “Planning Application Validation Checklist” that sets out additional information requirements above the Basic information. Additional information may be specified by the Council where it is reasonable having regard to the “nature”, “scale” and “location” of the proposal.

Table 2 below lists the additional requirements you may need to provide with your application. **Appendix 3** provides detailed guidance on which information is required. It only applies to applications for full and outline planning permission, and approval of reserved matters following an outline planning permission.

Table 2: Additional requirements – “Validation Checklist” (see Appendix 3)	
1. Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement	27. Marketing Statement
2. Affordable Housing Proposal Form	28. Masterplanning Statement
3. Ambient Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA)	29. Noise Impact Assessment (NIA)
4. Archaeological Impact Assessment	30. Odour Impact Assessment
5. Archaeological Site Evaluation	31. Office Impact Assessment
6. Biodiversity Checklist	32. Open Space Statement
7. Biodiversity Survey	33. Parking Survey
8. Climate Change Statement	34. PBMSA Statement
9. Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement	35. Phasing Plan
10. (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)	36. Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
11. Contaminated Land Assessment	37. Planning Statement
12. Contextual Design Information	38. Residential Quality Statement
13. Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment	39. Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)
14. Demolition Justification Statement	40. Sequential Test (main town centre uses)
15. Drainage Assessment	41. Short-term Let Accommodation Statement
16. Economic Statement	42. Specialist Housing Statement
17. Employability and Skills Profile	43. Tall Buildings Design Statement
18. Event Management Plan	44. Tele-communications Supporting Statement
19. Environmental Statement (EIA)	45. Transport Assessment
20. Flood Risk Assessment	46. Transport Assessment Form
21. Health Impact Assessment (HIA)	47. Travel Plan
22. Heritage Impact Assessment	48. Tree Report
23. Housing Mix Statement	49. Viability Assessment

24. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)	50. Waste Management Plan
25. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)	51. Waste Storage Plan
26. Lighting Impact Assessment	52. Wind Energy Statement

Please note that there are no Additional information requirements for Householder⁵ applications – only Basic information is required for those applications.

Appendix 3 (“Validation Checklist”) sets out when Additional information is required with an application and what should be included. The level of detail should be commensurate with the scale and complexity of the proposal.

When we receive your application, we will decide whether Additional information is required on a case-by-case basis according to the nature, scale and location of the proposal. We will only request information where it is reasonable and proportionate, and it will enable us to make an effective decision.

Indicative Guide

To help you provide the right information at the outset, we have provided an **Indicative Guide** as to the additional information that should be submitted by type of application at **Appendix 3**.

Please note that there are no Additional information requirements for Householder applications

Requesting Additional information

If we believe that any information in Table 2 is necessary and you have not provided it with the application, we will write to you and ask you to submit it **within 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 require is ready. If you believe that the additional information is not necessary, please let us know and we will discuss this with you.

Can I appeal?

Yes, if agreement is not reached between the Council and applicant (or their agent) on the need for the additional information, the Council will issue a “Notice” formally confirming the invalidity of the application to the applicant. The applicant may lodge an appeal to the [Planning Appeals Commission](#) concerning the Council’s decision to invalidate the application within **14 days** of the date of the Notice.

⁵ Householder applications include domestic extensions, garages, outbuildings, satellite dishes etc.

What form should the Additional information take?

We recommend that each information type is provided as a separate document. Alternatively, it can be provided as part of another document such as a Planning Statement or Design and Access Statement. Where provided as part of another document, you should clearly state in a covering letter where the information can be found.

Can the Council ask for any further information once the application is valid?

Yes, if the Council considers that further information is required to make an effective decision, it can require you to submit it later in the process.

How do I submit an application to the Council?

About 90% of our applications are submitted online via the [NI Planning Portal](#). We strongly encourage you to submit your application [online](#) as it allows us to deal with your application more quickly and efficiently.

Information Checklist

As well as our Indicative Guide (**Appendix 3**), our “Information Checklist” at **Appendix 1** is a useful tool to help you identify which information you need to provide with your application. We ask that you complete it in all cases and submit it with your application as missing information can lead to delays or could even result in refusal of your application. You can cross reference with **Appendices 2 and 3** to help you.

Pre-Application Discussions

We offer a [Pre-Application Discussion](#) (PAD) service so you can discuss your proposal with a planning officer before submitting a planning application. This helps to identify any issues at an early state. As part of this process, you can clarify which information you need to submit with your application in accordance with this Planning Application Validation Checklist.

Amended plans and supporting information

If you are submitting amended plans and supporting information, please explain in a covering letter what the changes are and why you are making them. We recommend you label the drawing with a revision number to the original drawing number (e.g. Revision A, B, C, D etc.) and include a revision schedule on the drawing that shows the revision number, description of the change and the date it was made.

Where the original application was made online, amended plans and supporting information can also be submitted online.

Planning application process

For further guidance on how we deal with planning applications please see our guide to processing planning applications go to www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning

Glossary

A non-technical Glossary that uses plain language where possible can be found at **Appendix 4** [to be finalised].

Appendix 1 Information Checklist



Address/Reference No _____
by applicant

*To be completed

Basic requirements (must be completed for <u>all</u> applications)		Please circle whichever of the following applies:	
1	Completed application form	Yes	
2	Ownership certificate	Yes	N/A
3	Confirmation of reserved matters (outline applications only)	Yes	N/A
	Are the following matters reserved for subsequent approval? Specify "Yes" if the matter is to be reserved and "No" if the matter is to be determined at outline stage	Siting Design External appearance Access Landscaping	Yes No Yes No Yes No Yes No
4	Location Plan (Scale of 1:1250 or 1:2500)	Yes	N/A
5	Plans and Drawings; to include:		
	- Block Plan 1:200 or 1:500	Yes	N/A
	- Existing and Proposed Elevation 1:50 or 1:100	Yes	N/A
	- Floor plans 1:50 or 1:100	Yes	N/A
	- Roof plan 1:50 or 1:100	Yes	N/A
	- Existing and Proposed Spot levels	Yes	N/A
	- Sections on sloping land and adjacent land	Yes	N/A
	- Demolition plans (If LBC / DCA)	Yes	N/A
6	Design & Access Statement	Yes	N/A
7	Pre-application Community Consultation Report (Major applications only)	Yes	N/A
8	Correct Fee	Yes	N/A

¹ A Design & Access Statement is required for the following:

- Major development
- Listed Building Consent
- Proposals of ≥1 dwelling house or ≥ 100sqm in:
 - Conservation Area
 - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
 - World Heritage Site
 - Area of Townscape Character

OFFICIAL USE ONLY		
Basic requirements met? (valid)	Yes	No
Other supporting information met?	Yes	No

Other supporting information (must be completed in all cases except Householder applications and applications for Advertisement Consent)		Please circle whichever of the following applies:	
1	Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement	Yes	N/A
2	Affordable Housing Proposal Form	Yes	N/A
3	Ambient Air Quality Impact Assessment	Yes	N/A
4	Archaeological Impact Assessment	Yes	N/A
5	Archaeological Site Evaluation	Yes	N/A
6	Biodiversity Checklist	Yes	N/A
7	Biodiversity/Ecological Survey	Yes	N/A
8	Climate Change Statement	Yes	N/A
9	Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement	Yes	N/A
10	(Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan	Yes	N/A
11	Contaminated Land Assessment	Yes	N/A
12	Contextual Design Information	Yes	N/A
13	Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment	Yes	N/A
14	Demolition Justification Statement	Yes	N/A
15	Drainage Assessment	Yes	N/A
16	Economic Statement	Yes	N/A
17	Employability and Skills Profile	Yes	N/A
18	Event Management Plan	Yes	N/A
19	Environmental Statement (EIA)	Yes	N/A
20	Flood Risk Assessment	Yes	N/A
21	Health Impact Assessment	Yes	N/A
22	Heritage Impact Assessment	Yes	N/A
23	Housing Mix Statement	Yes	N/A
24	Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Yes	N/A
25	Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal	Yes	N/A
26	Lighting Impact Assessment	Yes	N/A
27	Marketing Statement	Yes	N/A
28	Masterplanning Statement	Yes	N/A
29	Noise Impact Assessment	Yes	N/A
30	Odour Impact Assessment	Yes	N/A
31	Office Impact Assessment	Yes	N/A
32	Open Space Statement	Yes	N/A
33	Parking Survey	Yes	N/A
34	PBMSA Statement	Yes	N/A

35	Phasing Plan	Yes	N/A
36	Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)	Yes	N/A
37	Planning Statement	Yes	N/A
38	Residential Quality Statement	Yes	N/A
39	Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)	Yes	N/A
40	Sequential Test (Main Town Centre Uses)	Yes	N/A
41	Short-term Let Accommodation Statement	Yes	N/A
42	Specialist Housing Statement	Yes	N/A
43	Tall Buildings Design Statement	Yes	N/A
44	Telecommunications Supporting Statement	Yes	N/A
45	Transport Assessment	Yes	N/A
46	Transport Assessment Form	Yes	N/A
47	Travel Plan	Yes	N/A
48	Tree Report	Yes	N/A
49	Viability Assessment	Yes	N/A
50	Waste Management Plan	Yes	N/A
51	Waste Storage Plan	Yes	N/A
52	Wind Energy Statement	Yes	N/A



1. Application Form

Requirement	Advice
<p>All applications must be accompanied by a Planning Application form</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of details required by a condition (discharge of condition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete all parts of the form The name and address of the applicant must be included in all cases, even where there is an agent Description – keep this concise and only include the aspects of the proposal that requires consent Forms can be found at the following website link or in our Planning Reception: www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-fees-and-forms

2. Ownership Certificate

Requirement	Advice
<p>All applications must be accompanied by an Ownership Certificate</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of Reserved Matters Advertisement Consent Certificate of Lawful Development Non-Material Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete one of Certificate A, B, C and D, as applicable Complete all of the relevant section and sign it Ownership Certificates form part of the application form, which can be found at the following website link or in our Planning Reception: www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-fees-and-forms

3. Confirmation of reserved matters (outline applications only)

Requirement	Advice
<p>All applications for outline planning permission must confirm which matter(s) are reserved for subsequent approval and which matter(s) are to be determined at the outline stage. This enables the Council to check whether the right level of information has been provided in accordance with Article 3(4) of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015).</p> <p>“Reserved matters” means any of the following matters, details of which have not been provided as part of outline planning permission, namely—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> siting; design; external appearance; means of access; and the landscaping of the site; <p>What information do I need to provide?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must complete Appendix 1 Information Checklist to confirm which matter/s are reserved (and which are to be determined at outline stage) You must ensure that if any of the above matters are determined at outline stage (i.e. not to be reserved), you provide sufficient detail of those matters as part of the outline planning application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure you complete box 3 on page 1 of Appendix 1 of the Application Checklist ('Confirmation of Reserved Matters') If the matter is reserved you do not need to provide the details at the outline stage – if outline permission is granted it will be subject to a condition that requires subsequent approval of the reserved matters by the Council before development can begin If the description of the proposal specifies the amount of units for which outline permission is sought (e.g. the number of dwellings or apartments, or the amount of floor space), you should include indicative details of the access and parking layout, as well as siting and design of the buildings. This will help the Council assess whether the site can in principle accommodate the level of development applied for The reserved matters are defined as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siting is the exact location and footprint of proposed building(s) within the site, together with the site layout including parking Design is the massing, height and proportions of building(s) External appearance is the architectural treatment of the building(s) including the external design and materials Means of access comprises the access point/s into the site and circulation arrangements within it for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles Landscaping is the external treatment of the site. This includes both hard landscaping (areas of hard surfacing and details of boundary treatment such as walls, fences or railings); and soft landscaping (grassed areas, trees and planted areas). Outline planning permission establishes the principle of development of the site. Therefore, you will need to make sure that your application is supported by the necessary Other Supporting Information in Appendix 3. It is advisable to discuss your outline planning application with us before you submit it using our Pre-Application Discussion service. This will allow us to give you early feedback on your proposals and further advice on what information you need to include with your application. Further guidance can be found in <i>Development Management Practice Note 4: Types of Application</i> at the following link: www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/infrastructure/dmpn04-types-of-planning-applications.pdf

4. Site Location Plan

Requirement	Advice
<p>All applications must be accompanied by a Site Location Plan</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of Reserved Matters • Non-Material Change to a previous permission • Remove or variation of a condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an up-to-date map that shows surrounding properties • Show the North point • Outline the application using an unbroken red line • Outline any other neighbouring land controlled by the applicant using an unbroken blue line • We recommend a scale of 1:2500 or 1:1250

5. Plans and Drawings

Requirement	Advice
<p>Applications must be accompanied by appropriate plans and drawings to a specified scale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See guidance in the following sections of this table • Applications for Demolition in a Conservation Area only require existing and proposed plans for the demolition itself (not any new buildings)
<p>Block plan</p> <p>A technical plan showing the existing and proposed layout of the site. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing and proposed buildings or structures • Adjacent existing buildings or structures next to the site • Access arrangements • Parking layout <p>When is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applications that involve the extension of an existing building; erection of a new building; or erection or alteration of structures such as walls, fences and retaining walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide both existing and proposed block plans • Use an up-to-date map that shows surrounding properties • Show the North point • We recommend a scale of 1:200 or 1:500
<p>Elevations</p> <p>A technical drawing that shows the external appearance of the proposal from each of its four sides</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications for change of use only (where no external changes proposed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide both existing and proposed elevations • Provide all elevations affected by the proposal including both side elevations of an extension • Make sure that the elevations match the floor plans • Label the orientation of the elevation (e.g. North, South, East, West; or North West, North East, South East and South West) • We recommend a scale of 1:50 or 1:100
<p>Floor Plans</p> <p>A technical drawing that shows the internal layout of the building</p> <p>When is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applications including proposals for a change of use <p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications for Advertisement Consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide both existing and proposed floor plans • Make sure that the floor plans match the elevations • Include each floor of the building/s • Label the floors (e.g. basement, ground, first, second, third, fourth floor etc.) • We recommend a scale of 1:50 or 1:100
<p>Roof Plan</p> <p>A technical drawing that shows the design of the roof from above</p> <p>When is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For complex roof designs • Proposals that include a roof terrace • Alterations to the roof of a Listed Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide both existing and proposed roof plans • Label as a roof plan • We recommend a scale of 1:50 or 1:100

<p>Levels</p> <p>“Spot levels” show ground and finished floor levels on a plan</p> <p>When is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For proposals that involve a change of existing ground or floor levels (e.g. a raised deck, raised patio, sunken terrace garden, new buildings or development on a slope) <p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the change in ground or floor levels are clear from the elevation drawings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide both existing and proposed ground <u>and</u> finished floor levels Levels to indicate a specified datum point Provide a good spread of levels across the site Include levels on adjacent land impacted by the proposal
<p>Sections</p> <p>A technical drawing that shows a cut-away section of the building or land</p> <p>When is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For proposals that involve a change of existing ground or floor levels (e.g. a raised deck, raised patio, sunken terrace garden, new buildings or development on a slope) To demonstrate the internal cill height of a window where overlooking issues are critical (e.g. a roof light or high level window) Internal changes to the floor of a Listed Building or alterations to a staircase in a Listed Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide both existing and proposed sections We recommend a scale of 1:50, 1:100 or 1:200 Include levels on adjacent land impacted by the proposal

6. Design and Access Statement	
Requirement	Advice
<p>A written statement required for certain types of application that sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with. <p>When is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All proposals for Major development Where the site is within any of the following areas, all proposals for one dwelling or more (including flats and apartments); or where the floor space of the proposed building/s is 100 sqm or greater: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conservation Area ✓ Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) ✓ World Heritage Site ✓ Area of Townscape Character All applications for Listed Building Consent <p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals to develop land without compliance with previous conditions Engineering or mining operations Change of use (except where the new use involves access by an employee or involves the provision of services to the public – in such case a statement is required on access only) Waste development <p>Further advice: www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/development-management-practice-notes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Design & Access Statement must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; ✓ demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account; ✓ explain the policy or approach adopted as to access, and in particular, how— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> policies relating to access to, from and within the development have been taken into account, policies relating to access in the local development plan have been taken into account, and any specific issues which might affect access to the development for disabled people have been addressed; ✓ describe how features which ensure access to the development for disabled people will be maintained; ✓ state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; ✓ explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed; and ✓ explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to take into account environmental sustainability. <p>Why is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable the Council to assess the design and access impacts of proposals of a certain scale or within a designated area <p>To comply with Sections 40(3) and 86(2) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011; and Article 3(3)(f) and 6 of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015</p>

7. Pre-application Community Consultation Report

Requirement	Advice
<p>All Major Planning Applications</p> <p>A report that confirms that pre-application community consultation has taken place in line with the statutory minimum requirements and any other requirements set out in the Council's response to the "Prior Application Notice" (PAN)</p> <p>When is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All applications for Major development <p>Why is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that there has been appropriate pre-application engagement with communities before the application is made To comply with Sections 27 and 28 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011; Article 3(3)(e) of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report should include the following details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Details of any community or residents' steering group(s) established; ✓ what consultation was undertaken, when and with whom; ✓ dates, venues and numbers attended for all consultation events and meetings; ✓ details of how public events were made as accessible as possible to all members of the community; ✓ evidence of the consultation, e.g. dates and copies of advertisements, reference to material made available at events, minutes of meetings, samples of letters / leaflets if applicable; ✓ the comments made by the general public and those consulted; ✓ whether and how these comments have been taken into account in the development proposals; ✓ summary of the main issues/comments raised through the consultation and how they have been responded to; ✓ details of any amendments to the proposal as a result of the consultation; and ✓ details of any existing liaison arrangements, agreements with the local community or monitoring that is proposed during the construction and operational phases. Further guidance can be found in <i>Development Management Practice Note 10</i>, at the following link: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/development-management-practice-notes

8. Fee

Requirement	Advice
<p>Applications for the following must be accompanied by a Fee (*exemptions apply):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> planning permission approval of reserved matters removal or variation of condition advertisement consent hazardous substance consent certificate of lawful use or development <p>A fee is not required for applications for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> discharge of conditions works to a tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area determine whether Listed Building Consent is required Listed Building Consent demolish a building with an Area of Townscape Character determine whether Conservation Area Consent is required Conservation Area Consent Non-Material Change to a planning permission Modify or discharge a planning agreement <p>*Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works to a dwelling or within its curtilage to provide access for, or improve the safety, health or comfort of a disabled person Works for the purpose of providing means of access for disabled persons to or within a public building or premises Change of use whereby planning permission would not normally be required were it not for a restrictive planning condition Applications made by or on behalf of a club, society or other organisation (including any persons administering a trust) which is not established or conducted for profit, and the following conditions specified are satisfied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the application relates to the provision of community facilities (including sports grounds) and playing fields; and ✓ the council is satisfied that the development is to be carried out on land which is, or is intended to be, occupied by the club, society or other organisation and to be used wholly or mainly for the carrying out of its objects <p>Why is it needed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To comply with Article 3(3)(i) of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015; and the Planning (Fees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024; To support the Council's administrative costs for dealing with the application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other than Categories 6, 8 and 9, the fee shall be calculated as the total amount for each category in Schedule 2 For Categories 6, 8 and 9, the fee shall be whichever is the highest category in Schedule 2 Certain fees are based on the area to be developed. The site area will be taken as the site identified by the Site Location Plan (red line) Where the fee is based on gross floor space, the external measurement of floor space is used, include the thickness of walls EIA development – an additional £10,632 is payable where the proposal is for EIA development and an environmental statement is required Further guidance can be found at the following links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-fees-and-forms

Basic Requirements (by Application Type)

The basic information needed may vary according to the type of application and permission that is sought. The following table indicates Basic information requirements according to type of application. *

Application Type	Required Information
Full Planning Permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Ownership Certificate • Fee • Site location plan • Plans and drawings • Design and Access Statement* • Pre-Application Community Consultation Report*
Outline Planning Permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Ownership Certificate • Fee • Site location plan • Plans and drawings • Design and Access Statement* • Pre-Application Community Consultation Report*
Approval of Reserved Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Fee • Plans and drawings
Variation or removal of a condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Ownership Certificate • Fee
Advertisement Consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Fee • Site location plan • Plans and drawings
Listed Building Consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Ownership Certificate • Site location plan • Plans and drawings • Design & Access Statement
Conservation Area Consent (Demolition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Ownership Certificate • Site location plan • Plans and drawings
Certificate of Lawful Development (Existing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Fee • Site Location Plan • Plans and drawings (if applicable)
Certificate of Lawful Development (Proposed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Fee • Plans and drawings (if applicable)
Prior Application Notice (PAN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form (Belfast City Council website only) • Site Location Plan
Confirmation of details required by a condition (discharge of condition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covering letter or email (please include the application reference number and the condition number/s you seek confirmation of details for) • Plans and drawings, sample materials etc. (if applicable)
Non-Material Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Covering letter or email (please describe the proposed changes and why you are making them. The proposed changes should be annotated on the plans/drawings) • Plans and drawings (if applicable)



Indicative Guide – Information Requirements by Type of Application

The following is an indicative guide as to the information typically required for certain types of planning application.

Additional information may be required on a case-by-case basis according to the nature, scale and location of the proposal.

Hotel

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Odour Impact Assessment
- **Travel Plan**
- Waste Management Plan

Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO)

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Parking Survey
- Residential Quality Statement
- **Waste Storage Plan**

Major development

- Biodiversity Checklist with potential Biodiversity Survey
- Climate Change Statement
- Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
- Contextual Design Information
- Economic Statement
- Employability and Skills Profile (except for applications for environmental improvements and Multi-Use Game Areas)
- Health Impact Assessment
- Masterplanning Statement
- Open Space Statement
- Phasing Plan
- Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment Form (with potential for Transport Assessment)
- **Travel Plan**
- **Waste Storage Plan or Waste Management Plan**

Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement (including a Wheelchair Accessibility Statement)
- Biodiversity Checklist with potential Biodiversity Survey
- Climate Change Statement
- Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment
- Employability and Skills Profile
- PBMSA Statement
- Residential Quality Statement
- Transport Assessment Form (with potential for Transport Assessment)
- Travel Plan
- Waste Management Plan

Residential Development – 1 to 4 Residential Units

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement
- Affordable Housing Proposal Form (only required where the site area is greater than 0.1 hectares)
- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Residential Quality Statement
- Waste Storage Plan

Residential Development – 5 to 9 Residential Units (or greater than 0.1ha)

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement
- Affordable Housing Proposal Form
- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Housing Mix Statement
- Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
- Residential Quality Statement
- Waste Storage Area

Residential Development – 10 to 49 Residential Units

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement (including a Wheelchair Accessibility Statement)
- Affordable Housing Proposal Form
- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Drainage Assessment
- Housing Mix Statement
- Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
- Residential Quality Statement
- Transport Assessment Form
- Travel Plan
- Waste Storage Plan

Residential Development – 50 or more Residential Units (Major development)

- Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement (including a Wheelchair Accessibility Statement)
- Affordable Housing Proposal Form
- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Drainage Assessment
- Economic Statement
- **Employability and Skills Plan**
- Health Impact Assessment
- Housing Mix Statement
- Masterplanning Statement
- Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
- Planning Statement
- Residential Quality Statement
- Transport Assessment Form (with potential for Transport Assessment)
- **Travel Plan**
- **Waste Storage Plan**

Short-term Let Accommodation For example, short-term holiday lets, self-catering apartments, apart-hotels and serviced apartments.

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Short-term Let Accommodation Statement

Specialist residential accommodation For example, sheltered housing, extra care housing, nursing homes and residential care homes.

- Biodiversity Checklist with potential Biodiversity Survey
- Climate Change Statement
- Specialist Housing Statement
- **Transport Assessment Form (with potential for Transport Assessment)**
- **Travel Plan**
- **Waste Management Plan**

Telecommunications Infrastructure For example, masts, antennae and base stations.

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- ~~Climate Change Statement~~
- Tele-communications Supporting Statement

Town Centre uses (cultural and community facilities, retail, leisure, entertainment and businesses)

- Biodiversity Checklist (with potential for Biodiversity Survey)
- Climate Change Statement
- Offices: Office Impact Assessment
- Open Space Statement
- Retail or other main town centre uses: Retail Impact Assessment
- Retail or other main town centre uses: Sequential Test
- Transport Assessment Form (with potential for Transport Assessment)
- Travel Plan
- Waste Storage Plan

Validation Checklist

1. Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement
2. Affordable Housing Proposal Form
3. Ambient Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA)
4. Archaeological Impact Assessment
5. Archaeological Site Evaluation
6. Biodiversity Checklist
7. Biodiversity Survey
8. Climate Change Statement
9. Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement
10. (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
11. Contaminated Land Assessment
12. Contextual Design Information
13. Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment
14. Demolition Justification Statement
15. Drainage Assessment
16. Economic Statement
17. Employability and Skills Profile
18. Event Management Plan
19. Environmental Statement (EIA)
20. Flood Risk Assessment
21. Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
22. Heritage Impact Assessment
23. Housing Mix Statement
24. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)
25. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)
26. Lighting Impact Assessment
27. Marketing Statement
28. Masterplanning Statement
29. Noise Impact Assessment (NIA)
30. Odour Impact Assessment
31. Office Impact Assessment
32. Open Space Statement
33. Parking Survey
34. PBMSA Statement
35. Phasing Plan

36. Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)
37. Planning Statement Planning Policy Belfast LDP Plan Strategy – various policies
38. Residential Quality Statement
39. Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)
40. Sequential Test (main town centre uses)
41. Short-term Let Accommodation Statement
42. Specialist Housing Statement
43. Tall Buildings Design Statement
44. Tele-communications Supporting Statement
45. Transport Assessment
46. Transport Assessment Form
47. Travel Plan
48. Tree Report
49. Viability Assessment
50. Waste Management Plan
51. Waste Storage Plan
52. Wind Energy Statement



1. Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement

Planning Policy

Policy HOU7 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.297

SPG

Residential Design (Including Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation) Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy HOU7 of the Plan Strategy requires that all new homes should be designed in a flexible way to ensure that housing is adaptable throughout all stages of life, maximising the ability for occupants to remain in their homes and live independent lives for as long as possible.

An **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** sets out how the planning application addresses the requirements of Policy HOU7.

When is it required?

An **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** should be provided with all applications for permanent accommodation including:

- new homes including dwellings, apartments, maisonettes and other forms of permanent accommodation;
- Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation;
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

In addition, for applications for 10 residential units or more, the **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** should include a supplementary **“Wheelchair Accessibility Statement”**.

What should be included?

An **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** should include:

1. A written statement that sets out how each of the policy criteria a. to f. inclusive in Policy HOU7 are addressed. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.
2. Annotated scale drawings (or clear cross reference to such drawings provided with the application) that demonstrate how each of the satisfied criteria are addressed.

For applications for **10 residential units** or more, the **Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation Statement** should include a supplemental **“Wheelchair Accessibility Statement”**, including:

1. a written statement that sets out how each of criteria g. to o. inclusive are addressed for at least 10% of the homes. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.
2. Annotated scale drawings (or clear cross reference to such drawings provided with the application) that demonstrate how each of the satisfied criteria are addressed.

Guidance

Further guidance is contained in the [Residential Design \(Including Adaptable and Accessible Accommodation\) Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

2. Affordable Housing Proposal Form

Planning Policy

Policy HOU5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.143

SPG

Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy requires residential sites of a certain size or number of units to provide a minimum of 20% of the units as affordable housing. Affordable housing includes social rented housing; intermediate housing for sale; and intermediate housing for rent.

An **Affordable Housing Proposal Form** provides information on how Policy HOU5 is addressed by the application.

When is it required?

An **Affordable Housing Proposal Form** should be provided with applications for sites greater than 0.1 hectares and/or containing 5 or more residential units. It is required for proposals for general housing including dwelling houses, apartments and maisonettes, mixed-use developments, conversions, sub-divisions and changes of use.

For the avoidance of doubt, an **Affordable Housing Proposal Form** is not required for specialist housing including Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation and residential institutions such as care homes, nursing homes and supported housing schemes.

What should be included?

Applicants should complete and submit the **Affordable Housing Proposal Form** at "Appendix 1" of the [Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

A copy of the Affordable Housing Form can be obtained by emailing planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

Where Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy applies, and less than 20% affordable housing is proposed, a written statement should be provided that sets out why the minimum level of affordable housing is not proposed. For example, this could be based on grounds of either a) sustainability; and/or b) viability. Where the justification is on viability grounds, a **Viability Assessment** should be provided (see section 49).

Guidance

Further guidance is provided by the Council's [Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

3. Ambient Air Quality Impact Assessment (AAQIA)

Planning Policy

Policy ENV1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.11- 4.12, Annex A

Guidance

Belfast Air Quality Action Plan 2021-2026

What is it?

Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protect communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including **ambient** air quality.

Ambient Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) is a process for determining the significance of the impact of proposed development on ambient air quality **or** determining the significance of the impact of local ambient air quality on proposed development.

These impacts **will generally need to be quantified and evaluated in the context of air quality objectives or limits, having regard to existing ambient air quality in the area of the development, and to air ambient quality in the area of the development in the anticipated year of the development opening, or the year that the development is to be completed, if it is to be phased.**

When is it required?

An **AQIA** should be provided where the proposal **will**:

- **introduce new (public) exposure into an existing area of poor air quality, such as in the case of an application for residential development within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) or for residential development near to a significant air pollution source;**

- cause a significant increase in road traffic flows and / or a change in the proximity of receptors to road traffic sources, such as car parks, bus stations and new or realigned roads, junctions or roundabouts, etc.
- introduce new or increase existing industrial installations;
- introduce new or increase existing non-road transport sources, including airports, railways, and shipping; or
- introduce one or more substantial combustion processes, e.g. centralised boilers, generators, CHP plant or biomass, where there is a risk of impact at relevant receptors.

What should be included?

The content of an **AQIA** is detailed within Chapter 6 of Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land-Use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality (January 2017) publication.

An **AQIA** should be undertaken with reference to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) [local air quality management technical guidance](#) (LAQM.TG(22)) and associated [air quality screening and assessment tools](#).

Where necessary, an **AQIA** should also have regard to the requirements of the [IAQM Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction](#) and the [IAQM Guidance on Monitoring in the Vicinity of Demolition and Construction Sites](#).

The **AQIA** may take the form of either a simple or detailed assessment, but it must be sufficient to determine the significance of air quality impacts.

Where the **AQIA** predicts that new development may give rise to, or experience a significant adverse air quality impact, the assessment should set out the mitigation measures to avoid, reduce and, where appropriate, offset the impact to ensure that relevant receptors are not exposed to air pollution levels in excess of [ambient air quality objectives or limits](#).

Guidance

In determining whether new development requires an **AQIA**, the Council will refer to best practice guidance, including, for example, the [Environmental Protection UK and Institute of Air Quality Management, Land Use Planning & Development Control: Planning For Air Quality \(January 2017\)](#) publication. Information regarding the technical approach to, and content of an **AQIA**, may be obtained from [LAQM.TG\(22\)](#) and associated [LAQM guidance](#).

Information about current and historic ambient air pollution levels, Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and the Council's various air quality assessment reports may be obtained from [Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(DAERA\) NI Air Website](#).
<https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/>

The Belfast City Council Air Quality Action Plan 2021 to 2026 can be found at: [Air Quality Action Plan](#).

An **AQIA** should consider the impact on the marine environment, where appropriate.

4. Archaeological Impact Assessment

Planning Policy
Policy BH5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

What is it?

Policy BH5 of the Plan Strategy seeks to conserve and protect and where possible enhance archaeological assets. Where the impact of a development proposal on important archaeological remains is unclear, or the relative importance of such remains is uncertain, the council will normally require developers to provide further information in the form of an archaeological assessment or an archaeological evaluation.

SPPS Pars. 6.8-11

An **Archaeological Impact Assessment** identifies the potential impacts of the proposal upon archaeological assets, and upon potential new archaeological sites and features. It assesses the significance of assets, the magnitude of impact of development, and recommends mitigation. It is largely a desk-based exercise, incorporating the results of a site walkover survey and other specialist surveys as required.

When is it required?

An **Archaeological Impact Assessment** should be provided for proposals within an Area of Archaeological Interest or Potential where it involves the breaking of ground (i.e. an Archaeological Impact Assessment is not required for proposals that only involve the change of use of land or property).

What should be included?

An **Archaeological Impact Assessment** should be prepared by a qualified archaeologist and include a desk-based assessment to identify the known archaeological and related historic environment assets within the application site and within an appropriate study area.

Guidance on what should be included in an Archaeological Impact Assessment is provided by the Department for Communities' ["Development and Archaeology: Guidance on Archaeological Works in the Planning Process"](#).

Guidance

Applicants should take into account archaeological considerations and deal with them from the beginning of the development management process. The needs of archaeology and development can often be reconciled, and potential conflict avoided or much reduced, if applicants discuss their proposals early. The first step is for applicants to consult the Department for Communities' [Historic environment map viewer](#) for known archaeological sites and monuments.

An **Archaeological Impact Assessment** should consider the impact on the marine archaeology, where appropriate.

5. Archaeological Site Evaluation

Planning Policy

Policy BH5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Pars. 6.8-11.

What is it?

Policy BH5 of the Plan Strategy seeks to conserve and protect and where possible enhance archaeological assets. Where the impact of a development proposal on important archaeological remains is unclear, or the relative importance of such remains is uncertain, the council will normally require developers to provide further information in the form of an archaeological assessment or an archaeological evaluation.

An **Archaeological Site Evaluation** usually involves a targeted archaeological excavation, of limited scope, carried out by a licensed archaeologist. It is quite distinct from a full archaeological excavation. It aims to clarify the nature and extent of below-ground archaeological remains within a proposed development site. Evaluations may also be carried out to inform an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) for a site, particularly where areas of heightened archaeological potential have been identified.

Evaluations can clarify the potential archaeological risks and constraints of a development site early in the planning process, including identifying areas where development may not be acceptable to planning policy. Evaluations may also influence the design and layout of a development to avoid or minimise archaeological impacts.

When is it required?

An **Archaeological Site Evaluation** should be provided with applications where it is essential to clarify if a proposal or aspects of it are acceptable having regard to Policy BH5. If there is uncertainty as to whether the

	<p>proposal would be acceptable in principle (i.e. such information cannot be provided after a planning decision through planning conditions).</p> <p>What should be included? An Archaeological Site Evaluation should be prepared by a qualified archaeologist. Guidance on what should be included in an Archaeological Impact Assessment is provided by the Department for Communities “Development and Archaeology: Guidance on Archaeological Works in the Planning Process”.</p> <p>Guidance Applicants should take into account archaeological considerations and deal with them from the beginning of the development management process. The needs of archaeology and development can often be reconciled, and potential conflict avoided or much reduced, if applicants discuss their proposals early. The first step is for applicants to consult the Department for Communities’ Historic environment map viewer for known archaeological sites and monuments.</p> <p>An Archaeological Impact Assessment should consider the impact on the marine archaeology, where appropriate.</p>
<p>6. Biodiversity Checklist</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy NH1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Par. 6.168-198</p>	<p>What is it? Policy NH1 of the Plan Strategy states that in assessing proposals, the Council will seek to ensure the protection of the district’s natural heritage and biodiversity.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Checklist is a ‘step by step’ tool which is used by applicants to help identify if a development proposal is likely to adversely affect any biodiversity and natural heritage interests and whether further ecological assessments / surveys are required.</p> <p>When is it required? The Biodiversity Checklist should be provided with all applications where another biodiversity or ecological survey has not already been completed, except Householder proposals (e.g. domestic extensions, garages and outbuildings).</p> <p>What should be included? Applicants should complete and submit the Biodiversity Checklist available on DAERA’s website.</p> <p>Guidance The Council has a statutory duty under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of policy or decision making and in drawing up development plans.</p> <p>DAERA provides standing advice on the development of land that may affect natural heritage interests.</p>
<p>7. Biodiversity Survey</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy NH1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Par. 6.168-198</p>	<p>What is it? Policy NH1 of the Plan Strategy states that in assessing proposals, the Council will seek to ensure the protection of the district’s natural heritage and biodiversity. The council will require developers to undertake appropriate site surveys and assessments for consideration prior to planning applications being determined.</p> <p>A Biodiversity Survey (or ecological or wildlife survey) assesses the specific impacts of development proposals on natural heritage, including designated sites and priority habitats; and protected and priority species.</p> <p>When is it required? A Biodiversity Survey is required where:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the need for a survey is identified as part of the completion of the Biodiversity Checklist (see section 6 above); or the proposal would impact or have the potential to impact on natural heritage, including designated sites and priority habitats; or protected and priority species. <p>Guidance The Council has a statutory duty under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of policy or decision making and in drawing up development plans.</p> <p>The DAERA provides standing advice on the development of land that may affect natural heritage interests.</p> <p>DAERA also provides standing advice on development that may an effect on the water environment (including groundwater and fisheries).</p> <p>A Biodiversity Survey should consider the impact on the marine environment, where appropriate. Further marine related guidance is also provided on DAERA's website.</p> <p>Further general planning advice and guidance is provided on DAERA's website.</p>
<p>8. Climate Change Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5 and TRE1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.13 and 6.137</p> <p>SPG Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policies ENV2, ENV3 and ENV5 of the Plan Strategy require proposals to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and include, where appropriate, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).</p> <p>Policy TRE1 seeks to ensure a net gain in tree numbers as a result of built development, in the interests of natural heritage, amenity, environmental quality and resilience. All proposals for new built development should seek to provide for additional tree planting appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the development.</p> <p>A Climate Change Statement sets out how the requirements of Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5 and TRE1 are addressed.</p> <p>When is it required? A Climate Change Statement should be submitted with all applications for new development (including new build, extensions, conversion of buildings and changes of use), except Householder proposals (e.g. domestic extensions, garages and outbuildings)</p> <p>What should be included? A Climate Change Statement should address Policies ENV2, ENV3, ENV5 and TRE1 of the Plan Strategy and be proportionate to the proposal and its context.</p> <p>Annotated scale drawings should be provided (or clear cross reference to such drawings provided with the application) that demonstrate how each of the requirements are met.</p> <p><u>Major applications</u></p> <p>For applications for Major development, the Climate Change Statement should include the following. Where a requirement or criterion is not met, the statement must provide justification as to why this is the case.</p> <p><i>Policy ENV2:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How the proposal incorporates measures to mitigate environmental change and reduce Green House Gases (GHG) by promoting sustainable patterns of development;

2. How the proposal maximises opportunities to incorporate sustainable design features where feasible (such as grey water recycling, green roofs, maximising use of recycled materials, orientating buildings to optimise solar gain, energy efficiency); and
3. How the proposal, where appropriate, demonstrates the highest feasible and viable sustainability standards in the design, construction, operation and “end of life” phases of development in line with the ‘nearly zero carbon buildings’ strategy set out in the EU energy performance and buildings directive, where all new buildings are required to be ‘nearly zero carbon’ by 2020.

Policy ENV3:

4. A written statement that sets out how each of the policy criteria a. to i. inclusive in Policy ENV3 are addressed. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.

Policy ENV5:

5. How the proposal addresses the need to include SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface water runoff and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere. The following potential measures should be addressed:

- Green roofs (intensive and/or extensive systems);
- Swales;
- Filter strips and filter drains;
- Permeable or porous paving;
- Detention basins;
- Open areas, ponds and wetlands; and
- Trees and landscaping.

Policy TRE1:

6. Proposals for a net gain in tree numbers (proposals for built development only).

Guidance

Further guidance is provided by the [Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

A Climate Change Statement should consider the impact on the marine environment, where appropriate.

9. Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement

Planning Policy

Policy CGR1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.17

What is it?

Policy CGR1 of the Plan Strategy relate to the consideration of community cohesion and good relations in respect of proposals at interface locations, in close proximity to peace infrastructure and are judged to impact on contested space.

A **Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement** sets out how the requirements of Policy CGR1 are addressed.

When is it required?

A **Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement** should be provided with all applications for development at interface locations, in close proximity to peace infrastructure, or which would impact upon contested space. However, this does not include minor planning applications such as household proposals.

	<p>What must be included? A Community Cohesion and Good Relations Statement should set out how each of the policy criteria a. to e. inclusive in Policy CRG1 are addressed. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.</p>
<p>10. (Outline) Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies ENV1 and NH1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.11-4.12, Annex A</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protect communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including consideration of ground contamination, ambient air quality, water quality, noise, vibration and light pollution.</p> <p>Policy NH1 of the Plan Strategy seeks to ensure the protection of the district's natural heritage and biodiversity.</p> <p>An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan provides a framework from which a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be developed to avoid, minimise or mitigate any construction effects on the environment and local communities.</p> <p>When is it required? An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan should be provided with applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major development; • EIA development (see section 19); or • Major development in sensitive coastal and harbour areas; and within or in close proximity to, or hydrologically linked to, protected designated sites such as Special Protection Areas (SPA), RAMSAR sites and Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI); or • Other forms of development that could significantly impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents, members of the public or sensitive developments. <p>What should be included? An Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of all proposed site works including site clearance and site preparatory works, demolition and construction (where appropriate by phase) and anticipated durations and proposed working hours; • details of site-specific working / method statements; • details of vehicle access to the construction site; • environmental monitoring proposals and details of any associated site action levels; • details of all areas to be used for the storage of substrate/spoil including a suitable buffer between location for storage of excavated spoil and construction materials and any watercourses or surface drain present on site or adjacent to site; • details of pollution prevention measures to be employed during demolition and / or construction, including for noise, vibration, dust, ambient air quality and contamination of both land and the water environment; • consideration of human health receptors / impacts; • detailed drawing plans, demonstrating a suitable buffer between locations for the storage of oil/fuel, concrete mixing and

washing areas and any watercourses or surface drain present on site or adjacent to the site;

- a proposed storm drainage plan designed to the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in order to minimise the polluting effects of storm water on waterways; and
- proposals for engaging with the surrounding community and for monitoring contractor compliance with the CEMP, including responding to and resolving complaints.

Guidance

DAERA also provides [standing advice on development that may have an effect on the water environment](#) (including groundwater and fisheries). A biosecurity plan may be required for construction impacting on the marine environment.

Further [general](#) guidance is available on DAERA's [website](#).

The following guidance may also be useful in preparing an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan:

[IAQM Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction.](#)

[IAQM Guidance on Monitoring in the Vicinity of Demolition and Construction Sites](#)

[LAQM.TG\(22\)BCC Advice note for construction and demolition sites.](#)
<https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Documents/Advice-note-for-construction-and-demolition-sites>

[BS 5228:2009+A1:2014 Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Part 1 Noise and Part 2 Vibration.](#)

[Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light 2021.](#)

11. Contaminated Land Assessment

Planning Policy

Policy ENV1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

What is it?

Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protect communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including from ground contamination.

Land contamination can harm:

- human health;
- drinking water supplies, groundwater and surface water;
- soils;
- ecosystems including wildlife, animals and wetlands;
- property.

In accordance with the [Land Contamination Risk Management \(LCRM\)](#) guidance published by the UK Environment Agency, the **Contaminated Land Assessment** process is used to:

- identify and assess if there is an unacceptable risk;
- assess what remediation options are suitable to manage the risk;
- plan and carry out remediation;
- verify that remediation has worked.

When is it required?

A **Contaminated Land Assessment** should be submitted with applications for proposals on, or close to, land which has a current or previous use that has the potential for harmful contamination.

What should be included?

A **Contaminated Land Assessment** should be produced by a competent person in accordance with the staged risk based approach presented in the [LCRM guidance](#). There are 3 stages and each stage is broken down into tiers or steps.

Stage 1: Risk assessment

The LCRM presents a tiered approach to risk assessment. The 3 tiers are:

1. [Preliminary risk assessment.](#)
2. [Generic quantitative risk assessment.](#)
3. [Detailed quantitative risk assessment.](#)

Stage 2: Options appraisal

There are 3 steps to follow.

1. [Identify feasible remediation options.](#)
2. [Do a detailed evaluation of options.](#)
3. [Select the final remediation option.](#)

Stage 3: Remediation and verification

There are 4 steps to follow.

1. [Develop a remediation strategy.](#)
2. [Remediate.](#)
3. [Produce a verification report.](#)
4. [Do long term monitoring and maintenance, if required.](#)

Where a **Contaminated Land Assessment** is required, a preliminary risk assessment should be provided. The stages outlined above should then be followed; the risk assessment process may be exited at various stages if the assessment confirms that there are no unacceptable risks and that no further action is needed. All of the relevant reports (identified as being required through the process), up to and including the remediation strategy, should be submitted.

Guidance

A few examples of potentially contaminated land include:

- previously developed land (brownfield sites);
- former industrial land (for example engineering or chemical works, textile works and foundries);
- petrol filling stations and garages (and other land uses associated with fuel storage);
- waste facilities; and
- areas that have been subject to in-filling and/or reclamation.

Further information may be obtained by referring to [DoE Industry Profiles](#).

It should be noted that references to the Part 2A contaminated land regime within the LCRM do not apply in Northern Ireland.

All Contaminated Land Assessments should be undertaken in accordance with relevant British Standards and industry best practice (as outlined within the [LCRM guidance](#)).

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Land Use Database contains a record of approximately 14,000 sites across Northern Ireland that have had previous industrial land use(s). This database is available via the OSNI Spatial NI - Map Viewer. Other important sources of information in regard to land contamination assessments include historical maps (such as those provided within the PRONI Historical Maps viewer) and geological and hydrogeological information (such as that provided within the GSNI GeoIndex map viewer). It may also be useful to seek environmental information on specific sites from relevant authorities, including the Environmental Health Service in the Council.

A **Contaminated Land Assessment** should consider the impact on the marine environment, where appropriate.

DAERA also provides [standing advice on development that may have an effect on the water environment](#) (including groundwater and fisheries).

12. Contextual Design Information

Planning Policy

Policies DES1, BH1, BH2 and BH3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.23- 4.40

SPG

Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance

Residential Design Supplementary Planning Guidance

Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy DES1 of the Plan Strategy relates to the principles of urban design and states that planning permission will be granted for new development that accords with design criteria relating to high quality, sustainable design that makes a positive contribution to placemaking.

Policy BH1 relates to proposals affecting a Listed Building.

Policy BH2 relates to new development within or affect the setting of a Conservation Area.

Policy BH3 relates to new development within an Area of Townscape Character.

Contextual Design Information is visual material, such as drawings or CGIs, which accurately reflects the proposal in its immediate and local context, usually the existing street scene into which the development is to be placed. It is used to help assess the impact and suitability of the design of the proposal within its surrounding context.

When is it required?

Contextual Design Information will be required for the following (other than where they only involve a material change of use):

- applications for Major development;
- proposals that impact on built heritage including Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, historic monuments/gardens, Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character; or
- proposals that may significantly impact on the street-scene or townscape.

What should it include?

The type of **Contextual Design Information** that is required will depend on the nature of the proposal, its location, scale and the potential impacts.

Examples of **Contextual Design Information** include:

- extended scaled elevations, both existing and proposed, which illustrate the existing context and how the proposal responds to this context in relation to neighbouring buildings and the wider street-scene;
- site sections;
- photomontages showing existing and proposed key views;
- axonometric drawings; and
- 3D modelling such as use of [VU.CITY: Belfast](#) (an accurate 3D model of most of Belfast).

13. Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment

Planning Policy

Policies DES1 and RD1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.23- 4.40

SPG

What is it?

Policy DES1 of the Plan Strategy requires that proposals ensure no undue effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties or public spaces by minimising the impact of overshadowing and loss of daylight.

Policy RD1 requires that proposals do not unduly affect the amenity of neighbouring residents, including loss of light and overshadowing.

A **Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment** assesses the impact of the proposal on existing surrounding properties and open spaces in terms of daylight and sunlight. It may also assess the performance of the development for future occupants.

<p>Residential Design Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>When is it required? A Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment should be provided with all applications involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • buildings exceeding four storeys in height where adjoining other developed land or public open spaces; or • where proposed buildings or extensions could lead to harmful overshadowing of adjacent or other proposed buildings or spaces within or outside the site; or • where the proposed development would itself be subject to significant shading from adjoining buildings or trees, or the proposed development itself. <p>What should it include? A Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an aerial plan that shows shadowing impacts on adjacent buildings and public open spaces within and outside the site in respect of <u>both</u> the existing situation and proposed situation following implementation of the proposal. The assessment should be provided at the Spring Equinox (20th or 21st March) and during the following times of day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8am; 10am; 12pm; 2pm; 4pm; and 6pm. <p>For applications for Major development, the assessment should include an assessment consistent with the latest relevant Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidance.</p> 2. an assessment of daylight and sunlight levels within the proposed development itself. <p>For applications for Major development, the assessment should include an assessment consistent with the latest relevant Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidance.</p>
<p>14. Demolition Justification Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies BH2, BH3 and ENV2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.13, 6.15, 6.18s, 6.19 and 6.22</p>	<p>What is it? In the interests of mitigating climate change, Policy ENV2 of the Plan Strategy seeks to avoid demolition, where feasible, with consideration given to how existing buildings or main structures can be re-used.</p> <p>Policies BH2 and BH3 of the Plan Strategy state that there will be a presumption in favour of retaining non-listed buildings in Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Character respectively.</p> <p>A Demolition Justification Statement demonstrates why a building or structure that is normally protected by planning policy is not proposed to be retained and re-used.</p> <p>When is it required? A Demolition Justification Statement should be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the proposal involves demolition and replacement of a building or main structure, having regard to Policy ENV2 of the Plan Strategy. This information will also be sought where demolition has already taken place; or • for demolition of a building that makes a material contribution to a Conservation Area, having regard to Policy BH2 of the Plan Strategy; or • for demolition of a building that makes a material contribution to the distinctive character of an Area of Townscape Character, having regard to Policy BH3 of the Plan Strategy.

	<p>What should it include? The level of detail included in the Demolition Justification Statement should be proportionate to the nature and function of the building and the issues involved.</p> <p>The Demolition Justification Statement should explain why it is not feasible to retain and re-use the existing building/s or main structure/s that are proposed to be demolished and replaced. Factors may include the suitability of the building for the proposed use; its structural condition and/or financial viability and need to be evidenced. In these regards, the application may also require a Marketing Statement (see section 27) and/or Viability Assessment (see section 49).</p> <p>The Demolition Justification Statement should also include measures to minimise any waste through the re-use of as much building and sites materials as possible. If acceptable, those measures may be a secured as a planning condition were planning permission to be granted.</p>
<p>15. Drainage Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies ENV4 and ENV5 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.104 and 6.113</p> <p>SPG Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV4 of the Plan Strategy states that in all circumstances the Council will adopt a precautionary approach in assessing proposals in areas that may be liable to flood risk presently or in the future.</p> <p>Policy ENV5 of the Plan Strategy states that all built development should include, where appropriate, SuDS measures to manage surface water effectively on site, to reduce surface runoff and to ensure flooding is not increased elsewhere.</p> <p>A Drainage Assessment is a statement of the drainage issues relevant to a development proposal and the measures to provide the appropriate standard of drainage. The detail of the assessment will be proportionate to the nature of the proposal. (It may also be called a Drainage Impact Assessment).</p> <p>When is it required? In accordance with the Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance, a Drainage Assessment should be provided for all development proposals that meet or exceed any of the following thresholds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new residential development comprising of 10 or more residential units; or • a development site in excess of 1 hectare; or • change of use involving new buildings and/or hardstanding surface exceeding 1,000 sqm in area. <p>A Drainage Assessment should also be provided for any development proposal, except for minor development, where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed development is located in an area where there is evidence of a history of surface water flooding; or • surface water run-off from the development may adversely impact upon other development or features of importance to nature conservation, archaeology or the built heritage. <p>What should be included? Guidance on the information that should be contained in a Drainage Assessment is provided in Annex E of the Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Guidance The applicant may also need to obtain other approvals or consents from the Department for Infrastructure Rivers regarding safe disposal of storm water/surface water run-off. The time taken to secure these approvals or consent could result in delays to the Department for Infrastructure River's consideration of the applicant's Drainage Assessment.</p>

16. Economic Statement

Planning Policy

Policies EC1, EC2, EC3, EC5, EC6 and EC7 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.79-98

Guidance

Chapter 9 of the Developer Contributions Framework

What is it?

Policies EC1, EC2, EC3, EC5, EC6 and EC7 relate to proposals that have economic development impacts. Economic impacts of a proposal, such as investment, job creation and contribution to rates, are a material planning consideration relevant to the assessment of applications.

An Economic Statement sets out the economic impacts of new development on the area, whether specific to the neighbourhood in which the proposal would be located, city-wide, regional or international.

When is it required?

An **Economic Statement** should be submitted with all applications for Major development.

What should be included?

An Economic Statement should include:

- the level of economic investment;
- GDV impact on the local and, where relevant, regional economy;
- the number and type of jobs to be created both during the construction phase and on occupation, specifying whether the jobs are part time or full time;
- impact on rates;
- any commitments to employability and skills and inclusive growth (also see section 17, **Employability and Skills Profile**);
- whether the proposal is speculative or if there is a specific end user;
- the timeframe for delivery of the development;
- any wider benefits of the proposal to the economy.

Guidance

Further guidance is provided in Chapter 9 of the Council's [Developer Contributions Framework](#).

17. Employability and Skills Profile

Planning Policy

Policies EC1, EC2, EC3, EC5, EC6 and EC7 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.79-98

Guidance

Chapter 9 of the Developer Contributions Framework

What is it?

Inclusive growth is a core aim of the Plan Strategy **and Belfast Agenda (Belfast's Community Plan)**. Policies SP4, EC1, EC2, EC3, EC5, EC6 and EC7 relate to proposals that have economic development impacts. Policy EC4 seeks to protect zoned employment land.

Chapter 9 of the [Developer Contributions Framework](#) sets out the circumstances in which developers will be required to make contributions to employability and skills.

An **Employability and Skills Profile** provides a breakdown of proposed uses and an estimate of potential jobs to be created/displaced as a result of the development. This information enables the Council to undertake a "skills assessment", which informs **whether there would be a skills shortage in implementing the proposal, and consequently if an Employability and Skills Plan (form of Developer Contribution) is required to address this shortfall.**

When is it required?

An **Employability and Skills Profile** should be provided with all applications for:

- Major development (except for applications for environmental improvements and Multi-Use Game Areas);
- proposals resulting in the loss of economic development uses.

Guidance

An **Employability and Skills Profile** should include:

Construction

- details of the “construction phase” including: estimated construction costs; period for construction including estimate start date and completion date; and any relevant phasing information (including demolition);
- the number and type of Full Time Employment (FTE) jobs that will be created during the construction stage of the development including job occupations;
- The approximate number and type of jobs that will be created during the occupation stage of the development based on purpose/use of development, including displacement calculations; and
- For public sector construction, confirmation that Social Value applies. A Construction Employability and Skills Plan is not necessary in such cases.

Operation

- Details of the “operational phase” including: breakdown of floor space by use/number of bedrooms as applicable;
- the number and type of Full Time Employment (FTE) jobs that will be created during the operational/occupation stage of the development based on purpose/use of development including displacement calculations;
- for mixed use developments the expected breakdown of uses as related to the employment sectors, the approximate number and type of jobs that will be created during the occupation stage of the development based on purpose/use of development; and
- the developer should base the provided figures on recognised employment densities and provide information on any assumption they have adopted.

Guidance

The submitted information should be sufficient for the Council to carry out a “skills assessment” to establish whether employability and skills interventions are required.

Where interventions are required, the applicant will be required to provide an Employability and Skills Plan. This will normally be secured through a Section 76 Planning Agreement (see section 36 **Planning Agreements (Heads of Terms Form)**).

Further guidance is provided by the Council’s [Developer Contributions Framework](#).

18. Event Management Plan

Planning Policy

Policies TRAN 3 and TRAN 6 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.11, 6.90 and 6.208. 6.213, Annex A

What is it?

Policy TRAN 3 of the Plan Strategy requires a transport assessment to evaluate the transport implications of a development proposal, which is likely to have significant travel generating uses.

Policy TRAN 6 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals involving direct access, or the intensification of the use of an existing access, onto a public road.

An **Event Management Plan** sets out how the proposal seeks to minimise the transportation impacts of events that would be held as a result of the proposal.

When is it required?

An **Event Management Plan** should be provided with applications for proposals for commercial, recreational, cultural and community proposals which involve the hosting of events that generate significant large numbers of attendees and could result in significant travel disruption.

	<p>What should be included?</p> <p>An Event Management Plan should consider the types of trips, in all modes, likely to visit the site, to ensure they can arrive, park if necessary and depart without causing a traffic safety hazard or disruption to other traffic on the network.</p> <p>Where disruption to the network is anticipated, the Event Management Plan should propose measures that are co-ordinated with PSNI, Department for Infrastructure Roads, and the local community as necessary, to mitigate these impacts. Evidence should be provided of the engagement and input of those bodies into the Event Management Plan.</p> <p>The Events Management Plan should consider measures to encourage sustainable travel, such as public transport, the use of coaches and off-site park and ride and shuttle bus facilities.</p>
<p>19. Environmental Statement (EIA)</p> <p>Legislation The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017</p>	<p>What is it?</p> <p>The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 (“the Regulations”) specifies the circumstances in which a proposal is “EIA” development and requires an Environmental Statement to be submitted alongside the planning application.</p> <p>An Environmental Statement sets out the likely significant effects of the proposal – whether positive or negative – and can relate to environmental, social or economic impacts.</p> <p>When is it required?</p> <p>An Environmental Statement should be submitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development proposal falls under Schedule 1 of the Regulations; or • the development proposal falls under Schedule 2 of the Regulations and the Council has given a screening opinion that the proposal is “EIA” development and that an Environmental Statement is required; or • the applicant intends to submit an Environmental Statement alongside the planning application. <p>What should be included?</p> <p>Applicants should seek a “Scoping Opinion” from the Council as to the recommended content of the Environmental Statement before it is prepared.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p>If the development proposal falls under Schedule 2 of the Regulations, the applicant is strongly advised to submit a formal request to the City Council for a “screening opinion” as to whether the proposal is EIA prior to submitting the application.</p> <p>Where an Environmental Statement is deemed to be required, the applicant is advised to seek a scoping opinion from the Council on its content.</p>

20. Flood Risk Assessment

Planning Policy

Policy ENV4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.99-132

SPG

Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy ENV4 of the Plan Strategy requires that planning applications in flood risk areas are accompanied by an assessment of the flood risk in the form of a Flood Risk Assessment.

A **Flood Risk Assessment** is an assessment of the risk of flooding from all flooding mechanisms, the identification of flood mitigation measures and should provide advice on actions to be taken before and during a flood.

When is it required?

A **Flood Risk Assessment** should be provided with applications where the following circumstances apply:

- when the proposed development is within fluvial / coastal flood plain / reservoir flood inundation area; or
- where a more accurate definition of the flood plain and its extents is needed.

What should be included?

Guidance on the information that should be contained in a **Flood Risk Assessment** is provided in Annex E of the [Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

Guidance

The applicant will need to have satisfied the “Exceptions” test set out in the [Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) and that this has been confirmed in writing by the Council's Planning Service. Compliance with the Exceptions test can be discussed with the Planning Service as part of a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD).

Flood Maps can be viewed on the [Department for Infrastructure website](#).

With regard to potential flood risk from a reservoir, applicants are referred to [Technical Guidance Note 25: The Practical Application of Strategic Planning Policy for 'Development in Proximity to Reservoirs](#). The applicant may contact the Department for Infrastructure Reservoirs Authority in respect of determining the status of a reservoir potentially affecting a development site.

21. Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

Planning Policy

Policy HC1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 3.2, 4.3-4.10

What is it?

Policy HC1 of the Plan Strategy seeks to ensure that all new developments maximise opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles.

A **Health Impact Assessment** (HIA) helps to ensure that health and wellbeing are properly considered in development proposals. In looking at how a proposal might affect people's health, an HIA can identify ways to amend the proposal to reduce possible harmful effects and increase possible beneficial effects. HIAs can be done at any stage in the development process but are best done at the earliest stage possible in project design to allow scope for mitigations and other improvements.

When is it required?

A **Health Impact Assessment** should be provided with applications for Major residential, commercial and industrial development.

A **Health Impact Assessment** may also be required for other forms of development with potential to have a significant adverse effect on public health and wellbeing.

What should be included?

The **Health Impact Assessment** should follow the methodology provided in the Council's [Promoting Healthy Communities Technical Advice Note 1](#) and associated [Appendix 1: Health Impact Assessment Screening Guide](#).

22. Heritage Impact Assessment

Planning Policy

Policies BH1 and BH2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.12, 6.13, 6.18 and 6.19

What is it?

Policy BH1 relates to development affecting the setting of a Listed Building. Planning legislation requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving a Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Policy BH2 relates to proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area. Planning legislation requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the character or appearance of a Conservation Area where opportunity does not arise to enhance it; and to enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area where an opportunity to do so does arise.

A **Heritage Impact Assessment** assesses the impact of new development on built heritage, including the setting of a Listed Building or Scheduled Monument; or the character or appearance of a Conservation Area and its setting.

When is it required?

A **Heritage Impact Assessment** is required with planning applications for proposals that would:

- likely significantly impact on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area or its setting; or
- likely significantly impact on the setting of a Listed Building or Scheduled Monument.

What should be included?

A **Heritage Impact Assessment** should identify the impacted heritage assets; define and analyse its setting; and assess the change.

Guidance

A **Heritage Impact Assessment** can form part of a Design and Access Statement.

Historic environment advice and guidance in the planning process is provided on the Department for Communities' [website](#).

A Heritage Impact Assessment should consider the impact on the marine environment, where appropriate.

23. Housing Mix Statement

Planning Policy

Policy HOU6 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.14. 4.16. 6.137

SPG

Affordable Housing and Housing Mix SPG

What is it?

Policy HOU6 of the Plan Strategy requires housing proposals of a certain scale to provide a suitable mix of house types and sizes. The aim is to promote choice and assist in meeting community needs. There should be particular emphasis on provision for smaller homes across all tenures to meet future household requirements.

A **Housing Mix Statement** provides details of the proposed mix of house types and sizes.

When is it required?

A **Housing Mix Statement** should be provided with applications for new residential development on sites greater than 0.1 ha and/or containing 5 or more residential units. It is required for proposals for general housing including dwelling houses, apartments and maisonettes, mixed-use developments, conversions, sub-divisions and changes of use.

For the avoidance of doubt, a **Housing Mix Statement** is not required for specialist housing including Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation and residential institutions such as care homes, nursing homes and supported housing schemes.

What should be included?

The **Housing Mix Statement** should include the following:

1. A “housing mix schedule”, providing information on the number, type and size of each residential unit.

House type	Size (sqm)	Number of units
E.g. three-bedroom four person detached dwelling		
Etc.		

2. A written statement that demonstrates how the proposed housing mix has been informed by the following:
 - a. analysis of prevailing housing need in the area;
 - b. the location and size of the site;
 - c. specific characteristics of the development; and
 - d. the creation of balanced and sustainable communities.

Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.

Guidance

Further guidance is provided by the Council’s [Affordable Housing and Housing Mix Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

24. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Planning Policy ss

Policies LC1, LC1A, LC1B, LC1C, LDCD, LC2, LC3 and LC4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 4.39 and 6.76

SPG

Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance

Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy LC1 of the Plan Strategy states that new development should seek to protect and, where appropriate, restore or improve the quality and amenity of the landscape. The Council will adopt the precautionary approach in assessing development proposals in any designated landscape, giving careful consideration to a range of criteria.

Policies LC1A (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), LC1B, (Areas of High Scenic Value), LC1C (Local Landscape Policy Areas) and LC1D (Landscape wedges), LC2 (Lagan valley regional park) and LC3 (Belfast Hills), LC4 (coastal areas) set out further specific landscape policy requirements.

A **Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)** is the process of evaluating the effects of a proposal on views and on the landscape itself (“townscape” is defined as the landscape within the built-up area).

When is it required?

A **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment** should be provided for all “EIA development” where the proposal would likely have significant environmental effects on the landscape/townscape (also see section 19, **Environmental Statement**).

What should be included?

A **Landscape/Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment** should follow the methodology set out in the [Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment](#) published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

An LVIA should consider the impact on the marine environment, where appropriate.

25. Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)

What is it?

Policy LC1 of the Plan Strategy states that new development should seek to protect and, where appropriate, restore or improve the quality and amenity of the landscape. The Council will adopt the precautionary approach in assessing development proposals in any designated landscape, giving careful consideration to a range of criteria.

<p>Planning Policy Policies LC1, LC1A, LC1B, LC1C, LDCD, LC2, LC3 and LC4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.39 and 6.76</p> <p>SPG Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>Policies LC1A (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), LC1B, (Areas of High Scenic Value), LC1C (Local Landscape Policy Areas) and LC1D (Landscape wedges), LC2 (Lagan valley regional park) and LC3 (Belfast Hills), LC4 (coastal areas) set out further specific landscape policy requirements.</p> <p>A Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) is the process of evaluating the effects of a proposal on views and on the landscape itself (“townscape” is defined as the landscape within the built-up area).</p> <p>When is it required? A Landscape and Visual Appraisal should be provided with applications for the following where the proposal is <u>not</u> EIA Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposals in the countryside which are likely to have a significant visual impact within the landscape, and for any Major applications within or affecting the setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; or proposals in the urban area which are likely to have a significant visual impact on the townscape; or proposals for wind turbines where their overall height would exceed 15 metres and where Environmental Impact Assessment is required. <p>What should be included? A Landscape/Townscape and Visual Appraisal should follow the methodology set out in the Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. A LVA typically follows the format of an LVIA but, by definition, does not consider significance, with no requirement to give a judgement on the significance of effects.</p> <p>Further guidance is contained in the Placemaking and Urban Design Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>An LVA should consider the impact on the marine environment, where appropriate.</p>
<p>26. Lighting Impact Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies ENV1, OS5 and OS7 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.11 and 6.213</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including light pollution.</p> <p>Policy OS5 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for intensive sports facilities. There should be no unacceptable impact on amenities of people living nearby including light pollution likely to be generated.</p> <p>Policy OS7 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for floodlighting. The council will only support the development of floodlighting associated with sports and outdoor recreational facilities where all the criteria in the policy are met.</p> <p>A Lighting Impact Assessment explains how proposals that include largescale external lighting, such as floodlighting, will impact on the visual amenity of the area, and living conditions of local people.</p> <p>When is it required? A Lighting Impact Assessment should be provided with applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposals involving largescale artificial lighting (such as floodlighting of sports pitches);

- proposals for sensitive receptors close to a largescale existing artificial light source; **or**
- proposals that have the potential to impact on sensitive receptors such as the aquatic environment.

What should be included?

A Lighting Impact Assessment should include:

1. technical specification of the external lighting, including a layout plan with beam orientation and a schedule of the equipment in the design;
2. details of any directional hoods or other forms of mitigation;
3. proposed hours of illumination;
4. a light overspill diagram with a vertical lux contour plot and calculated vertical lux levels at appropriate façade heights at sensitive premises, taking account of topography;
5. identification of the appropriate environmental zone as outlined in the relevant Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance document: 'Guidance Note GN01/21 The Reduction of Obtrusive Light';
6. details of cumulative impact from proposed lighting and any existing artificial lighting, if they will be in operation simultaneously, and
7. demonstration that the vertical lux levels for the appropriate environmental zone and time of day will not be exceeded at nearby receptors.

Guidance

Detailed guidance on lighting impact can be found on the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) [website](#). This includes the ILP [Guidance on Undertaking Environmental Lighting Impact Assessments](#) and [Guidance Note for the reduction of obtrusive light](#).

Guidance is also provided by [Sport England – Outdoor Sports Lighting Briefing Note](#).

A Lighting Impact Assessment should consider the impact on the marine environment, where appropriate.

27. Marketing Statement

Planning Policy

Policies BH2, EC4 and TLC2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPG

Loss of Zoned Employment Land Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policies BH2 and BH3 of the Plan Strategy seek to safeguard buildings that makes a material contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character from demolition.

Policy EC4 of the Plan Strategy states that only in exceptional circumstances will the loss of zoned employment land be considered acceptable.

Policy TLC2 of the Plan Strategy states that only in exceptional circumstances will the loss of existing tourism and leisure and cultural facilities and assets be considered acceptable.

A **Marketing Statement** informs whether the existing use of a building or land is viable or likely to be viable in the context of market testing. The Council expects land premises to be actively marketed for at least 18 months before the application is made.

When is it required?

A **Marketing Statement** should be provided where the applicant seeks to demonstrate through market testing that the current use of a building or land is no longer viable, or is unlikely to be viable, and believes that this is

	<p>an important material consideration when the planning application is assessed.</p> <p>For example, a Marketing Statement may be used to support applications which involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demolition of a building which makes a material contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area or Area of Townscape Character, having regard to Policies BH2 and BH3 of the Plan Strategy; or • loss of zoned employment land, having regard to Policy EC4 of the Plan Strategy; or • loss of existing tourism, leisure and cultural provision and assets, having regard to Policy TLC2 of the Plan Strategy <p>What should be included?</p> <p>The Marketing Statement should include the information specified at paragraphs 3.3.7 and 3.3.8 of the Loss of Zoned Employment Land Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>28. Masterplanning Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy DES2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.3, 4.2, 4.11, 4.12, 4.23-4.36</p> <p>SPG Masterplanning Approach for Major Development Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy DES2 of the Plan Strategy requires a masterplanning approach for Major development.</p> <p>A Masterplanning Statement sets out how proposals for Major development accord with the masterplanning principles set out in Policy DES2 of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p>When is it required? A Masterplanning Statement should be provided with all applications for Major development.</p> <p>What should be included? A Masterplanning Statement should set out how the proposal addresses criteria a. to h. inclusive of Policy DES2. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Masterplanning Approach for Major Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>29. Noise Impact Assessment (NIA)</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy ENV1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.11-4.12, Annex A</p> <p>SPG Evening and Night-time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Sensitive Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Guidance Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Advice Note 1 (EPAN 1)</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including noise.</p> <p>A Noise Impact Assessment sets out the potential for new development to impact on its surroundings by way of noise and/or vibration. Where necessary, it will include measures to mitigate noise and vibration impacts, particularly if the site is surrounded by sensitive premises such as housing and other residential uses.</p> <p>When is it required? A Noise Impact Assessment should be provided with applications where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • noise and/or vibration arising from the proposed development has potential to adversely impact on nearby residential property or other noise sensitive premises such as schools, hospitals, places of worship, offices and other business premises; or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposed noise sensitive premises or development could be exposed to unacceptable adverse noise and/or vibration from an existing noise source (e.g. from road traffic/railway/ entertainment venues/sports/leisure facilities/plant noise). <p>What should be included? The Noise Impact Assessment should include the information and follow the guidance contained in the Belfast City Council Environmental Protection Advice Note 1 (EPAN 1).</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Sensitive Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance and Evening and Night-time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>DAERA also provides standing advice on development that may have an effect on the water environment (including groundwater and fisheries). A Noise Impact Assessment should consider the impact on the marine environment, where appropriate.</p>
<p>30. Odour Impact Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy ENV1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.11 and 6.90</p> <p>SPG Sensitive Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Evening and Night-time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV1 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development that will maintain and, where possible, enhance environmental quality, and protects communities from materially harmful development. Development must not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment, including air quality.</p> <p>An Odour Impact Assessment assesses the impact of odour generating uses on sensitive receptors; or the impact of existing nearby odour generating uses on proposed uses which are sensitive by nature.</p> <p>Where necessary and appropriate, the Odour Impact Assessment should include measures to mitigate odour impacts. These shall include details of proposed odour abatement system controls and demonstrate that the proposed controls are fit for purpose.</p> <p>When is it required? An Odour Impact Assessment should be provided with applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposals for use/s which generate odour and have the potential to impact on the amenity of nearby sensitive receptors. Examples of odour generating uses include commercial kitchens, industrial processes, breweries/distilleries, waste transfer stations, sewage treatment/pumping stations; proposals for sensitive uses which have the potential to be impacted by existing odour generating uses in the locality. Examples of sensitive uses include new housing proposals, hospitals, schools, cultural and recreational facilities, offices, retail and industrial premises, hotels and tourist accommodation. <p>What should be included? An Odour Impact Assessment should be carried out by competent person/s and in line with current best practice and guidance. Applicants are referred to guidance provided by the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM):</p> <p>Guidance on the Assessment of Odour for Planning.</p> <p>Guidance on the Assessment of Odour for Planning and to the Environment Agency Additional guidance for H4 Odour Management - How to comply with your environmental permit. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-permitting-h4-odour-management</p>

	<p>Details of an odour abatement system should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. scale floor plans and elevations showing the positioning and design of ventilation, flue/s and extraction equipment including termination points; 2. manufacturers details of the equipment proposed including odour abatement techniques; and 3. assessment of certain processes may require odour dispersion modelling to predict impact at sensitive receptors. <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Sensitive Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance and Evening and Night-time Economy Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Other relevant guidance includes:</p> <p>Environment Agency Additional guidance for H4 Odour Management - How to comply with your environmental permit.</p> <p>British Water Code of Practice Flows and Loads – 4 Sizing Criteria, Treatment Capacity for Sewage Treatment Systems UKWIR Odour Control in Wastewater Treatment – A Technical Reference Document.</p> <p>CIWEM Policy Position Statement - Control of Odour.</p> <p>NIW Development Encroachment - Odour Assessment Useful guidance concerning managing odour from commercial kitchens is provided by Ricardo EMAQ+ - Control of odour and noise from commercial kitchen exhaust systems, Update to the 2004 Report Prepared by NETCEN for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) (2nd EMAQ edition) (6th May 2022), https://emaq.ricardo.com/course/view.php?id=231</p> <p>An associated Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment may also be required (see section 30).</p>
<p>31. Office Impact Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies SD2, EC6 and RET2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.85 and 6.95</p> <p>SPG Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy EC6 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for office development. Proposals for Use Class B1(a) general offices outside specified areas must comply with the sequential approach with those in excess of 1,000 sqm gross floor space accompanied with an impact assessment and an assessment of need as set out in Policy RET2.</p> <p>Policy RET2 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for main town centre uses, including businesses (and offices). Proposals must demonstrate that there is not a sequentially preferable site in, or on the edge of, centres having regard to criteria of suitability, availability and viability; and submit a retail impact assessment of need for proposals that have a floor space of 1,000 sqm gross and above.</p> <p>An Office Impact Assessment sets out how the requirements of Policies EC6 and RET2 are addressed in respect of larger scale office proposals.</p> <p>When is it required? An Office Impact Assessment is required with planning applications for Use Class B1(a) general offices of 1,000 sqm gross floor space or greater outside the specified areas described in Policy EC6 of the Plan Strategy.</p> <p>What should be included? An Office Impact Assessment should:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate that there is not a sequentially preferable site in, or on the edge of, centres having regard to criteria of suitability, availability and viability; and • include a retail impact assessment that demonstrates the impact of the proposal either by itself, or in combination with other committed development proposals, on the vitality and viability of centres within Belfast and its catchment. <p>Applicants should refer to the by step approach set out in paragraph 3.3 and paragraph 3.5 of the Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>32. Open Space Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy OS3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Paras 4.4, 4.8, 6.199, 6.200, 6.201 and 6.211</p> <p>SPG Residential Development Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy OS3 of the Plan Strategy requires all new development to include appropriate provision for open space, including hard and soft landscaped areas and outdoor amenity areas, to serve the needs of the development.</p> <p>Where the provision of public open space is proposed or required under Policy OS3, the precise amount, location, type and design of such provision will be negotiated with applicants taking account of the specific characteristics of the development, the site and its context and having regard to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a normal expectation will be at least 10% of the total site area; and complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, should be incorporated into the design of the development. <p>An Open Space Statement sets out how the requirements of Policy OS3 have been addressed.</p> <p>When is it required? An Open Space Statement should be provided with all applications for Major development for non-residential uses such as employment, retail, leisure, tourism, cultural and community uses.</p> <p>Note: the requirement for open space for residential housing proposals are dealt with through a separate Residential Quality Statement (see section 38).</p> <p>What should be included? An Open Space Statement should address the requirements in Policy OS3 of the Plan Strategy, including the following.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. how the policy requirement for at least 10% of the site area to be provided as public open space has been met – this should include a written description and annotated and scale plan showing the location of the open space; 2. how the policy requirement for complementary and ancillary equipment and facilities, including for active or passive enjoyment of residents or occupiers, are incorporated into the design of the development; 3. where the requirements of Policy OS3 are not fully met, the reasoning must be explained.
<p>33. Parking Survey</p> <p>Planning Policy</p>	<p>What is it? Policy TRAN 8 of the Plan Strategy requires development proposals to provide adequate provision for car parking and appropriate servicing arrangement.</p>

<p>Policy TRAN8 and TRAN9 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.296, 6.297 and 6.304</p> <p>Guidance Parking Standards (Dfl)</p> <p>Creating Places (Dfl)</p>	<p>Parking standards are set out in the Department's Parking Standards guidance, currently under review.</p> <p>A reduced level of car parking provision may be acceptable in a number of circumstances, including where the development would benefit from spare capacity available in nearby public car parks or adjacent on street car parking.</p> <p>A Parking Survey assesses the number and location of parked vehicles and available space at any one time in the vicinity of the application site, either on street or in existing car parks, and provides an indication of parking trends and any available capacity that could serve the proposed development.</p> <p>When is it required? A Parking Survey should be submitted when there is an identified parking need that cannot be accommodated within the application site.</p> <p>What should be included? A Parking Survey should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A survey of parked vehicles and available parking spaces within 200 metres radius (400 metres diameter) of the application site; 2. Parked vehicles and available spaces are to be shown on a plan; 3. Timed and dated photographs; 4. Areas of parking restriction (e.g. single yellow lines, double yellow lines, disabled parking spaces, waiting bays and other restrictions) must not be included and must be indicated on the plan; 5. Spaces within 15 metres of a junction should also not be included; 6. The survey should be undertaken over at least three days during the working week (i.e. Monday to Friday) and at least one day during the weekend; 7. Residential Parking Survey (in support of residential proposals) – the survey should take place between 7pm and 7am; and 8. Commercial Parking Survey (in support of commercial proposals) – the survey should take place between 7am and 7pm. <p>Guidance Parking standards are set out in the Department's Parking Standards guidance, currently under review.</p>
<p>34. PBMSA Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy HOU12 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPG PBMSA Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy HOU12 of the Plan Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for large-scale Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) where certain criteria are met.</p> <p>A PBMSA Statement sets out how the requirements of Policy HOU12 are addressed.</p> <p>When is it required? A PBMSA Statement should be submitted with all applications for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation.</p> <p>What must be included? The PBMSA Statement should set out how the proposal addresses criteria a. to e. inclusive of Policy HOU12 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.</p>

	<p>In respect of criterion e., a “statement of student housing need” should be submitted, which addresses the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the specific need that is being addressed, with reference to relevant Corporate Plans published by the city’s further and higher education institutions; 2. why this need is currently unmet by existing student accommodation stock, implemented and un-implemented planning permissions for PBMSA; 3. the type of existing accommodation the potential student occupiers are likely to be drawn from; 4. any recorded increase in student numbers; 5. university support, if available; 6. current waiting lists for student accommodation; 7. bedspace to student population ratio/percentage comparison to other university cities; and 8. bank funding available to deliver proposals. <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council’s Draft Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>35. Phasing Plan</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies DES1 and DES2 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Par. 6.301</p> <p>SPG Masterplanning Approach For Major Development Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy DES1 of the Plan Strategy relates to the principles of urban design.</p> <p>Policy DES2 of the Plan Strategy requires proposals for Major development to comply with specified masterplanning principles.</p> <p>A Phasing Plan sets out the sequence in which the various parts of a larger development scheme will be brought forward. The phasing is indicated on a diagrammatic plan with supporting narrative that describes the sequencing and why it is to take place in that order.</p> <p>When is it required? A Phasing Plan should be provided with applications for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major development; or • proposals intended to be implemented in phases. <p>What should be included? A Phasing Plan should include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A plan demarcating the various proposed phases of the development; 2. Supporting narrative that describes the sequencing of the phases and why the proposal is proposed to be implemented in that order; 3. The sequencing of delivery of any infrastructure necessary to support the proposal; 4. If necessary, financial viability information to support the case for phasing of the development (also see section 49, Viability Assessment). <p>Guidance Further guidance is provided by the Masterplanning Approach For Major Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>

36. Planning Agreement (Heads of Terms Form)

Planning Policy

Policies DES1, HOU5, HOU12, RD1, CRG1, HC1, CI1, CC1, TRAN8, ENV5 and OS3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 5.66, 5.67, 5.69 and 5.77

Guidance

Developer Contributions Framework

What is it?

The Plan Strategy includes a range of planning policies that identify the potential requirement for a Planning Agreement to secure developer contributions, infrastructure or other forms of planning obligation to make the proposed development acceptable.

A **Heads of Terms Form** sets out the applicant's intention to enter into a **Planning Agreement** as part of the planning application process, and describes the planning obligations that it is expected to contain. The **Heads of Terms Form** also provides important administrative information to assist the preparation of the **Planning Agreement** including details of ownership of the site and the solicitor acting on behalf of the applicant.

When is it required?

A **Heads of Terms Form** should be provided with all applications where it is expected that a Planning Agreement will be a prerequisite to the granting of planning permission, having regard to the planning policies in the Plan Strategy.

What should be included?

Applicants should complete the **Heads of Terms Form** template, which can be obtained by emailing planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

Guidance

The Council will draft the **Planning Agreement** based on a review of the Heads of Terms Form by the Planning Service.

The Council's [Developer Contribution Framework](#) sets out circumstances when a **Planning Agreement** will be required to secure developer contributions.

Further guidance on planning agreements is provided by [Development Management Practice Note 21: Section 76 Planning Agreements](#)

37. Planning Statement Planning Policy Belfast LDP Plan Strategy – various policies

Planning Policy

Belfast LDP Plan Strategy – various policies

What is it?

A **Planning Statement** is a written document that explains the rationale for the proposal and provides an assessment in the context of the relevant local and regional planning policies.

When is it required?

A **Planning Statement** should be provided with applications for:

- Major development;
- proposals that would result in the loss of existing open space, having regard to Policy OS1 of the Plan Strategy;
- proposals that would result in the loss of employment land; having regard to Policy EC4 of the Plan Strategy;
- proposals that would result in the loss of community infrastructure, having regard to Policy CI1 of the Plan Strategy;
- proposals that require the exceptions test to be applied as described in the Planning and Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Guidance, having regard to Policy ENV4 of the Plan Strategy; and
- proposals that would result in the demolition or part demolition of either:
 - a Listed Building (Policy BH1); or
 - an un-listed building within a Conservation Area that makes a material contribution to the character or appearance of that Conservation Area (Policy BH2); or
 - an un-listed building within an Area of Townscape Character (including draft) that makes a material contribution to the

	<p>character or appearance of that Area of Townscape Character (Policy BH3).</p> <p>What should be included?</p> <p>The Planning Statement should set out how a development proposal takes account of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. It should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a description of the site and its surrounding context; 2. a description of the proposal and why it is needed; 3. relevant planning history; 4. summary of the relevant regional and local planning policies, including the Local Development Plan, and how those planning policies have been applied; 5. other relevant material considerations; 6. assessment of how the proposal addresses the key planning issues; 7. explanation if the proposal is contrary to any of the relevant planning policies (e.g. loss of open space); 8. suggested draft planning conditions in the event that planning permission is granted.
<p>38. Residential Quality Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies RD1 and OS3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.4, 4.8, 4.9, 6.199, 6.200, 6.201 and 6.211</p> <p>SPG Residential Design Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Guidance Creating Places</p>	<p>What is it?</p> <p>Policy RD1 of the Plan Strategy requires new residential development to provide appropriate open space; to create a quality and sustainable residential environment in accordance with the space standards set out in Appendix C; and to ensure that living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms have access to natural light.</p> <p>Policy OS3 of the Plan Strategy requires all new development to include appropriate provision for open space. Specific requirements are set out for residential development including the provision of integral public open space and an equipped children’s play area for certain scale residential proposals.</p> <p>Creating Places (Departmental guidance) provides guidance on garden and amenity standards. For dwellinghouses, the average space garden size should be around 70 sqm or greater. For any individual house, however, an area less than around 40 sqm will generally be unacceptable. In the case of apartment or flat developments, or 1 and 2 bedroomed houses on small urban infill sites, private communal open space will be acceptable in the form of landscaped areas, courtyards or roof gardens. These should range from a minimum of 10 sqm per unit to around 30 sqm per unit. The appropriate level of provision should be determined by having regard to the particular context of the development and the overall design concept.</p> <p>A Residential Quality Statement sets out how proposals for new residential development addresses policy requirements and guidance around open space, amenity space, space standards and natural light.</p> <p>When is it required?</p> <p>A Residential Quality Statement should be provided with applications for the following forms of residential accommodation, including new build, conversion, sub-division and material changes of use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new residential housing (including dwelling houses, apartments, flats and maisonettes); • Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs); and • Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation (PBMSA) accommodation.

What should be included?

A **Residential Quality Statement** should:

1. For proposals of 25 or more units, **or on sites of 1 hectare of more**, set out the proposals for integral public open space **and an equipped children’s play area within** the development as per the requirements of Policy OS3. Where the requirements are not met, the statement shall provide justification as to why this is the case.
2. For proposals of 100 or more units, or for development sites of 5 hectares or more, provide details of the location and specification of an equipped children’s play area. Where the requirements are not met, the statement shall provide justification as to why this is the case.
3. Detail the proposed amenity space (external and internal) for each proposed residential unit, based on the following table:

Unit / Plot	External Amenity Space (sqm)	Internal Amenity Space (sqm)	Total Amenity Space (Sqm)
1			
2			
3			
Communal			
Total			
Average			

4. The size of each proposed residential unit (sqm) against the space standards in Appendix C of the Plan Strategy, based on the following table:

Unit type	Minimum space standard in Appendix C (sqm)	Proposed floor space (sqm).	No. of Units
e.g. 2 person / 1 bed	50	55	
e.g. 4 person / 3 bed (two storey)	80	95	
Etc.			

Guidance

Further guidance is provided by the [Residential Design Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

Applicants should also refer to the Department’s [Creating Places: Achieving Quality in Residential Environments](#).

39. Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)

Planning Policy
Policies SD2, RET1, RET2, RET3 and RET4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.283 and 6.290

SPG
Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy RET1 of the Plan Strategy establishes a retail hierarchy to focus new retail development in existing centres in order of preference according to their type.

Policy RET2 requires proposals for main town centre uses outside of existing centres to be supported by a **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** for proposals that have a floorspace of 1,000 sqm gross and above.

A **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** considers the impacts of proposals for retail or other main town centre uses on the vitality and viability of Belfast City Centre, District centres and Local centres.

When is it required?

A **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** should be provided with applications for retail or other main town centre uses (including cultural and community facilities, retail, leisure, entertainment and businesses) outside of existing centres that have a floor space of 1,000 sqm gross and above.

What should be included?

A **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** should consider:

- the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in centres in the catchment area of the proposal; and
- the impact of the proposal on the vitality and viability of centres, including local consumer choice and trade

The **Retail Impact Assessment (and Assessment of Need)** should adopt the step by step methodology as referred to in paragraph 3.3 of the [Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

In addition, the following information should be provided:

- detail the nature of and reasons for the proposal;
- identify and justify a catchment area from which the proposal will draw trade and customers taking account of factors including the nature of retailing of the proposal and transport links. Where a designated centre is located outside but adjacent to the catchment, that centre should also be included in the assessment;
- identify a catchment area based on drive time journeys from the application site, sub-divided into 5-minute isochrone intervals, and clearly identified on a supporting catchment area map;
- include commentary on the vitality and viability of existing centres within the catchment;
- use an appropriate base and design year. The design year should generally be not less than 4 years after the base year, and include justification for the chosen design year;
- identify and use public published evidence sources for establishing existing and projected population, expenditure, and turnovers of existing retail developments for base and design years;
- justify trade diversion figures from existing facilities and any perceived diversions from outside the catchment area of the proposal;
- identify, consider, and justify the cumulative impacts of extant permissions and taking account of the proposal;
- examine the 'no development' scenario;
- impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in centres in the catchment area of the proposal;
- impact of the proposal on the vitality and viability of centres, including local consumer choice and trade; and
- an electronic copy of all supporting figures and tables.

Guidance

Further guidance is contained in the Council's [Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

40. Sequential Test (main town centre uses)

Planning Policy

Policies SD2, RET1, RET2, RET3 and RET4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Par. 6.280

SPG

Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance

What is it?

Policy RET1 of the Plan Strategy establishes a retail hierarchy to focus new retail development in existing centres in order of preference according to their type. Policy RET2 requires proposals for main town centre uses outside of existing centres to demonstrate that there is not a sequentially preferable site in, or on the edge of, centres having regard to criteria of suitability, availability and viability.

The **Sequential Test** guides main town centre uses to sites within centres locations first. If no centre sites are available, developers should consider an edge of centre location. Only when centre locations or edge of centre locations are unavailable, can consideration be given to an out of centre location. In such cases the developer will still be required to demonstrate that the proposal will not harm existing centres.

When is it required?

The **Sequential Test** should be provided with applications for retail or other main town centre development (including cultural and community facilities, retail, leisure, entertainment and businesses) is proposed either in an edge of centre or an out of centre location. This advice is at officer level only and does not prejudice any future formal decision that the Council may wish to make. includes proposals for new build, extensions and changes of use.

What should be included?

A **Sequential Test** should follow the step by step approach set out in section 3.1 of the [Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

The **Sequential Test** should:

- be proportionate and appropriate for the proposal;
- establish the appropriate catchment for the proposal based on the areas from which customers/visitors/users would be attracted. Catchments should include, where appropriate, an assessment of centres outside of the Council boundary, where relevant;
- identify a catchment area based on drive time journeys from the proposed site, sub-divided into 5-minute isochrone intervals, and clearly identified on a supporting catchment area map;
- identify which designated centres should be assessed. Where a designated centre is located outside but adjacent to the catchment, that centre should also be included in the assessment;
- identify the sequentially preferable sites which should be assessed; and
- assess the suitability, availability and viability of those sites; and
- include scope for flexibility in the format and scale of the proposed development.

Guidance

Further guidance is contained in the Council's [Retail and Main Town Centre Uses Supplementary Planning Guidance](#).

<p>41. Short-term Let Accommodation Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies HOU3 HOU13 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.135, 6.136 and 6.137</p>	<p>What is it? Policy HOU3 of the Plan Strategy seeks to protect existing residential accommodation.</p> <p>Policy HOU13 of the Plan Strategy relates to proposals for short-term let accommodation and sets out criteria for assessing planning applications for such uses.</p> <p>A Short-term Let Accommodation Statement demonstrates how proposals for short-term let accommodation meet the requirements of Policy HOU13.</p> <p>When is it required? A Short-term Let Accommodation Statement should be provided with applications for short-term let accommodation – including short-term holiday lets; self-catering apartments; apart-hotels and serviced apartments.</p> <p>What should be included? The Short-term Let Accommodation Statement should address criteria a. to f. inclusive of Policy HOU13 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not fully met, this must be justified.</p>
<p>42. Specialist Housing Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy HOU8 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 4.14. 4.16. 6.137</p>	<p>What is it? Policy HOU8 of the Plan Strategy sets out the circumstances where planning permission will be granted for specialist residential accommodation, including retirement villages and care facilities.</p> <p>A Specialist Housing Statement demonstrates how proposals for specialist residential accommodation meet the requirements of Policy HOU8.</p> <p>When is it required? A Specialist Housing Statement should be provided with applications for specialist residential accommodation – including both new build and extensions – such as sheltered housing, extra care housing, nursing homes and residential care homes.</p> <p>What should be included? The Specialist Housing Statement should address criteria a. and b. inclusive of Policy HOU8 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not fully met, this must be justified.</p>
<p>43. Tall Buildings Design Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy DES3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.3, 4.2, 4.11, 4.12, 4.23-4.36</p> <p>SPG Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What it is? Policy DES3 of the Plan Strategy provides criteria for assessing proposals for tall buildings, defined as any building 35m above ordnance datum (AOD) or taller or those which are significantly higher than their surroundings.</p> <p>A Tall Buildings Design Statement sets out how proposals for tall buildings address the design criteria in Policy DES3.</p> <p>When is it required? A Tall Buildings Design Statement should be provided with applications for a tall building, defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any building 35 metres above ordinance datum (AOD) or taller; or • any building which is significantly higher than their surroundings. <p>What should be included? The Tall Buildings Design Statement should address criteria a. to h. inclusive of Policy DES3 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not met, this must be justified.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>

44. Tele-communications Supporting Statement

Planning Policy

Policy ITU 1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.235-250

What is it?

Policy ITU 1 of the Plan Strategy sets out the requirements for proposals for telecommunications development.

A **Telecommunications Supporting Statement** sets out the proposal addresses the requirements of Policy ITU 1, including technical justification for the proposals and demonstration as to how it has been sited and designed to minimise visual and environmental impact, including investigation of mast sharing.

When is it required?

A **Telecommunications Supporting Statement** should be provided with applications for telecommunications infrastructure comprising masts, antennae and base stations.

What should be included?

A **Telecommunications Supporting Statement** should address criteria a. to h. inclusive of Policy ITU 1 of the Plan Strategy. Where a criterion is not met, this must be justified.

45. Transport Assessment

Planning Policy

Policy TRAN3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy

SPPS Para. 6.303

SPG

Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance

Guidance

Chapter 10 of the Developer Contributions Framework

What is it?

Policy TRAN 3 of the Plan Strategy states that a transport assessment will be required to evaluate the transport implications of the development proposal, where it is likely to have significant travel generating uses.

A **Transport Assessment** is a comprehensive and systematic process that sets out various transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme in relation to all forms of travel. Where that mitigation relates to matters that can be addressed by management arrangements, the mitigation may inform the preparation of Travel Plans. Its purpose is to provide enough information for the Council and Department for Infrastructure (Roads) to understand how the proposal is likely to function in transport terms.

When is it required?

A **Transport Assessment** should be provided with applications for proposed development that would likely have significant transport implications.

Applicants should complete a Transport Assessment Form (TAF) to help establish if a detailed **Transport Assessment** is needed (also see section 46).

The following table provides a guide as to when a Transport Assessment may be required.

Food retail - 1,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Non-food retail - 1,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Cinemas and conference facilities - 1,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Leisure facilities - 1,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Business - 2,500 sqm Gross Floor Area
Industry - 5,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Distribution and warehousing - 10,000 sqm Gross Floor Area
Hospitals - 2,500 sqm Gross Floor Area
Higher and further education 2,500 sqm Gross Floor Area
Stadia - 1,500 seats
Housing – 100 units

	<p>What should be included?</p> <p>The requirement for and scope of a Transport Assessment should be discussed with the Council's Planning Service and DfI Roads as part of a Pre-Application Discussion.</p> <p>Detailed guidance is provided by the Department's Transport Assessment: Guidelines for Development Proposals in Northern Ireland (November 2006) (currently under review).</p> <p>Further guidance is provided by the Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>46. Transport Assessment Form</p> <p>Planning Policy Policies TRAN 1, TRAN 2, TRAN 4 and TRAN 6 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Par. 6.293-305 SPG Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy TRAN 1 of the Plan Strategy promotes active travel – walking and cycling. Policy TRAN 2 relates to creating an accessible environment. Policy TRAN 4 requires travel plans to be submitted for proposals for significant travel generating uses. Policy TRAN 6 relates to proposals involving access to public roads.</p> <p>A Transport Assessment Form is a tool that applicants can use to screen out those applications where no further information on the transport impacts of the proposal is required. It helps the Council and DfI Roads understand the transport impacts of the proposal and how those impacts may be mitigated.</p> <p>When is it required? A Transport Assessment Form (TAF) should be submitted with applications for the following proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residential comprising 10 or more units; • non-residential with a gross floor area of 500 sqm or more; • likely to generate 30 or more vehicle movements per hour; • likely to generate 10 or more freight movements per day or 5 in any given hour. <p>What should be included? Applicants should complete the Transport Assessment Form at Appendix A of the Department's Transport Assessment: Guidelines for Development Proposals in Northern Ireland (November 2006) (currently under review).</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is provided by the Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Further advice can be found on the Department of Infrastructure Roads website</p>
<p>47. Travel Plan</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy TRAN4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Par. 6.293-305</p> <p>SPG Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Guidance Chapter 10 of the Developer Contributions Framework</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ENV4 of the Plan Strategy states that proposals for significant travel generating uses will require a travel plan.</p> <p>A Travel Plan sets out a package of complementary measures for the delivery of sustainable travel. The objective of a Travel Plan is to reduce single occupancy car travel. However, a Travel Plan should not be used to make a development acceptable. A Travel Plan is a long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed. As such, critical elements of all successful Travel Plans include setting targets to improve sustainable travel, monitoring and review.</p> <p>When is it required? The requirement for a Travel Plan will be informed by the criteria set out in paragraph 3.4.3 of the Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>

	<p>What should be included? Further guidance is provided by the Transportation Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>48. Tree Report</p> <p>Planning Policy</p> <p>Policies TRE1 and LC1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.192</p> <p>SPG Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance</p> <p>Guidance Creating Places</p>	<p>What is it? Policy TRE1 of the Plan Strategy seeks to protect existing trees from new development, particularly those that are of visual, biodiversity or amenity quality and significance, and there will be a presumption in favour of retaining and safeguarding trees that make a valuable contribution to the environment and amenity. The council will adopt the precautionary principle when considering the impacts of a proposed development on trees of visual, biodiversity or amenity quality and significance.</p> <p>A Tree Report assesses the likely impact of new development on existing trees within or adjacent to the site. It assesses the health, condition and amenity value of the affected trees and proposes mitigation where appropriate. The Tree Report should also set out measures to protect the trees during construction.</p> <p>When is it required? A Tree Report should be provided with applications for proposals that have the potential to impact on existing trees on or adjacent to the site (including street trees).</p> <p>What should be included? The Tree Report should include the information set out at paragraph 3.3.1 of the Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Council's Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>49. Viability Assessment</p> <p>Planning Policy</p> <p>Policies HOU5, BH1, BH2 and BH3 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.13</p> <p>SPG Development Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? A scheme is viability where, after taking account of all costs, the proposal provides a competitive return to the developer to ensure that development takes pace and generates a land value sufficient to persuade a land owner to sell the land for the development proposed. If these conditions are not met, a scheme will not be delivered.</p> <p>The Plan Strategy recognises that certain planning policy requirements may raise the issue of viability, such as the requirement to provide affordable housing under Policy HOU5, demolition of a building under Policy BH2 or loss of tourism leisure and cultural facilities and assets under Policy TLC2.</p> <p>The financial viability of proposals may therefore in some circumstances be a material planning consideration.</p> <p>A Viability Assessment assesses whether a development proposal is viable.</p> <p>When is it required? A Viability Assessment should be provided with applications where the normal planning policy requirement cannot be achieved on grounds of viability, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Policy HOU5 of the Plan Strategy • demolition of a building that makes a material contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, having regard to Policy BH2 of the Plan Strategy • loss of existing tourism or cultural facilities in the context of Policy TLC2 of the Plan Strategy

	<p>What should be included? The Viability Assessment should be based on the factors set out at paragraph 6.2.2 of the Development Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>It should include an “Executive Summary” based on the template at Appendix 2 of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (Please note that the Executive Summary will be published on the NI Planning Portal alongside the other main application documents).</p> <p>Guidance A Viability Assessment should be carried out by a suitably qualified professional such as a quantity surveyor.</p> <p>The Council may choose to commission an independent review of the Viability Assessment the cost of which will be met by the applicant.</p> <p>The Viability Assessment will often contain sensitive commercial information and will not be published on the NI Planning Portal. However, the Executive Summary provided as part of the Viability Assessment will be published.</p> <p>Further guidance is provided by the Council’s Development Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>50. Waste Management Plan</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy DES1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.3, 4.2, 4.11, 4.12, 4.23-4.36</p> <p>SPG Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy DES1 sets out principles for urban design including protection of amenity and effective placemaking.</p> <p>A Waste Management Plan ensures that appropriate provision is made for accommodating the total waste generated from a development; facilitating the segregation of waste as necessary; and allowing convenient and safe access and egress for the storage and collection of waste.</p> <p>When is it required? A Waste Management Plan should be provided with applications for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new commercial or mixed use developments of 500 sqm or greater; or • development that proposes use of communal waste storage (such as apartments, flats, sheltered housing, HMOs and Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation). <p>What should be included? The Waste Management Plan should include the information contained in Table 2 (paragraph 4.3.1) of the Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance on waste management is contained in the Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>
<p>51. Waste Storage Plan</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy DES1 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 3.3, 4.2, 4.11, 4.12, 4.23-4.36</p> <p>SPG</p>	<p>What is it? Policy DES1 sets out principles for urban design including protection of amenity and effective placemaking.</p> <p>A Waste Storage Plan shows the area/s within the site dedicated to the storage of waste, such as a bin storage area. This is to ensure that waste storage is appropriately designed and integrated into the development, is of sufficient size to accommodate the number of bins required to service the proposal and will not give rise to unacceptable amenity issues for neighbours.</p>

<p>Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>When is it required? A Waste Storage Plan should be provided with all applications, including proposals for a change of use, which would give rise to increased waste storage requirements, except Householder proposals (e.g. domestic extensions, garages and outbuildings).</p> <p>What should be included? The Waste Storage Plan should comprise the following scaled drawings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location of the waste storage area/s within the proposed site layout; • elevations showing how the waste storage area/s will be physically contained (if applicable). <p>Guidance Further guidance on waste management is contained in the Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p> <p>Appendix 2 of the Waste Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance provides guidance on the volume of waste and size of waste storage area for different uses and types of development.</p>
<p>52. Wind Energy Statement</p> <p>Planning Policy Policy ITU 4 of the Belfast LDP Plan Strategy</p> <p>SPPS Para. 6.227, 6.230, 6.233</p> <p>Guidance Wind Energy Developments in Northern Ireland's Landscapes Supplementary Planning Guidance</p>	<p>What is it? Policy ITU 4 of the Plan Strategy sets out the circumstances when planning permission will be granted for wind energy development.</p> <p>A Wind Energy Statement demonstrates how the proposal complies with the requirements of Policy ITU 4.</p> <p>When is it required? A Wind Energy Statement should be provided with applications for commercial wind energy development.</p> <p>What should be included? The Wind Energy Statement should set out how each of the policy criteria a. to l. inclusive in Policy ITU 4 of the Plan Strategy are addressed. Where a criterion is not satisfied, the statement should provide justification as to why this is the case.</p> <p>Guidance Further guidance is contained in the Department for Infrastructure's Wind Energy Development in Northern Ireland's Landscapes Supplementary Planning Guidance.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

<p>Additional information</p>	<p>Extra information required by the Council for a planning application to be valid in Belfast. Additional information is required on a case-by-case basis having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposal and helps the Council's Planning Service fully assess the planning application.</p> <p>The Additional information requirements are set out at Appendix 3 of the Planning Application Validation Checklist. This includes an Indicative Guide on Additional information requirements by type of application.</p>
<p>Appeal</p>	<p>An appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission following the Council's decision to issue a Notice of invalidity that the planning application is invalid (either because it is not accompanied by the correct planning fee or because insufficient Basic information and/or Additional information has been provided with the application).</p> <p>An appeal must be made to the Planning Appeals Commission within 14 days of the date of the Council's Notice of invalidity.</p>
<p>Approval of reserved matters</p>	<p>Any of the following matters for which details have not been provided as part of an application for Outline planning permission, namely:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) siting; (b) design; (c) external appearance; (d) means of access; or (e) the landscaping of the site.
<p>Area of Townscape Character (ATC)</p>	<p>Areas of Townscape Character exhibit a distinct character normally based on their historic built form or layout. For the most part, this derives from the cumulative impact of the area's buildings, their setting and other locally important features.</p> <p>Areas of Townscape Character are identified in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015. They will be updated in the Belfast Local Development Plan: Local Policies Plan once published.</p>
<p>Basic information</p>	<p>Basic information required by planning legislation for a planning application to be valid in NI. Typically, this includes an application form, ownership certificate, site location plan, plans and drawings. Other Basic information may be required according to the scale and location of the proposal.</p>

	<p>The Basic information requirements are set out at Appendix 2 of the Planning Application Validation Checklist.</p> <p>Additional information may also be required for the application to be confirmed as valid.</p>
Belfast Local Development Plan 2035	<p>The Local Development Plan for Belfast City Council's administrative area (also see Local Development Plan). It comprises two parts: the Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan.</p>
City Centre	<p>Belfast City Centre provides a broad range of facilities and services and which fulfil a function as a focus both for the community and for public transport.</p> <p>The City Centre boundary is identified by the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 and will be updated in the Belfast Local Development Plan: Local Policies Plan once published.</p>
Conservation Area	<p>A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest designated by the council under Article 104 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 within its district where the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.</p> <p>There are currently 13 Conservation Areas in Belfast. These are identified in the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 and will be feature in the Belfast Local Development Plan: Local Policies Plan once published.</p>
Full planning application	<p>An application for full planning permission includes all the particulars needed to describe a development in such a way that when permission is granted the development can proceed immediately (subject to any planning conditions in the decision notice).</p>
Householder application	<p>A planning application for domestic proposals such as extensions, garages, outbuildings, satellite dishes etc.</p> <p>Householder applications only need to be accompanied by Basic information (there is currently no requirement for Additional information for Householder applications in Belfast).</p>
Indicative Guide	<p>Guidance as to the typical Additional information requirements by type of application.</p> <p>The Indicative Guide can be found at Appendix 3 of the Planning Application Validation Checklist.</p>
Information Checklist	<p>A tool to prompt and help applicants identify which information they need to provide with their application.</p> <p>The Information Checklist can be found at Appendix 1 of the Planning Application Validation Checklist. Applicants are</p>

	<p>advised to complete the Information Checklist in all cases and submit it with their application.</p>
Invalid application	<p>An application which is accompanied by insufficient information for the Council to register and process it.</p> <p>An Invalid application may be missing Basic information and/or Additional information, or incorrect planning fee.</p>
Listed Building	<p>A Listed Building is building and any man-made features attached to the building or within the curtilage the building that are listed by the Department for Communities under Article 80 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 for its special architectural and historic interest. It brings it under the consideration of the planning system, so that it can be protected for future generations.</p> <p>Listed Buildings are identified by the Department for Infrastructure's Historic Environment Map Viewer.</p>
Local Development Plan	<p>NI operates a plan-led planning system whereby planning decisions must by law be made in accordance with the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>The Local Development Plan outlines a council's local policies and site specific proposals for new development and the use of land. It comprises two parts: a Plan Strategy and Local Policies Plan.</p> <p>The Belfast Local Development Plan: Plan Strategy was adopted in May 2023 and provides operational planning policies against which planning applications are assessed.</p> <p>The Local Policies Plan, once published, will include site specific proposals, designations and land use zonings required to deliver the council's vision for the city.</p>
Local Policies Plan	<p>Part of the Local Development Plan that, once published, will include site specific proposals, designations and land use zonings required to deliver the council's vision for the city.</p>
Major development	<p>Large-scale development proposals, the thresholds for which are defined by the Schedule in the Planning (Development Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.</p> <p>Examples of Major development include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing proposals of 50 or more residential units or sites of more than 2 hectares; • Business, industry, storage and distribution proposals of 5,000 sqm or more or sites of more than 1 hectare;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retailing, community, recreation and culture proposals of 1,000 sqm or more outside city or town centres or sites of more than 1 hectare.
Notice of invalidity	<p>A written notice issued by the Planning Service that formally confirms that an Invalid application has been submitted. The applicant has the right of Appeal against the Notice of invalidity to the Planning Appeals Commission. Such an appeal must be lodged within 14 days of the date of the Notice of invalidity.</p> <p>Where the Planning Service considers the application to be invalid on first review, it will normally discuss the further information requirements with the applicant and seek to negotiate a solution before issuing a Notice of invalidity.</p>
Outline planning application	<p>An outline planning application provides a means for an applicant to establish whether a proposal to build on any particular site is acceptable, in principle, before embarking on the preparation of detailed plans in full. The benefits of outline planning permission are a possible reduced initial expenditure and also the flexibility afforded to the applicant who may not necessarily wish to develop the land personally.</p> <p>Where outline planning permission is granted, development cannot proceed until an application for Approval of the Reserved matters (final details) has been submitted to and approved by the Council.</p>
Plan Strategy	<p>The first part of the Local Development Plan which sets out the strategic land-use planning vision for a council's administrative area.</p> <p>The Plan Strategy also provides operational planning policies against which planning applications are assessed.</p>
Planning Appeals Commission (PAC)	<p>The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent body which deals with a wide range of land use planning issues and related matters, including planning appeals.</p>
Planning Application Validation Checklist	<p>A document that prescribes Additional information required for a Valid application within a council's administrative area.</p>
Pre-Application Discussion (PAD)	<p>An informal discussion between a prospective applicant and the Council's Planning Service to discuss the merits of a proposal before a planning application is made.</p> <p>A PAD can be used to make sure that the proposal is on the right lines, how it can be improved to increase the chances of planning permission being granted and the issues that will need to be addressed through any application. A PAD provides opportunity for applicants to discuss Basic</p>

	information and Additional information required by the Council's Planning Application Validation Checklist.
Proposal of Application Notice (PAN)	Notice given to the Planning Service by the applicant of their intention to submit an application for Major development. The PAN sets out the applicant's proposals for Pre-Community Consultation before the application is made, including the holding of a community consultation event. An application for Major development cannot be submitted until 12 weeks has elapsed from the date from the Proposal of Application Notice being given.
Section 76 planning agreement	<p>A legally binding contract between the Council, applicant and any other interested parties in the land to secure planning obligations to make the proposed development acceptable, which cannot otherwise be secure by a planning condition.</p> <p>A Section 76 planning agreement is typically used to secure Developer Contributions such as affordable housing, Travel Plan, green travel measures, management of open space, Employability and Skills Plans and financial contributions towards improved infrastructure.</p>
Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)	Regional planning policy published by the Department for Infrastructure for securing the orderly and consistent development of land in NI under the reformed two-tier planning system. The provisions of the SPPS must be taken into account in a council's preparation of its Local Development Plan.
Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	Additional guidance which illustrates by example, supports, or clarifies planning policies. It also includes Development Control Advice Notes (DCANs) that explain criteria and technical standards to be considered when dealing with specific categories or particular aspects of development. Where relevant to a particular development proposal, Supplementary Planning Guidance will be taken into account as a material consideration in making decisions.
Town Centre Uses	Retail, office, leisure, entertainment, more intensive sports and recreation uses including cinemas, restaurants, casinos, health and fitness places, bowling centres, bars and pubs, culture and arts and tourism developments.
Validation	The process of the Planning Service checking whether the right information has been provided for a Valid application in accordance with the Planning Application Validation Checklist.
Valid application	<p>An application accompanied by all the information that the Council requires to register and process it.</p> <p>In order for it to qualify as being a Valid application, it must be supported by the relevant Basic information and Additional information, as well as the correct planning fee</p>

	(where applicable) in accordance with the Council's Planning Application Validation Checklist.
Valid date	The date of the Valid application – being the date that all the information required by the Planning Service to register and process the application was submitted in accordance with its Planning Application Validation Checklist.



Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	21 March 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Portfolio Manager

Restricted Reports					
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.					
Insert number <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 					
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?					
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<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>				

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
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

	<p>projects which the Council delivers on behalf of external agencies. The Council's Capital Programme forms part of the Physical Programme and is a rolling programme of investment which either improves existing Council facilities or provides new facilities. This report presents requests for approvals under the Capital Programme.</p>
<p>2.0</p>	<p>Recommendations</p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IT Programme – Electronic Document Management System (EDRMS) – Agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme and 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. ○ Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles Service – agree to move the project to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course. ○ Duncrue Masterplan - Agree that the Duncrue Masterplan is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. ○ Leisure Programme - Agree that the Leisure Programme is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> as a programme of works to allow business cases to be developed. ○ City Hall Preservation - Agree that the City Hall Preservation is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> as a programme of works to allow business cases to be developed. ○ Bridges Improvement Programme - Agree that the Bridges Improvement Programme is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> as a programme of works to allow business cases to be developed. ○ Beacon Programme - Agree that the Beacon Programme is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed. ○ Girdwood H&S Works - Agree that Girdwood H&S Works is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> as a programme of health and safety works and that any 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; and, ○ Fleet Replacement Programme 2026/27 – Note the Fleet Programme for 2026/27.

3.0	<p>Main report</p> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p>																											
3.1	<p><u>Physical Programme</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that the Council runs a substantial Physical Programme. This includes the rolling Capital Programme – a multimillion regeneration programme of investment across the city which improves existing Council assets or provides new council facilities. The Council also delivers externally focused funding streams such as Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Local Investment Fund (LIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF), as well as numerous physical programmes and standalone projects that we deliver for central government. Our funding partners include National Lottery Heritage Fund, SEUPB PeacePLUS, the Executive Office, DfC, DfI including the Living with Water Programme, DAERA, Ulster Garden Villages, Levelling Up Fund (LUF), UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and others. When appropriate, the Property & Projects Department is happy to arrange site visits to any projects that have been completed.</p>																											
3.2	<p><u>Capital Programme - Proposed Movements</u></p> <p>Members are aware of the scale of the Council's Physical Programme via a range of internal and external funding streams. Members have agreed that all capital projects must go through a three-stage process where decisions on which capital projects progress are taken by the Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and will allow Members 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:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project</th> <th>Overview</th> <th>Stage movement</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IT Programme – EDRMS</td> <td>Implementation of a new centralised approach to the storage, retrieval, sharing and retention of electronic records and information.</td> <td>Move to Stage 3 – Committed – held at risk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles Service</td> <td>Procurement of two smaller collection vehicles to improve collection performance in narrow and restricted streets.</td> <td>Move to Stage 2 - Uncommitted</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Duncrue Masterplan</td> <td>Redevelopment of the whole Duncrue site aimed at improving the efficiency of the site.</td> <td>Add at Stage 1 – Emerging</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leisure Programme</td> <td>Delivery of the next stage of the Leisure Programme.</td> <td>Add at Stage 1 – Emerging</td> </tr> <tr> <td>City Hall Preservation</td> <td>Programme of works to ensure the preservation of the City Hall building</td> <td>Add at Stage 1 – Emerging</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bridges Improvement Programme</td> <td>Programme of remedial works on bridges across the Council estate.</td> <td>Add at Stage 1 – Emerging</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Beacon Programme</td> <td>Provision of beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires.</td> <td>Add at Stage 1 – Emerging</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Girdwood H&S Works</td> <td>Urgent works to the roof of the Girdwood Community Hub building.</td> <td>Add at Stage 1 – Emerging</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Project	Overview	Stage movement	IT Programme – EDRMS	Implementation of a new centralised approach to the storage, retrieval, sharing and retention of electronic records and information.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed – held at risk	Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles Service	Procurement of two smaller collection vehicles to improve collection performance in narrow and restricted streets.	Move to Stage 2 - Uncommitted	Duncrue Masterplan	Redevelopment of the whole Duncrue site aimed at improving the efficiency of the site.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging	Leisure Programme	Delivery of the next stage of the Leisure Programme.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging	City Hall Preservation	Programme of works to ensure the preservation of the City Hall building	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging	Bridges Improvement Programme	Programme of remedial works on bridges across the Council estate.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging	Beacon Programme	Provision of beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging	Girdwood H&S Works	Urgent works to the roof of the Girdwood Community Hub building.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging
Project	Overview	Stage movement																										
IT Programme – EDRMS	Implementation of a new centralised approach to the storage, retrieval, sharing and retention of electronic records and information.	Move to Stage 3 – Committed – held at risk																										
Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles Service	Procurement of two smaller collection vehicles to improve collection performance in narrow and restricted streets.	Move to Stage 2 - Uncommitted																										
Duncrue Masterplan	Redevelopment of the whole Duncrue site aimed at improving the efficiency of the site.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging																										
Leisure Programme	Delivery of the next stage of the Leisure Programme.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging																										
City Hall Preservation	Programme of works to ensure the preservation of the City Hall building	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging																										
Bridges Improvement Programme	Programme of remedial works on bridges across the Council estate.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging																										
Beacon Programme	Provision of beacons as an alternative to traditional bonfires.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging																										
Girdwood H&S Works	Urgent works to the roof of the Girdwood Community Hub building.	Add at Stage 1 – Emerging																										

3.3	<p>IT Programme – EDRMS</p> <p>The Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) is a new centralised approach to the storage, retrieval, sharing and retention of electronic records and information. This project is part of the overall IT Programme and a business case has been submitted. Members are asked to agree that the project is added to the Capital Programme and 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.</p>
3.4	<p>Fleet Programme – Small Vehicles Service</p> <p>This project was added to the Capital Programme as a <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> project in December 2024. It forms part of the Council’s Waste Collection service and seeks to address issues around difficult to access streets via the introduction of smaller refuse collection vehicles. Following a successful trial utilising lease vehicles it is proposed to procure the small vehicles. Members are asked to agree to move the project to <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i> to allow the options to be fully worked up, with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course.</p>
3.5	<p>Duncrue Masterplan</p> <p>The Duncrue facility requires significant physical investment as well as strategic consideration of what is situated on this site and how it operates. A significant number of other key council projects and strategies will directly impact on this project. Members are asked to agree that the Duncrue Masterplan is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> to allow a business case to be developed.</p>
3.6	<p>Leisure Programme</p> <p>Members will be aware of the £105m Leisure Transformation Programme which was a ten-year programme designed to improve the Council’s leisure centres, programmes and services. The remaining centre under LTP is Girdwood which is on the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted</i>. Members will also be aware that consultants are continuing their work looking at other centres, and also that there are a number of other inter-linked pieces underway which relate to leisure including the Sports Development and Physical Activity Strategy and the development of the new Pitches Strategy. Members are asked to agree that the Leisure Programme is added to the Capital Programme at <i>Stage 1 – Emerging</i> as a programme of works to allow business cases to be developed.</p>
3.7	<p>City Hall Preservation</p> <p>In November 2024, Members agreed to add several heritage schemes to the Council’s Capital Programme and developmental work is underway on those projects. The City Hall is one of the</p>

	70+ listed assets the Council owns and requires a programme of works in order to preserve its historical fabric, along with ensuring the delivery of its operational and civic functions. Members are asked to agree that City Hall Preservation is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging as a programme of works to allow business cases to be developed.
3.8	<p>Bridges Improvement Programme</p> <p>Bridges surveys have been carried out across the council estate and a programme of necessary remedial work on a number of sites across multiple years is now being prepared. Members are asked to agree that the Bridges Improvement Programme is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging as a programme of works to allow business cases to be developed.</p>
3.9	<p>Beacon Programme</p> <p>For the last number of years, the Council has been providing Beacons as a managed, environmentally more acceptable alternative to traditional bonfires, where these are requested. The programme has grown and is expected to continue to do so in the year 2025/26. Members are asked to agree that the Beacon Programme is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 – Emerging to allow a business case to be developed.</p>
3.10	<p>Girdwood Hub H&S Works</p> <p>It is proposed that immediate health and safety works are undertaken to the building. Members are asked to agree that Girdwood H&S Works is added to the Capital Programme at Stage 1 - Emerging as a programme of health and safety works and that any 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.</p>
3.11	<p>Capital Programme - Fleet Programme 2026/27</p> <p>Members will know that the Council needs to run and maintain a substantial fleet in order to deliver its services and that the Committee noted the programme for the next financial year 2025/26 last month. To assist with financial planning and in recognition of lengthy lead-in times for this industry, the programme for the following financial year, 2026/27, is now also presented for Members to note. There is a rolling allocation of £2.2m towards the Fleet Programme for 2026/27. The Fleet Programme has been developed in conjunction with Council departments and reflects the service needs of the organisation, and there are ongoing issues caused by the high age profile and condition of the fleet operating well beyond its recommended operational life cycle. The agreed Fleet Programme for 2026/27 is attached at Appendix 1. Members are asked to note the agreed Fleet Programme for 2026/27.</p>
3.12	<p>Financial & Resource Implications</p> <p><i>Financial Implications</i> – Fleet Replacement Programme 2026/27 – this is an existing rolling allocation of £2.2m on the Capital Programme relating to the Council’s fleet.</p>

	<i>Resource Implications</i> – Officer time to deliver.
3.13	Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Fleet Programme 2026/27

Appendix 1 - Fleet Replacement Programme 2026/27

The proposed vehicle replacement of fleet assets for 2026/27 is made up as follows:

Total Budget £2.2m.

Item	Nr
Official corporate cars - lease/hire annually on 4yr contract	3
Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCV) 6x2 26 tonnes	3
Kerb-Sort Vehicle 12 tonnes - refurb of body to extend operational life	2
Compact cleaning sweeper 5 tonnes	3
Road truck cleaning sweeper 15 tonnes	3
Agri Tractor 4x4 front loader	2
Crew cab loose waste collect 6.5 tonnes - new chassis with refurb body	4
Crew cab beaver tail 7.2 tonnes - new chassis with refurb body	4
Total estimated cost	£2,171,010

This page is intentionally left blank

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	Committee is asked to approve the minutes of the meetings of South AWG – 24 Feb, North AWG – 25 Feb, West AWG – 27 Feb, East AWG – 6 March 2024 as attached.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Area Working Group Minutes</u></p> <p>It was agreed in June 2016 that the minutes of the meetings of the Area Working Groups would be presented to the SP&R Committee for approval going forward, in line with the Council’s commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups. The Committee is asked to approve the most recent meeting, as attached.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
3.4	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 - Minutes – Meeting - South Belfast Area Working Group 24 February 2025 Appendix 2 - Minutes – Meeting – North Belfast Area Working Group 25 February 2025 Appendix 3 - Minutes – Meeting – West Belfast Area Working Group 27 February 2025 Appendix 4 - Minutes – Meeting – East Belfast Area Working Group 6 March 2025</p>

South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 24th February, 2025

MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND
REMOТЕLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McKeown (Chairperson);
Councillors T. Brooks, Brennan, Bunting,
Groogan, Kelly, Lyons and McKay.

In attendance: Ms. S. Murtagh, Property and Projects Portfolio
Manager;
Ms. S. Kalke, Client Manager (Property and Projects);
Ms. S. Rafter, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 19th August, 2024 were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Brennan declared an interest in the Physical Programme item, in that her employer was involved in projects which were in receipt of funding under the schemes. She left the meeting before the item was discussed.

Presentations

Sustrans re: Blackstaff Greenway Study

The Client Manager (Property and Projects) provided the Working Group with an overview of a Notice of Motion, which had been brought forward by Councillor T. Brooks, to consider the creation of a Greenway following the route of the Blackstaff River, from the Stockman's Way roundabout through Boucher Road Playing Fields and continuing through the Boucher Estate to the 'Rise' sculpture.

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. A. McBeth and Ms. C. Pollock (both Sustrans), who had been commissioned to prepare the study, to the meeting. They provided the Members with an overview of the various factors which they had taken into consideration and highlighted several options of potential routes. Ms. McBeth explained that the

proposal was to revitalise and regenerate the river, bring back native species and create permeable routes along it.

They outlined that they had engaged with DfI Active Travel on the development of a Blackstaff Greenway and that the project would ideally be cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary. A number of potential funding streams had also been identified to help deliver the project.

During discussion, a Member stated that Stockman's Lane was one of the most heavily polluted areas on the island of Ireland, largely due to the fact that there were a significant number of Heavy Goods Vehicles using the area to access the industrial estate. He stated that, having tried to cycle along the Boucher Road himself, it was an unpleasant experience. He suggested that perhaps the Greenway could use alternative access and egress points such as adjacent Council property. The Member also stated that flooding was prevalent in the area and that NI Water should be consulted on the plans.

In response a Member's question, the Client Manager advised the Working Group that there was not a specific masterplan for the Boucher area. The Boucher Estate was managed by the Estates Management Unit in the Property and Projects Department.

In response to further Members' comments, the Client Manager advised the Members that the greenway could perhaps link in with the Forth Meadow Community Greenway, the West Belfast Greenway as well as connecting into the Donegall Road.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for the informative presentation and they left the meeting.

Noted.

Developing the Belfast Sustainable Food Strategy

(Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. M. Turley, Community Garden Support NI, to the meeting.

The Adaptation and Resilience Advisor provided the Working Group with an overview of the work which was ongoing in developing a Sustainable Food Strategy for the City. She outlined that the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership had been established in August 2023 and that it acted as a collective voice for the city on key challenges for the food system around climate change, biodiversity, food justice, a circular economy, urban farming, community growing, food waste and more.

She highlighted that they were mindful of Motions which had been passed by the Council, which covered issues such as the Right to Food, the Right to Grow and the Plant Based Treaty and would be progressing those as part of the work.

Ms. M. Turley outlined the extensive work which was being undertaken by several stakeholders, including Community Garden Support NI.

A Member stated that educating people should be central to the strategy, particularly with regards to food supply, seasonal produce and why sustainability was important.

A further Member added that making the climate relevant to the average person was important, particularly given the current cost of living. He stated that community wealth building would be crucial to its success.

During further discussion on community gardens and allotments, the Adaptation and Resilience Advisor confirmed that a paper would be submitted to the People and Communities Committee in March in relation to the provision and management of allotments across the City.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation and they left the meeting.

Noted.

Linen Quarter BID re: Gasworks Improvement Proposal

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. C. McCracken, MD, Mr. C. Karelse, Regeneration Manager (both Linen Quarter BID) and Mr. A. Haley, Director at The Paul Hogarth Company (Design consultant), to the meeting.

Mr. McCracken provided the Working Group with an overview of the Linen Quarter BID's proposal for improvements to the Gasworks area of the city, which had been drawn up in conjunction with The Paul Hogarth Company as Design Consultant.

He outlined that Mr. A. Haley had extensive experience of transforming underused public realm into sustainable places that people enjoyed using.

The proposal for public realm improvement for the Gasworks included a transformation of the central green space with the aim of promoting it as a social focal point for both employees and visitors alike, with improved lighting throughout.

During discussion, some Members stated that it was important that local residents were consulted on the plans and that their opinions be treated as equally important as the local employees. A number of Members also stated that animation in the area was to be welcomed and that the transition from a business park to a mixed-use site was to be welcomed.

A Member requested that the Linen Quarter BID would engage further with different user groups who would use the open space, to ensure that it would be flexible enough to meet their needs for various events.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their presentation and they left the meeting.

Noted.

Physical Programme Update

The Property and Projects Portfolio Manager presented the undernoted report to the Working Group:

“1. Introduction

The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the Physical Programme update for South Belfast including the recently completed project at Appendix 1 - Covered cycle stands,
- Note the announcement of Urban Villages Initiative capital funding from The Executive Office to projects in receipt of Council funding – BIF Market Arches £2m and NRF Former School of Music £2m, and;
- Note the status and next steps around the additional local capital schemes/ proposals as a consequence of the UKSPF funding.

3. Local Investment Fund (LIF)

Members are reminded that LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG area; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation. Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 24 projects received ‘In Principle’ letters under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 23 have been completed and 1 project is still at initial stage. Further details are outlined below.

LIF breakdown – South	LIF 1		LIF 2	
<i>Stage/ Description:</i>	<i>No. Projects</i>	<i>Amount (£)</i>	<i>No. Projects</i>	<i>Amount/ (£)</i>
Number of Projects Completed	12 (92%)	£1,053,600	11 (100%)	£796,000
Number of Projects in Delivery				

Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (8%)	£30,000		
Total Number of Approved Projects	13	£1,083,600	11	£796,000

The table below provides an overview of the remaining live project. Members are asked to note the status and ongoing actions.

LIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
SLIF017	Finaghy Bridge	£30,000	Design stage	Approved at SP&R Committee in May 2016 to undertake improvements to the bridge. Dfl have advised that they do not have a scheme for Finaghy Bridge but that they are facilitating the Council's LIF scheme.	Continue engagement with Dfl Roads.

4. Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)

Members are reminded that BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council. BIF – South Belfast was allocated £5.5m; with additional £500k ringfenced for new areas (outer South) that had joined the District area under Local Government Reform. In South Belfast, 6 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m, and £500k pot of funding. Each project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

Summary of BIF allocated projects.

South	Stage 3 - Lagan Gateway - £2.1m; Lanyon Tunnels - £1.3m; Bredagh GAC - £700k; Arts & Digital Hub - £584k; Coffee Culture - £286k Stage 1 - Sandy Row Open Space project- £479k
-------	---

Balmoral DEA	Stage 3 - Knockbreda Parish Church Hall - £250k Stage 2 - Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC - £250k
--------------	---

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
-----	---------	---------	-------	--------	------------------------

BIF04	Lagan Gateway	£6,545,000 <i>BIF - £2.15m UGV- £950k DfC - £470k Dfl- £2m Dfl Rivers - £975k</i>	Stage 3 - Committed	A Planning application was submitted for Phase 2 in May 2024. Detailed designs are ongoing. External match funding is in place from Dfl. The contractor procurement exercise has commenced.	Continue engagement with the public and key stakeholders.
BIF07	Market Arches	£3.3m <i>BIF -£1.3m UV – £2m</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Business case stage. TEO have confirmed £2m capital funding for this project under Urban Villages. Planning decision awaited.	Officer engagement with Executive Office and DfC as key funders, and stakeholders.
BIF48	Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub	£1,129,023 <i>BIF-£584,167 UV-£706,856</i>	Stage 3- Committed	On site. Progressing well. Awaiting written confirmation from NI Water on an outstanding issue for this project and Coffee Culture. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i>	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF46	Coffee Culture	£1,149,821 <i>BIF-£286,519 SOF-£100,000 UV- £463,302 DfC-£300,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Resolution of NIW and Environmental Health issues required before appointment of contractor. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i>	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF33	Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC	£250,000	Stage 3- Committed	The option for Belvoir FC to lease land from NIHE remains under discussion.	Continue engagement with the group and partners.
BIF47	Sandy Row Open Space project	£479,314*	Stage 1- Emerging <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Ongoing engagement between the Council and Translink in relation to the potential project site at Blythefield. Ongoing stakeholder meetings with officers as project progresses.	Continue engagement with the group.

				*The remaining balance of the ringfenced allocation for the Sandy Row Area projects	
--	--	--	--	---	--

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is a £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 3 projects in South Belfast received an In-Principle funding commitment, and 2 have completed. Similar to LIF and BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Members are asked to note the progress update of the remaining project in the table below.

SOF – South Belfast project overview

Project	Award	Status and update	Action/ Recommendation
SOF02 Coffee Culture	£1,149,821 <i>SOF-£100,000</i> <i>BIF-£286,519</i> <i>UV- £463,302</i> <i>DfC-£300,000</i>	Resolution of NIW and Environmental Health issues required before appointment of contractor.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for South was £1,978,637, and 5 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Projects remaining at Stage 2 continue to have the support of a Client Manager for their proposals.

South Belfast – NRF overview

South	Stage 3 - Sólás New Build project, GVRT Branching Out project, Lagan Water Access Activity Hub, Redevelopment of former School of Music, Market Heritage Hub Stage 2 (Reserve) - Redevelopment of Riddel’s Warehouse Stage 1 (Reserve) - The Avenue Arts Centre, An Droichead Annex, Lagan Legacy
-------	---

South Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
---------	---------	-------	--------	------------------------

Sólás New Build project	£1,162,141 <i>NRF- £362,141 COF- £800,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Sólás have appointed a design team and Council staff continue to engage. Group have secured funding from Community Ownership Fund (COF) £800,000.	Continue engagement with the group.
GVRT- Branching Out project	£500,000	Stage 3- Committed	Planning application submitted and engagement with planners ongoing. Discussions continue with potential funders.	Continue engagement with the group.
Lagan Water Access Activity Hub	£308,248	Stage 3- Committed	Planning application for bridge submitted by DfC. Design of boat house element is underway in preparation for Planning.	Continue engagement with the group.
Redevelopment of former School of Music	£2,308,248 <i>NRF- £308,248 UV- £2m</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Business case stage. TEO have confirmed £2m capital funding for this project under Urban Villages.	Continue engagement with the group.
Market Heritage Hub	£800,000 <i>NRF- £500,000 COF- £300,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Purchase of the property, although advanced, is still subject to agreement with the vendor and remains a risk. Funding has recently been secured from COF of £300,000.	Continue engagement with the group.

7. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is a rolling programme to either enhance existing Council assets or build / buy new assets or facilities. Table below provides an update on current live projects South Belfast area. Members are asked to note status and update.

South Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
Playground Improvement Programme 24/25	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> City-wide playgrounds improvements. Works at three sites across the city including Balfour Avenue Playground. Progressing.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Agreed at P&C Committee in June 2024. Works at four sites across the city including Strangford Avenue Playing Fields. Progressing.

Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. To be completed by end of March 2025.
City Hall – Installation of Stained Glass Windows – LGBT and NHS	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Agreed at SP&R in January 2025. LGBT – design complete - fabrication and installation ongoing.
City Hall External Christmas Tree provision	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Options are currently being explored via the outline business case process and updates taken to the City Hall Installations Working Group.
Waterfront Hall Chiller Units	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Project now progressing to detailed design stage.
Waterfront Hall Smoke Curtains	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Specialist support related to the auditorium is in place with work underway which will inform the scope of works.
Palm House, Botanic Gardens	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> This early stage Council heritage asset project is being considered as a candidate for partnership working with the Heritage Fund. Updated feasibility study is being developed to support the application process.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	The tender for a new provider/ operator has been concluded and contract will be signed in February.

Additional small scale local capital schemes

Due to securing UKSPF monies for a range of existing capital schemes, this has allowed the Council to free up resources for other activity. Council capital funds are therefore being redirected towards a range of additional small scale local capital schemes that still align with the prioritised objectives of the UKSPF as expected by the funder. In January, Members at SP&R Committee noted this update and that a further update will be brought to the AWGs for consideration. This activity can begin in this financial year and extend into 2025/26 to allow for development and completion of the projects. The proposal for these recouped capital monies is to target a range of small scale capital schemes focusing on sporting provision and access and inclusion. Projects within South area are shown below along with the projects that have a citywide focus:

<i>Additional local capital schemes - South</i>	
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	This facility can be used across the city. Specification developed and initial quotation received - next step is procurement.
Inclusive Makaton communications boards in playgrounds	Communication boards across council playgrounds.
Ormeau Park – Basketball court upgrade	Next step is to appoint the design team to take the scheme forward.
Strangford Playing Fields Enabling Works	Designs already in place for these works and can be taken forward.
Musgrave Park Sensory Garden upgrade	Design team to be appointed.

Members will also be aware that party briefings were held late last year on the Capital Programme and that a number of

further Capital Thematic workshops/briefings are to be arranged with Members to inform the longer term Capital Programme. As part of this exercise, a series of further improvement projects will come forward in conjunction with City & Neighbourhoods Services Department. Further, the Property & Projects Department continues to actively scan for potential additional sources of external funding that can be secured for capital proposals.

8. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government departments on key capital investment programmes, namely Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office as well as a number of schemes with DfC and DfI. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to South Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below is the status update on UV projects in South Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined South Belfast geography (Sandy Row; Donegall Pass and Markets).

UV – South Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
The Lockhouse - Gateway to the River / Walkway	Stalled on site due to NI Water issue. It may be necessary to redesign the scheme and return to Planning.
Sandy Row Arts & Digital Hub	As above at BIF48. On site. Progressing well. Awaiting written confirmation from NI Water on an outstanding issue for this project and Coffee Culture.
Coffee Culture	As above at BIF46 and SOF02. Resolution of NI Water and Environmental Health issues required before appointment of contractor.
Donegall Pass Good Relations Hub	Business case stage.
Market Arches	As above at BIF07. Business case stage. TEO have confirmed £2m capital funding for this project under Urban Villages. Planning application submitted.
Redevelopment of former School of Music	As above at NRF. Business case stage. TEO have confirmed £2m capital funding for this project under Urban Villages.

PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan - Capital Project

Members are asked to note the update on PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan capital project in South Belfast. The Letter of Offer has been accepted and returned to SEUPB.

Project	Status and update
Annadale Open Space	Part of the overall Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. The council has secured circa £500,000 via the PEACEPLUS Local Action plan funding, for the Annadale Open Space project. This funding under the Local Action Plan is primarily for the development of a playpark and a small men's shed. The overall concept plan including a proposed five-a-side pitch will be part of the forthcoming engagement and consultation process. The Council will continue to explore funding opportunities towards the overall plan. Any development of the entire proposed masterplan would be subject to obtaining a full funding package.

DfC funded projects

Below is the status update on project funded by Department for Communities in South Belfast.

DfC – South Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
Holylands Alleygating and Cleansing Project	Project progressing. Link to the citywide Alleygating Phase 5 project.

DfI funded projects

Below is the status update on project funded by Department for Infrastructure in South Belfast.

DfI – South Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
Lagan Gateway	As above as BIF04. A Planning application was submitted for Phase 2 in May 2024. Detailed designs are ongoing. External match funding is in place from DfI. The contractor procurement exercise has commenced.
Covered cycle stands	<i>Via DfI Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund</i> Funding was received for Phase 3; locations comprise Lagan Towpath Lockkeeper's Cottage, Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park, Finaghy Community Centre and P&R Blacks Road. Work is complete."

A Member sought clarity in relation to the Annadale Open Space project. The Neighbourhood Integration Manager explained that officers had received communication that, if relevant signage could be erected on the site to notify residents that the project was commencing, it was indicated that the community would consider a beacon in July 2025.

A further Member stated that it was disappointing that no progress had been made with any improvements to Finaghy Bridge, which had been allocated £30,000 under the Local Investment Fund in 2016.

Moved by Councillor Lyons,
Seconded by Councillor McKeown and

Resolved – that a letter is sent to the Minister for Infrastructure outlining the Working Group’s disappointment at the lack of progress with improvements to Finaghy Bridge and asking her to reconsider moving it up her Department’s priority list.

Additionally, the Working Group also:

- noted the Physical Programme update for South Belfast including the recently completed covered cycle stands;
- noted the announcement of Urban Villages Initiative capital funding from The Executive Office to projects in receipt of Council funding – BIF Market Arches £2million and NRF Former School of Music £2million, and;
- noted the status and next steps around the additional local capital schemes/ proposals as a consequence of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Chairperson

North Belfast Area Working Group

Tuesday, 25th February, 2025

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Doran (Chairperson);
Alderman McCullough; and
Councillors Bradley, Cobain, Magee,
Maskey, Murphy, Nelson and O'Neill.

In attendance: Mr. D. Logan, Physical Programmes Delivery
Manager;
Ms. M. Wilson, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 26th November were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Presentation

BHSCT – Fostering

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. A. McLaughlin to the meeting.

Ms. McLaughlin explained that there was a fostering crisis within the Belfast Trust and were undertaking to spread awareness of the situation and encourage potential carers to come forward.

She explained that there was almost children and young people living in care in Northern Ireland, 84% of which were living in foster care. She stated that the numbers had been increasing year on year which had resulted in a need to increase the number of carers through a recruitment campaign and informed the Members that information sessions had been scheduled at various venues in north Belfast.

She outlined the various types of foster care and stated that a new scheme, Supported Lodgings, for 16-21 years olds who were in full time education or employment, whereby, rather than a foster carer, a host would offer supported living to a young person and assist them towards independence.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. McLaughlin for her presentations and commended the scheme and asked the Working Group to support and promote the campaign.

Noted.

Sustainable Food Partnership

(Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. M. Turley, Community Garden Support NI, to the meeting.

The Adaptation and Resilience Advisor provided the Working Group with an overview of the work which was ongoing in developing a Sustainable Food Strategy for the City. She outlined that the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership had been established in August 2023 and that it acted as a collective voice for the city on key challenges for the food system around climate change, biodiversity, food justice, a circular economy, urban farming, community growing, food waste and more.

She highlighted that they were mindful of Motions which had been passed by the Council, which covered issues such as the Right to Food, the Right to Grow and the Plant Based Treaty and would be progressing those as part of the work.

Ms. M. Turley outlined the extensive work which was being undertaken by several stakeholders, including Community Garden Support NI.

Noted.

Physical Programmes Update

The Physical Programmes Delivery Manager provided an overview of the undernoted report:

“1. Introduction

The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the Physical Programme update for North Belfast including recently completed project at Appendix 1 - Covered cycle stands;**
- Note the announcement of Urban Villages Initiative capital funding from The Executive Office to projects in receipt of Council funding – LIF Westland Community Centre, and;**
- Note the status and next steps around the additional local capital schemes/ proposals as a consequence of the UKSPF funding.**

3. Local Investment Fund

LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation with the North being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £800,000 under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 43 projects in total have received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 38 have been completed; 2 are at delivery stage; 1 at pre-construction stage, and 1 remain at due diligence/ initial stage.

LIF breakdown – North	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Value (£)	Projects	Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	23 (92%)	£996,500	15 (83%)	£693,201
Number of Projects On-going Delivery	1 (4%)	£66,000	1 (11%)	£75,000
Number of Projects in Pre-construction			1 (6%)	15,000
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (4%)	£65,000		
Total Number of Approved Projects	25*	£1,127,500	17**	£783,201

**This includes additional funding for a LIF 2 project, Ballysillan Youth for Christ.*

*** This includes additional funding for two LIF 1 projects, Marrowbone Parochial Hall and Jennymount Church.*

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects. **Members are asked to note the status of the current LIF projects and the ongoing actions.**

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
NLIF2-22	Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment	£75,000	On Ground	On ground. Construction work ongoing on the gallery.	Continue engagement with group and HED.
NLIF057	Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club (UV – ABC Trust Hub)	£66,000	On Ground	On ground. The overall Urban Villages scheme will also incorporate this LIF scheme. Overall scheme is progressing well with Phase 2 completion anticipated by Winter 2025.	Continue engagement with Group and with UV

NLIF2-05	Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road	£15,000	On Ground	Funding agreement signed. Outdoor play equipment has been ordered and awaiting delivery.	Continue engagement with school.
NLIF014	Westland Community Centre - new building <i>(Link to UV Project)</i>	£65,000	Due Diligence stage	TEO have confirmed approx £1m capital funding for this project under Urban Villages. Procurement of design team ongoing.	Continue engagement with Group and TEO

4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded that BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – North Belfast was allocated £5.5m. In North Belfast, 7 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m: and 2 projects are on the longer BIF list. Each of the ‘In Principle’ projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

Members are asked to note the status update of these projects provided below. The table provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects.

North	Stage 3 - Cavehill Tennis Club- £71k, Malgrove -£950k, Cultural Community Hub - £350k Stage 1 - Cliftonville Community Forum, Sunningdale Community Centre - no commitment
--------------	---

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF15	Malgrove	£1,758,607	Stage 3 - Committed	Awaiting a Planning decision. Planning is awaiting two statutory consultee responses.	Continue engagement with planners.
BIF43	Cultural Community Hub	£350,000	Stage 3 - Committed	Discussions with external funders ongoing to address budgetary shortfall prior to appointment of contractor.	Continue engagement with the group and stakeholders.

5. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their

communities. The overall NRF allocation for North was £2,503,158 which 5 projects received an In Principle funding commitment and a contingency sum has also been retained. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

North Belfast – NRF overview

North	Stage 3— Belfast Orange Hall, Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL), Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Sailortown Regeneration Group, Ardoyne Youth Enterprises, Stage 1 (Reserve)— <i>Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain, Indian Community Centre, North Belfast Working Men's Club, North City Business Centre, Quaker Service, Belfast Charitable Society, Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian Church, Arts for All, Ligoniel Improvement Association</i>
--------------	---

North Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3- Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
USEL - Green Growth & The Circular Economy	£518,191	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement of works commencing this month. Designs have been updated.	Continue engagement with the group.
Cliftonville Community Enterprise	£1,452,700	Stage 3- Committed	Meeting held with design team. Land boundary issue identified and being addressed - DfC has started vesting process of land required.	Continue engagement with the group.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises – Community Hub <i>(Link to UV Project)</i>	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Main funder TEO is updating the business case as estimates have risen significantly. Additional funding opportunities being explored.	Continue engagement with the group.
Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Procurement stage. Team is working to bring the project within budget.	Continue engagement with the group.
St Joseph's Restoration project	£154,696	Stage 3- Committed	Structural survey finalised. Design team appointed.	Continue engagement with the group.

LIF funding reallocation - Members will be aware that in December it was agreed that officers would engage with Ardoyne Youth Club and Benview Community Centre in terms of the reallocation of £15,000. Members are advised that this work is ongoing and an update on project proposals will be brought back to the next meeting for consideration.

6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new ones. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on the council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in the North Belfast area.

Members are asked to note the updates on the Physical Programme.

North Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
Playground Improvement Programme 24/25	On ground. City-wide playgrounds improvements. Works at three sites across the city including Michelle Baird Memorial Playground. To be completed by end of March 2025.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	On ground. Works being undertaken at four sites across the city including Mallusk Playing Fields. To be completed by end of March 2025.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	On ground. Landfill Gas pipework infrastructure contractor recently appointed. Procurement on Foul Pumping Station is almost complete. NIE upgrade connections to fully service the site development to start in April.
North Foreshore - Giant's Park	A complex development agreement is now in place with Giant's Park Belfast Limited (GPBL). This agreement commits GPBL to deliver over 250 acres of phased development over a number of years in four distinct hubs: Adventure Hub, Welcome Hub, Pit Stop Hub, Distributions and Logistics Hub. The first planning application for the Adventure Hub was submitted in December 2024. Construction works are expected to commence on site in late 2025.
Reservoir Safety Programme <i>(links to PEACEPLUS)</i>	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Reservoir improvements at Waterworks and Alexandra Park. SEUPB PEACEPLUS funding application has been successful, securing €13.5m funding to enhance shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park area of North Belfast. The technical design is currently being developed.
Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	<i>Stage 3 Committed.</i> Technical design stage work ongoing. Planning approval granted 11 February 2025. Belfast Blitz memorial forms part of the overall scheme.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. To be completed by end of March 2025.
LTP - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> DfC partnership project. Design team continues to develop designs to Planning Stage. Officers continue to respond to queries from DfC regarding the business case.
Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot	<i>Stage 2 – Uncommitted.</i> Viable alternative site at Corporation Street Car Park being assessed by design team. As for easement requirement for NI Water pipe, previous layout of the building has been changed. Architects have been completed RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design stage.

Waste Plan – Waste Transfer Station Upgrade	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> OBC being worked up. Link to Duncrue Masterplan and citywide kerbside scheme.
Access to the Hills - Glencairn Park/ Ligoniel Park	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. PEACEPLUS funding has been received.
Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill.
Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Feasibility study presented to Members in Autumn 2023.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	Expansion in the North area for Phase 4 - Yorkgate was installed in November 2024. The tender for a new provider/ operator has been concluded and contract will be signed in February.

Additional small scale local capital schemes

Due to securing UKSPF monies for a range of existing capital schemes, this has allowed the Council to free up resources for other activity. Council capital funds are therefore being redirected towards a range of additional small scale local capital schemes that still align with the prioritised objectives of the UKSPF as expected by the funder. In January, Members at SP&R Committee noted this update and that a further update will be brought to the AWGs for consideration. This activity can begin in this financial year and extend into 2025/26 to allow for development and completion of the projects. The proposal for these recouped capital monies is to target a range of small scale capital schemes focusing on sporting provision and access and inclusion. Projects within North area are shown below along with the projects that have a citywide focus:

<i>Additional local capital schemes – North</i>	
Loughside Playing Fields	Modular changing and flexible space facility
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	This facility can be used across the city. Specification developed and initial quotation received - next step is procurement.
Inclusive Makaton communications boards in playgrounds	Communication boards across council playgrounds.
Historic Cemeteries	Initial works at historic cemeteries

Members will also be aware that party briefings were held late last year on the Capital Programme and that a number of further Capital Thematic workshops/briefings are to be arranged with Members to inform the longer term Capital Programme. As part of this exercise, a series of further improvement projects will come forward in conjunction with City & Neighbourhoods Services Department.

Further, the Property & Projects Department continues to actively scan for potential additional sources of external funding that can be secured for capital proposals.

7. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government departments on key capital investment programmes, including Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office and PEACE under SEUPB. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to North Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in North Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined North Belfast geography (Ardoyne and Greater Ballysillan).

North Belfast – Urban Villages Initiative overview

Project	Status and update
ABC Trust Health and Leisure Hub <i>(links to LIF programme NLIF057)</i>	Partnership project with DfC, Dfl, Flax Trust, and UV. Phase 2 progressing well with completion anticipated in late 2025.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	Partnership project with UV, DfC and Dfl. Contractor appointed and on site. Planning conditions to be discharged by contractor prior to major works commencement which is expected in March 2025. Tree removal scheme to commence February 2025 in line with recent notification to Members.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project <i>(links to NRF programme)</i>	<i>As above at NRF.</i> Main funder TEO is updating the business case as estimates have risen significantly. Additional funding opportunities being explored.
Sunningdale Community Centre <i>(links to BIF programme)</i>	Council is acting as delivery agent for project proposed on Council land. Planning not secured. UV remain committed to supporting the project. Currently working with the group to explore a suitable alternative site.
Westland Community Centre <i>(links to LIF programme)</i>	<i>As above under LIF.</i> TEO have confirmed £1m capital funding for this project under Urban Villages. Procurement of design team ongoing.

PEACE IV and PEACEPLUS – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on the capital projects that are related to the PEACE Programmes.

North Belfast – Capital Projects overview

Project	Status and update
Forth Meadow Community Greenway	Project completed. Signage package subject to agreement.

Reconnected Belfast - Waterworks and Alexandra Park	SEUPB PEACEPLUS funding application has been successful, securing €13.5m funding to enhance shared space and connectivity within and between Waterworks and Alexandra Park area of North Belfast. Engagement ongoing with Design Information Sessions taking place in February and March. Work ongoing to secure Planning approval and procure Design Team.
Access to the Hills – Glencairn/ Ligoniel	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Complementary scheme to developing further connections to the Hills at Ligoniel, Glencairn and Cavehill. PEACEPLUS funding has been received.

Dfl funded projects

Below is the status update on project funded by Department for Infrastructure in North Belfast.

Dfl – North Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
Covered cycle stands	<i>Via Dfl Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund</i> Funding was received for Phase 3; locations comprise Grove Leisure Centre, Ballysillan Leisure Centre and Marrowbone Park. Work is complete.

In response to a question from a Member, the Physical Programmes Delivery Manager agreed to provide information to the Working Group in relation to withheld NRF monies.

The Working Group:

- Noted the Physical Programme update for North Belfast that included covered cycle stands;
- Noted the announcement of Urban Villages Initiative capital funding from The Executive Office to projects in receipt of Council funding – LIF Westland Community Centre, and
- Noted the status and next steps around the additional local capital schemes/ proposals as a consequence of the UKSPF funding.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 27th February, 2025

HYBRID MEETING OF THE WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor McCann (Chairperson),
Councillors Black, M. Donnelly, Carson,
R-M Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett, McCabe, McCallin,
I. McLaughlin, R. McLaughlin, Verner and Walsh.

In attendance: Ms. S. Murtagh, Physical Programmes Portfolio Manager; and
Ms. F. Dennison, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager;
Ms. E. Sharpe, Regeneration Project Officer;
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported for Alderman McCoubrey.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 29th August, 2024 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Physical Programme Update

The Working Group considered the following report:

1. Introduction

The Council's Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the physical programme update for West Belfast including recently completed project at Appendix 1 - Covered cycle stands; and,
- Note the status and next steps around the additional local capital schemes/ proposals as a consequence of the UKSPF funding.

3. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded that BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment. The West AWG had a total allocation of £9m comprising £5.5m from the original allocation, an additional £1.2m which was ring-fenced for projects in the Shankill area when this became part of the West AWG following the Council elections in 2015, and £2.5m which was ringfenced for projects in the Colin area following LGR. The table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects.

Summary of BIF allocated projects

West	Stage 3—Davitt's GAC—£1m; Raidió Fáilte—£950k; St Comgall's- £3.5m; Colin Glen Forest Park—£2.5m; Greater Shankill Community Council - RBL project- £300k, Glencairn Community Project— £700k Stage 2— St Mary's CBS— no commitment Stage 1— An Sportslann; Suffolk Community Forum; Belfast Hills- Black Mountain Access—no commitment
-------------	---

The table below shows an overview of the remaining BIF project -

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF09	Glencairn Community Project	£900,000 <i>BIF- £700,000 ; NRF- £200,000</i>	Committed; Due Diligence	The group is continuing to work with NIHE on land arrangements for the project. The Design Team has been appointed and is undertaking initial site investigations.	Continue engagement with the group.

4. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for West was £3,446,654 (West - £2,721,133 and Shankill - £725,521) and 6 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

West Belfast – NRF overview

West	<p>Stage 3— Michael Davitt’s Community Heritage Centre- £684,058; Croí na Carraige - ‘The Heart of the Rock’ - Phase 1- £537,058; The Mountainview Hotel- £1,500,000; The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors’ Centre- £295,000; Glencairn Community Project (Hub)- £200,000, The Road- £210,759; <i>Shankill contingency- £19,762.</i></p> <p><i>Stage 1— Improving the Environment at Patrick Sarsfield’s GAC, Corrigan Park Redevelopment Project, WCC New Purpose-Built Childcare and Family Support Centre, Curam Leanaí na Faiseoige, Conway Mill - redeveloping for the future, Westcourt Uplift Project, Lamh Dhearg Renewable Energy & External Lighting Improvement scheme, St. Gall’s Milltown Community Development, Colin Glen Eco Air-Cruizer, CNP Regeneration of Cloona House</i></p>
-------------	---

West Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
Michael Davitt’s Community Heritage Centre	£684,058	Stage 3- Committed	Project was signed off at Due Diligence in January. Funding agreement is now being prepared.	Continue engagement with the group.
Croí na Carraige - ‘The Heart of the Rock’ - Phase 1	£787,058 <i>NRF- £537,058 An Ciste- £250,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	Design team is progressing work. Discussions ongoing with potential funders. Group is planning further fundraising activities following the success with An Ciste.	Continue engagement with the group.
The Mountainview Hotel	£1.5m	Stage 3- Committed	Officer is in contact with the group to discuss next steps. Clarification on the site boundary is necessary to make any further progress with this project.	Continue engagement with the group.
The ACT Initiative Community Hub & Visitors’ Centre	£295,000	Stage 3- Committed	<i>On ground.</i> Contractor appointed for heating element of contract, awaiting contractor start date. The group has recently secured additional funding to enhance the exhibition further.	Continue engagement with the group.
Glencairn Community Project	£900,000 <i>NRF- £200,000 ; BIF- £700,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	<i>As above at BIF09.</i> The group is continuing to work with NIHE on land arrangements for the project. The Design Team has been appointed and is	Continue engagement with the group.

			undertaking initial site investigations.	
The Road	£210,759	Stage 3- Committed	The group is continuing to work with a consultancy on funding opportunities.	Continue engagement with the group.

5. Capital Programmes

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building/buying new ones. The table below provides an update on current live projects on the Council's Capital Programme in the West Belfast area. Members are asked to note status and update.

West Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
City Cemetery Visitor Centre –Heritage Fund/ DfC	Project complete. <i>Members will continue to receive reports on this project until the other external works are completed.</i> CNS is undertaking a procurement exercise for an operator for the Visitor Centre. Works on the Victorian Fountain and landscaping works are progressing and should be completed by end of March. Railings for central steps are due to be installed by Summer which will enable security fencing to be removed.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. To be completed by end of March 2025.
Sporting Pitches Investment 24/25	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Agreed at P&C Committee in June 2024. Works at four sites across the city including Falls Park. Falls Park Ballstop nets installed in November 2024; spectator fencing and hard-standing installation is now underway.
Access to Hills - Black Mountain/ Upper Whiterock Pathway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Design stage. Design team is continuing to develop the project. Ongoing engagement with DfI as key partner. Full Planning application has been lodged. Application to DAERA Challenge Fund is being prepared.
Colin Greenway	Meetings are continuing between the Council and key stakeholders DfI, DfC and NIHE on the Colin Active Travel Plan. Lagmore Avenue cycle scheme works will commence late March for a period of 9 months by DfI.
Access to the Hills - connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> This is being considered within the wider study as below.

Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)	<i>Stage 1 - Emerging.</i> Feasibility study presented to Members in Autumn 2023. Ongoing engagement with other stakeholders such as the National Trust and Belfast Hills Partnership.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	The tender for a new provider/ operator has concluded and the contract will be signed in February.
Lidl, Stewartstown Road Suffolk 3G Pitch and Lenadoon Park Pitch Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. <i>Suffolk pitch</i> - Planning application submitted and awaiting decision. Likely to require additional funding. <i>Lenadoon Park</i> – Grass soccer pitch improvement works complete; includes spectator hard-standing, extension to height of boundary fence, including extended dugout areas; land drainage, new pedestrian access gate and path connections. MUGA improvements programmed for Spring.

Additional small scale local capital schemes

Due to securing UKSPF monies for a range of existing capital schemes, this has allowed the Council to free up resources for other activity. Council capital funds are therefore being redirected towards a range of additional small scale local capital schemes that still align with the prioritised objectives of the UKSPF as expected by the funder. In January, Members at SP&R Committee noted this update and that a further update will be brought to the AWGs for consideration. This activity can begin in this financial year and extend into 2025/26 to allow for development and completion of the projects. The proposal for these recouped capital monies is to target a range of small scale capital schemes focusing on sporting provision and access and inclusion. Projects within West area are shown below along with the projects that have a citywide focus:

<i>Additional local capital schemes - West</i>	
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	This facility can be used across the city. Specification developed and initial quotation received - next step is procurement.
Inclusive Makaton communications boards in playgrounds	Installation of communication boards in council playgrounds.
Basketball provision	Blacks Road and Páirc Nua Chollan – designs being prepared.
Woodvale Park Sensory Garden	Next step is to appoint the design team to take the scheme forward.

Members will also be aware that party briefings were held late last year on the Capital Programme and that a number of further Capital Thematic workshops/briefings are to be arranged with Members to inform the longer term Capital Programme. As part of this exercise, a series of further improvement projects will come forward in conjunction with City & Neighbourhoods Services Department. Further, the Property & Projects Department

continues to actively scan for potential additional sources of external funding that can be secured for capital proposals.

6. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government departments on key capital investment programmes, namely Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office, PEACEPLUS, DfI, DfC, DoJ as well as schemes with IFI. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to West Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in West Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined West Belfast geography (Colin area).

West Belfast – UV overview

Project	Status and update
Colin Community Health and Wellbeing Hub	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. This is a developing project from Colin Neighbourhood Partnership at Business Case stage.

PEACEIV/ PEACEPLUS – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on the capital projects that are related to the PEACE Programmes.

West Belfast – Capital Projects overview

Project	Status and update
Forth Meadow Community Greenway	Project completed. Signage package subject to agreement.
Distillery Street Redevelopment Project	Funding confirmed from SEUPB PeacePLUS. The project includes creation of a cross-community Peace and Reconciliation Park providing sustainable drainage and flood risk management as an integral part of urban renewal. Meeting SEUPB in March to move forward to procurement of Design Team. Ongoing meeting with key stakeholders, work in progress.

Other externally funded projects

Below is the status update on capital projects funded by other partners in West Belfast.

Other external funders – West Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
---------	-------------------

Covered cycle stands	Via DfI Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund Funding has been received for Phase 3 of this programme. Cycle stands in locations at Falls Park, Bog Meadows and Whiterock Leisure Centre have been completed.
Black Mountain Shared Space Project – Phase 2	Via IFI, DoJ, DfC On Ground. Contractor works progressing on site. Estimated completion in Summer 2025.

The Physical Programmes Portfolio Manager outlined the principal aspects of the report and the Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Sustainable Food Project - Update

(Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor, and Ms. M. Turley, Community Garden Support NI, attended in connection with this item.)

The Working Group was provided with an overview of the work which was ongoing in developing a Sustainable Food Strategy for Belfast. It was reported that the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership had been established in 2023, and that it acted as a collective voice for the city on key challenges for the food system around climate change, biodiversity, food justice, a circular economy, urban farming, community growing, food waste and more. Ms. Turley outlined the extensive work which been undertaken in conjunction with several stakeholders in advancing the project on behalf of the Council.

Noted.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 6th March, 2025

MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Alderman Copeland (Chairperson);
The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor McCormick;
The High Sheriff, Councillor McAteer;
Aldermen Lawlor and Rodgers;
Councillors Abernethy, Bell, Bower, R. Brooks,
de Faoite, S. Douglas, P. Donnelly, Ferguson,
Flynn, Harvey, Long, Maghie and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. S. Murtagh, Physical Programmes Portfolio Manager;
Ms. K. Watters, Neighbourhood Services Integration Manager;
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported on behalf of Councillor D. Douglas.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 5h September, 2024 were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Rodgers declared an interest in item 6, 'Physical Programmes Update', in that he was a Member of the Belmont Bowling Club.

Councillor Abernethy declared an interest in the same item, in that he was a member of the Belmont Bowling Club and the East Belfast Mission Congregation.

Alderman Rodgers and Councillor Abernethy did not partake in any discussion nor decision-making in respect of item 6.

Presentation - Sustainable Food Partnership

(Ms. M. Quigley, Adaptation and Resilience Advisor, attended in connection with this item.)

The Chairperson welcomed Ms. M. Turley, Growing Resilience Project Officer at Social Farms and Gardens, to the meeting.

The Adaptation and Resilience Advisor provided the Working Group with an overview of the Sustainable Food Partnership and the work which was ongoing in respect of the development of a Belfast Sustainable Food Strategy.

She outlined that the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership had been established in August 2023 and was a city-wide cross-sectoral partnership that acted as a collective voice for the city on key challenges for the food system around climate change, biodiversity, food justice, a circular economy, urban farming, community growing, food waste and more.

Ms. Turley advised the Working Group that the Belfast Sustainable Food Strategy was being developed by a range of city partners and stakeholders across the food system and outlined the extensive work that had been undertaken to date.

The Adaptation and Resilience Advisor highlighted the need for a strategy to implement a whole system approach and to create a shared vision across the city. She further highlighted that the strategy would align with, and support, work at a regional and local level such as the Executive's Food Strategy Framework, the Council's Resilience Strategy and Net Zero Carbon Roadmap and motions passed by the Council including Right to Grow, Right to Food and the Plant Based Treaty.

The Adaptation and Resilience Advisor and Ms. Turley answered a range of questions in relation to the engagement with local communities and schools, access to green spaces and allotments, community growing projects and sustainable farming.

The Chairperson thanked the Adaptation and Resilience Advisor and Ms. Turley for their presentation, and they left the meeting.

Noted.

Physical Programmes Update

The Physical Programmes Portfolio Manager presented the undernoted report to the Working Group:

1. Introduction

The Council's Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- **Note the physical programme update for East Belfast including recently completed project at Appendix 1 - Covered cycle stands;**
- **Note that Eastside Container Hotel (NRF) and Eastside Visitor Centre (SOF) are being taken forward as a combined project; and**

- Note the status and next steps around the additional local capital schemes/ proposals as a consequence of the UKSPF funding.

3. Local Investment Fund

LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation with the East being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £1.2m under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 22 projects received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 19 have been completed and 1 project is at delivery stage and 1 project is at due diligence stage.

LIF breakdown – East	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	8 (80%)	£931,902	12 (100%)	£1,161,589
Number of Projects in Delivery	1(10%)	£30,000		
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects at Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (10%)	£70,000		
Total Number of Approved Projects	10	£1,031,902	12	£1,161,589

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects.

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / Recommendation
ELIF31	Bloomfield FC, Clonduff FC, East Belfast FC and Dundela FC, Tullycarnet, Cregagh Wanderers, Nettlefield Multi-Sports and Bredagh GAC – storage facilities	£65,000 (£30k plus £35k reallocation)	On Ground Phase 1- complete Phase 2- ongoing	Phase 1 – Complete - Bloomfield FC, East Belfast FC, Tullycarnet FC and Cregagh Wanderers projects completed. Phase 2 - Bredagh GAC - the container has been delivered. Clonduff FC - signed off at Due Diligence and a funding agreement has been issued. Nettlefield Multi-Sports container – the club is required to become constituted and obtain EA approval to place the container on EA land. Dundela FC – signed off at Due Diligence in December 2024 and funding agreement being prepared.	Continue engagement with the groups.

ELIF29	Cycling Ireland	£70,000	Due Diligence	Due Diligence stage ongoing. Proposed licence arrangements have been discussed (subject to group confirming proposed usage requirements). Group is currently reviewing the suitability of the site and Council awaits an update from the group on this matter.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.
--------	-----------------	---------	---------------	--	--

4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250,000 investment from Council. In East Belfast, 9 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF. There are 5 projects on the longer BIF list. Each of the In-Principle projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. The table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and the funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects:

East	Stage 3—Willowfield—£560k; H&W Welders—£2.37m; Strand—£1.5m; Bloomfield—£440k Stage 2— <i>Lagan Village Youth & Community—no commitment</i> Stage 1— <i>East Belfast Mission; Belmont Bowling Club; Bloomfield Presbyterian Church; St. John's Orangefield, Church of Ireland, Tullycarnet Community Support Services—no commitment / on long list</i>
-------------	--

Outer East	Stage 3 —TAGIT- £434k; Hanwood—£396k; Lisnasharragh Community Schools—£398k; Branial—£390k; Castlereagh Presbyterian Church—£382k
-------------------	---

The table below provides an overview of the remaining projects. Members are asked to note the actions and recommendations.

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF12	Strand Arts Centre	£6,940,069 <i>LUF - £4m BIF - £1,550,000 HF- £255,000 (Development Grant), £768,069 (Delivery Grant)</i>	On Ground	On Ground. Contractor has been appointed and mobilisation works are commencing. Discussion with DfC regarding potential funding is continuing.	Continue engagement with the group and funders.
BIF13	Bloomfield Community Association	£715,009 <i>BIF - £655,000 LIF - £60,009</i>	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	The group is continuing to explore additional funding opportunities to meet the shortfall. An updated application to DfC has been prepared on the basis of updated costs.	Continue engagement with the group.

Outer East BIF Projects

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF38	Castlereagh Presbyterian Church	£382,000	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	On Ground. Initial contractor meeting on 28th February with a view to starting works in March 2025.	Continued engagement with the group.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. There is one project under SOF for East Belfast - Eastside Visitor Centre – with an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

Eastside Visitor Centre <i>(links to NRF project)</i>	£1,650,000 <i>SOF- £700,000</i> <i>NRF- £950,000</i>	The group has agreed to deliver a combined project to include hotel and extension to the visitor centre. Procurement exercise for Design Team was issued in January. Design team appointment expected in April 2025.	Continued engagement with the group. Members are asked to note that Eastside Container Hotel (NRF) and Eastside Visitor Centre (SOF) is being taken forward as a combined project.
---	--	--	--

6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF) is a capital fund with a current overall budget of £10,280,000 to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. The overall NRF allocation for East was £2,351,551 and 4 projects received an In-Principle funding commitment. Each NRF project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Projects remaining at Stage 2 continue to have the support of a Client Manager for their proposals.

East Belfast – NRF overview

East	Stage 3 - Eastside Container Hotel, Portview Exchange, Development of sporting hub at Wilgar Park, Hosford Community Homes: 335 Newtownards Road Stage 2 - Impact Belfast, Nevin Spence Centre Visitor Experience
-------------	--

East Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 3 - Delivery

Project name	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
--------------	---------	-------	--------	------------------------

Eastside Container Hotel <i>(links to SOF project)</i>	£1,650,000 <i>Comprising: SOF- £700,000 NRF- £950,000</i>	Stage 3- Committed	EastSide Partnership approved a land swap. The group has agreed to deliver a combined project to include hotel and extension to the visitor centre. Procurement exercise for Design Team was issued in January. Design team appointment expected in April 2025.	Continued engagement with the group. Members are asked to note that Eastside Container Hotel (NRF) and Eastside Visitor Centre (SOF) is being taken forward as a combined project.
Portview Exchange	£600,000	Stage 3- Committed	Link to UV project. A decision on the business case is expected from The Executive Office by April 2025.	Continue engagement with the group.
Development of sporting hub at Wilgar Park	£500,000	Stage 3- Committed	A new planning application was submitted in December 2024. The group intend to submit a funding application in March to provide the remaining budget required.	Continue engagement with the group and integrated design team.
Hosford Community Homes: 335 Newtownards Road	£300,000	Stage 3- Committed	The group is continuing to explore funding opportunities. Design team procurement is planned in spring 2025.	Continue engagement with the group and consultant.

7. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new assets. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in East Belfast. Members are asked to note the status and update.

East Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
New Crematorium	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Technical Design is complete. Procurement exercise for the main contractor is complete and a review of the business case is being undertaken. Alternative use for existing building continues to be explored.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works progressing. To be completed by end of March 2025.
Playground Improvement Programme 2024/25	<i>Stage 3 - Committed.</i> The Programme for 2024/25 includes improvement works at Grampian Avenue playground. Work is nearing completion with handover expected in March 2025.
Cremated Remains Burial Plots	<i>Stage 2 - Uncommitted.</i> Business case is being developed with City & Neighbourhood Services Department and surveys are continuing.

Sydenham Greenway	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case to be worked up with DfI who are at design development stage for the greenway. Ongoing discussion with DfI regarding a partnership approach.
Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Link to Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan. Education Authority (EA) is continuing to develop a business case for capital funding for youth provision at the council owned Ballymacarrett site. Officers are continuing to liaise with EA on the way forward.
Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Link to the Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East project.
Belfast Bikes Expansion	The tender for a new provider/ operator has been concluded and contract is due to be signed in February.
Parklands, Knocknagoney Dale - Knocknagoney Park Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. Illuminated pedestrian path connection to apartment development, car park & lower entrance enhancements completed in summer 2024. Tree planting and installation of additional park seating is programmed for spring 2025.
Lands at Castlehill Manor - Belmont Park Improvements	This work is under S76 Developer Contributions for Open Space. Woodland trail and accessible picnic area completed in summer 2023. Additional sensory play equipment to be installed at Belmont Park playground in spring/summer 2025.

Additional small scale local capital schemes

Due to securing UKSPF monies for a range of existing capital schemes, this has allowed the Council to free up resources for other activity. Council capital funds are therefore being redirected towards a range of additional small scale local capital schemes that still align with the prioritised objectives of the UKSPF as expected by the funder. In January, Members at SP&R Committee noted this update and that a further update will be brought to the AWGs for consideration. This activity can begin in this financial year and extend into 2025/26 to allow for development and completion of the projects. The proposal for these recouped capital monies is to target a range of small scale capital schemes focusing on sporting provision and access and inclusion. Projects within East area are shown below along with the projects that have a citywide focus:

<i>Additional local capital schemes - East</i>	
Mobile Changing Places modular facility	This facility can be used across the city. Specification developed and initial quotation received - next step is procurement.
Inclusive Makaton communications boards in playgrounds	Installation of communication boards in council playgrounds. Makaton Communication Board programmed for installation at Tommy Patton playground in March 2025.
Victoria Park – Basketball court upgrade	Next step is to appoint the design team to take the scheme forward.

Members will also be aware that party briefings were held late last year on the Capital Programme and that a number of further Capital Thematic workshops/briefings are to be arranged with Members to inform the longer term Capital Programme. As part of this exercise, a series of further improvement projects will come

forward in conjunction with City & Neighbourhoods Services Department. Further, the Property & Projects Department continues to actively scan for potential additional sources of external funding that can be secured for capital proposals.

8. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for a number of government departments on significant capital investment programmes, namely the Urban Villages Initiative (UV) funded by the Executive Office, and number of schemes with DfC. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to East Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

Project	Status and update
Hosford Community Homes Inclusion Hub	<i>Project underway.</i> Council is acting as Delivery Partner. Project completion is anticipated in March. It is proposed to hold the official launch in May.
Titanic People Exhibition	<i>Project underway.</i> Council is acting as Delivery Partner. Works progressing on site. Project completion is anticipated by early summer.
Portview Exchange <i>Link to NRF 'Portview Exchange'</i>	<i>Business case stage.</i> A decision on the business case is expected from The Executive Office in April.

PEACEPLUS – Capital Project

Members are asked to note updates on the capital project under the PEACEPLUS Programme.

East Belfast – PEACEPLUS LAP Capital Project overview

Project	Status and update
Sanctuary Theatre	Part of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Refurbishment of the Sanctuary Theatre at Castlereagh Street. PEACEPLUS Letter of Offer has been received. Meeting with Group held in February to discuss next steps.

DfC and Dfl funded projects

Below is the status update on project funded by Department for Infrastructure and the Department for Communities in East Belfast.

Dfl and DfC – East Belfast projects overview

Project	Status and update
Covered cycle stands Phase 3	<i>Via Dfl Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund</i> The third phase of this programme included the delivery of covered cycle stands in Victoria Park, Orangefield Park, Branial Community Centre and Tullycarnet Centre (Comber Greenway). Project

	completed.
--	-------------------

Moved by Councillor Long,
Seconded by Councillor Smyth and

Resolved – that a letter be sent to the Minister for Communities seeking an update, including timescales, in respect of potential funding for the Strand Arts Centre.

Accordingly, the Working Group:

- i. noted the Physical Programmes update; and
- ii. agreed that a letter be sent to the Minister for Communities seeking an update, including timescales, in respect of potential funding for the Strand Arts Centre.

Requests to Present

The Working Group agreed to receive, at future meetings, presentations from the following:

- EastSide Early Learning Community (ELC)
- East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA)
- EastSide Partnership

Ballyhackamore Parklet (Councillor Flynn to raise)

At the request of Councillor Flynn, the Working Group agreed that a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Working Group, that would outline a draft proposal, including draft plans, to install a parklet on vacant land in Ballyhackamore.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank



Subject:	CIPFA Prudential Code Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators 2025/26
Date:	21 March 2025
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Contact Officer:	Helen Lyons, Corporate Finance Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and the supporting Prudential and Treasury Codes produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), require the Council to consider the affordability and sustainability of capital expenditure decisions through the reporting of prudential and treasury management indicators.
1.2	The Prudential Code requires the Council to produce a Capital Strategy for 2025/26. This report provides information for Members on the Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators for Belfast City Council for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28, and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> note the contents of this report and the prudential and treasury management indicators included within the appendices to the report. <p>And agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council of £119m for 2025/26. The Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26, which has been included as Appendix B to this report.
3.0	Main report
3.1	The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. In doing so, the Council is required to agree a minimum revenue provision policy annually and to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators, the key objectives of which are to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the council are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
3.2	At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 9 December 2011, Members approved the Council's Treasury Management Policy which is based on the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Treasury Management Policy requires that a Treasury Management Strategy be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on an annual basis and that it is supported by a mid-year and year end treasury management reports. Recent changes in the CIPFA Prudential Code recommends best practice that treasury management reports are submitted on a quarterly basis.
3.3	The Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators, is included as Appendix A, while the Treasury Management Strategy and treasury management indicators have been included as Appendix B.
3.4	The comparison of "Gross Debt" to "Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)" is the main indicator of prudence when considering the proposed capital investment plans of the Council. Estimated gross debt should not exceed the CFR for the current year plus two years. The Council's estimated gross debt position, illustrated in Table 6, Appendix A, is comfortably within the CFR in the medium term. The Director of Finance therefore considers the estimated levels of gross debt as being prudent.
3.5	Table 10 (Appendix A) shows the estimated financing costs for capital expenditure as a percentage of the estimated net revenue stream for the Council, based on the medium term. These illustrate that in the medium term, capital financing costs will represent an average of

	4.8% of the Council's net running costs. On this basis the Director of Finance is satisfied that the level of capital expenditure is affordable.
3.6	The Finance Act requires the Council to set an affordable borrowing limit, relating to gross debt. The Prudential Code defines the affordable limit as the "Authorised Borrowing Limit" and gross borrowing must not exceed this limit. Table 8 (Appendix A) sets out the recommended "Authorised Borrowing Limit" for the Council as being £119m for 2025/26. <u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.7	As detailed in the report <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u>
3.8	None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix A – Capital Strategy Report 2025/26 Appendix B – Annual Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26

This page is intentionally left blank

Capital Strategy Report 2025/26

1. Introduction

This capital strategy report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

2. Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, which will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.

In 2025/26, the Council is planning capital expenditure of £47m as summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £thousands

	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
General Fund services	16,699	46,524	42,099	22,518

The capital expenditure forecast for 2025/26 continues to be monitored and reviewed, in terms of both project delivery and affordability. The Council is currently working on a long term capital expenditure forecast and will update the above table when this becomes available.

Governance – The Council’s Capital Programme is agreed by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in its role as the Council’s investment decision maker. All capital projects must go through a 3-stage approval process and decisions on which projects are added to the Capital Programme and which projects progress are also taken by SP&R Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and allows Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving capital projects. The Property & Projects Department and Financial Services calculate the financing cost of all proposals, including emerging proposals. As part of the final investment decision it must be confirmed that any project is within the affordability limits of the Council.

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council’s own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing and leasing). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing in £thousands

	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
External sources	0	0	0	0
Own resources	14,322	33,840	23,590	14,942
Debt	2,377	12,684	18,509	7,576
TOTAL	16,699	46,524	42,099	22,518

Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP is as follows:

Table 3: Repayment of debt finance in £thousands (MRP)

	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Own resources	8,947	9,103	9,057	9,586

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to repay debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £3.6m during 2025/26. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £thousands

	31.3.2025 forecast	31.3.2026 budget	31.3.2027 budget	31.3.2028 budget
General Fund services	115,073	118,654	128,106	126,095

Asset Management – The Council is committed to ensuring that all Capital projects contribute to the strategic direction of the city and continue to be of long term use. The Council is currently in the process of looking at its Asset Management Strategy and is implementing a new Asset Management System to support the strategic objectives of better financial management, information management, planning and performance and asset management

Asset disposals: When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Council plans to receive £1.7m of capital receipts in the coming financial year as follows:

Table 5: Capital receipts in £thousands

	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Asset sales	£7,298	£1,710	£3,300	£1,900
Loans repaid	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	£7,298	£1,710	£3,300	£1,900

3. Treasury Management

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Council is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

The Council currently has £33m borrowing, the weighted average interest rate of these loans is 2.17%. The council is projecting a £59m treasury investment balance at 31 March 2025, at current average rate of 4.3%. The investments balance is higher than prior years mainly due to timing of monies being paid to the Council and this monies being paid out again.

Borrowing strategy: The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between short-term loans (currently available at around 6%) and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known (currently over 5.5%).

Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, leases and transfers from local government reorganisation) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £thousands

	31.3.2025 forecast	31.3.2026 budget	31.3.2027 budget	31.3.2028 budget
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	33,146	28,633	33,426	32,523
Capital Financing Requirement	115,073	118,654	128,106	126,095

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, as can be seen from table 6.

Liability benchmark: To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end. This benchmark is currently £4m and is forecast to rise to £22m over the next three years.

Table 7: Prudential Indicator: Borrowing and the liability benchmark £thousands

	31.3.2025 forecast	31.3.2026 budget	31.3.2027 budget	31.3.2028 budget
Forecast borrowing	33,146	28,633	33,426	32,523
Liability Benchmark	4,073	19,654	24,106	22,095

The table shows that the Council's borrowing is currently above its liability benchmark. The Council is projecting to borrow over the next few years to meet capital expenditure requirements. This external borrowing is currently projected to be higher than the estimated liability benchmark over the next three years, based on current forecasts. Work is progressing on the long term capital expenditure forecasts and when finalised the budget figures in the above table will be reviewed and amended accordingly.

Affordable borrowing limit: The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year and to keep it under review. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 8: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £thousands

	2025/26 limit	2026/27 limit	2027/28 limit
Authorised limit – borrowing	118,654	128,106	126,095
Authorised limit – PFI and leases	0	0	0
Authorised limit – total external debt	118,654	128,106	126,095
Operational boundary – borrowing	102,654	112,106	110,095
Operational boundary – PFI and leases	0	0	0
Operational boundary – total external debt	102,654	112,106	110,095

Investment strategy: Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

The Council's policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

Table 9: Treasury management investments in £thousands

	31.3.2025 forecast	31.3.2026 budget	31.3.2027 budget	31.3.2028 budget
Near-term investments	39,000*	20,000	20,000	20,000
Longer-term investments	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	39,000	20,000	20,000	20,000

*This balance excludes monies that the Council has received (approx. £20m) and is due to be paid out again in the short term

Governance: Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Director of Finance and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R). Quarterly reports on treasury management activity may be presented to SP&R, where this committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

Liabilities

In addition to debt of £33m detailed above, the Council is making payments to cover its pension fund liability. It has also set aside £5m to cover risks of insurance claims and Landfill Closure. The Council is also at risk of having to pay for its share of the ARC 21 Joint Committee contingent liability but has not put aside any money.

Governance: Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by departmental Chief Officers in consultation with the Director of Finance. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by central finance and reported quarterly to the Director of Finance. New liabilities exceeding £1m are reported to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval/notification as appropriate.

4. Revenue Budget Implications

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known

as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from the District Rate and general government grants.

Table 10: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	2024/25 forecast	2025/26 budget	2026/27 budget	2027/28 budget
Financing costs (£'000)	9,763	9,801	10,453	11,296
Proportion of net revenue stream	4.74%	4.5%	4.8%	5.19%

Sustainability: Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years may extend for up to 50 years into the future. The Director of Finance is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable due to the processes in place to scrutinise any plans coming forward and are designed to highlight not only the ongoing financing costs but also the recurring running costs to ensure they remain within the affordability limits identified and agreed by the Council.

5. Knowledge and Skills

The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Director of Finance is a qualified accountant with over 25 years' experience. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA, ACT (treasury), ACCA, etc.

Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

Annual Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26

1. Introduction

Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. In addition, the former Department of the Environment (DoE) issued Guidance on Local Authority Investments in October 2011 that requires the Council to approve an investment strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the *Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011* to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the DoE Guidance.

This strategy covers the following issues in respect of 2025/26:

- Outlook for interest rates
- Capital Financing Plans
- Establishing the Borrowing Requirement
- Borrowing strategy
- Debt rescheduling
- Investments
- Treasury Management Indicators

2. Outlook for Interest Rates

The impact on the UK from the government's Autumn Budget, slower expected interest rate cuts, a short-term boost to but modestly weaker economic growth over the medium term, together with the impact from President-elect Trump's second term in office and uncertainties around US domestic and foreign policy, will be major influences on the Council's treasury management strategy for 2025/26.

The Bank of England's (BoE) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.75% at its December 2024 meeting, having reduced it to that level in November and following a previous 25bp cut from the 5.25% peak at the August MPC meeting. At the December meeting, six Committee members voted to maintain Bank Rate at 4.75% while three members preferred to reduce it to 4.50%. The Bank rate was cut to 4.5% in February 2025. The Council's treasury management adviser Arlingclose expects the Bank of England's MPC will continue reducing Bank Rate through 2025, taking it to around 3.75% by the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The effect from the Autumn Budget on economic growth and inflation has reduced previous expectations in terms of the pace of rate cuts as well as pushing up the rate at the end of the loosening cycle.

3. Capital Financing Plans

It is essential that the level of borrowing is considered within the context of the Council's capital expenditure and plans, as is required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance.

The Council holds £33m of borrowing and is projected to hold £59m of treasury investments. The investments balance is higher than prior years due to timing of monies being paid to Council and this monies being paid out again.

Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1, with the Council planning to increase borrowings over the next three years.

Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast

	2024/25 £'000 Estimate	2025/26 £'000 Forecast	2026/27 £'000 Forecast	2027/28 £'000 Forecast
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	115,073	118,654	128,106	126,095
Less: External Borrowing	33,146	28,633	33,426	32,523
Internal Borrowing	81,927	90,021	94,680	93,572
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	121,000	109,000	114,000	114,000
Treasury Investments (new borrowing)	39,073	18,979	19,320	20,428

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Council's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.

The Council has an increasing CFR and given current investments levels, the borrowing requirement is under review. The Council's long term capital expenditure forecasts are currently being developed which may change the above forecasts.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Council's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation during 2025/26.

Liability benchmark: To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 1 above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

Table 2: Liability Benchmark

	2024/25 £'000 Estimate	2025/26 £'000 Forecast	2026/27 £'000 Forecast	2027/28 £'000 Forecast
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	115,073	118,654	128,106	126,095
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	121,000	109,000	114,000	114,000
Net loans requirement	(5,927)	9,654	14,106	12,095
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Liability Benchmark	4,073	19,654	24,106	22,095

The Liability Benchmark is effectively the Net Borrowing Requirement of a Council plus a liquidity allowance.

CIPFA recommends that the optimum position for external borrowing should be at the level of the Liability Benchmark (i.e., all balance sheet resources should be used to maximise internal borrowing). If the outputs show future periods where external loans are less than the Liability Benchmark, then this indicates a borrowing requirement thus identifying where the Council is exposed to interest rate, liquidity and refinancing risks. Conversely where external loans exceed the Liability Benchmark then this will highlight an overborrowed position which will result in excess cash in the organisation requiring investment thus exposing the Council to credit and reinvestment risks and a potential cost of carry. The Council's external debt is currently higher than the liability benchmark. This position will change as the Council is currently working on long term capital forecasts which will update the above figures.

4. Establishing the Borrowing Requirement

The starting point for ascertaining the appropriate level of borrowing is the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is derived from the Balance Sheet and represents the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose, as it takes account of all capital expenditure incurred which is resourced from borrowing.

However, in addition to the debt position created by historic capital expenditure met from borrowing, the Council also has significant values of reserves, provisions and balances supported by cash, which reduce the net indebtedness of the Council. These positive cash flows allow the Council to consider utilising this cash to support capital expenditure in lieu of external borrowing.

If external borrowing is higher than the CFR, this indicates borrowing in advance of immediate need (permitted within the Prudential Code) and borrowing below CFR would indicate internal borrowing (i.e. the level of cash used in lieu of external borrowing)

The relatively high levels of reserves and balances on the Council's balance sheet have therefore enabled the Council to benefit from not having to borrow externally to the full extent of the underlying need. However, it cannot be assumed that this position can continue into perpetuity and when long term capital forecasts have been finalised this will need to be given active consideration.

The Council currently holds £33 million of loans, a decrease of £5million on the previous year. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Council does not expect to have any additional borrowing in 2025/26.

5. Borrowing Strategy

In terms of meeting the external borrowing requirement identified above, one of the most important considerations is the timing, in terms of the potential to save significant interest costs and it is key that this position is proactively managed using all information available to inform decisions. It is essential therefore that the considerations of timing of borrowing form a key element of the borrowing strategy.

It is of course not possible for all borrowing to be undertaken at the lowest rates of interest available, as unforeseen events can significantly alter the path of rates. It is therefore essential that the risks to adverse movements are fully understood and actively managed. One of the key borrowing objectives is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required.

Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. Short-term interest rates are currently higher than in the recent past, but are expected to fall in the coming year and it is therefore likely to be more cost effective over the medium-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead. The risks of this approach will be managed by keeping the Council's interest rate exposure within the limit set in the treasury management prudential indicators, see below.

By doing so, the Council is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of internal / short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Council with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Council borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2025/26 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

It is recognised that whilst the capital expenditure and financing plans will be a driver of borrowing costs, the management of risk is the prime objective of the borrowing strategy and reduction of interest rate risk and refinancing risk within the portfolio is essential.

The Council has previously raised the majority of its long-term borrowing from the Government Loans Fund via Department of Finance. The Council may look to borrow any long-term loans from other sources such as banks, pensions and local authorities and may utilise money market brokers to facilitate borrowing from other local authorities for short to medium term borrowing.

6. Debt Rescheduling

The prime objective of any restructuring is to reduce risk in the portfolio, whether that be interest rate or refinancing risk. Any savings that may be created as a result will be considered in the context of the overall risk profile.

Debt restructuring opportunities will be kept under constant review.

7. Investments

Annual Investment Strategy

The Council has regard to the CIPFA Code and Guidance for Local Government Investments for District Councils in Northern Ireland (the Guidance) as cited under Section 25(1) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Act) when setting the Investment Strategy. The Department recommends that each local authority produce and publish an Annual Investment Strategy, approved by the Council and revised in year as required. This sets out the Council's policies for managing investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. This investment strategy states which instruments the Council may use for investment purposes, making a distinction between specified and non-specified investments. This strategy also determines limits in respect of their overall levels.

The prime objective of the Council's investment strategy is to ensure prudent investment of surplus funds. The Council's investment priorities are the security of capital, liquidity of investments and, within those objectives, to secure optimum performance.

All investments will be made in accordance with the Council's investment policies and prevailing legislation and regulations.

7.1 Specified Investments

An investment is a **specified investment** if:

- The investment is denominated in Sterling and all payments or repayments are payable only in Sterling,
- The investment is not a long term investment (i.e. due to be repaid within 12 months of the date in which it was made or one which the Council may require to be repaid within that period),
- The making of the investment is not defined as capital expenditure by virtue of regulation 12 of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2011; and
- The investment is made with a body which has been awarded a high credit rating, or is made with one of the following:
 - a) The United Kingdom Government;
 - b) A District Council;
 - c) A Local Authority in England and Wales or a similar body in Scotland;

The following categories of investments may be used under the definition of specified investments:

- Short term cash deposits
- Call accounts
- Certificates of Deposit (with maturity dates < 1 year)
- UK Government Gilts
- Treasury Bills
- Money Market Funds

The Council considers a high credit rating for money market funds to be those with a long term Fitch Rating of AAA (or the equivalent highest rating from Standard and Poors or Moodys).

The Council will have regard to all 3 rating agencies and considers a high credit rating for other investments to be as follows:

Fitch Credit Rating	Minimum level
Short Term Rating	F1
Long Term Rating	A

Fitch defines these ratings as follows:

A: High credit quality.

'A' ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

F1: Highest short-term credit quality.

Indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments

7.2 Non-specified Investments

In respect of **non-specified investments**. The following instruments have been identified by the Council.

Category of Non-specified investment
Sterling denominated Foreign Government Securities
Sterling medium term Deposits or Certificates of Deposit
Floating rate Certificates of Deposit
Highly rated Corporate Bonds (including investments in a Corporate Bond Fund)
Sterling Reserve Funds
Index-linked structured deposits
Collateralised deposits
Foreign Currency denominated investments
Deposits with non-rated Building Societies

The Council do not intend on making any investments in the 2025/26 year which meet the definition of non-specified investments and therefore there is no limit set on this within the Investment Strategy.

The CIPFA Code of Practice recommends that the Investment Strategy sets out the maximum period over which investments will be made.

The Director of Finance recommends that a maximum duration of 2 years should be set, although it is only expected that investments over 12 months will be made only in exceptional circumstances.

Regulation 12(1) (d) of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that some categories of investment are defined as Capital Expenditure. This relates to the acquisition of share or loan capital in any body corporate. However, in the event that this expenditure is made as an investment for the prudent management of the Council's financial affairs, it shall not be treated as capital expenditure.

The impact of investing in instruments of this nature are such that, unlike other investment instruments, either capital or revenue resources would have to be applied to this expenditure, and once the investment was sold or matured, the income would be a capital receipt.

The Council will monitor any proposals for such investments and will assess a suitable limit within the Investment Strategy.

7.3 Investment Risk

The prime consideration of risk within investments is the loss of capital invested. Therefore investments will only be made with bodies with a high credit rating defined above. Credit ratings will form the primary driver for assessing credit quality, although it is recognised that this is not the only means of assessing credit quality.

Caution will be exercised in determining the creditworthiness of investment counterparties, even if they meet the minimum criteria above.

In the event that any institutions are at the minimum criteria and are on negative rating watch, monies will not be placed with that organisation until such time that the negative outlook is revised.

Geographical limits will be considered to ensure an appropriate spread of risk. Sovereign ratings will be taken account of when placing funds with institutions outside of the UK.

Credit ratings for existing investment counterparties will be monitored on a monthly basis, as well as immediately before new deposits are placed.

Market intelligence will also be considered before entering into any investments with proposed counterparties meeting the minimum criteria.

7.4 Treasury Management Advisers

The Council currently utilise the services of external advisers, Arlingclose, when determining the credit quality of its investment counterparties. The Council recognise that responsibility for the decision to invest with a counterparty rests with the Council as the principle undertaking the transaction.

Credit ratings will be obtained directly from the rating agencies' websites, and officers will regularly read the financial press for information relevant to the credit-worthiness of counterparties.

7.5 Investment Training

The Council recognises that investments, as well as wider treasury management issues require a high level of specialist knowledge. Officers undertaking the decisions are all qualified accountants with many years of experience. However, the Council recognises the need for officers to be kept up to date with developments and through the annual appraisal system will identify any training needs to further enhance the current skills base.

In the event of new Officers joining the function, they will be provided with significant on the job training as well as being provided with the opportunity to attend relevant external training courses.

The Council recognises that although there may be costs involved with sending officers to training courses, when these costs are considered in the context of the size of the portfolios being managed, and the amount of the Council's money at risk, investment in training is a worthwhile area of expenditure.

In addition to the training of officers, in order for elected members to provide effective scrutiny of the strategy and to have the knowledge to make informed decisions regarding the strategy, it is also important that training is provided to Members of the Council.

7.6 Other Investment Considerations

The level of investment balances is not specifically targeted in the strategy; it will be a consequence of the net spending plans of the Council, and the level of external borrowing to be undertaken. To date, balances have remained relatively stable over recent years. However, the introduction of the Prudential Code, and the self regulation of borrowing limits and capital financing strategies, may result in higher or lower levels of balances going forwards as the level of external borrowing is given active consideration.

It should also be noted that the investments are largely as a result of the level of reserves and provisions that the Council has at any one point in time. In addition, there is an amount of working capital (excess of creditors over debtors) as well as being a factor of the extent to which investment balances have been used in lieu of external borrowing.

Investment balances are currently higher than in prior years, however they are expected to decrease as long term capital expenditure forecasts are finalised and further investment balances are used in lieu of external borrowing.

The remaining cash balances that will not be used in lieu of external borrowing will primarily exist to manage cash flow volatility within the Council. It is therefore not expected that investments of a long term nature will be made, however this will be kept under review depending on the level of investment balances.

The Council recognises that a consequence of short dated investments is that it exposes the portfolio to interest rate risk, which would otherwise be reduced if investments were made of a long term nature. The budget for investment income takes a prudent approach to expected returns from investments.

8. Treasury Management Indicators

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice requires various indicators to be set within the strategy. This section of the report sets these out in the format required by the Code. Whilst they are required to provide boundaries within which the treasury management operations will be managed, it is also important that there is sufficient flexibility to enable officers to react to unforeseen favourable movements in the financial markets which may present beneficial opportunities to the Council.

8.21 Interest Rate Exposures

The Council is required to set upper limits for both fixed and variable exposures for the forthcoming years. The purpose of this indicator is to contain the Council's exposure to unfavourable movements in interest rates. The indicators are expressed as Fixed Rate Borrowing less Fixed Rate Investments and Variable Rate Borrowing less Variable Rate Investments. The Council defines variable rate investments as including those instruments maturing within each year, as the replacement of those instruments will be subject to prevailing rates of interest. The following table shows the upper limit of fixed rate exposure and the upper limit of variable rate exposure for the forthcoming three years.

	Estimate 2025/26 £'000	Estimate 2026/27 £'000	Estimate 2027/28 £'000
Upper limit of fixed rate exposure	102,654	112,106	110,095
Upper limit of variable rate exposure	3,080	3,363	3,303

8.2 Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

The Council is required to set upper and lower limits of fixed rate borrowing maturing within certain periods, in order to contain the exposure to re-financing risk which may arise if significant proportions of borrowing were maturing within a short period of time. The Council has set the following limits for the forthcoming financial year.

	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Under 12 months	0.00%	35.00%
12 months – 24 months	0.00%	35.00%
24 months – 5 years	0.00%	50.00%
5 years – 10 years	0.00%	75.00%
10 years and above	0.00%	75.00%

8.3 Total Principal Sums Invested for periods longer than 364 days

The purpose of this indicator is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise as a result of the Council having to seek early repayment of sums invested.

The Council would not, through its normal course of investment activities, expect to make investments beyond 12 months. However, there may be exceptional circumstances which may result in investments being made up to 2 years in duration, as is referred to within the Annual Investment Strategy.

	Estimate 2025/26	Estimate 2026/27	Estimate 2027/28
Total principal sums invested for longer than 364 days	£2m	£2m	£2m



Subject:	Audit & Risk Panel Report and Minutes of Meeting of 4 March 2025
Date:	21 March 2025
Reporting Officer:	Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive / Strategic Director of Corporate Services
Contact Officer:	Claire O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk 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?

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a summary of the key issues that were considered and discussed by the Audit & Risk Panel at its March 2025 meeting and present the minutes of the last meeting of the Panel for approval.

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	That Strategic Policy and Resources Committee notes the key issues arising at the meeting and approves the minutes of the Audit & Risk Panel of 4 March 2025 at appendix A.
3.0	Main Report
	<p>Key Issues</p> <p><u>Key reports</u></p> <p>3.1 The Panel noted the progress being made against the annual internal audit plan and received summaries of the recently completed internal audits of External Affairs, Communications and Marketing, NI Houses in Multiple Occupation, Dog Warden Service, Asset Management IT System – Project Management Arrangements and the Building Control IT System – Project Management Arrangements.</p> <p>3.2 The audit of the External Affairs, Communications and Marketing received an assurance opinion of major improvement required, and the Panel requested an update from management for their next meeting.</p> <p>3.3 The Panel considered the reasons put forward by management and agreed the deferral of internal audits of the Climate Action Plan, Strategic Waste Management and Outdoor Leisure.</p> <p>3.4 Regarding the recommendations monitor report and the decrease in the usual implementation rate, the Panel asked AGRS to undertake an analysis of the root cause and the associated risk of not implementing these actions for their next meeting. The Panel received an update on the review and oversight processes in place for the implementation of these actions. The Panel also asked AGRS to liaise with management regarding setting a realistic target for implementation of actions, with a focus on high priority actions.</p> <p>3.5 The Panel considered the corporate risk dashboard which provided an analysis and update on the progress being made to manage the 23 risks that are considered to present the greatest threat to the delivery of corporate priorities and / or compliance with key statutory requirements.</p> <p>3.6 The Panel agreed the updated draft Risk Appetite Statement which describes the Council's attitude to accepting various categories of risk and stressed the importance of ensuring that, once finalised, this is communicated effectively and implemented in practice. The updated draft Statement will be included within the review and update of the Councils overall Risk</p>

	Management Strategy, which has commenced, and which will follow the Council's Joint Negotiating / Consultative framework.
3.7	The Panel considered the horizon scanning matters and the Director confirmed that financial risks and opportunities would be considered.
3.8	The Panel agreed the Audit Strategy & Plan for 25/26 which sets out the role of AGRS as an assurance provider and advisory service which directly assists the Council in meeting relevant statutory obligations in relation to internal control, risk management and good governance.
3.9	The Panel noted the quarterly assurances provided by Directors regarding compliance with risk management and internal control processes.
3.10	The Panel noted the work that was underway to exercise, review and update business continuity management (BCM) plans and the Business Impact Analysis for the critical services by the year-end.
3.11	The Panel received quarter 3 reports on corporate health and safety, absence management and performance improvement.
3.12	Regarding health and safety, the Panel received an update on the procurement that was underway to implement several fire safety actions.
3.13	Noting that the average sickness absence rate was above target for quarter three, the Panel expressed their thanks to departments for managing absence including the completion of departmental improvement plans and absence management dashboards and related progress updates.
	<u>Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)</u>
3.14	The Panel received the Performance Improvement Audit and Assessment Report 2024-25 , in which the LGA has provided an unqualified audit opinion regarding how the Council has discharged its performance improvement and reporting duties. In terms of the improvement assessment the LGA has provided a positive assessment, that the Council is likely to discharge its duties in respect of Part 12 of the Act during 2024-25.
3.15	The Panel expressed their appreciation for the work of the Performance Team in achieving this positive opinion.

3.16	<p>The Panel also considered the NIAO Audit Strategy for 2024/25, which covers both the audit of the financial statements and their improvement audit and assessment</p> <p><u>Audit and Risk Panel Governance</u></p>
3.17	<p>To Panel were updated on the requirements of the new Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government and the importance of their role in establishing internal audit arrangements and providing oversight and support for internal audit.</p>
3.18	<p>The Panel were updated on the work that was underway to assess compliance with the new Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS). The Panel also agreed updates to the terms of reference for the Audit and Risk Panel, Audit Assurance Board and Audit, Governance and Risk Services, which take account of the new GIAS.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.19	<p>None.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.20	<p>None known at this time.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	Appendix A - Minutes of Audit & Risk Panel 4 March 2025

Audit and Risk Panel

Tuesday, 4th March, 2025

MEETING OF AUDIT AND RISK PANEL

Members present: Councillor R. McLaughlin (Chairperson);
Alderman Rodgers,
Councillors Hanvey and Verner; and
Mr. D. Wilson (External Member).

In attendance: Mrs. S. McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of
Corporate Services;
Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and
Civic Services;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Director of Human Resources;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Ms. C. O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk
Services;
Mr. M. Whitmore, Audit, Governance and Risk
Services Manager;
Ms. T. Higgins, Assistant Corporate Health and
Safety Manager;
Mr. A. McKinley, Internal Auditor;
and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Also attended: Mr. R. Ross, Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Pre-Meeting

The Audit and Risk Panel met privately with Mr. R. Ross, Northern Ireland Audit Office, prior to the meeting commencing, to enable them to discuss any concerns around the work of the Council's risk, control and governance arrangements.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Councillors Groogan and McKeown.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 3rd December, 2024, were approved by the Panel.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

Absence Rates Q/E December 2024

The Director of Human Resources presented the following report to the Panel:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Audit Panel of the Council’s performance in managing absence at the end of quarter three, April – December 2024.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Audit Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Key corporate indicators:

At the end of quarter three:

- **The Council’s average sickness absence rate stands at 10.99 days, a decrease of 1.44 days compared to absence for the same period last year (12.43 days).**
- **A total of 24848.4 working days was lost due to sickness absence. This accounted for 6.51% of the total working days available.**
- **The table below provides a summary of how departments are performing against the target. Three departments did not meet the corporate quarterly target of 12.17 days for quarter three.**

End of year target	16.23					
End of Q3 target	12.17					
Department	Number of employees (FTE)	Total days lost (FTE)	Average absence per FTE	Variance	% of workforce	% of absence
City and Neighbourhood Services	1312.27	16425.9	12.52	0.34	58.04%	66.10%
City and Organisational Strategy	87.15	798.89	9.17	-3.01	3.85%	3.22%
Corporate Services	127.39	399.16	3.13	-9.04	5.63%	1.61%
External Affairs, Comms and Marketing	27.71	83.07	3.00	-9.17	1.23%	0.33%
Finance	48.64	198.68	4.08	-8.09	2.15%	0.80%
Human Resources	32.54	257.16	7.90	-4.27	1.44%	1.03%
Legal and Civic Services	157.94	2067.35	13.09	0.92	6.99%	8.32%
Place and Economy	349.67	2956.25	8.45	-3.72	15.47%	11.90%
Property and Projects	117.53	1661.9	14.14	1.97	5.20%	6.69%
Grand Total	2260.84	24848.4	10.99	-1.18		

3.2 Additional Absence information:

- There has been a slight increase in the number of staff with no recorded absence this period (49.44%) compared to the same time last year (49.27%)
- There has been a significant decrease of 11.7%, or 2290.8 days, in absence classified as long term (20+ days) this year (17240.10 days) compared to the same time last year (19530.90 days).
- The number of days lost per full time equivalent increased by 0.6 in quarter three (4.06 days) when compared to quarter two (3.46 days). It is worth noting that the quarter three figure in 24/25 is the lowest it's been, in quarter three, since 20/21. This is illustrated in figure one.
- Stress, depression, anxiety (31.23% of total days lost) and musculo-skeletal (28.91% of total days lost) continue to be the top two reasons for absence. Refer to figure two for further information.
- There has been a significant decrease of 11.7%, or 2290.8 days, in absence classified as long term (20+ days) this year (17240.10 days) compared to the same time last year (19530.90 days). Refer to figure three for further information.
- Issues were identified in how absences were being managed in 88 cases. These were discussed in detail with departments during quarter three. Please note that a number of meetings did not take place with City and Neighbourhood Services in quarter three. Refer to figure four for a breakdown by department.
- Approximately 27% of absence (6787.03 days) is recorded as disability related. Almost two thirds (64.95%) of disability related absence was managed as long term. Employees who reported absence with Depression / Anxiety / Mental Health (30.77%), Chronic back pain (14.63%) and Osteoarthritis (9.95%) accounted for 55% of all disability related absence days. Refer to figure five for further detail on disability related absence.
- The Council continued to be impacted by absence due to COVID 19 by the end of quarter three. 108 employees were recorded as absent due to COVID19, and this accounted for 639.44

days or 2.57% of the total absence in quarter three.

- 11 employees met the trigger for a Stage four/FAH in quarter three.
 - One employee was retired on the grounds of ill health prior to hearing being arranged.
 - One employee resigned prior to a final hearing being organised.
 - Discretion was applied to five of these cases not to progress to a FAH. This was due to one employee returning to work, two employees given additional time off due to surgery and recovery, one employee sustained a serious back injury and further medical information was required for one employee.
 - Two employees (who met the trigger during quarter three) attended a stage four / final hearing.
 - Discretion was shown due to the nature of the employees' absence (bereavement / mental health).
 - The other employee availed of a career break.
 - Two cases were non-compliant (case reviews not organised within agreed timeframes).

In addition to the above cases, three employees were also dismissed on the grounds of permanent ill health during quarter three and one employee was dismissed for failing to meet the standards of attendance.

Corporate HR monitors how departments are managing attendance. Matters regarding the management of cases at the final stages of the attendance policy are raised with departmental senior management when necessary.

3.3 Departmental improvement plans/absence reporting to DMT:

Corporate HR has reviewed all of the departmental improvement plans for quarter three. All departments provided a progress report for quarter three. In general, meaningful information and updates were provided by the departments.

However, CNS has, again, identified lack of resources as an issue in carrying out the analysis required for the improvement plan.

All departments returned their absence dashboards for October, November and December 2024.

3.4 Health and Wellbeing Strategy

A key action for Corporate HR as outlined in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, is to develop an annual H&WB action plan to deliver a programme of wellbeing support and awareness raising to all employees. Corporate HR continues to roll out a full programme of H&WB events, activities and initiatives which have been promoted via departmental HR, Interlink and through a team of 16 Health & Wellbeing Champions.

Twenty-three events were delivered in quarter three and attended by 320 staff. This equates to a 78% increase on attendance compared to quarter three last year and a 22 % increase on the number of events delivered.

Furthermore, training on management skills continues to be delivered, for example, Understanding the Attendance Policy, Skills for Managing Performance, Conflict Resolution and Dealing with Difficult Conversations.

Health and Wellbeing initiatives:

Stress

Stress Awareness for Managers and Positive Mental Health are delivered regularly and were attended by 18 staff in quarter three. To support staff in reducing stress and tension, Corporate HR delivered a programme of 15-minute, Mindful Movement sessions which were attended by 71 staff.

Musculo Skeletal Issues

There has also been a focus this quarter on support for musculoskeletal health issues which are a major cause of absence. Tips for Spinal Health, Osteoporosis in a Sedentary World and Diet and Nutrition sessions were delivered and 45 employees attended. Going forward, there will be a continued focus on musculoskeletal support and advice.

Stop Smoking Campaign

A Stop Smoking Campaign, supported by Cancer Focus, and promoted through events at various council locations is ongoing and 19 employees have signed up to the programme. Progress on this will be reported in our next report.

Keeping Well Van

The Keeping Well Van visited one CNS site with 16 staff attending a 30 minute health check. The Keeping Well van has now been rolled out over six sites including Duncrue, Park Road, Alexandra Park and Blackstaff with a total of 85 staff having a health check.

4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 Directors are asked to ensure that:

- Attendance management continues to be a priority item on DMT agendas and related matters discussed and appropriate actions taken forward.
- Resources are in place to ensure that adequate monitoring and review is in place at department level.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

5.1 Approximately 27% of absence (6787.03 days) is recorded as disability related. The use of discretion and reasonable adjustments is considered in such cases.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

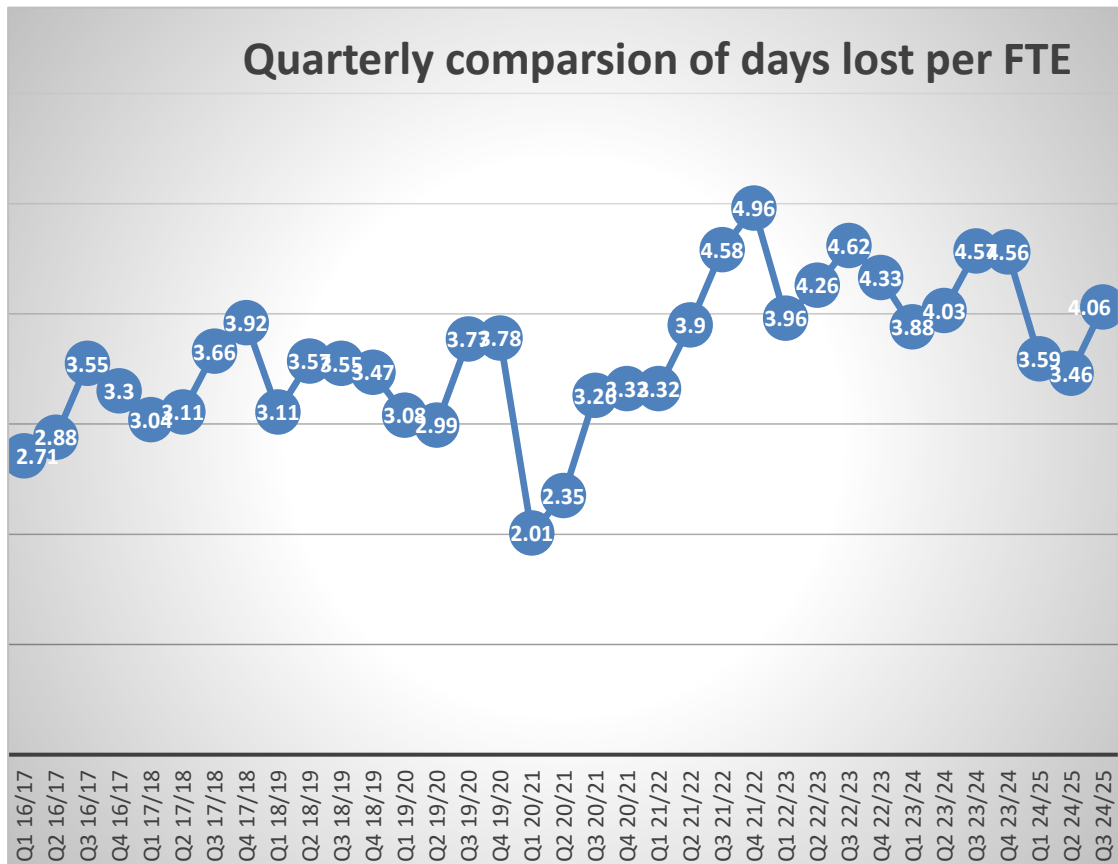


Figure Two:

Reason for absence	Days lost (FTE)	% of absence
Stress, depression, anxiety	7760.82	31.23%
Musculo-skeletal	7183.01	28.91%
Stomach, digestive, etc	2554.34	10.28%
Infections, inc colds & flu	1568.38	6.31%
Heart, blood press, circ, etc	1124.17	4.52%
Neurological, inc headaches	1030.61	4.15%
Other	839.65	3.38%
Chest and respiratory	765.03	3.08%
Infections, Covid19	639.44	2.57%
Genito-urinary, inc menstrual	595.33	2.40%
Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental	448.11	1.80%
Pregnancy related	339.49	1.37%
Total	24848.38	

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

Figure three:

Reason for discretion	Total days	% of total
Bereavement	299.4	17.55%
Underlying medical condition / Disability	229.51	13.45%
Mental Health	227.95	13.36%
Work related stress	205.55	12.05%
Emergency domestic responsibilities	190.29	11.16%
Planned surgery and recovery	169.45	9.93%
Hospitalisation	154	9.03%
Industrial injury	95.6	5.60%
Unresolved ER issues	35.81	2.10%
Previous long service and clear record	31	1.82%
Sensitive personal stressors	29.44	1.73%
Workplace incident	20.74	1.22%
Previous long service and clear record.	11	0.64%
Pregnancy related	6.03	0.35%
Total	1705.77	
Total days lost in quarter three (October to December 2024)	9021.57	
% of total days lost where discretion applied in quarter three	18.91%	
Average days off per occurrence of discretion in quarter three	19.38375	

Figure four:

Department	Total
City and Neighbourhood Services	34
City and Organisational Strategy	9
Corporate Services	3
External Affairs Comms & Marketing	2
Human Resources	0
Finance	0
Legal and Civic Services	19
Place and Economy	10
Property and Projects	11
Totals	88

Figure five:

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

Actual disability	Total days	% of total disability related absence
Depression / Anxiety / Mental health conditions	2088.09	30.77%
Chronic back condition	992.82	14.63%
Osteoarthritis	675.15	9.95%
Chronic heart condition	508.67	7.49%
Cancer	274.83	4.05%
Hernia	262.32	3.87%
Chronic neurological condition	222	3.27%
Chronic bowel condition	186.15	2.74%
Chronic hip condition	174.13	2.57%
Pancreatic Necrosis	122.97	1.81%
Ulcerative Colitis	113.99	1.68%
Spinal Stenosis	87.03	1.28%
Eczema	84.93	1.25%
Diabetes	84.49	1.24%
Chronic pituitary condition	83	1.22%
Chronic respiratory condition	69.19	1.02%
Macular Degeneration	68.99	1.02%
Renal failure	67.97	1.00%
Other*	620.31	9.14%
Total absence end of quarter three	24848.38	
Disability related absence at the end of quarter three	6787.03	
% of absence lost due to disability	27.31%	
% of disability related absence managed as LTA	64.95%	

***Other includes a total of 24 conditions that each individually account for less than 1% of total disability related absence.”**

In response to a Member’s comments, the Director stated that she hoped that the significant decrease in long term absences, of 11.7% from the same time last year, was a positive indication that the corporate and departmental improvement plans were working. The Member paid tribute to the hard work of all the staff who had been involved in the managing of attendance, noting that all Departments had returned their dashboards.

In response to a further Member’s query regarding the absence levels within the City and Neighbourhood Services (CNS) Department, the Director advised the Panel that CNS comprised almost 60% of the workforce, with a significant proportion of those employees carrying out manual or frontline jobs. She outlined

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

that management had sought to realign its resources and recruit additional staff in order to assist with absence management and reduce its level of absence.

The Chairperson thanked the Director for the update which had been provided and the Panel noted the contents of the report.

Corporate Health and Safety Performance Report

The City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services provided the Panel with a report on the health and safety performance and activities for the quarter ending on 31st December, 2024.

She provided, on a Departmental basis, information on the implementation of actions associated with the key performance indicators of health and safety and fire safety and pointed out that, at a corporate level, compliance rates had been 81% and 67% respectively.

In terms of accident/incident reporting, there had, in quarter three, been 29 employee accidents, 1 non-employee accident, 13 RIDDOR accidents and 15 work related violence incidents.

The City Solicitor outlined that no new enquiries or correspondence had been received from the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) or the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service during quarter three 2024/25. However, there had been a follow up by HSENI in relation to the Belfast Zoo near miss, road layout improvements to Alexandra Park and the Corporate Health and Safety Unit was copied into correspondence regarding a forthcoming pool safety initiative.

She reported that the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) had met with representatives from HSENI in February, 2025, to discuss the lessons which could be learned from recent incidents and prosecutions across all sectors in Northern Ireland. The session had been well received and officers were considering how best to cascade the learning through its health and safety structures. It was agreed that HSENI would meet CMT annually.

The Panel was assured that the contract for the Council's fire doors had gone out to tender and that an external contractor would be appointed in the coming weeks.

A Member stated that it was good to see that the majority of the high priority actions had been progressed. The Director agreed to provide a further update on the two remaining high priority actions at the Panel's next meeting.

The Panel noted the contents of the report.

Recommendations Monitor Report

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager presented the Audit and Risk Panel with an update on the implementation of agreed audit actions following the recent Recommendations Monitoring exercise.

A full validation exercise was completed recently and included a review of all audit recommendations that were open as at the end of February 2025.

At the start of the exercise, there were 248 open audit actions across the Council. As a result of the exercise, 60 of those actions could now be closed, that is, fully implemented (57) or were no longer applicable (3). That represented an implementation rate of 24%. It represented a significant decrease on the previous exercise (implementation rate of 35%) and was below the implementation rates seen over previous years. At the conclusion of that exercise, 188 recommendations remained open, as compared to 189 at the same point in the last reporting period.

The Panel received an update on the full implementation of actions in a number of areas across the Council. The Panel also received an update on the implementation rates for each department.

A summary of the link between the implementation of audit actions and the management of corporate risks and the link to delivery of value for money was also provided.

The Panel also learned how management had indicated that the implementation of new IT systems was a key enabler for the implementation of open audit actions.

Management continued to express their commitment to addressing these and where applicable had provided revised implementation dates. AGRS would continue to provide management with regular information on the current position of open audit actions within their department.

In order to allow the Panel to better understand the underlying causes for delays in implementation of outstanding actions and to decide on the best time to undertake their next exercise, the Panel agreed for AGRS to undertake an analysis of root causes and report back to the next meeting of the Panel in June 2025.

A Member queried why Departments were continually missing completion dates on high priority actions.

In response, the Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Audit Assurance Board had recently held an in-depth scrutiny session on the issue. She explained that the importance of expediting delivery was well-recognised amongst management and that it was agreed that further analysis of the root causes of the delays should be carried out. The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager added that management had indicated that a number of the outstanding actions were tied to delays in the implementation of new IT systems.

In response to a further Member's question, the Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager explained that that the key theme amongst the reasons for the

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

delays was that the Departments had indicated that they were working with competing priorities and resources.

The Panel noted the progress which had been made by management to implement audit recommendations and approved the proposal that AGRS would bring back an analysis of the underlying reasons for the delays in implementation to the June 2025 meeting, after which the timing of the next exercise could be agreed.

After discussion, the Panel further agreed that officers would:

1. bring an analysis of the underlying reasons for the delays in implementation to the June 2025 meeting, with a focus on those actions which placed the Council at the most risk, be that financial or reputational; and
2. look to establish a new target on the implementation rate of high priority actions.

AGRS Progress Report February 2025

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager provided the Panel with an update on the internal audit reports for five assignments which had been finalised during the period from December 2024 to February 2025, namely:

- External Affairs, Communications and Marketing (Major Improvement Needed);
- NI Houses in Multiple Occupation (Some Improvement Needed);
- Dog Warden Service (Some Improvement Needed);
- Asset Management IT System – Project Management Arrangements (opinion n/a); and
- Building Control IT System – Project Management Arrangements (opinion n/a).

He advised the Members that 66% of planned activity in the Audit Plan 2024/2025 had either been completed or was underway.

The Panel was advised of the following Audits which were still in progress:

- In-Cab Technology – Project Management Arrangements (draft report issued)
- New Crematorium (fieldwork)
- Police & Community Safety Partnerships (draft report)
- Agency (draft report)
- People Strategy (fieldwork)
- Government Procurement cards (draft report issued)
- Planning (draft report)
- Corporate Complaints (fieldwork)

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

- BWUH Ltd - review of Finance, IT Security, Performance Management, Event Management and Company Secretarial Duties (draft report issued)
- Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships (fieldwork)
- Insurance (fieldwork)
- Payroll – Data Analytics (fieldwork)
- Governance Review BWUH (fieldwork)

The Panel was provided with an update in relation to initial enquiries relating to the Raising Concerns Policy. The Manager outlined that there had been an attempted bank mandate fraud which had been prevented by the application of controls. There were no fraud cases ongoing.

Regarding the National Fraud Initiative, the Panel was advised that the Council had received the data matches requiring investigation, following the data upload which had taken place in October 2024. Whilst there had been a slight increase in the number of duplicate creditor matches this year, in general, the number of matches was consistent with those which had been received in recent years.

The Panel was reminded that the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 required the Council to “undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of risk management, internal control and governance processes using internal auditing standards in force from time to time”.

He explained that AGRS complied with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which were published in 2013 and remained in force until 31st March, 2025. He reported that those had now been superseded by the new Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) which had come into effect from January 2025 and set out standards in relation to:

- Purpose of Internal Auditing.
- Ethics and Professionalism.
- Governing the Internal Audit Function.
- Managing the Internal Audit Function.
- Performing Internal Audit Services.

The Panel was advised that, following a period of consultation, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) had issued the final version of the Application Note on the GIAS in the UK Public Sector applicable from 1st April, 2025 and all internal auditors in the public sector must confirm adherence to the Application Note as well as the GIAS from 1st April, 2025.

He outlined that AGRS was in the process of completing a self-assessment against the GIAS, Application Note and the Code and would develop a draft action plan to take forward any necessary work to ensure conformance. It was noted that an update report would be submitted to the Panel’s June meeting in that regard.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

It was reported that management had requested that the planned audit of the Climate Action Plan be deferred as it had not yet been finalised due to resource issues within the Climate Team.

It was also reported that, in March 2024, the Panel had approved the deferral of the audit of Strategic Waste Management from the 2023/24 audit plan due to a lack of progress regarding the development of a Regional Waste Management Strategy by DAERA. The absence of the regional strategy impacted on the ability of the Council to develop its own strategy and therefore management considered that there would be limited value in undertaking an audit at that time. As there had been no change since then, AGRS was once again requesting that the Panel would consider deferring the audit to a future audit plan. The AGRS manager also relayed a recent request from management to defer the internal audit of outdoor leisure to allow time for the Unit to complete the current CI review of the Parks, Events and Outreach service.

It was anticipated that this review would be completed by no later than May/June of this year at which time CNS would be in touch to agree a timeline for this work.

The Panel:

- noted the AGRS Progress Report for the period December 2024 to February 2025; and
- agreed the request by management to defer the internal audits of BCC Climate Action Plan and Strategic Waste Management and Outdoor Leisure.

After discussion, it was also agreed that a report be submitted to the next meeting, providing the Panel with an update on the progress made by the External Affairs, Communications and Marketing Department in response to its agreed action plan.

Corporate Risk Management

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services submitted for the Panel's consideration the Corporate Risk Dashboard which summarised the key updates from the risk review for the quarter-ending December, 2024.

She outlined that Management proposed that sole ownership of the Port Health risk should transfer to the Strategic Director of City Operations, with the City Solicitor to continue to provide an advisory role.

The report updated the Panel also on compliance with the Risk Strategy, based on the assurance statements for the quarter ending December 2024 which had been completed by senior management.

The Panel was advised that risk appetite was "the amount of risk that an organisation was willing to accept." The Head of AGRS explained that the external review of the Council's risk management arrangements, reported to the Panel in

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

December 2022, had recommended that the overarching risk appetite statement be supplemented with statements for each risk category. The external review also recommended that the Council would review and update its current risk categories (Finance; Governance and Compliance; Programme and Project; Customer and Service; Strategic; Innovation; and Reputation) to specifically include Health and Safety and Technology. She explained that AGRS had since met with the relevant senior managers to seek their views on the content of such statements and they were provided to the Panel.

The Panel highlighted the importance of ensuring that the Risk Appetite statements be applied in practice. The Head of AGRS indicated that that would be considered when communicating the updated Risk Strategy, when it was agreed.

The Panel was provided with an update on Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements for each critical service, outlining that AGRS had reinstated the BCM Group to support the implementation of the Council's BCM Policy, with the first meeting having taken place in January 2025. It was noted that each service was required to consider any learning from the recent Storm Éowyn on 24th January, 2025, and to complete a return regarding their preparedness for Planned Emergency Power Cuts.

During discussion in relation to horizon scanning, a Member added that the Council should be looking at the recently published Programme for Government for any opportunities for the Council.

After discussion, the Panel:

- Noted the corporate risk management dashboard and the updates for quarter-end December 2024;
- Agreed that sole ownership of the corporate risk on Port Health would transfer to the Strategic Director of City Operations;
- Noted the assurances from senior management regarding compliance with the Risk Strategy, based on the assurance statements for quarter-end December 2024;
- Reviewed and agreed the updated draft Risk Appetite Statement; and
- Noted the current position regarding business continuity arrangements.

Draft Internal Audit Strategy and Plan

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager submitted for the Panel's approval the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan for 2025/2026. The Plan set out the role of Audit, Governance and Risk Services as an assurance provider and

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

advisory service which directly assisted the Council in meeting relevant statutory obligations in relation to internal control, risk management and good governance.

The detailed Plan listed the areas which Audit, Governance and Risk Services was planning to audit during 2025/2026 and was based on an assessment of audit need, taking into account a number of risk factors, with the aim being to audit key areas on a cyclical basis. The Plan had been discussed with each Department at quarterly risk and audit meetings.

In addition to specific assignments, it also provided for support to the Council in terms of advisory work, project assurance, fraud prevention, detection and investigation, including a continued focus on the corporate fraud risk assessment and participation in the National Fraud Initiative, as well as raising concerns, risk management, business continuity management and corporate governance.

The Panel was advised that the Plan was aligned to the draft Corporate Plan and priorities and would be flexible to meet the assurance and advisory needs of Members and management as required.

In relation to the Global Internal Audit Standards, Standard 8.2 – Resources, she confirmed that the internal audit resources were sufficient to fulfil the internal audit mandate and achieve the internal audit plan. She reported that AGRS had a support, coordination and oversight role in regard to the Council policies on Fraud and Bribery, Raising Concerns, Business Continuity Management and the Risk Management Strategy. To ensure that the Council was receiving assurance over those areas, they undertook regular self-assessments against best practice for each area and commissioned periodic external reviews of them to provide management with independent assurance.

The Panel was advised that the completion of the periodic external reviews was subject to budget availability. She outlined that she planned to seek approval to commission an external review of the arrangements in place for Raising Concerns during 2025/26.

Furthermore, regarding Standard 8.3 - Quality, she drew the Panels attention to the AGRS Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme, including their Performance Indicators for 2025/26, and sought approval for those.

The Panel noted and approved the draft Internal Audit Strategy and Plan (including the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and Performance Indicators) for 2025/26.

Performance Improvement Q3 Update

(Mr. J. Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy, attended in connection with this item)

The Director of City and Organisational Strategy presented the following report to the Panel:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Panel with a quarter 3 (Oct – Dec) 2024-25 progress update on the actions and measures of success (performance indicators) contributing to the achievement of the performance improvement objectives contained within the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2024-25.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Panel is asked to:

- i. note the update provided within this report.
- ii. consider and approve the PIP (2024-25) quarter 3 Performance Dashboard Report as attached at Appendix 1.
- iii. agree the Performance Dashboard Report is submitted to be noted at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 21 March 2025.

3.0 Main report

Background

3.1 Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act requires councils to agree improvement objectives on an annual basis and publish these in the form of a PIP, to be published by 30 June. The Act also requires that progress is regularly monitored against the improvement objectives and reported in an annual Self-Assessment of Performance, to be published annually by 30 September. The PIP 2024-25 does not include everything that the Council plans to do that year, but instead focused on a smaller set of performance improvement objectives and priorities.

3.2 Q3 2024-25 Performance Improvement Dashboard Report

In the [2024-25 Performance Improvement Plan](#), agreed by SP&R on 21 June 2024, we committed to presenting quarterly performance reports to the CMT, the Audit and Assurance Board and the Audit and Risk Panel, Committee, and the Full Council.

3.3 Year-to-date progress as at the end of quarter 3 2024-25 is detailed in Appendix 1 for the Panel’s consideration. In total there are 44 actions and 50 measures of

success (performance indicators) including 7 statutory and 43 self-imposed performance indicators. A high-level performance overview is provided on page 4 of Appendix 1, with a summary set out below.

i. On Track or Complete

- 74 measures are on track for completion.
- 9 measures (2 actions and 7 performance indicators) have been achieved year-to-date including targets in relation to the Belfast Business Promise, anti-poverty/cost of living programme and the NI Environmental Benchmarking Survey Rating (Gold) in quarter 3.

ii. Data not available

In assessing progress at quarter 3, data was not yet available for 2 performance indicators:

- Maintaining Carbon Disclosure 'A' Status (expected February 2025).
- Promoting jobs through business start-up activity (data has yet to be verified).

iii. Closed

Recognising that tree planting does not fully reflect the ambitions in the Tree Strategy and the Climate Action Plan, the CMT agreed on the 30 October 2024, to move away from the following performance indicator. The Panel will recall that this performance indicator was subsequently removed from the 2024-25 Performance Improvement Plan in quarter 2.

‘Planting trees as part of the One Million Trees Programme (target to be confirmed – subject to internal approval)’.

iv. Performance against targets

Excluding the performance indicator that is now closed, those that have already been completed/achieved, and those that don't have available data to measure performance against target there are 40 remaining indicators. Of these 40 indicators, 35 (87.5%) are on track for achievement. A total of 39 out of 44 actions (89%) are also on track to be delivered.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

At the end of quarter 3 (i.e., 31 December 2024) there were a small number of actions and performance indicators being reported as behind target and requiring intervention and/or at risk of not achieving target and that change is required. Table 1 overleaf provides a brief commentary on the rationale for the delay in these areas, with more detail provided in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Commentary on actions and indicators reporting to be behind target

Audit and Risk Panel

Measure description/ rationale	Measure type/ status
<p>% of corporate complaints resolved within timeframe - <i>(NB. The complaints handling procedure has changed in line with requirements from NIPSO from a three-stage process to a two-stage process – services are adapting to the new process).</i></p>	<p>Performance Indicator – Behind/ requires intervention</p>
<p>% of corporate complaints with improvement actions - <i>(as above).</i></p>	
<p>Average processing time for major planning applications (Statutory) - <i>(NB. The Planning Service continue to implement ongoing improvements within a currently challenging system).</i></p>	
<p>Customer contact service level (people answered within 120 secs) - <i>(NB. customer satisfaction levels continue to exceed performance target).</i></p>	<p>Performance Indicator – At risk/ change required</p>
<p>Average processing time for local planning applications (Statutory) - <i>(NB. The Planning Service continue to implement ongoing improvements within a currently challenging system).</i></p>	
<p>Develop and agree a new four-year Community Support Plan (2025-29) to improve how we provide support to our local communities and residents across the city – <i>(NB. Review of the Community Support Plan continues with a draft plan going to members in Q4).</i></p>	<p>Action - At risk/ change required</p>
<p>Develop the Belfast Physical Activity and Sport Development strategy and action plan to create a more active city – <i>(NB. Further work required from consultation findings, as a result the timescale to complete this has now moved to March 2025).</i></p>	
<p>Approval for a council single use plastics policy for the council - <i>(NB. Draft Single Use Plastics Policy is completed. The next steps will be to present this to CMT and committee).</i></p>	

Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 Reporting Cycle

- 3.4 The Panel are asked to remind themselves of the following 2024-25 Performance Improvement Plan reporting cycle below:

Quarter/ year	Report	ARP meeting
Q4 2024-25	Q4 Performance Report	June 2025
Q1 2025-26	Year-end Performance Assessment	September 2025

3.5 **Next steps**

- i. The Panel are asked to note that this report will be noted via the minutes of this panel which will be presented to the SP&R Committee on 21 March 2025.

4.0 **Financial & Resource Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial or human Resource implications arising directly from this report.

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

- 5.1 There are no equality/ good relations or rural needs implications arising directly from this report.”

The Chairperson thanked the Director for the update which had been provided and paid tribute to the significant work which had been undertaken by staff.

The Panel agreed to recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would adopt the recommendations outlined in the report.

**NIAO Performance Improvement
Audit and Assessment Report 2024-25**

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. R. Ross from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) to the meeting.

He updated the Panel of the outcome of the NIAO Audit and Assurance Report (2024-2025) which stated that the Council had complied with its statutory performance duty.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

He reminded the Panel of the legislative duties and requirements in relation to performance improvement placed on Councils and the Local Government Auditor (LGA), as set out in Part 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014. Those included:

Councils

- Have a general duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions.
- Set improvement objectives for each financial year.
- Publish a self-assessment of progress made against these improvement objectives before 30 September annually. This must take account of guidance issued by the Department for Communities.

Local Government Auditor (LGA)

- Audit the Council's assessment of its performance for 2023-24 and its improvement plan for 2024-25 in accordance with section 93 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (the Act) and the Code of Audit Practice for local government bodies.
- Perform an improvement assessment for 2024-25 at the Council in accordance with Section 94 of the Act and the Code of Audit Practice.
- Produce a report to comply with the requirement of section 95(2) of the Act.

The Members were advised that, as part of the process, Council officers had facilitated a series of site visits and meetings with NIAO officials as well as collating and presenting a substantive amount of evidence to demonstrate the Council's improvement journey.

The Local Government Auditor had certified performance arrangements with an unqualified opinion and concluded that, in relation to improvement planning and publication of improvement information, the Council had complied with its duties in relation to both in accordance with section 92 of the Act and had acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance.

The Local Government Auditor had also conducted an improvement assessment and confirmed that the Council:

- Had discharged its duties under Part 12 of the Act.
- Had acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently.
- Had demonstrated a track record of ongoing improvement; and
- Was likely to comply with Part 12 of the Act during 2024-25.

The Panel was advised that the Local Government Auditor did not make any recommendations for improvement under section 95(2) of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 and that a special inspection would not be required.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

The Panel approved the NIAO Audit and Assessment Report (2024-25).

NIAO AUDIT Strategy 2024/25

Mr. R. Ross, Northern Ireland Audit Office, outlined the NIAO's Audit Strategy for Belfast City Council for the 2024-25 financial year and explained that it was intended to provide the Council with a clear understanding of how the audit was carried out and highlighted the key messages, that included the audit approach, significant risks that had been identified and other matters of interest.

The Panel noted the Audit Strategy and the Chairperson thanked Mr. Ross for his attendance at the meeting.

Audit and Risk Panel – Governance

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services presented the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 To update the Panel and Board on the requirements of the new Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government.

1.2 The terms of reference for the Audit and Risk Panel, Audit Assurance Board and Audit, Governance and Risk Services are reviewed and updated annually. The purpose of this paper is to present the Audit and Risk Panel with these updated terms of reference for review and approval, along with the 2025 programme of business.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Given the responsibility of the Panel and Board for ensuring effective arrangements for the governance of internal audit, the Panel and Board are asked to note the requirements of the new Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government (the Code); note AGRS assessment of compliance with the new Code and agree the recommendations to ensure full compliance (Appendix A).

2.2 The Board / Panel are also asked to review and approve the updated:

- **Audit and Risk Panel's purpose and terms of reference statement (Appendix B)**

- **Audit Assurance Boards constitution and terms of reference (Appendix C)**
- **Audit Governance and Risk Services terms of reference, including a review of the effectiveness of the safeguards in place to preserve the independence and objectivity of AGRS arising from our role in maintaining and supporting the implementation of the council's policies on Fraud and Bribery, Raising Concerns, Risk Management and Business Continuity (Appendix D)**
- **Audit and Risk Panel's indicative programme of business for 2025 (Appendix E).**

3.0 Main Report

Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government

3.1 The new Global Internal Audit Standards which come into effect from January 2025 include a new standard on the essential conditions for the governance of internal audit which are:

- **To be effective and to meet the requirements of professional standards, internal audit's authority needs to be established.**
- **Internal audit's activities require access to and support from senior management, the audit committee and those charged with governance. Support allows internal audit to apply their mandate and charter in practice and meet expectations.**
- **On behalf of those charged with governance and the audit committee, senior management establishes and protects the internal audit function's independence and qualifications.**
- **To ensure the effectiveness of internal audit, it should be overseen by the audit committee on behalf of those charged with governance**

3.2 The new CIPFA Code of Practice for the Governance of Internal Audit in UK Local Government (the Code) applicable from 1 April 2025 sets out how these essential conditions should be applied in local government and aims to support the Panel and senior management in establishing their internal audit arrangements and providing oversight and support for internal audit. The consultation period for this new Code ended on 28 November 2024 and a final version

was issued in early 2025. The Code is aimed at those responsible for ensuring effective governance arrangements for internal audit, which for BCC is primarily the Audit and Risk Panel and Audit Assurance Board. It is important that members of the Panel and the Board familiarise themselves with their responsibilities regarding the governance of internal audit as set out in the Code (appendix A).

- 3.3 The Code requires BCC to explain how it complies with the Code in its Annual Governance Statement.
- 3.4 AGRS has reviewed the provisions of the Code and subject to implementation of the following proposed improvement actions, has concluded that BCC complies with the Code:
- Agree the proposed minor updates to the Terms of Reference for AGRS to ensure they more specifically reflect the provisions of the Code (see para 3.12).
 - Incorporate a request for feedback from the Chair of the Panel into the Head of AGRS performance appraisal process.
 - AGRS to provide the Panel with a report for review on the results assessment of conformance against the GIAS (UK public sector), including the draft action plan.

Audit & Risk Panel Terms of Reference

- 3.5 The terms of reference of the Panel are important because they set out the role of the Panel in the context of the Council's governance structures. In line with good practice, the terms of reference for the Audit & Risk Panel are reviewed on an annual basis.
- 3.6 There have been no changes to the CIPFA guidance on the function and operation of audit committees issued in 2022 on 'Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police' and 'Audit Committees Position Statement'. As such, our review did not identify any changes that are required to the Terms of Reference of the Panel, other than replacing references to the previous Public Sector Internal Audit Standards with a reference to the new Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) and Application Note on the GIAS in the UK Public Sector. The updated terms of reference for the Audit & Risk Panel are at appendix B.

Audit Assurance Board Terms of Reference

- 3.7** The Audit Assurance Board is chaired by the Chief Executive. The principal activity of the Audit Assurance Board is to review and consider reports from internal audit, external audit and management that are to be submitted to the Audit & Risk Panel - but from a top management / Accounting Officer perspective rather than a Member perspective. This process enables the Chief Executive and the Board to be assured (or otherwise) of current risk, control and governance arrangements and consider any issues that require management priority / attention / direction.
- 3.8** In line with good practice, we have reviewed the terms of reference and concluded that no changes are required. The terms of reference are at appendix C.

Audit, Governance and Risk Services Terms of Reference

- 3.9** As the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) have now been superseded by the new Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) and the Application Note on the GIAS in the UK Public Sector Applicable, our terms of reference have been updated to reflect that AGRS operates to these new standards.
- 3.10** With reference to provision 1.2 of the Code regarding the Internal Audit Charter / Terms of Reference, we have updated our Terms of Reference to more specifically refer to how AGRS:
- Supports the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives;
 - Champions good practice in governance; and
 - Advises on governance, risk and control arrangements for major projects, programmes and system changes.
- 3.11** Section 7 of the AGRS Terms of Reference sets out the safeguards that are in place to preserve the independence and objectivity of AGRS arising from our role in maintaining and supporting the implementation of the council's policies on Fraud and Bribery, Raising Concerns, Risk Management and Business Continuity. In line with provision 2.1 of the Code, the Panel is asked to review the effectiveness of these safeguards.

3.12 In line with Principle 8 of the new Internal Audit Code of Practice we can confirm that the Responsibilities of AGRS and Scope of Work as set out in our Terms of Reference (combined with our processes for developing the internal audit strategy and plan) includes coverage of:

- **Purpose, strategy and business model.**
- **Organisational culture.**
- **Internal governance.**
- **The setting of, and adherence to, the risks the entity is willing to accept.**
- **Key corporate and external events.**
- **Capital and liquidity risks.**
- **Risks of poor customer treatment, giving rise to conduct or reputational risk.**
- **Environmental sustainability, climate change risks and social issues.**
- **Financial crime, economic crime and fraud.**
- **Technology, cyber, digital and data risks.**
- **Risk management, compliance, finance and control functions**
- **Outcomes of processes.**

3.13 The updated terms of reference for AGRS are at appendix D.

Audit & Risk Panel – Programme of Business 2025

3.14 In line with good practice the quarterly meetings of the Panel have been aligned with an indicative programme of business, designed to ensure that the Panel demonstrably addresses / discharges its roles and responsibilities as set out in its purpose statement / terms of reference. The indicative programme of business is attached at Appendix E.

3.15 Financial & Resource Implications

None.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None known at this time.”

The Panel agreed to recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would approve the updated terms of reference along with the 2025 programme of business.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 4th March, 2025**

Date of next meeting

The Panel noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 3rd June at 12.30pm.

Chairperson

2.0	Recommendation
2.1	That the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 10 th March 2025 including:
2.2	<p><u>Segregation and Environment Report - Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report, including the activity that has taken place across Council and externally to progress the Actions contained in the report.
2.3	<p><u>Refresh Good Relations Strategy and Development of a 3-year Action Plan in 2025/26</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.
2.4	<p><u>PEACE IV – Secretariat Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership noted the contents of the report and recommends to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report.
2.5	<p><u>PEACEPLUS Belfast City Council Local Community Action Plan – Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partnership noted the contents of the report and agreed: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Option i data collection approach whereby Council retains Participant IDs only, ○ the M&E Framework in principle subject to approval by SEUPB. • The Partnership recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report and agree recommendations above.
2.6	<p><u>Update from Partnership Members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Donnelly – Active Community Network presented the Trauma of Inequality • Wasif Naeem – Belfast Islamic Centre, Belfast Multicultural Association and Ramadan Tent Project, provided information regarding the Open Iftar event on the 23rd March.
2.7	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers updated on the arrangements for the walking tour of the Forth Meadow Greenway on Thursday, 27th March, at 13.30.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></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 10th March 2025 meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Papers of 10th February 2025 • Segregation and Environment Report – Update • Refresh Good Relations Strategy and Development of a 3-year Action Plan in 2025/26 • Peace IV Secretariat Update • PEACEPLUS – Theme 1.1 – Belfast City Council Local Action Plan Update • Update from SCP Members • AOB
3.3	<p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the following minutes of the meeting attached in Appendix 1 Minutes of the Shared City Partnership 10th March 2025; Appendix 2; Summary of Progress Segregation and Environment; Appendix 3; PEACEPLUS Project Mobilisation Update; Appendix 4; PEACEPLUS Capital Programme and Appendix 5; PEACEPLUS Monitoring & Evaluation Framework.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All financial implications are covered through existing budgets, and the Good Relations Action Plan is included in the current estimates process.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The recommendations of the Partnership are to promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts for the City of Belfast.</p>
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Minutes of the Shared City Partnership 10th March 2025</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Summary of Progress Segregation and Environment</p> <p>Appendix 3 – PEACEPLUS Project Mobilisation Update</p> <p>Appendix 4 - PEACEPLUS Capital Programme</p> <p>Appendix 5 - PEACEPLUS Monitoring & Evaluation Framework</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP

Monday 10th March, 2025

MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY AND IN THE CONOR ROOM

Members present: Councillor J. Duffy (Chairperson); and
Alderman S. Copeland; and
Councillors I. McLaughlin and Abernethy.

External Members: Ms. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Mr. M. Briggs, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Mr. L. Euler, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
Mr. J. Donnelly, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Mr. L. Gunn, Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;
Mr. W. Naeem, Interfaith Forum; and
Mr. G. Walker, Community and Voluntary Sector.

In attendance: Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager;
Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer;
MS. L. Dolan, Good Relations Officer; and
Mr. B. Flynn, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

There were no apologies reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 10th February were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 21st February.

Declarations of Interest

In respect of the item 'PEACEPLUS - BCC Local Action Plan Update', declarations of interest were reported by the Chairperson (Councillor Duffy), Alderman Copeland and Councillor I. McLaughlin, as well as Independent Members Mr. M. Briggs, Mr. J Donnelly and Mr. W. Naeem. It was noted that they were associated with organisations which were in receipt of support under the terms of the Plan and they retired from the meeting whilst the matter was under discussion.

Segregation and Environment Report - Update

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer reminded the Partnership that, in 2024, it had agreed to commission a report which explored the links between segregation within Belfast and

its impact on the environment and climate. He added that, since the launch of the report in September 2024, significant engagement work had been carried out as a result of the interest generated. That had included a meeting with the Minister from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), and several meetings with officials from the Climate Action Team within DAERA, who had noted that the paper had been the only Northern Ireland-specific research to have identified issues unique to the challenges faced in meeting net-zero by 2050. In addition, the Partnership was provided with an overview of the several meetings which had taken place with the Interfaces' Teams within the Department of Justice, who had committed to auditing land surrounding interfaces to assess the potential for restoring natural habitat and introducing biodiversity projects.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and commended officers for the work which had been undertaken in promoting the findings of the report.

Good Relations - Audit and Action Plan Update

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer reminded the Partnership that, at its meeting on 13th January, it had agreed to make several budgetary reallocations to support the costs associated with a new Good Relations audit, strategy and three-year action plan to cover the period 2026/29. In addition, the reallocation of funds would support for the 'East meets West Community Centre Programme', and also to offset the costs which had been incurred during the Beacon Programme.

The Partnership noted that consultants had been appointed to oversee the audit, strategy and three year action plan and an initial meeting had taken place and that Members would be contacted in due course as part of the review process.

Peace IV - Secretariat Update

The PEACE Programme Manager reported that verification of Period 34 claims for the Children and Young People's theme, valued at £121,527, and the Building Positive Relation theme, valued at £215,968, had been progressed by SEUPB. It was added that any reimbursements should be received in due course, and, as such, it is anticipated that both themes would be closed. In addition, a final payment regarding the Shared Spaces and Services theme would be progressed once the Audit Authority audit had been completed.

The Partnership noted the information which had been provided and agreed that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee be requested to note the contents of the report.

PEACEPLUS - Belfast City Council Local Action Plan Update

(Councillor Abernethy in the Chair).

The Partnership considered the following report:

"1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership members with an update on the mobilisation of PEACEPLUS 1.1. Co-designed Belfast Local Community Peace Action Plan (LCAP).

2.0 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of the report and agree

- Option i data collection approach whereby Council retains Participant IDs only,
- the M&E Framework in principle subject to approval by SEUPB.

and also recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee note the contents of the report and agree recommendations above.

3.0 Main report

SEUPB Approval / Letter of Offer (LoO)

Following submission of the LoO to SEUPB, the final steps to complete SEUPB's formal project commencement is progressing, with amendments to the Data Sharing Agreement submitted to SEUPB for agreement. Once accepted a request for the €100K development costs and 20% advance will be progressed.

3.2 Mobilisation

Mobilisation of projects within the Thriving and Peaceful Communities and Celebrating Culture and Diversity themes is progressing with contract awards made to successful bidders as follows:

- CCD5 – Multiculturalism to Interculturalism - Lot 3 to Feile An Phobail
- CCD5 – Multiculturalism to Interculturalism - Lot 4 to ArtsEkta
- TPC1 – Community Empowerment to NICVA
- TPC4 – Sport for Peace to Active Communities Network (ACN)
- TPC5 - Employability (Language Up) to DFPF Ltd (t/a People 1st)

Contract initiation meetings with the appointed delivery partners are progressing over the coming weeks, with project implementation to commence early March.

As previously reported all revenue projects have been opened for procurement, with each at different stages of assessment/ award, as detailed in Project Mobilisation Update.

- 3.3** The re-tender for Lot 2 of CCD5 Multi-culturalism to Interculturalism opened on 21 February 2025, and the re - tender for Lot 4 Youth Empowerment remains open.

Members should note that based on market feedback a minor wording amendment has been incorporated into the Lot 2 CCD5 tender, relating to the type of cultural spaces to include 'centres where these cultures are supported or celebrated regularly' and the steering group to begin with a minimum of 6 cultural spaces, with a further 6 to be incorporated into the project by the end of Year 1 of delivery, in agreement with Council.

The wording amendment does not alter the objective, target, output or results indicator in the project, and is in line with original context of the project. As such, Members are requested to note the wording amendment.

- 3.4 As implementation progresses, further governance will be established, with the commencement of Thematic Steering Groups (TSGs). It is anticipated that the TSG will be in place by May 2025.

3.5 **Community Regeneration and Transformation**

As previously reported a workshop to develop and agree a timeline for the capital works, aligned to the animation activity has taken place.

Members are requested to note the indicative timeline for the capital works as outlined in PEACEPLUS Capital Programme.

A meeting with CPD to agree their involvement and the procurement strategy is scheduled for 7 March 2025. It is anticipated that procurement for the capital elements will commence shortly afterwards.

Members should note that the Capital Programme timeline is being considered in line with animation activity, and given that construction is to continue until June 2027, it is highly likely that an extension to the Letter of Offer of at least six months will be required. A further report on alignment of both capital and animation activity, highlighting extension options, will be presented at the next meeting.

3.6 **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework**

Development of the PEACEPLUS M&E framework is ongoing. The framework will capture participant and attendance records, collate equality data and evaluate the impact of the project activity, which are essential to meet SEUPB requirements.

The legal and lawful basis for collection and sharing of data has been agreed, and a schedule of processing will be provided to delivery partners as part of their contractual obligations to Council.

The Framework comprises of a suite of participant surveys, spreadsheets and databases for delivery partners to utilise in collating, recording and sharing data with Council.

The use of standardised equality and attitudinal surveys will ensure consistency of information across all delivery partners.

- 3.7 A key consideration in the collation of data is whether Council retains participant contact details or utilises ID numbers. These options have been considered in line with compliance requirements, SEUPB advice, guidance from IGU and Equality teams, as well as the PEACEPLUS Programme Board.

Members are referred to PEACEPLUS Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for further detail on the content, compliance and options for the collation of data

On considering the data collection options, the PEACEPLUS Programme Board, recommends that the SCP agree

- Option i data collection approach whereby Council retains Participant IDs only
- the M&E Framework, in principle, subject to approval by SEUPB.

Members should note that SEUPB advised that duplicate checks are to ensure no duplicate participants per activity. Monthly contract management meetings will enable the review of participation registration at this stage. In addition, a robust On the Spot Verification process will be established and conducted by the PEACEPLUS team to meet this requirement.

3.8 Staff Recruitment

Recruitment for the Data / Claims Support Officer is ongoing with interviews in March 2025.

3.9 PEACEPLUS 1.4 Project - Waterworks / Alexandra Park

Design Information Sessions took place in late February / early March 2025, and procurement for the Integrated Design Team commenced on 21 February 2025. Discussions with SEUPB to agree the animation timeframe are progressing.

3.10 Financial and Resource Implications

All expenditure associated with the PEACEPLUS LCAP is eligible from 1 January 2024 and preparation for the submission of claims on JeMS is progressing. Expenditure from 1 Jan – 31 Dec 24:

Table 1 PEACEPLUS Expenditure Claims Jan-Dec 2024

Claim Period / SEUPB Budget Line	Expenditure Claims 1-4 Total
Salaries	£260,268.58
Office & Admin	£ 39,040.29
TOTAL	£299,308.87

3.11 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

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

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to adopt Option i as set out, i.e., the data collection approach whereby the Council would retain participants’ identification only. In addition, the Partnership adopted the M and E Framework, as outlined, in principle, subject to the approval of SEUPB.

The Partnership agreed also to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that its note the contents of the report and endorse the course of action adopted by the Partnership.

Update from Partnership Members

The Partnership noted the comments made by Independent Member, Mr. J. Donnelly, regarding a piece he had written entitled, ‘The Trauma of Inequality’. Mr. Donnelly suggested that, as part of any review as to how Good Relations were promoted and delivered, a fundamental and radical change was required to address the symptoms of division. He added that new thinking was required to find solutions to age-old problems. He suggested that in attempting to heal the trauma of inequality, individuals must first acknowledge that trauma continues to exist and to seek to identify the symptom, not the problem.

The Partnership noted comments which had been made by Mr. W. Naeem of the Belfast Islamic Centre’s regarding the Belfast Multicultural Association and Ramadan Tent Project in respect of which an invite would be extended to Partnership members to attend an Open Iftar event on 23rd March.

Any Other Business

The Committee noted that an invitation to the guided walk along the Forth River Greenway on Thursday, 27th March at 13.30. It was agreed also that a small donation would be made on behalf of the Partnership to St. John’s Parish Hall, Falls Road, who would be providing small scale hospitality for participants at the end of the walk.

Chairperson

Appendix 2: Summary of progress against Actions and Ideas within the Segregation and the Environment; Breaking Down Barriers Report

Theme	Action	Progress (Feb 2025)
Segregation Handicap	Review of services, buildings and procurement	No Progress to date, lead to be agreed to undertake an audit and analysis
Segregation Handicap	Project supporting diversity in schools including pupils, governors and teachers	Council is engaged within schools through projects within OSSS & Cleansing Awareness Team. Forthmeadow Community Greenway (FMCG) Project is supporting teacher training in local schools in Forestry Training.
Segregation Handicap	Eco school project in schools	OSSS tree planting and rewilding initiatives. FMCG Project supporting teacher training in local schools in Forestry Training
Segregation Handicap	Project to raise awareness of Integrate My School	No progress to date.
Segregation Handicap	Community wealth building initiative	PEACEPLUS an example of a largescale programme that will see significant community delivery.
Security Architecture	Planting and rewilding at an interface	DoJ Interfaces Team to audit interface areas for potential nature projects. Access to the Hills initiative at Glencairn/Ligoniel through PeacePlus.
Security Architecture	Walk and Talk initiative using Forth Meadow Community Greenway (FMCG) and at peace barriers/sensitive locations	FMCG delivering initiatives such as Access to the Hills. New Park Run initiative developed on the FMCG route – attracting people into the area.
Security Architecture	Mental health and well being initiative involving people either side of a peace barrier	PeacePlus TPC2 Project targeting interventions based on GP prescription data will target people in North & West Belfast, at interface areas.
Security Architecture	Conference and area-based workshops on acknowledging and diluting existing hidden barriers/boundaries	No identified initiative to date. Potential for inclusion Climate and Good Relations Action Plans.
Security Architecture	Men’s and Hen’s Shed project to grow together either side of a peace barrier	Projects currently in development through:

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PeacePlus CCD4 for former politically motivated prisoners. 2. Annadale Open Space PeacePlus project 3. Good Relations Action Plan Interfaces Programme initiatives
Environment Justice	Walk the Hills project targeting areas and communities not generally engaged in environment projects	PeacePlus Access to the Hills project arising out of the FMCG project will develop capital works and animation programmes
Environment Justice	Recruit and train minority ethnic volunteers to participate in and sit on committees of environment organisations	PeacePlus CCD2 Project on minority ethnic leadership and addressing underrepresentation will contain this theme
Environment Justice	Youth project on inter cultural awareness and climate change	PeacePlus TPC3 Project on Youth Empowerment will contain environmental initiatives through Good Relations activity.
Environment Justice	Parks Accelerator initiative	No identified initiatives to date.
Good Relations Projects	Cross community carbon literacy and environmental stewardship initiative	The Councils Community Awareness Team have been delivering initiatives in this area for some time.
Good Relations Projects	Cross community tree planting in parks, schools and peace barrier areas	OSSS 1 Million Trees initiative ongoing. Environmental programmes being included in cross community projects through Good Relations Action Plan
Good Relations Projects	Environment as a cross cutting strategic funding stream	Requires a corporate approach to funding criteria
Good Relations Projects	Glider initiative facilitating west-east and east-west visits and dialogues	Community Services East Meets West initiative supported by Good Relations Action Plan
Good Relations Projects	Cornfield type project in an area of ongoing tension	Access to the Hills, building on the FMCG project through PeacePlus will contain capital and animation elements.

Appendix I - PEACEPLUS Project Mobilisation – Revenue Projects with Thriving and Peaceful Communities and Celebrating Cultures and Diversity Theme

Project Portfolio – Katie Oliver	Budget	Participants	Current Status	Next Steps	Contractor Appt
TPC1 - Community Empowerment Programme - Capacity Building	£903,577.68	1,000	Contract live from 13/02/25	Contract initiation meeting to take place late Feb/ Mar	NICVA
CCD5 - From Multiculturalism to Interculturalism - Culture & Heritage	£949,140.00	2,565			
Lot 3 – Festivals & Flagship Events	£238,555	404 (+600 wider)	Contract live from 10/02/25	Contract initiation meeting late Feb/ early Mar	Feile An Phobail
Lot 4 – Shared Built Heritage	£234,200	625 (+300 wider)	Contract live from 10/02/25	Contract initiation 20/02/25	ArtsEkta
Lot 1 – Language & Cultural Access	£270,055	1110 (+650 wider)	Nil response to 1st tender release. Supplier re-engagement session 27/01/25 discussed challenges for the sector in responding to the tender.	Rescope options under consideration. Key stakeholders need to be re-engaged (Ulster Scots).	
Lot 2 – Cultural Spaces	£206,330	426	No successful bids after 1st tender release. Supplier re-engagement session 29/01/25 discussed minor changes needed to specification which have been implemented.	Tender re-release on 21/2 /25 Closes 28/3/25.	
TPC6 - Arts Across the Genres	£695,744.00	496	DAR stage	DAR to be progressed	
Project Portfolio – Amy Ashe					
TPC3 - Inspiring Future Belfast - Youth	£970,861.00	2,106			
Lot 1	£241,558	1500	Standstill ends 20/02/25	Contract award letter issue w/c 24/02/25	TBC
Lot 2	£226,366	350	Further due diligence checks with procurement – now confirmed	Standstill commence w/c 17/02/25	
Lot 3	£278,440	160	Standstill ends 20/02/25	Contract award letter issue w/c 24/02/25	
Lot 4	£224,497	96	Tender live – closes 3/03/25	Consensus 24/03/2025	
TPC4 - Sport for Peace - Sports	£711,646.00	1,600	Further due diligence checks with procurement – now confirmed	Contract award letter issued 17/02/25 Contract initiation planned for 26/02/25	Active Communities Network
CCD1 - Interfaith and Belief Programme - Church & Faith	£304,564.00	870	Self-Declaration phase	DAR w/c 17/02/25	
CCD4 - Community Empowerment - Ex Political Prisoners	£493,006.00	750	Consensus completed Clarifications ongoing	Self-Declaration phase w/c 17/02/25	
Project Portfolio – Gráinne Reilly					
TPC5 - Employability (Language Up)	£447,513.00	816	Standstill period due to end 13/2/25 and unsuccessful bidder queries being progressed	Contract award letter issue 17/02/25	DFFP t/a People 1st

TPC2 - Health & Wellbeing Programme	£853,000.00	1,620	Highest bidder presentation scheduled for 18/2/25	If content with presentation then will progress to DAR w/c 17/02/25	
CCD2 - Community Connections - Ethnic Minority	£638,135.00	726	Consensus identified highest bidder 12/2/25	Progressing to clarification of some bid detail	
CCD3 - Belfast LGBTQIA+ Community Engagement Programme	£391,672.00	625	Individual assessment stage	Consensus meeting 19/2/25.	

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix III – PEACEPLUS Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

The key elements considered in developing the PEACEPLUS M&E framework are summarised below.

Table 1 - Compliance requirement	BCC solution
Participant community background & gender to be recorded.	Participant signs up to an activity with a delivery partner All activities monitored against participant sign ups to ensure activity is cross community in nature
Register of contact hours	Delivery agents record participant attendance hours by activity, by date attended on BCCs database
No duplication – participants cannot be counted more than once per activity	Sign in sheets will be checked, register shows which participants attend which activities – monitored by BCC monthly, and via On the Spot Verification (OSV) check
Achievement of KPIs	Achievement of 17,437 participant target Via attitudinal surveys – questions provided to delivery partners who are subsequently responsible for collecting information from participants and recording in the BCC database
Number of participants per event	Analysed and monitored via BCC database

Table 2 - Key Area of compliance	Process
Sign up of participants including community background, gender and accessibility	Participants – sign up with delivery partner Delivery partner – ensures relevant data input to databases and saved in SharePoint folder. Reports # of participants in monthly progress report BCC – provides delivery partners with spreadsheets and databases to use for sign ups, reviews and reconciles data, follows up with delivery partner if missing info. Reports results to SEUPB
Monitoring of activities and contact hours per participant / activity to ensure minimum hours are met	Participants – attend events & sign in each time Delivery partners – register participant hours, ensure sign in sheets are held on file, report participant hours and completers to BCC BCC – reviews and reconciles data, follows up with delivery partner if missing info, completes on the spot checks and verification checks, provides verification data to SEUPB
Equality monitoring and evaluation via attitudinal surveys	Participants – provide valuable feedback via equality and attitudinal surveys (anonymously in line with IGU and equality team advice) Delivery partners – collect surveys and report to BCC, reviews against KPI targets in tender documents and provides rationale for any variances BCC – provides questions to delivery partners, reviews data, reports to SEUPB, discusses any variances against KPIs with delivery partner
Analysis and verification of data	BCC – monthly analysis of sign ups and completers per delivery partner, combination of all delivery partners and participants into one master file, production of dashboard by delivery partner, community background, gender and where appropriate activity. Updates for Programme Board / SCP, reporting to SEUPB (qtly), on the spot checks to include checking of source documents such as physical sign in sheets, attitudinal surveys etc.

Table 3 Options for data collection	Pros	Cons
i) Participant IDs retained by Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. automatically generated on registration b. tracks participation in activity/attendance c. robust On The Spot check to manage duplication of participants 	Anonymises participant personal details Level of detail required by SEUPB. Enables consistency across projects Reduces risk of data breaches Compliant with GDPR regulations collecting only required data Provides the required level of oversight	Participant contact details held by delivery partner Limits identification of duplicates
ii) Participant names and contact details shared with Council	Council has access to all participant data that delivery partners hold Enables duplicate identification	Council holding sensitive data not required by SEUPB Significant amount of personal data (est. 25,000 records) held by Council Increases potential of data breach

Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 13th March 2025

Attendance

Members:

Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Ciaran Beattie
Councillor Sarah Bunting
Councillor Séamas de Faoite
Councillor Áine Groogan
Alderman Sonia Copeland

Apologies: Councillor Ryan Murphy

Officers:

Sharon McNicholl, Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Director of Corporate Services
Pól Hamilton, Lead Officer, Community Provision (for Item 1)
Jim Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services (for Items 1, 4, 5 & 7)
Sean Dolan, Senior Development Manager (for Item 2)
Stevie Lavery, Programme Manager (for Item 5)
Nora Largey, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Joanne Delaney, Portfolio and Programme Coordinator (secretariat)

1. Summer Community Diversionary Programme

The Lead Officer, Community Provision presented an update on the Summer Community Diversionary Programme for both July and August applications. Alderman Copeland declared an interest and left the meeting for this discussion. The Director of Neighbourhood Services also declared an interest and left the meeting during the discussion on the August applications.

Members discussed the agreed delivery model, the timeline in relation to the application process, the detail of the assessments undertaken by officers and the recommendations and options being presented for the 2025 programme.

There was detailed discussion on the July applications and Members discussed the recommended options outlined due to the July funding stream being oversubscribed. There were a number of issues and questions raised by Members for which the Lead Officer, Community Provision provided clarity. It was also noted that the detailed information requested by Members may need to be restricted when the report is considered by Members

at March SP&R Committee. The feedback provided to be further considered and incorporated into the report to March SP&R Committee.

2. York Street Interchange

The Senior Development Manager provided a briefing on the York Street Interchange project including the background/timeline and engagement that has taken place to date with the Department for Infrastructure. He referred to a report that went to February CG&R Committee which also included an update on the Placemaking and Active Travel Development piece of work on how the scheme could deliver positive improvements for the local community. He advised that it was agreed by the CG&R Committee that Members would receive a presentation from the Department of Infrastructure on the York Street Interchange Place Making & Active Travel Review at a future special meeting of the CG&R Committee and that Party Group Leaders would be kept up to date as this project progresses.

3. Closure of Connswater Shopping Centre

At the request of a Member the subject of the closure of Connswater was added to the agenda following CG&R Committee this week. Members discussed the many challenges that will arise for the current tenants as a result of the closure and discussed what support and/or assistance Council could potentially provide. In relation to a query raised on potential financial assistance the Director of Finance provided clarity. It was noted that given the tight timescales involved an update report would be brought to March SP&R Committee to seek agreement for Officers to further explore and to formally agree to issue correspondence to the Department for the Economy.

There was also detailed discussion on regeneration needs within the surrounding area and that engagement with key stakeholders is required in order to address going forward.

4. Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service

The Director of Neighbourhood Services advised that the P&C Committee at its meeting in March had deferred consideration of the recommendations contained within the Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service report. Members of the Committee had requested that the recommendations within the report were further considered by Party Group Leaders. Detailed discussion followed and a number of issues in relation to governance were raised

by Members, for which the Director of Neighbourhood Services provided clarity and outlined the due diligence that had been carried out to date. Given the need for further clarification on the issues raised it was agreed that a report on the options discussed be brought to the next meeting of Party Group Leaders in advance of a report going to P&C Committee for consideration

5. Community Support Plan 2025/29

The Director of Neighbourhood Services presented the current proposals in relation to the development of the Community Support Plan 2025/29. He outlined the work undertaken to date on the proposed approach. Members also reviewed the dual process of proposed consultation and engagement plan in relation to next steps for the funding model. There was detailed discussion on the consultation proposals outlined and the Director of Neighbourhood Services to further consider in advance of a report going to March SP&R Committee for approval.

Members also discussed within the wider strategic context and that the review of Council owned community assets needs to be included in order to allow for evidence based decision making in relation to the strategic community support requirements across the City. It was agreed that the report to be brought to June SP&R Committee will include this review alongside the consultation findings.

6. Planning Update

The City Solicitor updated the Forum on the live planning applications and provided an update on the applications to be considered at the March Planning Committee.

Some issues were raised by Members in relation to current applications linked to the Strategic Site Assessments and the City Solicitor to follow up with the Director of Planning.

7. AOB

Belfast Stories

Members noted the upcoming Party Group Briefings being organised by the Programme Director and Strategic Lead for Belfast Stories. The briefing will provide Members with an update on the progress achieved to date on the project, including an update on the activity being undertaken to support the submission of the Outline Business Case.

Governance Review

The City Solicitor advised that Party Group Briefings were being arranged to allow Members to further consider in advance of consideration at April SP&R Committee.

Insourcing of Security

Members noted the update provided by the City Solicitor in relation to the proposed interim arrangements for Insourcing of Security. It was also noted that a report would go to March SP&R Committee for Members consideration based on the details provided.

Illuminate Requests

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

- **Brain Tumour Awareness month** – March 2025 - Date to be confirmed
- **World Down Syndrome Day** – 21 March 2025
- **Global Intergenerational Week** - 24 April 2025
- **Italy's National Day 2025** – 2 June 2025

March of Life UK - Holocaust Commemoration Event

Members noted the request for the use of City Hall Grounds on 27th April 2025 which would be agreed under the City Solicitors delegated authority.

Planned Demonstration

A Member referred to an upcoming demonstration that was discussed at the recent Party Group Leader meeting. The Neighbourhood Services Manager provided an update following recent engagement with PSNI and further updates to be circulated to Party Group Leaders as they become available.

Call In

Members noted a Call in made in relation to Newington Football Club which had been deemed valid and noted that Counsel opinion was being sought.

Woodvale Park

The Director of Neighbourhood Services outlined an upcoming event, and Members noted the request in relation to Woodvale Park. There was consensus that the Chair of SP&R Committee would be consulted and the decision made under Officer delegated authority given the timescales involved.

This page is intentionally left blank

Cost of Living Working Group

Thursday, 6th March, 2025

MEETING OF THE COST OF LIVING WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Flynn (Chairperson);
Alderman Copeland; and
Councillors Doherty and I. McLaughlin.

In attendance: Mr. J. Girvan, Director of Neighbourhood Services;
Ms. M. Higgins, Lead Officer, Community Provision;
Mr. C. Tubridy, Hardship Programme Coordinator;
Mr. B. Carr, Portfolio Manager; and
Ms E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services and Governance
Coordinator.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

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

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Copeland declared an interest in that a family member worked for the Greater Village Regeneration Trust which was associated with a delivery partner of the Hardship Fund.

Hardship Programme Overview

The Portfolio Manager reminded the Working Group of the Hardship Programme's financial commitment, thematic focus and design principles.

The Working Group was advised that the cost-of-living guide to signpost residents to the support and advice services available across the city had been updated and distributed to over 100 locations - community and leisure centres, libraries, family support centres, advice centres, older people organisations and social supermarkets. The Hardship Programme Coordinator highlighted that the Council's website also had a dedicated section at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/costofliving and included support and activities offered by partner organisations.

The Hardship Programme Coordinator provided an update for each of the delivery partners funded through the 2024/25 Hardship Programme.

It was reported that the South Belfast Foodbank would be unable to deliver the allocated funding of £12,500 due to capacity issues and it was recommended that the Working Group consider the reallocation of the funding, due to the time constraints of the delivery deadline.

During discussion, Members raised concerns that South Belfast residents were potentially missing out on accessing the foodbank services available and pointed out the importance of access for all those in need across the city, together with equality, fairness and balance.

One Member highlighted the need to explore alternative models to ensure a spread of hardship services across the city.

In response to a Member's question in relation to organisations accessing the Fareshare Funding, The Lead Officer Community Provision advised that further information could be provided to the Working Group on supported projects in Belfast and the application process, subject to GDPR constraints.

The Hardship Programme Coordinator also highlighted that Winter Warmth Packs were available by referral and details of the process would be shared with the Working Group.

After lengthy discussion, the Working Group noted the update and agreed that the funding of £12,500 previously allocated to South Belfast Foodbank be reallocated to the Schools Programme (via the Education Authority) in South Belfast, in the first instance, and if required, be extended to other priority schools across the city.

It was also noted that there had been a slight increase of £1,412 to the Schools Hardship Programme, following the late addition of two schools. This would be covered by underspends from the previous year and included in the report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March.

Social Supermarkets Update (Verbal Update)

The Lead Officer, Community Provision, provided an update on the Social Supermarkets and Advice Services.

She outlined that 21 projects were providing food support and wraparound services in the 24/25 year.

She highlighted that an update had been provided at the People and Communities Committee in March in relation to the outcome of the recent open call for applications to the Social Supermarket Fund.

The Working Group was reminded that the Social Supermarket Support Fund had opened on 14th October, 2024 for applications and the Council had launched a campaign to advertise and promote the fund.

It was reported that the 2025/26 Social Supermarket Support Fund had received 33 applications totalling £1,278,670.28 by the closing date. Members were also advised that the People and Communities Committee had referred Social Supermarket Funding to the

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for consideration as the Council had not yet received a Letter of Offer from the Department for Communities for this area of work. This update would be provided as part of the Hardship Programme report.

The Lead Officer, Community Provision, reminded the Working Group that the Council provided funding for advice services which were delivered through 5 area advice consortia, registered with advice NI.

Noted.

Next Steps

The Portfolio Manager advised that a further update would be reported to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March.

He highlighted that the Hardship Programme Delivery Period ended on 31st June and that a performance report would be submitted to the Working Group and the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in August.

Noted.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group noted that next meeting was scheduled for 5th June.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

All-Party Working Group on the City Centre

Friday, 7th March, 2025

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

Members present: Councillor Long (Chairperson);
Alderman McCullough; and
Councillors de Faoite and Maskey.

In attendance: Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. J. Girvan, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services;
Mr. J. Uprichard, Business Research and Development
Manager;
Ms. Y. Hill, Project Manager (Complex Lives);
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th December, 2024 were agreed.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Presentations

ROAM NI

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. A. Bartlett from ROAM NI to the meeting.

Mr. Bartlett provided the Working Group with a presentation on the ROAM NI app, which he stated provided a personalised marketing experience that placed businesses at the heart of the local community.

He outlined the benefits to local businesses and explained how the app offered customer engagement tools and contact-free stopping solutions to brick and mortar businesses to increase loyalty and repeat revenue.

He explained how the app could be used to guide visitors through the city and outlined the customer experience to the Working Group, highlighting how businesses could target visitors as well as locals, through push notifications with images, deals and discounts

He concluded by sharing a promotional video with the Working Group.

In response to a question from a Member, who asked how visitors to the city would know about the app, Mr. Bartlett explained that ROAM NI were working in conjunction with Translink to promote the app to visitors and added that there had already been 180k downloads of the app in Northern Ireland.

The Chairperson thanked ROAM NI for the presentation and the Working Group agreed that a report on the scheme, that would envisage what a partnership between ROAM NI and the Council would look like, would be presented to a future meeting of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee.

Future City Centre Performance Update - Verbal Report

The Business Research and Development Manager presented the Working Group with the recently updated Future City Centre Programme Performance Dashboard. He provided an update on the following strategic indicators which reflected the city's overall performance, for which all stakeholders were accountable:

- Footfall levels;
- Dwell time;
- Unique visitors;
- Catchment area;
- Rates income;
- Cleanliness and safety,
- Air quality;
- Employee jobs;
- Development;
- Vacancy rates;
- Independent retailers;
- Consumer spend; and
- Tourism spend.

The Business Research and Development Manager provided the Working Group with an overview of different footfall and visitor behaviour indicators, that included street level and density heatmaps, international visitors and catchment areas, which highlighted recent performance, compared with similar periods the previous year.

He concluded by outlining consumer spend data, provided by Visa cardholder spend data, which indicated an increase of 3.3% in consumer spend in BT1 and BT2 from 2023 to 2024.

At the request of a Member, the Business Research and Development Manager agreed to provide the Working Group with 2019 performance figures to allow a pre-pandemic comparison.

The Working Group noted the update.

Communications and News Update - Verbal Report

The Director of City Regeneration and Development updated the Working Group on city centre new and communications from the previous three months and provided an overview of recent coverage, highlighting the following positive communications:

- Twilight at St George's Market;
- Launch of Queen's Quay Kiosk;
- Belfast Stories design concepts – extensive broadcast and print/digital coverage;
- Looking back to look forward (Joe Berridge) stock-take report;
- Appointment of GRAHAM as private sector delivery partner for city centre housing-led regeneration – excellent pick up across sector and wider media;
- Development of student accommodation (£80 million project) and 40-bedroom Cathedral Quarter Hotel;
- Christmas celebrations and Christmas market – ongoing in-depth coverage across December;
- Rory Gallagher statue;
- Vacant to Vibrant – numerous and extensive coverage;
- Opening of new coffee shops Black Sheep and Nine Squared;
- Planning permission granted for Cathedral Gardens;
- Launch of St Patrick's Day celebrations 2025;
- DBEC conference; and
- Primark home store opening and increased footfall figures.

She outlined upcoming proactive activity that included the Fleadh announcement, St Patrick's Day celebrations, inner northwest housing developments, further Vacant to Vibrant grants and Easter activity in the city centre.

She stated that, moving forward, consistent positive city centre messaging would be undertaken and reported that the vast majority of Council posts on social media had been positively received with above average levels of engagement.

The Working Group noted the update.

Complex Lives Update - Verbal Report

The Project Manager (Complex Lives) provided the Working Group with an overview of the Complex Lives Initiative that worked in partnership with the PSNI, Probation NI, Belfast Trust, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and voluntary organisations, to meet the acute needs of those caught in the cycle of chronic homelessness.

She stated that the partnership focused on Belfast city centre and was not a service provider but a collaboration model to ensure support was better coordinated across agencies to help stabilise situations and improve outcomes for individuals.

She informed the Working Group that the model aimed to pool expertise and resources and provide evidence and case studies to inform change across support services.

She reported that, to date, the initiative had supported 165 people to move to a place of stability, recovery and long-term accommodation.

The Project Manager (Complex Lives) outlined the future plans of the initiative, that included a shared case management system and enhancement of referral pathways.

In response to a question from a Member with regard to PSNI statistics for the city centre to gain a full picture of the level of incidents that had been occurring, the Project Manager (Complex Lives) stated that the initiative had been working with a PSNI vulnerability team and would engage with partners to ascertain what information or statistics could be shared with the Working Group.

At the suggestion of a Member, the Working Group agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, that an All-Party delegation undertake a site visit to Merchant's Quay Ireland, in Dublin, a registered charity that supported people affected by homelessness and addiction.

The Working Group noted the update.

Agenda Items for Future Meetings - Verbal Report

The Director of City Regeneration and Development explained the proposed approach to the programming of the Working Group for the following twelve months and suggested that the following five pillar themes be rotated, per meeting, to enable an enhanced view of the ongoing work of the various departments in the city centre:

- Regeneration and connectivity,
- Business and investment proposition;
- Animation and distinctive offering;
- Clean, green, inclusive and safe; and
- Vulnerability.

The Working Group agreed to the proposed approach and noted that it may be subject to change due to the ongoing governance review.

Chairperson

Belfast Stories Working Group

Tuesday, 11th March, 2025

MEETING OF THE BELFAST STORIES WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor Smyth (Chairperson);
Alderman Copeland; and
Councillors Bunting, Duffy and McKeown.

In attendance: Ms. W. Langham, Programme Director;
Ms. E. Henry, Creative and Strategic Lead;
Ms. N. McElroy, Programme Support Assistant;
Mrs. L. Holmes, Marketing & Communications
Coordinator; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Committee Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14th November, 2024 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

Progress Update - Verbal Report

The Programme Director provide the Working Group with an update on the delivery timetable and highlighted the key milestones for 2025.

The Creative and Strategic Lead explained that a working group had been convened to assist Brink! to move to an alternative site and stated that a timeline had been agreed.

The Working Group noted the update.

Outline Business Case - Verbal Report

The Programme Director informed the Working Group that bidding was ongoing to secure City Deal funding of £65m and summarised the following five draft outline business cases:

- Strategic case;
- Economic case;
- Commercial case;
- Financial case; and
- Management case.

She outlined the potential benefits of the project that included growth of the creative economy, boosting tourism and the city's international reputation and bringing people together.

She concluded by providing the Working Group with an overview of the project's risk management strategy and stated that there was sufficient risk budget and optimism bias to delivery Belfast Stories.

The Working Group noted the update.

Chairperson