

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



**Belfast
City Council**

2nd October, 2026

MEETING OF THE CITY GROWTH AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Lavery Room, City Hall and via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 7th October, 2026 at 5.15 pm, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

1. Routine Matters

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

2. Restricted Items

- (a) Vacant to Vibrant Programme Update (Pages 1 - 22)
- (b) 2 Royal Avenue Update (report to follow)
- (c) DfC Sandy Row and Grosvenor Road Area Revitalisation Update (report to follow)
- (d) Motion Update - Bike Bunker Trial (report to follow)
- (e) Cultural Multi-Annual Grants 2026-2028 Transition Fund Impact Report (Pages 23 - 28)

- (f) Community Festivals Fund Programme Update (Pages 29 - 32)
- (g) Neighbourhood Tourism (Pages 33 - 38)
- (h) Events Update - Festive Lighting and Christmas Activity (Pages 39 - 48)

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

- (a) Motion - Commemoration of the Famine (Pages 49 - 52)

4. **Strategic and Operational Issues**

- (a) Minutes of the Zoo Long-Term Financial Sustainability Group - 17th September, 2026 (Pages 53 - 56)

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Subject:	Notice of Motion – Commemoration of the Famine
Date:	2nd October, 2026
Reporting Officer:	Damien Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy
Contact Officer:	Craig Mealey, Committee Services Officer

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

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

Insert number

☐

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

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☐
☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

☒

No

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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To inform the Committee that a motion in relation to commemorating the famine has been referred to the Committee by the Standards and Business Committee at its meeting on 22nd September, 2026.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	At this stage, the Committee is asked to: i. note that the motion has been received; and ii. agree that a report be brought back outlining a detailed consideration of the motion and the potential financial and resource implications.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.2	At the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee held on 22nd September, 2026, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor McKeown and seconded by Councillor Whyte, was referred to the Committee for consideration:
3.3	<u>Commemoration of the Famine</u> “Belfast City Council will develop a programme of commemoration to mark the 180th anniversary of the Famine in 2027, to include a focus on the contemporary shared experience of communities; the impact on Belfast, Ulster and island of Ireland at the time and in the years that followed; international aspects such as emigration and the role this played here and in the history of other countries; domestic and overseas contributions to altruistic relief; and telling the stories of ordinary people whose experiences have been forgotten. This will be an opportunity to discover more about our collective history from this period, and in addition will support the Council’s bid to host the National Famine Commemoration in Belfast in 2027.” Proposed by: Councillor McKeown Seconded by: Councillor Whyte
3.4	The motion calls upon on the Council to develop a programme of events and activities in 2027 to commemorate the 180th anniversary of the Famine and support the Council’s bid to host the National Famine Commemoration in Belfast in 2027.
4.0	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
	None at this stage as there is no commitment to proceed with the motion. Details of any financial and resource implications will be reported at a subsequent meeting.

5.0	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None associated with this report.
6.0	Appendices
	None.

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Zoo Long-Term Financial Sustainability Group

Thursday, 17th September, 2026

MEETING OF THE ZOO LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY GROUP

Members present: Councillor R. McLaughlin (Chairperson); and
Councillors Brennan, Murphy
and Whyte.

Also attended: Alderman McCullough.

In attendance: Mr. D. Martin, Strategic Director of Place and Economy;
Mr. K. Forster, Director of Economic Development;
Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Property and Projects;
Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;
Ms. L. Frew, Zoo Operations Manager;
Ms. A. Fox, Assets Development Officer;
Mr. F. Grant, Operations Development Manager;
Ms. S. Kalke, Client Manager;
Ms. L. Frew, Zoo Operations Manager; and
Mr. C. Mealey, Committee Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Group agreed that Councillor R. McLaughlin would assume the role of the Chairperson for the meeting.

Apologies

No apologies were received.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 27th May, 2026, were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

Recap and Updates

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy provided the Group with a recap of the key issues discussed at its workshop held in March, 2026, and its previous meeting in May, 2026.

The Operations Development Manager provided the Group with an overview of recent updates relating to the Zoo.

Visitor and Financial Data

The Group was provided with an update in respect of the Zoo's visitor and financial performance for Quarter 1 of 2026/27.

The Operations Manager provided the Group with an overview of the visitor data for Q1, which included the monthly footfall figures in comparison with the same period of last year, a five-year overview covering the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26, and information relating to the income and spend per visitor.

In relation to the financial performance of the Zoo, the Group was presented with Q1 figures for 2026/27 alongside comparative figures for the same period of 2025/26, a five-year financial overview covering the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26, pricing, and income and expenditure data.

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy outlined for the Group's information some of the key issues and challenges faced by the Zoo during the first quarter.

During discussion, officers answered a range of questions from the Members in relation to the Zoo's expenditure against income, footfall, pricing, and associated costings for maintenance issues.

Noted.

Zoo Annual Plan for 2026/27 and 2027/28

The Group was provided with an overview of the Zoo's Annual Plan highlights for 2026/27, which included an update on staff recruitment, the implementation of additional health and safety measures, income opportunities, the addition of new animals, site improvements, and the actions undertaken and planned in the short to medium term.

The Operations Manager outlined the key considerations looking forward to the Zoo's plan for 2027/28, including challenges, procurement exercises and capital works.

The Assets Development Officer provided the Group with an update in respect of corporate partnerships and the Zoo's pricing structure.

Noted.

Proposed Site Visits

The Director of Property and Projects highlighted a number of potential site visits for the Group's consideration.

The Group agreed to undertake a site visit to Dublin Zoo and Emerald Park, and the Director advised that a date would be confirmed in due course.

Operational Models

The Strategic Director of Place and Economy provided the Group with brief overview in respect of operation models and advised that, following the Group's site visits, further information would be brought back for its consideration.

Noted.

Chairperson

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