

Public Document Pack

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

17 September, 2019

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

As previously notified to you, I enclose a copy/copies of the report for the following item(s) to be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.30 am on Friday, 20th September, 2019.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

4. **Governance**

(a) Amendment to Standing Orders (Pages 1 - 4)

5. **Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues**

(b) Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission (Pages 5 - 8)

6. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**

(a) Leisure Transformation Programme: Assets Update (Pages 9 - 24)

(b) Physical Programme Update (Pages 25 - 28)

9. **Operational Issues**

(d) Report from Audit and Risk Panel and Minutes (Pages 29 - 46)

(e) Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 47 - 50)



Subject:	Amendments to Standing Orders
Date:	20 September 2019
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
Contact Officers:	Jim Hanna, Democratic Services Russell Connelly, Policy, Research & Compliance 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 seek Committee approval to amend Standing Order 47 (in relation to call in) in order to properly reflect the Council’s statutory obligations under Section 41 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 (“the 2014 Act”).
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to make the changes outlined in the report to the Standing Order 47.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Decisions of council subject to call in</u> Standing Order 47 in relation to call-in does not (as currently drafted) reflect the council’s statutory obligations arising from the 2014 Act, which specifically provides that, when

	<p>Section 41(1) requires Council's to make provision for reconsideration of decisions, a "decision" includes a decision of the council.</p> <p>Counsel recommends that Standing Order 47(a)(1) be amended to include "<i>a decision of the council</i>" in the list of decisions which may be subject to call-in.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Sections of the inhabitants of the district</u></p> <p>Section 41(4) of the 2014 Act requires that Standing Orders specify the section of the inhabitants of the district who may claim to be adversely affected under Section 41(1)(b). The statutory requirement is not that the persons seeking the call-in of the decision specify the section of the inhabitants of the district, rather, the statute requires that standing orders do that in advance. The Council's standing orders do not appear to do so as currently drafted.</p> <p>In order to rectify this situation the City Solicitor recommends that as a minimum, the Council specify at least those categories of persons set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in standing orders. It is of course open to the Council to specify further sections of the inhabitants of the district, subject to the usual public law boundary of Wednesbury reasonableness.</p> <p>Whilst the Act is not prescriptive as to the sections which should be specified, the Draft Standing Order Regulations 2016 (which have not yet been ratified by the NI Assembly) – do provide a legislative interpretation of sections of the inhabitants of the district which is wider than just the Section 75 groups:</p> <p><i>"section of the inhabitants of the district" means any section of the inhabitants that is clearly identifiable by location, interest or other category</i></p> <p>It is recommended that Council amend Standing Order 47(3)(b) to incorporate the above wording from the draft Standing Order Regulations with reference to the Section 75 categories as one of the "other" categories.</p> <p>This approach would appear to reflect the intention of the legislation as originally drafted and would prevent call in being limited to just those section 75 groups.</p> <p><u>Suggested wording to be included after Standing Order 47(3)(b)(3)</u></p> <p><i>(4) In this part, "section of the inhabitants of the district" means any section of the inhabitants that is clearly identifiable by location, interest or other category (including those categories identified in Section 75(1) of the NI Act 1998).</i></p>
3.3	<p><u>Financial & 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	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>

4.1	None
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Subject:	Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission
Date:	20 September 2019
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Grainia Long, Commissioner for Resilience John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy

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
	This paper provides an update to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the work of the newly-established Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission. Regular updates will be provided to this Committee throughout the Commission's lifetime.
2.0	Recommendations
	The Committee is asked: To note the update and in particular the proposed approach to ensuring good governance and oversight of the Commission's work.
3.0	Main report
	The Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission was set up to support the Council and city partners in the further development and implementation of the priorities as set out in the Belfast Agenda. A particular focus has been given to the priorities of (1) growing the

economy and (2) city development. The Commission will seek to deliver the core objective of inclusive growth. Core membership of the Commission is as follows:

- Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive, Belfast City Council
- Michael Lyons, Chair- English Cities Fund
- Matthew Taylor, RSA (previously led RSA Inclusive Growth Commission)
- Owen Reidy, or nominee, ICTU (tbc)
- Emma Cariaga, British Land
- Alice Charles, World Economic Forum
- Joe O'Neill, Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- Paddy Nixon, Vice Chancellor and President, Ulster University
- Ian Greer, Vice Chancellor and President, Queen's University Belfast
- Rotha Johnston
- Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive, Belfast City Council
- Anne McGregor, NI Chamber of Commerce
- Judith Totten, INI Non-Exec Board Member
- Ed Vernon
- Angela Magowan, Director, CBI Northern Ireland
- Neil Gibson, EY

However, the Commission will also take advice from a wide range of organisations including the Nevin Institute and JRF etc.

Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

At the previous meeting of SP&R, it was agreed that the Commission's membership would be broadened to include a wider range of economic expertise and viewpoints. Since the meeting, and following invitation to join the Commission, ICTU has confirmed it will nominate a member. The Nevin Institute has also been contacted to provide advice and insight to the Commission. As the Commission's work proceeds, it will also seek advice from Trademark and other similar organisations to ensure that insights and practice on co-operative development inform the Commission's work. We are also seeking insight from social enterprise organisations to provide advice throughout. As agreed, inclusive growth has been re-emphasised in the Commission's terms of reference and its title brief, and Commission members were also briefed on the importance attached to inclusive growth at its first meeting. Specific reference has been made to cities that have developed economic strategies with inclusive growth or 'good growth' as core goals, and officers have been tasked with seeking input and insights from cities that can demonstrate success in this area. As the Commission develops it will align with ongoing work on climate change and sustainable development and seek advice from Leeds Climate Commission, Place based Climate Action Network (PCAN), Friends of the Earth etc

Governance and member engagement

At its previous meeting, SP&R discussed governance and oversight of the Commission's work, and discussed how elected members would engage with the Commission.

The Commission is a collaboration between four city institutions- Belfast City Council, Belfast Harbour, Queen's University and Ulster University. Each organisation will take part in the Commission as per its own system of governance.

The following approach is being proposed for Belfast City Council:

1. That SP&R remains the primary committee through which the Chief Executive will report on the Commission's work. SP&R will ultimately approve early and final drafts of outputs produced by the Commission, for formal ratification by Council. City Growth and Regeneration Committee will also be consulted.
2. Three events, attended jointly by BCC members and Commission members, will be held throughout the Commission's work. The first will take place in the autumn to

inform the Commission's early thinking; the second in early 2020 when some initial themes have begun to emerge and the third to inform draft conclusions.

3. Party briefings will take place in the normal way to ensure parties are informed continuously throughout.
4. A summary note of each Commission meeting will be produced for SP&R.

Summary note of the Commission's first meeting

- The first meeting was a general introduction and context setting meeting- held on the evening of the 9th and all day on the 10th September.
 - The meeting included presentations from local SME sector and large local and global businesses based in Belfast. It also included an overview of the UK Industrial Strategy – to ensure alignment with wider policy goals. Data was presented on Belfast's existing economic and 'good growth' performance and how it compares with other cities across Europe and globally, as well as presentations and discussion on cities as drivers of inclusive economic growth.
 - Some critical issues emerged in the discussion:
1. Belfast has an immense opportunity to align its economic ambitions with its social and environmental goals. For example, the transition to a low-carbon economy must be an equitable one, and this therefore presents an opportunity to significantly reduce and perhaps eradicate fuel poverty over time. Recent successes by industry (e.g. exceeding our targets on renewables) must be learned from and scaled up.
 2. The Commission's eventual conclusions/outputs must ensure that Belfast builds on its strengths- where it has already proven to succeed. However, its work will be impacted by national (UK) policy and we must be cognisant of that—an example is UK government policy on visa restrictions for international students.
 3. The Commission does not intend to work 'behind closed doors' for a year, and then produce a report. It wants to focus on practical solutions to drive city growth in the interests of communities, and will be looking for ways that the four anchor institutions (BCC, Belfast Harbour, QUB and UU) can work collaboratively to deliver 'good growth'.
 4. Belfast has significant advantages given its proximity to Dublin and London. Both cities will continue to be successful in a post-Brexit environment, and therefore we must find ways to better leverage this connectivity and proximity, given the scale and nature of growth in both cities.
 5. The major issues remain those we've been debating for years- how to build skills among those furthest from the labour market and those economically inactive, so that they feel there are opportunities for them, as well as ensuring that we do not lose talent from the city. Skills already emerging as a major challenge.
 6. The city has many strengths but we are one of many cities that is promoting our distinctive 'offer'. Belfast has yet to really 'hone' what makes us unique. For example, the fact that the city is a leader in cyber security and food security is little known outside of these niche sectors. Generally speaking, there's a perceived lack of strategy on our economic future- other successful cities are clearer about their assets (economic, social and environmental) and focused on what they are going to do with them. A grand vision is needed- e.g. the Oxford/Cambridge corridor has a vision to be the R&D Centre for the UK.
 7. A focus on inclusive growth and/or 'good growth' (term used by Edinburgh) is an example of how we can be competitive and distinctive... Glasgow has done this by stressing its quality of life and really pursuing a strong environmental agenda- which is increasingly being sought by people visiting the city and those investing in the city- both companies and workers.

	<p>8. Several presenters/contributors emphasised the importance of focusing on the current drivers of growth – investing more in them rather than trying to do too many things.</p> <p>Future meetings/themes/areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transition to a low-carbon/carbon neutral economy, and how we do this in an equitable way - Learning from economic shocks and how the poorest and most economically vulnerable have been impacted- including across the generations - Opportunities from energy transition- retro-fitting our existing stock and possible job opportunities for this/next generation <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	N/A



Subject:	Leisure Transformation Programme: Assets Update
Date:	20 th September 2019
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan; Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes

Restricted Reports	
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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	This report updates Members on the development and implementation of the £105m leisure assets capital programme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the programme level update in respect of the new facilities under the leisure programme as outlined at 3.1-3.5

- note that site visits to the three new centres have been arranged for Tuesday 25th September and that all Members are encouraged to avail of this opportunity (see 3.6)
- note the update on communications around the opening of the new centres (see 3.7)
- note the update on employment opportunities as arising from the new centres (see 3.8)
- note the update on the Social Responsibility Plan which is being delivered (see 3.9)
- note the update around the next phase of the Programme with respect to proposed closure and start dates for Avoniel and Templemore (see 3.11 & 3.12)
- note the update with respect to a further leisure development at the Girdwood site as outlined at 3.13 and agree the request from DFC that the Council acts as Delivery Agent for the project under the current LTP Governance structures. Members are further asked to note that the next steps will include working up options (further options can be added), appointing Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) and developing concept designs before carrying out public consultation. Members are asked to note that DFC are funding the appointment of the ICT
- agree that a feasibility study is undertaken on the rest of the Council's leisure estate with a focus on Ballysillan, Whiterock, Shankill and Loughside with further detail to be brought back to Committee in due course

3.0 **Main report**

Programme level

3.1 Members will recall that they have agreed the design cost limits and the citywide USP strategy for the Council's £105m leisure programme, which will ensure that the city has a unique offering in terms of its leisure provision and minimises any duplication of provision ensuring both balanced investment and value for money. A high level summary of the current status of all the projects is outlined below -

CENTRE	USP	BUDGET	STATUS
Olympia	Sports Village	£19m (£21.75m total - £2.75m DfC)	Centre opened January 2017. Continues to exceed performance indicators Phase 2 (outdoor space) officially opened at the end of May 2018
Andersonstown	Family fun leisure water	£25m	Works well underway. See images at Appendix 1
Lisnasharragh	Aquatic Centre	£20m	Works well underway. See images at Appendix 1
Brook	Outdoor Centre of Excellence	£15m	Works well underway. See images at Appendix 1
Avoniel	Outdoor Centre of Excellence	£8m	Centre will close and works will begin once Lisnasharragh opens
Templemore	Spa and heritage	£12m (£17m total - £5m HLF)	Heritage Fund funding secured. Planning secured. Detailed designs being developed

Girdwood	TBC	£6m	Discussions continuing with DfC
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Project Updates

Current builds

3.2 Works are well underway on the three new builds. All are currently on schedule and are moving towards construction completion. Members are asked to note that each new centre requires a period of commissioning following construction completion – this is to allow for testing of equipment etc. Following this period of commissioning each centre will have a ‘soft opening’ during which the centres will be open to schools, community groups etc. for taster sessions before the centre is officially opened to the public. A summary of the status is outlined below and photos showing ‘the current status of the builds are attached at Appendix 1.

Centre	Construction complete	Opening
Lisnasharragh	Mid October	Soft opening – December Official opening – January 2020*
Brook	End October	Soft opening – December Official opening – January 2020*
Andersonstown	February 2020	Soft opening March Official opening – April 2020*

** All centres will have an official opening – the dates of these are to be agreed and will be brought back to Committee in due course.*

3.3 **Lisnaharragh-** Tiling to the main pool hall and changing rooms has been completed, the diving board structures have been installed and the flooring to the gym and sports hall is currently being fitted. Externally all utilities connections are in place and the 3G pitch and installation of fencing is almost complete. In addition, the community facility is now completed. The finished centre is due to be handed over to Council in mid-October. Following this there will be a period of approximately 6 weeks of mobilisation during which the centre will be furnished, machines installed, staff trained and systems tested. **The centre itself will then undergo a ‘soft opening’ in December where various groups will be invited to use the facility before it formally opens to the public at the start of January 2020.** Members will be aware that discussions are ongoing regarding the proposed facilities at the rear of the site and Members will be verbally updated on this at Committee.

3.4 **Brook-** Tiling to the ground floor is almost complete and the timber floor is being fitted in the sports hall. Third fix M&E is now underway with pool lights now installed. Externally groundworks continue with pathways being formed and 3G pitch carpets laid. The centre is due to be handed over to Council at the end of October. Following mobilisation period of approximately 4 weeks it is then envisaged that **the centre will undergo a ‘soft opening’ in early December before opening to the public at the start of January 2020.**

- 3.5 **Andersonstown-** The slides and tower are now in place and internally the building is continuing to be fitted out with the children's splash adventure area and surf machine now installed. The underfloor heating is currently being installed and tiling to the main changing areas has been completed. The building is about to be made watertight which will allow completion of the main pool hall. Externally the 3G pitch is currently well underway. The centre is currently on schedule to be handed over to Council in February 2020 and following mobilisation **will undergo a soft opening in late March 2020 before opening to the public in mid-April 2020.**
- 3.6 **Site Visits-** visits to the three new builds have been organised for Members for next **Tuesday, 24th September.** A bus will leave City Hall at 10am for Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre and return at 12.30pm. The bus will then leave for Andersonstown and Brook Leisure Centres at 1.00pm and return to City Hall at approximately 4.30pm. All Members are invited to attend these site visits and are encouraged to take up this opportunity. Further visits can be arranged if these dates do not suit Members and if this is required then Members can contact the Physical Programmes Department.
- 3.7 **Communications-** Members are asked to note that a full communications plan to promote the opening of the three new centres is in place and BCC officers are working closely with GLL to coordinate its delivery. Regular updates on the progress of the builds are being provided on the Council website, Facebook and via social media and are receiving extremely positive feedback. In addition, information stands promoting the centres will be appearing in the Kennedy Centre, Victoria Square, Castle Court, Connswater and Forestside shopping centres over the coming weeks. GLL will also shortly be launching their formal 'pre-sales' offering allowing people to join the new centres prior to opening. An extensive outdoor advertising campaign will also be rolled out across the city.
- 3.8 **Employment-** The opening of the three new facilities will create up to 75 new permanent jobs and up to 100 casual positions for the city. This represents another very positive impact for the Leisure Transformation Programme and feeds directly into the ambitious job creation targets within the Council's Belfast Agenda. To date GLL have recruited all the management posts for the new centres, including General and Duty Managers and are now focusing on some of the more customer facing posts such as Customer Service Staff, Recreation Assistants and Fitness Instructors. Many of these posts will be recruited through the Council's newly established Leisure Academy (see below).
- 3.9 **Social Responsibility – Economic and social benefit clauses** - In line with Council policy our leisure contractor, Heron Brothers, have developed a **Social Responsibility Plan** which maximises the social, economic and environmental benefits of the contract through focusing on a number of areas including employment, promotion of local businesses and community

and social initiatives. Members are asked to note the following key outcomes which have been delivered to date under the Social Responsibility Plan –

- **Employment** - The creation of **employment opportunities** was a central component of the Social Responsibility Plan including employment opportunities for the long term unemployed, apprentices and tertiary level students. Employment outcomes are principally measured in employment weeks although additional indicators are also being monitored in terms of the number of jobs created, salary levels, duration of employment etc. In regards to the employment opportunities targeted at the unemployed and economically inactive, the Employability & Skills Team have co-designed and delivered a **Construction Employment Academy** targeted at supporting the contractor to fulfil the employment and employments weeks, ensuring optimum outcomes in specific relation to those unemployed, economically inactive, apprentices/trainees and higher-level students. As of September 2019 Members are asked to note that the following employment opportunities have been delivered as part of the Council’s leisure contract and **that the overall target number of weeks for employment, apprentices and paid placements has now been exceeded by over 35%.**

	Target	Weeks Delivered	Individuals Recruited
Employment for long-term unemployed or economically inactive	620	700 (up from 489 in Feb 19)	12
Apprentice	620	1435 (up from 1196 in Feb 19)	34
Paid Placement/Work Experience	1100	1040 (up from 746 in Feb 19)	15 (up from 14 in Feb 19)
TOTAL	2340	3175	61

- In addition to the Construction Academy the Council’s Economic Development Unit have recently launched a **Leisure Employment Academy** to provide support for those out of work or currently working under 16 hours to compete for the 75 new permanent jobs and 100 casual positions that will be created as part of the current phase of LTP. This Academy will provide participants with job specific skills and the relevant qualifications required to access the employment opportunities identified. GLL have recently been awarded the contract to deliver this training and the academies have been split into a number of different occupational areas as follows:
 - Wetside Employment Academy (National Pool Lifeguard NPLQ)
 - Wetside Employment Academy (STA Swimming Teachers)
 - Dryside Employment Academy (Fitness Instructor)
 - Dryside Employment Academy (Customer Service)

The investment per person involved in the Academy will be approximately £1,700 and each successful participant is guaranteed an interview with GLL. It is envisaged that approximately 40-50 permanent and casual posts will be filled through this route. The Academy has been widely publicised through a series of roadshows, radio ads and press articles and will commence delivery in late September.

- 3.10 In addition to this Heron Bros Ltd. have also taken forward a range of other initiatives under their Social Responsibility Plan including promotion of local suppliers and businesses, community initiatives and engagement, sports development and skills and health initiatives. Further details of these are attached at Appendix 2.

Next Phase

Plans are well developed to progress the next phase of the Programme as follows:

- 3.11 **Avoniel** – Members agreed in April 2016, that Avoniel would become a ‘dry’ centre with a focus on outdoor soccer facilities and that Templemore would become the ‘wet’ centre for inner east Belfast. Members will also be aware that a comprehensive consultation and engagement process was held in relation to the development proposals for Avoniel and Templemore between November 2017 and January 2018. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with 97% of respondents expressing support for Templemore and 85% expressing support for Avoniel. As part of the planning process for Avoniel a further consultation event was held in Avoniel Leisure Centre on Wednesday 20th March from 3pm - 8pm. This event produced 31 individual responses with 49% expressing support for the project and 32% expressing opposition. There was significant representation at the event from the Avoniel ‘Over 50s’ group with 66% of respondents coming from the 55+ age group. Several clubs also attended the consultation including Glentoran FC, East Belfast FC and two local hockey clubs, all of whom expressed strong support for the plans. The main comment from those opposed to the plans was a request to keep Avoniel open until the redevelopment of Templemore is complete. Members have previously considered and rejected this request, as any deviation from the previously already agreed phasing would have serious financial and contractual implications on the delivery of the Programme. Members had also previously reflected that officers relook at the design and cost implications to see if it would be possible to incorporate a café within the new Avoniel. Members are asked to note that officers have looked at this and given that the facilities mix has been signed off and ‘design freeze’ is in place that the costs of this and the wider impact on the design would be prohibitive within the budget envelope. The development of a café would also compromise the design in that it will require losing one of the two multi-purpose rooms which has been designed in to ensure that the building is as flexible as possible and can deliver a range of activities and classes.

It is planned that works will commence at Avoniel in January 2020. Council officers are working closely with GLL on their demobilisation plans for Avoniel. As agreed, there will be no disruption to the continuity of swim provision in East Belfast and **Avoniel will not fully close until Lisnasharragh is fully operational.**

- 3.12 **Templemore** – Following the decision by the ‘Heritage Fund’ (HF) (previously the ‘Heritage Lottery Fund’) to fund the project, officers have been working closely with HF to secure formal ‘Permission to Start’. Planning Permission for the project was granted in June and the formal paperwork has just been received. This completes HF’s requirements and Permission to Start notification is expected before the end of September. The Design Team are now working on Stage 4 designs and these should be completed before the end of this year. Contractor procurement (PQQ) is due to commence before the end of September with the ITT then going out before Christmas. It is expected that the contractor will be in place by mid-April 2020 and following mobilisation construction will commence in June 2020. In order to maximise leisure provision in East Belfast and ensure the building remains operational as long as possible **it is proposed that the current facilities Templemore remain open until May 2020.**

Council officers and GLL are currently liaising with the Templemore Users Trust (TUT) to help ensure they have access to facilities to provide continuity of provision of their services for the period that Templemore Baths is under development. These discussions are ongoing and a further update will be brought to Members in due course. As with previous centres, a full demobilisation plan for Templemore will also be developed in due course.

- 3.13 **Girdwood Phase 2** – Members will be aware that officers have been in discussions with DfC, as the land owners of Girdwood Park, around options for a further leisure development at the Girdwood site. A high-level options paper has been developed by DfC, which outlined 3 options with regard to the facilities mix. These options included (i) Indoor Basketball Arena + community pool, (ii) High performance boxing facility + community pool and, (iii) Specialist Climbing Facility + community pool. These options were presented to a cross-party (political) group in December 2017 and the Girdwood Community Forum in May 2018; no issues or constraints outside of financing and statutory approvals were identified. **It is therefore proposed that these options are taken forward for viability assessment.** This will involve the engagement of an Integrated Consultant Team (ICT) to further test the options and develop concept designs, which will then be subject to consultation. **It is important to note that at this stage DfC have not ruled out the potential to explore further options should these emerge during the development process, providing they still reflect the broad objectives for the site as outlined in the options paper.** The proposed facilities mix for this facility must also take into account the Council’s other facilities across the city (both current and planned), particularly in terms of USPs, usage, catchment area and revenue implications.

3.14	<p>Given the Council's capacity and experience with respect to the delivery of leisure facilities, the current governance structures already in place for LTP, and its current £6m commitment to the project, DfC have now formally requested that Council act as the Delivery Agent for this project. DfC have ring-fenced budget to cover the costs of ICT engagement and have requested that Council lead this procurement. The estimated costs for the new indoor sports facility are currently projected at £14m and consideration for DfC to fund the balance of the project (£8m) will be subject to the outcomes of the Business Plan process, budget priorities and availability of Ministerial approvals. A high level timeline for the new Girdwood facility which is indicative only at this stage is - Concept design 2020/21, Planning and detailed design 2021/2022, Construction 2022/2023-2024 (18 months build).</p> <p>Other leisure facilities – Members will be aware that there are a number of other leisure facilities across its estate which have not been part of the Leisure Transformation Programme. A number of these are aging and to ensure that leisure continues to be looked at on a city-wide basis it is proposed that a feasibility study is undertaken on the rest of the leisure estate with a focus on Ballysillan, Whiterock, Shankill, Loughside given the age of these facilities. Members are asked to agree that a feasibility is now undertaken with further detail to be brought back to Committee. The costs for this feasibility will be met from the Feasibility Fund.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Financial – The design costs limits for each centre were agreed by Committee in April 2015 as part of the overall £105m leisure programme.</p> <p>Costs for taking forward the feasibility studies for the</p> <p>Resource- relating to Council acting as Delivery Agent for the designs development stage of Girdwood II using the existing LTP Governance structures</p>
3.16	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>There are no direct equality implications</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Photos – Lisnasharragh, Andersonstown and Brook Leisure Centres</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Detail of other initiatives taken forward under the Leisure Social Responsibility Plan</p>

Appendix 1- New Leisure Centre Photos



Lisnasharragh- external



Lisnasharragh- front elevation



Lisnasharrgh- main pool hall



Lisnasharragh- Community Centre



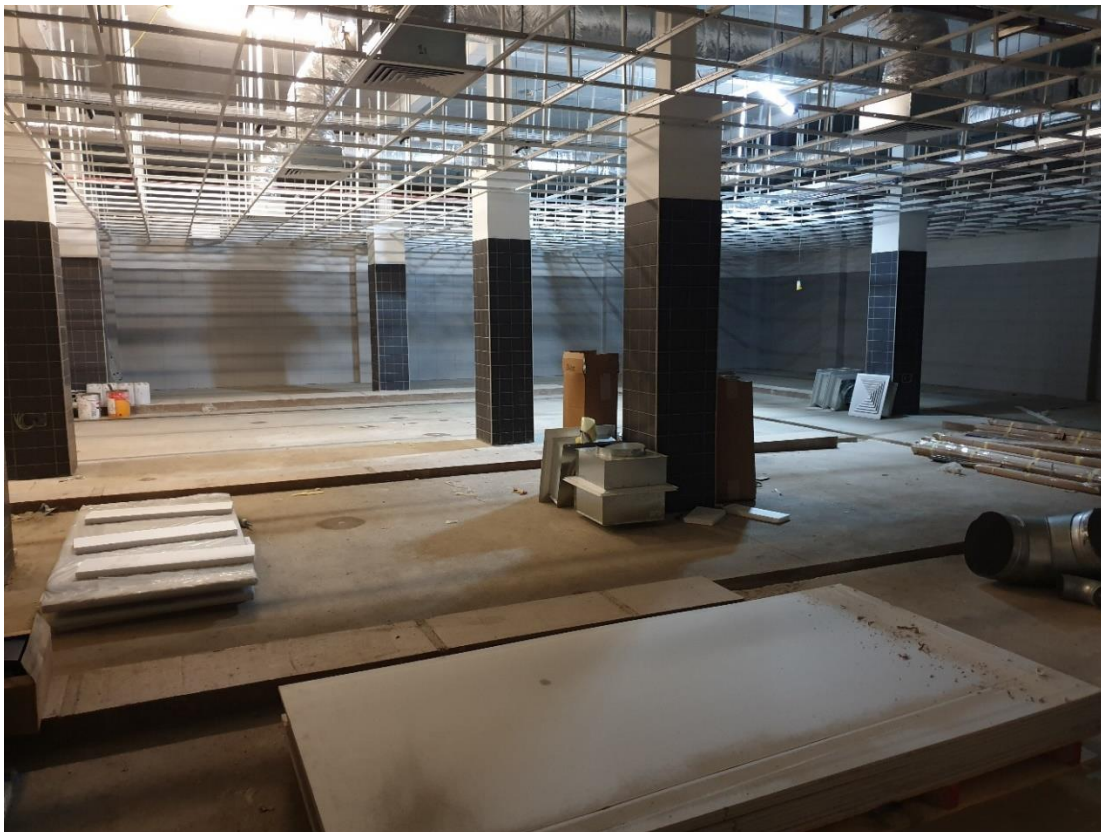
Andersonstown- front elevation



Andersonstown- main pool hall



Andersonstown- top of slide tower



Andersonstown- village changing



Brook- external



Brook- main pool hall



Brook- covered 3G pitch

Appendix 2 – Leisure Update - Initiatives taken forward under the Leisure Social Responsibility Plan

Promotion of Local Suppliers and Businesses

- A 'Business-to-Business' wall has been installed at each site for local businesses to promote their goods and services

Community Initiatives and Engagement

- Fund raising activities including a Cystic Fibrosis 'Trick or Treat' breakfast and a McMillian Cancer Coffee Morning
- Partnering with South Belfast Foodbank to collect food from site employees and help local people in crisis at Christmas
- Christmas decorations installed at each site
- Sponsorship of a range of community groups and festivals including Féile an Phobail; Clonduff July Festival; Colinglen Christmas tree and festival;
- Benefit in kind materials (fencing) to support West Spend summer festival and benefit in kind materials (brick) to help community memorial wall in Clonduff
- Eight site employees have undertaken volunteering at Reconnect NI to lay new patio and tidy up the garden facilities for the local West Belfast charity

Sports Development

- Partnership with GLL on summer 2019 cross community activities
- Sponsorship of Clonduff Under 14 Football Club
- Sponsorship of 'Run Belfast Hills' in partnership with North Belfast Harriers and National Trust.

Skills & Health Initiatives

- Worked in partnership with Groundwork NI to plan and deliver the 'Grow Bus' to 4 cross community schools local to the sites to educate the children on the benefits of eating fruit and veg plus how to grow your own.

West&pend Initiative

This Initiative has now been completed. A summary of the main points is as follows:

- Aiken PR appointed to engage with local businesses on the Andersonstown Road

- A budget of £20,000 was utilised to develop and deliver a range of marketing and promotional activities such as PR and social media campaigns and a targeted advertising campaign
- Over 80 businesses in the area availed of support
- Range of events were delivered such as Summer Street Fair, Pumpkin Festival and Christmas Light Switch on Event



Subject:	Physical Programme Update
Date:	20 th September 2019
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes Ronan Cregan; Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Omar Balite, Programme Office Coordinator Shauna Murtagh, Programme Office Coordinator

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 Council's Physical Programme covers over 150 live regeneration projects across a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, Leisure Transformation Programme, Belfast Investment Fund, Local Investment Fund, Social Outcomes Fund and the projects which the Council is delivering on behalf of other agencies. This report highlights projects recommended to be move through the approval stages.
2.0	Recommendations

2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to –</p> <p>Proposed movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> agree that the Boodles Dam abandonment and redevelopment project is moved to Stage 3- Committed on the Capital Programme. It is however recommended that this be held at Pre-Tender Stage pending planning approval and the tender return price at which stage the final budget will be brought back to Committee. Members are further asked to agree that the necessary procurement processes be initiated as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver <p>Externally funded programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> agree to the request by DFC to administer its Access and Inclusion Capital Programme 2019/20 in the Belfast City Council area. 												
3.0	<p>Main report</p> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>3.1 Proposed Movements – Capital Programme</p> <p>Members have previously agreed that all capital projects must go through a 3 Stage process where decisions on which projects progress are taken by SP&R. 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 agree to the following movement on the Capital Programme</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="248 1252 1423 1494"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="248 1252 493 1312">Project</th> <th data-bbox="493 1252 1062 1312">Overview</th> <th data-bbox="1062 1252 1423 1312">Stage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="248 1312 493 1494">Boodles Dam Abandonment and Redevelopment</td> <td data-bbox="493 1312 1062 1494">To safely decommission Boodles Dam and develop the site for amenity use (located at Ligoniel Park – off the Ligoniel Road)</td> <td data-bbox="1062 1312 1423 1494">Move to Stage 3- Committed Recommended to be held at Pre-Tender stage pending tender return</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Any project which is being moved from Stage 2 to Stage 3 under the Capital Programme is required as part of the Council three stage approval process to complete an Outline Business Case (OBC).</p> <p>3.2 Project Update – Boodles Dam</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="240 1711 1423 1852"> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="240 1711 844 1758">Moved to Stage 2- Uncommitted on the Capital Programme</td> <td data-bbox="844 1711 1423 1758">19 August 2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="240 1758 844 1805">Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)</td> <td data-bbox="844 1758 1423 1805">Nigel Grimshaw</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="240 1805 844 1852">Client Department</td> <td data-bbox="844 1805 1423 1852">City & Neighbourhood Services</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Members will be aware that in August 2016 the Committee agreed to move Boodles Dam project to Stage 2- Uncommitted. Members have been previously updated that a Section 10</p>	Project	Overview	Stage	Boodles Dam Abandonment and Redevelopment	To safely decommission Boodles Dam and develop the site for amenity use (located at Ligoniel Park – off the Ligoniel Road)	Move to Stage 3- Committed Recommended to be held at Pre-Tender stage pending tender return	Moved to Stage 2- Uncommitted on the Capital Programme	19 August 2016	Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)	Nigel Grimshaw	Client Department	City & Neighbourhood Services
Project	Overview	Stage											
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Moved to Stage 2- Uncommitted on the Capital Programme	19 August 2016												
Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)	Nigel Grimshaw												
Client Department	City & Neighbourhood Services												

safety report has set out a recommendation for Boodles Dam to be abandoned due to the risk of a landslip from the landfill and park on the adjacent western slope. The Dam has a heavily populated urban development downstream, and as a result is defined as a Category A reservoir and as such carries requirements for the Council under the Reservoir Safety Act. The most recent monitoring survey (Ligoniel Park - 2019 Ground Movement Survey) undertaken in July 2019 provides evidence of ongoing movement of the ground uphill of the dam and therefore in order to ensure that the Council complies with its statutory requirements under the Reservoirs Safety Act works to Boodles Dam must now be undertaken.

3.3 Members are asked to note that the OBC for the Boodles Dam project has been completed and reviewed internally and found to be consistent with the required abilities (feasibility, affordability, deliverability, sustainability, strategic fit. The proposed scope of the project includes works to address Section 10 Report requirements along with some wider environmental improvements and upgrades including paths, landscaping and new fencing. This ensures the council meets its statutory obligations with respect to the management of reservoirs. In addition it will open up the site up for community use as an amenity.

3.4 Members are also asked to note that this project is linked to the Reservoir Safety Programme (currently at Stage 2- Uncommitted project) a city wide initiatives which look at the council's responsibility for the management of reservoirs that retain over 10,000m³ of water above natural ground level. These reservoirs includes the Waterworks Upper and Lower, Alexandra Park and Half Moon Lake. Monitoring of these reservoirs is ongoing in line with our requirements under the Act. Following these monitoring regimes, future works and requirements will be identified and an OBC will be prepared.

3.5 **In order to comply with its statutory requirements under the Reservoirs Safety Act it is therefore recommended that the Boodles Dam project be moved to Stage 3- Committed on the Capital Programme. It is however recommended that this be held at Pre-tender stage pending planning approval and the tender return price.** At this stage the final budget will be brought back to the Committee for sign-off and confirmation that is within the affordability limits of the Council. Members are further asked to agree that the necessary procurement process be initiated as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of most economically advantageous tenders received and full commitment to deliver.

3.6 **Delivery of externally funded programme – DfC Access and Inclusion**

All local councils in NI have been approached again by DfC to request that they administer the DfC Access and Inclusion Capital Programme 2019/20 within their respective local council areas. The Council acted as the lead management partner for the 18/19 Access and Inclusion Fund within Belfast. This programme supports small-scale capital investments up to £30,000

	<p>and aims to improve access to arts and cultural activities, including leisure and recreation facilities, by people with disabilities. The Council is eligible to apply for support as well as community groups and arts and cultural venues, where demonstrable need is evidenced. The available budget across the 11 council areas is £500,000. The Belfast programme will be administered by the Place and Economy Dept, in line with the process initiated in 2018/19, with support from the Physical Programmes Dept.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p><i>Financial</i> -- Boodles Dam abandonment and redevelopment – as above</p> <p>DFC Access and Inclusion Fund - There is no requirement for match-funding from Council. The funding will be provided by DfC up to a maximum of £30,000 per eligible project. The total available funding across NI is £500,000.</p> <p><i>Resources</i> – Officer time to deliver as required</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>All capital projects are screened as part of the stage approval process</p> <p>DFC Access and Inclusion Fund – working closely with the Council’s Equality Unit and DfC to ensure positive equality implications which is the central component of the Fund</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None</p>

Audit and Risk Panel

Tuesday, 10th September, 2019

MEETING OF AUDIT AND RISK PANEL

Members present: Councillor Hussey (Chairperson);
Councillors Hutchinson and McKeown; and
Ms S. Hetherington.

In attendance: Mr. R. Cregan, Strategic Director of Finance and Resources;
Mr. J. Walsh, City Solicitor;
Ms. C. O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk
Services (AGRS);
Mr. T. Wallace, Head of Finance;
Ms. C. Sheridan, Head of Human Resources;
Mr. L. Mulholland, Audit, Governance and Risk
Services Manager;
Mr. M. Whitmore, Audit, Governance and Risk
Services Manager;
Mrs. E. Eaton, Corporate Health and Safety Manager;
Ms. H. Lyons, Corporate Finance Manager;
Mrs. C. Kane, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office;
Ms. S. Murphy, Northern Ireland Audit Office; and
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chair

The Audit and Risk Panel noted that it was required to elect a Chairperson for the coming year.

Moved by Councillor Hutchinson,
Seconded by Councillor McKeown, and

Resolved – that Councillor Hussey be elected to serve as Chairperson to the Audit and Risk Panel from September, 2019 to June, 2020.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Councillor O'Hara.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 4th March were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 10th September, 2019**

Future Dates of the Audit and Risk Panel

The Panel agreed to the following meeting dates and times of the Audit and Risk Panel for the period from October, 2019 to March, 2020:

- Monday, 21 October, 2019 (1/2 Day Training - Morning);
- Tuesday, 3rd December, 2019 at 12.30; and
- Tuesday, 10th March, 2020 at 11.30.

The Panel also noted that it would have a pre-meet, fifteen minutes before the meeting commenced.

Absence Rates Q/E June 2019

The Panel considered a report providing information on the absence figures for the first quarter of 2019/2020. The Head of Human Resources reported that sickness absence per employee for that period had been 3.08 days, which meant that the Council was under target (3.17 days) by 0.09 days. She advised that the number of absences which had been classified as long term (20 days or more) during the quarter had been 68.7%, which was an increase compared to the same period last year at 67.43%.

She advised that the number of days lost per full time equivalent was less in quarter one (3.08 days) when compared to quarter four 2018/19 (3.47 days) and there had been a slight improvement in compared to the same period last year (3.11 days).

In relation to Disability Related Absence, approximately 30% of absence (1964.96 days) had been recorded as disability related and 51.5% of disability related absence was being managed as long term.

She confirmed that the Council's Attendance Policy permitted the use of discretion and highlighted circumstances when discretion might be applicable. She reported that, in quarter one, of the 550 employees that were off due to sickness absence, discretion had been applied to 76 of these employees and the average length of absence where discretion had been used was 21.8 days per occurrence.

She informed the Panel that a number of health and wellbeing activities and initiatives were in place to assist with managing attendance at work including:

- Positive Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing training;
- Stress Awareness for Managers; and
- Mindfulness

She also highlighted that further health and wellbeing initiatives and programmes would be developed as part of the People Strategy.

During discussion, the Head of Human Resources explained further the occupational health service referral process and the monitoring of absence rates across departments.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 10th September, 2019**

The Panel noted the information which had been provided.

Corporate Health and Safety Performance Report

The Corporate Health and Safety Manager provided the Panel with an update in relation to the Council's Health and Safety performance during the period ending 30th June, 2019. She reviewed the progress which had been achieved in relation to the key performance indicators, where the Council had only fully implemented 29% of the health and safety actions and 60% of the fire actions due at the end of quarter one, which was not satisfactory.

She reported that the number of employee accidents for quarter one was 37, which was seven less than in the last quarter. She reported that the highest number of accidents had been caused by employees being injured through a slip/trip or fall.

The Panel was informed that the number of RIDDOR reportable accidents had increased by 4 from the last quarter, at 14.

The Corporate Health and Safety Manager reported that there had been a decrease in the number of reported Work Related Violence incidents from the last quarter, from 36 to 25 and the majority of which were of verbal abuse, threatening behaviour and 1 incident which involved physical violence.

She advised that there were 29 non-employee accidents during quarter one with 15 accidents due to slip, trip or falls.

Noted.

**Report on Compensation Claim Settlements
as a Result of Accidents**

The City Solicitor provided an update regarding the compensation claims for 2018/19. He advised that full details on the costs of employer liability, motor insurance and public liability claims for the year 2018/2019 were included in the Appendices along with the figures for the period 2017/2018. He reported that there had been an increase in payments in employer liability claims from £341,321 in 2017/2018 to £406,889 in 2018/2019 which related to an increase in noise induced hearing loss claims. The highest payments were for damages and solicitors fees.

He provided an overview in relation to the Management of claims, and highlighted that the Divisional Solicitor attended the City and Neighbourhoods Departmental Management Team on a six monthly basis to provide an overview on the number of new claims received, the reserves for claims and details of any payments made. Learning points were addressed with the department for communication to the relevant teams. He stated that management of claims were also reviewed by the Council's Health and Safety Assurance Board on a six monthly basis.

He provided an analysis of claims conceded for the relevant period and highlighted that, in respect of employer liability claims, the majority (77%) were settled after

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 10th September, 2019**

proceedings were issued. Similarly, in the case of public liability claims, the majority (57%) were also settled after proceedings were issued. In the case of motor insurance claims, however, the majority (89%) were settled prior to proceedings being issued.

During discussion, the City Solicitor provided details of the potential reasons for the increase in legal fees and confirmed that this would be examined further.

Noted.

Audit and Risk Panel Update on Year-End Reports

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services provided a summary of the various year-end reports that would usually have been considered at the June 2019 meeting and which related to the year-end accounts, which was a separate agenda item.

She explained that there were various important year-end reports that fed into the council's Financial Statements which included the following reports:

- a) The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) Annual Assurance Statement;
- b) Review of the Council's Code of Governance;
- c) Draft Annual Governance Statement for the Council for 2019;
- d) Annual self-assessment against the principles contained in the CIPFA; and
- e) Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit.

She advised that, in the absence of an Audit and Risk Panel in June, and in order to ensure that there was proper consideration of these important year-end papers, the Audit Assurance Board had met on 3rd June to review the reports. In addition, an annual report was submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee providing a summary of the key issues that had been considered and discussed by the Audit and Risk Panel during the 2018/19 financial year, the assurances received and the areas requiring attention.

She confirmed that the Draft Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19, which incorporated elements of the year-end reports detailed above, was approved by the Chairperson of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources, and was incorporated into the unaudited statement of accounts which had been certified by the Chief Financial Officer by 30th June, 2019. She highlighted that this was subject to review by the Local Government Auditor, as part of the NIAO's annual audit.

During discussion, one Member emphasised the importance of the reports and the necessity for Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to review the documents.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided.

**Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) –
Financial Statement of Accounts**

The Panel considered the following report which had been prepared by the Financial Accounting Manager and his team:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Audit and Risk Panel, the Statement of Accounts of the Council, including the Annual Governance Statement, for the period ending 31 March 2019.

1.2 The Statement of Accounts are an important element of the council’s overall corporate governance framework as they provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council’s finances and its financial position.

1.3 The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019, as attached, have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department for the Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 12/19 dated 29 March 2019.

1.4 I can confirm that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for the Communities and in my opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Panel is asked to

- Recommend that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the Council’s Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2019.**

3.0 Main report

Key Issues

3.1 Audit Opinion

It is the Local government Auditors' opinion that:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018-19, of the financial position of Belfast City Council as at 31 March 2019 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- the statement of accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities directions issued thereunder; and
- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and
- the information given in the Narrative Report for the financial year ended 31 March 2019 is consistent with the financial statements.

3.2 Reserves

General Fund

The credit balance on the General Fund has increased to £25,796,988 (of which £12,957,466 relates to specified reserves). The movement on the reserves balance is summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of Reserves Position

Opening Balance	£24.4m
In year movement in reserves	<u>£ 1.4m</u>
Closing Balance	£25.8m
Specified Reserves at year end	<u>£13.0m</u>
Balance Available	<u>£12.8m</u>

3.3 Capital Fund £25,288,151

The Capital Fund is made up of the Belfast Investment Fund (£5,559,723). The fund has been created to support key partnership projects to regenerate Belfast and help lever substantial funds from other sources, the Local Investment Fund (£1,425,280) to fund smaller local regeneration projects, the City Centre Investment Fund (£15,154,012) to support the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Plans, the Social Outcomes Fund (£3,149,136) to support City Centre projects which might not generate a direct financial return but would enhance the overall City Centre offer and support and attraction of investment.

3.4 Leisure Mobilisation Fund £1,441,702

This fund is to support the Leisure Transformation Programme and will cover programme level costs including communications, engagement and procurement costs.

3.5 Capital Receipts Reserve £5,200,457

These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets and which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.

3.6 Other Fund Balances and Reserves £1,063,919

This relates to the Election Reserve (£674,607) which has been set up to smooth the cost of running council elections, the BWUH Subvention Fund (£322,667) to support national and international organisations in bringing their conferences to Belfast and the BWUH Sinking Fund (£66,645) to support planned maintenance and future capital works at the new exhibition centre.

3.7 Debt

The overall level of trade debtors had decreased over the previous 10 years, reducing from £7.5m at 31 March 2009 to £2.5m at 31 March 2019. An analysis of trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, for the last two years is shown below:

	31 March 2019	31 March 2018
Less than three months	£2,131,221	£2,859,979
Three to one year	£128,050	£154,081
More than one year	£285,208	£736,633
Total	£2,544,479	£3,750,693

3.8 Creditors

The Department for Communities has set councils a target of paying invoices within 30 days. During the year the council paid 61,520 invoices totalling £163,474,395.

3.9 The average time taken to pay creditor invoices was 15 days for the year ended 31 March 2019. The Council paid 39,940 invoices within 10 days, 56,029 invoices within 30 days, and 5,491 invoices outside of 30 days. The council endeavours to process invoices as quickly as possible and has an improvement plan to support this process.

3.10 Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

The Statement of Accounts include Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2018/19, which has been prepared in line with the Accounts Directive provided by the Department for Communities, NIAO guidance and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. Specifically the AGS sets out:

- scope of responsibility of the Council in relation to governance
- the purpose of the governance framework
- the governance framework in place
- review of effectiveness of the governance framework
- significant governance issues to be disclosed.

3.11 The AGS is approved by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Resources. It is subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.

3.12 Financial & Resource Implications

None

3.13 Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment

None.”

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 10th September, 2019**

After discussion, the Panel recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March, 2019, a copy of which was available on the Council's website.

**Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) –
Draft Report to those Charged with Governance**

The Panel was advised that the Local Government Auditor had issued, in draft format, her Report to those Charged with Governance for 2018/2019.

The Director of the Northern Ireland Audit Office provided an overview of the draft report, which summarised the system and control issues arising from the Northern Ireland Audit Office's audit of the Council's Financial Statements for 2018/2019. She indicated that the audit had been largely completed and that it was anticipated that the Local Government Auditor would certify the Council's statements with an "unqualified opinion".

She informed the Panel that the Local Government Auditor had identified five areas of priorities and recommendations had been made.

She advised that 'Priority 2' recommendations needed to be reviewed and responded to by management. She outlined the details of the three areas, which related to:

- Infrastructure Assets – To develop an Asset Management Plan and review whether current depreciation policy remained appropriate;
- Valuation of the Gasworks Site – The Council, in consultation with Land and Property Service, review its approach to calculating fair value of investment property assets; and
- Zero Net Book Value of vehicles still in use – A review of the useful economic life and depreciation policy for vehicles was recommended.

She highlighted the 2 'Priority 3' areas for response were:

- Giant's Park, North Foreshore – recommendations for best practice in relation to the process for retaining supporting documentation; and
- Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd – ensure that the company achieved a break even position at year end.

She highlighted audit judgements and adjustments and pointed out that uncorrected misstatements would increase net expenditure by a further £0.2m and decrease net assets by £0.2m. She explained that the Panel should consider whether the unadjusted misstatements, set out in the identified misstatements section, should be corrected.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 10th September, 2019**

During discussion, the Head of Finance suggested that the aforementioned adjustment would not have a material impact on the accounts and, at this stage, would not be advising changing the accounts. He also highlighted that, in relation to the Auditor's recommendations, management had not had the opportunity to provide comments to address these issues, however, these would be presented to the Audit and Risk Panel at its meeting in December, 2019.

After discussion, the Panel agreed to endorse management's reasons for not adjusting misstatements and noted the contents of the draft report to those charged with governance for 2018/2019, a copy of which was available on the Council's website. It also noted that a detailed response to the document would be submitted to a future meeting.

AGRS Progress Report August 2019

The Panel considered a report which provided an overview of the specific internal audits which had been carried out for the period between March to August, 2019, by Audit, Governance and Risk Services.

It was highlighted that a number of audits had been completed in the six month period, 3 of which had received an assurance opinion of major improvement, as follows:

- **Capital Programme - Corporate / Strategic Level Issues** - One of the objectives of the Capital Programme was to support the delivery of the Belfast Agenda. It was found that projects within the Capital Programme currently demonstrated alignment with the Belfast Agenda in a fairly general way and that further work was required to:
 - Ensure appropriate alignment between the Belfast Agenda and the various programmes, projects and services around the Council through the establishment and implementation of new governance arrangements for each of the pillars of the Belfast Agenda; and
 - As part of this work, ensure a greater focus on the achievement of Belfast Agenda outcomes and embed new arrangements to ensure that the outcomes associated with programmes and projects around the Council (e.g. Capital Programme, Customer Focus Programme etc.) were properly linked to the Belfast Agenda, and were properly defined / quantified and monitored.

The Strategic Hub had been tasked with addressing these complex corporate-wide issues.

- **Asset Management** - A recent corporate risk workshop had highlighted that the need for effective asset management and maintenance was a key risk area for the Council. The Risk Action Plan had not been substantially updated for a number of years to reflect this risk. Consequently, there was a need for a fundamental review of this risk and the associated mitigations, clarification of roles and responsibilities in relation to asset management and

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 10th September, 2019**

maintenance, review of resourcing and financing, development of an Asset Management Strategy.

- **Externally Funded Projects** - It was important to note that responsibility for the ongoing compliance with terms and conditions of funding lay with the relevant Senior Responsible Officer and was not the responsibility of Physical Programmes Department. The key actions were a protocol for formal handover of projects and reporting corporately on the meeting of performance indicators and outcomes as per letters of offer. Given the fact that the council was increasingly becoming the delivery agent for projects funded by other organisations, and that there has been a significant delay in the implementation of corporate level assurance reporting on compliance with post-build terms and conditions, a conclusion of 'major improvement needed to the risk management process' had been given.

It was reported that the Local Development Plan, Continuous Improvement and Organisational Development, Peace IV, Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships, Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd: Finance and Performance, Financial Position of the Council, Building Control, Economic Development, Local Investment Fund all required 'Some Improvement'.

The Panel was informed that that the following audits were in progress:

- Corporate Risk Review – Health and Safety (draft report);
- Corporate Risk Review BWUH – (draft report);
- Corporate Risk Review – Belfast Agenda (fieldwork);
- Organisational Culture – (fieldwork);
- Pitches Strategy – (fieldwork);
- Planning Enforcement – (fieldwork);
- PCSP's – (draft report); and
- Budgetary Control & Financial Reporting (fieldwork).

The Panel was also informed that a number of other pieces of work had been completed in the period, such as AGRS Review of City Centre Recovery, HR/Payroll – implementation of the new system, Visit Belfast follow up on audit actions and Everybody Active 2020 governance statement sign off.

The Panel noted the Progress Report for the period March – August 2019 and the replacement of the planned audit of waste management with waste collection.

Corporate Risk Management Q/E June 2019

The Head of AGRS reported that, following a workshop in May with senior management to review the corporate risks, management had agreed 19 corporate risks, with a further corporate risk subsequently identified in relation to a 'no deal' Brexit. The Head of AGRS referred the Panel to the corporate risks set out in the appendix and explained that these corporate risks were considered by management to present the

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 10th September, 2019**

greatest threat to the delivery of the corporate plan and / or compliance with key statutory requirements. She confirmed that AGRS were currently working with each Risk Owner to support them in assessing each risk and developing the necessary mitigation actions. As these corporate risk mitigation plans were developed they would be reported into the Corporate Management Team for consideration and sign off before being reported to the Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel.

One member had a query regarding safeguarding arrangements at Council leisure centres and the Panel agreed that an update would be submitted to the next meeting for consideration.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided.

**Fraud and Whistleblowing –
Annual Report and Policy Update**

The Panel considered the Annual Report on the Fraud and Whistleblowing Policy and related arrangements, including the application of the policies during 2018/19.

The AGRS Manager reminded the Panel of the Council's participation in the National Fraud Initiative and explained that the investigations which had been completed to date highlighted 8 new instances or investigations into fraud and financial impropriety, 1 external (substantiated) and 7 internal (1 substantiated).

He highlighted that, in relation to Whistleblowing and Anonymous Concerns, the process had been extended to include anonymous complaints and concerns not formally raised as Public Interest Disclosures but which, nevertheless, required review and potential investigation. During 2018/19, 16 concerns had been received compared with 21 cases received during 2017/18.

At 31st March, 15 of the 16 investigations had been completed with one case ongoing, a disciplinary investigation was ongoing which related to a case that had been opened during 17/18. Of the 15 investigations closed:

- allegations were fully substantiated in 2 cases;
- allegations were partly substantiated in 4 cases;
- allegations were not substantiated in 9 cases; and
- 3 cases had been raised anonymously, 7 from members of the public, 6 were from employees and 1 was referred anonymously via the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

It was reported that, where appropriate, the issues arising from investigations had been followed up, for example through referral to management of cases for consideration under the council's disciplinary procedures or through review and tightening of controls over particular areas.

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager pointed out that a key element of the Council's counter-fraud arrangements was its participation in the National Fraud Initiative which was essentially a data matching exercise that involved comparing sets of

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data against other records held by the same or another body, allowing potentially fraudulent or erroneous payments to be identified, reviewed and, where necessary, investigated. He advised that AGRS, in consultation with Financial Services, had reviewed the majority of matches for the 2018/19 exercise and work was ongoing to review the remaining matches. He highlighted that they were currently liaising with departments to determine if adequate conflict of interest declarations had been made or were required, relating to matches identified. He confirmed that, to date, one duplicate payment had been identified relating to a grant, where £2000 had been paid twice and Financial Services were currently progressing the recoupment of the duplicate payment.

The Audit Panel approved the updated fraud and whistleblowing policies, and noted the updated cases which had been handled in 2018/19, together with the ongoing work in relation to the Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment and the National Fraud Initiative.

AGRS Terms of Reference / Charter - Annual review

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) advised the Panel that, in line with good practice, the agreed annual programme of business provided for an annual review of the purpose and terms of reference for Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS). She reported that the purpose and terms of reference of AGRS were important because they set out the purpose, authority, reporting arrangements, access and scope of the internal audit function so that all stakeholders had a clear understanding of the role of the internal audit function, its powers and responsibilities. The Head of AGRS explained that the terms of reference had been updated to refer to more recent legislation and that this didn't impact on the remit of the work of AGRS.

The Panel approved the AGRS terms of reference (copy available on the Council's internal website.)

**Self-assessment against the Public Sector
Internal Audit Standards**

The Panel considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Audit & Risk Panel of the self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) undertaken by AGRS and to provide an update on the action plan arising from the previous external review of AGRS in October 2017.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That the Audit & Risk Panel note the self-assessment against the PSIAS undertaken by AGRS and the update on the action plan arising from the previous external review of AGRS in October 2017.

3.0 Main report

- 3.1 The PSIAS require regular internal and external assessments to confirm that the internal audit service (AGRS) is operating to professional standards for internal auditing, thereby giving an assurance to key stakeholders that they can rely on the professionalism of the Service.**

Internal Assessments

- 3.2 The PSIAS require ‘periodic self-assessments.... to evaluate conformance with the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics and the Standards.’**
- 3.3 Our detailed self-assessment against the PSIAS is set out at appendix A. In summary, this self-assessment found that we are compliant with the PSIAS.**

External Assessments

- 3.4 The PSIAS also stipulate that ‘external assessments must be conducted at least once every five years by a qualified, independent assessor or assessment team from outside the organisation.’**
- 3.5 Following a competitive quotation process overseen and approved by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources, On Board Training and Consultancy were appointed to undertake an external review of AGRS. The report was issued in October 2017 and was reported to the December 2017 meeting of the Audit and Risk Panel. In summary, On Board concluded that:**
- AGRS conforms to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards**
 - There are a few areas which require action but they do not significantly impact on On Board’s overall opinion**
 - There was strong evidence from their review of the value and contribution that AGRS makes to the Council’s governance, risk management and control environment**
- 3.6 An action plan was also presented, setting out how AGRS would address the recommendations arising from this external review. A progress update on this action plan is at Appendix B and shows that 12 out of 13 actions have been**

fully implemented. The remaining action regarding monitoring and reporting on the actual number of days spent on audits against the budgeted number of days is in progress and will be re-visited at the training session being organised for October.

4.0 Financial & Resource Implications

4.1 None

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

5.1 None known at this time.”

The Panel noted the self-assessment against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards undertaken by Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS) and the update on the action plan arising from the previous external review of AGRS in October, 2017.

**Performance Improvement - 2018-19 Year End Report
and Arrangements for 2019-2020**

The Director of Finance and Resources provided the Panel with details of the reporting arrangements which were in place to ensure that the Council complied with the performance improvement duty 2018-2019, as laid out in Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act 2014 and the associated guidance from the Department for Communities and the NI Audit Office (NIAO). That ‘duty’ sought to measure the performance of councils and the arrangements which were in place to meet with the performance improvements objectives.

The Panel was presented with the year-end corporate Performance Assessment for 2018-19. The Director of Finance and Resources highlighted that this year’s report contained a new section, Section 3 ‘Continuous Improvement’, which had resulted from revised Department for Communities (DfC) Guidance that sought greater detail about emerging issues that lead to organisational improvements. He pointed out that Section 6 contained an overview of the Council’s performance in relation to 7 statutory performance indicators (3 waste, 3 planning and 1 economic development) as required under the Local Government Performance Indicators and Standards Order (2014).

He stated that it also included a list of ‘self-imposed’ indicators which would provide an update on performance against the Performance Indicators listed in last year’s Corporate Improvement Plan. He pointed out that, following a request from DfC, two additional indicators in respect of Absence and Prompt Payments had also been included this year, together with comparative data with the other 10 Councils and trends.

The Director reported that a Performance Assessment had been produced ahead of the September deadline (copy available internally [here](#)), and following the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting in September, the report would be published online subject to the ratification of the Council.

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He confirmed that updates on progress against the 2019-20 Improvement Plan would be presented to the Panel at mid-year and year end in line with our agreed processes.

The Panel approved the year end Performance Assessment and noted the proposed arrangements for 2019-20 and correspondence received from NIAO about those arrangements.

Local Government Auditor's Report – 2019

The Head of AGRS reported that the Local Government Auditor was required to produce an annual report which summarised, from an external audit perspective, the key issues which had arisen in all Councils across Northern Ireland. The report, published in June, provided the Local Government Auditor's perspective on the audits of all local councils based on the key messages from audits performed up to 31st March, 2018.

The Chief Local Government Auditor explained that the report had raised a wide variety of issues arising from the audits, which included helpful comparative information with other councils.

The Head of AGRS explained that the report was not specific to Belfast City Council but did include information regarding the Council and comparative information with other councils. The report also included general observations made by the Local Government Auditor in a number of areas including, value for money in the use of agency workers, reserves policy, Audit & Risk Panel training, conflict of interest training for Members, conduct of a NI-wide study on Planning, performance improvement, plans to undertake a cost benefit analysis of local government reform, absenteeism, principles for asset management and monitoring of city deals. The Head of AGRS assured the Panel that these observations and recommendations had been communicated to the relevant managers for information and action.

After discussion, the Panel noted the NIAO report at Appendix A and that AGRS had circulated the report to the relevant officers in the council for information and action.

**Option to Extend the Contract with the Non-Executive Member
of the Audit and Risk Panel**

It was reported that the contract for the non-executive member of the Panel, Ms. S. Hetherington, had reached the one year review point and the Panel had the option to extend this agreement for an additional two years, in line with the relevant legal agreement.

The Panel agreed to extend the non-executive Members' contract for a further two years.

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Audit and Risk Panel Annual Training Session

The Panel noted that Training had been arranged for the morning of 21st October commencing at 9:30am. Further details, such as the location of the Training, would be confirmed with the Panel in due course.

During discussion, one Member reiterated the importance of Audit Training and attendance of all Members at meetings.

After discussion, the Panel noted the information on the training event and agreed that the Director of Finance and Resources would write to Party Group Leaders to highlight meeting attendance at the Audit and Risk Panel.

Chairperson

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Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum 12 September 2019

Attendance

Members:

Alderman Brian Kingston (Chair)
Councillor Ciaran Beattie
Councillor George Dorrian
Councillor Fiona Ferguson
Councillor Billy Hutchinson
Councillor Donal Lyons
Councillor Michael Long
Councillor Mal O'Hara
Alderman Jim Rodgers (for Cllr Copeland)

Apologies: Councillor Copeland

Officers:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive
Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
John Walsh, City Solicitor
Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Emer Husbands, Strategic Performance Manager (secretariat)

1. Leisure Update

Members were updated on ongoing issues at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre which was impacting on the overall development of the site. It was agreed that Members of the East Area Working Group together with officers would meet with the contractor and community representatives.

The Director of Finance and Resources also informed the forum that a report would be going to committee on the Leisure Transformation programme and would include in relation to Girdwood recommendations for the Council to act as Delivery Agent as requested by DFC and to appoint an Integrated Consultancy Team to develop concept designs.

2. Finance

Medium Term Financial Plan/Efficiencies

The Director of Finance and Resources outlined the priorities and work in progress to establish the efficiency agenda and associated targets for 2020/21 – 2022/23, which would be presented to Septembers SP&R committee.

3. Area Working Groups

The Director of City and Neighbourhood Services circulated a revised terms of reference for the area working groups which was going to be discussed at September Committee.

Members asked that, if it was feasible, could some of the area working group meetings take place outside of city hall.

4. Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission (*Grania Long, Commissioner for Resilience attended for this item*)

The Chief Executive updated the Forum on the first meeting of the Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission and also outlined to them the proposed future membership which would be presented to SP&R committee. The members highlighted the importance of the inclusive element of the commission and also sought assurances that sustainable growth was also a focus, and that this should be reflected in the membership and engagement process.

5. Industrial Relations Framework

The Chief Executive informed members that a review of the Industrial relations Framework had been undertaken and the report was currently with the trade unions for comment.

Further updates would be brought to members following the trade unions response.

6. Notices of Motion

The City Solicitor sought the views of the forum on discussing better ways of dealing with notices of motion given that some members had raised with him the number that were currently being raised at council meetings. He also highlighted the issue of the staff resources that are required to follow up on such a high volume of notices of motion. The panel expressed the importance of being able to raise issues at full council for debate given not all parties were represented on all the committees. They asked to be provided with clear guidance on how issues can be raised by members at a committee and the process for doing this. They also agreed to receive a report on the impact on resources arising from notices of motion.

7. Planning Update

The Chief Executive updated the panel on the live planning applications and informed the panel of the applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee this month.

The members requested that a report on the development of the North Foreshore is brought to a future meeting.

8. AOB

Belfast Local Full Fibre Networks Procurement

The Director of Finance and Resources informed members that the Council had now completed the procurement process to enable them to move ahead with the implementation of the £11.5M Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) Programme. The £11.5m was awarded to the council following a successful application to the Department of Culture Media and Sport's (DCMS). Belfast is the first city to complete the full process to go live with the project. An update report will be presented to SP&R committee.

9. 50th Anniversaries (*David Robinson, Good Relations Unit also attended for this item*)

Kate Turner, Healing Through Remembering joined the meeting and provided an overview on the organisations work in relation to a 'Day of Reflection'.

The members requested party group briefings on the proposals for the 50th Anniversaries of the conflict including a day of reflection.

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