

# Public Document Pack

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

8<sup>th</sup> October, 2019

## **MEETING OF PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following item(s) will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 5.15 pm on Tuesday, 8th October, 2019.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

- 2 (b) Motion: Anti-Social Behaviour - Holylands Area (Pages 1 - 4)

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<b>Subject:</b>	Notice of Motion – Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour in the Holylands Area
<b>Date:</b>	8 October 2019
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director, City & Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Stephen Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To bring to the Committee’s attention a Notice of Motion regarding addressing Anti-Social Behaviour in the Holylands and the surrounding areas, which was discussed at the Council meeting on 1st October.
1.2	The following motion regarding Anti-Social Behaviour in the Holylands and surrounding area, which was proposed by Councillor Groogan, and seconded by Councillor McKeown, :  <p>“This Council condemns the persistent and serious anti-social behaviour that residents of the Holylands and the surrounding area endure throughout the year due to the high numbers of HMOs that exist there.</p> <p>This council will review its policy for dealing with all aspects of anti-social behaviour in the Holylands area, particularly around on-street drinking, noise and littering and bring forward an action plan for tackling the ongoing problems experienced in this area.</p>

1.3	<p>This council also notes the worryingly high levels of crime in a small, densely populated area of this city and commits to working with statutory partners to bring back CCTV units to the area as one of the means to tackle this issue."</p> <p>In accordance with Standing Order 13(f), the Motion was referred without discussion to the People and Communities Committee</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the Motion and take such action thereon as may be determined.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p><b>Freshers' 2019 Update</b></p> <p>Our night time noise service was operational as usual, 7 days a week from 2000 – 0400. All complaints from the Holylands were prioritised during the fresher's period.</p> <p>Safer Neighbourhood Officers and Alcohol Enforcement Officers were committed to the Holyland / Wider University Area Sunday – Thursday between 15<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September. Hours of operation were 1600 – 2200 on Sunday and 1400 – 2200 Monday – Thursday. They were proactively patrolling the area to reduce / prevent anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe.</p> <p>South Belfast Anti-social behaviour officer carried out joint visits with the universities and followed up on problem premises and public complaints.</p> <p>Our cleansing and cleansing enforcement teams operated as normal with any issues / areas for attention being passed on by community safety. Our night time cleansing service also assisted with reducing excessive litter within the area.</p> <p>Our entertainments licensing team proactively engaged with bars and clubs regarding their plans for the period and reminding them of their responsibilities. Premises of concern where flagged up with the team and joint visits did take place with the PSNI.</p> <p>Figures for the Freshers' Period are being finalised and a meeting has been called by the PSNI to sign off on these for this year.</p> <p><b>Background to existing role and actions from the Learning City Interagency Group</b></p> <p>The Holylands Interagency Group (now Learning City Interagency Group) was formed in 2005. Since 2009 the Council has chaired this group and it consists of a range of statutory partners committed to working in partnership to tackle the problems associated with large number of students living in the City. The Chair of PACT (Partners and Communities Together) represents local residents on this group. The group also included a representative from the Landlord Association for Northern Ireland (LANI) and the National Union of Students.</p> <p>In 2012 the Council and other statutory partners adopted the Holyland &amp; Wider University Area Strategic Study. The plan recognised that the problems in the area were not just down to one agency and that in order to realise the improvements identified in the report it needed ownership and commitment from all the stakeholders in the area. Since then partners have worked together and integrated services on the ground in order to make a difference in the area. The short to medium term recommendations in the report have been achieved. The long-term recommendations will be progressed through our local</p>

development plan and our Community Plan 'The Belfast Agenda'. A summary of these achievements is outlined below.

- Council developed a Framework for Student Housing in the city in 2014, which has been incorporated into Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Supplementary Planning Guidance sets the strategic context and agenda for student housing in the city, articulating the need for more purpose built student accommodation and will monitor and maintain an up to date assessment of current supply and future demand for student accommodation.
- Council continues to work with partners to assess the viability of purpose built student accommodation, requirements, and options for public sector to support delivery.
- The Local Development Plan sets the strategic context and agenda for student housing in the city. A report on Preferred Options Paper consultation was published on 26 July 2017 and the consultation on the draft plan strategy has just closed.
- The then 'DSD' (The Department for Social Development) now 'DfC' (The Department for Communities) was approached to consider the potential for implementing recommendations in relation to introducing a 'new homes from old places' initiative in the area, namely to identify a housing association that would acquire properties and make these available to single households. DSD advised that this was not a feasible option due to lack of demand from potential tenants, and the high costs of acquiring/converting properties. Through the Local Development Plan's strategic theme of "shaping a liveable place" development to enhance the health and wellbeing of communities, neighbourhoods and place will be promoted. Furthermore, the Belfast Agenda's strategic priority "living here" focuses on making life better for all our residents.
- Council worked with the former Holyland Interagency Group to review the PACT structure and implement a new neighbourhood management approach for the area. A revised PACT structure was agreed and has been in operation since 2014. The Learning City Interagency Group continues to work closely with PACT.

3.9

Every year partners deliver a range of projects in the area in addition to the work of all the relevant enforcement agencies. In 2017/18 partners delivered the following in the area:

- Through continued, effective partnership working with the higher education institutions across the city, procedures to manage student behaviours have been introduced which include induction and disciplinary procedures.
- Reviewed the effectiveness of legislation and byelaws, relevant to addressing antisocial behaviour. On 17 April 2018, Department of Justice launched an eight week public consultation to review the current criminal legislation framework to tackle anti-social behaviour, including on-street drinking. A corporate Council response was prepared in relation to this consultation which was presented to Committee on 5 June 2018.
- Several physical and environmental improvement projects have been delivered or are in the process of being delivered which include:
  - (i) graffiti removal and re-imaging using the Probation Board NI graffiti bus in addition to Council's graffiti team;
  - (ii) tree planting through the Local Investment Fund;
  - (iii) scoping the regeneration of the area known as "Horsey Hill" to develop a corridor to link local green spaces;
  - (iv) capacity support to assist the delivery of community led projects;

	<p>(v) community clean-ups; and</p> <p>(vi) A South Belfast circular economy project is being considered to encourage recycling rates.</p> <p><b>Challenges and Next Steps</b></p> <p>3.10 Partner agencies provide services and numerous initiatives and projects in the area to assist in addressing the impacts on the levels of antisocial behaviour whilst acknowledging that there is always more to be done. The Learning City Interagency Group looks at good practice for new ways to tackle the issues encountered and are committed to continue to work together to integrate services on the ground in a way that is responsive to what makes a difference to local people in an area. This motion highlights a number of options to address problems in the area.</p> <p>3.11 As described above, both the Council and our partner agencies recognise that key challenges remain which may require future legislative and policy change, including the identification of resources to support these. Some of the key areas highlighted during the Council discussion were the need for increased partnership agency response on the street, a need to review the powers of seizure around on-street drinking, how effective our powers are in addressing noise nuisance, and considering how opportunities presented by the new Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing scheme can be utilised in order to address antisocial behaviour whilst recognising that any changes in the latter will require some time to implement in real terms.</p> <p>3.12 The Chief Executive will shortly be convening a meeting with senior representatives of the PSNI and Vice Chancellors of both Ulster University and Queens University Belfast to consider what further can be done. Community stakeholders will also be invited to attend this meeting.</p> <p>3.13 It is also anticipated that a special meeting of the People and Communities is convened to allow the relevant community stakeholders to raise their concerns – requests have already been received by a number of partners.</p> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b> None related to this report.</p> <p><b><u>Equality, Rural Needs or Good Relations Implications</u></b> None.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	None