

Public Document Pack

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

24th March, 2022

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following items will also be considered at the meeting to be held in hybrid format at 10.00 a.m. on Monday, 28th March, 2022.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN WALSH

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

5. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

- (j) UK - Republic of Korea Innovation Twins Programme (Pages 1 - 8)
- (k) UEFA Conference League Final 2023 (Pages 9 - 16)

6. Physical Programme and Asset Management

- (b) Update on Area Working Groups (Pages 17 - 72)

7. Finance, Procurement and Performance

- (b) Update on Contracts (Pages 73 - 80)
- (c) CIPFA Prudential Code Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators 2022-23 (Pages 81 - 100)

8. Equality and Good Relations

- (d) Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee (Pages 101 - 104)

9. **Operational Issues**

- (g) Minutes of Meeting of Audit and Risk Panel (Pages 105 - 130)
- (h) Minutes of Meeting of City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group (Pages 131 - 138)
- (i) Minutes of Language Strategy Working Group (Pages 139 - 140)



Subject:	UK - Republic of Korea Innovation Twins Programme
Date:	25th March, 2022
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Deborah Colville, City Innovation Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To seek Committee approval of a Statement of Intent to support ongoing collaboration with the city of Sejong (South Korea). A pre-recording of the signing of the Statement by the Chief Executive will feature as part of a virtual International Showcase Day with Sejong on 30th March, which will mark the culmination of this last phase of the project.
1.2	To provide an update on the virtual international Showcase Day on March 30 th and planned agenda.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. approve the Statement of Intent - which has been developed with support from key institutions across the city - to progress opportunities for collaboration with the city of Sejong in South Korea; and ii. note the arrangements for a joint city to city virtual international showcase day on March 30th, which will feature a pre-recording of the signing of the Statement of Intent by the Chief Executive.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	At the Committee meeting in November 2021, Members were presented with details of the Council's participation in the ' <i>UK-Republic of Korea Innovation Twins</i> ' programme ¹ which was set up by the Connected Places Catapult and funded by BEIS and UKRI.
3.2	The programme aims to build relationships between smart cities with high potential for accelerating long term R and I collaborations and generating opportunities for trade and FDI. Committee has also received regular updates on the programme and has been made aware of the development of a Statement of Intent to support ongoing collaboration and this is now being submitted for approval.
3.3	While not legally binding, the Statement sets out areas of shared interest which will form the basis for ongoing cooperation between Sejong and Belfast. These include smart cities, medtech, cyber security, fintech, academic, educational and cultural cooperation, economic development and opportunities for bilateral trade and investment.
3.4	The Statement of Intent has been developed in conjunction with our colleagues in the city of Sejong in South Korea and with support from Invest NI who are in the process of developing a presence there. It will facilitate opportunities for mutual benefit between both cities and make it possible to unlock further funding from BEIS post March, 2022.
3.5	It has also been discussed with Colin Crooks, the newly appointed UK Ambassador to South Korea. Following a meeting led by the City Innovation team with representatives from Queens University, Ulster University, Health Innovation Research Alliance and QUBIS, Ambassador Crooks has taken the opportunity to table areas of interest detailed in the Statement with the Mayor of Sejong to promote future collaboration.

3.6	With Committee approval, a pre-recording of the signing of the Statement of Intent by the Chief Executive will be shown on March 30th, at a virtual international Showcase Day (organised and funded by Connected Places Catapult) to mark the culmination of the UK innovation twins programme.
3.7	Ian Greer, Vice-chancellor of Queens University and Chair of Innovation City Belfast will provide a keynote speech at the showcase event, setting out the city's innovation ambitions and sector strengths and addressing the benefits of bilateral engagement between Belfast and Sejong, potential outcomes and impact for both cities. Invest NI will outline their role to support international trade and showcase companies currently doing business and who wish to do business in South Korea.
3.8	Deborah Colville will present at the event on the theme of Smart Cities and Belfast Digital Innovation investments and John Greer will attend a panel session to outline how opportunities can be further developed between Belfast and Sejong beyond the current programme.
3.9	Local companies who have received funding (from a total budget of c £100k as part of the Innovation Twins programme) will also have the opportunity to show-case their innovative products or services at the event. Eight companies in total have been successful in their application for funding and will present on a range of products relating to areas such as encouraging recycling behaviour, fitness hubs, virtual tourism, community rewards programmes, last mile delivery, safer cycling, and personal safety.
3.10	There are also opportunities for companies not directly involved in the programme but who wish to explore business/collaboration in Sejong/South Korea to profile their work within a virtual exhibition space.
3.11	Work undertaken to develop an 'Innovative Procurement Playbook' will also feature as part of the event. The Playbook will capture the learning from the full programme and support local councils and public sector bodies across the UK to find better ways to procure more innovative solutions and services. It will also include learning from the delivery of a training programme delivered to local SMEs, and to council officers (who took part in the programme) to build their capacity to engage in challenge-led competitions.

3.12	The training for both officers and for SMEs will provide useful preparation and learning for the council to ensure that we are able to maximise the innovation opportunities offered by the Belfast Region City Deal challenge funds and in particular the Innovation for Societal Impact fund which is in development.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.13	The programme requires officer time commitment from across the Departments.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.14	None
4.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Draft Statement of Intent Appendix 2 - Draft Agenda



Belfast
City Council

Statement of Intent between Sejong City and Belfast

This Statement of Intent is intended to set out areas of shared interest which will form the basis for cooperation between Sejong and Belfast to support their city twinning project as well as other relevant activities.

The cities of Sejong and Belfast wish to explore opportunities for long-term city to city relationships which, inter alia, contribute to shared economic prosperity, enhance bilateral trade and investment and accelerate research and innovation for both cities. Cooperation between both cities will also include the promotion of skills development and job creation in both regions, business growth, market access for participating entities, shared socioeconomic prosperity and lasting research and innovation to address city challenges.

Both cities, working together for the purposes of this Statement of Intent, will consider their cooperation in such particular areas of interest as follow but are not exclusive to:

- smart cities, cyber security, fintech, medtech, regtech, enabling and emerging technologies
- regulatory sandboxes
- research and innovation contributing to mobility, health and wellbeing, advanced manufacturing, net zero, sustainable and resilient cities.
- innovation eco-systems and innovative procurement.
- economic development and diversification.
- start-up and SME support.
- academic, educational and cultural cooperation.
- opportunities for bilateral trade and investment, as appropriate, supported by Invest Northern Ireland

In accordance with the principles of equality and mutual benefit, both cities will explore opportunities to carry out cooperation in various forms to support the areas listed above.

Both cities will conduct regular visits and exchanges to strengthen further their friendly and cooperative relationships and will exchange information on the areas listed above as applicable.

This Statement of Intent is not a legally binding document and will not be deemed to constitute or create any legally binding or enforceable obligations, express or implied.

It will come into effect on the date of signing and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Signed on behalf of Sejong City

Name:

Title:

Date:

Signed on behalf of Belfast City Council

Name:

Title:

Date:

UK – South Korea Innovation Twins – Showcase Event
30 March 2022

Agenda

Session	Presentations	Who?	Timing (approx.)
8:00 am	Welcome Remarks	CPC	5 mins
8:05	Invest In Northern Ireland	Led by Mark Graham Invest NI	20 minutes
Webinar 1 – Showcasing the strengths of NI/Belfast and South Korea/Sejong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to invest In Northern Ireland and Belfast City Council • Industry showcase • Companies doing business in the Republic of Korea 		
	Belfast City Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key innovation projects and investments • Intro by ICB Chair Ian Greer (pre-recorded video) • Deborah Colville to present main presentation 	Deborah Colville Belfast City Council	10 mins
8:36	Break		5 mins
8:43	Sejong / Republic of South Korea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International initiatives showcase • Sector strengths and successes 	Sejong	30 mins
9:14	Keynote speech from Ian Greer, Belfast's innovation ambitions and sector strengths and addresses the benefits of bilateral engagement between Belfast and Sejong, potential outcomes and impact for both cities	Ian Greer Chair of Innovation City Belfast and Vice Chancellor of QUB	5 mins
9:20	Keynote speech from Sejong	Sejong Rep	5 mins
9:25	Signing of Statement of Intent – pre-recording of signing by Belfast City Council Acting CX and signing by Sejong representative	Ronan Cregan and Sejong Rep	5 mins
9:30	Break		
9:35	Innovation Twins presentation by Rachel Gardner Poole	CPC Chief Operating Officer	5 mins
9:40	Belfast and Sejong Innovative Procurement Playbook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of key findings from the development of the Belfast and Sejong Innovative Procurement Playbooks • Overview of key learning from SME and Challenge Owner training programmes 	Warren Smith CPC	20 mins

10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'art of the possible', demos from SMEs involved in the Belfast and Sejong programmes 		30 mins
10:42	Break		5 mins
10:47 Webinar 3 – Forward look on city and national bilateral relations	Panel discussion on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities for collaboration new cities joining the programme funding opportunities Q&A	Rachel Gardner Pool CPC Chief Operating Officer, Deborah Colville, Sejong Rep, UNDP	30 minutes
11:20 Close	Closing remarks from Senior Rep	CPC	5 mins



Subject:	UEFA Conference League Final 2023
Date:	25th March, 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

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"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide details of a recent request from the Irish Football Association (IFA) for the Council to support its bid for the UEFA Conference League Final 2023 and agree the Council's position in relation to this.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. note the details of the imminent bid by the IFA; ii. consider the request to provide support, as set out in the appendix; iii. note the possible future request for financial support if the bid is successful to host the UEFA Conference League Final 2023 and that such support is not in the medium-term financial planning. Should the IFA be awarded this event, a report will subsequently be brought to Committee outlining resource implications; and iv. authorise officers to engage with the IFA in this development process.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	In August 2021, Belfast hosted the UEFA Super Cup final at the National Stadium. The Council provided support of £200,000 to the IFA for the event, with this being allocated to areas such as City Animation, Fan Mobility and Fan Experience, the Formal Dinner in the City Hall and other City logistics.
3.2	An estimated 12,725 bed nights were created in Belfast, generating £1.12 million for the local accommodation sector. A further £700,000 was spent by attendees while in Northern Ireland for the match. The direct economic impact of the event has been measured at £3.9 million with a total economic impact of over £4 million. The benefits generated by the Super Cup also extend beyond the economic impacts. The match was aired on television and digital media all around the world, attracting an audience of 24.4 million (source: independent socio-economic report commissioned by the IFA). It should also be noted that this event was impacted by the pandemic.
3.3	Council officers have now received a request from the IFA to support its bid for the UEFA Conference League Final 2023. This is a new competition and this bid is for the second year it takes place, the first final will be in Albania in June, 2022. As far as the infrastructure and expectations for the event, they are similar to the UEFA Super Cup Final hosted last year. There is no historical information on the impact of this particular final event.
3.4	To present an understanding of the timelines involved, UEFA's Evaluation phase is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - February/March 2022: Potential site visits by UEFA - April 2022: Evaluation finished - May 2022: Appointment of the Host Association by the UEFA Executive Committee
3.5	The IFA reached out to the Council for a letter of support as the bid deadline was February. Following the issue of a letter of support from the Lord Mayor, (which did not indicate any financial commitment), UEFA has since requested that the Council sign a 'Host City Authority Undertaking' letter to further confirm support for the bid. UEFA has given the IFA a deadline of 24 th March for return. This outlines a number of obligations the host City would have if hosting and has been reviewed by Legal Services. The advice given is that political approval is required prior to the Council agreeing to the terms of the document. This document is included at appendix 1.
3.6	Furthermore, should the bid be successful, it is anticipated that there will be a financial ask - there is, however, no indication as yet of what this might be. The profile of the UEFA Conference League Final 2023 is possibly on a par with that of the Super Cup, and therefore there is the possibility of a similar request for the 2021 event. In addition, officers from the City Events Unit provided significant support to the IFA during the delivery of the Super Cup.

3.7	<p>This potential financial support is not in the medium-term planning. In addition, it should also be noted that 2023 is a year of significant major event activity for Council, including the hosting of One Young World, the staging of the now biennial Maritime Festival signature event and preparation for 2024 Year of Culture, along with annual programme of events and potentially early planning of the Fleadh Cheol. These exiting commitments have been considered within the division's resource planning which did not include provision for this event.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>There are currently no resource implications, however, Members should be aware that a request for financial support will follow should IFA be successful in its bid for Belfast to host this event. No provision for financial support has been planned for in financial forecasts. A subsequent report will be taken to Committee.</p> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.9	<p>There are currently no equality and good relations implications.</p>
4.0	Document Attached
4.1	<p>IFA Host City Undertaking – Letter of Commitment</p>

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HostCityAuthorityUndertaking

To: Union des associations européennes de football
Route de Genève 46
1260 Nyon 2
Switzerland
("UEFA")

Date:

UEFA Europa Conference League Final 2022 and 2023

Dear Sirs,

I/We the undersigned, being the person duly authorised to undertake obligations on behalf of the *[Insert full legal name of the Host City Authority]* (the "Host City Authority") understand that the *[insert name of the Host Association]* (the "Host Association") is applying to be appointed as the entity responsible for staging and organising the UEFA Europa Conference League Final 2022 and 2023 at the *[Insert name of the Stadium]* in the City of *[Insert name if of the City]* (referred to respectively as "UECL Final Match", the "Stadium" and the "Host City").

If the Host Association is appointed by UEFA and in consideration of the mutual rights and obligations of the parties, this Undertaking constitutes the Host City Authority's acknowledgement and agreement to use its best endeavours to comply, subject to any cost implications,, with the organisational and operational requirements of the Host City Authority for the UECL Final Match and any additional events (if and when applicable), that are attached as Appendix 1 ("Host City Authority Requirements") to this Undertaking and to use its best endeavours to comply fully with all instructions and guidelines given by the Host Association and/or UEFA in relation thereto.

In addition, the Host City Authority hereby represents and undertakes to the Host Association and UEFA that it will use its best endeavours to comply with the following:

1. It shall create an appropriate structure within its organisation to provide full cooperation and assistance to UEFA and the Host Association to ensure the successful and smooth organisation of the UECL Final and the Additional Events (if and when applicable) in the Host City.
2. It supports, without any financial commitment being made, the offer of the Host Association to host the UECL Final Match and any additional events (if and when applicable) and it will continue to fully support and cooperate with the Host Association and UEFA in relation to the preparation, organisation and promotion of the UECL Final Match, and any additional events in the Host City including by making its personnel, ground(s), building(s) and infrastructure(s) available for fulfilling its obligations.
3. It acknowledges that the preparation, organisation and staging of the UECL Final Match and any additional events (if and when applicable) will be classified as a matter of general interest with priority of primary importance within the Host City.

Host City Authority Undertaking

4. It shall issue to the Host Association and UEFA, in a quick and efficient manner, any and all approvals and consents as may be required in connection with the UECL Final Match and any additional events (if and when applicable) in an expedited fashion, provided that all requirements set by any applicable laws are met. With respect to consents and approvals which do not fall into the Host City Authority's competencies, it agrees to proactively support the Host Association and UEFA in obtaining any and all such consents and approvals.
5. It shall take all necessary and reasonable steps to secure the full support and cooperation of all other relevant Authorities for the successful staging and organisation of the UECL Final Match and any additional events (if and when applicable) in the Host City.
6. It shall not knowingly by any act or omission breach the Host City Authority Requirements nor place the Host Association in breach of its obligations to UEFA with respect to the staging and organisation of the UECL Final Match and any additional events (if and when applicable) in the Host City.
7. It shall indemnify, hold harmless and defend UEFA from and against all liabilities, claims, damages or costs (including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses) suffered or incurred as a result of a failure by the Host City Authority to perform any of its obligations in relation to the staging and organisation of the UECL Final Match and any additional events (if and when applicable) in the Host City.
8. It shall, upon UEFA's request, grant to UEFA a licence to use its intellectual property for the purpose of the successful staging and organisation of the UECL Final Match.
9. It shall not use any marks, logos or other intellectual property belonging to UEFA in connection with the UEFA Europa Conference League Final 2022 and 2023 and/or the UECL Final Match and/or any additional events (if and when applicable) at any time without the prior written approval of UEFA.

If deemed necessary, the Host City Authority and the Host Association may execute a long-form agreement between them (which cannot be derogating to this Undertaking) in relation to the staging and the organisation of the UECL Final Match and any additional events (if and when applicable) in the Host City. UEFA shall (i) be informed of the intention to conclude such agreement, (ii) have the right to receive such agreement and (iii) be entitled to comment such agreement before its execution.

This letter should not be taken as a financial commitment by Belfast City Council. Should the cost to the Council of continuing to support the UEFA Conference League Final 2022 and 2023 prove, in the reasonable opinion of the Council to be financially prohibitive, the Council shall have the right to withdraw its support, whereupon this letter shall cease to have effect, and the provisions of clause 7 shall not apply.

I/We acknowledge and agree that the terms of this Undertaking shall be considered valid and fully enforceable provided that the Host Association is appointed by UEFA to stage and organise the UEFA Europa Conference League Final 2022 and 2023 and any additional events in the Host City.

HostCityAuthorityUndertaking

This Undertaking has been signed by a duly authorised signatory:

For Host City Authority:

Signature

Name

Title

Date

Acknowledged by the Host Association:

Signature

Name

HostCityAuthorityUndertaking

Title

Date



Subject:	Update on Area Working Groups
Date:	25th March, 2022
Reporting Officer:	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
Contact Officer:	Shauna Murtagh, Programme Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To seek the Committee's approval of the minutes of the most recent round of AWG meetings.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. approve the most recent AWG minutes (<i>North – 23rd February, West – 24th February, South – 28th February and East – 3rd March</i>), as attached; and ii. approve the recommendation of the South AWG that £463,015 of the £1.35m which had been ringfenced for Sandy Row area projects (formerly Gilpin's) be allocated to the Arts and Digital Hub, which is being taken in conjunction with Urban Villages

3.0	Main Report
	<u>KEY ISSUES</u>
3.1	<p>Area Working Group Minutes</p> <p>Members agreed, in June 2016, that the Area Working Group minutes would be taken into the SP and R Committee for approval going forward, in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency and to ensure a consistent approach with other Member-led Working Groups.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to approve the most recent AWG minutes as attached.</p>
3.2	<p>West AWG</p> <p>The West AWG agreed to recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LIF St James' Community Forum - The reallocation of underspend (£16k) from the St James Community Forum project to Davitt's GAC to fund the school link pathways project; and, - BIF Glencairn - The proposed approach of construction of a new community/neighbourhood centre in the Glencairn Estate with Education Authority ownership and management (Option 2) as detailed in the report. <p>South AWG - BIF Arts and Digital Hub (partnership project with Urban Villages)</p>
3.3	<p>The South AWG agreed to recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Arts and Digital Hub project would be allocated £463,015 of the £1.35m which had been ringfenced for Sandy Row area projects (formerly Gilpins) and that Urban Villages would be advised accordingly.
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>A total of £463,015 will be allocated to the Arts and Digital Hub project from the £1.34m previously ringfenced for the Sandy Row area under the BIF Programme, leaving a balance of £886,985 for the remaining Sandy Row area projects.</p> <p>A total of £16,000 will be allocated to Davitt's GAC from underspend on the St. James' Community Forum LIF project (WLIF2-10).</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.5	None.
4.0	Documents Attached
	Minutes of the meeting of the four Area Working Groups

North Belfast Area Working Group

Wednesday, 23rd February, 2021

NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor McCullough (Chairperson);
Councillors Bradley, Cobain, Ferguson, Magee, Maskey,
McCusker, Murphy, O'Hara, Pankhurst and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Ms. N. Mulrine, Regeneration Project Officer;
Ms. E. McCullough, Neighbourhood Services Integration
Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies for inability to attend were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 24th November, 2021 were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Presentations

University of Ulster - Mr. Duncan Morrow

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. Duncan Morrow, Director of Community Engagement, University of Ulster, to the meeting.

Mr. Morrow informed the Working Group that the University of Ulster build programme had remained operational for the majority of the pandemic and had been subject to ongoing monitoring and reporting.

He outlined how the new Belfast Campus had already changed the nature of the area, through placemaking and providing new links to north Belfast and how a collaborative project,

with the Council, was underway to develop a model for tracking community benefits in local areas, particularly those adjacent to the city centre area. He informed the Members that the aim of the project was to monitor medium and long term progress, as regeneration projects are developed and delivered.

He pointed out that the Ulster University had been working towards building collaborative partnerships with sustainable relationships with its local community, through engagement activities which included:

- Educational outreach;
- Community Benefit Framework;
- Neighbourhood Community Forum;
- Belfast Campus Community Safety Group; and
- Great Place North Belfast.

He reported that the Ulster University hoped to work collaboratively, with Belfast City Council, through various projects, to address issues that affect the city centre and north Belfast, which included:

- Educational inequalities;
- Placemaking;
- Inclusive growth;
- Active travel;
- Covid recovery;
- Bolder Vision – Cathedral Gardens;
- Culture and Tourism; and
- City Quay Gardens.

Following several questions from Members of the Working Group, the Chairperson thanked Mr. Morrow for his presentation, and he retired from the meeting.

Physical Programmes Update

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1. Introduction

The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering in behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the physical programme update for North Belfast.

3. Local Investment Fund

LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation with the North being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £800,000 under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 43 projects in total have received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 34 have been completed; 2 are at delivery stage; 2 are at pre-construction stage and 5 remain at due diligence / initial stages. In total, 79% of all LIF North projects have now been completed.

LIF breakdown – North	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	22 (88%)	£956,500	12 (67%)	£566,400
Number of Projects On-going Delivery	1(4%)	£40,000	2 (11%)	£133,467
Number of Projects in Pre-construction			1 (6%)	£21,667
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	2(8%)	£131,000	3 (17%)	£76,667
Total Number of Approved Projects	25 *	£1,127,500	18 **	£798,201

**This includes additional funding for a LIF 2 project, Ballysillan Youth for Christ.*

*** This includes additional funding for two LIF 1 projects, Marrowbone Parochial Hall and Jennymount Church.*

The table below provide an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects. Members are asked to note the status of the current LIF projects and the ongoing actions.

LIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / recommendation
NLIF066	Wishing Well Project	£40,000	On Ground	Project nearing completion.	Continue engagement with group re final account.
NLIF2-14	Star Neighbourhood Centre	£58,467	On Ground	Project on site. Electrical works complete. Artist appointed for mural on exterior wall. Art piece has been installed. Quotations from supplier for	Continue engagement with the group.

				playground equipment received.	
NLIF2-22	Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment	£75,000	On Ground	Project is progressing on site. Heaters procured and installed. Structural Engineer surveyed the internal roof structure and identified necessary works. Contractor for roof work has been appointed and work started 7 February 2022.	Continued engagement with group.
NLIF2-21	Somme Group – cross community memorial	£21,667	Tender preparation	Progressing through Due Diligence stage. Designs also completed and planning application approved. Ongoing work with Legal Services in order to get the funding agreement prepared. Change of Trustees so details to be included in management and maintenance agreement.	Management and maintenance agreement to be finalised and funding agreement signed off at next DD meeting. Requirement for street works licence to be resolved, work in progress with Dfl.
NLIF014	Westland Community Centre - new buildings	£65,000	Due Diligence stage	Project originally agreed for LIF January 2013. Since SIF support was withdrawn in 2019 Westland Community Group are being supported by partners, including UV, NIHE and BCC to build capacity, and provide programming funding support. A revised community centre scheme has been agreed as a UV capital pipeline project and a business case is progressing.	Continued engagement with group and the Executive Office in regarding to UV business case process and Due Diligence information.
NLIF2-19	Women's Tec	£46,667	Due Diligence stage	Agreed February 2017. Group is renewing their lease at the former Skegoniell Primary School. They have now signed the	Continued engagement with Group in terms of the lease.

				lease and it is with the Education Authority for signature.	
NLIF2-03	Ardoyne Shankill Health Partnership	£15,000	Due Diligence stage	Agreed in June 2018. Project remains at Due Diligence stage – lease issues to be resolved. Officers have had recent contact with the group and the project remains live – the group expect the lease shortly.	Continued engagement with Group.
NLIF057	Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club	£66,000	Due Diligence stage	Agreed April 2014 - This project is within the overall UV development of St Gemma's School - ABC Trust. The Business Case has been approved and a Letter of Offer is expected imminently from the Executive Office under Urban Villages. Complex legal matters are progressing well via legal teams and a tripartite MOU has been developed with the project promoter.	Continued engagement with Group and with UV
NLIF2-05	Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road	£15,000	Due Diligence stage	Agreed June 2016 - Reported to SP&R Committee on 19 th June 2020 confirming that information was received from the group and project is progressing. The title deeds for Mercy Primary School have been received and being reviewed by Legal Services.	Continued engagement with Group. To be presented at the future Due Diligence meeting.

4. **Belfast Investment Fund**

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – North Belfast was allocated £5.5m. In North Belfast, 7 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m: and 2 projects are on the longer BIF list. Each of the 'In Principle' projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a

rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

Members are asked to note the status update of these projects provided below. The table provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects

North	Stage 3 - Cancer Lifeline—£650k; Grace Family Centre —£1.6m; Basement Youth Club/ Elim Church Ireland - £1.5m <i>Stage 2- Malgrove- £500k, Marrowbone Park £750k; Cultural Community Hub - £350k, Midland Boxing Club £400k</i> <i>Stage 1 - Cliftonville Community Forum, Sunningdale Community Centre - no commitment</i>
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BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / recommendation
BIF22/34	Basement Youth Club/ Elim Church (Old Grove)	£1,500,000	Design stage	<p>The updated Economic Appraisal and Business Plan has been sent to the Department of Education. This new proposal would see the demolition and rebuild of the building previously used by Basement Youth Club and owned by Elim Church on Gainsborough Drive.</p> <p>A meeting took place on 07.02.22 with the Minister of Education, local councillors, Elim officials, DE representatives and council officers to progress the project which is currently subject to scrutiny by the Departmental Solicitors Office.</p>	Continue engagement with the group and stakeholders.
BIF15	Malgrove	£500,000	Uncommitted	<p>Business case completed - preferred pavilion option (2017) is for a 4-team changing at estimated cost of £1million. £500k funding deficit remains – avenues</p>	Continue engagement with the group.

				to be explored incl. DfC. Positive response received from NIE re. availability of portion of their land to accommodate element of project carparking requirements - awaiting confirmation of boundary which will inform site design layout.	
BIF45	Midland Boxing Club	£400,000	Uncommitted -Design Stage	Planning permission obtained Dec 2021. Land transfer was approved by council in Feb 2022. Officers in Legal Services are liaising with Northern Ireland Housing Executive to complete the acquisition of land for the extension. Pre-tender estimates show the project may require further funding (approx. £144k) and project officers are working with group to address this, including approaching other funders. Tender package prepared and ready to issue, subject to funding. Aim to bring back to Due Diligence in March.	Continue engagement with the group, design team and funders.
BIF41	Marrowbone Millennium Park	£750,000	Uncommitted – Tender Stage	Partnership project with UV and DfC. A Letter of Offer was agreed in November 2021 and governance structures now in place. NIHE/ Council lease agreement regarding land transfer progressing. Planning has been approved. Procurement of contractor is underway.	Continue engagement with the group and stakeholders.
BIF43	Cultural Community Hub	£350,000	Uncommitted	Proposed new cultural hub community facility.	Continue engagement with

				<p>Project will comprise of a 130sqm permanent brick facility on derelict Orange Lodge owned site. As Upper Crumlin Road Cultural Association is recently constituted, it is proposed that the County Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast will be project guarantor. Discussed initially at Due Diligence in August 2021 with no major issues. Legal Services currently reviewing documents and the aim is to bring project to Due Diligence by April 2022.</p>	the group and stakeholders.
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5. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new ones. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. Table below provides an update on current live projects North Belfast area. Members are asked to note the status and updates.

North Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
Belfast Zoo – Programme of Works (Works to the Large Cats Enclosure, Sea Lion, etc)	Stage 3 - Committed Project. On ground. Sea Lion works complete, H&S works progressing and to be complete in the next 4-6 weeks. New lion enclosure works under discussion.
Boodles Dam – Abandonment of the Dam	Stage 3 – Committed Project. On ground. Contractor is on site and is undertaking works. Planned completion in Spring 2022.
Playground Improvement Programme 2021/2022 (City wide)	Stage 3 – Committed Project. Cavehill Adventurous playground. Works to start on February 2022, completion expected early April 2022.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	Stage 3 – Committed Project. On Ground. Update reported to SP&R Committee in February 2022 regarding the Storm Drainage Infrastructure Installation.

Reservoir Safety Programme	Stage 3- Committed Project. Works to Alexandra Park, Waterworks Upper and Waterworks Lower. Consultants appointed and undertaking investigative work to assess the existing condition of the reservoirs and associated structures.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	Stage 3 – Committed Project. Update to be brought to future AWG
LTP - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility	Stage 2 – Uncommitted Project. Continued development of OBC for new leisure facility. Continued liaison with key stakeholders around options for new facility and overall development of the Girdwood site.
Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	Stage 2 – Uncommitted Project. OBC being worked up
Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot	Stage 2 – Uncommitted Project. OBC being worked up
Glencairn Park/ Ligoniel Park Greenway	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.
Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.

6. **Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund**

Members are reminded that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund has recently been launched and is a new £8m capital programme to support capital projects across the city. The fund is now open for Stage 1 applications via an open call process and will close on 12 May 2022. Communications activity is already underway via a variety of tools to promote the fund to as wide an audience as possible.

7. **Externally funded programmes**

The Council is the delivery partner for several government department on key capital investment programmes, namely Social Investment Fund (SIF) and Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office as well as a number of schemes with DfC. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to North Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in North Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined North Belfast geography (Ardoyne and Greater Ballysillan).

Project	Status and update
Marrowbone Millennium Park (links to BIF programme)	Partnership project with UV and DfC. A Letter of Offer was agreed in November 2021 and governance structures now in place. NIHE/ Council lease agreement regarding land transfer progressing. Planning has been

	approved. Procurement of contractor is underway.
Ballysillan Playing Fields	Partnership project with UV, DfC and DfL Living with Water Programme. A Letter of Offer was agreed in November 2021 and governance structures are now in place. At design stage.
Beann Mhadagáin Family Centre	No Letter of Offer in place. Council is acting as delivery agent. The project has been moved to emerging / feasibility stage as the Project Promoter has paused work to consider governance and capacity. The draft Business Case has identified a potential funding deficit. Any future Letter of Offer is dependent upon confirmation of funding and Business Case approval.
Sunningdale Community Centre	No Letter of Offer in place. Council is acting as delivery agent, proposed on Council land. The Business Case has been approved and a Letter of Offer is expected imminently. TEO has confirmed that the funding gap previously identified will be met via the UV Programme. Sustainability issues that had previously been highlighted have been explored and Council is satisfied these have been resolved. Council is considering an in-principle agreement to transfer lands. The Design Team has been appointed.
Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project	No Letter of Offer in place. Council is acting as delivery agent. The Business Case is progressing. TEO has identified a potential funding gap and has advised that it is exploring additional funding opportunities to support this project. The project designs and costs are being developed.
St Gemma's ABC Trust (links to LIF programme)	No Letter of Offer in place. Partnership project with UV. The Business Case has been approved and a Letter of Offer is expected imminently. Complex legal matters are progressing well via legal teams and a tripartite MOU has been developed with the project promoter. At design stage.
Westland Community Centre (links to LIF programme)	No Letter of Offer in place. Partnership project with UV. This is an emerging project at feasibility stage and Business Case is progressing.

Peace IV

Members are asked to note the update on Peace IV - Forth Meadow Community Greenway project.

Project	Status and update
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Forth Meadow Community Greenway project	<p>On Ground. The project is split into five distinct sections:</p> <p><i>Section 1 – Glencairn</i> - Works are well underway at Section 1 with a planned completion of Spring 2022.</p> <p><i>Section 2 – Forth River/ Springfield Road</i> – works scheduled to start this month. <i>Section 3- Falls Park/Whiterock</i> - works are scheduled to start in the next month. <i>Section 4 – Bog Meadows</i> - Planning permission has been secured for Section 4 with works due to commence next month.</p> <p><i>Section 5 – Westlink to City Centre</i> - currently at detailed design stage.</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Council has recently been advised that an application for leave to apply for a judicial review in respect of the planning approval for Section 2 of the works has been lodged with the Courts. Business case submitted to DfI for further funding - decision pending. Estimated completion of SEUPB programme December 2023. Reported to SP&R Committee in February 2022 on the potential negative impact of any delay on the project.</p>
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DfC funded projects

Members are asked to note the update on projects funded by Department for Communities.

Project	Status and update
Girdwood Indoor Sports Site— ICT	Continued development of OBC for new leisure facility. Continued liaison with key stakeholders around options for new facility and overall development of the Girdwood site.
Voice of Young people In Care (VOYPIC) and Include Youth	Council is acting as delivery agent. On Ground. Refurbishment of 100 Great Patrick St, Belfast to provide a modern, fit for purpose youth space. Contractor started on site in January 2022. Funded by DfC and the group.
Ballysillan 3G Pitch (Carpet Replacement)	Tender stage. Replacement of 3G carpet. Match funded by DfC.

Living With Water Programme (LWWP)

Members are asked to note the update on projects under LWWP.

Project	Status and update
Belfast Castle Estate – SuDS pilot project	Project recently completed. Natural flood management scheme based on a sustainable drainage pilot project in the grounds of Belfast Castle. “

The Working Group noted the content of the report.

Alleygating Scheme Phase 5 - Verbal Update

The Director of Physical Programmes informed the Members that a report in respect of the Alleygates Scheme had been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, where a number of omissions had been highlighted by Members, and that the Committee had agreed that the long list would be amended to reflect all of the proposals that had been put forward for the scheme, and a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.

Chairperson

West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 24th February, 2022

WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Corr (Chairperson),
Alderman Kingston and McCoubrey; and
Councillors Baker, Beattie, Black, Canavan,
Donnelly, Garrett, Hutchinson, McCabe and Verner.

In attendance: Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. D. Logan, Project Manager, Physical Programmes;
Ms. A. McGlone, Neighbourhood Integration Manager;
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies were reported on behalf of Alderman Carson and Councillor Matt Collins.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 25th November were agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

Alderman Kingston declared an interest in relation to item 2b on the agenda, Shankill Mission Hotel, as a Director of the Argyle Business Centre, and left the meeting whilst the item was being considered.

Councillors Corr and Donnelly declared an interest in item 2c, Belfast Celtic, in so far as they either worked for or were associated with Black Mountain Shared Spaces.

Presentations

Proposed approach in regard to requests to address/present to the Working Group

Following discussion, it was agreed that, where possible, site visits would be convened to view organisations/clubs future proposals as it was felt that such an arrangement would enable the proposal to be considered within the context of the existing facilities.

It was noted that on some occasions it might still be necessary to invite an organisation to present.

Presentation by the Shankill Mission

(Alderman Kingston left the meeting during this part of the meeting)

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting, Mr. D. McBride, Executive Chairman, representing the Argyle Business Centre (ABC).

Mr. McBride provided the Working Group with a brief background to the ABC and its services. He then drew Members' attention to the ABC's proposal in respect of the Mission Hotel that would be located in the Shankill Road Mission building on the Shankill Road, Belfast.

Mr. McBride took the Members through the details of the presentation. He highlighted his belief that this project was critical to the economic development of the area and that it would help to kickstart regeneration in the area. He also advised that, given the educational underachievement within the area, the Shankill Mission Hotel would promote growth by providing opportunities for skills development through job creation and apprenticeships.

He reviewed the original plan for the hotel and advised that the initial budget had been £8M. He advised also that, to date, £40k had been spent on Risk Elimination but unfortunately, due to Covid, all development had been put on hold. Mr. McBride then set out the next steps for the proposed development of the Shankill Mission. He advised that the Heritage Enterprise grant scheme had re-opened and that they had engaged a consultant for the application for a capital grant and a development grant to assist with the initial staffing funding and support. They had also applied for the Urban Development Grant. However, there was currently a debate in regard to 'double funding', therefore, the application was currently being reviewed. However, as areas of Special Economic Deprivation could override this, they were hopeful that the application would be successful. In addition, they had registered their intent for Peace Plus and had also engaged consultants to assist with the application.

Mr. McBride concluded his presentation by thanking the Members for the opportunity to address the Working Group and he asked them to remain committed to the Shankill Mission Hotel project whilst they awaited confirmation of funding in relation to their 'Peace Plus' funding application.

During discussion a number of the Members referred to the Shankill area and the positive regeneration works that had taken place. They stressed that they were keen not to see the area negatively portrayed as it still had much to offer.

Several of the Members referred to the current significant increase in build costs, and the fact that the projected £750k had not been reviewed in several years. Following discussion, the representative agreed to forward updated projected build costs which would be circulated to the Members.

It was also suggested to the representative that the organisation needed to try and identify other private funding options and a Member specifically drew reference to the Financial Capital Transaction Fund and encouraged Mr. McBride to investigate this fund further.

Several Members noted the update and whilst they acknowledged the problems and delays that the Covid Pandemic had created they advised that the proposal needed to be progressed as a matter of urgency.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. McBride for his presentation, and he left the meeting.

Noted.

Presentation by Belfast Celtic

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting, Mr. J. Gallon, representing Belfast Celtic CIC.

Mr. Gallon commenced by providing the Working Group with a brief background to Belfast Celtic CIC and its services. He then drew Members' attention to the club's vision for the future:

- to bring Irish League Football back to West Belfast;
- for it to become a community club at the heart of the rapidly growing Glen Road and to offer more than football; and
- to unify the wider "Celtic" family in West Belfast and to develop its growing links to Glasgow Celtic FC.

He then outlined the Club's Redevelopment Proposals as follows:

- state of readiness for Sub Regional Stadia Funding;
- initial planning application submitted December 2013;
- revised application submitted September 2020 (approved May 2021);
- Sport NI Facilities Fund- New WC Provisions (£25k) (Committed);
- IFA Grassroots Facilities Funding Application- Upgrade Carpark (£30k) (Committed); and
- Choice Housing collaboration (£5k) (Committed).

He proceeded to present the Working Group with a summary of the reasons of need for the proposed redevelopment, as follows:

- limitations of current grass pitch; restricted use; Summer season repairs;
- difficulties in accessing other suitable playing facilities locally when required- Demand outstrips supply;
- the potential to host additional local football clubs and teams (early discussions with Belfast Swifts);
- facilities upgrade required to aid progression of Belfast Celtic up through the leagues;
- to facilitate wider community participation and address health and well-being challenges of local communities through the power of participation in sport;
- identification of current and forthcoming Council funding opportunities which align with our ambitions;

- support to lobby other government Departments;
- update on the Council's position on Sub Regional Stadia Funding;
- renegotiation of the Lease with the Council (20 years remaining at present); and
- Seek Council Officer Support to further develop "Celtic Cup" summer tournament in partnership with Glasgow Celtic Football Club.

Following the presentation, it was agreed that:

- officers from the Neighbourhood Services Team and Physical Programmes would identify officer support to liaise with Belfast Celtic to assist with the organisation of a Football Tournament Event; and
- a site visit to the facilities would be convened which would enable the Members to relate to the suggested proposals made during the presentation.

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Gallon for his presentation and he left the meeting.

Physical Programmes Update

The Working Group considered the following report:

"1. Introduction

The Council's Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering in behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to

- **note the physical programmes update for West Belfast;**
- **note the success story on the completed St James Community Forum project and consider the reallocation of underspend LIF monies of up to £16k; and,**
- **note the update on Glencairn Community Project and agree to the proposed approach which involves construction of a new community/neighbourhood centre in the Glencairn Estate with Education Authority ownership and management.**

3. Local Investment Fund

Members are reminded LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation. (LIF 1 – West - £1,127,500 + Shankill £490,000 and LIF 2 - £1,400,000).

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 49 projects have received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 47 have been completed and 2 projects at delivery stage. In total, 95% of all LIF West projects have now been completed. Further details of these are outlined below.

LIF breakdown – West	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/ Description	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)	Projects	Amount/ Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	25 (100%)	£1,617,500	22 (92%)	£1,301,788
Number of Projects On-going Delivery			2 (8%)	£98,212
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)				
Total Number of Approved Projects	25	£1,617,500	24	£1,400,000

The below table is a brief overview of the remaining live projects are shown below.

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action / recommendation
WLIF2-08	Berlin Swifts Football Club	£65,085	On Ground	Work underway to ensure connections (sewer and utilities), meetings with Education Authority to confirm preferred option.	Continue engagement with the groups and project partners.

				Additional funding contribution received from Department of Communities to ensure works can complete.	
WLIF2-04	St John Bosco Boxing Club	£40,000	On Ground	Contractor appointed. Works progressing. Estimated project completion date by May 2022.	Ongoing liaison with Sport NI and group.

St James Community Forum (WLIF2-10)

Members will note that on September 2015, the AWG agreed to allocate to the St James Community Forum urban farm/allotment project an initial LIF budget of £82,000. On September 2020, the LIF budget was further increased with the additional funding of £50,000, which brought the overall LIF budget to £132,000. During that time, Officers have been engaging with DfC, Groundwork NI and other partners for possible match funding, which was successfully secured. On March 2021, the AWG agreed to reallocate £17,000 of St James Community Forum monies to St John GAC. Both the St James' Community Forum and St John GAC projects have now been completed. The St James' project success story has received extremely positive media and local support. Following the conclusion of the project's final account, there is a LIF amount remaining of £16,191 that is now available for reallocation, leaving a final LIF budget at St James' of £99,000, reduced from £132,000.

Members are asked to note the success story of St James' Community Forum project and consider the reallocation of up to £16,000 monies from the underspend at St James' CF.

4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration, partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment. The West AWG had a total allocation of £9m comprising £5.5m from the original allocation, an additional £1.2m which was ring-fenced for projects in the Shankill area when this became part of the West AWG following the Council elections in 2015 and £2.5m which was ringfenced for projects in the Colin area following LGR.

6 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF accounting for the full allocation. Each of the 'In Principle' projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects.

Summary of BIF allocated projects

West	Stage 3—Davitts GAC—£1m; Raidió Fáilte—£950k; St Comgall's- £3.5m; Colin Glen Forest Park—£2.5m Stage 2—Glencairn Community Project— £700k; St Mary's CBS— no commitment Stage 1— Royal British Legion—£300k; An Sportslann; Suffolk Community Forum; Belfast Hills- Black Mountain Access—no commitment
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Glencairn Community Project (BIF09)

In 2016, £700,000 was allocated towards construction of a new multi-functional facility/ neighbourhood centre in Glencairn. The purpose of the centre is to provide a hub for a range of community, sport, health and leisure-based activities to meet the needs of the growing population, improve economic and social prospects and enhance the quality of life for residents of the Glencairn area.

Glencairn Community Project formed as a representative group of the Glencairn community with responsibility for progressing the project. It was the intention that GCP would own and manage the building however without having an existing facility, it has been difficult for the group to demonstrate experience and capability in this regard. The council's Due Diligence panel has recognised the efforts of Glencairn Community Project to seek governance support and undertake training but still have concerns regarding the sustainability of the group to own and manage the building.

While numerous economic appraisals have been prepared which have considered proposals of varying scale and cost, affordability and funding have been recurrent issues which have hindered progress. Subsequent discussions with the Education Authority (EA) have however contributed to securing additional funding (£500,000) and an agreement in principle that EA would partner BCC in a new build facility with space for EA managed activities. Consequently, updated plans for the scheme were produced and costed in 2020.

Work has subsequently been carried out to develop options with the aim of moving the project forward. The following options have been considered:

- Option 1: Shared facility owned and managed by Glencairn Community Project at a capital cost of £1,079,500;

- Option 2: Shared facility owned and managed by Education Authority with Glencairn Community Project becoming anchor tenant for their portion of the building; and
- Option 3: A scaled back version of the facility, potentially a modular build, with the Glencairn Community Project operating the facility.

Officers have engaged with Education Authority, Elected Members and Glencairn Community Project to discuss the opportunities and implications of each option. Based on these discussions, Option 2 emerged as the preferred option. It is considered that Option 2 presents an opportunity to deliver a project of an appropriate scale to meet the needs of both Glencairn Community Project and Education Authority youth provision. Option 2 would also build the leadership and capacity of GCP and allow them to work in partnership to deliver community and youth-based activities. The partnership agreement could make provision for the facility to transfer to community ownership and management after a determined period of time should the capacity be there and conditions right. In addition, the group could become registered with EA and avail of future funding opportunities. The project has been discussed at Due Diligence and subsequently referred to the AWG for further consideration.

Members are asked to note the update on Glencairn Community Project and, following its consideration at Due Diligence, agree to the proposed approach of construction of a new community/neighbourhood centre in the Glencairn Estate with Education Authority ownership and management as outlined in Option 2.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 5 projects in West Belfast received an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to LIF and BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

SOF – West Belfast projects overview

West	Stage 3— James Connolly Interpretative centre— £650,000; Rock Centre —£200,000; Belfast Orange Hall Museum- £80,000; Roddy McCorley Museum - £1,350,000 Stage 1— Shankill Mission - £750,000
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An overview of the remaining SOF projects is outlined in the table below -

SOF ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action /recommendation
SOF05	Roddy McCorley Museum	£1,350,000	On Ground	Development of a modern interpretative museum and existing grounds. Project progressing well. Estimated completion June 2022.	Continue engagement with the group
SOF07	Shankill Mission	£750,000	Initial stage	Development of a social economy training hotel. Initial stage. Overall scheme approx. cost at £7m. Funding is the major issue—no other funding has yet been secured. Group is still working to secure match funding—exploring the Heritage Enterprise Fund (HLF), bank loans and private investments - likely to be a long-term process. Note the current position with the project and continued significant funding gap. Representatives from Argyle Business Centre are in attendance at this AWG meeting to provide a full update on this project.	Note the current position with the project and continued significant funding gap.

6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

Members are reminded that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund has recently been launched and is a new £8m capital programme to support capital projects across the city. The fund is now open for Stage 1 applications via an open call process and will close on 12 May 2022. Communications activity is already underway via a variety of tools to promote the fund to as wide an audience as possible.

7. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new ones. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. Table below provides an update on current live projects West Belfast area. Members are asked to note the status and updates provided.

West Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
City Cemetery – National Lottery Heritage Fund	Stage 3 – Committed, on the ground. Contractor works are progressing well. The new service yard was completed Dec 2020. Work commenced on the visitor centre in January 2021 and is due to be completed in April 2022. With the interpretive fitout of the exhibition and site wide information panels/signs due to be completed in May 2022. In tandem with this the restoration works on several of the site's key assets such as the Centre Steps and Victorian Fountains is well underway. The restoration of the and Mortuary Tower & exterior of Foxes Lodge is completed.
Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.
Black Mountain/ Upper Whiterock Greenway	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.
Colin Greenway	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.

Members are asked to note the updates provided.

8. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government department on key capital investment programmes, namely Social Investment Fund (SIF) and Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office as well as a number of schemes with DfC. The following is

an overview of projects within each programme relevant to West Belfast.

Urban Villages Initiative

The table below shows the status on UV projects in West Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined West Belfast geography (Colin area).

Project	Status and update
Páirc Nua Chollann (New Park in Colin)	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The contractor is on site and construction works are progressing however ongoing issues with the contractor have impacted project delivery dates. Discussions ongoing with Legal Services and UV
Colin Valley Football Club	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. A Letter of Offer was agreed in February 2022. Contractor is appointed and is at mobilisation stage. Planning approval has been granted.
Healthy Living Centre (Sport in the Community (PCA))	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The Design Team has been appointed and a planning application was presented to Planning Committee in February 2022. The Business Case has been approved and a Letter of Offer is anticipated imminently.
Colin Glen Trust	Letter of Offer not received. Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The project has been moved to emerging / feasibility stage as the Group is exploring options in relation to a funding gap. Given that the draft Business Case has identified a significant funding deficit, the Letter of Offer is dependent upon confirmation of funding and Business Case approval.

Social Investment Fund

Members are asked to note the update on the SIF funded project in West.

Project	Status and update
St. Comgall's (link to BIF programme)	The contractor is on site and works are progressing well. Supply chain issues remain ongoing however are being managed. Completion date Spring 2022.

PEACEIV – Capital Projects

Members are asked to note updates on the capital projects that are related to the PEACEIV Programme;

Project	Status and update
Forth Meadow Community Greenway	<p>On Ground. The project is split into five distinct sections:</p> <p><i>Section 1 – Glencairn</i> - Works are well underway at Section 1 with a planned completion of Spring 2022.</p> <p><i>Section 2 – Forth River/ Springfield Road</i> – works scheduled to start this month.</p> <p><i>Section 3- Falls Park/Whiterock</i> - works are scheduled to start in the next month.</p> <p><i>Section 4 – Bog Meadows</i> - Planning permission has been secured for Section 4 with works due to commence next month.</p> <p><i>Section 5 – Westlink to City Centre</i> - currently at detailed design stage.</p> <p>Members will be aware that the Council has recently been advised that an application for leave to apply for a judicial review in respect of the planning approval for Section 2 of the works has been lodged with the Courts. Business case submitted to DfI for further funding - decision pending. Estimated completion of SEUPB programme December 2023. Reported to SP&R Committee in February 2022 on the potential negative impact of any delay on the project.</p>
Black Mountain Shared Space Project	<p>Design stage. Application submitted to SEUPB for additional funds. Costs continue to be reviewed as the design develops. Full planning application submitted in December 2021. SEUPB have granted the project an extension to September 2023 and the construction programme is still in line with this timeframe.</p>
Shankill Women's Centre	<p>Application submitted to SEUPB for additional funds. ITT returned and tender report prepared, and letter of intent issued to preferred contractor. The Council in February 2022 agreed to cashflow additional funding while application for additional funds from SEUPB are pending enabling Council to proceed with award of contract.</p>

DfC funded projects

Members are asked to note on projects match funded by Department for Communities which include Páirc Nua Chollann, Berlin Swifts Football Club, Forth Meadow Community Greenway, Black Mountain Shared Space and Whiterock 3G pitch carpet replacement.”

The Working Group noted the report and agreed:

- to reallocate the underspend from the St James Community Forum project to Davitt's GAC to fund the school link pathways project ; and

- to the proposed approach of construction of a new community /neighbourhood centre in the Glencairn Estate with Education Authority ownership and management (Option 2) as detailed in the report.

Alleygates Scheme 5 (verbal Update)

The Neighbourhood Services Manager provided the Members with an update in respect of the Alleygates Scheme. He advised the Members that the 12-month plan had been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and it was due to be ratified at the March Council meeting.

The officer undertook to provide a further update at the next meeting of the Area Working Group.

Noted.

Alleygate Transformation

The Members were reminded that, at its last meeting in November, the Working Group had agreed the proposed areas that would benefit from the transformation scheme along with the proposed scoring and ranking matrix for the applications. He reported that the demand for the scheme had been huge with over 80 sites listed and highlighted that the scheme would need considerable resources. He updated that, to date, officers had not been able to assess all the sites as there was not sufficient staffing resources available to do so. In addition, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) was not contributing any revenue funding towards the scheme, only capital funding. He advised that the Council proposed to allocate a dedicated resource to assess the applications, align the workplan and draw down the money from the DfI. The Working Group was advised that Council officers were scheduled to meet with the DfI the following day to confirm finances for the scheme and he advised that any available funding would be carried forward to the next financial year. The Members were also advised that there had also been discussion regarding progressing the top priority applications, however, it was difficult to move forward on any of the applications without applying the criteria to all of the applications to ensure every application was considered fairly.

Following discussion, a number of the Members raised concerns around unadopted Alleyways and it was subsequently agreed that officers would:

- circulate to the Members of the Working Group the current list of proposed alleygate sites;
- compile a list of the 'unadopted' alleyways that needed to be brought up to standard;
- proceed to gather more information in relation to the alleyway at Beechview; and
- provide further information on how the PSNI categorised ASB for crime statistics (how this information had been gathered and registered for the purposes of the alleygate transformation scheme).

Chairperson

South Belfast Area Working Group

Monday, 28th February, 2022

MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Groogan (Chairperson); and
Councillors Bunting, Gormley, T. Kelly,
Lyons, McAteer, McKeown and Spratt.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager
(South Belfast); and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd November were approved by the Working Group.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor McKeown declared an interest in relation to the presentation on the Rosario Youth Centre hub proposal, in that he was on the capital project steering group and his son played for Rosario Football Club.

Councillor T. Kelly declared an interest in relation to the presentation on TREE NI and TREECO, on the basis that her husband was employed by the Greater Village Regeneration Trust, which managed the TREE NI project.

Request to Present

The Working Group agreed to receive at a future meeting a presentation from the Chair of the Lagan Valley Regional Park.

Presentations

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 22nd November, it had agreed to receive a presentation from the following organisations:

TREE NI/TREECO

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Ms. S. Bowden, Director of Greater Village Regeneration Trust, which managed the TREE NI project, and Mr. G. Bowden, Programme Co-ordinator.

Ms. Bowden informed the Working Group that TREE NI had been established in 2005 as a Timber Recycling Eco Enterprise. By 2010, it had evolved into a Training Reskilling, Education and Employment provider, in response to emerging needs in the area. Funding had been provided by the former Department for Employment and Learning, the European Social Fund and the Department for Communities and, more recently, through the Social Investment Fund, as the construction hub for South Belfast.

She explained that TREE NI worked primarily with young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who were not in education, employment or training and highlighted its full-time training programme, which focused primarily on enhancing literacy and numeracy, personal development, health and wellbeing and employability. In terms of results, of the eleven young people who had participated in the programme between September, 2020 and June, 2021, seven were now in full-time employment and four had progressed to further or higher education. Fifteen young people were participating in the current programme.

In addition, TREE NI also provided construction-based training at Levels 1 and 2, a ten-week youth summer intervention programme, a vocational school placement scheme, summer intervention programmes and volunteering opportunities, as well as facilitating courses for women's groups and other community organisations. A men's shed project had commenced in July, 2021, with the aim of promoting positive mental health/wellbeing, physical activity and social inclusion amongst participants, whilst developing new skills. She highlighted also TREE NI's cross community and good relations work and pointed out that it was currently involved in a partnership initiative with An Droichead, involving one hundred children.

Ms. Bowden went on to outline the work of TREECO (Training, Reskilling, Education and Employment – Career Opportunities), which had been formally established in 2017, to generate income for TREE NI, in the event of its funding being lost or reduced. TREECO provided a gardening and external maintenance service, including grass cutting, weeding, power washing and fencing. It currently operated with two full-time and two part-time staff, all of whom had progressed through the TREE NI Programme. She then outlined the various contracts which it had secured and referred to a number of prestigious awards which it had attained.

In terms of next steps, she pointed out that TREE NI/TREECO currently operated from a building which was under the ownership of the Department for Communities. A community asset transfer process, which had commenced before the pandemic, was progressing slowly. A recent condition survey report had confirmed that extensive work was required to bring the building up to the necessary standard and this view had been supported in a feasibility study which had been requested separately by TREE NI/TREECO. She outlined the three design concepts which were being proposed and the associated costs and pointed out that the organisations would benefit from having a permanent fit for purpose building, with increased space being available for training and other activities.

She confirmed that representatives from TREE NI would be attending the Council's Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund online information event on the following day and that it was planning to submit an application for funding towards the refurbishment of the building. The proposal would, in her view, meet the objectives of the Regeneration Fund, the Belfast Agenda and the Belfast City Recovery Framework.

Ms. Bowden was thanked by the Chairperson.

Rosario Youth Centre

The Chairperson welcomed to the meeting Ms. N. Robinson, Youth Worker in Charge, Mr. N. Savage, Chairperson of Rosario Youth Centre, and Mr. C. Toland, Chairperson of Ormeau Boxing Club.

Ms. Robinson informed the Working Group that Rosario Youth Centre, which had been built in 1978, currently accommodated Rosario Youth Club, Rosario Football Club and Ormeau Boxing Club. The building was open every day and its current facilities included a reception area, an IT room, office accommodation, a main sports hall, equipment storage rooms, a social area and an outdoor multi-use games area.

She pointed out that the Youth Centre was currently facing a number of challenges, primarily around the limited capabilities of the main sports hall, given the extent of the area required by the Boxing Club, the limited space available to expand membership across the three partner organisations, the need to comply with Disability Discrimination Act, health and safety and child protection requirements and, lastly, the inefficient use of site, as the building was of a single storey.

With that in mind, she drew the Members' attention to the redevelopment plans for the site and the associated costs and confirmed that it would be a collaborative venture involving all three project partners. The outcome would be an extended fit for purpose shared space facility. Planning approval had been secured in March, 2021, a cross-party capital project steering group had been established and been meeting regularly and the Department for Communities' Ministerial team had been briefed.

Moving forward, Ms. Robinson confirmed that the steering group was preparing an application for Building Control approval and that the three partners had met with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to discuss their ongoing participation in the PEACE IV CCAN project. Further community engagement would take place around the development proposals and a business case and funding applications would be prepared. She pointed out the three project partners made a significant contribution towards achieving the vision for Belfast, as set out in the Belfast Agenda, and concluded by inviting the Working Group to affirm its support for the new hub by recommending that it be considered in the context of emerging Council funding programmes and project development/technical assistance costs.

The deputation was thanked by the Chairperson.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- i. noted the presentations and commended TREE NI/TREECO and Rosario Youth Centre on their work and success to date; and

- ii. agreed that the Director of Physical Projects would draft correspondence, to be signed by the Chairperson and forwarded to Ms. Bowden and Ms. Robinson, firstly, providing details of the Council's new £8m Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund and confirming that officers from the Physical Programmes Unit would be available to provide advice and assist with the application process and, secondly, outlining other external capital funding streams which the organisations would be eligible to apply for.

Update on Alleygating and Alleyway Transformation Programmes

Alleygating Scheme – Phase 5

The Working Group was reminded that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 18th February, had considered a report on Phase 5 of the Council's Alleygating Scheme. The report had recommended that the Committee:

- i. approve an identified 'long list' of possible alleygate locations for North, South, East and West, based upon the framework agreed by the Committee on 21st May 2021; and
- ii. agree to refer each 'long list' of possible alleygate locations to the relevant Area Working Group for prioritisation, based on the available budget of £125,000 for each quadrant of the City.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager reported that the Committee had, in light of omissions which had highlighted by Members, agreed to defer the matter to allow for a full list of location requests to be circulated and a comprehensive list of potential locations to be drafted and agreed. He confirmed that that work had now commenced.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Alleyway Transformation Programme

The Working Group was reminded that the People and Communities Committee, at its meeting on 7th September 2021, had approved the delivery of a number of pilot alleyway transformation schemes across the City, with the final area selection, number of pilots and the detail of intervention to be delegated to the Area Working Groups. Funding for the pilots had been committed by the Department for Infrastructure via the Blue/Green Infrastructure Fund.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager reported that, in total, between seventy and eighty potential sites had been identified by Members. However, due to resourcing issues, it had not been possible to process, assess and rank applications. He confirmed that he would be writing shortly to the Department for Infrastructure to request that it agree to carry the funding into the 2022/23 financial year and that, if approved, a dedicated resource would be put in place by the Council to move the process forward.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided.

Update on Physical Programme

The Director of Physical Programmes submitted for the Working Group's consideration the following report:

"1. Introduction

The Council's Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF). It covers also projects that the Council is delivering in behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

The Working Group is requested to:

- i. note the physical programme update for South Belfast; and
- ii. note the request for funding from TEO in the sum of £463k in relation to the Arts and Digital Hub project

3. Local Investment Fund (LIF)

Members are reminded LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation. Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. The table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 24 projects received 'In Principle' letters under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 21 have been completed; 1 project at delivery stage, 1 at pre-construction stage and 1 project still at initial stage. Further details of these are outlined below.

LIF breakdown – South	LIF 1		LIF 2	
<i>Stage/ Description:</i>	<i>No. Projects</i>	<i>Amount (£)</i>	<i>No. Projects</i>	<i>Amount/ (£)</i>
Number of Projects Completed	12 (92%)	£1,053,600	9 (82%)	£676,000
Number of Projects in Delivery			1 (9%)	£80,000
Number of Projects in Pre-construction			1 (9%)	£40,000

Number of Project in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	1 (8%)	£30,000		
Total Number of Approved Projects	13	£1,083,600	11	£796,000

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live projects – Holylands Area Improvement Initiative (£80,000), Finaghy Bridge (£30,000) and John Murray Lockhouse (£40,000). Members are asked to note the status of the live LIF projects and the ongoing actions.

LIF Ref	PROJECT	FUNDING	STAGE	STATUS	ACTION/ RECOMMENDATION
SLIF2-07	Holylands Area Improvement Initiative	£80,000	Awarded	A contractor has been appointed to undertake these works – challenges remain in terms of supply. There is regular contact with the contractor and community group (QUBA) on the project status.	Continue engagement with the contractor, group and partners
SLIF2-13	LORAG - John Murray Lockhouse	£40,000	Design stage	LIF funding will contribute to the development of the community garden. Project is linked to Urban Villages programme. Project will be submitted for planning together with the overall development of the John Murray Lockhouse. Business case was approved in August 2021 and the next step is for UV to release a funding offer.	Continued engagement with the group.
SLIF017	Finaghy Bridge	£30,000	Initial stage	DfI Roads are now taking the lead on design and the Council will contribute the LIF funding to DfI.	Continue engagement with DfI Roads.

4. Belfast Investment Fund (BIF)

Members are reminded that BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration partnership projects, with a minimum £250k investment from Council BIF – South Belfast was allocated £5.5m; with additional £500k ringfenced for new areas (outer South) that had joined the District area under Local Government Reform. In South Belfast, 6 projects received an in-principle funding commitment, thereby fully allocating its £5.5m, and £500k pot of funding. Each project is taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place.

Summary of BIF allocated projects

South	Stage 3—Lagan Gateway—£2.1m; Lanyon Tunnels—£1.3m; Bredagh GAC—£700k Stage 1— Coffee Culture, Sandy Row Open Space project and BSCR IT Exam Centre project (Arts & Digital Hub) [Sandy Row area projects, formerly Gilpins]— £1.35m Stage 1—Belfast Islamic Centre—no commitment
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Balmoral DEA	Stage 3 - Knockbreda Parish Church Hall—£250k Stage 2— Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC—£250k
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BIF Ref	PROJECT	BIF FUNDING	STAGE	STATUS	ACTION/RECOMMENDATION
BIF04	Lagan Gateway	£2.1m	On ground	Phase 1 of the project completed in October 2021. Handover and operation discussions are underway within Council regarding the lock. Design of Phase 2 of the project has started.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.
BIF19	Bredagh GAC	£700,000	Design stage	Works for the required surveys have been completed. Once the reports are received the team will look at the refurbishment design in more detail and get a cost estimate. This is anticipated to be complete by end of March 2022. Following that step, officers will meet the group to discuss and review the option designs. The outcome will be reported to a future meeting of the SAWG.	Continue engagement with the group.

BIF07	Lanyon Tunnels	£1.3m	Stage 3- Committed	Project has been impacted by the JR decision on the adjacent site to the tunnels – the adjacent site is a critical access point for the project, enabling range of connectivity outcomes and benefits. A new planning application has been submitted (October 2021). The SIF programme has expired, and Urban Villages have been approached as potential funder in place of SIF. Ongoing discussions with group, DfC and TEO.	Officer engagement with Executive Office as key funder, and key stakeholders.
BIF33	Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC	£250,000	Stage 3- Committed	BIF funding to progress Phase 1A of larger sports hub project i.e. replacement of Belvoir FC's grass football pitch with associated widening of adjacent road access and resurfacing of existing carpark. Planning consent for wider development agreed early 2020. Project promoter continues to work on project development including governance arrangements and NIHE tenure agreement – remaining issues on disposal and governance are being addressed by the group and their consultancy support.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF46	Coffee Culture	£1.35m - total allocation for the Sandy Area projects (formerly Gilpin's)	Stage 1- Emerging	Partnership project with UV. Final Business Case approved and Letter of Offer expected imminently. At design stage and planning application is required. Options in relation to the property purchase have now been resolved and work is ongoing to progress	Continue engagement with the group.

				the legal issues regarding title. Project funding includes: UV £402k, SOF £100k, DfC £100k, BIF funding commitment agreed at SAWG March 2021. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i>	
BIF47	Sandy Row Open Space project		Stage 1- Emerging	Work is continuing on the development of a project in the Sand. Initial mtg with group – rescoping project. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i>	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF48	Arts and Digital Hub <i>(formerly BSCR IT Exam Centre project)</i>		Stage 1- Emerging	Partnership project with UV. Business Case progressing and is contingent on receiving a confirmation of funding from the Council. Officers continue to work with the UV team and the group to develop up one joint scheme. <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects.</i>	Continue engagement with the group.

Arts and Digital Hub - Request for Specified Allocation

In September 2020, Members agreed to support the IT Exam Centre proposal from BSCR on Sandy Row under the Belfast Investment Fund. Members have since noted that the project is now a joint initiative, taking in both the IT Exam Centre proposal as well as the Arts and Digital Hub project being developed by BSCR with Urban Villages. Members will note the corresponding change of project title under BIF to 'Arts and Digital Hub' which incorporates the IT Exam Centre proposal. Members are asked to consider a request from the Urban Villages Initiative for a specific allocation of £463,015 for the Arts & Digital Hub project. Members are asked to note that an allocation for this project would form part of the £1.35m ringfenced for Sandy Row Area projects.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. 3 projects in South Belfast received an in-principle funding commitment. Similar to LIF and BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Members are asked to note the progress update of each project in Table below.

SOF – South Belfast Projects Overview

Project	SOF Award	Status and update	Recommendation/ Proposed Action
SOF02 Coffee Culture <i>UV partnership</i>	£100,000	Partnership project with UV. Final Business Case approved and Letter of Offer expected imminently. At design stage and planning application is required. Options in relation to the property purchase have now been resolved and work is ongoing to progress the legal issues regarding title. Project funding includes: UV £402k, SOF £100k, DfC £100k, BIF funding commitment agreed at SAWG March 2021.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.
SOF04 Sandy Row Community Forum	£80,000	Development of a Tourism Trail to complement the Transport Hub. Due Diligence complete. The project concept has been developed and costed. Belfast South Community Resources have signed off the project concept. Council will act as delivery agent for the project and will assist in the maintenance of signage as part of the council-wide upkeep of tourism signage. The project is expected on site early 2022 - supply chain and cost issues have caused significant delays.	Continue engagement with the group

6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is a rolling programme to either enhance existing Council assets or build / buy new assets or facilities. Table below provides an update on current live projects South Belfast area. Members are asked to note status and update.

South Belfast – Capital Programme Overview

Project	Status and update
Playground Improvement Programme 2021/2022 (City wide)	Stage 3 – Committed. Ormeau (Park Road) playground project onsite, completion expected early March 2022.

Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	Stage 1 - Emerging. Consultation stage
Palm House, Botanic Gardens	Stage 1 - Emerging. Link to Tropical Ravine

7. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

Members are reminded that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund has recently been launched and is a new £8m capital programme to support capital projects across the city. The fund is now open for Stage 1 applications via an open call process and will close on 12 May 2022. Communications activity is already underway via a variety of tools to promote the fund to as wide an audience as possible.

8. Externally Funded Programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government department on key capital investment programmes, namely Social Investment Fund (SIF) and Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office as well as a number of schemes with DfC. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to South Belfast.

Social Investment Fund

The table below provides a status update on SIF projects in South Belfast. Officers continue to liaise with TEO officials in relations to these projects.

SIF – South Belfast Projects Overview

Project	Status and update
Mornington Community Project	Project completed on 14 January 2022.
Lanyon Tunnels	Project has been impacted by the JR decision on the adjacent site to the tunnels – the adjacent site is a critical access point for the project, enabling range of connectivity outcomes and benefits (SIF business case dependent on connectivity). Members are asked to note that discussions are ongoing with Executive Office under SIF and Urban Villages.

Urban Villages Initiative

Table below is the status update on UV projects in South Belfast – note the UV programme has a defined South Belfast geography (Sandy Row; Donegall Pass and Markets).

UV – South Belfast Projects Overview

Project	Status and update
Coffee Culture <i>SOF and BIF</i>	Partnership project with UV. Final Business Case approved and Letter of Offer expected imminently. At design stage and planning application is required. Options in relation to the property purchase have been resolved and work is ongoing to progress the legal issues regarding title. BIF funding agreed at SAWG March 2021 (£1.35m ringfenced for Sandy Row Area projects). Match funding anticipated from DfC and Urban Villages.
John Murray Lockhouse—wider development	Partnership project with UV. Business Case approved. Council has commented on a draft Letter of Offer has been and the final Letter of Offer is expected imminently. Design team has been appointed and liaison with Group continues to finalise designs. Complex legal issues regarding land transfers continue to be progressed.
Arts and Digital Hub <i>BIF (formerly IT Exam Centre)</i>	Council acting as delivery agent. Business Case progressing. At design stage. This is a joint project - BIF BSCR IT Exam Centre project – the project is now one proposal on the same site. In March 2021 SAWG agreed to support as Stage 1 emerging under BIF (£1.35m ringfenced for Sandy Row Area projects). The Executive Office has submitted a funding request in sum of £463,015 – see above under BIF updates.
Accidental Theatre (Shaftesbury Square)	Business Case at preliminary stage and progressing.
School of Music Redevelopment	Emerging project at feasibility stage.

DfC Funded Projects

Outlined below is the status update on a project funded by Department for Communities.

Project	Status and update
Belfast Islamic Centre <i>- Renovations of Aldersgate House, University Rd</i>	The Council is the delivery agent for this project. Working in conjunction with BIC and DfC the project has progressed to tender. Unfortunately, the project has not proceeded to award as there is governance issues that are required to be resolved between BIC and DfC. All parties are however committed to the project and funds are in place to undertake the project.

9. Documents attached

None.”

After discussion, the Working Group:

- i. noted the contents of the report;
- ii. agreed to resume site visits to view ongoing and completed projects within the Physical Programme; and
- iii. agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that the Arts and Digital Hub project be allocated £463,015 of the £1.35m which had been ringfenced for Sandy Row area projects (formerly Gilpin's) and that Urban Villages be advised accordingly.

Chairperson

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East Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 3rd March, 2022

MEETING OF EAST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Sandford (Chairperson),
The Deputy Lord Mayor (Alderman Haire);
Aldermen Copeland, Dorrian and Rodgers; and
Councillors Brooks, de Faoite, Flynn, Hanvey, Howard,
M. Kelly, Kyle, Long, Mulholland and Newton.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. C. Taggart, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Ms. P. Conway, Strategic Sites Development Surveyor;
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer; and
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Smyth.

Minutes

The Working Group agreed that the minutes of the meeting of 3rd February were an accurate record of proceedings.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were declared

Presentation

Hawarden Tennis Club

The Chairperson welcomed Mr. S. Garvin and Ms. S. Cooke to the meeting.

Ms. Cooke thanked the Working Group for acceding to their request to present. She commenced her presentation by giving the Working Group an overview of the background to the club:

- it was a small 3 court, family friendly tennis club based in East Belfast;
- it had approximately 250 members from all sections of the community;
- it was formed in 1927;
- membership had increased in the last few years by more than 500% and had managed to thrive during the pandemic;

She continued by advising the Members that the club offered the following services:

- Parent and Child Tots Tennis;
- Full weekly Junior Programme (beginners up to Ulster representatives);
- Junior Club Night
- A varied social calendar for both adult and junior members ;
- A full adult tennis programme ranging from beginner club players to elite training sessions;
- Fun group sessions and weekly cardio sessions;
- they had a large number of members who were representative on both the national and international tennis scene; and
- Indoor facilities included squash court, table tennis, pool table and bar, but that it faced competition from local clubs which offered other indoor facilities.

After school cross-community activities for kids from Strandtown and St Joseph's Primary school, which served as an introduction to the club where they and their families could hopefully, and often did, join as members. They would like to expand the initiative to include Bloomfield Collegiate School in order to attract more teenage girls into the club, as there was evidence of a high dropout rate within tennis.

She then outlined their development plans for the future:

- they were keen to be more 'inclusive' and open doors to the wider community;
- tennis should be accessible to all and there were many adaptations which could be made;
- a review of the current facilities had highlighted a need for a disabled toilet facility on the ground floor – the club had applied for that under 'Sport NI Better Facilities Grant' and had been successful. They wanted to give individuals with disabilities the opportunity to benefit from the physical, social and mental aspects of not only playing sport but from being included and making friends for life within a club environment.
- they were also keen to open up their indoor space to the local community. Prior to Covid they had groups use it for yoga etc. and that was the plan for the future.

She concluded the presentation by explaining their reasons for seeking financial support:

- the condition of the 3 tennis courts was deteriorating which was increasingly becoming a concern and could jeopardise the club's long term future.
- They had taken remedial action over the years but it was looking more likely that they will need to completely replace the surface of each court.
- Initial quotes were in excess of £60,000.
- The club had limited cash reserves which was understandably eroded by operational expenditure to maintain the clubhouse, pay general bills, fees etc.
- They had increased their cash reserves by attracting a large number of new members and fund raising activities. However, those were insufficient to cover the huge one-off cost of having to resurface their courts.

A Member asked if the £60,000 was to resurface the three courts. Mr. Garvin advised the Working Group that it was for all three courts but he explained that £60,000 was an estimate for the resurfacing as they would not know the state of the tarmac beneath.

The Chairperson thanked the Harwarden representatives for their presentation and advised them that the Working Group would be in contact in due course. Ms. Cooke and Mr. Garvin retired from the meeting.

After the representatives had left the meeting, the Members had a brief discussion and agreed that the request would be best discussed at a Special meeting of the Working Group.

The Director of Physical Programmes agreed to identify a date towards the end of March, in conjunction with the Chairperson, on which to hold the meeting.

Update on Alleygating and Alleyway and Transformation Programmes - Verbal Update

Alleygates Scheme Phase 5 (verbal Update)

The Neighbourhood Services Manager provided the Members with an update in respect of the Alleygate Scheme. She advised the Members that the 12-month plan had been presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and that it was due to be ratified at the March Council meeting.

She stated that Stephen Leonard, the lead officer for this work, would provide an update at the next meeting of the Area Working Group.

Noted.

Alleygate Transformation

The Neighbourhood Services Manager updated the meeting in relation to the Alleygate Transformation Scheme. She reported that the demand for the scheme had been huge, with over 80 sites listed and highlighted that the scheme would need considerable resources. She updated that, to date, officers had not been able to assess all the sites as there was not sufficient staffing resources available to do so. In addition, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) was not contributing any revenue funding towards the scheme, only capital funding. She advised that the Council would allocate a dedicated resource to assess the applications, align the workplan and draw down the money from DfI. The Working Group was advised that Council officers had met with DfI to confirm finances for the scheme and had advised that any available funding would be carried forward to the next financial year. The Members were also advised that there had been discussion in regard to progressing the top priority applications, however, it was difficult to move forward on any of the applications without applying the criteria to all the applications to ensure every application was considered fairly.

A Member asked if consideration could be given to an issue with an existing Council alleygate at Parkgate Crescent. There was a significant gap between the hedging and the structural support of the alleygate which was allowing unfettered access and egress from the alley, thus rendering the gate ineffective. The Member asked if it could be remedied either under the alleyway transformation programme or perhaps via maintenance on the existing alleygate stock, as the gap was encouraging Anti-Social behaviour in the alleyway along with a number of other cleansing issues. The Neighbourhood Services Manager agreed to investigate the matter and report back directly to the Member.

Several Members remarked on the delay in progressing the Alleygate Programme. While they recognised the impact of Covid, they wanted it expedited. The Working Group requested that the update report would be submitted to the March Strategic Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

A number of Members noted the aforementioned gaps in the list. The Members asked to see the full list of alleygate requests and that this list be shared with all elected members (rather than just those on Strategic Policy and Resources) to allow them to review and feedback any gaps.

A Member requested that the report include information in relation to the criteria based scoring matrix which was applied to each application. The Members sought clarification to allow them to understand how the high, medium and low ratings were applied and why there

could be discrepancies between, for example, the PSNI rating and the Council rating. A Member used an example of the Jocelyn Street gate, where the PSNI had rated it as medium but the BCC rating was low. The Neighbour Services Manager undertook to provide him with an explanation for the difference.

Further Members also requested the total number of alleygates to be agreed this round.

Noted.

Update on the Physical Programme

The Working Group considered the undernoted report:

“1. Introduction

The Council’s Physical Programme covers projects under a range of funding streams including the Capital Programme, the Leisure Transformation Programme, the Local Investment Fund (LIF), the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), Social Outcomes Fund (SOF) and the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund (NRF); in addition, the programme covers projects that the Council is delivering in behalf of other agencies. This report outlines the status of projects under the Physical Programme.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the physical programme update for East Belfast, and;**
- Note that confirmation has been received from Braniel Church that additional funding of £60,000 in relation to the BIF project is being met by the group, allowing the final investment decision to be taken.**

3. Local Investment Fund

LIF is a £9m fixed programme of capital investment in non-council neighbourhood assets, over two tranches: LIF 1 (2012-2015) - £5m total funding pot, allocated across each AWG areas; and LIF 2 (2015 -2019) - £4m allocation with the East being allocated £1.127m under LIF1 and £1.2m under LIF2.

Each LIF project proposal is taken through a Due Diligence process prior to any funding award. Table below outlines funding spend to date for each tranche, at key stages of the delivery process: 19 projects received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 18 have been completed; 1 project remaining at initial stage, the Lagan Village Youth and Community Association.

LIF breakdown – East	LIF 1		LIF 2	
Stage/Description	Projects	Amount/Value (£)	Projects	Amount/Value (£)
Number of Projects Completed	7 (100%)	£877,500	11 (92%)	£1,146,589
Number of Projects in Delivery				
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects at Initial Stage (Due Diligence)			1 (8%)	£15,000
Total Number of Approved Projects	7	£877,500	12	£1,161,589

The table below provides an overview of progress and actions around the remaining live project.

LIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / recommendation
ELIF2-17	Lagan Village Youth and Community Association	£15,000	Initial stage	Approved by SP&R Committee in October 2020. DfC funding commitment received of £35,000 and awaiting final confirmation on land transfer. Initial enabling works and site fencing to commence imminently. The transfer of the lease will soon to be completed allowing works to commence, subject to a successful outcome of the group's	Continue engagement with the group.

				application to Alpha funding.	
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LIF funding

Members will recall at their meeting on November 2021, AWG agreed to discuss the remaining funding which is available under LIF and BIF, and the requests received to date for funding support. The table shows the remaining funding under the LIF programme. Members will note that there is no remaining funding under BIF as this is fully allocated at this stage.

Total LIF Allocation (LIF 1 and 2)	Amount Allocated To Date*	Amount Remaining**
£2,327,500	£2,113,089	£230,009

**This includes additional funding for BIF TAGIT Boxing Club (£9k) and Braniel Church (£65k).*

*** This includes the reported underspend amount for Walkway Community Centre (£15,598).*

4. Belfast Investment Fund

Members are reminded BIF is a £28m investment fund for regeneration, partnership projects, with a minimum £250,000 investment from Council. In East Belfast 9 projects have received an In-Principle funding commitment under BIF. There are 5 projects on the longer BIF list. Each of the 'In Principle' projects are taken through a 3-stage approval process, including a rigorous Due Diligence process before any Funding Agreement is approved and put in place. Table below provides a summary of BIF allocated projects i.e. project stage; project title; and the funding allocated.

Summary of BIF allocated projects:

East	Stage 3—Willowfield—£560k; H&W Welders—£2.37m; Strand—£1.8m; Bloomfield—£440k Stage 2—Lagan Village Youth & Community—no commitment Stage 1—East Belfast Mission; Belmont Bowling Club; Bloomfield Presbyterian Church; St. John's Orangefield, Church of Ireland, Tullycarnet Community Support Services—no commitment / on long list
Outer East	Stage 3 —TAGIT- £434k; Braniel—£390k; Hanwood—£396k; Castlereagh Presbyterian Church—£382k; Lisnasharragh Community Schools—£398k

The table below provides an overview of the remaining projects. Members are asked to note the actions and recommendations.

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / recommendation
BIF14	H&W Welders Club	£2,370,000	Complete	Project completed.	Continue engagement with the group re post monitoring
BIF12	Strand Arts Centre	£1,800,000	Stage 3 – design stage	In November 2021, Members noted the increase in cost estimates following the RIBA Stage 2 Design Report. The total cost estimate is £5,320,000 which includes construction inflation and theatre/cinema specifics. The total project budget exclusive of these items is estimated at £4,657,000. Members agreed to progress to RIBA Stage 3 and submit to Planning, and the Application has since been submitted (January 2022).	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF13	Bloomfield Community Association	£440,000	Stage 3 - Committed – In Principle	A new Economic Appraisal/ Business Plan was completed in July 2021. Cost of preferred option is £745,054. Application to DfC for	Continue engagement with the group and partners.

				funding deficit of £305,054 has been prepared and will be submitted once group provide supporting information for application requested.	
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Outer East BIF Projects

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action / recommendation
BIF18	TAGIT Boxing Club	£434,000	Stage 3 – Complete	Project completed. Project officially launched on 25 February 2022.	Continue engagement with the group re post monitoring
BIF37	Lisnasharragh Community Schools Project	£398,000	Stage 3- On Ground	Project works at Lisnasharragh PS and Cregagh PS commenced on November 21 and January 22, respectively. Planned completion by April 2022.	Continue engagement with the group/ schools and Education Authority.
BIF25	Branial Church	£390,000	Stage 3 – Tender stage	Tender return over allocated funding amount. EAWG and Branial Church to fund the deficient in the construction budget. Confirmation now received from Branial regarding their funding contribution - see below.	Continue engagement with the group
BIF38	Castlereagh Presbyterian Church	£382,000	Stage 3 – Due Diligence	Costs of works currently estimated at	Continued engagement with group.

				<p>£325,200. Church approval for works now in place. In December Members recommended that additional information be requested from the Church in respect of whether there would be any congregational funding or whether they had investigated other external funding streams; who the end users of the facilities would be; and that a further site visit be arranged to the Church. Officers liaising with group regarding outstanding information.</p>	
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BIF 25 Braniel Church

Members will recall at its meeting in February 2022, it was recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that match funding of up to £65,000 be allocated to the Braniel Church project, from the uncommitted allocations within the East area, provided that the Church would agree to commit £60,000 toward the cost of the project and that the Church would confirm that to officers, in writing, by 25 February 2022, and an update would be provided to the East AWG to note that all funding was in place before a final investment decision be taken and the contract awarded.

Note that confirmation has been received from Braniel Church that additional funding of £60,000 in relation to the BIF project is being met by the group, allowing the final investment decision to be taken.

5. Social Outcomes Fund

SOF is £4m ringfenced capital investment programme with a focus on local community tourism projects. There is one project under SOF for East Belfast – Eastside Visitor Centre – with an In-Principle funding commitment. Similar to BIF, all projects are subject to Due Diligence process prior to any funding award.

Project	SOF Award	Status and update
Eastside Visitor Centre <i>Link to UV project</i>	£700,000	The proposal is for the extension of the existing visitor centre at C.S. Lewis Square. Council and UV agreed that this is a joint project with Pop Eastside (UV). Project business case development process completed, and study with UV in final stages of their approval process. In parallel to information collation to take the project through Due Diligence still ongoing.

6. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme is the rolling programme of enhancing existing Council assets or building / buying new assets. Members are reminded of the 3-stage approval process in place for every project on council's Capital Programme, as agreed by SP&R Committee. The table below provides an update on current live projects in East Belfast. Members are asked to note the status and update.

East Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
Pitches Programme- Blanchflower Playing Fields – New pitch and floodlighting	Stage 3 – Committed. Project completed.
LTP- Avoniel	Stage 3 – Committed. Project completed.
LTP- Templemore- NLHF	Stage 3 – Committed. On Ground. Completion anticipated by summer 2022.
New Crematorium	Stage 3 – Committed – Scheme at tender preparation stage. Design and Planning discussions underway.
Sydenham Greenway	Stage 2- Uncommitted. OBC to be worked up.
Shared Youth and Community Facility Inner East	Stage 1- Emerging. Officers investigating the potential to work jointly with the EA to develop business case/ plan on a potential youth facility at the council owned

	Ballymacarrett site. Strategic options study and discussions ongoing, initial mapping exercise complete and with Council officers for review.
Ballymacarrett Area Masterplan	Stage 1- Emerging. Linked to Connswater Community Greenway. Link to the UV/DfI funded Ballymacarrett Walkway Environmental and Cycling Infrastructure Improvement project.
Playground Improvement Programme 2021/2022 (City wide)	Stage 3 – Committed Project. Clarawood Playground. Works to start in Spring and completion expected end of May 2022.
Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide	Stage 3 – Committed Project. Update to be brought to future AWG

6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

Members are reminded that the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund has recently been launched and is a new £8m capital programme to support capital projects across the city. The fund is now open for Stage 1 applications via an open call process and will close on 12 May 2022. Communications activity is already underway via a variety of tools to promote the fund to as wide an audience as possible.

7. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for a number of government departments on significant capital investment programmes, namely Social Investment Fund (SIF) and the Urban Villages Initiative (UV) funded by the Executive Office, and number of schemes with DfC. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to East Belfast.

Social Investment Fund

Project	Status and update
Walkway Community Association	Project is progressing satisfactorily following discussions with the contractor and funder to resolve issues in relation to the escalating costs of supply, contractors delay in ordering key materials and Covid related matters. Minor adjustments to the building façade have been agreed to balance project costs and a planning application was presented to the Planning Committee on 15 February 2022. Estimated completion April 2022.

Urban Villages Initiative

Project	Status and update
ProKick Community Gym	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. Programme progressing well with estimated completion date June 2022.
Pop EastSide- Landmark East <i>Link to SOF 'Eastside Visitor Centre'</i>	The project proposal is for the extension of the existing visitor centre at C.S. Lewis Square. Council and UV have agreed that this is a joint project with Pop Eastside (UV). Final draft OBC completed and is in the UV approval process. Council investigating charges against site and UV undertaking a VFM exercise. At design stage.
Pitt Park redevelopment <i>Council asset</i>	This project is on a Council site and the Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The Business Case has been approved. The Letter of Offer is expected imminently. Design stage.
East Belfast Mission Accommodation project	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. The Business Case has been approved. Revised refurbishment options are being explored with the Group and additional funding options are being considered.
Eastside Souk	Emerging project at feasibility stage.
Titanic People Exhibition	Design options, surveys and costs have been reviewed and concerns remain regarding building safety, associated costs in making the site secure, viability of the project given available investment and project outcome measures. Following a site visit on 4 November 2021, Members took the decision to withdraw the previously allocated LIF funding. Members stressed their desire to continue to work with the Group to explore alternative funding sources and how the project can link with other projects in the area. The Council is waiting on a detailed project proposal and Business Case from UV. Options in relation to the funding gap are being explored.

DfC funded projects

Members are asked to note the update on projects match funded by Department for Communities.

Project	Status and update
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Prokick Community Gym	On Ground. Link to UV project
Lagan Village Youth and Community Centre	Initial stage. Link to LIF project
Clarawood Play Park	Initial stage. Part of the Playground Improvement Programme. Works to start in Spring and completion expected end of May 2022.”

The Members expressed their thanks to the Director of Physical Programmes and her team for the sterling work that they were doing to progress works through all of the funding streams and the capital programme.

The Working Group noted the contents of the report.

Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group agreed to change the date of its next quarterly meeting, which was due to be held on Thursday, 5th May, which was Polling Day for the upcoming Assembly Elections. It agreed, therefore, that the next quarterly meeting would be held on Monday, 16th May at 5pm.

Chairperson

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Belfast
City Council

Subject:	Update on Contracts
Date:	25th March, 2022
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

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"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to seek the Committee's approval for tenders and Single Tender Actions (STA) over £30,000; and to ask the Committee to note contract modifications to contract term and retrospective Single Tender Actions (STAs)
2.0	Recommendations
	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 1) approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 2)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 3) • note the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (Table 4)
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Competitive Tenders</u>
3.1	Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states that Chief Officers have delegated authority to authorise a contract for the procurement of goods, services or works over the statutory limit of £30,000 following a tender exercise where the council has approved the invitation to tender.
3.2	Standing Order 60(a) states any contract that exceeds the statutory amount (currently £30,000) shall be made under the Corporate Seal. Under Standing Order 51(b) the Corporate Seal can only be affixed when there is a resolution of the Council.
3.3	Standing Order 54 states that every contract shall comply with the relevant requirements of national and European legislation.
	<u>Single Tender Actions (STAs)</u>
3.4	<p>The following STAs are being submitted for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a contract for £45,000, for up to 3 years, awarded to CDR Group for the renewal of support and maintenance for SSA (Spectrum Spatial Analyst) software. SSA is used extensively across the Council. It would be a major exercise to replace or change this product and the cost would be prohibitive. The disruption would impact a broad range of departments across the Council. • a contract for £57,000, for up to 3 years, awarded to CDR Group for the renewal of support and maintenance for MapInfo mapping software. The platform has been extensively used to provide developed functionality and projects. It would be a major exercise to replace or change this product and the cost would be prohibitive. • a contract for £30,000, for up to 1 year, awarded to George Best Belfast City Airport for Belfast City brand advertising at George Best Belfast City Airport. Belfast City Airport is NI's only connection to 3 London airports, key routes regularly used by business passengers and a key channel for one of our key target audiences (investors).

3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a contract for £170,000, for up to 3 years, awarded to Simply Zesty UK Ltd for the extension of the design and build contract for ongoing corporate website development and development of additional BCC websites. The current contract extension runs to May 2022 and additional time is required to complete all design and development work of the Councils websites. <p>The following retrospective STAs were awarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a contract for £100,000 (part-funded), for up to 1 month, awarded to The Eden Trust for the delivery of a feasibility study and essential public engagement work for the Urban Forest project at 2 Royal Avenue. Eden Trust have developed the Urban Forest concept including a feasibility study for outdoor installation as part of year of culture in 2024, they own the concept for Urban Forest and this engagement programme and events are an extension of this work. • a contract for £100,000 (fully-funded), for up to 4 months, awarded to Smallworld Music for the requirement for a company to produce and action a detailed and robust Venue Management Plan to cover operational and event needs at 2 Royal Avenue. The original STA for this work was £29,500 this now needs extended as total cost is up to £100,000 to cover all operational staffing fees and maintenance fees until 31st March 2022. • a contract for £54,000 (fully-funded), for up to 1 month, awarded to Portview for the requirement for a company to increase connectivity between the city centre and neighbourhoods through thematically aligned programmes at 2 Royal Avenue. Banana Block at Portview are a named partner within the Service Level Agreement with Tourism NI however as lead partner this is administered by the Council. • a contract for £125,000 (fully-funded), for up to 6 weeks, awarded to Visit Belfast for the development and delivery an extensive Marcomms campaign to support the reopening of the city at 2 Royal Avenue. Visit Belfast are the only contractor who can provide this particular service as the destination marketing organisation for the city they are responsible for delivering a Spring campaign.
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3.6	<p><u>Modification to Contract Term</u></p> <p>The following contract terms were modified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 3 month extension to contract T2084 (b) - Provision of a 'Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Interpretative Panels on Shared Space Greenway' PEACE IV Programme Services, awarded to Mediation NI. In response to the current outbreak of Coronavirus and due to government restrictions the activity could not take place. • a 3 month extension and additional £20,000 to contract T1710 - Provision of a cleaning service at Belfast Castle, Malone House, The Stables and Lock Keepers Cottage, awarded to Precision Industrial Services. Extension to allow time for a new tender to be awarded. A 4 month extension and additional £20,000 was previously approved Dec 2021. • a 3 month extension and additional £16,000 to contracts T1870 Tender for the Maintenance and Removal of Flower Displays, awarded to Clive Richardson Ltd. Extension requested to current tender by 3 months to allow sufficient time for a new tender to be awarded.
	Financial and Resource Implications
3.7	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment
3.8	None
4.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 Table 1 - Competitive Tenders Table 2 - Single Tender Actions Table 3 - Modification to Contract Table 4 - Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Table 1: Competitive Tenders

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Supply and delivery of steeled wheeled bins, castors and all supporting spare parts	Up to 2 years	£100,000	S Toland / R Crozier	Supply of commercial bins and spare parts for repair
Email filtering solution to help prevent spam, phishing attacks and other malicious email	Up to 3 years	£48,000	R Cregan	To reduce risk of infection or loss of data from malicious email
Provision of legionella monitoring & risk management programme at BCC properties	Up to 5 years	£250,000	S Grimes	Statutory compliance requirement
Design and build of a mobile responsive and accessible website for Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) and implement a web CMS	Up to 4 years & 3 months	£45,000	R Cregan	There is currently no standalone website for the BRCD programme. The information is currently on a landing page on BCC's website.
T2119 - Supply of bottled and mains-fed water with dispensers across BCC offices and sites	Up to 3 years	£50,000	R Cregan	Supply of bottled and mains-fed water with dispensers across BCC offices and sites. This is a continuing requirement as kitchens throughout Council buildings need to be refurbished to provide safe drinking water and public access areas need to have a supply of water
Multi supplier framework agreement for the provision of marketing services for the Marketing and Corporate Comms Business Area of BCC	Up to 4 years	N/A	J Tully	BCC target a number of audiences with our Marketing and Communication activities: residents, businesses, potential investors, tourists (local and international) and students that come to study in Belfast
In-depth technical research and guidance to help Digital Services advance the initiatives/projects that support execution of the IT strategy	Up to 2 years	£39,600	R Cregan	Use proven reference architecture to develop technology architecture Receive organisation-specific guidance through calls with analysts

Appendix 1

				<p>Leverage industry best practices to avoid costly mistakes</p> <p>Enables Digital Services to stay current with changing markets and technologies</p>
<p>Multi supplier framework agreement for the provision of technical support, advice and research and economic analysis support service for the Labour Market Partnership, Employability & Skills, Enterprise & Business Growth departments as well as the wider Economic Development division and BRCD</p> <p>Suppliers on the framework will have not have a guarantee of any work</p>	Up to 5 years	Up to £4,000,000	A Reid	<p>The tender will provide technical assistance and economic data analysis as part of an intelligence-led approach, based on robust economic data and strong consultation and research with relevant stakeholders in the city.</p> <p>*Note - approval granted Oct 2021 for 4.5 year at £225k which for Labour Market Partnership only. Requesting increase to 5 years and up to a total value of £4m which includes potential use by other departments in BCC</p>
T2210 - professional congress/conference organiser required for One Young World 2023 conference	Up to 20 months	£2,700,000	A Reid	<p>The contractor will be entitled to a management fee of £250k but will be responsible for managing the overall budget for the event £2.7m.</p> <p>*Note - approval granted Sept 2021 for £175k. Requesting increased to £2.7m. Of this £1m is funding coming from NI Executive to BCC and a further £350,000 from BCC directly with the remaining to be raised from the private sector.</p>
New camera and microphone system for the Committee Rooms	1 off purchase	£49,816	J Walsh	To prepare the Committee Rooms to hold hybrid meetings
Design, provision and management of a meanwhile use at 2 Royal Avenue	Up to 2 years	£1,200,000	A Reid	Agreement to deliver meanwhile use at 2 Royal Avenue until end of temporary planning permission

Table 2: Single Tender Actions

Title	Total Value	SRO	Supplier
Renewal of support and maintenance for SSA (Spectrum Spatial Analyst) software	£45,000	R Cregan	CDR Group
Renewal of support and maintenance for MapInfo mapping software	£57,000	R Cregan	CDR Group
Belfast City brand advertising at George Best Belfast City Airport	£30,000	J Tully	George Best Belfast City Airport
Extension of the design and build contract for ongoing corporate website development and development of additional BCC websites	£170,000	R Cregan	Simply Zesty UK Ltd

Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Supplier
T2084 (b) Provision of a 'Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Interpretative Panels on Shared Space Greenway' PEACE IV Programme Services	Up to 16 months	Additional 3 months	S Toland / R Crozier	Mediation NI
T1710 - Provision of a cleaning service at Belfast Castle, Malone House, The Stables and Lock Keepers Cottage	Up 5 years	Additional 3 months and £20,000	S Toland / R Crozier	Precision Industrial Services
T1870 Tender for the Maintenance and Removal of Flower Displays	Up 3 years	Additional 3 months and £16,000	S Toland / R Crozier	Clive Richardson Ltd

Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Supplier
Delivery of a feasibility study and essential public engagement work for the Urban Forest project at 2 Royal Avenue (Part funded)	Up to 1 month	£100,000	A Reid	The Eden Trust
Company required to produce and action a detailed and robust Venue Management Plan to cover operational and event needs at 2 Royal Avenue (fully funded)	Up to 4 months	£100,000	A Reid	Smallworld Music
Increase connectivity between the city centre and neighbourhoods through thematically aligned programmes at 2 Royal Avenue (fully funded)	Up to 1 month	£54,000	A Reid	BDA Property Projects Ltd

Appendix 1

Develop and deliver an extensive Marcomms campaign to support the reopening of the city at 2 Royal Avenue (fully funded)	Up to 6 weeks	£125,000	A Reid	Visit Belfast
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Subject:	CIPFA Prudential Code Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators 2022/23
Date:	25th March, 2022
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources
Contact Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Head of Finance

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"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 and the supporting Prudential and Treasury Codes produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), require the Council to consider the affordability and sustainability of capital expenditure decisions through the reporting of prudential and treasury management indicators.
1.2	The Prudential Code requires the Council to produce a Capital Strategy for 2022/23. This report provides information for the Committee on the Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators for Belfast City Council for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25, and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. note the contents of this report and the prudential and treasury management indicators included within the appendices; <p>and agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. the Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council of £147m for 2022/23; and iii. the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23, which has been included as Appendix 2 to this report.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 requires the Council to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. In doing so, the Council is required to agree a minimum revenue provision policy annually and to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators, the key objectives of which are to ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the council are affordable, prudent and sustainable.</p>
3.2	<p>At the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 9 December 2011, Members approved the Council's Treasury Management Policy which is based on the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Treasury Management Policy requires that a Treasury Management Strategy be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on an annual basis and that it is supported by a mid-year and year end treasury management reports.</p>
3.3	<p>The Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators, is included as Appendix 1, while the Treasury Management Strategy and treasury management indicators have been included as Appendix 2.</p>
3.4	<p>The comparison of "Gross Borrowing" to "Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is the main indicator of prudence when considering the proposed capital investment plans of the Council. Estimated gross borrowing should not exceed the CFR for the current year plus two years. The Council's estimated gross borrowing position, illustrated in Table 6, Appendix 1, is comfortably within the CFR in the medium term. The Director of Finance and Resources therefore considers the estimated levels of gross borrowing as being prudent.</p>
3.5	<p>Table 10 (Appendix 1) shows the estimated financing costs for capital expenditure as a percentage of the estimated net revenue stream for the Council, based on the medium</p>

	financial plan. These illustrate that in the medium term, capital financing costs will represent 8.7% of the Council's net running costs. On this basis the Director of Finance and Resources is satisfied that the level of capital expenditure is affordable.
3.6	<p>The Finance Act requires the Council to set an affordable borrowing limit, relating to gross debt. The Prudential Code defines the affordable limit as the "Authorised Borrowing Limit" and gross borrowing must not exceed this limit. Table 8 (Appendix 1) sets out the recommended "Authorised Borrowing Limit" for the Council as being £147m for 2022/23.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.7	<p>As detailed in the report</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.8	None
4.0	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Capital Strategy Report 2022/23</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Annual Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23</p>

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Capital Strategy Report 2022/23

1. Introduction

This capital strategy report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

2. Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, which will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £25k are not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year.

In 2022/23, the Council is planning capital expenditure of £37.5m as summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £thousands

	2021/22 forecast	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget
General Fund services	47,100	37,542	30,988	20,495

The capital expenditure forecast for 2022/23 is still impacted by COVID-19 and continues to be monitored and reviewed, in terms of both project delivery and affordability.

Governance – The Council’s Capital Programme is agreed on a yearly basis by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee in its role as the Council’s investment decision maker. All capital projects must go through a 3-stage approval process and decisions on which projects are added to the Capital Programme and which projects progress are also taken by SP&R Committee. This provides assurance as to the level of financial control and allows Members to properly consider the opportunity costs of approving capital projects. The Physical Programmes Department and Financial Services calculate the financing cost of all proposals, including emerging proposals. As part of the final investment decision it must be confirmed that any project is within the affordability limits of the Council.

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council’s own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing and leasing). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing in £thousands

	2021/22 forecast	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget
External sources	0	0	0	0
Own resources	34,169	15,230	11,142	8,434
Debt	12,931	22,312	19,846	12,061
TOTAL	47,100	37,542	30,988	20,495

Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP).

Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP is as follows:

Table 3: Repayment of debt finance in £thousands (MRP)

	2021/22 forecast	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget
Own resources	8,344	9,727	10,621	11,324

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to repay debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £12.5m during 2022/23. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £thousands

	31.3.2022 forecast	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget
General Fund services	134,904	147,489	156,715	157,451

Asset Management – The Council is committed to ensuring that all Capital projects contribute to the strategic direction of the city and continue to be of long term use. The Council is currently in the process of looking at its Asset Management Strategy and is implementing a new Asset Management System to support the strategic objectives of better financial management, information management, planning and performance and asset management

Asset disposals: When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital

receipts. The Council plans to receive £4.9m of capital receipts in the coming financial year as follows:

Table 5: Capital receipts in £thousands

	2021/22 forecast	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget
Asset sales	£456	£4,946	£5,000	£3,200
Loans repaid	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	£456	£4,946	£5,000	£3,200

3. Treasury Management

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Council is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

The Council currently has £49m borrowing and due to legacy loans taken at higher rates in the past and transfers of debt under Local Government, the average interest rate of these loans is 7.6%. The council also has £18m treasury investments at an average rate of 0.03%.

Borrowing strategy: The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheap short-term loans (currently available at around 0.92%) and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher (currently 2 to 3%).

Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, leases and transfers from local government reorganisation) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £thousands

	31.3.2022 forecast	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	48,992	67,176	78,916	79,540
Capital Financing Requirement	134,904	147,489	156,715	157,451

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, as can be seen from table 6.

Liability benchmark: To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end. This benchmark is currently £54m and is forecast to rise to £79m over the next three years.

Table 7: Prudential Indicator: Borrowing and the liability benchmark £thousands

	31.3.2022 forecast	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget
Outstanding borrowing	48,992	67,176	78,916	79,540
Liability Benchmark	53,892	68,869	77,711	78,911

The table shows that the Council's borrowing is currently below its liability benchmark. The Council is projecting to borrow over the next few years to meet capital expenditure requirements. This external borrowing will align borrowing with the estimated liability benchmark over the next three years.

Affordable borrowing limit: The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year and to keep it under review. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 8: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £thousands

	2022/23 limit	2023/24 limit	2024/25 limit
Authorised limit – borrowing	147,489	156,715	157,451
Authorised limit – PFI and leases	0	0	0
Authorised limit – total external debt	147,489	156,715	157,451
Operational boundary – borrowing	131,489	140,715	141,451
Operational boundary – PFI and leases	0	0	0
Operational boundary – total external debt	131,489	140,715	141,451

Investment strategy: Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

The Council's policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

Table 9: Treasury management investments in £thousands

	31.3.2022 forecast	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget
Near-term investments	18,000	16,000	16,000	16,000
Longer-term investments	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	18,000	16,000	16,000	16,000

Governance: Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Director of Finance and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee (SP&R). Tri-annual reports on treasury management activity are presented to SP&R. The SP&R committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

4. Liabilities

In addition to debt of £49m detailed above, the Council is making payments to cover its pension fund liability. It has also set aside £4.9m to cover risks of insurance

claims and Landfill Closure. The Council is also at risk of having to pay for its share of the ARC 21 Joint Committee contingent liability but has not put aside any money.

Governance: Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by departmental Chief Officers in consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by central finance and reported quarterly to the Director of Finance and Resources. New liabilities exceeding £1m are reported to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval/notification as appropriate.

5. **Revenue Budget Implications**

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from the District Rate and general government grants.

Table 10: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	2021/22 forecast	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget
Financing costs (£'000)	9,687	13,570	14,682	15,488
Proportion of net revenue stream	5.7%	7.6%	8.2%	8.7%

Sustainability: Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years may extend for up to 50 years into the future. The Director of Finance and Resources is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable due to the processes in place to scrutinise any plans coming forward and are designed to highlight not only the ongoing financing costs but also the recurring running costs to ensure they remain within the affordability limits identified and agreed by the Council.

6. **Knowledge and Skills**

The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Director of Finance and Resources is a qualified accountant with over 30 years' experience. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA, ACT (treasury), ACCA, etc.

Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

Annual Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23

1. Introduction

Belfast City Council's Treasury Management Policy is based on the Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Treasury Management Code of Practice. The policy requires the Director of Finance and Resources to submit an annual Treasury management Strategy to the Council.

This strategy covers the following issues in respect of 2022/23:

- Outlook for interest rates
- Capital Financing Plans
- Establishing the Borrowing Requirement
- Borrowing strategy
- Debt rescheduling
- Investments
- Treasury Management Indicators

2. Outlook for Interest Rates

The ongoing impact on the UK from coronavirus, together with higher inflation, higher interest rates, and the country's trade position post-Brexit, will be major influences on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2022/23.

The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate to 0.5% in February 2022. The Authority's treasury management adviser Arlingclose is forecasting that BoE Bank Rate will increase in March and May to a peak of 1%. Policymakers will want to maintain inflation fighting credentials given potentially higher inflation ahead, so will continue with interest rate rises; but will also be highly aware of the economic impact from that same high inflation, so may be cautious of hiking rates further than warranted. Given the significant uncertainties ahead, these forecasts will be closely monitored.

3. Capital Financing Plans

It is essential that the level of borrowing is considered within the context of the Council's capital expenditure and plans, as is required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance.

On 28 February 2022, the Council held £49m of borrowing and £22m of treasury investments.

Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 overleaf, with the Council planning to increase borrowings over the next three years.

Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast

	2021/22 £'000 Estimate	2022/23 £'000 Forecast	2023/24 £'000 Forecast	2024/25 £'000 Forecast
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	134,904	147,489	156,715	157,451
Less: External Borrowing	48,992	67,176	78,916	79,540
Internal Borrowing	85,912	80,313	77,799	77,911
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	91,012	88,620	89,004	88,540
Treasury Investments (new borrowing)	5,100	8,307	11,205	10,629

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.

The Authority has an increasing CFR due to the capital programme, but minimal investments and may therefore be required to borrow up to £55m over the forecast period.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation during 2022/23.

Liability benchmark: To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 1 above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

Table 2: Liability Benchmark

	2021/22 £'000 Estimate	2022/23 £'000 Forecast	2023/24 £'000 Forecast	2024/25 £'000 Forecast
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	134,904	147,489	156,715	157,451
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	91,012	88,620	89,004	88,540
Net loans requirement	43,892	58,869	67,711	68,911
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Liability Benchmark	53,892	68,869	77,711	78,911

The Liability Benchmark is effectively the Net Borrowing Requirement of a local authority plus a liquidity allowance.

CIPFA recommends that the optimum position for external borrowing should be at the level of the Liability Benchmark (i.e., all balance sheet resources should be used to maximise internal borrowing). If the outputs show future periods where external loans are less than the Liability Benchmark, then this indicates a borrowing requirement thus identifying where the authority is exposed to interest rate, liquidity and refinancing risks. Conversely where external loans exceed the Liability Benchmark then this will highlight an overborrowed position which will result in excess cash in the organisation requiring investment thus exposing the authority to credit and reinvestment risks and a potential cost of carry. The Council's external debt is relatively close to the liability benchmark and given the potential increases in the bank rate, the level of debt required is closely monitored to minimise any interest rate risk.

4. Establishing the Borrowing Requirement

The starting point for ascertaining the appropriate level of borrowing is the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is derived from the Balance Sheet and represents the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose, as it takes account of all capital expenditure incurred which is resourced from borrowing.

However, in addition to the debt position created by historic capital expenditure met from borrowing, the Council also has significant values of reserves, provisions and balances supported by cash, which reduce the net indebtedness of the Council. These positive cash flows allow the Council to consider utilising this cash to support capital expenditure in lieu of external borrowing.

If external borrowing is higher than the CFR, this indicates borrowing in advance of immediate need (permitted within the Prudential Code) and borrowing below CFR would indicate internal borrowing (i.e. the level of cash used in lieu of external borrowing)

The relatively high levels of reserves and balances on the Council's balance sheet have therefore enabled the Council to benefit from not having to borrow externally to the full extent of the underlying need. However, it cannot be assumed that this position can continue into perpetuity and needs to be given active consideration.

The Authority currently holds £49 million of loans, a decrease of £8 million on the previous year. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Authority expects to borrow up to £25m in 2022/23. The Authority may also borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £147 million.

5. **Borrowing Strategy**

In terms of meeting the external borrowing requirement identified above, one of the most important considerations is the timing, in terms of the potential to save significant interest costs and it is key that this position is proactively managed using all information available to inform decisions. It is essential therefore that the considerations of timing of borrowing form a key element of the borrowing strategy.

It is of course not possible for all borrowing to be undertaken at the lowest rates of interest available, as unforeseen events can significantly alter the path of rates. It is therefore essential that the risks to adverse movements are fully understood and actively managed. One of the key borrowing objectives is to achieve certainty around interest costs, and there is therefore little appetite to undertake variable rate borrowing.

Given the uncertainty around local government funding, the Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead. By doing so, the Council is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of internal / short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly

It is recognised that whilst the capital expenditure and financing plans will be a driver of borrowing costs, the management of risk is the prime objective of the borrowing strategy and reduction of interest rate risk and refinancing risk within the portfolio is essential.

The Council remains prepared to undertake the potential borrowing ahead of immediate need (up to three years in advance), if it results in a reduction of interest rate risk within the portfolio. The Council recognises that this may temporarily increase investment balances, and increase net interest costs in the short term, and that these factors will form part of the decision making process when the strategy is executed. It would be necessary to demonstrate value for money when making a decision in respect of borrowing in advance of need, therefore it will only be undertaken if there is a strong view that rates may rise.

The Council has previously raised the majority of its long-term borrowing from the Government Loans Fund. The Council may look to borrow any long-term loans from other sources such as banks, pensions and local authorities and may utilise money market brokers to facilitate borrowing from other local authorities for short to medium term borrowing.

6. **Debt Rescheduling**

The prime objective of any restructuring is to reduce risk in the portfolio, whether that be interest rate or refinancing risk. Any savings that may be created as a result will be considered in the context of the overall risk profile.

Debt restructuring opportunities will be kept under constant review, however the penalties of premature redemption of loans at higher rates than prevailing interest

rates mean that there may be significant costs associated with this, which will reduce the attractiveness of opportunities.

7. Investments

Annual Investment Strategy

The Council has regard to the Guidance for Local Government Investments for District Councils in Northern Ireland (the Guidance) as cited under Section 25(1) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Act) when setting the Investment Strategy. The Department recommends that each local authority produce and publish an Annual Investment Strategy, approved by the Council and revised in year as required. This sets out the Council's policies for managing investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. This investment strategy states which instruments the Council may use for investment purposes, making a distinction between specified and non-specified investments. This strategy also determines limits in respect of their overall levels.

The prime objective of the Council's investment strategy is to ensure prudent investment of surplus funds. The Council's investment priorities are the security of capital, liquidity of investments and, within those objectives, to secure optimum performance. The COVID-19 pandemic had increased the risk that the Bank of England would set its Bank Rate at or below zero, however given the recent Bank of England rate increases, this risk has reduced but will continue to be monitored given continued market uncertainties.

All investments will be made in accordance with the Council's investment policies and prevailing legislation and regulations.

7.1 Specified Investments

An investment is a **specified investment** if:

- The investment is denominated in Sterling and all payments or repayments are payable only in Sterling,
- The investment is not a long term investment (i.e. due to be repaid within 12 months of the date in which it was made or one which the Council may require to be repaid within that period),
- The making of the investment is not defined as capital expenditure by virtue of regulation 12 of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2011; and
- The investment is made with a body which has been awarded a high credit rating, or is made with one of the following:
 - a) The United Kingdom Government;
 - b) A District Council;
 - c) A Local Authority in England and Wales or a similar body in Scotland;

The following categories of investments may be used under the definition of specified investments:

- Short term cash deposits
- Call accounts
- Certificates of Deposit (with maturity dates < 1 year)
- UK Government Gilts
- Treasury Bills

- Money Market Funds

The Council considers a high credit rating for money market funds to be those with a long term Fitch Rating of AAA (or the equivalent highest rating from Standard and Poors or Moodys).

The Council will have regard to all 3 rating agencies and considers a high credit rating for other investments to be as follows:

Fitch Credit Rating	Minimum level
Short Term Rating	F1
Long Term Rating	A

Fitch defines these ratings as follows:

A: High credit quality.

'A' ratings denote expectations of low default risk. The capacity for payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic conditions than is the case for higher ratings.

F1: Highest short-term credit quality.

Indicates the strongest intrinsic capacity for timely payment of financial commitments

7.2 Non-specified Investments

In respect of **non-specified investments**. The following instruments have been identified by the Council.

Category of Non-specified investment
Sterling denominated Foreign Government Securities
Sterling medium term Deposits or Certificates of Deposit
Floating rate Certificates of Deposit
Highly rated Corporate Bonds (including investments in a Corporate Bond Fund)
Sterling Reserve Funds
Index-linked structured deposits
Collateralised deposits
Foreign Currency denominated investments
Deposits with non-rated Building Societies

The Council do not intend on making any investments in the 2022/23 year which meet the definition of non-specified investments and therefore there is no limit set on this within the Investment Strategy.

The CIPFA Code of Practice recommends that the Investment Strategy sets out the maximum period over which investments will be made.

The Director of Finance and Resources recommends that a maximum duration of 2 years should be set, although it is only expected that investments over 12 months will be made in exceptional circumstances.

Regulation 12(1) (d) of the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that some categories of investment are defined as Capital Expenditure. This relates to the acquisition of share or loan capital in any body corporate. However, in the event that this expenditure is made as an investment for the prudent management of the Council's financial affairs, it shall not be treated as capital expenditure.

The impact of investing in instruments of this nature are such that, unlike other investment instruments, either capital or revenue resources would have to be applied to this expenditure, and once the investment was sold or matured, the income would be a capital receipt.

The Council do not intend on making any investments which meet the definition of capital expenditure and therefore there is no limit set on this within the Investment Strategy.

7.3 Investment Risk

The prime consideration of risk within investments is the loss of capital invested. Therefore investments will only be made with bodies with a high credit rating defined above. Credit ratings will form the primary driver for assessing credit quality, although it is recognised that this is not the only means of assessing credit quality.

Caution will be exercised in determining the creditworthiness of investment counterparties, even if they meet the minimum criteria above.

In the event that any institutions are at the minimum criteria and are on negative rating watch, monies will not be placed with that organisation until such time that the negative outlook is revised.

Geographical limits will be considered to ensure an appropriate spread of risk. Sovereign ratings will be taken account of when placing funds with institutions outside of the UK.

Credit ratings for existing investment counterparties will be monitored on a monthly basis, as well as immediately before new deposits are placed.

Market intelligence will also be considered before entering into any investments with proposed counterparties meeting the minimum criteria.

7.4 Treasury Management Advisers

The Council currently utilise the services of external advisers, Arlingclose, when determining the credit quality of its investment counterparties. The Council recognise that responsibility for the decision to invest with a counterparty rests with the Council as the principle undertaking the transaction.

Credit ratings will be obtained directly from the rating agencies' websites, and officers will regularly read the financial press for information relevant to the credit-worthiness of counterparties.

7.5 Investment Training

The Council recognises that investments, as well as wider treasury management issues require a high level of specialist knowledge. Officers undertaking the decisions are all qualified accountants with many years of experience. However, the Council recognises the need for officers to be kept up to date with developments and through the annual

appraisal system will identify any training needs to further enhance the current skills base.

In the event of new Officers joining the function, they will be provided with significant on the job training as well as being provided with the opportunity to attend relevant external training courses.

The Council recognises that although there may be costs involved with sending officers to training courses, when these costs are considered in the context of the size of the portfolios being managed, and the amount of the Council's money at risk, investment in training is a worthwhile area of expenditure.

In addition to the training of officers, in order for elected members to provide effective scrutiny of the strategy and to have the knowledge to make informed decisions regarding the strategy, it is also important that training is provided to Members of the Council.

7.6 Other Investment Considerations

The level of investment balances is not specifically targeted in the strategy; it will be a consequence of the net spending plans of the Council, and the level of external borrowing to be undertaken. To date, balances have remained relatively stable over recent years. However, the introduction of the Prudential Code, and the self regulation of borrowing limits and capital financing strategies, may result in higher or lower levels of balances going forwards as the level of external borrowing is given active consideration.

It should also be noted that the investments are largely as a result of the level of reserves and provisions that the Council has at any one point in time. In addition, there is an amount of working capital (excess of creditors over debtors) as well as being a factor of the extent to which investment balances have been used in lieu of external borrowing.

Investment balances are expected to decrease as further investment balances are used in lieu of external borrowing.

The remaining cash balances that will not be used in lieu of external borrowing will primarily exist to manage cash flow volatility within the Council. It is therefore not expected that investments of a long term strategic nature will be made. Instead the duration of new investments will remain relatively short in order to meet liquidity demands.

The Council recognises that a consequence of short dated investments is that it exposes the portfolio to interest rate risk, which would otherwise be reduced if investments were made of a long term nature. The budget for investment income takes a prudent approach to expected returns from investments.

8. Treasury Management Indicators

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice requires various indicators to be set within the strategy. This section of the report sets these out in the format required by the Code. Whilst they are required to provide boundaries within which the treasury management operations will be managed, it is also important that there is sufficient flexibility to enable officers to react to unforeseen favourable movements in the financial markets which may present beneficial opportunities to the Council.

8.21 Interest Rate Exposures

The Council is required to set upper limits for both fixed and variable exposures for the forthcoming years. The purpose of this indicator is to contain the Council's exposure to unfavourable movements in interest rates. The indicators are expressed as Fixed Rate Borrowing less Fixed Rate Investments and Variable Rate Borrowing less Variable Rate Investments. The Council defines variable rate investments as including those instruments maturing within each year, as the replacement of those instruments will be subject to prevailing rates of interest. The following table shows the upper limit of fixed rate exposure and the upper limit of variable rate exposure for the forthcoming three years.

	Estimate 2022/23 £'000	Estimate 2023/24 £'000	Estimate 2024/25 £'000
Upper limit of fixed rate exposure	131,489	140,715	141,451
Upper limit of variable rate exposure	3,945	4,221	4,244

8.2 Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing

The Council is required to set upper and lower limits of fixed rate borrowing maturing within certain periods, in order to contain the exposure to re-financing risk which may arise if significant proportions of borrowing were maturing within a short period of time. The Council has set the following limits for the forthcoming financial year.

	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Under 12 months	0.00%	15.00%
12 months – 24 months	0.00%	25.00%
24 months – 5 years	0.00%	48.00%
5 years – 10 years	0.00%	56.00%
10 years and above	0.00%	55.00%

8.3 Total Principal Sums invested for periods longer than 364 days

The purpose of this indicator is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise as a result of the Council having to seek early repayment of sums invested.

The Council would not, through its normal course of investment activities, expect to make investments beyond 12 months. However, there may be exceptional circumstances which may result in investments being made up to 2 years in duration, as is referred to within the Annual Investment Strategy.

	Estimate 2022/23 £2m	Estimate 2023/24 £2m	Estimate 2024/25 £2m
Total principal sums invested for longer than 364 days	£2m	£2m	£2m

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Subject:	Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee
Date:	25th March 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, Chief Executive Rose Crozier, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stevie Lavery, Programme Manager

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the funding programme for Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the report.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend will take place from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June, inclusive.</p> <p>At the meeting on 18th February, the Committee agreed to allocate funding of £100,000 for events to take place in local communities across the city over the Platinum Jubilee weekend.</p>

The Committee also agreed to engage the services of the Community Foundation Northern Ireland (CFNI) to administer the fund, which will allocate a maximum of £2,000 for any group / event to take place.

Officers have been engaging with the Community Foundation over the past few weeks to finalise the details of the programme to make sure the funding process is straightforward and open to as many groups as possible. Members have also been providing feedback on a number of important points such as non-constituted groups being able to access the funding.

The programme is now live, with groups able to apply online and attend information sessions to find out more about how to apply, please see the following link for further details <https://communityfoundationni.org/grants/her-majesty-the-queens-platinum-jubilee-fund-for-belfast/>. The following provides an overview of how the programme will be delivered:

3.2 Application Timeline:

Stage	Timescale
Open Call	23 March 2022
Close of Applications	11 April 2022
Awards made	W/C 2 May 2022
Delivery	2-5 June 2022

3.3 Community Engagement

Venue	Time
Duncairn Community Centre Upper Mervue St, BT15 2J	Tuesday 29 March 1.00 pm
Olympia Leisure Centre Boucher Rd, BT12 6HR	Wednesday, 30 March 10.15 am
Inverary Community Centre Inverary Ave, BT4 1RN	Tuesday, 29 March 11.30 am
Spectrum Centre Café, Shankill Road Belfast	Wednesday, 30 March 6.00 pm
Online via Zoom https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6086313480 Meeting ID: 608 631 3480	Friday 1 April 11:30 am

	<p>The fund has been advertised via Social media channels and has been published on the Council's and CFNI websites. Any groups who require further information on how to apply can call the CFNI grants team directly on 028 9024 5927.</p>
3.4	<p>Multiple 'Umbrella' applications:</p> <p>Following discussions with CFNI we have agreed that 'Umbrella' organisations can support applications from community groups who do not have a constitution. However, this will be up to a limit of £6,000 in total applications, with the minimum award per group £500, maximum award per group £2,000. An application for each individual community group must be received.</p> <p>The governance arrangements of the CFNI does not directly support the advancement of religion and/or organisations whose purposes include the advancement of religion. To assist such groups in accessing this funding, organisations with purposes to advance religion, can seek an eligible umbrella organisation who can submit an application for an eligible project on their behalf. Alternatively, they can work with an eligible partner organisation who can act as the lead applicant.</p> <p>Information sessions as outlined above will provide support to groups to enable them to apply or signpost them as appropriate. Council officers will also be supporting community groups, providing information and supporting the application process.</p>
3.5	<p>Payment and Verification</p> <p>As many of the groups who are accessing this funding, will have limited financial capacity, successful awards will be paid 100% in advance. All successful applicants will have to return project monitoring information, with a sample of applicants subject to full verification and will be asked to submit all relevant receipts of payments made with the funding.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>An additional Budget of £110,000, which includes the amount required to buy in the services of the Community Foundation, is being allocated from Departmental budgets.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>All events will take equality and good relations implications into account.</p>
4.0	<p>Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None</p>

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Belfast
City Council

STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE

Subject:	Audit and Risk Panel Report and Minutes of Meeting of 8th March 2022
Date:	25th March 2022
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, ext. 6085
Contact Officer:	Claire O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services ext. 4643

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

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

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a summary of the key issues which were discussed by the Audit and Risk Panel at its meeting on 8th March 2022 and to present the minutes of that meeting for approval.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the key issues arising from the meeting of 8th March and approve the minutes of that meeting.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	Key Issues
3.1.1	<p><u>Internal Audit</u></p> <p>The Panel agreed the internal audit strategy and plan for 22/23 which will assist the Council in meeting statutory obligations in relation to internal control, risk management and good governance.</p> <p><u>Key Reports</u></p>
3.1.2	<p>The Panel noted the progress being made to deliver the annual audit plan for 21/22, with six audits / reviews finalised in the period. After considering the update on the review of the Asset Management System, the Board requested an update report from management on the progress being made to improve the project management arrangements for their next meeting. Regarding a previous audit of Property Maintenance, the Panel received an update from management on the progress being made to implement the recommendations arising.</p>
3.1.3	<p>The Panel received an update on the annual review and update of the Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment and the completion of the 20/21 National Fraud Initiative.</p>
3.1.4	<p>The Panel considered the corporate risk dashboard which provided an analysis and update on the progress being made to manage the 24 risks that are considered by management to present the greatest threat to the delivery of corporate priorities and / or compliance with key statutory requirements. The Panel agreed the wording of the three new Belfast Region City Deal risks around Belfast Stories, the Digital Strand and Programme Management / Accountable Body. The Panel also agreed to close the corporate risk on Neighbourhood Planning and agreed changes to the risk rating for the corporate risks on the council's Financial Position and the Resilience Strategy.</p>
3.1.5	<p>The Panel noted the quarterly assurances provided by members of the corporate management team regarding compliance with risk management and internal control processes. The Panel was also provided with a progress update on the review of the business continuity plans for the critical services and an update on work that is underway to improve the council's resilience to a cyber-attack.</p>
3.1.6	<p>The Panel received an update on the progress being made to implement audit recommendations, with 28% of audit recommendations implemented in the period. A further exercise will be undertaken in October / November 2022.</p>
3.1.7	<p>The Panel also received quarter 3 reports on corporate health and safety, absence management and performance improvement and a progress update on the action plan in relation to the report from Peter Coll QC of his independent investigation relating to events at Roselawn Cemetery on 30th June, 2020.</p>

	<u>Audit and Risk Panel</u>
3.1.8	The Panel agreed its updated terms of reference, which reflects their new role in relation to considering the effectiveness of the recently established Standards and Business Committee as part of the annual governance review.
	<u>Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)</u>
3.1.9	The Panel considered the NIAO Strategy for the audit of the financial statements for 21/22. In addition, the Panel considered the key messages in the Local Government Auditor's Report (LGA) which summarises the results of audit work undertaken in the year to 31 March 2020 in councils across Northern Ireland.
3.1.10	The Panel also considered the Audit and Assessment Reports for both 2020-21 and 2021-22 issued by the LGA which provides an unqualified opinion on the council's performance arrangements and the discharge of performance improvement and reporting duties
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u> None
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None known at this time.
	Document Attached
	Minutes of Audit and Risk Panel 8th March 2022

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Audit and Risk Panel

Tuesday, 8th March, 2022

MEETING OF AUDIT AND RISK PANEL

HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);
Councillors Hutchinson and O'Hara; and Ms. G. Fahy.

In attendance: Mr. R. Cregan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of
Finance and Resources;
Ms. C. O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk
Services;
Mr. L. Mulholland, Audit, Governance and Risk
Services Manager;
Mr. T. Wallace, Head of Finance;
Ms. S. Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager;
and
Mr. H. Downey, Democratic Services Officer.

Also attended: Ms. C. Kane, Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Annual Pre-meeting

The Audit and Risk Panel met privately with the Director of the Northern Ireland Audit Office before the meeting commenced.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 7th December were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Absence Rates - Quarter 3 2021-22

(Ms. C. Sheridan, Head of Human Resources, attended in connection with this item.)

The Head of Human Resources submitted for the Panel's consideration the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues

1.1 This report:

- provides sickness absence data for quarter 3, 2021/22, (April, 2021 to December, 2021);
- compares performance to targets for quarter 3, 2021/22, (April, 2021 to December, 2021);
- compares this year’s performance to the same period last year, (April, 2020 to December, 2020);
- provides an analysis of:
 - the use of discretion between October, 2021 and December, 2021;
 - non-compliance issues between October, 2021 and December, 2021;
 - Disability related absence between April, 2021 and December, 2021;
 - COVID19 Related Absence between April, 2021 and December, 2021; and
 - Stage 4 and final absence hearings between October, 2021 and December. 20201; and
- provides an update on:
 - the review of the Attendance Policy; and
 - DMT reporting and departmental improvement plan progress

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Audit Panel is requested to note the contents of this report.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 Absence Rates

- At the end of quarter three, sickness absence is 11.68 days, an increase of 4.1 days compared to absence for the same period last year (7.58). Please note that the absence rate for the same period in 2019/20 was 9.83 days. It would be more appropriate

to compare this year with 19/20 figures given the exceptional nature of last year (20/21);

- There has been a decrease in the number of staff with no recorded absence this period (46.87%) compared to the same time last year (68.99%);
- There has been an increase in absence classified as long term (20+ days) this year (17163.31 days) compared to the same time last year (11880.30 days). Please note that long term absence in 2019/20 was 13795.15 days. It would be more appropriate to compare this year with 19/20 figures given the exceptional nature of last year (20/21).

3.2 An analysis of how the Council is performing against the agreed corporate target of a reduction of 9.7% (11.07 days per FTE) has been circulated. The Council's average sickness absence rate at the end of quarter three stands at 11.68 days (this figure further reduces to 9.87 days per FTE when COVID-19 related absences are deducted), against an agreed Corporate target of 8.3 days.

3.3 All absence cases are managed in accordance with the Council's attendance procedure.

The number of days lost per full time equivalent increased in quarter three (4.58 days) when compared to quarter two (3.9 days). The quarterly comparison chart which has been circulated also illustrates an increase of 1.32 days in quarter three absence rate this year (4.58 days) when compared to the same period last year (3.26 days). Please note that the quarterly absence figure in 2019/20 was 3.77 days. It would be more appropriate to compare this quarter with 19/20 figures given the exceptional nature of last year (20/21).

3.4 Reasons for Absence – April to December, 2021

Analysis shows that depression/anxiety/stress and musculo-skeletal continue to be the top two reasons for absence.

In summary:

- Depression, Anxiety, Stress related absence accounted for approximately 32% of all days lost due to sickness absence (7537.46 days)
- 62% (or 4687.71 days) of these days were attributed to personal stress
- Musculo-skeletal related absence accounted for approximately 22% of all days lost due to sickness absence (5228.33 days)
 - Almost 92% (or 4792.72 days) of these days were attributable to non-work-related reasons.

The use of Discretion (October to December, 2021):

3.5 A summary of the use of discretion found as follows:

From 1st October to 31st December 2021, 675 employees were off due to sickness absence (accounting for 9198.35 days). Discretion was applied to 84 of these employees (12.4%) and their absence accounted for 2399.5 days (approximately 26% of the total absence for quarter three).

The range of reasons for discretion were as follows:

- Underlying medical condition / Disability (693.65 days or 29%)
- Bereavement (359.09 days or 15%)
- COVID-19 (329.15 days or 13.7%)
- Hospitalisation
- Unresolved ER issues
- Emergency domestic responsibilities
- Industrial Injury
- Surgery and recovery
- Maternity
- Menopause

The average length of absence where discretion was used was 28.6 days per occurrence.

Compliance Issues (October to December 2021):

- 3.6 The following table highlights the number of cases where issues have been discussed with departments during quarter four.

Department	Number of cases
City and Neighbourhood Services	95
City and Organisational Strategy	6
Finance and Resources	1
Legal and Civic Services	28
Physical Programmes	11
Place and Economy	0
Grand Total	141

Examples of issues are as follows:

- Delayed scheduling of stage meetings
- Failure to organise absence review meetings
- Delayed referral to Occupational Health and/or Employee Counselling
- Failure to update actions taken on corporate absence management system (PSE)
- Delays in dealing with other issues such as grievance, discipline, that has impacted on the management of absence
- Lack of a holistic approach to dealing with all issues relating to an employee

Corporate HR is working with the Departments and making recommendations to manage these cases

Disability Related Absence:

- 3.7 Disability related absence was also analysed.

In summary:

- Approximately 42.5% of absence (10021.01days) is recorded as disability related
- 28% of disability related was managed as long term
- The use of discretion and reasonable adjustments is considered in such cases

- Employees who reported absence with Depression / Anxiety (32.45%), Heart failure (8.6%) and Osteoarthritis (7.95%) accounted for almost half (48.8%) of all disability related absence days
- Long COVID complications were also recorded as potential disability related absence and accounted for almost 5% of disability related absence

COVID19 Related Absence:

- 3.8 The Council was impacted by absence due to COVID-19 during quarter 3.

A total of 305 employees were recorded as absent due to COVID-19 and this accounted for a total of 3657.44 days/15.5% of the total absence in quarter three.

It is worth noting that COVID-19 related absence in quarter three (1752.45 days), was higher than the total COVID related absence for quarter one and quarter two combined (1917.70 days).

COVID-19 related absence accounts, on average, for almost two days per FTE employee (1.81 days).

Review of Attendance Policy:

- 3.9 The Attendance Policy is under review. Consultation commenced with trade unions, however, they objected to the review of the Attendance Policy during COVID-19. CMT agreed to put the consultation on hold for 3 months until the end of June. Consultation recommenced however the trade union have still not engaged in the consultation process given their view that the review should not be done at this time. HR continue to address this matter with the trade union co-ordinators.

Stage 4 and Final Absence Hearings:

- 3.10 A review was undertaken to identify the number of employees who had reached a Stage 4/final absence hearing (FAH) between October 2021 and December 2021.

In summary:

- 14 employees met the trigger for a Stage4/FAH in quarter three
 - Three employees resigned prior to a Stage4/FAH being scheduled.
 - Discretion was applied to seven of these cases to Stage4/FAH due to an ongoing disciplinary case that was linked to an employee's absence (1), complex long term COVID case (1), serious underlying medical condition (1), work related assault (1) and the requirement for additional medical information (3).
 - Three employees were ill health retired prior to Stage4/FAH being scheduled.
 - One employee attended a Stage 4 / FAH and was dismissed.

In addition to the above fourteen cases, there was a final absence hearing conducted. This additional case was in relation to an employee who had met the trigger prior to October 2021. The employee was subsequently dismissed.

Corporate HR continues to monitor departmental compliance with the attendance policy. Non-compliance issues, in relation to the final stages of the attendance policy, are raised with Departmental senior management when necessary.

Departmental Improvement Plans:

- 3.11 All departments returned their respective improvement plans for quarter three. Improvement plans highlighted steps that departments are taking to improve their attendance levels. For example, departments have identified and arranged for managers to attend Stress Awareness training where necessary.

Absence reporting to DMT:

- 3.12 All departments returned their respective absence reporting dashboards for quarter three, including statistical data that is required for the dashboard. The reporting of non-compliance issues at DMT meeting needs to be improved.

4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 Directors have been asked to ensure that:

- **Attendance management continues to be an item on DMT agendas and related matters discussed and appropriate actions taken forward; and**
- **Resources are in place to ensure that adequate monitoring and review is in place at department level.**

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

5.1 Approximately 42.5% of absence (10,021.01days) is recorded as disability related. The use of discretion and reasonable adjustments is considered in such cases.”

The Panel noted the contents of the report.

Update on Corporate Health and Safety Performance

(Ms. E. Eaton, Corporate Health and Safety Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Panel was reminded that it was responsible for overseeing the Council's risk, control and governance arrangements for health and safety. In undertaking this function, the Panel provided independent scrutiny of the Council's health and safety performance, with reports being presented to it on a quarterly basis.

Accordingly, the Health and Safety Manager submitted for the Panel's consideration a report on corporate health and safety performance and activities for the quarter ending 31st December, 2021.

She provided, on a Departmental basis, information on the implementation of actions associated with the key performance indicators of health and safety and fire safety and pointed out that, at a corporate level, compliance rates had been 44% and 67% respectively.

In terms of accident/incident reporting, there had, in quarter three, been 18 employee accidents, 14 non-employee accidents, 7 RIDDOR accidents and 14 work related violence incidents, which represented a slight overall increase on the previous quarter.

Health and safety statutory agency enquiries correspondence had been received from the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland in relation to an event in Botanic Park, a potential Covid-19 cluster and a statutory examination defect report, all of which had been addressed.

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Tuesday, 8th March, 2022**

In relation to Covid-19, the Corporate Health and Safety Unit continued to support the Council's Recovery Co-ordination Group and individual service managers to comply with evolving Government guidance and to ensure the health and safety of staff and others.

The Corporate Health and Safety Manager stressed that the resource required from the Corporate Health and Safety Unit to support the Council continued to be provided at the expense of a reduction in routine health and safety activity. Work was underway to replace two members of staff who had left the Unit during Quarter 4 and an additional temporary project post was also being recruited.

She concluded by stating that the Panel would, in due course, be provided with an update on the outcome of an investigation by the Police Service of Northern Ireland into a fatality involving a Council vehicle, which had occurred in Quarter 4.

In response to an issue which had been raised by the independent member, the Corporate Health and Safety Manager confirmed that the next report on Corporate Health and Safety Performance would provide information on the length of time in which outstanding high priority actions had been open.

The Panel noted the corporate health and safety performance and activities for the quarter ending 31st December, 2021.

**Audit Governance and Risk Services Progress
Report – December, 2021 – February, 2022**

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager submitted for the Panel's consideration a report providing an update on the progress which had been made on the delivery of the annual Audit Plan for the period from December, 2021 to February, 2022.

He reported that six audits/reviews had been finalised during that period, namely:

- Payroll (full audit 20/21);
- Payroll (data analytics February – November 2021);
- Procurement and Contract Management;
- Externally Funded Projects;
- Corporate Risk Review – Safeguarding; and
- A Review of Project Management Arrangements for the Asset Management System.

In response to a point which had been raised by Ms. Fahy around the need for the timely implementation of actions resulting from the corporate risk review on safeguarding, the Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager confirmed that all actions were due to be implemented by September, 2022.

He went on to provide details of the assurance and advisory work which had been undertaken during the period around the SAP Replacement Project, the Customer Focus Programme and the new Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund.

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In terms of progress against the Plan, at the end of February, 90% of assignments had either been completed or were in progress.

He then drew the Panel's attention to a number of reports/guidance documents which had been issued by the Northern Ireland Audit Office during the period in question and confirmed that the key messages from these had been summarised and circulated to relevant managers. A report would, he confirmed, be presented to a future meeting of the Planning Committee in response to the wider issues which had been raised within the Northern Ireland Audit Office's report on Planning in Northern Ireland.

The Audit Governance and Risk Services Manager also provided the Panel with a high-level update on investigations, the work being done on the Council's Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment and the completion of the last National Fraud Initiative exercise and indicative dates for the next exercise.

He concluded by recommending that the Panel note the contents of the report and agree, at the request of management, that, in light of current resource issues and year-end pressures, the audit of the Capital Programme be deferred until the 2022/23 Audit Plan.

The Panel adopted the recommendations.

**Update on Corporate Risk Management –
Quarter 3 2021/22**

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services submitted for the Panel's consideration the Corporate Risk Dashboard, which summarised the key updates from the risk review for the quarter ending 31st December, 2021. This included the financial position risk, the proposed closure of the risk on neighbourhood area planning, the three new Belfast Region City Deal risks, the Continuous Improvement risk relating to the completion of the pay and grading review, the review and update of the Local Development Plan risk which would take place in the next quarter to take account of the Planning Appeals Commission's findings.

Reference was made also within the Corporate Risk Dashboard to waste management risk, staffing and funding issues impacting on the management of Port Health risk, work underway on the People Strategy, the increased risk rating for the Resilience Strategy, work underway on the Customer Focus Programme risk, asset management risk and the actions which had been completed to help mitigate corporate risks.

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services then updated the Panel on compliance with the Risk Strategy, based upon the assurance statements for the quarter ending 31st December 2021, which had been completed by senior management and outlined the main issues and actions contained therein.

Finally, she provided an update on business continuity management arrangements, with particular reference to the work being undertaken across critical

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services to review and update their Business Continuity Management plans by 31st March, 2022 to cover a cyber-attack scenario.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided.

Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager submitted for the Panel's approval the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23. The Plan set out the role of Audit, Governance and Risk Services as an assurance provider and advisory service which directly assisted the Council in meeting relevant statutory obligations in relation to internal control, risk management and good governance.

The detailed Plan listed the areas which Audit, Governance and Risk Services was planning to audit during 2022/23 and was based on an assessment of audit need, taking into account of a number of risk factors, with the aim being to audit key areas on a cyclical basis. The Plan had been discussed with each Department at quarterly risk and audit meetings and with the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

He went on to explain that the Plan recognised the fact that the Council was facing a number of significant challenges, both in terms of recovery from the pandemic and also significant change at senior management level. To reflect this, the Plan had been designed to support management and would be adjusted to meet the assurance and advisory needs of Members and management as required.

In addition to specific assignments, it also provided for support to the Council in terms of advisory work, project assurance, fraud prevention, detection and investigation, including a continued focus on the corporate fraud risk assessment and participation in the National Fraud Initiative, as well as raising concerns, risk management, business continuity management and corporate governance.

He added that the Plan would be achievable if Audit, Governance and Risk Services were to retain its full complement of staff during the year. However, should unforeseeable demands on resources arise during the year, it would prioritise the completion of high priority assignments. Any requests for deferrals made during the year would be brought to the Audit Assurance Board and the Audit and Risk Panel for consideration.

After discussion, the Panel approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23.

Northern Ireland Audit Office Audit Strategy 2021/22

The Director of the Northern Ireland Audit Office reminded the Panel that the Northern Ireland Audit Office produced an Audit Strategy each year, prior to its audit of the Council's financial statements. Accordingly, she drew the Panel's attention to the Strategy document for 2021/22, which outlined the approach to the audit of the 2021/22 financial statements and the performance improvement and assessment audit for 2022/23.

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The Strategy set out:

- how the Audit Office planned to audit the Council's financial statements for the year ending 31st March, 2022, including how significant risks of material misstatement to transactions and balances would be addressed;
- how the Audit Office planned to audit the proper arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources for the year ending 31st March 2022;
- how the Audit Office planned to conduct an improvement audit and assessment;
- the planned timetable, fees chargeable and membership of the audit team;
- relevant updates to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom; and
- matters which the Northern Ireland Audit Office was required to communicate to the Council, under International Standards on auditing, including the scope of the audit, respective responsibilities, and how independence and objectivity would be maintained.

The Panel noted the Northern Ireland Audit Office Audit Strategy for 2021/22, a copy of which is available [here](#).

Update on Recommendations Monitor

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services provided the Panel with an update on the implementation of agreed audit actions, following the recent Recommendations Monitoring exercise in January, 2022.

She reported that there had, at the beginning of this exercise, been 303 "outstanding" actions. Audit, Governance and Risk Services had reviewed and, where appropriate, validated the progress that management had made to implement these. It had validated the full implementation of 84 of the 303 actions, resulting in an implementation rate of 28%. This represented a slight improvement on the 25% attained in the previous full monitoring exercise reported in June 2021. Implementation of actions had, she pointed out, been impacted by the pandemic, as had been seen by a fall in implementation rates from 31% in the full monitoring exercise reported in December, 2019 to 17% reported in a limited Covid-19 exercise in December, 2020. The implementation rate for this latest exercise had shown an ongoing improvement, as the Council continued to recover from the impact of the pandemic. It was important, therefore, that this was maintained, particularly considering the extent of organisational change over 2022.

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She went on to outline the effect which the key issues arising from the monitoring exercise, including the impact that the pandemic, staff resource issues and the implementation of IT systems, had had on the capacity to implement audit recommendations in line with previously agreed timeframes.

She then highlighted the fact that a number of audit actions relating to improving project management arrangements for the completion of Phase Two of the HR/ Payroll system, were overdue, which were particularly important, given the number of corporate wide systems being implemented in 2022/23.

In a wider context, audit actions had been implemented and controls strengthened over IT security, organisational structure on the new HR/Payroll system, externally funded physical projects, capital projects, conflicts of interest/gifts and hospitality, the Planning Portal, cemeteries and the crematorium, markets and the Belfast Bikes scheme.

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services went on to highlight three audits, namely, grants, capital programme and performance management, where Audit, Governance and Risk Services had raised corporate/strategic issues, rather than recommendations, to prompt discussion on how these would be addressed and outlined the progress which had been made to date.

She concluded by pointing out that, since many of the outstanding audit actions were due to be fully implemented in 2022/23, it was proposed that Audit, Governance and Risk Services would, in June, 2022, provide Directors with reports on outstanding audit actions for their Departments for review and discussion at their Departmental Management Team meetings. Audit, Governance and Risk Services would undertake a further full validation exercise in October/November 2022, with the outcome to be reported to the Panel in December.

During discussion, a Member expressed concern at the number of posts across the Council which had still to be filled, as alluded to in the report and sought clarification on the reason/s for the delay.

In response, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources pointed out that the delay could be attributed primarily to Covid-19, ongoing restructuring exercises, the requirement to have three people on an interview panel and the need to undertake an internal trawl in the first instance, all of which were being addressed.

The Panel noted the contents of the report and agreed that the Head of Human Resources would, at its next meeting, provide an update on the progress being made to recruit the posts referred to in the report and on the Council's recruitment process generally, in the context of the information which had been provided by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources.

Update on Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager reminded the Panel that it had, in late 2018, approved the first Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment exercise. Since then, significant work had been undertaken to ensure that the assessment reflected the key

**Audit and Risk Panel,
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areas of risk facing the Council and that management and staff were aware of these risks and mitigations required to manage them.

Following the publication, in August 2020, of the Northern Ireland Audit Office's guide on Covid-19 fraud risks, Audit, Governance and Risk Services had, in conjunction with Council Departments, reviewed, re-assessed and updated the Council's Corporate Fraud Risk Assessment.

He reported that, during the last quarter, Audit, Governance and Risk Services had met with Department managers to review the fraud risk assessments, discuss the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the level of risk and agree any proposed changes to the level of risk. The delivery of fraud risk awareness training to Departments had also been completed.

Feedback from Departments had indicated that there was a recognition of the potential fraud risks facing the Council and that the opportunity to reflect on the control arrangements currently in place was welcomed. The review exercise had, therefore, been effective in terms of raising awareness of fraud risks and the importance of effective controls. Audit, Governance and Risk Services had recommended that Departments keep the assessments under review and carry out a formal review at least annually, which they had agreed to do.

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager went on to point out that the top fraud risks for the Council continued to be:

- cyber fraud/attack
- changes to supplier bank details (bank mandate fraud)
- rates income / evasion (albeit outside Council control)
- grants processed outside of the Central Grants Unit
- funding agreements
- contract management
- planning Agreements/developer contributions and
- creditor payments.

He outlined the main changes resulting from the recent review and update of the corporate fraud risks and drew the Panel's attention to the corporate fraud risk assessment position at February, 2022. The assessment highlighted where risks had increased, decreased or remained the same, as well as the rationale for any changes. During 2021/22, Audit, Governance and Risk Services had supported management in developing fraud risk mitigation plans for eleven of the sixteen fraud risks referred to within the assessment document.

In terms of Audit, Governance and Risk Services' responsibilities/approach, he pointed out that it did not have responsibility for the detection or prevention of fraud, as this was a management responsibility. However, its auditors were alert to the risk of fraud when carrying out audits. Where appropriate, audits were planned to take into account the risk of fraud and included an evaluation of the effectiveness of controls to manage key fraud risks. Any significant issues arising from audits would be communicated to management to enable appropriate action to be taken. Audit, Governance and Risk

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Services would ensure that these issues were considered as part of the corporate fraud risk assessment update.

He added that Audit, Governance and Risk Services would, capacity permitting, during 2022/23, be supporting management in developing fraud risk mitigation plans for the five remaining fraud risks. It would also provide them with advice on how best to use these fraud risk mitigation plans to promote fraud risk awareness in their teams and improve associated control measures and would assist in co-ordinating the annual update on the corporate fraud risk assessment for the Audit Assurance Board and Audit and Risk Panel.

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager concluded by stressing that it was the responsibility of management to ensure that appropriate controls were in place to manage the risk of fraud and to review and update the fraud risk assessment, at least on an annual basis. Management was responsible also for ensuring that the fraud risk assessment was communicated to all relevant staff, to raise awareness of the risks and the importance of consistently applying controls and highlighting any areas of concern.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided.

**Northern Ireland Audit Office - Local
Government Auditor's Report 2021**

The Director of the Northern Ireland Audit Office reminded the Panel that the Audit Office was required to produce an annual report providing a summary of the key issues which had arisen from audit work across all eleven councils in Northern Ireland. The report for 2021, relating to the 2019/20 financial year, had been published on 21st December, 2021.

She explained that the report included information on the Council, as well as comparative data with other councils, and provided details of observations/recommendations made by the Local Government Auditor on financial performance, good governance, performance improvement, the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and other matters.

The report had set out five areas which were of particular relevance to the Council, namely, medium-term financial planning, income generation, City Deal, IT security and asset management and had included a position statement on the work which was currently underway in each of those areas.

The Panel noted the Local Government Auditor's report for 2021, a copy of which is available [here](#).

Peter Coll QC Report – Update on Action Plan

The Panel noted the contents of a report providing a quarterly update on the progress of the agreed actions arising from the recommendations contained within Section 6 of Mr. Peter Coll QC's independent investigation into events at Roselawn Cemetery on 30th June, 2020.

Update on Audit of Property Maintenance Unit

(Mr. G. McFall, Property Maintenance Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Property Maintenance Manager reminded the Panel that a draft audit report on the Property Maintenance Unit, which had been issued in January, 2021, had contained twelve recommendations and two observations to be progressed. The implementation of the recommendations would be dependent on the following two key elements:

- i. a fit-for-purpose structure to develop solutions in response to the recommendations and the capacity to implement them; and
- ii. a corporate asset management system which would provide inherent solutions to several of the recommendations and assist with others (a fit-for-purpose structure was also required to assist in the implementation of this system).

He informed the Panel that the current Property Maintenance Unit structure had been in existence since 2006 and that, given the changes which had taken place across the Council since then, it was generally accepted that it was no longer fit for purpose. Whilst the unit was operating currently at reduced capacity, due to vacancies and sickness absence, it had been able to fill several vacancies on a temporary basis, via agency staff. That had assisted in keeping the Council's assets operational and legally compliant. The importance of the Property Maintenance function to the Council had been demonstrated by its classification as a critical service during the Covid-19 pandemic.

He then provided the Panel with an update on the work which had been undertaken since its last meeting to address the issues which had been highlighted in the audit.

In terms of the two key elements referred to above, the restructuring of the Property Maintenance Unit had been agreed with the Continuous Improvement Unit as being a key priority, given the Unit's importance to the Council. The restructure was one of two pilot initiatives being undertaken using a new process to arrive at an optimal structure, with the initial phase including engagement sessions with staff and key stakeholders to identify key issues or gaps. Staff had now been fully briefed on the proposed structure and individual and group engagement sessions had also been completed. The process of briefing other key stakeholders, including Council Departments, GLL and the Belfast Waterfront Hall had also concluded. The Continuous Improvement Unit was now compiling the information, with a view to producing a report for consideration by the Director of Physical Programmes and the Property Maintenance Manager.

He reported further that, in relation to the Asset Management System, work was focusing on the completion of the interface between SAP and the new Concerto Asset Management System. The implementation of the various modules within the latter system was dependent upon the successful implementation of this interface, including the Helpdesk and Planned Maintenance Modules. Initial meetings had taken place with

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the team responsible for the replacement of the current financial system, with a view to maximising the functionality between the new asset management and financial systems.

The Property Maintenance Manager then provided details on progress which had been made and/or actions which had been completed in a number of other areas, such as ensuring that procurement processes were commenced well in advance of existing contracts expiring to ensure that continuity of service and value for money were achieved. Procurement planning had been included as a standing agenda item in operations management meetings and was reported upon at monthly operational meetings. In addition, a new Service Level Agreement, which had been agreed with the BWUH Management Team, had been reviewed and signed off by the Legal Services Section and a new Service Level Agreement with GLL was currently under development.

The Panel noted the information which had been provided.

**Audit and Risk Panel/Audit Assurance Board –
Annual Review of Terms of Reference and
Programme of Work 2022**

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services advised the Panel that, in line with good practice, the statement of purpose and terms of reference of the Audit and Risk Panel and the Audit Assurance Board were reviewed on an annual basis. These were important in that they set out the role of the Panel and the Board, in the context of the Council's governance structures.

She reported that, following the establishment, in October 2021, of the Standards and Business Committee and with reference to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's guidance of 2018 for audit committees, the terms of reference for the Audit and Risk Panel had been amended to provide for the inclusion of the following wording: *"to consider the effectiveness of Standards and Business Committee as part of the annual governance review"*.

The terms of reference for the Audit Assurance Board had also been amended to remove reference to the Director of City and Organisational Strategy as being a member of the Board. The Director had initially been included on the Board as an observer but no longer attended these meetings.

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services went on to report that, in accordance with good practice, the quarterly meetings of the Panel had been aligned with an indicative programme of business. That had been designed to ensure that the Panel demonstrably addressed/discharged its roles and responsibilities, as set out in its statement of purpose and terms of reference. An indicative programme of business for 2022 was being presented to the Panel for approval.

The Panel approved the statement of purpose and terms of reference of the Audit and Risk Panel and the Audit Assurance Board, as amended, and approved also the indicative programme of business for 2022.

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In addition, it:

- i. noted that the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources would, at the next meeting of Party Leaders, emphasise the need for each Party's representative on the Audit and Risk Panel to attend meetings on a consistent basis; and
- ii. agreed that a legal opinion be sought on whether a conflict of interest existed for those Members who sat on both the Standards and Business Committee and the Audit and Risk Panel.

**Performance Improvement - Northern Ireland Audit
Office Performance Assessments**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources informed the Panel that Part 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 placed a duty on the Council to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. With that in mind, he drew its attention to the following Northern Ireland Audit Office Performance Assessments:

2019/20

He reported that, due to ongoing pressures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Northern Ireland Audit Office's audit and assessment of the Council's improvement activity for 2019/20 had only been completed in February, 2021. The final audit report had been issued on 9th December, one year later than usual.

The Local Government Auditor had certified the performance arrangements with a standard, unqualified opinion. The Council had met its requirements under Section 92 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, in terms of the publication of improvement information and had acted in accordance with the Department for Communities' guidance sufficiently. No recommendations had been made under section 95(2) of the aforementioned Act and no recommendations or proposals had been identified for improvement.

The Panel approved the Northern Ireland Audit Office's report on the Council's improvement activity for 2019/20.

2021-22

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources reported that the Covid-19 pandemic had delayed the commencement of the Northern Ireland Audit Office's audit and assessment of the Council's improvement activity for 2020/21 until December, 2021. A draft audit report had been forwarded to the Council on 21st February and was now being presented to the Audit and Risk Panel for approval.

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The Local Government Auditor had certified the performance arrangements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification. The Council had discharged its performance improvement and reporting duties, as set out within the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014, including its assessment of performance for 2020-21 and its 2021-22 improvement plan, and had acted in accordance with the relevant guidance.

He went on to explain that the Covid-19 pandemic had removed the requirement for the Council to draft a Performance Improvement Plan for 2021-22. In the absence of guidance around the arrangements to be in place for performance assessment, the Performance Unit had compiled a short summary update on the Statutory Performance Indicators and had published its figures by the deadline of 30th September, 2021.

The audit report had acknowledged that the Council had produced a Recovery Plan and that, whilst there had been no obligation to include a year-end assessment of the Plan, it would have been desirable to have had this included in the performance assessment. He pointed out that, although a formal annual update of the Plan had not produced, Members and senior officers had, over the course of the pandemic, been provided with regular weekly and monthly updates on various aspects of the Council's activities to support recovery.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources concluded by pointing out that, for 2021–22, the Council had developed an Improvement Plan, based upon its Recovery Plan. A full update on the Improvement Plan would be produced at year-end, as part of the Annual Performance Assessment and in line with the Local Government Auditor's proposal for Improvement.

The Panel approved the Northern Ireland Audit Office's audit and assessment of the Council's improvement activity for 2020/21.

**Performance Improvement – Q3 Performance 2021- 22/
Update on Arrangements for 2022-23 Improvement Plan**

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Panel that Part 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 required councils to agree improvement objectives on an annual basis and to publish them in the form of an Improvement Plan by 30th June.

This year, as the Council transitioned from the impacts of the pandemic, it had once again adapted its improvement objectives in such a way as to provide an appropriate balance between corporate planning and recovery work.

He reported that the strategic structure which had been used in 2021-22 by the Council to explain improvement objectives appeared to have been well received by residents. That format would be retained for the 2022–23 improvement objectives, as it allowed for Covid-19 considerations to be incorporated and for specific improvement to be articulated in a meaningful way for the public.

He reminded the Panel that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 18th February, had agreed the following draft improvement objectives for 2022-23 and approved their issue for public consultation, in line with statutory guidance:

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Our Services
We will continue to adapt and improve our services
Our Communities
We will work to support our communities, helping them to become stronger, healthier and more resilient
Our Economy
We will work collaboratively to support businesses, jobs and inclusive growth
Our Environment
We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast
Our City
We will continue to support our city to recover and innovate in a safe, inclusive and sustainable way

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that the Council would issue the improvement objectives via its on-line engagement platform, with an eight-week consultation period running from March to April, 2022. During that time, Audit, Governance and Risk Services would work with Departments to develop detailed actions, milestones and performance indicators and would update those, based on public feedback. A final report and draft improvement plan would, in June, be submitted to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval and be published thereafter.

He went on to draw the Panel's attention to the Quarter 3 update on progress made against activities contributing to the improvement objectives contained within the Council's 2021-22 Improvement Plan. The update outlined the key milestones, provided a summary of activity under each objective and included the most up to date position in relation to the performance indicators included within the Plan. Progress against all the objectives had, largely, been on target, and an explanation had been provided for those which had been delayed. A further report on progress would be presented to the Panel at the year-end.

He then reported that the Department for Communities had recently launched a consultation on The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland), 2022. The consultation outlined proposed changes to how business start-up activity was measured. The Council had drafted an outline response which, on 9th February, had been approved by the City Growth and Regeneration Committee. He added that the Performance Improvement Working Group would continue to have discussions with the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Audit Office on performance improvement and the further review of statutory indicators and that the Panel will be updated on the outcome.

**Audit and Risk Panel,
Tuesday, 8th March, 2022**

Change of Date of September Meeting

The Panel acceded to a request from the Northern Ireland Audit Office to move its meeting in September from Tuesday, 6th to Tuesday, 13th, to allow the Audit Office sufficient time to complete its audit of the financial statements. The meeting would, as usual, commence at 12.30 p.m.

Date of Next Meeting

The Panel noted that its next meeting would take place on Tuesday, 7th June at 12.30 p.m.

Chairperson

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City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group

Wednesday, 16th February, 2022

THE CITY HALL/CITY HALL GROUNDS INSTALLATIONS WORKING GROUP MINUTES HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Kingston; and
Councillors Beattie, Ferguson and O'Hara.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;
Ms. K. Mullen, Project Sponsor; and
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Election of Chairperson

The Working Group agreed that Councillor Beattie take the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

(Councillor Beattie in the Chair.)

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Installations – City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group Terms of Reference

The Director of Physical Programmes reminded the Members that the Strategic Policy Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21st May, 2021 had agreed to the establishment of an All-Party Working Group – Installations: City Hall/City Grounds to consider and agree commissions for future installations in City Hall or City Hall grounds.

A copy of the Terms of Reference for the Working Group had been circulated for the Members' consideration. She advised that the Working Group would be responsible for ensuring that any future installations in City Hall complied with and fulfilled the recommendations set out in the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) 'Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment. The Working Group would report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to make recommendations and seek approval for investment decisions.

Officers had engaged with a number of external parties to explore their willingness to participate in the Working Group in an advisory capacity.

The Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities (HED) had indicated that it was content to participate in future meetings of the Working Group given the City Hall's Grade 1 Listed Status. Representatives were keen to assist the Council to ensure that any future installations met the necessary statutory requirements. HED had acknowledged the ongoing work to ensure that the City Hall and its grounds were inclusive and reflected the diverse nature of the City.

Following agreement by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 21st May, 2021, on the installation of statues to Mary Ann McCracken and Winifred Carney it was suggested that subject matter experts be invited to participate in the Working Group to inform an artist's brief. Officers had approached the Mary Ann McCracken Foundation who had nominated two representatives to attend the Working Group meetings on an ad hoc basis. Furthermore, it was recommended that Tom Hartley, Local Historian, be approached to provide background to inform an artist's brief for the installation of a statue of Winifred Carney.

The Working Group recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee:

- i. Approve the Terms of Reference for the Installations: City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group; and
- ii. Agree the external statutory membership and subject matter expert membership.

Purpose Statement

- **To ensure Belfast City Hall¹ and its grounds are a good and harmonious environment for those who visit and work in the building, while reflecting both the diverse identities of its users and the functions served by the City Hall, whilst acknowledging its prominent role in the civic life and history of Belfast. This is in line with the recommendations of the EQIA 'Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment.**
- **The underpinning principles being that Council should move towards more balanced and inclusive displays in City Hall and by nature of the EQIA City Hall grounds and that these should be:**
 - **Welcoming**
 - **Attractive**
 - **Interesting**
 - **Representative of the history and heritage of Belfast**
 - **Representative of the diversity of the City**

¹ NB use of wording City Hall includes reference to both City Hall building and by extension the grounds of City Hall

The purpose of the Working Group is to:

- Consider and provide recommendations relating to City Hall and its grounds ensuring these are reflective of the principles set out in the EQIA whilst ensuring compliance with City Hall's status as a Grade 1 Listed Building;
- Make recommendations on any additionality² and give assurances to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with regard to City Hall and its grounds; and
- Take cognisance of any similar works/plans throughout the City to ensure complementarity.

Role of the Working Group:

1. Provide input on, and endorsement of, any additionality to City Hall and its grounds, to ensure these align with the EQIA 'Belfast City Hall: Promoting a Good and Harmonious Environment and corporate priorities/objectives;
2. Consider and provide recommendations on any additionality to City Hall, including the escalation of issues to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee;
3. Review and consider outstanding Notices of Motion in relation to installation of stained glass windows in City Hall with a view to taking these forward;
4. Take forward the procurement, design and installation of additional statues in City Hall grounds;
5. Take forward the installation of the Carson tile;
6. Review and consider and take forward the installation of the Municipal Arc;
7. Ensure there is complementarity and appropriate linkages with other planned installations within the City, that is, the Fredrick Douglass statue; and
8. Ensure that any future installations are underpinned by programming and supporting resources.

Accountability:

The City Hall Working Group will be accountable to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for the fulfilment of these Terms of Reference.

All recommendations will be forwarded to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval in line with Council's capital programme approval and investment processes.

² NB additionality includes, statutes, stained glass windows, municipal arc and any other memorabilia

Installation of Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken Statues City Hall Grounds

The Working Group considered the following report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

Members will recall that there have been ongoing discussions with regard to a number of issues related to installations and future installations in City Hall grounds following recommendations contained in the City Hall EQIA. In particular to the installation of two statues on the front lawn of City Hall one representing Winifred Carney and the second Mary Ann McCracken.

SP&R at its meeting on 24 January 2020 agreed that the City Hall Statues Project be added as a Stage 1 Emerging Project on the Capital Programme. SP&R at its meeting on 21 May 2021 agreed to the installation of a statue of Winifred Carney, the final form of this statue to be brought back to Committee for approval and that the proposed work be moved to Stage 2 – Uncommitted on the Capital Programme. At that same meeting it was agreed to the installation of a statue of Mary Ann McCracken in the grounds of City Hall, the final form of which would be submitted to the Committee in due course for approval as part of the Capital Programme. The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current status of works and to note that it is proposed to bring these into the SP&R Committee next month to seek approval to move the installation of both statues to Stage 3-Committed on the Capital Programme and to commence the procurement process for the design, manufacture and installation of both statues subject to Committee approval.

2.0 Recommendations

The Members of the Working Group are asked to

- i Note that it is proposed that the installation of the Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken statues are moved to Stage 3 -Committed on the Capital Programme to allow procurement to commence with final approval on designs and costs being taken by Strategic Policy and Resources Committee based on recommendations from Installations: City Hall/City Grounds Working Group. This will be subject to a planning being obtained and a satisfactory tender being returned. An indicative budget has been set to allow for the process to commence in terms of design, fabrication and installation. In line with the three stage approval process Members are asked to

- note that the final budget will only be agreed upon the receipt of a satisfactory tender
- ii Note that one artist be appointed to undertake the design and installation of both Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken to ensure there is complementarity between both pieces
 - iii Consideration be given to participating in the Mary Ann McCracken walking tour and the James Connolly walking tour by way of providing some further background and history of each individual.

3.0 Main report

Discussions have been ongoing at Party Group Leaders in relation to additional statues within City Hall grounds. Following agreement at Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 21 May 2021 it was agreed that this Working Group Installations: City Hall/City Hall grounds be established to take forward the statues project.

A number of meetings have taken place with HED to ascertain if the installation of additional statutory in City Hall grounds would be something which would be acceptable given City Hall's Grade 1 Listed Status in light of the need to secure the necessary planning approvals. HED, in initial conversations, have indicated that they have no objections to the proposal and have agreed to act in an advisory capacity in not only taking the City Hall Statues Project forward but also in relation to all future City Hall installations.

There has been early engagement with the Mary Ann McCracken Foundation who have indicated their support for the installation of a statue and have agreed to provide support in the development of an artist's brief. The Mary Ann McCracken Foundation undertake significant work in promoting the work undertaken by Mary Ann McCracken and recognising the impact she, as an individual, had on the City of Belfast. The Foundation operate regular walking tours where Mary Ann's work and contribution to the City are explored in more detail – the Foundation would like to offer Members the opportunity to participant in a walking tour to give a flavour of the remarkable contribution Mary Ann made and the impact of her work not just in Belfast but on a wider scale. The Mary Ann McCracken walking tour concludes in City Hall grounds so a very fitting tribute to her would be the erection of a statue in the grounds. There is an opportunity to work with the Foundation to ensure Mary Ann's contribution to the City is celebrated and acknowledged through the development of supporting programming.

Winifred Carney's role as a women, as a Trade Unionist representing workers and as an Irish Nationalist and Republican is recognised in the work of the James Connolly

Museum. The James Connolly heritage trail commences in City Hall grounds so there would be an opportunity to establish a linkage with the walking tour should Members be minded. In terms of background for inclusion in an artist's brief it is suggested that as well as a family member that Tom Hartley, Historian, be invited to participate in the Working Group to inform an artist's brief.

Once the artist's brief has been finalised the procurement process can commence. This is a two-stage process, the first being PQQ (pre-qualification questionnaire) process in order to proceed to ITT (invitation to tender) stage. As part of the ITT stage the shortlisted artists are required to produce maquette (a small preliminary model). It is suggested that the Working Group are involved in all steps of the process to select the final designs. Based on similar public art installations it is expected that the fabrication of the final pieces including installation and securing planning can take between 6 to 10 months with a procurement exercise taking approximately 14 weeks.

Finance and Resource Implications

Based on similar public art procurement exercises it is expected that each piece may cost in the region of £150,000. Procurement for public art is slightly different from a normal procurement exercise in that the budget must be specified in order to inform the design and fabrication of the final piece. It is recommended that £300,000 be ringfenced in Council's capital budget for City Hall statues project.

Human Resources

Officer time as required.

Equality or Good Relations Implications

The installation of statues of Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken will contribute to meeting the recommendations of the EQIA in ensuring Council achieves a greater balance in terms of the persons who are depicted or represented within the grounds."

After discussion, the Working Group adopted the recommendations and commended them to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval. The Working Group noted that the Director would explore the incorporation of social value into the procurement process, in line with any procurement policies in place, and if any Members were aware of any other subject matter experts these could be forwarded to the Director for consideration.

Carson Tile - Verbal Update

The Working Group note an update on the Carson Tile which was to be located in the City Hall reception area and that report would be submitted to the next meeting.

City Hall Installation Group - Future work programme

The Working Group agreed to the following future work programme:

Meeting	Items to be discussed
March	Design specifications - Winfred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken statues Stained Glass windows – update on current position and proposed next steps Frederick Douglass statue – update Carson Tile - update
April	Statues - update Arc City Hall Grounds

Chairperson

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Language Strategy Working Group

Tuesday, 15th March, 2022

LANGUAGE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP MINUTES HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillors Kyle, McMullan, O'Hara, Spratt and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. S. Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager;
Mr. M. Johnston, Language Officer;
Mr. C. McGuigan, Irish Language Officer;
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer;
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer; and
Ms. L. McConnell (Interpreter)

Appointment of Chairperson

The Working Group agreed that Councillor McMullan take the Chair for the duration of the meeting.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Ferguson, Hutchinson and Walsh.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Terms of Reference

The Governance and Compliance Manager referred to the Terms of Reference for the Language Strategy Working Group as agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in October 2022 and asked if Members were content.

A Member asked for clarity around New Community Languages and the Governance and Compliance Manager clarified that it referred to Newcomer Languages.

In response to a Member's concern around reaching key stakeholders, the Governance and Compliance Manager explained that stakeholder mechanisms would be put in place and would be discussed at future meetings in line with each of the five strands contained within the strategy.

There was further discussion about the changing demographic of Belfast.

The Working Group noted the information which had been provided and the Terms of Reference.

Briefing for Members on the Language Strategy

The Governance and Compliance Manager delivered an overview of the Language Strategy 2018 – 2023, and provided the Members with background into the agreed visions and aims of the strategy which included the following five strands:

- Irish Language
- Ulster-Scots Language
- Sign Language (British and Irish)
- New Communities' Languages
- Languages and Communications for Disabled

The Governance and Compliance Manager outlined the agreed policy and messaging. She provided an overview of events and engagement activities undertaken so far in the context of the strategy and highlighted the challenges ahead.

Noted.

Language Strategy: proposed approach

The Governance and Compliance Manager provided Members with a high-level overview of the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan which outlined both short-term and long-term actions for All Languages and each of the five strands.

Following the presentation, the Working Group noted that the Members would review the Action Plan for discussion at the next Working Group meeting.

Chairperson