

# Public Document Pack

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



**Belfast  
City Council**

## COMBINED PACK

23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2023

### **MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the on Friday, 24th March, 2023 at 9.30 am, for the transaction of the business noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

### **AGENDA:**

#### **1. Routine Matters**

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

#### **2. Restricted Items**

- (a) Belfast Local Development Plan - Plan Strategy (PS) Adoption (Pages 1 - 1126)
- (b) Outstanding Accounts (Pages 1127 - 1130)
- (c) Medium Term Financial Plan (Pages 1131 - 1138)
- (d) Refresh of Belfast Agenda Update (Pages 1139 - 1210)
- (e) Advertising Spend (Pages 1211 - 1214)

- (f) Signage at Olympia Leisure Centre EQIA (Pages 1215 - 1230)
  - (g) Asset Management (Pages 1231 - 1238)
  - (h) Bid to Host the European Football Championships 2028 (Pages 1239 - 1244)
  - (i) Gaelic Games Pitch at Henry Jones Playing Fields (Pages 1245 - 1250)
  - (j) Physical Programme Update (Pages 1251 - 1266)
3. **Matters referred back from Council/Notices of Motions** (Pages 1267 - 1268)
- (a) Motion – Maternity Leave Provision for Mothers of Babies defined as Premature (Pages 1269 - 1270)
4. **Governance**
- (a) Revisions to Scheme of Allowances (Pages 1271 - 1298)
  - (b) Local Government Elections May 2023 - Update (Pages 1299 - 1314)
5. **Strategic Issues/Belfast Agenda**
- (a) City Region Growth Deal – update (Pages 1315 - 1324)
  - (b) ~~2028 UEFA European Championship~~ (moved to restricted)
  - (c) Community Ownership Fund (Pages 1325 - 1348)
  - (d) Modern Slavery Act 2015 - updated Modern Slavery Statement and update on corporate action plan (Pages 1349 - 1360)
6. **Physical Programme and Asset Management**
- (a) ~~Physical Programme Update~~ (moved to restricted)
  - (b) ~~Asset Management~~ (moved to restricted)
  - (c) Area Working Update (Pages 1361 - 1398)
7. **Finance, Procurement and Performance**
- (a) CIPFA Prudential Code Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators 2023-24 (Pages 1399 - 1418)
  - (b) Business Cluster and Community Grant Scheme Re-allocation (Pages 1419 - 1420)
  - (c) Audit and Risk Panel Report and Minutes of meeting of 7th March 2023 (Pages 1421 - 1446)
  - (d) Social Value Procurement Policy Delivery Report (Pages 1447 - 1458)
  - (e) Contracts Update (Pages 1459 - 1468)

8. **Equality and Good Relations**

- (a) Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 6th March 2023 (Pages 1469 - 1496)
- (b) Equality and Diversity- Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Q3 22-23 (Pages 1497 - 1504)

9. **Operational**

- (a) Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum (Pages 1505 - 1510)
- (b) Requests for the use of the City Hall and the provision of hospitality (Pages 1511 - 1514)
- (c) Minutes of the meeting of the Installations Working Group 22nd February (Pages 1515 - 1518)
- (d) Minutes of the Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore 27th February (Pages 1519 - 1522)
- (e) Minutes of the Meeting of the Language Strategy Working Group (Pages 1523 - 1524)
- (f) Attendance at Horizon 2020 UPSURGE (Pages 1525 - 1528)
- (g) Minutes of the Meeting of the City Centre Working Group (Pages 1529 - 1530)
- (h) Update on dual language street signs (Pages 1531 - 1534)

10. **Issues raised in advance by Members**

- (a) Belfast Citywide Tribunal Service - Councillor Ferguson to raise

This page is intentionally left blank



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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 6  
of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Maternity Leave Provision for Mothers of Babies defined as Premature</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> March, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
	To bring to Members' attention a motion on Maternity Leave Provision for Mothers of Babies defined as Premature, which the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21 <sup>st</sup> February, referred to this Committee.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
	The Committee is asked to consider the motion.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b> The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21 <sup>st</sup> February, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 1st February:

	<p><b><u>Maternity Leave Provision for Mothers of Babies defined as Premature</u></b></p> <p>“This Council will amend maternity leave provision for mothers of babies defined as premature so that maternity leave will not commence until the certified due date of the child. All/any leave required from delivery date of a premature baby by parents will be considered compassionate leave and not reduce an employee’s right to standard parental leave.”</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Gareth Spratt</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Sarah Bunting</p>
3.2	<p>Members are reminded that in accordance with Standing Order 13(l), where the notice of motion seeks to commit the Council to expenditure not previously agreed through the Committee process, the motion will stand referred to the relevant Committee for consideration. If the motion is agreed at the Committee, then this will usually require a further report from officers outlining the financial and other implications should the notice of motion be adopted.</p>
3.3	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None at this stage.</p>
3,4	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None





<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Motion – Maternity Leave Provision for Mothers of Babies defined as Premature</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> March, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
	To bring to Members' attention a motion on Maternity Leave Provision for Mothers of Babies defined as Premature, which the Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21 <sup>st</sup> February, referred to this Committee.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
	The Committee is asked to consider the motion.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b><u>Key Issues</u></b> The Standards and Business Committee, at its meeting on 21 <sup>st</sup> February, considered the following motion which had been received for submission to the Council on 1st February:

	<p><b><u>Maternity Leave Provision for Mothers of Babies defined as Premature</u></b></p> <p>“This Council will amend maternity leave provision for mothers of babies defined as premature so that maternity leave will not commence until the certified due date of the child. All/any leave required from delivery date of a premature baby by parents will be considered compassionate leave and not reduce an employee’s right to standard parental leave.”</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Gareth Spratt</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Sarah Bunting</p>
3.2	<p>Members are reminded that in accordance with Standing Order 13(l), where the notice of motion seeks to commit the Council to expenditure not previously agreed through the Committee process, the motion will stand referred to the relevant Committee for consideration. If the motion is agreed at the Committee, then this will usually require a further report from officers outlining the financial and other implications should the notice of motion be adopted.</p>
3.3	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None at this stage.</p>
3,4	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>This motion, if agreed, may have potential equality, good relations and rural needs implications and should be subject to our normal screening process as appropriate</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
	None



<b>Subject:</b>	Revisions to Scheme of Allowances
<b>Date:</b>	24th March, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ms. Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mr. Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider amendments to the Council's Scheme of Allowances to increase the rates of Basic Allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances, and Dependents' Carers' Allowance
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider whether it wishes to increase the Basic Allowance paid to each Councillor from £15,486 per annum to £16,394 with effect from 1st April, 2022;</li> <li>consider whether it wishes to increase the total maximum Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) from the current £117,774 per annum to £124,676 as set out in Appendix 2 with effect from 1st April, 2022; and</li> <li>Approve the increase to rate of Dependents' Carers' Allowance in line with the National Living Wage for 2023-2024</li> </ol>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, Part 2, par 3 states that the Council must agree a new Scheme of Allowances for each year in which allowances are paid.</p>
3.1.1	Paragraphs 4(2) and 5(2) further state that the amount of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances shall be determined by the Council.
3.1.2	The Department for Communities issued a circular, LG 10/2022, dated 28th March, 2022, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April, 2021.
3.1.3	The Committee, at its meeting in April, 2022, agreed not to apply any increase in the basic and special responsibility allowances, and instead agreed to write to the Department for Communities calling for the current legislation to be amended to provide for the establishment of an independent process to deal with the scheme of allowances, thereby removing Elected Member involvement.
3.1.4	The Council has not yet received a reply from the Department for Communities to our letter send in mid-2022.
3.1.5	The Department for Communities issued a further circular, LG 03/2023 dated 25th January, 2023, which set out revised maximum limits for basic and special responsibility allowances with effect from 1st April,2022.
	<u>Basic Allowance</u>
3.16	The Committee is requested to consider whether it wishes to increase the rate of basic allowance paid to each Councillor from the current £15,486 per annum to £16,394 per annum.
	<u>Special Responsibility Allowance</u>
3.17	The Committee is further requested to consider whether it wishes to apply the increase to the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) budget, with effect from 1st April, 2022. For a number of years, the Council has agreed a split in the special responsibility allowance budget so as to pay both the Chairpersons and the Deputy Chairpersons of the Standing Committees and the Party Officers (Party Leader, Deputy Party Leader and Party Secretary – depending upon

	<p>Party size). The current division of SRAs is set out in Appendix 1. If the increase in the overall budget is increased, a suggested split is set out in Appendix 2.</p> <p><u>Dependents' Carers' Allowance</u></p> <p>3.18 The Department for Communities determines the maximum hourly rates of Dependant's Carers' Allowance for both standard care and specialised care. The rate for standard care is based on the hourly National Living Wage for age 23+, which will increase on 1st April, 2023 from the current rate of £9.50 per hour to £10.42 per hour.</p> <p>3.19 The rate for specialised care is double the rate for standard care. In addition, the Department for Communities sets the maximum monthly amounts for standard care and specialised care, capped at the equivalent of 52 hours per month.</p> <p>3.20 Accordingly, in line with the increase in the National Living Wage, the Committee is requested to agree to following amendment to the Scheme of Allowances:</p> <p><u>"(iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Standard Care £10.42 per hour limited to £542.00 per month</i></li> <li>• <i>Specialist Care £20.84 per hour limited to £1,084.00 per month"</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.21 The increase to the maximum rates of each of the allowances has already been considered and can be met through existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.22 There are not any Good Relations, Equality or Rural Needs issues associate with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
4.1	<p>Appendix 1 – Current division of SRAs</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Revised division of SRAs if the increase in the maximum is applied</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Proposed Scheme of Allowances 2023-2024</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Local Government Circular LG 03/2023</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

**Allocation of Special Responsibility Allowance – Current****Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons**

Position	Allowance	Number of Positions	Total
Chairpersons	£5,460.00	7	£38,220
Deputy Chairpersons	£2,730.00	7	£19,110
Chair BW&UH Cttee	£2,730.00	1	£2,730
Dep Chair BW&UH Cttee	£1,365.00	1	£1,365
<b>Total</b>			<b>£61,425</b>

**Political Party Officers**

Party Officer Basic Allocation £3,465.00

Deputy Leader/Secretary Basic Allocation £3,150

Remainder allocated to Political Party Leaders £162.15 per Member of the Party

Position	Number of Members	Allocation per Party Member	Allocation per Party Strength	Basic Allocation	Total
SF Party Leader	18	£162.15	£2,534.94	£3,465	£6,383.70
SF Deputy Leader				£3,150	£3,150
SF Secretary				£3,150	£3,150
DUP Party Leader	15	£162.15	£2,112.45	£3,465	£5,897.25
DUP Deputy Leader				£3,150	£3,150
DUP Secretary				£3,150	£3,150
Alliance Party Leader	10	£162.15	£1,408.30	£3,465	£5,086.50
Alliance Deputy Leader				£3,150	£3,150
SDLP Party Leader	6	£162.15	£844.98	£3,465	£4,437.90
SDLP Deputy Leader				£3,150	£3,150
Green Party Leader	4	£162.15	£563.32	£3,465	£4,113.60
PBPA Leader	3	£162.15	£422.49	£3,465	£3,951.45
UUP Leader	2	£162.15	£281.66	£3,465	£3,789.30
PUP Leader	2	£162.15	£281.66	£3,465	£3,789.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>				<b>£56,349</b>

**Total**

**£117,774**

This page is intentionally left blank



**Allocation of Special Responsibility Allowance – with increase applied****Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Allowance</b>	<b>Number of Positions</b>	<b>Total</b>
Chairpersons	£5,800	7	£40,600
Deputy Chairpersons	£2,900	7	£20,300
Chair BW&UH Cttee	£2,900	1	£2,900
Dep Chair BW&UH Cttee	£1,450	1	£1,450
<b>Total</b>			<b>£65,250</b>

**Political Party Officers**

Party Officer Basic Allocation £3,660

Deputy Leader/Secretary Basic Allocation £3,300

Remainder allocated to Political Party Leaders £172.43 per Member of the Party

<b>Position</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>	<b>Allocation per Party Member</b>	<b>Allocation per Party Strength</b>	<b>Basic Allocation</b>	<b>Total</b>
SF Party Leader	18	£172.43	£3,103.74	£3,660.00	£6,763.74
SF Deputy Leader				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
SF Secretary				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
DUP Party Leader	15	£172.43	£2,586.45	£3,660.00	£6,246.45
DUP Deputy Leader				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
DUP Secretary				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
Alliance Party Leader	10	£172.43	£1,724.30	£3,660.00	£5,384.30
Alliance Deputy Leader				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
SDLP Party Leader	6	£172.43	£1,034.58	£3,660.00	£4,694.58
SDLP Deputy Leader				£3,300.00	£3,300.00
Green Party Leader	4	£172.43	£689.72	£3,660.00	£4,349.72
PBPA Leader	3	£172.43	£517.29	£3,660.00	£4,177.29
UUP Leader	2	£172.43	£344.86	£3,660.00	£4,004.86
PUP Leader	2	£172.43	£344.86	£3,660.00	£4,004.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>				<b>£59,425.80</b>

**Total**

**£124,675.80**

This page is intentionally left blank



# **Scheme of Allowances**

## **Payable to Councillors 2023/2024**

Revised March, 2023

This Scheme is made under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and will take effect from 1st April, 2023.

### **Councillors' allowances**

Councillors' allowances are governed by statute and provision is made for the following types of payments:

#### **(a) Allowances:**

- (i) Basic Allowance
- (ii) Special Responsibility Allowance
- (iii) Civic Dignitaries Allowance
- (iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance
- (v) District Policing and Community Safety Partnership Allowances (DPCSP)
- (vi) Renunciations
- (vii) Disqualification or Suspension of a Councillor

#### **(b) Expenses**

- (i) Travel
- (ii) Subsistence

In issuing the payment of allowances to elected members the Council follows the instructions set out by the Department of Environment in 'Guidance on Councillor Allowances' March 2012 and further circular updates.

Information regarding other provisions for Councillors is also included:

#### **(c) Additional Information**

- (i) IT/Phone Package
- (ii) Councillors' Support Services

(a) Allowances

(i) Basic Allowances

A basic allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all Councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and approved duties. Basic allowance is also intended to cover incidental costs incurred by Councillors in their official capacity, such as the use of their homes and the cost of any telephone calls, including mobile phone calls.

The maximum annual allowance with effect from 1st April, 2023 is £16,394 payable monthly.

This allowance will be paid in equal monthly instalments via the Council's Payroll and is subject to tax, National Insurance and pension deductions where applicable.

If a Councillor ceases to be a Councillor before the end of his or her term of office, payment of the allowance will cease and a pro rata calculation will be made to ensure that the Councillor receives the correct amount of allowance. If necessary, an adjustment for under or over payment may be made to ensure that the final payment is correct, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Basic Allowance.

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of the basic allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld.

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 60(1) (Decisions on Interim Reports) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of the basic allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld, subject to the provision that the allowance withheld shall be payable to the councillor concerned should the final adjudication of the Commissioner for Standards exonerate the councillor concerned.

In circumstances where a councillor is partially suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) or section 60(1) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the basic allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is partially suspended shall continue.

## Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

## (ii) Special Responsibility Allowances

In addition to Basic Allowance the Council also pays Special Responsibility Allowances to those Councillors it considers to have significant additional responsibilities over and above the generally accepted duties of a Councillor. These special responsibilities are related to the discharge of the Council's functions.

The maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance is determined by the Department for Communities. The division of the Special Responsibility Allowance is based upon the positions held by individual Councillors as agreed.

- The Council agreed a special responsibility allowance threshold of £124,676 which may be paid to holders of positions of responsibility. No more than 50% of the Councillors can receive a special responsibility payment and no individual member can receive more than one special responsibility payment.

Special Responsibility Allowance is paid in equal, monthly instalments. Special Responsibility Allowances are liable for tax, National Insurance and pension deductions where applicable

In the event of a Councillor ceasing to hold an office which entitled him or her to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance before the term of office is completed, payment of the Allowance ceases. If necessary, an adjustment for under or overpayment may have to be made to ensure that the final payment is correct, and the Council reserves the right to recover any overpayments of Special Responsibility Allowance.

Rates of Special Responsibility Allowances with effect from 1st September, 2023 are:

Position	Committee	Allowance
<b>Chairperson's Allowance</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee	£5,800
	City Growth and Regeneration Committee	£5,800
	People and Communities Committee	£5,800
	Licensing Committee	£5,800
	Planning Committee	£5,800
	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee	£2,900
	Brexit Committee	£5,800
	Standards Committee	£5,800

## Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

<b>Deputy Chairperson's Allowance</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee	£2,900
	City Growth and Regeneration Committee	£2,900
	People and Communities Committee	£2,900
	Licensing Committee	£2,900
	Planning Committee	£2,900
	Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Hall Ltd. Shareholders' Committee	£1,450
	Brexit Committee	£2,900
	Standards Committee	£2,900

Position	Party	Allowance
<b>Party Group Leader</b>	Sinn Fein (18 Members)	£6,763.74
	DUP (15 Members)	£6,246.45
	Alliance (10 Members)	£5,384.30
	SDLP (6 Members)	£4,694.58
	GREEN (4 Members)	£4,349.72
	PBPA (3 Members)	£4,177.29
	UUP (2 Members)	£4,004.86
	PUP (2 Members)	£4,004.86
<b>Deputy Party Group Leader</b>	Sinn Fein	£3,300
	DUP	£3,300
	Alliance	£3,300
	SDLP	£3,300
<b>Party Secretary</b>	Sinn Fein	£3,300
	DUP	£3,300

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of any special responsibility allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld.

In circumstances where a councillor is wholly suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 60(1) (Decisions on Interim Reports) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, the whole of any special responsibility allowance payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is suspended shall be withheld, subject to the provision that the allowance withheld

## Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

shall be payable to the councillor concerned should the final adjudication of the Commissioner for Standards exonerate the councillor concerned.

In circumstances where a councillor is partially suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, that part of any special responsibility allowance (to which the partial suspension relates) payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is partially suspended shall be withheld.

In circumstances where a councillor is partially suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 60(1) (Decisions on Interim Reports) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, that part of any special responsibility allowance (to which the partial suspension relates) payable to the councillor in respect of the period for which the councillor is partially suspended shall be withheld, subject to the provision that the allowance withheld shall be payable to the councillor concerned should the final adjudication of the Commissioner for Standards exonerate the councillor concerned.

(iii) Civic Dignitaries Allowance

Section 32 of the Finance Act provides that a council may pay to the Civic Dignitaries such allowances as it considers reasonable to meet the expenses of those offices and they should be considered totally separate from SRA arrangements.

The Civic Dignitary Personal Allowances are paid in equal, monthly instalments and are liable for tax, National Insurance and pension deductions where applicable.

The entitlements, per annum, are:-

- Lord Mayor                      £34,800
- Deputy Lord Mayor        £6,250
- High Sherriff                £6,250

Where a Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor is suspended from carrying out the duties of a councillor in accordance with section 59(5) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, the part of Civic Allowance payable to the Councillor in respect of the period for which the Councillor is suspended will be withheld.

#### (iv) Dependants' Carers' Allowance

Any Member who is the main carer of a dependant, where care is required to enable that Member to perform an Approved Duty (see page 9), may claim Dependent Carers' Allowance (DCA). The rate for Standard Care is based on the hourly national living wage for age 23 or over, and the rate for Specialised Care is double the rate for Standard Care. The rates from 1st April, 2023 are:

- Standard Care            £10.42 per hour limited to £541.84 per month
- Specialist Care        £20.84 per hour limited to £1,083.68 per month

A dependant is defined as:

- a child under 16 years old;
- a child 16 years old or older, where there is medical / social work evidence that full-time care is required;
- an adult with recognised physical/mental disability where there is medical / social work evidence that full-time care is required; or
- an elderly relative requiring full-time care.

For the purposes of this allowance, a carer is defined as a responsible person over 16 years old who does not normally live with the councillor as part of that household; and is not a parent/guardian of the dependant. A specialist carer is a qualified person who is needed where it is essential to have professional assistance.

Receipts must be obtained from specialist carers and must accompany the claim form. Councillors may claim only once for each occurrence of an approved duty (page 10) and only one Dependants' Carers' Allowance rate is payable, even if there are two or more dependants being cared for.

Councillors must disclose any financial support provided under this allowance when applying for other care services offered by another public body.

This allowance claim may also include the duration of essential travel time, up to a maximum of one hour before the approved duty starts and ending up to one hour after it finishes.

#### (v) District Policing and Community Safety Partnership Allowances (DPCSP)

This allowance is paid to councillors who are members of the District Policing and Community Safety Partnership. Each councillor is entitled to claim £60 per attendance at each meeting and may claim for up to a maximum of 20 meetings a year. Each member can also claim for mileage for attending each meeting directly from DPCSP.

Chairpersons of each DPCSP are entitled to claim for an additional 10 meetings per year of the DPCSP. In addition the Chairperson of the 4 DCPSPs also sit on the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and are entitled to claim for up to 20 meetings per year of this partnership.

#### (vi) Renunciations

Councillors may, if they wish, renounce their entitlement to basic, chairperson, vice chairperson or special responsibility allowances. They can do this by writing to the Chief Executive. A councillor can subsequently withdraw the renunciation. They can also amend a renunciation (for example, to limit it to one kind of allowance only). The withdrawal or amendment cannot have retrospective effect.



(vii) Disqualification or Suspension of a Councillor

The Local Government Commissioner for Standards may impose sanctions on a Councillor who is found to have breached the Northern Ireland Code of Conduct for Councillors. Such sanction may be imposed at the conclusion of the Commissioner's adjudication process of the alleged breach or at the conclusion of an interim adjudication by the Commissioner.

For the purpose of this Scheme of Allowances, the following action will be taken upon receipt by the Chief Executive of a decision by the Commissioner which results in the disqualification or the suspension of a Councillor:

**Disqualification**

If a Councillor is disqualified, then the payment of all allowances and the provision of all support services outlined in this Scheme will cease with immediate effect from the date of disqualification.

**Suspension**

If a Councillor is wholly suspended for a period, then the payment of all allowances and the provision of all support services outlined in this Scheme will cease with immediate effect from the date of suspension.

## (b) Expenses

### Travel and Subsistence Allowances

All claims for travel and subsistence should be submitted within three months. Any claims made outside of this time limit cannot be processed.

#### (i) Travel

##### • Motor Mileage Claims

The rates of Travel and Subsistence Allowances, including motor mileage and pedal cycle rates, are reviewed annually by the Department for Communities, following consultation with the Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services.

Claims can only be made where expenditure is incurred in relation to the Councillors undertaking Approved Duties.

Travel claims may be made through Democratic Services and it is a matter for each individual Councillor to ensure that the details contained in any claim are accurate and only include actual expenditure for which they are entitled to make a claim.

In some instances, mileage claims may be liable for tax and National Insurance deductions.

The following rates are currently in use, with most Councillors getting the maximum amount of 65.0p per mile:

	Motor Cars				Pedal Cycle	Motor Cycle (all engine capacities)
	450-999cc	1000-1199cc	1199 + cc	Electric Car		
0-8,500 miles	46.9p	52.2p	65.0p	45.0p	20p	24p
After 8,500 miles	13.7p	14.4p	16.4p	25.0p		
Passenger rate	5.0p					

##### • Public Transport

Expenditure on public transport in relation to attending approved duties can be claimed back only when accompanied by proof of purchase. Any journeys made using public transport should be noted separately in any travel expenses claim.

## Scheme of Allowances 2023/2024

## (ii) Subsistence

If Councillors attend conferences, courses or undertake visits as representatives of the Council they are entitled to receive appropriate subsistence allowances.

Before a Councillor attends an event, they must obtain Committee approval. Councillors may also attend approved events as part of their Personal Development Plan (PDP).

Any accommodation or travel arrangements for conferences are made directly by the Council.

Councillors should take a careful note and keep receipts for any expenses they incur while they are away on Council business because they may be able to claim for these as part of their subsistence allowances or as incidental expenses. This relates to such things as meals, bus and taxi fares, necessary telephone calls, etc. Purchases of any alcoholic beverages may not be claimed for.

***Within the UK***

The rates for subsistence allowance are determined by the Department for Communities. The following table shows the current rates of subsistence which may be claimed for:

Maximum Subsistence Rates		
	BRITISH ISLES	LONDON
<b>Accommodation Allowance</b>	<b>£100.70</b>	<b>£122.45</b>
<b>Meal Allowance</b>		
Breakfast	£11.50	
Lunch	£13.50	
Tea	£4.70	
Dinner	£20.95	
<b>Total Meal Allowance</b>	<b>£50.65</b>	

Departments will assist Councillors in the completion of claim forms and Councillors should make contact with an appropriate officer immediately upon returning from the conference to give details of additional expenses incurred and to sign the necessary claim forms.

Claims without receipts should rarely happen. However, Councillors must use the '[Lost or Unobtainable Receipt Voucher](#)' to claim reimbursement for expenditure they have incurred when no receipt is available.

***Outside the UK***

For travel outside the United Kingdom, the Council will pay advanced subsistence at the rate of £75.00 per 24-hour period, or £45 per part 24-hour period.

## Approved Duties

Under the existing Regulations Councillors are entitled to claim expenses in relation to an approved duty. An approved duty may be defined as:-

- (a) attendance at a meeting of the Council or of any of its Committees. Members may only claim travelling allowance for attending Committees to which they have been appointed. A Member, however, may claim mileage allowance for attending a meeting of a Committee to which he or she has not been appointed if he or she is attending at the invitation of the Committee concerned or has been sent by another Committee to state a particular case.

Or

- (b) attendance approved by the Council for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the Council, such as:
  - attendance by appointed Councillors at meetings of Advisory/Liaison Committees Steering Groups/ Working Groups;
  - attendance at approved conferences, courses, study visits or seminars as a representative of the Council;
  - attendance by appointed Councillors at meetings of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships of which they are a member;
  - attendance at meetings of community centre committees to which they have been appointed;
  - attendance on a Council or Committee deputation relevant to the functions of the Council;
  - attendance at meetings of outside bodies to which they have been appointed, only if the functions of the Outside Body relates to the statutory functions of the Council, and where remuneration is not made by the Outside Body to which the Councillor has been appointed; and
  - Attendance at training courses or briefing sessions provided by or through the Council

In addition, the Council's Chief Executive can authorise as approved duties certain miscellaneous functions.

## Tax

Useful information on treatment of tax for councillors could be found at His Majesty's Revenue and Customs website via <https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual/eim65900>.

## Councillors' Pension Scheme

Councillors are automatically enrolled in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Scheme (NILGOSC). The main purpose of the scheme is to provide a pension in retirement for Councillors. The benefits paid under the Scheme are based on length of membership of the Scheme and career average pensionable pay.

The pensionable pay of a councillor consists of the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance payments only. The contribution rate depends on how much each Councillor is paid but will be between 5.5% and 7.5% of the pensionable allowances received.

If a Councillor no longer wishes to participate in the pension scheme, or has any queries regarding the scheme, NIGOSC should be contacted directly on 0345 3197 320

### (c) Additional Information

#### (i) IT /Phone Package

Personal computer equipment can be provided by the Council to each Councillor on the basis that the Council owns the equipment and lends it to those Councillors who request it.

Councillors IT Package currently consists of the following:

- a Windows Hybrid device: Dell Latitude 5330 2 in 1 (or equivalent), 1 Bluetooth touch pen (if required), and laptop case; and
- a Smartphone, either an Apple iPhone 11 64GB or a Samsung Galaxy A53, which includes call, text and data allowance.

- **Tablet PC**

Each Councillor is entitled to receive a tablet PC for their duration as a Member of Belfast City Council. The device is provided by the Council to assist Councillors in undertaking their role more effectively. The main benefits are having online access to the council minutes system and other Council provided software and to engage more effectively with constituents.

Where a Councillor has been provided with a tablet PC, hard copies of Council, Committee and Working Group report packs will not be provided.

- **Mobile Telephone costs**

Each Councillor will be offered the use of a mobile phone for the duration they remain a Councillor of Belfast City Council. The device is available for upgrade periodically.

The Council will cover the cost of line rental which includes:

- a. the cost of all phone calls to UK landlines or UK mobile phones whilst within the UK;
- b. the cost of all text messages to UK landlines or UK mobile phones whilst within the UK; and
- c. 4GB of data usage per month.

All costs incurred by calls, texts or data usage outside of that detailed above, are met by the Councillor and will be deducted the following month from the Councillor's basic allowance.

### **Hands free mobile phone equipment**

The Council will contribute towards the cost of purchase and installation of hands free mobile phone equipment for use in the Councillors' cars on the following basis:-

- Reimbursement will be made in respect of the costs of installation of the equipment in the Councillor's own private vehicle and shall be subject to the submission of appropriate receipts
- The maximum amount of reimbursement on each occasion to be £250.00.

- **Home Telephone**

The Council may meet the costs of basic monthly/quarterly line rental of the home telephone of each Councillor. Councillors are required to pay the rental cost in the first instance and, having submitted the telephone bill, will then be reimbursed this amount, subject to any tax deductions being applied through the Council's payroll system.

The Department for Communities has determined that as the Councillor's Basic Allowance covers incidental expenses involved in being a Councillor, such as the use of a home telephone, it is therefore not possible to reimburse the cost of telephone calls made on a landline.

- **Broadband Internet Access**

In order to encourage Councillors to use the Council's IT system remotely (from home or office), Councillors may claim part of their home broadband internet rental costs (maximum £25 per month).

As with phone line rental reimbursement, Councillors are required to pay the cost of the broadband in the first instance and, having submitted the appropriate bill, will then be reimbursed up to £25.00 per month, subject to any tax deductions being applied through the Council's payroll.

Access to the Council's systems is provided by means of a virtual private network (VPN). Councillors should speak to officers in Democratic Services to arrange to have the VPN set up on their computer.

- **Electronic Minutes System**

The electronic minutes system is accessible on the Council's website as well as the corporate intranet. The purpose of the system is to have a range of information relating to councillors and the Council's decision-making process in one place.

The system allows Councillors and members of the public to:-

- View the schedule of meetings;
- Access agendas, reports and minutes of Council, Committees, and Working Group Meetings; and
- Search for historical decisions.

The system is also used to alert Councillors that Committee summonses, agenda, minutes and reports have been published and, when any amendments or changes have taken place, Councillors can then access electronically.

## (ii) Councillors' Support Services

The Council provides Councillors with a wide range of support services to assist them in carrying out their work as Councillors. Support services include typing of correspondence, post, message and enquiry services, council stationery, research service, room bookings, Councillors training, travel arrangements, expenses and subsistence payments and general enquiries.

### • Members' Common Room

The Members' Common Room is located at the reception area of the City Hall, adjacent to the Committee Rooms. Individual mail boxes and a kitchen are available for Councillors' use.

### • Party Rooms

In addition to the Members' Common Room, the Council provides Party Rooms for each of the political party groups within the Council. These may be used for meetings, work or discussions with constituents.

All accommodation and facilities provided are for use in connection with Council or constituency business only.

In addition to a conference table, printer, scanner, television, tea/coffee making facilities and filing space, each Party Room has at least one PC in addition to docking stations for use with the Council provided tablet PCs.

### • Correspondence

Items for typing may be left with Democratic Services, where a confidential secretarial service is available for letters, reports and all other correspondence related to Council or constituency work.

After typing, letters will be left in the Councillor's mailbox in the Members' Common Room or can be posted to the addressee.

### • Post

A postal service is available for correspondence which relates to Council or constituency work.

Letters must be addressed to individuals living within the City boundary although letters to public bodies and government Departments with addresses outside the City will also be accepted.

Circularised mail will not be accepted.

Councillors can also be provided with prepaid envelopes for use in their routine correspondence to constituents etc. Please speak to Democratic Services officer to request an allocation of prepaid envelopes.

Postal facilities are not available for party political issues.

- **Message and Inquiry Service**

Democratic Services staff act as a point of contact for all enquiries and telephone messages concerning Councillors from the general public, constituents and Council officers.

The telephones in the party rooms are set to divert to staff on no reply and telephone messages for Councillors will be taken. Urgent messages will be relayed immediately to Councillors, if contact is possible, and other messages will be emailed or left in their mail boxes.

- **Council Stationery**

Personalised headed-paper, compliment slips and business cards with the Council logo will be provided for each Councillor during their term of office. Standard Council stationery items are also available in the Members' Common Room.

- **Civic Gifts**

A limited range of Belfast City Council branded gifts is available for use by Councillors. The gifts are intended for VIP guests to City Hall or for special individuals or groups which a Councillor wishes to recognise. Councillors may also request civic gifts when visiting special individuals or groups when on Council business in other countries. When requesting Civic Gifts, the Councillor must sign a receipt of goods and a database of issued gifts will be maintained.

- **Research and Information Service**

Democratic Services staff will be available to assist Councillors in obtaining information and carrying out research on items related to Council and constituency business.

- **Receiving Constituents**

Councillors may make arrangements to receive constituents or visitors in their party room if space is available. Councillors may also request to book a committee room to meet with a group of up to 15 visitors. Visitors will not be permitted access to party rooms or the committee rooms unless accompanied by a Councillor.

- **Car parking**

Councillors have 24 hour access to the City Hall car park. A pass for display in Councillors' vehicles will be provided by Democratic Services.

Car parking for guests of Councillors is limited. However, if this is required, please contact Democratic Services staff. The visitors' name and the registration number of the vehicle will be required for the purposes of admittance by Security staff.





Chief Executive of each District Council  
Finance Officer of each District Council  
Other Interested Parties

Local Government and  
Housing Regulation Division  
Finance Branch  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 7EG

Phone: 028 9082 3346

email: [Anthony.carleton@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Anthony.carleton@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Our ref: CO1-22-718

25 January 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**CIRCULAR LG 03/2023 - CONSOLIDATED COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES CIRCULAR  
(UPDATED JANUARY 2023)**

This Local Government Circular provides a consolidated record of all councillor allowances and supersedes Local Government Circular 10/2022.

This consolidated circular is required to determine and reflect an increase in maximum rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance from 1 April 2022 and an increase in Dependants' Carers' Allowance from 1 April 2023.

All determinations are made by the Department under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019.

If you have any queries on the content of this circular please contact Jeff Glass on 028 9082 3375 or Ian Lewis on 028 9082 3506 or by email [jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk) or [ian.lewis@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:ian.lewis@communities-ni.gov.uk).

Yours faithfully

**ANTHONY CARLETON**  
Director  
Local Government and Housing Regulation

## 1. Basic Allowance

- valid from 1 April 2022

<b>Basic Allowance</b>
Maximum £16,394 per annum ≠

≠ (The basic allowance includes an element for incidental and consumable costs incurred by councillors in their official capacity. In 2015/16 this element was £1,000 and each year this amount is uplifted in line with the increase applied to the basic allowance, therefore this element within the basic allowance is £1,154 from 1 April 2022.)

## 2. Dependants' Carers' Allowance

- valid from 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants' carers' allowance.

<b>Dependants' Carers' Allowance</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Maximum monthly amount</b>
Standard	£9.50 <sup>^</sup>	£494
Specialist	£19.00	£988

<sup>^</sup>(Based on national living wage)

- valid from 1 April 2023

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants' carers' allowance.

<b>Dependants' Carers' Allowance</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Maximum monthly amount</b>
Standard	£10.42 <sup>^</sup>	£542
Specialist	£20.84	£1,084

<sup>^</sup>(Based on national living wage)

### 3. Travel Allowances

– valid from 1 April 2017

The following table states the maximum rates for travel allowances.

Type of Vehicle	Rate per Mile	Rate per Mile Above 8,500 miles	Rate per Mile Above 10,000 miles
A pedal cycle	20.0p	20.0p	20.0p
A motor cycle (all engine capacities)	24.0p	24.0p	24.0p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 450cc but not exceeding 999cc	46.9p	13.7p	13.7p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 999cc but not exceeding 1,199cc	52.2p	14.4p	14.4p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 1,199cc	65.0p	16.4p	16.4p
An electric car	45.0p	45.0p	25.0p
Passenger rate (per passenger)	5.0p	5.0p	5.0p

#### 4. Special Responsibility Allowance

– valid from 1 April 2022

The following table states the maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance that a council may pay. The maximum rate is based on the size of the council population. Each council's population figures are updated each year by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and it is the duty of each council to operate within the total maximum rate appropriate to its population band. For ease the maximum any councillor can receive, within each band, is also provided.

<b>Population of council</b>	<b>Maximum Special Responsibility Allowance £</b>	<b>Maximum (1/5<sup>th</sup>) for individual councillor £</b>
Less than 120,000	57,720	11,544
120,000 to 199,000	80,809	16,162
200,000 +	124,676	24,935

## 5. Subsistence Allowances

– valid from 1 April 2015

The following table states the maximum rates for subsistence; however, where councils believe it is necessary there is flexibility for councils to increase these rates by applying a suitable measure of price inflation.

PERIOD/MEAL	British Isles Rates £	London Rates £
<b>Accommodation allowance</b> - An absence involving an overnight stay, away from the normal place of residence. This rate does not include any meal allowance.	100.70	122.45
<b>Breakfast allowance</b> - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period before 11 am)	11.50	11.50
<b>Lunch allowance</b> - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 12 noon and 2pm)	13.50	13.50
<b>Tea allowance</b> - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 3pm and 6pm)	4.70	4.70
<b>Evening meal allowance</b> - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period ending after 7pm)	20.95	20.95

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Subject:</b>	Local Government Elections May, 2023 - Update
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> March, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the Local Government Elections in May, 2023.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the contents of the report.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><b><u>Background</u></b></p> <p>The Committee will be aware that the Returning Officer (EONI) appoints the Chief Executive to be the Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) for the Local Government Elections. It is therefore his responsibility to organise the Election Count, amongst other things, from the Notice of Election through to the Counting of the ballot papers to determine the 60</p>

	Councillors who are elected to serve the Belfast District for the next Council term: May, 2023 till May, 2027.								
3.2	<p>To assist him in this process, the DRO has appointed Jim Hanna and Stephen McCrory as Assistant Deputy Returning Officers who are authorised to take all decisions in relation to the election in his place. The Chief Executive will be present throughout the count.</p> <p><b><u>Date of Election</u></b></p>								
3.3	<p>This year's Local Government Election poll was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> May, with the Counts to each of the 10 District Electoral Areas to take place on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>.</p>								
3.4	<p>However, due to the Coronation of King Charles III on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May and the possible impact on the count, the Northern Ireland Minister has determined that the date of the Election will be moved as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Polling Day</td><td>Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> May</td></tr> <tr> <td>Overnight verification of unused ballot papers</td><td>Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May</td></tr> <tr> <td>Count - Day 1 (5 DEAs)</td><td>Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> May</td></tr> <tr> <td>Count - Day 2 (5 DEAs)</td><td>Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> May</td></tr> </table>	Polling Day	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> May	Overnight verification of unused ballot papers	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> May	Count - Day 1 (5 DEAs)	Friday, 19 <sup>th</sup> May	Count - Day 2 (5 DEAs)	Saturday, 20 <sup>th</sup> May
Polling Day	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> May								
Overnight verification of unused ballot papers	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> May								
Count - Day 1 (5 DEAs)	Friday, 19 <sup>th</sup> May								
Count - Day 2 (5 DEAs)	Saturday, 20 <sup>th</sup> May								
3.5	<p>The election timetable is attached at Appendix 1 for information.</p> <p><b><u>Count Venue</u></b></p>								
3.6	<p>The venue for all of the counts will be the City Hall. This would require 3 counts to take place in the Great Hall and 1 each in the Banqueting Hall and the Reception Room.</p> <p><b><u>Order of Counts</u></b></p>								
3.7	<p>It is recognised that most Members would prefer the count for the DEA in which they are standing to take place on the Friday rather than the Saturday. In deciding which 5 DEAs should be counted in which room, there are some logistical matters which need to be taken into account:</p>								



3.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Reception Room is being used as a count venue and it is significantly smaller than the other count venues in the City Hall. The Banqueting Hall is the largest of the venues being used.</li> </ul>
3.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 10 DEAs do not all elect the same number of councillors. Black Mountain and Ormiston DEAs elect 7 members each; Balmoral and Botanic DEAs elect 5 members each; and Castle, Oldpark, Court, Collin, Lisnasharragh and Titanic DEAs each elect 6 members.</li> </ul>
3.10	<p>It is accepted that the number of members to be elected to a DEA does not necessarily mean that the count will take less time to complete but that is the only variable which can reasonably be used to assess which counts should be held in which venue. Accordingly it is suggested that the following breakdown is agreed:</p> <p>Reception Room – Balmoral and Botanic DEAs (5 members each)  Banqueting Hall – Black Mountain and Ormiston DEAs (7 members each)  Great Hall (1) – Castle and Oldpark DEAs (6 members each)  Great Hall (2) – Court and Colin DEAs (6 members each)  Great Hall (3) – Lisnasharragh and Titanic DEAs (6 members each)</p>
3.11	<p>In 2014 the Committee agreed which counts would be held on which day. It was agreed also that the counts held on the Saturday in 2014 would be held on the Friday in 2019 and this was subsequently confirmed at that time. Again, it is recommended that the counts should alternated and be held as follows:</p> <p><u>Friday 18th May, 2023</u></p> <p>Reception Room – Balmoral DEA  Banqueting Hall – Black Mountain DEA  Great Hall 1 – Castle DEA  Great Hall 2 – Court DEA  Great Hall 3 – Lisnasharragh DEA</p> <p><u>Saturday 20th May, 2023</u></p> <p>Reception Room – Botanic DEA  Banqueting Hall – Ormiston DEA</p>

	<p>Great Hall 1 – Oldpark DEA</p> <p>Great Hall 2 – Colin DEA</p> <p>Great Hall 3 – Titanic DEA</p> <p><b><u>Pre-Election Period of Heightened Political Sensitivity</u></b></p>
3.12	<p>The Pre-Election Period of Heightened Political Sensitivity (previously known as Purdah) will commence with effect from 6th April. Whilst there is currently no legislation in Northern Ireland which governs the publicity and council activity during the pre-election period for local government, the Council has previously approved an Election Protocol which provides guidance in dealing with issues which might impact on the election process and a copy is appended to this report.</p> <p>Motions and Issues raised in advance by Members</p>
3.13	<p>In previous years, Motions and issues raised in advance by Members have been perceived as publicity which could influence public opinion or to promote the public image of a particular candidate or group of candidates. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that these will accepted for inclusion on the agendas for Committees during the month of April (please note that this will require the meeting of the Standards and Business Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> April to be cancelled).</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.14	<p>The costs of the Local Elections in May 2023 will be met out of the existing elections budget.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.15	<p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Local Elections Timetable</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Belfast City Council Election Protocol</p>

# Local Council Elections Timetable

## Polling Day

### Thursday 18 May 2023

Event	Deadline (If no time specified the deadline is midnight on that day)
Publication of Notice of Election by the Deputy Returning Officer	11 April 2023
Delivery of nomination papers	10.00am to 4.00pm on:  12 April, 13 April 14 April, 17 April, 18 April, 19 April, 20 April, 21 April and from 10.00am to 1.00pm on 24 April
Delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature	10.00am to 4.00pm on:  12 April, 13 April, 14 April, 17 April, 18 April, 19 April, 20 April, 21 April and from 10.00am to 1.00pm on 24 April
Receipt of notice of appointment of election agents	1.00pm on 24 April
The making of objections to nomination papers	10.00am to 4.00pm on:  12 April, 13 April, 14 April, 17 April, 18 April, 19 April, 20 April, 21 April and from 10.00am to 2.00pm on 24 April
Publication by the Deputy Returning Officer of statement of persons nominated:  a) If no objections to nomination papers made  b) If any objections to nomination papers are made, after they have been disposed of but no later than 24 hours after the deadline for delivery of nomination papers	  6.00pm on 24 April 2023 or as soon as practicable thereafter  1.00pm on 25 April 2023
Publication by the Deputy Returning Officer of notice of names and addresses of Election Agents	6.00pm on 24 April 2023 or as soon as practicable thereafter
Receipt at Electoral Office for NI of postal and proxy vote applications	5.00pm on 26 April 2023

Receipt at Electoral Office for NI of late registration applications	28 April 2023
Receipt at Electoral Office for NI of additional information in relation to late registration applications	9 May 2023
Receipt at Electoral Office for NI of late postal and proxy vote applications	5.00pm on 10 May 2023
Publication by the Electoral Office for NI of notices of alteration as a result of late registration	11 May 2023
Receipt by the Deputy Returning Officer of notice of appointment of polling and counting agents	5.00pm on 11 May 2023
Receipt at Electoral Office for NI of spoilt postal votes for replacement	5.00pm on 17 May 2023
<b>Polling day</b>	<b>7.00am to 10.00pm Thursday 18 May 2023</b>
Alterations to the register due to clerical error	7.00pm on 18 May 2023
Verification of 'unused' ballot papers	As soon as practicable after 10.00pm on Thursday 18 May 2023 (completed overnight)
Verification of 'used' ballot papers (the opening of ballot boxes) and the Count	19 May 2023

**Note:** the above timetable excludes Saturdays (with the exception of the count), Sundays and the following Bank Holidays with exception of the deadline for receipt of additional information in relation to late registration applications which is computed in accordance with regulation 8 of the Representation of the People (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2008

- May Day 1 May 2023
- King's Coronation Bank Holiday 8 May 2023

## After the Declaration of Result

Receipt by candidates/agents of claims for election expenses	21 calendar days after the result of the election is declared
Payment by candidates/agents of claims for election expenses	28 calendar days after the result of the election is declared
Receipt by the Returning Officer of returns and declarations of election expenses by election agent	35 calendar days after the result of the election is declared
Receipt by the Returning Officer of candidates' declarations of election expenses	7 working days after receipt of the agents declaration and return (or at the same time that the election agent delivers the return)  (If the candidate is outside the United Kingdom when the agent's return is delivered, the declaration must be delivered 14 calendar days after their return)
Publication by the Deputy Returning Officer in two or more newspapers circulating in the District Electoral Area for which the election was held, a summary of the returns accompanied by a notice of the time and place at which the return and declarations (including the accompanying documents) can be inspected	10 calendar days after receipt of the election expenses returns
Inspection of returns and declarations of election expenses	During the period of 12 months from the date of publication by the Deputy Returning Officer of the time and place for inspection.

This page is intentionally left blank



# **BELFAST CITY COUNCIL**

## **ELECTION PROTOCOL**

**GUIDANCE IN DEALING WITH ISSUES WHICH  
MIGHT IMPACT ON THE ELECTION PROCESS**

**Approved by Council on  
3rd February, 2014**

**BELFAST CITY COUNCIL  
ELECTION PROTOCOL**

## **1.0 Introduction**

This protocol has been prepared primarily to provide guidance to Council Officers in dealing with issues relating to the functions and policies of the Council which might impact on the election process, particularly in the run-up periods to the various elections held in Northern Ireland. It sets out some general advice and principles to ensure that the impartiality and integrity of Council Officers is maintained during such periods when there is increased political sensitivity.

The protocol also provides useful information to Members of the Council, other elected representatives and prospective candidates for election in terms of the principles which the Council will observe in the run-up period to any election.

## **2.0 Types of Election**

The three main types of election in Northern Ireland are;

- Local Council Elections
- Westminster Parliamentary Election
- Elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly

There is also potential for bye-elections in relation to vacancies which might occur at a Westminster level although the introduction of the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 (Amendment) Order 2010 makes it most unlikely that bye-elections will be required for casual vacancies arising in the Council.

The guidance contained in this protocol relates to all of the elections mentioned above but it does not refer to the actual arrangements and procedures for the running of such elections.

The responsibility for running all elections in Northern Ireland rests with the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland and enquiries relating to the running of elections should be made to her or her Electoral Officers in Belfast as set out below:

Ms Virginia McVea, Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, St Anne's House, 15 Church Street, Belfast, BT1 1ER.

Telephone: 028 9044 6680  
Email: [bfs.info@eoni.org.uk](mailto:bfs.info@eoni.org.uk)

The Chief Executive is the Deputy Returning Officer for local elections in the Belfast City Council area and is responsible for making the arrangements for Council elections in Belfast.



### **3.0 General Principles**

The guidance contained in this protocol relates to the main areas of Council activity which might impact on the election processes including the conduct of employees, the provision of support services to Members, the use of Council premises, publicity and the holding of public meetings.

However, it is recognised that because of the Council's diverse range of functions there may be other issues outside of these general areas of activity which might from time to time impact on the election processes. It is important therefore to set out some general principles which Council Officers should observe when conducting business during the run up period to any election.

The run up period is generally taken to be that period from the issuing of the notice of election to polling day at the election. The notice of election would generally be issued some three or four weeks in advance of election day but the Chief Executive's Department will issue to Departments the proposed date of publication of the notice of an election as soon as this is known.

The general principles which Council Officers should observe in relation to all activity during the run-up period to any election are:

- they should not undertake any activity which would call into question their political impartiality
- they should ensure that Council resources are not used for party political purposes
- they should not undertake any activities which could have a direct bearing on the election campaign

In relation to matters which are not specifically mentioned in this protocol and about which there may be uncertainty, Departments are advised to seek guidance from the Democratic Services Section.

### **4.0 Employees and Elections**

There is specific legislation, together with rules and guidance, which relates to the participation of Council employees in political activities.

#### **4.1 Disqualification**

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, Section 4, provides that a person shall be disqualified for being elected or being a Councillor if he holds any paid office or other employment, appointments to which are made by a council if it is a prescribed office or employment. This means that a person employed as the Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer or Scrutiny Officer of a Council cannot stand for election to the Council which employs them or any other Council. Any other officer cannot stand for election to the Council which employs them but may stand for election to another Council so long as their remuneration does not exceed spinal column point 32 on the NJC pay spine.

## **4.2 Political Neutrality**

The Council's code of conduct for employees states:-

“Employees serve the Council as a whole. They must serve all councillors and not just those of a particular group and must ensure that the individual rights of all councillors are respected.

Employees may be required to advise political groups. In the provision of such advice employees should not compromise their political neutrality. Any advice given should be available to all political groups, if requested.

All Employees must follow all lawful policies of the Council and must not let their own personal or political opinions interfere with their work. While the Council recognises and respects the rights of all employees to hold personal or political opinions; employees should ensure that the expression of those opinions does not constitute a conflict of interest for their role within the Council. This does not compromise an officer's rights in relation to collective trade union representation engagement in lawful trade union activity.

Employees who have concerns about whether there is a potential conflict of interest should raise the matter with an appropriate manager.”

The requirements of the Code of Conduct

The requirements of the code of conduct in relation to political neutrality are clear and should be observed at all times by all employees but assume particular sensitivity in the run up to an election. The holding of public meetings and other events involving elected representatives, for example, needs careful consideration in such a period and this is dealt with separately elsewhere in the protocol.

## **5.0 Support Services to Elected Members**

Belfast City Council provides a wide range of support services to its elected Members including the provision of party rooms, research and library services, the provision of personal computers and typing, photocopying and postal services. The support services provided to Members are to assist them in discharging their roles as Councillors and are not for use for political campaigning or private purposes.

On this basis the Council will continue to provide a full range of support services to Members in the run up period to elections.

## **6.0 Use of Council Premises**

The Council owns and operates a wide range of properties within the City and the use of such properties for election purposes will depend on the conditions which apply to each property.

The Belfast Waterfront Hall, the Ulster Hall, Malone House and Belfast Castle all operate on a commercial basis and are used from time to time for party political meetings and events. The normal booking arrangements would apply to the use of these buildings for political purposes even in the run up period for an election. Other Council premises including the City Hall, Leisure and Recreation Centres and Community Centres would not be available for political purposes although there is a discretion for the Council to permit the use of the City Hall for an event involving a range of political parties which has the purpose of increasing voter interest and participation in the electoral process generally.

## **7.0 Publicity**

**7.1 Legislation:** The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 amended the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to provide for the prohibition of political publicity. The relevant insertion to the principal Act reads as follows:-

115A – “Publicity

(1) A council shall not publish any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.

(2) In determining whether material falls within the prohibition regard shall be had to the content and style of the material, the time and other circumstances of publication and the likely effect on those to whom it is directed and, in particular, to the following matters.

- (a) whether the material refers to a political party or to persons identified with a political party or promotes or opposes a point of view on a question of political controversy which is identifiable as the view of one political party and not of another;
- (b) where the material is part of a campaign, the effect which the campaign appears to be designed to achieve
- (c) A Council shall not give financial or other assistance to a person for the publication of material which the council is prohibited by this section from publishing itself.”

## **7.2 Specific Requirements at Election Time**

The run up period to any election is a particularly sensitive time in terms of Council publicity. The Council communicates regularly with the people of Belfast through responding to media enquiries, issuing press releases, holding press launches of major initiatives and publishing the Council’s newsletter.

It is important in the run up period to an election that any Council publicity issued could not be perceived as seeking to influence public opinion or to promote the public image of a particular candidate or group of candidates. The Council should also in this period, in its communication, avoid dealing with controversial issues or reporting views or proposals in a way that identifies them with individual members or groups of members. The Council should avoid where possible mentioning or quoting individual members in press releases.

This is not to say that all Council publicity should be stopped in the run up period to an election. It is appropriate for example that the Council should respond to the media in relation to legitimate service enquiries or to important events, such as a major emergencies. The media also have their protocols in place during election periods and the council will need to take that into account. The Lord Mayor will continue to carry out civic engagements and it will be a matter for the media whether they wish to cover these events or not. Depending on the nature of the issue, the usual policy of political primacy may have to be set aside and Directors or other senior staff members may be quoted if required. Council comment to the media will be factual in nature and will avoid issues of political controversy. If the council is unable to put up official political spokespersons, Members may wish to comment individually or as a spokesperson for their party on events in their own locality or of a city wide nature if approached by the media.

The council holds a range of photographs featuring elected members who request use of these from time to time in their election material. These can be provided if they feature only the politician in question and/or colleagues from the same party who are happy for the images to be used. However, images that also include elected representatives from different political parties cannot be used without their stated permission. Photographs that include members of council staff will not be provided and cannot appear in any election material at any time.

In relation to elections where the polling date is known in advance (such the Local Government Elections) Council Departments should avoid arranging major press launches or other such publicity events in the run up period to the elections.

Where the date of an election is not known in advance, and where it transpires that a major launch or other publicity event has been arranged during the run up period to the election, then the Department concerned should consider the postponement of the event until a later date.

## **8.0 Public Meetings**

In the normal course of events, Chief Officers, Heads of Service and other Senior Officers will meet regularly with Members of the Council and other public representatives about a range of issues affecting their constituents. Where such meetings are about legitimate service issues then there is no reason why they should not continue even in the run up period to an election. Officers, however, should observe the general principle that there should be even-handedness in

considering requests for one-to-one meetings with members or other public representatives particularly during the run up period to an election.

Particular care needs to be exercised at election time in cases where a public representative wishes to bring a delegation of local people to a meeting with a Council Officer. Even though this may be a private meeting it may be perceived that one candidate at an election is being given an advantage over another candidate. It is suggested that unless such a request for a meeting relates to some urgent service delivery issue then the meeting should be delayed until after the completion of the election.

Officers should avoid participation in public meetings involving public representatives during the run up period to an election. Such meetings could involve representation from some political parties and not others and officers may also be asked to comment on sensitive political issues in a public forum. To avoid a situation where officers may be accused of promoting the views of one political party as opposed to another the general assumption should be that participation in public meetings is to be avoided during the run up period to an election.

However, the situation might arise whereby the Council has issued a policy document for consultation and the consultation period extends into the run up period to an election. If this consultation includes the holding of public meetings or meetings with particular interest groups, then the Council officers should firstly seek the authority of the appropriate Council Committee before proceeding and, if such authority is granted, ensure that all political groupings on the Council are afforded equality of opportunity to either attend or arrange such meetings.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

This protocol is not likely to have covered all the many different situations which are liable to occur during the run up period to an election. However, the general principles set out in section 3.0 and the general thrust of the advice contained in the protocol can be applied to specific situations which arise.

If Departments are unclear about how they should act in any given situation then they should seek advice from the Democratic Services Section.

Updated 30 October 2019 – to take account of the revisions to the employees' code of conduct



<b>Subject:</b>	City Region Growth Deal – update
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Walsh, Chief Executive
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Damien Martin, Programme Director

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	This report is to provide an update to Committee on the progress of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The progress being made on the Contracts for Funding which are required for each of the capital projects delivered through the Deal and the update on project development and delivery across the pillars of investment.</li> <li>The update in relation to the BRCD Annual Report.</li> <li>The update in respect of the BRCD Council Panel.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Contracts for Funding</b></p> <p>As previously noted by the Committee, a number of contracts for funding have now been approved and signed which will allow for funding to begin to flow to projects. Since the last update to Members in January the first funding drawdown requests for the City Deal to the</p>

	<p>Department for Economy and Department for Communities have now been submitted marking another significant milestone for deal delivery.</p>
3.2	<p>It was also noted by the Committee that Members would be advised of progress to agree the funding agreements for each project. Since the last update to the Committee progress has continued to prepare and agree a number of contracts as outlined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contract for The <b>Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre</b> (AMIC) has now been approved and signed.</li> <li>• The Contract for <b>Mourne Mountain Gateway</b> is at a very advanced stage and it is anticipated this will be submitted this month to Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council for their agreement.</li> <li>• Contracts for the <b>Institute for Research Excellence in Advanced Clinical Healthcare</b> (iREACH), and the <b>Global Innovation Institute</b> have been finalised and are expected to be signed during this month.</li> </ul> <p><b>Progress across BRCD Pillars</b></p> <p><b>Innovation</b></p>
3.3	<p><b>AMIC</b> has been advanced by Queen's University through to the detailed design stage and has now concluded the end of RIBA Stage 3, with the final report being considered by the Department of Finance and Invest NI. The invitation to tender for the prime contractor for the project has now been published since the last update to Members.</p>
3.4	<p>The Outline Business Case for the <b>Centre for Digital Healthcare Technology</b> is currently being revised to reflect proposed changes to the scope since Department of Finance approval in May 2022, including the consideration of early procurement of equipment for the Royal Victoria Hospital Living Lab. The updated Outline Business Case (OBC) is expected to be submitted in April.</p>
3.5	<p>As previously reported to Members construction work on <b>Studio Ulster</b> commenced on site in October 2022. Following the publication of the Prior Information Notice in November, and the successful completion of the Pre-Qualification phase, the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue is now under development in advance of the commencement of the competitive dialogue process.</p>



	<p><b>Digital</b></p>
3.6	<p>Since the last update to Members, OBC for the <b>Investment Fund</b> element of the Innovation Challenge Fund has progressed well, with a Strategic case review completed with key Government and partner stakeholders in December and a detailed workshop focusing on delivery held in early March. The first draft of the business case is expected to have been prepared by April after which a detailed review involving key stakeholders, including economists will take place. Members also previously approved the commencement of a separate business case for the <b>Augment the City</b> pilot project in October 2022. Since then and following consideration by the Digital Advisory Board a draft business case has been shared with the Department for the Economy and the Belfast City Innovation team are currently finalising the OBC following feedback from the Department. The OBC is expected to be submitted to the BRCD Digital Advisory Board on 29<sup>th</sup> March and a further update will be brought to committee in April.</p>
	<p><b>Tourism and Regeneration</b></p>
3.7	<p>As previously reported a number of the Tourism and Regeneration projects now have a signed contract for funding or are progressing towards finalising contract for funding signing. The development of procurement documentation is ongoing, with a number of key project procurements now live.</p>
3.8	<p>The prequalification stage for the procurement of Integrated Consultancy Teams (ICT) for <b>Carrickfergus Regeneration</b> and the <b>Gobbins Phase 2</b> has now been commenced with documentation now published by Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council.</p>
3.9	<p>Development of the prequalification stage for the procurement of ICT for <b>Bangor Waterfront</b> and the <b>Mourne Mountain Gateway</b> is ongoing with publication of documentation expected in the coming months.</p>
3.10	<p><b>Newry Regeneration</b> are preparing their PQQ documentation for the Integrated Supply Team, with appointment of Contractor expected later this year.</p>
3.11	<p><b>Belfast Stories</b>, the Council's flagship project continues to progress against the agreed programme. The procurement of professional services continues with tender reports for the pre-qualification stage completed and approved and Invitation to Tender documents expected to be published later this month.</p>

3.12	<p>The OBC for <b>Destination Royal Hillsborough</b> approved by the Department for the Economy Minister in late October has now received Department of Finance supply approval allowing the Contract for Funding to be actively progressed.</p>
3.13	<p><b>Employability and Skills (E&amp;S)</b></p> <p>Members were updated in January on the skills assessment process developed through the E&amp;S pillar to understand the labour and skills implications of the city deal investment projects. The first assessment was focused upon the construction opportunities arising through the city deal investment and the assessment informed a series of recommendations which relate to BRCD partners, as well as to wider stakeholders. An early action as a result of this assessment is the delivery of two events taking place on the 21<sup>st</sup> March (jointly hosted with the Construction Employers Federation) and 23<sup>rd</sup> March. These events will help to ensure that local businesses are aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the construction pipeline arising from the Belfast Region City Deal capital investment programme with a specific focus on opportunities that will be brought to market in the coming 12 months</li> <li>- communicate the inclusive growth ambitions of the Deal, including expected social value commitments;</li> <li>- the employability and skills support available through the Belfast Region City Deal, council, college, and university partners to help the sector respond to labour and skills challenges, including those relating to social value commitments.</li> </ul>
3.14	<p>Both events were widely communicated to key stakeholders and on the BRCD website and both events were fully booked.</p>
3.15	<p>Following discussions with partners, the relevant Government Departments and key stakeholders plans to establish a <b>Cross Deal Skills Group</b> to oversee and manage skills assessments relating to City and Growth Deals at the Northern Ireland level are well advanced. These Assessments will consider the projects emerging across all 4 Deals and focus on the sectors where city deal investment is aligned. A preliminary meeting of this group took place in late January in order to consider the draft Terms of Reference and to inform the schedule of skills assessments. The BRCD will play a key role in supporting this group – finalising terms of reference, agreeing the initial work programme and fulfilling the role of secretariat. The draft Terms of Reference for the Group was presented to the Executive Board for consideration at its March Meeting. Aligned to the establishment of this group two further skills assessments are currently underway for Advanced Manufacturing and Creative Industries (Virtual Production) and Members will be kept updated as both assessments progress</p>

3.16	<p>It is anticipated that the OBC for <b>Digital Transformation Flexible Fund</b> will progress to casework in early April through Invest NI. Concurrently Newry, Mourne and Down District Council who will lead the delivery of the project continue to progress with pre-development work to establish the application and funding process and developing marketing materials in preparation for the launch of the fund.</p>
3.17	<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p> <p>Following the announcement by the then Minister on the preferred route for <b>Belfast Rapid Transit Phase 2</b>, feasibility studies are being completed and the OBC is being updated and reviewed by Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The procurement of the design and build contract for <b>Lagan Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge</b> will commence in the early summer with appointment expected early in 2024. DfI has now confirmed that its preferred option for the bridge on the <b>Newry Southern Relief Road</b> is a non-opening 50m fixed bridge, allowing work on the statutory orders, public consultation and Environmental Impact Assessment to progress.</p>
3.18	<p><b>Annual Report</b></p> <p>The agreed reporting arrangements for all City and Growth Deals requires the production of an Annual Report and the requirement to meet with the Northern Ireland Delivery Board in order to discuss deal progress as part of an 'Annual Conversation' which is envisaged to take place in June. The Programme management team have been actively engaging with the Department of Finance in order to agree the timeframes and content of the annual reporting process and required documentation now that the BRCD is in delivery phase.</p>
3.19	<p>Members are asked to note that a high level, outward focused Annual Report will be produced following the end of the 2023 reporting year. The programme management office will lead on the development of the report and will engage with individual partners on project specifics where required in advance of consideration of the Executive Board and by partners through their own governance structures.</p>
3.20	<p><b>BRCD Council Panel</b></p> <p>A hybrid meeting of the BRCD Council Panel was held on 25 January hosted by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. Panel Members considered a detailed programme update and received presentations on the BRCD investments in Newry, Mourne and Down and also on Communications &amp; Engagement which included a live demonstration of the newly dedicated BRCD website. A link to the new website was circulated to all BCC Members following the January panel meeting. The minutes of the previous Panel meeting hosted by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council were also approved and are attached at Appendix 1.</p>

3.21	The next Council panel meeting was due to be held in April and hosted by Ards and North Down Borough Council, however due to the upcoming Local Government Elections and the timeframes involved it has been agreed to postpone this meeting and reschedule for later in the year. Members will be kept informed when the date and host council has been confirmed.
3.22	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All costs associated with the BRCD are within existing budgets.</p>
3.23	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The approach taken to develop the City Deal has been subject to independent equality screening and rural proofing and states that;</p> <p><i>‘BRCD is inherently inclusive, affording an opportunity for the region to grow in a way that will benefit the economy of Northern Ireland as a whole, thereby enhancing the lives and well-being of its citizens. If during further development of the programme it becomes apparent that there may be an adverse impact on certain groups or communities then the partnership commits to carrying out further Section 75 work and including screening and EQIAs as and when appropriate.’</i></p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 - Minutes of the BRCD Council Panel 28 September 2022

## BRCD Council Panel

<b>Subject:</b>	Minutes of Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) Council Panel
<b>Date:</b>	12.30 pm, 28 September 2022
<b>Councillors in attendance:</b>	<p>Alderman Noel Williams - The Mayor of Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council  Councillor Matthew Magill – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council  Councillor Stephen Ross – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council  Alderman Mark Cosgrove – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council  Councillor Julie Gilmour – Antrim &amp; Newtownabbey Borough Council  Councillor Alistair Cathcart – Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council  Alderman Alan McDowell – Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council  Councillor Richard Smart - Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council  Councillor Stephen Dunlop- Ards &amp; North Down Borough Council  Councillor Michael Long- Belfast City Council  Alderman Allan Ewart – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Alderman Amanda Grehan – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Alderman Michael Henderson – Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Councillor Uel Mackin - Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Alderman Billy Ashe MBE – Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council  Alderman Audrey Wales MBE - Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council  Councillor Timothy Gaston - Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council  Councillor Robert Logan – Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council  Councillor Charlie Casey – Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council  Councillor Pete Byrne - Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p>
<b>Officers:</b>	<p>Ronan Cregan – Deputy Chief Executive, Belfast City Council  Damien Martin – BRCD Programme Director, Belfast City Council  David Burns – Chief Executive, Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council  Valerie Watts –Interim Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council  Susie McCullough – Director Regeneration, Development and Planning, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Majella McAllister – Director of Economic Development and Planning, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council  Padraic Murphy – Programme Co-ordinator, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council  Ursula O’Loughlin – Head of Economic Development, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council  Jonathan McGrandle – City Deal Programme Director, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council  Paul Duffy – Head of Planning &amp; Building Control, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council  Steven Walls – Head of Digital Innovation &amp; Corporate Governance, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council  Conor Mallon – Director Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  Amanda Smyth – Head of Regeneration and Business Development, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council  Theresa Slevin, Ruth Rea, Lorraine Beggs – BRCD Programme Office</p>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
1.1	<p>The Mayor of Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council Alderman Noel Williams welcomed the members of the BRCD Council Panel to the meeting which was hosted by Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council.</p> <p>Alderman Noel Williams outlined the key areas of focus for the meeting.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
2.1	<p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Councillor Robin Stewart - Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council  Councillor Robert Burgess - Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council  Councillor Ronan McLaughlin - Belfast City Council  Alderman George Dorrian – Belfast City Council  Councillor Carl Whyte – Belfast City Council  Councillor Barra O’Muirí – Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council</p> <p>Apologies were received from the following Officers:</p> <p>John Walsh - Chief Executive, Belfast City Council  Stephen Reid – Chief Executive, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Jacqui Dixon – Chief Executive, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council  Marie Ward – Chief Executive, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
3.1	Alderman Noel Williams asked Councillors if they had any interests to declare in relation to the agenda. No interests were declared.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
4.1	<p>Alderman Noel Williams asked if the Panel agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were an accurate reflection of the meeting.</p> <p>Alderman Audrey Wales proposed that the minutes from the last meeting were agreed.  Seconded by Councillor Timothy Gaston  <b>Members agreed the minutes.</b></p>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>BRCD Programme Report</b>
5.1	<p>Damien Martin (DM) presented the programme report key points of update included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A main priority for the team is progressing contracts for funding, the first contract for Studio Ulster has been signed with Carrickfergus Regeneration and AMIC expected to be progressed imminently. Work has also commenced for on a number of other projects with business cases approved.</li> <li>- Innovation projects are the most developed at this time with full business cases expected at the start of the new financial year;</li> <li>- Digital programme is at an earlier stage of development, with the exception of the i4C project, a number of additional business cases for Digital Twin, Advanced Wireless projects are also at an advanced stage of development;</li> <li>- Construction inflation is a key issue for the programme, discussions have taken place with NI and UK officials to agree a position that will enable projects to proceed to enable the financial impact of construction inflation to be better understood. Confirmation was provided by NI and UK officials that no additional funding is available and mechanisms to reduce costs including value engineering will be important moving forward.</li> </ul>

Cllr Michael Henderson queried the implication of the absence of Ministers to approve business cases and if those in progress are due to be approved in advance of the impending deadline.  
DM stated that all efforts are being undertaken to progress businesses cases currently in the system, confirming that business cases can be approved without ministers, however in this scenario there is expected to be some delays in the timing of decisions.

Cllr Charlie Casey noted the positive progress that has been achieved and queried the current position of the Newry Regeneration project.  
DM responded highlighting that business case approval is in place and work is ready to commence on the contract for funding.

Cllr Timothy Gaston queried:

- the issues being experienced with government departments and if there was a sense that the commitment to the deal was still present; and
- the potential to access additional funding if project costs overrun or if it expected councils will cover this.

DM stated there remains an absolute commitment to the deal and its component projects, as the first city and growth deal in Northern Ireland there are challenges associated with this and the appetite to risk of the government departments, linked to key issues such as construction inflation. Confirmation has been provided by government officials that no additional funding is available, responsibility for cost overruns remain at a project level. Whilst opportunities may emerge for other funding opportunities in the future, projects may need to consider value engineering which will have a knock-on impact on benefits.

Cllr Billy Ashe queried when the contract for funding would be received for the Carrickfergus Regeneration project.

DM stated that two contracts are required, the first between DfC and BCC, following which a contract will be drafted between BCC and MEA. Feedback from DfC has indicated that the initial contract will be received imminently following which the contract to MEA will be drafted and issued.

Cllr Robert Logan queried if there was anything that Councils could do to encourage departments to move at pace.

DM flagged the opportunity of elected members to engage through party colleagues to encourage momentum and highlighted the possibility of an event to re-energise support for the deal.

Cllr Mark Cosgrove highlighted the specific construction inflation risk to the AMIC project and the financial implication of this upon Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council, shouldering this risk with project partners. Majella McAlister further elaborated stressing the impact of delays which could erode the relevance of projects to the business community.

DM echoed the points raised highlighting through the example of Studio Ulster the risk of not progressing at pace, with the implication being that productions would be lost to the NI market.

Cllr Audrey Wales highlighted frustrations as to the pace of progress of city deals in NI in comparison with other parts of the UK and the resulting risk of delays devaluing the investment.

Cllr Michael Henderson queried the casework date for the Royal Hillsborough project. DM confirmed the Programme Management Office is pressing officials for casework date to be confirmed urgently.

**Members noted the report.**

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Impact of Digital Investment: i4C at St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena</b>
6.1	<p>A presentation was delivered by Valerie Watts and Jonathan McGrandle providing an overview of the three investment projects led by Mid &amp; East Antrim Borough Council. The presentation focused upon the investment through the digital pillar to support the delivery of the i4C innovation and clean technology centre for SMEs. It was highlighted that i4C will serve as the anchor tenant building in the 15-hectare mixed regeneration of St Patrick's Barracks which is situated in the heart of Ballymena and will act as a catalyst and enabler of inclusive growth in Ballymena and the wider borough.</p> <p>Following the presentation Cllr Alan McDowell queried the confidence in achieving occupancy rates to cover operating costs.</p> <p>Ursula O'Loughlin responded noting the significant interest in the existing small incubator space at the councils EKOS facility and synergy with the work of the Manufacturing Task Force with clear areas of opportunity particularly around the clean tech supply chain.</p>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Integrating Social Value into BRCD Contracts</b>
7.1	<p>Ruth Rea provided an update to members on the work undertaken to ensure that social value will be integrated into the tender process for BRCD procurements and to outline the plans to then ensure that social value benefits are ultimately delivered by the successful contractor.</p> <p>Alderman Alan McDowell <b>requested a copy of the slides presented</b> and referenced the shortage in skilled labour being experienced in the construction sector, particularly vocational skills and the need to change perceptions of parents on vocational pathways. Querying how can contractors be supported to help them fulfil their social value contributions.</p> <p>RR responded highlighting the challenging recruitment market businesses will continue to face due to restricted labour force growth and falling levels of migrant labour. The skills assessment process being undertaken through the Employability &amp; Pillar will help to identify particular areas of constraint, there is a key opportunity to work with Councils via their Labour Market Partnerships, with FE College and University partners to ensure we target effort accordingly including in key areas such as apprenticeships and Higher-Level Apprenticeships.</p> <p>DM reinforced the partnership potential of the deal, ensuring there is connectivity of support across the skills system from lower to higher level skills, recognising that the city deal will provide opportunities across all levels.</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>Press Release</b>
	<p>Alderman Noel Williams asked members if they were content to agree the draft press release circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Members agreed the press release.</b></p>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Date of next meetings</b>
9.1	Alderman Noel Williams highlighted that a schedule of meetings has been circulated with the next meeting to be hosted by Newry Mourne & Down District Council on 25 January 2023.





<b>Subject:</b>	Community Ownership Fund – New Bidding Window
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Kevin Heaney, Head of Inclusive Growth and Anti-Poverty Mark Mulholland, Strategic Policy, and Planning Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To provide Committee with an update on a bidding window, Window 3 Round 2, to apply for the Community Ownership Fund recently opened by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>note the update in relation to Window 3 Round 2 funding under the Community Ownership Fund;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that Members agree to share this information with relevant local organisations through their existing area networks if appropriate; and</li> <li>• agree that this information is shared with relevant partners through the Community Planning network.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	DLUHC have recently launched a new window to apply for the Community Ownership Fund. Community groups can bid for up to £250k matched-funding to buy or take over local community assets at risk of loss to run these as community-owned businesses. In exceptional cases, up to £1m is available for sports clubs to buy a sports ground at risk of loss.
3.2	To apply, groups should submit an Expression of Interest, and this is always open. If successful, they will be invited to submit a full application during one of the bidding windows. The current window opened on <b>15 February 2023</b> and will close on <b>14 April 2023</b> .
3.3	To date in NI, DLUHC have supported six projects to date including Ballymacash Sports Academy in Lisburn, St. Columb's Hall in Derry Londonderry, and a parish building in Kilcoo.
3.4	DLUHC have provided a promotional pack which includes key information, links, and materials in case for local authorities to share these with relevant groups or in your wider network. This pack is provided at Appendix A for your consideration.
3.5	<p><b>Round 2 Changes</b></p> <p>Having learned lessons from the review of the first bidding round after engaging with applicants and sector stakeholders, DLUHC have made some changes to the eligibility requirements and the design of the programme for Round 2 onwards. These changes are explained in full in the updated <a href="#">prospectus</a>.</p>
3.5.1	<p><b>A summary of the key changes to the eligibility requirements for the relaunch of the Fund include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an extension for project completion from 6 months to 12 months from the date indicated on the offer letter</li> <li>• allowing the approval of bids for assets with at least 15-year leases and reasonable break clauses, although 25-year leases are still preferable</li> <li>• removing the requirement for projects to have had a community use in the last 5 years, although assets must still have evidence of some past community use</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clarifying and simplifying the eligibility requirements for publicly owned assets and sporting assets.</li> </ul>
3.5.2	<p><b>A summary of the key changes to the design of the programme include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>introducing a two-stage application process by including an always open Expression of Interest (EOI) stage</li> <li>moving to three bidding windows per year, meaning applicants can submit a full application once their EOI has been approved, at a time that is right for their project</li> <li>Providing more information to successful applicants on what they can expect after receiving an offer letter</li> <li>introducing a cap on the number of full applications that can be made for each project. Applicants are now permitted two full application attempts. Application attempts from Round 1 will be disregarded from the cap.</li> </ul> <p><b>Expression of Interest (EOI) and main application stage</b></p>
3.6	<p>DLUHC have introduced a two-stage application process for applicants. Applicants first need to submit an EOI form and have this approved before being sent a link to the full application for the Fund. The EOI form will test whether a project is likely to be eligible through a pass/fail assessment based on the eligibility requirements.</p>
3.7	<p>The EOI stage is designed to strengthen the application process by ensuring that applicants are fully aware of the eligibility requirements ahead of submitting a full application to the Fund. The EOI stage will be always open so that applicants can submit an EOI form at a time that is right for their project.</p>
3.8	<p>If applicants pass the EOI stage, they can then apply in any bidding window suitable for the timings of their project. There will be three bidding windows each year to submit a full application to the Fund.</p> <p><b>Round 2 Timings</b></p>
3.9	<p>Window 3 of Round 2 opened on 15 February 2023 and will close on <b>14 April 2023 at 11:59am</b>. If applicants apply in this window, DLUHC aim to inform them of the outcome of the application in spring 2023. There will be additional bidding windows in the future, with three windows per financial year. The dates of future bidding windows will be announced in due course.</p>

3.10	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.11	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<b>Appendix A – Community Ownership Fund Local Authority Promotional Pack, 15 March 2023</b>

# Local Authority Promotional Pack:

Round 2 Window 3  
Announcement

**MARCH 15 2023**

---

**COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND**  
**COF@Levellingup.gov.uk**



# Contents

1.	BACKGROUND .....	3
2.	ROUND 2 .....	4
3.	ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLICLY OWNED ASSETS .....	6
4.	KEY LINKS.....	7
5.	THIS ANNOUNCEMENT .....	8
5.	PROMOTION .....	8
6.	PHOTOS OF PROJECTS.....	9
7.	SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS.....	11
7.1.	Successful Project for Round 2 Window 2 .....	11
7.2.	Successful Project for Round 2 Window 1 .....	12
7.3.	Successful Project for Round 1 .....	14
8.	Q & A.....	11

# 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The £150m Community Ownership Fund helps communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to take ownership of assets at risk of closure.
- 1.2. There is a long-term trend of communities losing assets that foster a sense of community pride and bring people together. This has a knock-on impact on people's satisfaction with the place they live in, and the strength of local communities.
- 1.3. There is evidence that assets of this variety can be successfully and sustainably brought into community ownership. This both enables people to continue to benefit from the places that matter most to them and empowers communities to shape their local areas.
- 1.4. However, we recognise it can be hard for community groups to raise the initial funding required to buy the asset. The Community Ownership Fund will help enable community groups to overcome these barriers.
- 1.5. The Fund ensures that local people across the UK can support and continue benefiting from treasured local institutions whose future may be in doubt. We will invest in community ownership projects where these assets make the biggest difference to the local place.
- 1.6. Community ownership of assets can boost local connections, participation and pride of place, and bolster community resilience. By investing in the capacity of communities across the UK to take ownership of the places and spaces that matter to them, the Fund will help to strengthen the social infrastructure that supports communities to thrive.
- 1.7. From July 2021, community groups have been able to bid for up to £250k matched funding to help them buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost, to run as community-owned businesses.
- 1.8. In exceptional cases, up to £1m matched funding is available to help establish a community-owned sports club or help buy a sports ground at risk of being lost without community intervention.
- 1.9. The Community Ownership Fund helps to ensure that important parts of the social fabric, such as pubs, sports clubs, theatres and post office buildings, can continue to play a central role in towns and villages across the UK.
- 1.10. This Fund forms part of the UK Government's levelling up agenda, helping support ambition and building opportunity, with support targeted towards places where community assets can make the most difference. The Community Ownership Fund helps to safeguard the small, but much-loved local assets on which we cannot put a price.

## 2. ROUND 2

### Round 2 Changes

Having learned lessons from the review of the first bidding round after engaging with applicants and sector stakeholders, we have made some positive changes to the eligibility requirements and the design of the programme for Round 2 onwards. These changes are explained in full in the updated prospectus.

#### **A summary of the key changes to the eligibility requirements for the relaunch of the Fund include:**

- an extension for project completion from 6 months to 12 months from the date indicated on the offer letter
- allowing the approval of bids for assets with at least 15-year leases and reasonable break clauses, although 25-year leases are still preferable
- removing the requirement for projects to have had a community use in the last 5 years, although assets must still have evidence of some past community use
- clarifying and simplifying the eligibility requirements for publicly owned assets and sporting assets.

#### **A summary of the key changes to the design of the programme include:**

introducing a two-stage application process by including an always open Expression of Interest (EOI) stage

- moving to three bidding windows per year, meaning applicants can submit a full application once their EOI has been approved, at a time that is right for their project
- Providing more information to successful applicants on what they can expect after receiving an offer letter
- introducing a cap on the number of full applications that can be made for each project. Applicants are now permitted two full application attempts. Application attempts from Round 1 will be disregarded from the cap.

### EOI and main application stage

2.1. We have introduced a two-stage application process for applicants.

2.2. Applicants first need to submit an EOI form and have this approved before being sent a link to the full application for the Fund. The EOI form will test whether a project is likely to be eligible through a pass/fail assessment based on the eligibility requirements.

2.3. The EOI stage is designed to strengthen the application process by ensuring that applicants are fully aware of the eligibility requirements ahead of submitting a full application to the Fund.



- 2.4. The EOI stage will be always open so that applicants can submit an EOI form at a time that is right for their project.
- 2.5. If applicants pass the EOI stage, they can then apply in any bidding window suitable for the timings of their project. There will be three bidding windows each year to submit a full application to the Fund.

### **Round 2 Timings**

- 2.6. The first bidding window opened in June and closed on 19 August 2022. Bidding window 2 opened on 31 October and closed on 14 December 2022.
- 2.7. Window 3 of Round 2 opened on 15 February and will close on 14 April 2023 at 11:59am. If applicants apply in this window, we aim to inform you of the outcome of your application in spring 2023.
- 2.8. There will be additional bidding windows in the future, with three windows per financial year. Each bidding window will close at 11:59am on its respective closing date. The dates of future bidding windows will be announced in due course.

### **LA Introduction to COF PowerPoint Presentation (Updated)**



LA Introduction to  
COF.pptx

### 3. ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLICLY OWNED ASSETS

- 3.1. The Community Ownership Fund grant cannot fund the costs of purchasing publicly owned assets where the public authority would credit a capital receipt. However, the Fund will work alongside existing Community Asset Transfers to support these transfers by funding the costs of renovation and refurbishment.
- 3.2. For example, if an applicant was able to secure an asset transfer or raise the funds through another route, they could be eligible for funding from the Community Ownership Fund for any refurbishment needed in order to save that asset.
- 3.3. The purpose of the Fund is to provide support to voluntary and community groups who want to take ownership of assets. We hope however, that local authorities will play an active role in encouraging community groups to apply. We see the role of local authorities and parish councils as providing essential support to the efforts of local community groups, rather than delivering the projects themselves.
- 3.4. Alongside the mandatory eligibility requirements that every applicant will need to fulfil, bids relating to publicly owned assets will also need to demonstrate the following additional requirements. These additional requirements are that:
  - 3.4.1. The responsibility for delivering statutory services (if relevant) is not transferred from the public authority to the community organisation
  - 3.4.2. The Community Ownership Fund grant received will only be used for renovation and refurbishment costs following the transfer of an asset into community ownership; the public authority will not credit a capital receipt from Community Ownership Fund funding.
- 3.5. These additional requirements are necessary because local authorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have a number of statutory functions requiring them to provide various services to their communities.
- 3.6. For projects relating to publicly owned assets, we will require additional, specific evidence covering the following points:
  - 3.6.1. **Risk facing the asset** - the Fund will only invest in community assets which would otherwise be lost. We will therefore need evidence from both the current public owner and applicant about the current status of the asset and why its future is at risk
  - 3.6.2. **Impact on service provision** - evidence that any statutory services currently delivered from the asset at risk will be continued by the public authority. This may be evidenced by a letter or appropriate cabinet paper from a local authority, for example
  - 3.6.3. **Deliverability and sustainability** - we can't invest in projects where we assess the transfer of liabilities associated with the asset to be unmanageable or unreasonable. Sustainability of the management of the asset should be evidenced in the application

## 4. KEY LINKS

- **Prospectus:**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus>
- **Updated List of Successful Bidders:**  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-ownership-fund-first-round-successful-bidders>
- **Assessment Guidance:**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-round-2-application-form-assessment-criteria-guidance>
- **Expression of Interest Guidance:**  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-ownership-fund-round-2-how-to-express-your-interest-in-applying>
- **Webinar:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-round-2-webinar-slides>
- **Leveling Up Website:** <https://levellingup.campaign.gov.uk/projects-near-me/>

## 5. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT

- 5.3. This announcement of successful bidders to the Community Ownership fund will see £7.73m awarded to 30 projects across the United Kingdom. This additional funding takes our overall funding total to £23.9m for 98 projects.
- 5.4. So far, the Community Ownership Fund has awarded £23.9m to 98 projects across the UK, with £17.5m allocated to 67 projects across England, £3.1m allocated to 15 projects in Scotland, £1.8m to 9 projects in Wales and £1.5m to 7 projects in Northern Ireland.
- 5.5. Interested groups can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) form to start their application process at any time. Applicants who pass the EOI stage are then invited to submit a full application to the Fund at a time that is right for their project.
- 5.6. With a 4-year window until 2024/25 for investment to be released, there is plenty of opportunity for interested community groups to apply to take over invaluable community assets and to run them as businesses – by the community, *for* the community.
- 5.7. Early-stage development support is now available to applicants via the **My Community website**. The service currently only offers initial advice, such as questions about the content of the prospectus. A more in-depth support offers to develop successful business plans will be offered in the next bidding round. You can find more information on the development support provider in section 9 of the prospectus.

## 6. PROMOTION

- 6.3. We encourage you to share the Round 2 Window 2 announcement of successful projects with your networks. Below you will find some supporting communication products.

### Social Media Post Draft

**Twitter:**

The Community Ownership Fund is now supporting almost 100 communities, with an additional **£7.73m** for **30** new projects across the UK announced as part of the Spring Budget. For a full list of projects being supported see here: <https://tinyurl.com/3897nuz5>

**Facebook/Other:**

The Community Ownership Fund is now supporting almost 100 communities, with an additional **£7.73m** for **30** new projects across the UK announced as part of the Spring Budget. For a full list of projects being supported see here: <https://tinyurl.com/3897nuz5>

The third application window of Round 2 opened on 15 February and will close at 11:59am on 14 April 2023. If you are a community group looking to take over a local community asset at risk of being lost, then submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) now: <https://tinyurl.com/pkmme5bj>

## DLUHC Social Pages

6.4. We will be promoting the Community Ownership Fund on DLUHC social media pages. Please feel free to like and share any post about the Fund with your network. You can find DLUHC's social media pages here:

- Twitter - <https://twitter.com/luhc?s=20&t=vZheyUXTlgGa5Y6yX4E1pA>
- Instagram- <https://www.instagram.com/luhcgovuk/>
- Linked-In- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/luhcgovuk/>
- Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/luhcgovuk>

## Development Support Provider Social Pages

- Twitter- <https://twitter.com/MyCommunityHelp>
- Twitter- <https://twitter.com/localitynews>
- Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/MyCommunityHelp/>

## Updated Webinar slides for applicants

6.5. Below you will find updated webinar slides which can be used if you wish to hold applicant facing webinars:



Community\_Owners  
hip\_Fund\_round\_2\_W

6.6.



## 5. PHOTOS OF PROJECTS

Hartcliffe City Farm



The Old Forge



Leigh Spinners Mill Community Regeneration





Racehorse Community Pub



Ballymacash Sports Academy



Margaret Haes Riding Centre



## 6. SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

### 6.1. Successful Project for Round 2 Window 2

Organisation	Project Name	Total Value	Country	Local Authority
Argyle Community Trust	Brickfields Sports and Community Hub	£1,050,000	England	Plymouth
Courtside Hubs CIC (Courtside) (The Bury Knowle)	Bury Knowle Multi-activity Hub	£260,878	England	Oxfordshire
Courtside Hubs CIC (Courtside) (The Leys Multi activity hub)	The Leys Multi-activity Hub	£699,697	England	Oxfordshire
DesignerMakersCIO	designermakers21 building purchase	£191,596	England	Norfolk
East Boldre Community Stores Limited	East Boldre Chapel Stores	£299,500	England	New Forest
Fighting All Cancers Together	ACT Family Community Centre	£300,000	England	Gateshead
Friends Of The Black Horse Cranham Ltd (registered number RS008746)	Friends Of The Black Horse Cranham Ltd	£300,000	England	Gloucestershire
Groundlings Theatre Trust	Saving the Old Benny	£156,000	England	Portsmouth
Healthy Me Healthy Communities CIC	Gorton Central	£150,000	England	Manchester
Joint Activities & Motor Education Service	JAMES Tramshed Keighley	£121,670	England	Bradford
Lancaster Musicians Coop	Lancaster Music Co-op	£300,000	England	Lancaster
Middlesbrough Rugby Union Football Club Ltd	Tollesby Playing Fields	£138,623	England	Middlesbrough
Old Horn Community Pub Society Limited	Old Horn Community Pub	£199,740	England	North Yorkshire
Sangat community association	sangat centre renovations	£140,500	England	Bradford
Selsey Pavilion Trust	Selsey Pavilion	£299,400	England	Chichester
St Albans Community Association	St Albans Community Centre	£300,000	England	Sandwell
TAAG CIO	TAAG refurbishment	£88,560	England	Newton Abbot
The Fishers Arms Hornccliffe Community Pub Limited	The Fishers Arms	£65,000	England	Northumberland
The Generator Loughborough CIC	The Generator Loughborough	£250,000	England	Charnwood
The George Community Pub (Wickham Market) Limited	The George Community Pub Project	£195,000	England	East Suffolk
The New Mechanics Institution Preservation Trust	Refurbishment of historic Cricketers Arms for community use	£250,000	England	Swindon



The Portland Inn Project CIC	THE PORTLAND INN PROJECT	£299,900	England	Stoke-on-Trent
Wixford Village Hall	Replacement of Wixford Village Hall	£179,862	England	Warwickshire
Greater Shantallow Area Partnership	Northside Community Building	£194,438	Northern Ireland	Derry City and Strabane
Dornie & District Community Trust	Dornie Community Hub	£280,000	Scotland	Highland
Forres Area Community Trust	Forres Town Hall – An Enterprising Community Venue	£300,000	Scotland	Moray
Inspire Inveraray	Inveraray Pier	£44,332	Scotland	Argyll and Bute
Take A Bow Development Trust	Re-Development of the Former New Farm Loch Community Centre	£200,000	Scotland	East Ayrshire
The Aberfeldy Sports Club	The Aberfeldy Sports Club	£300,000	Scotland	Perth and North Perthshire
Tremeirchion Community Pub Ltd	Salisbury Arms Tremeirchion	£175,000	Wales	Denbighshire

## 6.2. Successful Project for Round 2 Window 1

Page 134

Organisation	Project Name	Total Value	Country	Local Authority
Banana Enterprise Network Ltd (Rock Hall)	Save Rock Hall	£295,000	England	Bolton
Caistor and District Community Trust Limited (C&DCT) (2-4 Market Place)	2-4 Market Place	£250,000	England	West Lindsey
Cliftonville Cultural Space	ARK - a new cultural space for Cliftonville	£148,792	England	Thanet
Horrabridge Recreation Field Trust	Horrabridge Replacement Sports Pavilion	£134,000	England	West Devon
Kingswood Arts CIC (Kingwood House Restoration)	Kingswood House Restoration	£180,000	England	Southwark
LifeLine Church (Community Centre)	LifeLine Community Centre	£250,000	England	Barking and Dagenham
Limpley Stoke Community Benefit Society Ltd (Save the Hop Pole)	Save the Hop Pole	£300,000	England	Wiltshire
Margaret Haes Riding Centre Limited (the spirit of the Horse)	The Spirit of the Horse	£171,500	England	Bury
Mind in Bexley and East Kent Ltd (Revival: Food & Mood)	Revival: Food & Mood	£120,550	England	Canterbury

Moor Pool Heritage Trust (Moor Pool Community Jigsaw)	Completing the Moor Pool Community Jigsaw	£96,000	England	Birmingham
Myddleton Road Community Benefit Society Limited	Save The Step	£300,000	England	Haringey
Oxhill Village Hall	Renovation & extension of Oxhill Village Hall	£25,000	England	Stratford-on-Avon
Sawyers Church (Community Centre)	Sawyers Community Centre	£275,000	England	Brentwood
ST GEORGE'S CHURCH FATFIELD PCC	St Georges Fatfield Community Annexe and Cafe project	£250,000	England	Sunderland
The Black Horse Community Group Limited	BHCG Black Horse	£245,395	England	Melton
THE HONEST MILLER COMMUNITY GROUP LIMITED	The Honest Miller, Brook	£262,500	England	Ashford
The Raven Inn Community Benefit Society Limited	The Raven Inn Community pub	£102,000	England	Warrington
The Roxy Collective	The Future of The Roxy	£300,000	England	South Lakeland
Zion Bristol Limited	Zion Community Art Space	£240,000	England	Bristol, City of
Glór Uachtar Tíre (Teach Uidhilin)	Teach Uidhilín	£204,316	Northern Ireland	Newry, Mourne and Down
Kilcoo Regeneration Group Limited	Purchase of the Parish Buildings for Community Use	£195,000	Northern Ireland	Newry, Mourne and Down
KILCOOLEY WOMENS CENTRE (Ladybird Parent Children and Family Care)	LADYBIRDS PARENT, CHILDREN & FAMILY CENTRE	£156,000	Northern Ireland	Ards and North Down
Falkirk Rugby Football and Sports Club (SCIO) (Sunnyside Pavillion)	Sunnyside Pavilion	£115,000	Scotland	Falkirk
Heart of Newhaven Community	The Heart	£300,000	Scotland	City of Edinburgh
Langside Sports Club	Langside Sports Club - Clubhouse and Pavilion Renovation	£100,000	Scotland	Glasgow City
North Arran Community Benefit Society Ltd	Lochranza Country Inn	£300,000	Scotland	North Ayrshire
Aberporth Village Hall and Recreation Ground	Heart of the Community	£280,000	Wales	Ceredigion
Aberystwyth and District Hospice at Home Volunteers	Acquiring Plas Antaron, a place for wellbeing and hope	£179,730	Wales	Ceredigion
HAVERHUB CIC	Expansion and security of Haverhub CIC	£240,000	Wales	Pembrokeshire
SHGT COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETY LTD. (Siop Havards)	Siop Havards	£207,720	Wales	Pembrokeshire

The Llandyrnog Community Shop Ltd.	Llandyrnog Community Shop and Post Office Project (The Llandyrnog Community Shop Ltd)	£200,000	Wales	Denbighshire
------------------------------------	---	----------	-------	--------------

### 6.3. Successful Project for Round 1

Page 1343

Organisation	Project Name	Total Value	Country	Local Authority
Adwick Park Community and Sports Academies CIO	Adwick Park Community Hub	£235,952	England	Doncaster
Bridge Creative Enterprise CIC	Centre of Social Enterprise and Creativity	£65,870	England	County Durham
Bury Community Football Stadium	Bury Community Football Stadium	£1,000,000	England	Bury
Countrymans Community Pub Society Limited CCPS	Countrymans Community Pub	£230,000	England	Richmondshire
Fontmell Magna Community Land Trust Limited	Community ownership of the Fontmell Magna Village Shop	£204,800	England	Dorset
Friends of Newtown St Martin Pub Limited	Newtown St Martin Pub	£240,000	England	Cornwall
Hartcliffe City Farm Ltd.	Hartcliffe City Farm	£300,000	England	Bristol City of
Heritage Lab CIC Ltd	Pugin Studios	£300,000	England	Thanet
Icarus Theatre Collective	The Old Red Lion: A rich history, an exciting future	£255,172	England	Islington
Newnham on Severn Community Benefit Society NoSCBS	The George Community Hub	£247,500	England	Forest of Dean
Ogbourne Community Pub Society Limited	SavetheSilks	£237,500	England	Wiltshire
Oldham Boxing	Victoria House (The Oldham Boxing Club)	£550,000	England	Oldham
Oxford Arms Pub and Hub	Oxford Arms Pub and Hub	£300,000	England	Herefordshire, County of
The Bell Inn Frisby Community Group Limited	TBIFCG	£150,000	England	Melton
The Weardale Museum	Progressing the Internal Envelope	£56,760	England	County Durham
Ballymacash Sports Academy Limited	Community Hub Project (Phase 2) 2022	£300,000	Northern Ireland	Lisburn and Castlereagh
St Columbs Hall Trust	Aurora	£181,800	Northern Ireland	Derry City and Strabane
St Davids Brass Band SCIO	Vogrie Hall Refurbishment	£127,251	Scotland	MIDLOTHIAN

Clayton West and District Community Hub Limited	Clayton Community Wellbeing Hub	£185,088	England	Hyndburn
Leigh Building Preservation Trust	Leigh Spinners Mill Community Regeneration	£250,000	England	Wigan
Pompey in the Community	The John Jenkins Stadium	£986,000	England	Portsmouth
THE GEORGE COMMUNITY LIMITED	THE GEORGE COMMUNITY	£250,000	England	Ashford
The Light Church Bradford	Purchase and Renovation of The Jubilee Centre	£225,000	England	Bradford
The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Luke, Thurnby Leicester	The Hub Community Centre and Cafe, Manor Field, Thurnby	£250,000	England	Harborough
The Rising Sun Woodcroft Community Pub Project	The Rising Sun Woodcroft Community Pub Project	£175,000	England	Forest of Dean
The Wharf Marple Community Interest Company	The Wharf Marple Community Hub, Heritage, Health & Wellbeing Centre.	£200,000	England	Stockport
Westhall Community Pub Ltd.	Westhall Racehorse Community Pub	£96,600	England	East Suffolk
Whitley Bay Big Local CIO	Community Building for Whitley Bay	£300,000	England	North Tyneside
Grow the Glens Community Interest Company GtG CIC	Glens Digital Hub	£300,000	Northern Ireland	Causeway Coast and Glens
Callander Community Development Trust Ltd	Callander Visitor Information Centre	£124,843	Scotland	Stirling
Local Initiatives in New Galloway	New Galloway Town Hall SOS Save Our Space	£175,000	Scotland	Dumfries and Galloway
Rannoch Community Trust	Rannoch Hub	£250,000	Scotland	Perth and Kinross
The Old Forge Community Benefit Society Limited	The Old Forge Community Benefit Society: a community owned pub	£219,096	Scotland	Highland
THE WHITHORN TRUST	Whithorn ReBuild Renewing the Old Town Hall	£300,000	Scotland	Dumfries and Galloway
Creations of Cymru Film and Media	Refurbishment and Redevelopment of the Queens Ballroom	£90,000	Wales	Blaenau Gwent
Menter Tyn Llan Cyfyngedig	Achub Tyn Llan Save Tyn Llan	£250,000	Wales	Gwynedd
The Coalfields Regeneration Trust	The CANA Resource and Training Centre	£124,258	Wales	Rhondda Cynon Taf

## 7. Q & A

### 7.1. General Q&A

**Q: Taking ownership of an asset is complicated, what support will be put in place to help?**

**A:** We recognise that taking ownership of an asset can be challenging. The Fund will help ensure that community groups have the necessary help, both practical and financial, to support them in taking ownership of an asset.

We also intend to provide additional early stage support to the applicants who need it the most. Our Delivery Partners will start to offer support from March 2023. Those who express interest in the Fund will be directed to liaise with the Delivery Partner about their support needs. Please refer to section 9 of the prospectus for more information on this support.

### 7.2. Fund-Specific Q&A

**Q: How long will the fund run for?**

**A:** The Fund will run from July 2021 for 4 years until 2025.

**Q: How many times can applicants submit an EOI Form to the Fund?**

**A:** The EOI stage of the application process is always open, meaning applicants can submit the form at the time that is right for their projects. There are no limits on how many times you can submit an EOI like there is for the main application stage, however if your project is ineligible you should not submit a new EOI unless the circumstances have changed and you now think your project will be eligible for the Fund.

**Q: Do I have to wait before submitting another EOI if I am unsuccessful?**

**A:** There is no time limit on re-submitting an EOI after receiving an unsuccessful outcome from a previous EOI submission. Nonetheless, you should only submit another EOI if there has been a marked change in your projects circumstances that may deem it to be eligible. We may determine that your project will never be eligible for the Fund and will advise you accordingly, in which case you will not be able to submit another EOI.

**Q: Can I expect feedback on my EOI submission?**

**A:** You can expect to receive feedback on the outcome of your EOI application within three weeks. Those applicants who are unsuccessful will receive feedback summarising where their application did not meet our eligibility requirements.

**Q: What happens if my EOI is successful?**

**A:** You will be written to confirming an invitation to apply for funding. A link to the full application form will be included in this correspondence for you to complete. An invitation to apply for funding does not guarantee a grant from us, but it does indicate that we see potential in your idea.

**Q: Is project X eligible for funding?**

**A:** Full eligibility requirements are published in the bidding prospectus.

**Q: Will funding be provided in grant or loan form?**

**A:** Applicants can bid for a capital grant of up to £250,000 match funding. In exceptional cases, bidders will be able to make the case for up to £1 million match funding to help establish a community-owned sports club or help buy a sports club/asset at risk of being lost without community intervention. Full details of available funding is provided in the bidding prospectus. This is provided as a grant and is not paid back.

**Q: Are you able to advise projects on how best to develop their application?**

**A:** All the information needed to submit a compelling and evidence-based application is available in the prospectus. To ensure fairness for all applicants and uphold the integrity of the bidding process, we are unable to advise applicants beyond what is publicly available on how best to develop and present their application. Although we cannot advise on how to develop applications, we may be able to clarify points in the prospectus that applicants are unsure of.

**Q: Why is there a cap at £250,000 on general asset types?**

**A:** This threshold was informed by evidence from previous external programmes funded by the National Lottery which indicated that community groups typically required up to £250,000 to secure ownership of an asset. This cap will maximise the impact of the Fund by allowing hundreds of projects across the UK to submit a successful application to save their community asset.

**Q: Why can't the Community Ownership Fund provide funding to save publicly owned assets?**

**A:** The Community Ownership Fund grant cannot fund the costs of purchasing publicly owned assets where the public authority would credit a capital receipt. However, the Fund will work alongside existing Community Asset Transfers to support these transfers by funding the costs of renovation and refurbishment.

For example, if an applicant was able to secure an asset transfer or raise the funds through another route, they could be eligible for funding from the Community Ownership Fund for any refurbishment needed in order to save that asset.

**Q: Why have you introduced a two-application limit?**

**A:** As a result of the feedback received from applicants in Round 1 and from stakeholder engagement, we have taken the decision to limit the number of applications for any one asset to two applications during the period of COF funding.

If a project has not been found to be fundable after two attempts, it is unlikely they could benefit from the Community Ownership Fund programme of funding. This means that projects which do not meet the eligibility or standards of the Fund can focus their efforts applying to more suitable opportunities. To clarify, this limit is on a project, not on an organisation – so if the same organisation wishes to apply for funding for more than one asset, this will be accepted.

**Q: Will you be making further changes to allow X in the future?**

**A:** We want to make positive changes to ensure that as many community organisations as possible across the UK can save their treasured local assets at risk of loss. We therefore actively engage with

our stakeholders and applicants to understand how the Fund can be improved throughout its lifespan and welcome any feedback to achieve this.

**Q: My asset is not at immediate risk of loss but could still do with support for refurbishments/improvements etc. Can I apply?**

**A:** This Fund exists to prevent important assets being lost to the community. In order to meet the Community Ownership Fund eligibility requirements, applicants need to provide evidence that demonstrates that the asset is at risk of being lost to the community. The risk can be from closure, sale, neglect and dereliction under current ownership, or unsustainable operations under the current business model.

**Q: Can this Fund be used to save a professional / semi-professional sports club that is important to the community?**

**A:** We are keen to ensure that community groups have the opportunity to bid for funding where there is a risk that a sport, or assets associated with sport such as a sports ground, will be totally lost to that community. However, we won't let funding be used to pay off an existing club's debts – that wouldn't be a good use of public funding. Sports clubs should carefully check the eligibility requirements for the types of organisations we can fund, as we do not fund profit distributing organisations, including those that pay out to shareholders.

**If you have any questions, please get in touch with your DLUHC Area Team contact who will contact the Community Ownership Fund Team.**

**THANK YOU,  
THE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND.**

This page is intentionally left blank





<b>Subject:</b>	Modern Slavery Act 2015: updated Modern Slavery Statement and update on corporate action plan
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officers:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services David Sales, Director Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Sarah Williams, Governance & Compliance Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the updated annual Modern Slavery Transparency in Supply Chains Statement to meet the obligations of the Modern Slavery Act, 2015 and an update on the related corporate action plan.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>It is recommended that the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the updated annual Modern Slavery Transparency in Supply Chains Statement (the “Transparency Statement”).</li> <li>Approve the addition of the Transparency Statement to the UK Government’s online registry.</li> <li>Note the progress made on the action plan.</li> </ul>

3.0	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the “Act”) aims to address slavery and trafficking by enhancing support and protection for victims, giving law enforcement the tools needed to target today’s slave drivers and ensuring perpetrators can be severely punished. It also includes a provision in Section 54 to encourage organisations to ensure their supply chains are slavery-free, known as the Transparency in Supply Chains arrangements (“TISC”).</p>
3.2	<p><b>Key Issues</b></p> <p>The Council has voluntarily published an annual Transparency Statement on our website since 2015. This sets out what the Council has done to ensure there is no modern slavery in its supply chains or any part of its business.</p> <p>This year, the annual Transparency Statement has been reviewed by Commercial and Procurement Services, the Council’s Safeguarding Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer and has been refreshed to reflect current guidance on its content. An updated version for 2021-22 is set out in <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Recent changes to the Transparency Statement requirements</u></p> <p>The TISC provisions currently apply to commercial organisations, however, in recent years both the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Department of Justice have reviewed and consulted on these provisions and their potential application to the public sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In July 2018, the Home Secretary undertook an independent review of the Act and made recommendations, one of which was to strengthen Section 54 by extending the requirement to publish Modern Slavery Statements to government and the public sector.</li> <li>• In July 2019 the UK Government launched a consultation on measures to strengthen the TISC arrangements and published its proposals on how it planned to take this work forward. Many of the proposed changes will require legislative change which has not happened to date. The proposed changes would see a strengthening of the TISC arrangements for commercial businesses, and would, for the first time, extend them so they apply to the public sector.</li> <li>• In January 2022, the Northern Ireland Department of Justice (“DOJ”) published its report, summary of responses and next steps in response to its consultation on TISC. It found that overall, there is widespread support for the strengthening of TISC arrangements.</li> </ul>

3.4	<p><u>Approach to Modern Slavery in Northern Ireland</u></p> <p>In October 2022, in accordance with Section 12 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, (as amended by the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022), the DOJ launched a public consultation on a new three-year draft Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy. This is a multiagency collaboration, with actions to be delivered by members of Northern Ireland's Organised Crime Task Force, NGO Engagement Group and other agencies working to address modern slavery and human trafficking.</p> <p>The DOJ noted in its consultation that the UK Government plan to make additional changes to the TISC provisions in the Act when parliamentary time allows. The additional changes that the UK Government plan to legislate for include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reporting on specific topics;</li> <li>2. Publishing the MS statement on a public registry;</li> <li>3. Setting a deadline for submitting a statement annually;</li> <li>4. Extending the requirement to publish a statement to public sector organisations with a turnover of over £36million; and</li> <li>5. The introduction of financial penalties for those that do not publish a slavery statement.</li> </ol>
3.5	<p>It should be noted that the Legislative Consent of the Northern Ireland Assembly will be required to extend any UK Government changes to Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Alongside the consultation, the DOJ published a progress report on the commitments laid out in the 2021-22 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Progress Report states in part that the DOJ "will engage further with public sector procurement leads once the additional measures to strengthen TISC are progressed in legislation and will become mandatory for all businesses with an annual turnover of over £36million."</p>
3.6	<p>In March 2021, the UK Government launched an online modern slavery statement registry. Since its launch, over 7,000 statements have been submitted covering over 23,350 organisations on a voluntary basis.</p> <p>Members asked to approve the addition of the Belfast City Council Transparency Statement to this registry.</p>

3.7	<p><u>Action Plan</u></p> <p>In October 2021, Council approved an action plan to tackle modern slavery to be taken forward by various departments. This was based on guidance from NILGA. An update on the proposed actions is set forth in <b>Appendix 2</b>.</p> <p>Members should note that an initial awareness session for relevant Belfast City Council managers on recognising Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking was held on 17 November by the Department of Justice.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Reporting</u></p> <p>The Governance &amp; Compliance Manager co-ordinates an annual report on progress to be brought to CMT and the Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee.</p>
3.9	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The implementation of the action plan will involve staff from City and Neighbourhood Services, Legal Services, Governance &amp; Compliance Services, Commercial and Procurement Services, Corporate HR and Marketing and Corporate Communications.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Any equality, good relations or rural needs implications will be identified using the council's usual screening process.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1: Draft Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement 2021 - 2022</p> <p>Appendix 2: Modern Slavery Action Plan</p>



## Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement for the period 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

### Introduction

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (the “Act”) places specific responsibilities on organisations to ensure slavery and human trafficking does not exist within their supply chains, and in any part of their own businesses. Organisations need to demonstrate accountability through transparency to protect workers, adults and children from abuse and exploitation.

Belfast City Council is committed to improving practices to prevent slavery and human trafficking. The Council expects suppliers, partners and third parties to adhere to the same values and principles to combat slavery and human trafficking.

This statement is made pursuant to section 54(1) of the Act and constitutes Belfast City Council’s slavery and human trafficking statement for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

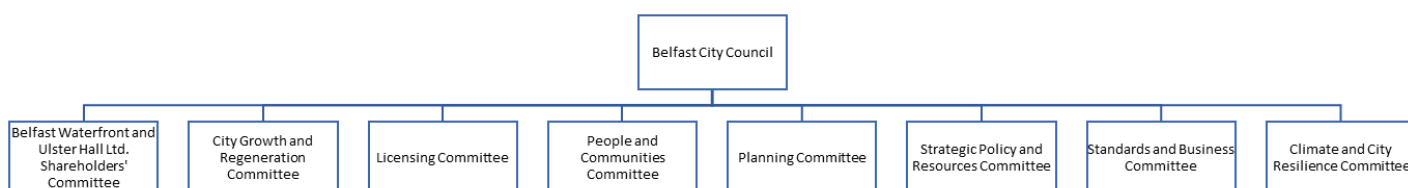
### Our structure and our supply chains

The Council is the local authority for the Belfast area with responsibility for a wide range of services including local planning, economic development, tourism, street cleaning and parks, leisure and waste management.

The [Belfast Agenda](#) is the community plan that the whole city is working towards. Our vision is that by 2035 Belfast will be a city

- Where everyone benefits from a thriving and prosperous economy
- That is welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive for all
- That is vibrant, attractive, connected and environmentally sustainable
- Where everyone experiences good health and wellbeing and
- Where everyone fulfils their potential

Our political governance structure is set out below:



Belfast City Council procured goods, works and services from circa 2,400 suppliers during the last financial year with a supply chain mostly based in the UK and Ireland.

The Council has a responsibility to prevent slavery and human trafficking within its supply chain and in any part of the organisation. As the customer, the Council makes clear to our suppliers, and those wishing to do business with us, what is expected of them.

The Council's tender process require all applicable tenderers to provide confirmation that they are compliant with the Act. They are also required to confirm their subcontractors and suppliers comply with the Act.

### **Our policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking**

Belfast City Council have the following policies or procedures in place, related to mitigating the risks of slavery and human trafficking:

#### **Safeguarding**

We recognise our responsibility to develop, implement and monitor policies and procedures to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Our child safeguarding procedures are well established. Our current focus is on reviewing, underpinning and improving how we take care of adults and the reporting system. This will include a new Safeguarding All ages policy to be in place by January 2023.

#### **Equality and Diversity**

We are committed to Equality and Diversity and actively seek to eradicate discrimination and inequality when developing services and when goods and or services are provided on the Council's behalf. To this end we have developed an internal toolkit which integrates equality and diversity into everything we do from policy development to service planning and delivery. The Council's new five-year Equality Scheme which has been drawn up in accordance with Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 was approved in January 2021.

We are an Equal Opportunities employer and welcome applications from all sections of the community. We are a Lead Partner and Member of Excellence of Employers for Disability NI with members of our recruitment team being accredited as "Disability Positive". We have a dedicated helpline for any applicants who require reasonable adjustments or whose first language is not English. We appoint strictly on the merit principle and our recruitment processes require the completion of relevant pre-employment checks which include eligibility to work in the UK and the uptake of suitable references, where required.

We operate a job evaluation scheme to ensure all employees are paid fairly and equitably.

#### **Raising Concerns**

We encourage workers to raise any concerns that they may have and there are established arrangements in place for handling these. Externally, members of the public and customers can use our [Corporate Complaints Compliments and Comments](#) procedure to report concerns.

#### **Fraud and bribery**

We are committed to protecting the public money we look after and to making sure that the opportunity for fraud, bribery or any other financial impropriety is reduced to the lowest possible risk. We have policies and procedures to manage the risk of fraud, bribery and other financial impropriety, including arrangements for prevention and detection as well as arrangements for reporting and investigation.

## **Code of Conduct**

We expect all employees and Councillors to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct and ethical behaviour. We require all Councillors and relevant officer to submit declarations of interests to record and declare personal and pecuniary interests.

## **Social Value Procurement Policy**

Our [Social Value Procurement Policy](#) sets out our approach to delivering on the council's inclusive growth commitments and explains our social value objectives, the impact these changes will make and how we will work with suppliers using our social value toolkit to achieve our ambitions.

### **Due diligence in assessing modern slavery risk in operations or supply chains**

Belfast City Council's Commercial and Procurement Services team operate a Category Management structure. A Category Management structure within the team enables greater transparency in the identification of risks associated with modern slavery on a category basis.

### **Risk Assessment and Management**

All new suppliers, for new applicable contracts, are assessed as part of the Council's tendering process to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act.

The Commercial and Procurement Services team completed CIPS Ethical Procurement training achieving the professional standard of CIPS Corporate Ethics kite mark for the service.

An integral part of the risk management will be the new Safeguarding All Ages policy due to be introduced January 2023 and the associated updated training already in place, which includes Modern Slavery and Human trafficking as topics.

### **Key performance indicators to measure effectiveness of steps being taken**

We will communicate this policy to our staff to make them aware of the issue and the Council's obligations.

In October 2021, Belfast City Council approved suggested actions for various council departments based on guidance from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association. These actions include: providing Modern Slavery Awareness Training for all council personnel in public facing services; designating a point of contact to report modern slavery concerns and raise awareness of modern slavery among communities; and collaborating with other councils and agencies. This action plan is being taken forwards by officers.

The Northern Ireland Department of Justice is expected, at some point, to announce guidance on the new duty to report incidences of modern slavery. This may require further training and guidance being issued to staff.

### **Training on modern slavery and trafficking**

The Commercial and Procurement Services team commit to retaining the professional standard of CIPS Corporate Ethics during 2021/22. Further Council officers involved in procurement activity will also be selected for this training.

Signed on behalf of Belfast City Council by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Nora Largey**  
**Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services**  
**Date:**

#### Policy Control

<b>Organisation</b>	Belfast City Council
<b>Title</b>	Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement 2021-2022 v. 0.1
<b>Author</b>	Sarah Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager
<b>Owner</b>	Nora Largey
<b>Review date</b>	
<b>Location of document</b>	Website home page
<b>Approved by</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and ratified at Full Council
<b>Approval date</b>	



## APPENDIX 2 – SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR COUNCILS

Action	NILGA Guidance and Suggested Council Actions	Suggested Lead	Estimated deadline	March 2023 Progress Update
1. Provide Modern Slavery Awareness Training for all council personnel in public facing services.	<p>NILGA Guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Department of Justice and the Department of Finance's Construction and Procurement Delivery can advise on TISC (Transparency in Supply Chains) training for public sector and council procurement leads.</li> <li>The guidance provides a list of voluntary and community sector organisations which can advise on modern slavery and provide training.</li> </ul> <p>NILGA's suggested next steps for Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver training for public sector procurement leads in respect of transparency in supply chains.</li> <li>Accessing "Train the trainer" sessions for Councils shared by the Department of Justice to provide Councils with the tools to deliver their own inhouse training on Modern Slavery. <i>(The Train the Trainers session will be built into NILGA's Regional Training Programme and further information will follow on an ongoing basis as appropriate).</i></li> <li>Using Training Materials for Council Staff, available from the Department of Justice and PSNI. <i>(In April 2019, the Department of Justice and the PSNI wrote to all local Council CEOs to offer training materials for staff on modern slavery concerns.)</i></li> </ul>	<p>Head of Commercial and Procurement Services</p> <p>Director of HR / Governance &amp; Compliance Manager</p> <p>External provider to deliver approved training.</p>	March 2023	An initial corporate awareness session was delivered by the NI DOJ Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking branch to relevant managers (BDM&CP and Environmental Health) on 17 November 2022
2. Designate a point of contact to report modern slavery concerns and raise awareness of	<p>NILGA Guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils should <b>designate a lead officer or team who can act as a point of contact</b> and expertise on the issue. Council Community Planning, Good Relations or Policing and Community Partnerships (PCSP) teams are ideally placed to fulfil this role. A Lead Officer from either one of</li> </ul>	<p>Nora Largey and David Sales.</p> <p>To be agreed, at the relevant time, how</p>	March 2023	CMT has discussed and agreed that Nora Largey and David Sales will act as points of contact for modern

Action	NILGA Guidance and Suggested Council Actions	Suggested Lead	Estimated deadline	March 2023 Progress Update
modern slavery among communities.	<p>these teams could be nominated as the “go to” person for other officers or council workers who have concerns that modern slavery may be happening in certain businesses or in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>council protocol</b> for reporting suspicions of modern slavery should be developed.</li> <li>• <b>Community Planning Partnerships</b> should be harnessed to share information and to raise awareness of modern slavery with communities and the drive to eradicate it.</li> <li>• <b>PCSPs</b> are a key council resource in the drive to eradicate modern slavery in Northern Ireland. Intelligence which can be disclosed by the PCSP should be shared with the lead person / team in the council appointed as the “go to” for modern slavery concerns.</li> </ul>	we will embed / promote through the Community Planning Structures, SCP and PCSP/DPCSP's.		slavery and human trafficking concerns.
3. Establish clear procurement guidelines	<p>NILGA guidance: The <b>modern slavery transparency statement</b> required to be published by the Council under Section 54 of the MSA must include the steps the Council has taken during the financial year to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any of its supply chains, and in any part of its own business or; that the organisation has taken no steps in the financial year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency in supply chains is a process of continuous improvement. As stipulated in government guidance, the government expects organisations to <i>build</i> on their statements year on year</li> <li>• Guidance and resources include: Transparency in Supply Chains etc. A practical guide; Council Transparency Statements Portal; TISCReport Transparency Map; LGA's Tackling Modern Slavery Guide</li> </ul> <p>NILGA's suggested next steps for Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking account of any further government developments on proposals to extend the scope of Section 54 (TISC).</li> </ul>	Commercial and Procurement Services – N Bohill	Annually	Annual update to Modern Slavery Transparency Statement has been drafted and approved by CMT. It will be uploaded to the council website and the UK Government registry after SP&R and Council approval

Action	NILGA Guidance and Suggested Council Actions	Suggested Lead	Estimated deadline	March 2023 Progress Update
4. Collaborate with other councils and agencies	<p>NILGA guidance: Opportunities for <b>collaboration</b> include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All-Council Professional Officers Groups (e.g. the Environmental Health Professional Officers Group, the Local Government Safeguarding Network and the Planning Professional Officers Group);</li> <li>• Cross-council project collaboration (e.g. Arc21); and</li> <li>• Council collaboration with the private sector: e.g. for Economic Development teams to provide guidance to new and existing businesses in their districts on developing modern slavery transparency statements to enhance their competitiveness when bidding for new, or when renewing goods / services contracts.</li> </ul>	All Directors to raise with relevant officers	Immediate	This can be started following the roll-out of training to staff

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Subject:</b>	Update on Area Working Groups
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Shauna Murtagh, Programme Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To seek Members' approval of the minutes of the most recent AWG meetings.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve the most recent AWG minutes (<i>West – 23 February, South – 27 February North – 28 February</i>) attached at Appendix 1.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<b><u>KEY ISSUES</u></b>
3.1	<p><b>Area Working Group Minutes</b></p> <p>Members agreed in June 2016 that the Area Working Group minutes would be taken into the</p>

	<p>SP&amp;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. Members are asked to approve the most recent AWG minutes as attached.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Project Updates</b></p> <p><b>West AWG</b></p> <p>The Working Group made the following recommendation to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee:</p> <p><b>Expansion of Belfast Bikes Scheme 2022/23 –</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. To note that <b>Coláiste Feirste</b> were content with the Belfast Bikes docking station to be placed on its land, with the agreement that the Council tidy up the entrance and maintain in the area before the docking station is installed. C&amp;NS has agreed this approach.</li> <li>II. <b>Shankill Road</b> –agreed that further consideration be given to a docking site located closer to Glencairn with the potential for a location at the entrance to Glencairn Park at Forthriver Road as part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway.</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.3	<p>None</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.4	<p>None</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Minutes of the Area Working Groups</p>

# West Belfast Area Working Group

Thursday, 23rd February, 2023

## HYBRID MEETING OF THE SPECIAL WEST BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP

Members present: Councillor McCann (Chairperson),  
Alderman McCoubrey;  
Councillors Canavan, Mathew Collins, M. Donnelly,  
R.M Donnelly, Duffy, Garrett, Hutchinson, McCabe,  
McLaughlin, Verner and Walsh.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor;  
Mr. F. Grant, Operations Development Manager; and  
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology was recorded on behalf of Councillor Thompson.

### **Minutes**

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

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were reported.

### **Physical Programme 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 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 updates on the Physical Programme for West Belfast.**

### 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: 50 projects have received In Principle support under LIF1 and LIF2, of which 49 have been completed and 1 project at delivery stage. In total, 98% of all LIF West projects have 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	24 (96%)	£1,341,788
Number of Projects On-going Delivery			1 (4%)	£58,212
Number of Projects in Pre-construction				
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)				
<b>Total Number of Approved Projects</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>£1,617,500</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>£1,400,000</b>

The table below shows an overview of the remaining live project:

LIF Ref	Project	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action / Recommendation
WLIF2-08	Berlin Swifts Football Club	LIF £65,085; SOF £113,000	On Ground	Utility connections to the completed modular changing building remain outstanding. All actions are sitting with NI Water and their utilities connections. NI Water continue to be extremely slow to respond and progress their design and pricing to date.	Continue engagement with utility companies and project partners.



#### 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**

<b>West</b>	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; Greater Shankill Community Council- Royal British Legion- £300k, St Mary's CBS— no commitment Stage 1— An Sportslann; Suffolk Community Forum; Belfast Hills- Black Mountain Access—no commitment				
<b>BIF29</b>	<b>Greater Shankill Community Council - RBL</b>	BIF- £300,000; SOF- £507,000	On Ground	Recently approved at Due Diligence. Contractor has been appointed and works are progressing.	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>BIF09</b>	<b>Glencairn Community Project</b>	£700,000	Uncommitted; Due Diligence stage	Updated cost estimate is £1.8m which is an increase of over £750k since 2020. Options for land transfer being explored. GCP has progressed to Stage 2 of Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. Meeting to progress matters held in Jan 2023 with NIHE, EA and political representatives.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

## 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

<b>West</b>	<p>Stage 3— James Connolly Interpretative centre—£650,000; Rock Centre — £200,000; Belfast Orange Hall Museum- £80,000; Roddy McCorley Museum - £1,350,000; Berlin Swifts Football Club - £113,000; Greater Shankill Community Council - £507,000</p> <p>Stage 1—Shankill Road Environmental Improvement Project - £50,000; Woodvale Park - £80,000</p>
-------------	---

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	There were delays in the supply and manufacture of elements of the museum fitout as well as a small number of contractor issues. Project progressing. Following a delay related to issues with supply and manufacture, the revised completion date is April 2023.	Continue engagement with the group
SOF10	Shankill Road Environmental Improvement Project	£50,000	On Ground	Approved at Due Diligence in December 2022. Project progressing.	Funding Agreement to be issued to the group.
SOF13	Woodvale Park	£80,000	Initial stage	Proposed MUGA upgrades and development of a sensory garden. Project	Meeting to be arranged with project promoter

				scoping exercise ongoing.	
--	--	--	--	---------------------------------	--

## 6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is a £10m capital fund to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. On 27 October 2022, Members considered the feedback on Stage 1- Applications in the West Belfast area and made recommendations to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on which applications they wish to move forward to *Stage 2 – Development Stage*. In line with the agreed process, the outcome of special AWGs have been taken through Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and have been ratified by the Council (December 2022).

The table below provides an overview of the projects that have progressed to *Stage 2- Development* and the projects that are held on the reserve list at Stage 1.

### West Belfast – NRF overview

<b>South</b>	<p>Stage 2— The Mountainview Hotel, Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre, Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1, The ACT Initiative Community Hub &amp; Visitors' Centre, The Road, Glencairn Community Project (Hub)</p> <p>Stage 1— <i>Improving the Environment at Patrick Sarsfield's GAC, Corrigan Park Redevelopment Project, WCC New Purpose-Built Childcare and Family Support Centre, Curam Leanaí na Fuiseoige, Conway Mill - redeveloping for the future, Westcourt Uplift Project, Lamh Dhearg Renewable Energy &amp; External Lighting Improvement scheme, St. Gall's Milltown Community Development, Colin Glen Eco Air-Cruizer, CNP Regeneration of Cloona House</i></p>
--------------	--

### West Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 2 - Development

Project name	Description	Status
<b>The Mountainview Hotel</b>	Building a socially owned environmentally friendly 65-bedroom hotel located on the new Glenmona development in West Belfast. This is promoted by Fáilte Feirste Thiar.	Business Case stage.
<b>Michael Davitt's Community Heritage Centre</b>	Transforming a large redundant site adjacent to Páirc Mac Daibhéid located in Beechmount, West Belfast. Creation of a museum/ exhibition space, multipurpose hall and supporting ancillary services.	Business Case stage.
<b>Croí na Carraige - 'The Heart of the Rock' - Phase 1</b>	Development of a flagship multi-purpose youth, community, family and heritage hub on the derelict land adjacent to our current community hub Gael-Ionad Mhic Goill in the Upper Springfield Area of West Belfast. It will incorporate their existing building and provide space for Irish language youth provision, a heritage exhibition	Business Case being reviewed.

	gallery and office space. This is promoted by Glor na Mona.	
<b>The ACT Initiative Community Hub &amp; Visitors' Centre</b>	Purchase and development of ACT's central office and Community Hub to include a Visitors' Centre that features a historical exhibition.	Business Case stage.
<b>The Road</b>	Development of a capital tourism project based around the shared history of the Shankill Road and its contribution to Belfast. This is promoted by Lower Shankill Community Association.	Business Case stage.
<b>Glencairn Community Project (Hub)</b>	Link to BIF project (BIF09) above. Development of a purpose-built community and youth facility within the Glencairn estate to meet both the needs of the community and provide statutory youth provision within the area.	Business Case being refreshed. Work ongoing to seek agreement regarding transfer of land.

Members will note that activity at **Stage 2 – Development** (the equivalent to **Stage 2-Uncommitted** on the Capital Programme) will include development of a business case/ economic appraisal (commensurate with the scale of the project) along with detailed designs and project costings. If a business case or economic appraisal has already been undertaken, then the findings will be tested. Due-diligence checks will be carried out in line with arrangements under LIF, BIF and SOF programmes. It is proposed that this stage will be timebound to 6 months to allow decisions on projects to be taken at the same time. The outcome of this development phase will then be reported to the relevant Area Working Group (AWG), along with a presentation on the project. The AWG will put forward recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, with a detailed update on each project, seeking approval for funding. Projects that receive committee approval will be issued with a Letter of Offer in principle and will move to **Stage 3- Committed**.

## 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. The table below provides an update on current live projects on the Council's Capital Programme in the West Belfast area.

### West Belfast – Capital programme overview

Project	Status and update
<b>City Cemetery – National Lottery Heritage Fund</b>	<i>Stage 3 – Committed. On ground.</i> The new service yard is completed. The restoration of the Mortuary Tower & exterior of Foxes Lodge is completed. Visitor centre is completed and officially opened to the public. 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 and

	aiming for completion by Summer 2023. Design and procurement works are underway with regards to Dual Language signage throughout the site with some external signage on centre now complete as well as the APP and research stations. Further dual language work (site signage, videos etc) is underway and engagement with Irish language groups is ongoing and will remain so until all dual language works are completed.
<b>Playground Programme - Areema and Sally Gardens</b>	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Works programmed for completion within 2022/23 financial year.
<b>Alleygating Phase 5</b>	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Consultation process and costs being prepared for each area. Engagement underway with Members to confirm locations. Order placed with Contractor and gates currently being manufactured.
<b>Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain</b>	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Business case procurement underway. Will also be considered within the wider study as below.
<b>Black Mountain/Upper Whiterock Greenway</b>	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Undergoing the business case review process. Will be assessed within the wider study.
<b>Colin Greenway</b>	<i>Stage 2- Uncommitted.</i> Draft Business case related to the development of the Colin Active Travel Routes prepared and under review.
<b>Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)</b>	<i>Stage 1- Emerging.</i> Secured DAERA funding for the Access to the Belfast Hills Feasibility Study. Consultant has been appointed and study and delivery plan will be complete in March 2023.

## 8. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government department on key capital investment programmes, namely Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office, Peace IV, DfI as well as 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).

### West Belfast – UV overview

Project	Status and update
<b>Colin Valley Football Club</b>	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. <b>On ground.</b> The contractor on site and the project is progressing well. Project completion expected in February 2023. Communications activity is being planned.
<b>Healthy Living Centre (Sport in the Community PCA)</b>	Council is acting as Delivery Partner. <b>On ground.</b> Contractor appointed and work progressing well on site. Lease agreement being finalised. Construction anticipated to complete by March 2023.

## **PEACEIV – Capital Projects**

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

### **West Belfast – Peace IV Capital Projects overview**

Project	Status and update
<b>Forth Meadow Community Greenway</b>	<p><b>On ground.</b></p> <p><i>Section 1 – Glencairn</i> – Works complete and handed over to City and Neighbourhood Services. Signage package to be installed to include feature panels, narrative panels and beacon lights.</p> <p><i>Section 2 – Forth River/ Springfield Road</i> – Works commenced with the completion date in June.</p> <p><i>Section 3 – Falls Park/Whiterock</i> – Works complete</p> <p><i>Section 4 – Bog Meadows</i> – All phases within this section now complete</p> <p><i>Section 5 – Westlink to City Centre</i> – currently at detailed design stage.</p> <p>Works on the flagship piece are progressing with installation and a revised plan for the public unveiling of March 2023. Discussions with Invest NI on the installation of the art piece are ongoing. DfC Levelling Up match funding received.</p>
<b>Black Mountain Shared Space Project</b>	<p><b>On ground.</b> <i>Phase 1.</i> Works progressing well. Will be liaising with funders regarding reducing the deficit. Project completion will be outside the PIV funding programme. SEUPB are exploring the use of a bond so that the funding deficit and those works claimed outside the programme can be discharged.</p> <p><i>Phase 2.</i> McAdam appointed as design team. Design agreed with end user. Planning application submitted.</p>
<b>Shankill Shared Women's Centre</b>	<p><b>On ground.</b> Contractor works ongoing. Project completion revised to 31 December 2023.</p>

## **DfI funded projects**

Below is the status update on projects funded by Department for Infrastructure in West Belfast.

### **DfI – West Belfast projects overview**

Project	Status and update
<b>Covered cycle stands Phase 2</b>	<p><i>Via DfI Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund</i></p> <p>Páirc Nua Chollann, Andersonstown Leisure Centre – currently in production and due for installation by May 2023. Potential additional location: Brook Leisure Centre.</p>

## **DfC funded projects**

Members are asked to note that the projects currently match funded by Department for Communities include: Berlin Swifts Football Club, Forth Meadow Community Greenway, Black

**Mountain Shared Space Project and Paisley Park Sportsplex refurbishment (see below). All these projects are progressing well.**

Project	Status and update
<b>Paisley Park Sportsplex refurbishment</b>	<b><i>On ground.</i></b> Refurbishment of the existing 3G pitch, provision of floodlighting, changing facilities and associated amenities. Project progressing well. ”

The Working Group noted the update provided.

### **Belfast Bikes Update**

The Working Group considered the following report:

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1 To agree the final locations for next phase of expansion on the Falls Road and Shankill Road area.**

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

**2.1 The Committee is requested to:**

- to agree the final locations for the next phase of expansion on the Falls Rd and Shankill Rd

#### **3.0 Main report**

##### **3.1 Background**

At CG&R on 9 June 2021 it was agreed to proceed with 15 docking stations outlined in the expansion proposal in Appendix 1. An investment of approximately £525,000 is required, based on cost estimates from previous network expansions. At SP&R on 18 June 2021 members agreed for £500,000 to be invested in the expansion proposal.

Eight stations will be installed in the upcoming phase, which should be completed by 31 March 2023. Seven stations will follow in the next phase the following year (2023/24).

The following areas were agreed previously by SP&R Committee, with the final locations of each docking station to be agreed through Area Working Groups:

- North: Yorkgate and Shore Road
- West: St Mary’s College and Shankill Road
- South: Lisburn Road and Malone Road
- East: Castlereagh Road, Upper Newtownards Road.

In the previous West AWG meeting, the location options for St. Mary’s College and the Shankill Rd have been discussed.

### **3.2 St. Mary's College**

Two potential locations at St Dominic's Grammar School and Coláiste Feirste were presented. It was queried if consultation with Coláiste Feirste has been undertaken to establish if the school would be content with the location considering that it would be close to a public art piece.

It was agreed to defer the decision to enable further consideration regarding the proposed location.

Since then, officers have been on site and met with a representative from Coláiste Feirste.

In general, they are content for a Belfast Bikes docking station to be placed on their land. However, the land was previously transferred from BCC to Coláiste Feirste. A gentleman's agreement was put in place at the time to maintain the entrance to the school however over the intervening years due to changes in management and an integration of services into OSS, the gentleman's agreement is no longer being implemented. The area has fallen into disrepair and the present state of it is neglected. The group would like the Council to tidy up the entrance and maintain it as part of the OSS schedule of operations in the area before the bike's docking station is installed.

Officers have liaised with Open Spaces and Streetscene and they have agreed to maintain the area. Arrangements in relation to liability for the differing assets within the small space need to be reflected in the Belfast Bikes licence agreement between Council and Coláiste Feirste.

BCC legal team needs to be instructed to add these arrangements to the licence agreement.

### **3.3 Shankill Road**

Members also considered the proposed Shankill locations and discussed the possibility of the final location being located nearer to Glencairn and requested that further consideration be given to this.

Officers identified as a potential new location the entrance to the Glencairn Park at Forthriver Rd that forms part of the Forth Meadow Community Greenway. They are liaising currently with officers who are involved in the Forth Meadow Community Greenway and believe that the proposed location for the docking station will provide good linkages for residents and visitors to the area.

### **Financial & Resource Implications**

#### **Finance**

There are no specific financial or resource implications contained within this report.



### **Equality or Good Relations Implications**

**None”**

The Working Group agreed the final locations for the next phase of expansion on the Falls Road and the Shankill Road, as outlined in the report.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

# **South Belfast Area Working Group**

Monday, 27th February, 2023

## **MEETING OF SOUTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP**

### **HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

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

In attendance: Mr. D. Logan, Project Manager;  
Mr. A. Ferguson, Senior Development Manager;  
Ms. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Services Integration  
Manager; and  
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Spratt.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 30th January were approved by the Working Group.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Presentation - Donegall Pass Community Enterprises**

The Chairperson welcomed representatives from Donegall Pass Community Enterprises (DPCE), namely, Ms. L. McCloy, Capital Project Coordinator, DPCE delivered a presentation and provided the Working Group with background to the organisation. She explained that DPCE's purpose was to ensure a sustainable development in a residential area with mixed tenure opportunities that would offer community benefits and synergy with the rest of the city. Its vision was "to make Donegall Pass a more vibrant and thriving area of inner-city Belfast, that is welcoming and open to ALL."

Ms. McCloy informed the Members that the DPCE Board comprised of 11 Directors who had a breadth of expertise and a good blend of skills to direct and shape the development. She outlined DPCE's strategic aims which were:

- Building back a strong and resilient community;
- A fully involved and inspired community;
- Sustainable income generation; and
- Good governance and leadership.

Ms. McCloy provided the Members with details of the profile of the Donegall Pass area and highlighted a number of the challenges facing the local area and communities.

She outlined details of the 15-year plan which included the development and implementation of a Regeneration Strategy and Good Relations Strategy for the area. Ms. McCloy informed the Members of DPCE's approach and outlined the proposals for a new functional hub; a derelict former PSNI site being taken forward by Urban Villages and Clanmil Housing Association which would be transformational to the area.

Ms McCloy noted that the proposed project would act a catalyst for change in the local area that the community could be part of and benefit from. She outlined a range of the proposed outcomes from the project and also added that social clauses would be built in.

Discussion ensued, and a Member asked Ms. McCloy about next steps and how DPCE would ensure that mechanisms were in place to keep the community informed which would feed into capacity and confidence. Ms McCloy provided an overview of the engagement mechanisms noting that 2 stakeholder groups had been held to date. She provided an assurance that all local community stakeholders would be consulted. She also provided an update on the estimated timelines for completion. Members noted that the provisional timeline reflected that it was a significant capital build.

During the discussion, the Members raised concerns that recent developments around Donegall Pass had not benefited the community and therefore welcomed that the community would be involved in the proposed DPCE development.

The Chairperson thanked Ms. McCloy for her presentation.

Noted.

### **Update on Physical Programmes**

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 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 South Belfast.

## 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		
<b>Total Number of Approved Projects</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>£1,083,600</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>£796,000</b>

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 The Lock House (£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	On ground	<b>Works now complete</b> see attached photos (Appendix 1). Note that this initial phase is a trial. Scoping and outcome of the	Continue engagement with partners

				pilot will inform next steps.	
<b>SLIF2-13</b>	<b>LORAG- The Lock House</b>	£40,000	Design stage	Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer received. At detailed design stage and planning application has been submitted. Initial works have commenced on site with the main contractor also expected by Summer 2023, pending planning approval.	Continued engagement with the group and funder.
<b>SLIF017</b>	<b>Finaghy Bridge</b>	£30,000	Design stage	Approved at SP&R Committee in May 2016 to undertake improvements to the bridge. DfI Roads Highways Team are 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 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***

<b>South</b>	Stage 3—Lagan Gateway—£2.1m; Lanyon Tunnels—£1.3m; Bredagh GAC- £700k Stage 1— Coffee Culture, and Arts & Digital Hub (BSCR IT Exam Centre
--------------	---

	project) and Sandy Row Open Space project [Sandy Row area projects, formerly Gilpins]— £1.35m <i>Stage 1—Belfast Islamic Centre—no commitment</i>
--	--

<b>Balmoral DEA</b>	Stage 3 - Knockbreda Parish Church Hall—£250k Stage 2— Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC—£250k
---------------------	--

Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
<b>BIF04</b>	<b>Lagan Gateway</b>	£2.1m	On ground	Phase 1 complete and bridge pier murals complete. Design of Phase 2 of the project ongoing. DfI match funding application for Phase 2 successful, subject to business case approval. Consultation complete and planning in early 2023. Site Investigation started on 15 Feb and due to complete on 28 Feb 2023.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.
<b>BIF19</b>	<b>Bredagh GAC</b>	£700,000	On ground	Contractor has been appointed and works are due to commence in late February 2023.	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>BIF07</b>	<b>Lanyon Tunnels</b>	£1.3m	Stage 3- Committed	Potential funding under discussion with Urban Villages. Plans have been amended and new planning application is currently in PAD process. DfC to decide on Business Case in early 2023. Further planning responses have been requested	Officer engagement with Executive Office and DfC as key funders, and key stakeholders.

				and are being readied.	
<b>BIF33</b>	<b>Linfield FC/ Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC</b>	£250,000	Stage 3- Committed	Linfield FC/Boys Brigade and Belvoir FC have agreed in principle that Belvoir FC can take forward project. Special AWG meeting held on 30 January 2023 and agreed that the BIF proposal which includes Phase 1 is decoupled from the wider masterplan and that any future phases will be taken forward separately by Linfield FC and Boys Brigade.	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>BIF46</b>	<b>Coffee Culture</b>	£286,519	Stage 2- Uncommitted <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Partnership project with UV – total funding package £900k. Letter of Offer approved. Funding package via UV, DfC, SOF and BIF. Due Diligence process complete. Property purchase complete. Design Team tender process complete. Planning application to be submitted by March 2023.	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>BIF48</b>	<b>Sandy Row Arts &amp; Digital Hub</b>	£584,167	Stage 2- Uncommitted <i>Part of Sandy Row Area projects</i>	Partnership project with UV. The Letter of Offer is expected imminently. Due Diligence process complete. Design Team tender process complete.	Continue engagement with the group.
<b>BIF47</b>	<b>Sandy Row Open</b>	£479,314*	Stage 1- Emerging	Work is progressing, location being	Continue engagement with the group.



	Space project		Part of Sandy Row Area projects	confirmed with an exploration of potential opportunities in terms of final project, urban farm to allotments or a mixed development based on community needs.  <i>*The remaining balance of the ringfenced allocation for the Sandy Row Area projects</i>	
--	---------------	--	---------------------------------	---	--

## 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 the table below.

### *SOF – South Belfast projects overview*

Project	Award	Status and update	Action/ Recommendation
<b>SOF04</b> <b>Belfast South Community Resources</b> (SRCF)	£80,000	<b>Project completed.</b> Tourism signages are now installed (see Appendix 1).	Continue engagement with the group on post monitoring
<b>SOF02</b> <b>Coffee Culture</b>	£100,000	As above at BIF46. Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. Funding package via UV, DfC, SOF and BIF. Due Diligence process complete. Property purchase complete. Design Team tender process complete. Planning application to be submitted by March 2023.	Continue engagement with the group and key stakeholders.

## 6. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is a £10m capital fund to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. On 3 November 2022, Members considered the feedback on Stage 1- Applications in the South Belfast area and made recommendations to Strategic Policy and Resources

Committee on which applications they wish to move forward to **Stage 2 – Development Stage**. In line with the agreed process, the outcome of special AWGs have been taken through Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and have been ratified by the Council (December 2022).

The table below provides an overview of the projects that have progressed to **Stage 2- Development** and the projects that are on the reserve list at Stage 1.

#### ***South Belfast – NRF overview***

<b>South</b>	Stage 2 - Sólás New Build project, Branching Out project, Lagan Water Access Activity Hub, Redevelopment of Riddel's Warehouse, Redevelopment of former School of Music, Market Heritage Hub Stage 1 (Reserve) - The Avenue Arts Centre, An Droichead Annex, Lagan Legacy
--------------	--

#### ***South Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 2 - Development***

<b>Project name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Sólás New Build project</b>	Development of three-storey building and outdoor space for the special needs' charity.	Business Case stage.
<b>Branching Out project</b>	Refurbishment and extension of existing GVRT premises.	Business Case stage.
<b>Lagan Water Access Activity Hub</b>	Water activity hub on the River Lagan including floating pontoon and footbridge.	Business Case being reviewed.
<b>Redevelopment of Riddel's Warehouse</b>	Improvements to disused listed building including creation of an arts centre, co-working space and visitor attraction.	Business Case stage.
<b>Redevelopment of former School of Music</b>	Transformation of a derelict listed building into artist studios, a gallery, a rehearsal, dance and event space.	Business Case stage.
<b>Market Heritage Hub</b>	Regeneration of the former St Malachy's Convent School and warehouse at Sussex Place into a vibrant new community heritage hub and visitor attraction.	Business Case being reviewed. Initially discussed at Due Diligence on 20 Feb 2023.

Members will note that activity at **Stage 2 – Development** (the equivalent to **Stage 2-Uncommitted** on the Capital Programme) will include development of a business case/ economic appraisal (commensurate with the scale of the project) along with detailed designs and project costings. If a business case or economic appraisal has already been undertaken, then the findings will be tested. Due-diligence checks will be carried out in line with arrangements under LIF, BIF and SOF programmes. It is proposed that this stage will be timebound to 6 months to allow decisions on projects to be taken at the same time.

The outcome of this development phase will then be reported to the relevant Area Working Group (AWG), along with a presentation on the project. The AWG will put forward recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, with a detailed update on each project, seeking approval for funding. Projects that receive committee approval will be issued with a Letter of Offer in principle and will move to *Stage 3- Committed*.

## 7. Capital Programme

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

### *South Belfast – Capital programme overview*

Project	Status and update
<b>Alleygating Phase 5 – City wide</b>	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Consultation process and costs being prepared for each area. Engagement underway with Members to confirm locations. Order placed with Contractor and gates currently being manufactured.
<b>Palm House, Botanic Gardens</b>	<i>Stage 1 – Emerging.</i> Link to Tropical Ravine

## 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 and DfI. The following is an overview of projects within each programme relevant to South Belfast.

### 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
<b>Coffee Culture</b> <i>SOF and BIF</i>	As above at BIF46. Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. Funding package via UV, DfC, SOF and BIF. Due Diligence process complete. Property purchase complete. Design Team tender process complete. Planning application to be submitted by March 2023.

<b>The Lockhouse— Gateway to the River / Walkway</b>	As above at SLIF2-13. Partnership project with UV. Letter of Offer approved. At design stage and planning application progressing. MTC works have commenced and it is anticipated that main contractor will be appointed and on site by Summer 2023, pending planning approval.
<b>Sandy Row Arts &amp; Digital Hub</b> <i>BIF (formerly IT Exam Centre)</i>	Partnership project with UV. In August 2022, SAWG agreed to increase the total funding allocation to £584,167 draft UV Letter of Offer has been released with final LoO expected imminently. Due Diligence process is now complete for this stage. Design Team tender process complete.
<b>Accidental Theatre (Shaftesbury Square)</b>	Business Case at preliminary stage and progressing. No change from previous update.

### **DfC funded projects**

**Below is the status update on project funded by Department for Communities in South Belfast.**

#### ***DfC – South Belfast projects overview***

<b>Project</b>	<b>Status and update</b>
<b>Belfast Islamic Centre – Renovations of Aldersgate House, University Rd</b>	The Council is the delivery agent for this project. Working in conjunction with BIC and DfC the project continues on site.
<b>Holylands Alleygating and Cleansing Project</b>	Project progressing. Link to the citywide Alleygating Phase 5 project.
<b>Southwest Quarter Revitalisation Scheme</b>	The Council is asked to be the delivery agent for this project. Contract for funding/ Letter of Offer received.
<b>Strangford Avenue Playing Fields</b>	Feasibility study completed. Currently exploring funding opportunities for delivery.

### **DfI funded projects**

**Below is the status update on project funded by Department for Infrastructure in South Belfast.**

#### ***DfI – South Belfast projects overview***

<b>Project</b>	<b>Status and update</b>
<b>Lagan Gateway</b>	As above as BIF04. Underway.
<b>Finaghy Bridge</b>	As above at SLIF017. Design stage.
<b>Covered cycle stands Phase 2</b>	<i>Via DfI Active Travel Enablers Blue and Green Infrastructure Fund</i> Botanic Gardens, Ormeau Park - Currently in production and due for installation by May 2023. Potential additional locations: Cherryvale Park, Shaftesbury Centre, Musgrave Park.
<b>Expansion of Belfast Bikes Network</b>	<i>Via Revitalisation Programme (DfC, DfI)</i> The new station at Olympia in South has been installed. Further stations are also under development via the Council funded scheme.

### **EU funded project**

Project	Status and update
<b>UPSURGE Project</b>	City-centred approach to catalyse nature-based solutions through the EU Regenerative Urban Lighthouse for pollution alleviation and regenerative development. Additional funding has been secured from UKSPF to enable the first phase of the works (research plots and community garden) to be delivered in part. Design team appointed and planning to carry out first phase of works before end of March 2023.

The Project Manager updated the Members in relation to projects currently underway under the Physical Programme. A Member sought clarity on the status of the Finaghy Bridge project. The Project Manager highlighted that Council officers were continuing to engage closely with DfI which was considering the options in the feasibility study. He highlighted that this would be followed up and an update provided at the next meeting.

A Member raised the proposed works under Phase 2 of the Lagan Gateway and the need to ensure engagement with and buy-in by the local community. She recommended that consideration be given to holding a workshop on the proposed designs. The Project Manager noted that officers would consider the engagement options with an update to be brought back.

It was highlighted that Members had received a letter of invitation from a heritage group inviting them to have a tour of Riddel's warehouse. The Project Manager noted that this was one of a number of projects currently being considered under the Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund. Given this, it was agreed that direction would be sought from the City Solicitor and Director of Legal Services to ascertain if a visit could be undertaken.

The Working Group noted the contents of the report.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

# **North Belfast Area Working Group**

Tuesday, 28th February, 2023

## **NORTH BELFAST AREA WORKING GROUP**

**HELD IN THE CONOR ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillors Bradley (Chairperson),  
Councillors Cobain, Magee, Maskey,  
McCullough, Murphy, Nelson, O'Hara and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Ms. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager; and  
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Doran.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of 2nd and 29th November were approved by the Working Group.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

### **Presentation:**

#### **Department for Infrastructure – York Street Interchange**

The Chairperson introduced Mr. P. King, Project Sponsor, and Mr. B. Hassard, Project Manager, representing the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), and Mr. J. McBride, Project Manager, Mr. P. Clarke, UK and Ireland Masterplanning Lead, Mr. A. Patterson, Landscape Architect, and Mr. J. Lu, Senior Urban Designer, representing AECOM, to the Working Group and they were admitted to the meeting.

The representatives reminded the Working Group that AECOM had been commissioned to carry out a Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR) of the York Street Interchange (YSI) scheme in 2021 and the purpose of the study was to undertake further analysis around placemaking to identify opportunities to deliver benefits for communities, particularly in terms of connectivity and the wider living places agenda, and to consider how DfI could maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits of the project and its contribution to the future development of Belfast.

Mr. Clarke advised that this had included an international best practice review, connectivity analysis and stakeholder engagement which had resulted in eleven placemaking guiding themes and thirty-one desired outcomes for the area.

Mr. McBride described the proposals for the new cycle infrastructure across the city and summarised the audit outcomes.

Mr. Clarke and Mr. Patterson informed the Working Group of the various placemaking scenarios which had been considered, which included mapping and illustrative sketches of the options, together with potential active travel, urban greening and streetscape improvements.

It was reported that the five scenarios had been evaluated against the 11 Guiding Principles, and Mr. Clarke provided an overview of the overall conclusions and recommendations of the refinement and development of three of the scenarios. He pointed out that, as part of the engagement strategy, it was recommended that consideration was given to the potential for a programme of stakeholder consultation, community involvement and co-design that could unlock further local insights, support buy-in and create long term social value.

Mr. McBride described the realignment options for the development of the M2 and provided illustrations of the Corporation Street studies.

He explained the potential delivery of the active travel network improvements, together with the next steps in the process. This included: Packaging and Phasing of Delivery; Engagement with Delivery Partners around delivery and long-term maintenance; Cost analysis of the interventions and wider economic benefits assessment; and Further engagement with stakeholders on selected topics. He pointed out that the preferred strategies would be developed for recommendations to the future Department for Infrastructure Minister.

During discussion, the representatives answered a range of questions in relation to the review of the transport objectives, timeframes, placemaking benefits and engagement with stakeholders.

After discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance and they retired from the meeting.

### **Physical Programme 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 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,
- note the updates on projects that were issued with a letter seeking written confirmation on whether the group wish to either withdraw or engage in the process – Holy Cross Trust/ Houben Centre, Mercy Primary School, Crumlin Road, and Basement Youth Club/ Elim Church.

### 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 35 have been completed; 2 are at delivery stage; 1 are at pre-construction stage and 5 remain at due diligence / initial stages. In total, 80% 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	23 (92%)	£996,500	12 (67%)	£566,400
Number of Projects On-going Delivery			2 (11%)	£133,467
Number of Projects in Pre-construction			2 (11%)	£68,334
Number of Projects in Initial Stage (Due Diligence)	2(8%)	£131,000	2 (11%)	£30,000
<b>Total Number of Approved Projects</b>	<b>25 *</b>	<b>£1,127,500</b>	<b>18 **</b>	<b>£798,201</b>

*\*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	LIF Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
---------	---------	-------------	-------	--------	------------------------

NLIF2-14	<b>Star Neighbourhood Centre</b>	£58,467	On Ground	<b>On ground.</b> Electrical works complete. Art piece has been installed. Quotation from supplier for playground equipment received. Waiting for final certificate from other works before order can be made.	Continued engagement with the group.
NLIF2-22	<b>Sailortown, St. Joseph's Church Refurbishment</b>	£75,000	On Ground	<b>On ground.</b> Heaters procured and installed. Contractor on site. Works on gallery paused pending HED consent. Architectural option drawings for HED.	Continued engagement with group and HED.
NLIF2-21	<b>Somme Group – cross community memorial</b>	£21,667	Tender preparation	Funding agreement to be finalised. Planning amendment to be agreed, contractor appointed with a view to commencement on receipt of approved planning amendment	Continued engagement with group.
NLIF2-19	<b>Women's Tec</b>	£46,667	Tender preparation	Tender for the works to secure contractor ongoing.	Continued engagement with Group
NLIF014	<b>Westland Community Centre - new building</b> <i>(Link to UV Project)</i>	£65,000	Due Diligence stage	Project originally agreed for LIF in January 2013. A revised community centre scheme has been agreed as an emerging UV capital project. A governance model is being explored and the Business Case is progressing.	Continued engagement with group and the Executive Office.
NLIF057	<b>Ardoyne Holy Cross Boxing Club</b> <i>(Link to UV project – ABC Trust H&amp;L Hub)</i>	£66,000	Due Diligence stage	This project is part of the UV development of St Gemma's School - ABC Trust. Construction works on ABC Trust (Phase 1) ongoing. Boxing Club LIF project will be part of Phase 2.	Continued engagement with Group and with UV
NLIF2-03	<b>Holy Cross Trust/ Houben Centre</b> <i>(Ardoyne Shankill Health Partnership)</i>	£15,000	Due Diligence stage	Agreed in June 2018. Project remains at Due Diligence stage. Letter was sent to group on 11 January. Group formally responded on 25 January 2023 and confirm that they would wish to remain in the LIF process. Confirmation has been received that they wish to remain in the process and are now actively working with the Council to progress. Proposal is for an outside sensory room as well as play equipment.	AWG to note the project update. Continue engagement with group.
NLIF2-05	<b>Mercy Primary, Crumlin Road</b>	£15,000	Due Diligence stage	Agreed June 2016. Letter was sent to group on 11 January. Mercy PS formally responded on 10 February 2023 and confirm that they are interested and keen to progress the project. They have updated their plans and are progressing the procurement of works and	AWG to note the project update. Continue engagement with group.

				recently received quotations from EA approved suppliers.	
--	--	--	--	--	--

#### 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**

<b>North</b>	Stage 3 - Cancer Lifeline—£575k; Grace Family Centre —£1.3m; Basement Youth Club/ Elim Church Ireland - £900k; <i>Marrowbone Park</i> £750k; <i>Midland Boxing Club</i> £550k Stage 2- <i>Malgrove</i> - £950k, <i>Cultural Community Hub</i> - £350k Stage 1 - <i>Cliftonville Community Forum</i> , <i>Sunningdale Community Centre</i> - no commitment
--------------	---

BIF Ref	Project	Funding	Stage	Status	Action/ Recommendation
BIF41	<b>Marrowbone Millennium Park</b> (Link to UV Project)	£750,000	On Ground	Contractor appointed. Works progressing well onsite. Estimated completion date is early 2024.	Continue engagement with the group and stakeholders.
BIF45	<b>Midland Boxing Club</b>	BIF £550,000; GWF £30,000	On Ground	Contractor appointed. Works progressing well on site. Aiming for completion by Summer 2023.	Continue engagement with the group.
BIF22/34	<b>Basement Youth Club/ Elim Church</b>	BIF £900,000;  DoE £500,000	Design stage	Letter was sent to group on 11 January 2023 seeking written confirmation on whether the group wish to either withdraw or engage in the process, with the deadline set on 17 February, so that an update to be brought to next AWG. However, Elim Church responded that it has not been possible to convene the Board together to finalise their response. They have requested an extension to	AWG to note the project update. Continue engagement with group.

				<p>get a completed response no later than 10 March 2023. Officer will be working closely with the group to secure the completed response.</p> <p><b>Members to confirm of they are happy to accede to the request for an extension by Basement/ Elim. If agreed officers will continue to engage with the Group and provide an update to a future meeting.</b></p>	
BIF15	Malgrove	£950,000	Design stage	<p>Business case completed - preferred pavilion option is for a 4-team changing. Detailed design progressing. It is proposed to submit a planning application for the whole sporting complex within the next few weeks.</p>	Continue engagement with the group and the team to agree the design and submit the planning application.
BIF43	Cultural Community Hub	£350,000	Uncommitted – Due Diligence stage	<p>Proposed new cultural hub community facility. Project will comprise of a 130sqm permanent brick facility on derelict Orange Lodge owned site. DD information is still being assembled by the group.</p>	Continue engagement with the group and stakeholders.
BIF49	Cavehill Tennis Club	£71,413	Due diligence stage	<p>Sign-off at Due Diligence on 19 January 2023. Preparation for funding agreement progressing.</p>	Continue engagement with the group.

## 5. Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund

The Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is a £10m capital fund to help groups deliver capital projects that will make a real, long-term difference in their communities. On 2 November 2022, Members considered the feedback on Stage 1- Applications in the North Belfast area and made recommendations to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on which applications they wish to move forward to *Stage 2 – Development Stage*. In line with the agreed process, the outcome of special AWGs have been taken through Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and have been ratified by the Council (December 2022).

The table below provides an overview of the projects that have progressed to *Stage 2- Development* and the projects that are on the reserve list at Stage 1.

### North Belfast – NRF overview

<b>North</b>	<p>Stage 2— Belfast Orange Hall, Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL), Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Sailortown Regeneration Group, Ardoyne Youth Enterprises,</p> <p>Stage 1 (Reserve)— <i>Cumann Cultúrtha Mhic Reachtain, Indian Community Centre, North Belfast Working Men's Club, North City Business Centre, Quaker Service, Belfast Charitable Society, Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian Church, Arts for All, Ligoniel Improvement Association</i></p>
--------------	--

### **North Belfast – NRF projects at Stage 2- Development**

<b>Project name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Ardoyne Youth Enterprises – Community Hub</b>	Creation of a Community Youth Hub totalling almost 1,000m <sup>2</sup> . It will comprise three main zones – (i) a fully shared and inclusive Community Youth Hub comprising a range of facilities including a flexible activity/ youth space, counselling rooms, coffee point and rest area; (ii) a Creative Learning Centre (CLC) that will include digital and creative skills equipment and workspaces; and (iii) Office space and meeting rooms.	Link to UV project below. Business case being reviewed. The UV Letter of Offer received and being process. TEO and the Project Promoter are exploring additional funding opportunities to support this project. Design Team appointed.
<b>Belfast Orange Hall Refurbishment</b>	Refurbishment works to the Belfast Orange Hall, a Grade B listed building, to ensure it is fit for purpose. External and internal improvements to lighting, multiple rooms on different floors including kitchens as well as a new heating system.	Business Case stage. Consultant appointed to develop project business case.
<b>USEL - Green Growth &amp; The Circular Economy</b>	Extension of the site through construction of a 600m <sup>2</sup> purpose-built processing unit with storage for recycled and unrecycled materials increasing increase capacity to recycle a wide range of Dry, Mixed Recycling materials (DMR).	Business Case stage. Consultant appointed to refresh project Economic Appraisal.
<b>Cliftonville Community Enterprise</b>	Building a 750m <sup>2</sup> social enterprise on Cliftonpark Avenue with a 2-storey childcare facility and 8 enterprise units.	Business Case stage. Consultant appointed to develop project business case.
<b>St Joseph's Restoration project</b>	Stabilising and reopening the Parochial House, a Grade B+ listed Italianate red brick building. Work to the Grade B+ listed Church space to assist with remaining water ingress and developing its potential for wider use.	Business Case stage. Procurement of consultant underway.

Members will note that activity at **Stage 2 – Development** (the equivalent to **Stage 2-Uncommitted** on the Capital Programme) will

include development of a business case/ economic appraisal (commensurate with the scale of the project) along with detailed designs and project costings. If a business case or economic appraisal has already been undertaken, then the findings will be tested. Due-diligence checks will be carried out in line with arrangements under LIF, BIF and SOF programmes. It is proposed that this stage will be timebound to 6 months to allow decisions on projects to be taken at the same time. The outcome of this development phase will then be reported to the relevant Area Working Group (AWG), along with a presentation on the project. The AWG will put forward recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, with a detailed update on each project, seeking approval for funding. Projects that receive committee approval will be issued with a Letter of Offer in principle and will move to *Stage 3- Committed*.

## 6. Capital Programme

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

### 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. <b>On ground.</b> Sea Lion works complete, H&S works complete. Picnic area has been constructed. Work on new lion enclosure has started and aim to complete by Easter 2023.
North Foreshore - Development Sites Infrastructure Works	Stage 3 – Committed. <b>On ground.</b> Storm Drainage Infrastructure Installation contractor appointed, started on site and completion expected in June 2023. The Landfill Gas Ring Main tender being reviewed in light of material price increases. Tender will be re-issued in March 2023.
Reservoir Safety Programme	Stage 3- Committed. 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. Public consultation and planning application to be submitted in 2023. Proposals to take account and be integrated into Peace Plus application.
Cathedral Gardens (including Belfast Blitz)	Stage 3 – Committed. Design team is continuing to develop the project and prepare a RIBA Stage 2 Close Out report. Procurement of Design Team to deliver the project to completion will be underway by 3 March 2023. Aim to submit planning application in Summer 2023.

<b>Playground Improvement Programme - Westland</b>	Stage 3 – Committed. Works programmed for completion within 2022/23 financial year.
<b>Alleygating Phase 5</b>	<i>Stage 3 – Committed.</i> Consultation process and costs being prepared for each area. Engagement underway with Members to confirm locations. Order placed with Contractor and gates currently being manufactured.
<b>LTP - Girdwood Indoor Sports Facility</b>	Stage 2 – Uncommitted. DfC partnership 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.
<b>Relocation of Dunbar Link Cleansing Depot</b>	Stage 2 – Uncommitted. OBC being worked up. Possible alternative site at Corporation Stret Car Park being assessed by design team. Design to progress through capital process.
<b>Glencairn Park/ Ligoniel Park Greenway</b>	Stage 2- Uncommitted. Will be considered within the wider study as below.
<b>Access to the Hills – connections from Cavehill to Divis Mountain and Black Mountain</b>	Stage 2- Uncommitted. Business case procurement underway. Will also be considered within the wider study as below.
<b>Connectivity - Access to Hills Programme (city wide)</b>	Stage 1- Emerging. Secured DAERA funding for the Access to the Belfast Hills Feasibility Study. Consultant has been appointed and study and delivery plan will be complete in March 2023.

## 7. Externally funded programmes

The Council is the delivery partner for several government department on key capital investment programmes, namely Urban Villages (UV) from the Executive Office, Peace IV 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
<b>Marrowbone Millennium Park</b> (links to BIF programme)	<b>On ground.</b> As above BIF41. Contractor has been appointed and work progressing well and completion date is estimated as early 2024.
<b>ABC Trust Health and Leisure Hub</b> (links to LIF programme)	<b>On ground.</b> Partnership project with UV DfC, DfI and Flax Trust. Contractor has been appointed and works is progressing. Estimated completion of Phase 1 is early 2024 with Phase 2 to follow. Delays due to site issues have been mitigated and UV looking into how to increase budget to accommodate.
<b>Ballysillan Playing Fields</b>	Partnership project with UV, DfC and DfI Living with Water Programme. At design stage and the

	planning application is progressing. Land transfer issues are also progressing. It is anticipated that a contractor will be appointed and on-site in late 2023 pending planning approval. Currently working through options for dealing with large watermain with NIW as part of detailed design process.
<b>Ardoyne Youth Enterprises (AYE) Social Enterprise Project</b>	Council is acting as delivery agent. The final Letter of Offer is received. TEO has identified a funding gap in the sum of £500,000. TEO and the Project Promoter are exploring additional funding opportunities to support this project. Planning application approval pending. Design Team appointed. Project was taken to Due Diligence on 19 January 2023. Procurement of contractor progressing.
<b>Sunningdale Community Centre</b>	Council is acting as delivery agent, proposed on Council land. The project is being fully funded by TEO UV Programme. The Design Team has been appointed and gaining design sign off from end users. Planning application to be submitted around Easter 2023. Contractor expected to start on site by Spring 2024.
<b>Westland Community Centre</b> (links to LIF programme)	Partnership project with UV. This is an emerging project. A governance model is being explored and the Business Case is expected to complete by March 2023 with the LoO being issued thereafter.

## Peace IV

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

Project	Status and update
<b>Forth Meadow Community Greenway project</b>	<p><b>On ground.</b></p> <p><i>Section 1 – Glencairn</i> – Works complete and handed over to City and Neighbourhood Services. Signage package to be installed to include feature panels, narrative panels and beacon lights.</p> <p><i>Section 2 – Forth River/ Springfield Road</i> – Works commenced with the completion date in June.</p> <p><i>Section 3 – Falls Park/Whiterock</i> – Works complete</p> <p><i>Section 4 – Bog Meadows</i> – All phases within this section now complete</p> <p><i>Section 5 – Westlink to City Centre</i> – currently at detailed design stage.</p> <p>Works on the flagship piece are progressing with installation and a revised plan for the public unveiling of March 2023. Discussions with Invest NI on the installation of the art piece are ongoing. DfC Levelling Up match funding received “</p>

The Working Group:

- noted the physical programme update for north Belfast;



- noted the updates on projects that had been issued with a letter seeking written confirmation on whether the group wished to either withdraw or engage in the process – Holy Cross Trust/ Houben Centre, Mercy Primary School, Crumlin Road and Basement Youth Club/ Elim Church; and
- agreed to accede to a request from Basement Youth Club/ Elim Church to extend its confirmation deadline to 10th March, 2023.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Subject:</b>	CIPFA Prudential Code Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Indicators 2023/24
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Helen Lyons, Corporate Finance Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
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 2023/24. This report provides information for Members on the Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators for Belfast City Council for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26, and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24.

<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• note the contents of this report and the prudential and treasury management indicators included within the appendices to the report.</li> </ul> <p>And agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Authorised Borrowing Limit for the Council of £140m for 2023/24.</li> <li>• The Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24, which has been included as Appendix B to this report.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
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. Recent changes in the CIPFA Prudential Code recommends best practice that treasury management reports are submitted on a quarterly basis and this will be effective from 1 April 2023</p>
3.3	<p>The Capital Strategy, incorporating the prudential indicators, is included as Appendix A, while the Treasury Management Strategy and treasury management indicators have been included as Appendix B.</p>
3.4	<p>The comparison of "Gross Debt" to "Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is the main indicator of prudence when considering the proposed capital investment plans of the Council. Estimated gross debt should not exceed the CFR for the current year plus two years. The Council's estimated gross debt position, illustrated in Table 6, Appendix A, is comfortably within the CFR in the medium term. The Director of Finance therefore considers the estimated levels of gross debt as being prudent.</p>

3.5	Table 10 (Appendix A) shows the estimated financing costs for capital expenditure as a percentage of the estimated net revenue stream for the Council, based on the medium financial plan. These illustrate that in the medium term, capital financing costs will represent an average of 6.35% of the Council's net running costs. On this basis the Director of Finance is satisfied that the level of capital expenditure is affordable.
3.6	<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 A) sets out the recommended "Authorised Borrowing Limit" for the Council as being £140m for 2023/24.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; 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
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix A – Capital Strategy Report 2023/24</p> <p>Appendix B – Annual Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

# Capital Strategy Report 2023/24

## 1. Introduction

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

## 2. Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, which will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.

In 2023/24, the Council is planning capital expenditure of £35m as summarised below:

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

	<b>2022/23 forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 budget</b>	<b>2024/25 budget</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>
General Fund services	22,913	35,358	30,095	21,522

The capital expenditure forecast for 2023/24 continues to be monitored and reviewed, in terms of both project delivery and affordability. The Council is currently working on a long term capital expenditure forecast and will update the above table when this becomes available.

**Governance** – The Council’s Capital Programme is agreed 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*

	<b>2022/23 forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 budget</b>	<b>2024/25 budget</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>
External sources	0	0	0	0
Own resources	16,897	18,218	10,443	14,050
Debt	6,016	17,140	19,652	7,472
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,913</b>	<b>35,358</b>	<b>30,095</b>	<b>21,522</b>

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)*

	<b>2022/23 forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 budget</b>	<b>2024/25 budget</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>
Own resources	8,669	9,313	10,477	11,042

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 £8m during 2023/24. 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*

	<b>31.3.2023 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2024 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2025 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2026 budget</b>
General Fund services	132,480	140,307	149,482	145,912

**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 £5m of capital receipts in the coming financial year as follows:



Table 5: Capital receipts in £thousands

	<b>2022/23 forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 budget</b>	<b>2024/25 budget</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>
Asset sales	£375	£4,946	£3,200	£1,996
Loans repaid	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£375</b>	<b>£4,946</b>	<b>£3,200</b>	<b>£1,996</b>

### 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 £44m 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 7.87%. The council also has £21m treasury investments at current average rate of 2.67%.

**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 4.5%) and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher (currently over 5%).

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

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

	<b>31.3.2023 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2024 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2025 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2026 budget</b>
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	43,782	53,064	71,447	79,925
Capital Financing Requirement	132,480	140,307	149,482	145,912

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 £40m and is forecast to rise to £80m over the next three years.

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

	<b>31.3.2023 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2024 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2025 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2026 budget</b>
Outstanding borrowing	43,782	53,064	71,447	79,925
Liability Benchmark	39,619	54,946	73,422	80,351

The table shows that the Council's borrowing is currently above its liability benchmark. The Council is projecting to borrow over the next few years to meet capital expenditure requirements. This external borrowing is currently projected to be slightly lower than the estimated liability benchmark over the next three years, based on current forecasts. Work is progressing on the long term capital expenditure forecasts and when finalised the budget figures in the above table will be reviewed and amended accordingly.

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

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

	<b>2023/24 limit</b>	<b>2024/25 limit</b>	<b>2025/26 limit</b>
Authorised limit – borrowing	140,307	149,482	145,912
Authorised limit – PFI and leases	0	0	0
Authorised limit – total external debt	140,307	149,482	145,912
Operational boundary – borrowing	124,307	133,482	129,912
Operational boundary – PFI and leases	0	0	0
Operational boundary – total external debt	124,307	133,482	129,912

**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*

	<b>31.3.2023 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2024 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2025 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2026 budget</b>
Near-term investments	15,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Longer-term investments	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>

**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 currently presented to SP&R. From 1 April 2023, the frequency of these reports will be reviewed in light of the recent changes to the CIPFA Prudential Code. Reports may be presented on a quarterly basis, where the SP&R committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

### **Liabilities**

In addition to debt of £44m detailed above, the Council is making payments to cover its pension fund liability. It has also set aside £5.4m to cover risks of insurance claims and Landfill Closure. The Council is also at risk of having to pay for its share of the ARC 21 Joint Committee contingent liability but has not put aside any money.

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

## **4. Revenue Budget Implications**

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known

as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from the District Rate and general government grants.

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

	<b>2022/23 forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 budget</b>	<b>2024/25 budget</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>
Financing costs (£'000)	9,731	10,978	13,204	14,288
Proportion of net revenue stream	5.44%	5.69%	6.85%	7.41%

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

## **5. Knowledge and Skills**

The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Director of Finance is a qualified accountant with over 25 years' experience. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA, ACT (treasury), ACCA, etc.

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

# Annual Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24

## 1. Introduction

Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. In addition, the former Department of the Environment (DoE) issued Guidance on Local Authority Investments in October 2011 that requires the Council to approve an investment strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the *Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011* to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the DoE Guidance.

This strategy covers the following issues in respect of 2023/24:

- 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 the war in Ukraine, together with higher inflation, higher interest rates, uncertain government policy, and a deteriorating economic outlook, will be major influences on the Council's treasury management strategy for 2023/24.

The Bank of England (BoE) increased the Bank Rate by 0.5% to 4% in February 2023. The Council's treasury management adviser Arlingclose forecasts that the Bank Rate will continue to rise in 2023 as the Bank of England attempts to subdue inflation which is significantly above its 2% target. Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to rise to at least 4.25% under its central case, with the risks in the near- and medium-term to the upside should inflation not evolve as the Bank forecasts and remains persistently higher.

## 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 2023, the Council held £44m of borrowing and £21m of treasury investments.

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

*Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast*

	<b>2022/23 £'000 Estimate</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000 Forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000 Forecast</b>	<b>2025/26 £'000 Forecast</b>
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	132,480	140,307	149,482	145,912
Less: External Borrowing	43,782	53,064	71,447	79,925
Internal Borrowing	88,698	87,243	78,035	65,987
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	102,861	95,360	86,060	75,560
Treasury Investments (new borrowing)	14,163	8,117	8,025	9,573

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

The Council has an increasing CFR due to the capital programme, but minimal investments and may therefore may be required to borrow over £55m over the forecast period. The Council's long term capital expenditure forecasts are currently being developed which may change the above forecasts.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation during 2023/24.

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

	<b>2022/23 £'000 Estimate</b>	<b>2023/24 £'000 Forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 £'000 Forecast</b>	<b>2025/26 £'000 Forecast</b>
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	132,480	140,307	149,482	145,912
Less: Balance Sheet Resources	102,861	95,361	86,060	75,561
Net loans requirement	29,619	44,946	63,422	70,351
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Liability Benchmark	39,619	54,946	73,422	80,351

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. The Council is currently working on long term capital forecasts and the above amounts may change. Given the 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 Council currently holds £44 million of loans, a decrease of £5 million on the previous year. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Council expects to borrow up to £15m in 2023/24. The Council may also borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £140 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 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.

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 this is the preferred approach.

The Council has previously raised the majority of its long-term borrowing from the Government Loans Fund via Department of Finance. Government loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield; the Council intends to avoid this activity in order to retain its access to government loans. 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 CIPFA Code and Guidance for Local Government Investments for District Councils in Northern Ireland (the Guidance) as cited under Section 25(1) of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Act) when setting the Investment Strategy. The Department recommends that each local authority produce and publish an Annual Investment Strategy, approved by the Council and revised in year as required. This sets out the Council's policies for managing investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. This investment strategy states which instruments the Council may use for investment purposes, making a distinction between specified and non-specified investments. This strategy also determines limits in respect of their overall levels.

The prime objective of the Council's investment strategy is to ensure prudent investment of surplus funds. The Council's investment priorities are the security of capital, liquidity of investments and, within those objectives, to secure optimum performance.

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

### 7.1 Specified Investments

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

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

c) A Local Authority in England and Wales or a similar body in Scotland;

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

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

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

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

<b>Fitch Credit Rating</b>	<b>Minimum level</b>
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.

<b>Category of Non-specified investment</b>
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 2023/24 year which meet the definition of non-specified investments and therefore there is no limit set on this within the Investment Strategy.

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

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

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

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

The Council will monitor any proposals for such investments and will assess a suitable limit within the Investment Strategy.

### **7.3 Investment Risk**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **7.4 Treasury Management Advisers**

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

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

### **7.5 *Investment Training***

The Council recognises that investments, as well as wider treasury management issues require a high level of specialist knowledge. Officers undertaking the decisions are all qualified accountants with many years of experience. However, the Council recognises the need for officers to be kept up to date with developments and through the annual appraisal system will identify any training needs to further enhance the current skills base.

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

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

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

### **7.6 *Other Investment Considerations***

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

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

Investment balances are 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 2023/24 £'000	Estimate 2024/25 £'000	Estimate 2025/26 £'000
Upper limit of fixed rate exposure	124,307	133,482	129,912
Upper limit of variable rate exposure	3,729	4,004	3,897

### 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%	25.00%
12 months – 24 months	0.00%	25.00%
24 months – 5 years	0.00%	50.00%
5 years – 10 years	0.00%	75.00%
10 years and above	0.00%	75.00%

### 8.3 Total Principal Sums invested for periods longer than 364 days

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

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

	Estimate 2023/24 £2m	Estimate 2024/25 £2m	Estimate 2025/26 £2m
Total principal sums invested for longer than 364 days	£2m	£2m	£2m

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Subject:</b>	Business Cluster and Community Grant Scheme Re-allocation
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to advise members of funds available for potential re-allocation.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the amount of £220,254 available for members to either re-allocate or add to reserves.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	At the City Growth and Regeneration Committee of 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2023 members agreed that the Business Cluster and Community Grant scheme would not be reopened to new

	applications, and that any realised underspend be referred to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committees for reallocation.
3.2	A further report was taken to City Growth and Regeneration Committee on 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 approving the final tranche of grants. As a result, the reserve that was set up will no longer be fully utilised and an amount of £220,254 is no longer required for this purpose.
3.3	SP&R at its meeting of 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 agreed that reallocations of forecast departmental underspends will be considered as part of year end reporting taking into consideration the 2023/24 budgetary gap. However, in this instance, as the underspend is from a specified reserve and not a departmental underspend then members can agree to reallocate this for other purposes or to include as a reserve to partly offset the 2023/24 budgetary gap.
	<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>
3.4	As per the report.
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.5	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None





<b>Subject:</b>	Audit & Risk Panel Report and Minutes of meeting of 7 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Claire O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Claire O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services (AGRS)

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a summary of the key issues that were considered and discussed by the Audit & Risk Panel at its March 2023 meeting and to present the minutes of the last meeting of the Audit & Risk Panel and the updated Terms of Reference for the Audit & Risk Panel for approval.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the key issues arising at the meeting,</li> <li>Approve the minutes of the March meeting of the Audit &amp; Risk Panel at appendix A,</li> <li>Approve the updated Terms of Reference for the Audit &amp; Risk Panel at appendix B.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<b>Key Issues</b>
	<u>Key reports</u>
3.1	The Panel received summaries of the <b>recently completed internal audits</b> of the Capital Programme, Food Safety, Pest Control, Digital Information Security, Visit Belfast, Payroll

	<p>(data analytics testing), the HR Payroll System Project and Continuous Improvement. The internal audit of Payroll received “substantial assurance” and the audit of Continuous Improvement resulted in a “major improvement required” opinion, with all other audits receiving the opinion of “some improvement required”.</p>
3.2	<p>The Panel agreed the <b>Audit Strategy &amp; Plan for 23/24</b> which sets out the role of AGRS as an assurance provider and advisory service which directly assists the Council in meeting relevant statutory obligations in relation to internal control, risk management and good governance.</p>
3.3	<p>The Panel considered the <b>corporate risk dashboard</b> which provided an analysis and update on the progress being made to manage the 23 risks that are considered to present the greatest threat to the delivery corporate priorities and / or compliance with key statutory requirements. The Panel agreed to add a <b>new risk to the corporate risk register</b> around the provision of statutory duties. The Panel was also updated on how horizon scanning will be built into an annual review process to allow consideration of the themes emerging, how they could impact on city and council strategies and enable council to influence and challenge thinking on how to address city challenges. The Panel noted the <b>quarterly assurances provided by senior management</b> regarding compliance with risk management and internal control processes. Give the current status of recovery from the impact of the pandemic, the Panel agreed to reintroduce the annual review, update and exercise of <b>Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans</b> during 23/24, in line with BCM policy requirements. The Panel also agreed the action plan to implement the recommendations arising from the recent <b>external review of the councils risk management arrangements</b>.</p>
3.4	<p>The Panel was briefed on the updated version of the 2018 CIPFA publication on “Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police” issued in October 2022, which represents best practice and includes suggested terms of reference for audit committees in local authorities. The Panel agreed an <b>updated terms of reference for the Audit and Risk Panel in line with the best practice guidance</b>, tailored, where appropriate to Belfast City Council. The updates do not represent any change to the usual work of the Panel, rather the updates set out in more detail the work that the Panel currently undertakes.</p>
3.5	<p>The Panel was provided with a <b>progress update on the agreed actions to be taken in relation to the recommendations contained within the report from Peter Coll QC</b> of his independent investigation relating to events at Roselawn Cemetery on 30th June 2020.</p>

	Subject to approval from Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Panel agreed that they did not require any further updates because the remaining four actions are either ongoing or due to be completed in Spring 2023.
3.6	<p>The Panel also received <b>quarter three reports on Corporate Health and Safety, Absence Management and Performance improvement</b>. The Panel requested that the Corporate Health and Safety Manager reminds departments of the importance of the timely implementation of the actions arising from inspections.</p> <p><u>Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)</u></p>
3.7	<p>The NIAO Director and Local Government Auditor presented the Panel with a briefing on the changes to audit approach for the 2022-23 audit cycle due to significant changes to International Standards on Auditing (UK) and how this is likely to result in a greater number of inquiries at the planning stages of the audit. The NIAO Director and Local Government Auditor also drew the Panels attention to the Planning Fraud Risks Guide that had been launched recently by the NIAO. The Panel learned that the Director of Planning and Building Control will be updating the Planning Committee on this publication.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>None</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.9	<p>None known at this time.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix A - Minutes of Audit &amp; Risk Panel 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023</p> <p>Appendix B - Updated Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Panel</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

# Audit and Risk Panel

Tuesday, 7th March, 2023

## MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK PANEL

### HELD IN THE LAVERY ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);  
Councillors Carson, Matt Collins, Hutchinson and M.  
Kelly; and  
Ms. G. Fahy (Independent Non-Executive Member).

In attendance: Mr. T. Wallace, Director of Finance;  
Ms. N. Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal  
and Civic Services;  
Ms. C. O'Prey, Head of Audit, Governance and Risk  
Services;  
Mr. L. Mulholland, Audit, Governance and Risk  
Services Manager;  
Mr. M. Whitmore, Audit, Governance and Risk  
Services Manager; and  
Mr. J. Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

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

### **Apologies**

Apologies were reported from Councillors Groogan and McKeown.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 6th December were taken as read and signed as correct.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Absence Rates - Quarter ending December 2022**

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

The Audit Panel considered the following report:

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

**“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Audit & Risk Panel of the Council’s performance in managing absence in quarter three, April – December 2022.**

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Audit & Risk Panel is asked to note the contents of this report.**

**3.0 Main report**

**Key corporate indicators:**

**At the end of quarter three:**

- **The Council’s average sickness absence rate stands at 12.76 days per FTE, an increase of 1.08 days compared to absence for the same period last year (11.68).**
- **A total of 25980.97 working days was lost due to sickness absence. This accounted for 7.56% of the total working days available.**
- **The table below provides a summary of how departments are performing against the target. As indicated below, 4 departments did not meet the corporate target for quarter three (9.74 days).**

End of Year Target	12.99					
End of Q3 Target	9.74					
Department	Number of Staff (FTE)	Total lost days	Actual absence per FTE	Variance	% of workforce	% of absence
City and Neighbourhood Services	1141.12	16333.14	14.31	4.57	56.06%	62.87%
City and Organisational Strategy	121.42	693.71	5.71	-4.03	5.97%	2.67%
Finance and Resources	187.44	1088.35	5.81	-3.93	9.21%	4.19%
Legal and Civic Services	149.44	2351.7	15.74	6.00	7.34%	9.05%
Physical Programmes	122.55	1955.1	15.95	6.21	6.02%	7.53%
Place and Economy	313.56	3558.97	11.35	1.61	15.40%	13.70%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2035.53</b>	<b>25980.97</b>	<b>12.76</b>	<b>3.02</b>		

**Additional Absence information:**

- There has been a decrease in the number of staff with no recorded absence in this period (45.01%) compared to the same time last year (46.87%).
- There has been an increase of 2.62% in absence classified as long term (20+ days) this year (17613.50 days) compared to the same time last year (17163.31 days).
- Council's average sickness absence rate further reduces to 11.18 days per FTE when COVID-19 related absences are deducted.
- The number of days lost per full time equivalent increased in quarter three (4.62 days) when compared to quarter two (4.26 days). This increase is illustrated in figure 1.
- Depression/anxiety/stress (36% of total days lost) and musculo-skeletal (23% of total days lost) continue to be the top two reasons for absence. Refer to figure 2 for further information.
- Between October and December 2022, 757 employees were off due to sickness absence (accounting for 9528.19 days). Discretion was applied to 90 of these employees (11.8%) and their absence accounted for 2532.23 days/26.58% of the total absence for quarter three. Refer to figure 3 for further information.
- A total of 306 cases were identified as having compliance related issues Refer to figure 4 for further information.
- Approximately 33% of absence (8535.31 days) is recorded as disability related, of which, 62% was managed as long term. Depression and Anxiety related absence accounted for almost 40% (39.82%) of disability related absence. Refer to figure 5 for further information.
- Since April 2022, a total of 484 employees were recorded as absent due to COVID and this accounted for 3213.75 days / 12.4% of the total absence in quarter three.
  - 24 employees met the trigger for a Stage 4 / FAH in quarter three.
  - Discretion not to proceed to a stage 4 / FAH was applied to 12 of these cases. The reasons for discretion include, 2 employees returned to work between month 6 and 7, one employee was medically redeployed, one employee required additional information,

one employee's case was bereavement related, 2 cases did not proceed due to disability related absence and five cases were not progressed due to employee related issues.

- 8 employees were ill health retired prior to Stage4/FAH being scheduled.
- 2 employees were dismissed at Stage 4 / FAH.
- 1 employee attended a Stage 4 / FAH however, they were provided with a final opportunity to meet the standards of attendance (disability related reasons)
- 1 case did not proceed to Stage 4 / FAH due to non-compliance reasons (delay organising case review subsequent Stage 4 hearing).
- All guidance documents and templates to assist departments with the development of Attendance Improvement Plans and DMT reporting has now been finalised and issued to departments in January 2023. A progress update will be provided at the end of quarter 4.

#### **4.0 Resource Implications**

Directors are asked to ensure that:

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

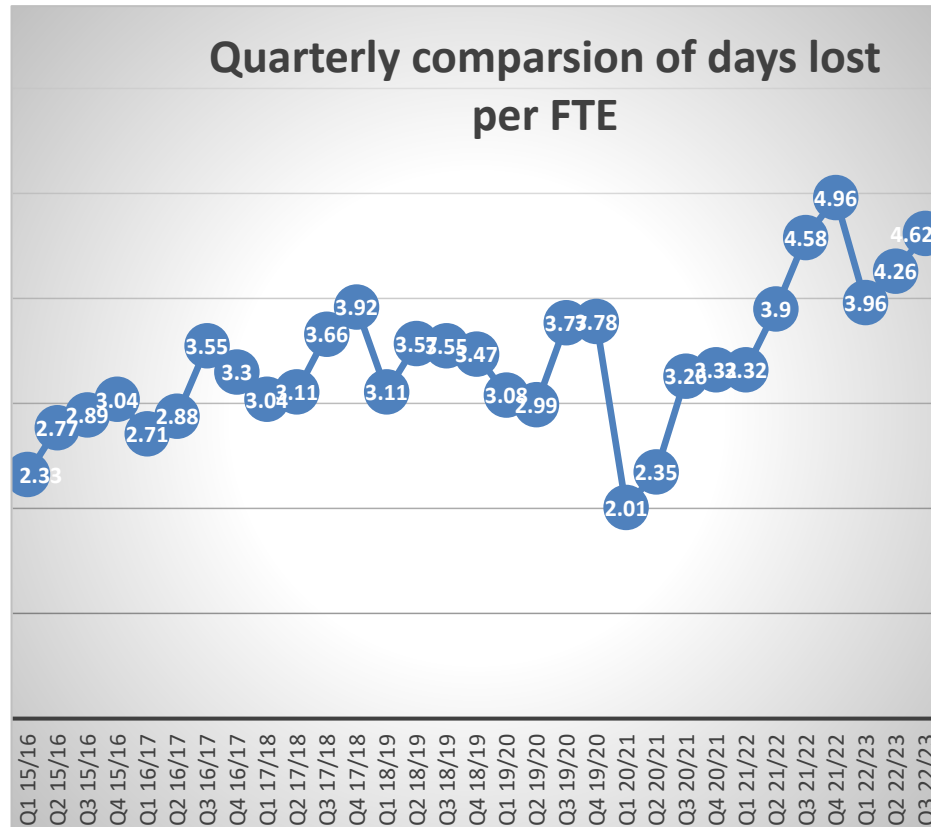
#### **5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications**

- 5.1** Approximately 33% of absence (8535.31 days) is recorded as disability related.

The use of discretion and reasonable adjustments is considered in such cases.



**Figure 1:**



**Figure 2:**

Reason for absence	Days lost (FTE)	% of absence
Stress, depression, anxiety	9411.01	36.22%
Musculo-skeletal	6025.95	23.19%
Infections, Covid19	3213.75	12.37%
Stomach, digestive, etc	1712.33	6.59%
Infections, inc colds & flu	1516.44	5.84%
Chest and respiratory	990.15	3.81%
Heart, blood press, circ, etc	773.6	2.98%
Neurological, inc headaches	736.64	2.84%
Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental	606.93	2.34%
Other	491.46	1.89%
Genito-urinary, inc menstrual	385.69	1.48%
Pregnancy related	102.02	0.39%
Indust/Neurological (head)	8.99	0.03%
Indust/Other	6.01	0.02%
Total	25980.97	

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

**Figure 3:**

Reason for discretion	Total days	% of total
Underlying Medical Condition	545.88	21.56%
Planned surgery	382.7	15.11%
Hospitalisation	301.4	11.90%
Bereavement	254.17	10.04%
Mental Health	228.86	9.04%
Unresolved ER issues	227.22	8.97%
Industrial injury	176.36	6.96%
Emergency domestic responsibilities	160.09	6.32%
Work related issue	77.49	3.06%
Terminal illness	61.89	2.44%
Undertaking redeployment exercise	40	1.58%
Unresolved ER issue	26.49	1.05%
Violence at work	13.99	0.55%
Previous long service and good attendance history	12	0.47%
Infectious disease	11.75	0.46%
Maternity	11.5	0.45%
Covid Vaccine Reaction	0.44	0.02%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2532.23</b>	
<b>Total days lost in quarter three (October to December 2022)</b>	<b>9528.19</b>	
<b>% of total days lost where discretion applied in quarter three</b>	<b>26.58%</b>	
<b>Average days off per occurrence of discretion in quarter three</b>	<b>28.13589</b>	

**Figure 4: Compliance issues**

Department	Totals
City and Neighbourhood Services	250
City and Organisational Strategy	0
Finance and Resources	1
Legal and Civic Services	25
Physical Programmes	19
Place and Economy	11
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>306</b>

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

**Figure 5:**

<b>Actual disability</b>	<b>Total days</b>	<b>% of total disability related absence</b>
Depression / Anxiety	3398.56	39.82%
Osteoarthritis	567.06	6.64%
Cancer	542.29	6.35%
Chronic back pain	525.15	6.15%
Stroke	315.89	3.70%
Long Covid	249.63	2.92%
Epilepsy	232.51	2.72%
Arthritis	202.46	2.37%
Chronic hearing condition	190.19	2.23%
PTSD	149.26	1.75%
Chronic hip condition	147.97	1.73%
Chronic knee pain	118.3	1.39%
Chronic ear condition	117.97	1.38%
Ulcerative Colitis	117.97	1.38%
Chronic heart condition	112.54	1.32%
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	101.29	1.19%
Anaemia	98.99	1.16%
Heart failure	97.97	1.15%
Osteoarthritis	94.46	1.11%
Crohn's disease	91.68	1.07%
Vertebral collapse	87.27	1.02%
Other	975.9	11.43%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8535.31</b>	
Total absence end of quarter three	25980.97	
Disability related absence in quarter three	8535.31	
% if absence lost due to disability	32.85%	
% of disability related absence managed as LTA	61.63%	

\*Other includes a total of 27 conditions that each individually account for less than 1% of total disability related absence.

After discussion, the Panel noted the contents of the report.

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

**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 on 31st December, 2022.

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 50% and 79% respectively.

In terms of accident/incident reporting, there had, in quarter one, been 19 employee accidents, 4 non-employee accidents, 9 RIDDOR accidents and 9 work related violence incidents.

She concluded by providing details of the information which had, during quarter three, been forwarded to the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland in response to enquiries/correspondence.

After discussion, during which the Corporate Health and Safety Manager undertook to relay concerns raised regarding the high levels of actions which were partially implemented/not implemented to the relevant directors, the Panel noted the corporate health and safety performance and activities for the quarter ending on 31st December, 2022.

**Audit, Governance and Risk Services  
Progress Report**

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager submitted for the Panel's consideration a report providing an update on the work which had been completed by Audit, Governance and Risk Services from December, 2022 till February, 2023.

He explained that nine audits had been completed during that period and he provided an overview of the audits and the assurance opinion of the Service on each. In particular, he highlighted the audit of Continuous improvement and how

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

management expect an action plan to be in place by June to address the issues which had been identified.

He provided details also on the assurance and advisory work on key corporate systems and programmes, the work currently in progress, an update on investigations/fraud risk awareness and the National Fraud Initiative.

In conclusion, he advised the Panel that a request had been received from the Interim City Solicitor for a deferral of the planned Audit of the Standards and Business Committee as it would overlap with the mini governance review which was being undertaken within Legal and Civic Services.

Following a query from Ms Fahy the Head of AGRS indicated that the review of the councils risk management strategy and risk appetite statement would consider how the risk appetite statement should be updated to take account of occasions where the council is accepting a higher level of risk for certain types of corporate risks e.g. Digital Information Security.

After discussion, during which officers answered a number of questions in relation to the audits on Digital Information Security and Visit Belfast, the Panel the noted the progress report for December, 2022 till February, 2023 and approved the management request to defer the internal audit of the Standards and Business Committee.

**Draft Internal Audit  
Plan for 2023/24**

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager submitted for the Panel's approval the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24. 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 2023/24 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.

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

The 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

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

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 2023/24.

**Corporate Risk Management report**  
**Quarter Ending December 2022**

The Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services submitted for the Panel's consideration the Corporate Risk Dashboard which summarised the key updates from the risk review for the quarter-ending December, 2022.

The report updated the Panel also on compliance with the Risk Strategy, based on the assurance statements, which had been completed by senior management, the Action Plan to implement the recommendations from the external review of Risk Management arrangements in the Council and an update on business continuity management arrangements.

The Panel:

- a) Noted the corporate risk management dashboard and update for quarter-end December 2022, including agreement of a new corporate risk around statutory service failure;
- b) noted the assurances from senior management regarding compliance with the Risk Strategy, based on the assurance statements for quarter-end December 2022;
- c) approved the action plan arising from the external review of Risk Management (as set out in Appendix 2 to the report); and
- d) noted the current position regarding review and update of business continuity plans for the critical services.

**Assurance Map**

The Panel was reminded that, at its meeting in September, 2021, it had considered a paper highlighting the benefits of assurance mapping, and had approved AGRS to undertake a piece of work on the development of an assurance map for Belfast City Council.

The Audit, Governance and Risk Services Manager advised the Panel that assurance work provided the Council with the confidence that what needed to be done, both operationally and strategically, was being done to manage the risks which might impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives / priorities.

There were a range of ways in which management could obtain and/or provide assurance to Members, known as sources of assurance. The various

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

sources form the Council's Assurance Framework as set out in appendix 1 to the report. The Three Lines model would allow AGRS to collate these various sources of assurance into an Assurance Map, which demonstrates whether the assurance is provided via:

- **Operations / management** (*the first line*) - Identifying risks & improvement actions, implementing controls. Reporting on progress. Management assurance.
- **Corporate Oversight** (*the second line*) - Designing policies. Setting direction. Ensuring compliance. Monitoring progress. Assurance oversight.
- **Independent Assurance** (*the third line*) - Independent challenge, audit. Reporting on assurance. Can be internally or externally provided.

AGRS have worked alongside senior management, who have assessed the assurance arrangements in place over the following six core financial systems:

- Accounts Payable
- Payroll
- Treasury Management
- Procurement
- Accounts Receivable
- Capital programme

This had involved not only mapping the sources of assurance across each of the three lines, but also management's assessment of the quality of the assurance being provided as follows:

- **High assurance**
- **Moderate assurance**
- **Low assurance**
- **No assurance**
- **Not applicable**

This allowed management to identify any perceived gaps as well as actions for improvement arising specifically from this exercise for five of the financial systems (the results of the Assurance Mapping exercise for Capital Programme are not included as the exercise is a work in progress and has not yet been agreed with management). There might be existing actions from improvement arising from recent audits of these areas, but only actions arising specifically from the Assurance Mapping exercise had been included.

He explained that sources of assurance were routinely considered as part of the embedded quarterly Corporate Risk Management update process. As part of the process, management consider the sources of assurance listed on the Risk Action Plan for each of the 23 corporate risks, assess their ongoing adequacy and relevance and, where appropriate, create risk actions to develop and embed new sources of assurance where required.

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

In developing the draft internal audit plan and strategy for 2023/24, AGRS have considered the work of other internal and external assurance and consulting service providers to ensure proper coverage and up to date assurance was available, and where relevant to minimise duplication of efforts.

The Panel noted the update on assurance mapping.

**Update on the Coll Report  
Recommendations**

The Panel considered a report which provided an update of the agreed actions arising from the recommendations contained within Section 6 of Mr. Peter McColl QC's independent investigation into events at Roselawn Cemetery on 30th June, 2020.

The Interim City Solicitor advised that there was a total of 6 recommendations within the Report, which resulted in 18 actions. Good progress has been made in complying with those recommendations and there were only 4 remaining actions.

The Panel agreed to the proposal that the remaining outstanding actions may be closed, subject to the views of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee. Two of the actions (the facilitated leadership training and the development of an Organisational Crisis Response Protocol) have a target completion date of March 2023. One action relating to training on Managing in a Political Environment had a target completion date of Spring 2023 and thereafter on an ongoing basis and the remaining action relating to strategic workforce planning of Community and Neighbourhood Services was ongoing.

Noted.

**Performance Improvement Update Report  
for Quarter 3**

(Mr. G. Dickson, Strategic Policy Lead Officer, attended in  
connection with this item.)

The Panel considered the following report:

**“1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This purpose of this report is to present the Quarter 3 status update on progress made against the improvement objectives and activities contained within our 2022-23 Improvement Plan (Appendix 1).**



**2.0     Recommendations**

- 2.1     The Audit & Risk Panel is asked to note the Q3 status update on the 22-23 Improvement objectives.**

**3.0     Main Report**

**Background**

- 3.1     Part 12 of the Local Government (NI) Act requires Councils to agree improvement objectives on an annual basis and publish these in the form of an Improvement Plan. BCC's Improvement Plan 2022-23 was agreed by Council in June 2022 and contained a strong commitment to securing continuous improvement through the delivery of 5 Improvement Objectives.**
- 3.2     The Act also requires that progress against the improvement objectives be monitored and reported in an annual assessment of performance. For this we produced a 2021-22 year-end performance assessment report which was submitted and agreed by the Audit and Risk Panel in September 2022. This assessment report was then published [online](#) ahead of the September 30th as required by legislation.**

**BCC Improvement Plan 2022 / 23**

- 3.3     SP&R Committee in June 2022 considered and agreed the Improvement Plan for 2022/23 period. The Improvement plan does not include everything that council plans to do that year, but instead focuses on a smaller set of key improvement priorities, as informed by resident priorities and evidenced by need. The Improvement Plan for 2022/23 includes five improvement objectives as set out below;**

<b>Our services</b>
1. We will continue to adapt and improve our services
<b>Our communities</b>
2. We will work to support our communities, helping them to become stronger, healthier and more resilient
<b>Our economy</b>

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

3. We will work collaboratively to support businesses, jobs and inclusive growth
<b>Our environment</b>
4. We will champion climate action; protect the environment and improve the sustainability of Belfast
<b>Our city</b>
5. We will continue to support our city to recover and innovate in a safe, inclusive and sustainable way

- 3.4 The 2022/23 Improvement Plan was subsequently published on the council website by 30th June in order to meet the statutory deadline.**
- 3.5 Attached at appendix 1 is the quarter 3 report on progress made against activities contributing to the Improvement Objectives contained within our 2022-23 Improvement Plan. It sets out the key milestones and provides a summary of activity under each objective. The report also includes the most up to date position in relation to the performance indicators included within the plan.**
- 3.6 Progress against all the objectives is in the most part on target with only a few milestones that have been slightly delayed, ragged amber or red, with the explanations for the delays contained within the report. A further report on progress will be presented to the panel at the year end.**
- 3.7 The Panel should note that the Guidance accompanying the legislation advises that the lessons emerging from our performance improvement assessments and report should be used to:**
- Help inform the content of our next Corporate Improvement Plan (due 30th June**
  - 2023) in terms both of ongoing activity and other actions that may address any**
  - shortfalls in the current Plan and;**
  - Form the basis of our next *Year-End Performance Assessment Report* which must be made available to the Local Government Auditor by 30th September 2023.**

**Financial and Resource Implications**

**3.8     None associated with this report.**

**Equality and Good Relations/Rural Need Implications**

**3.9     None associated with this report.”**

The Panel noted the update on the 2022-23 Improvement objectives.

**NIAO Briefing - Changes to Audit Approach  
for the 2022/23 Audit Cycle**

The Panel noted a report which provided details of the changes to the audit approach for the 2022-23 audit cycle which would be undertaken by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

The NIAO Director / Local Government Auditor also drew the Panels attention to the Planning Fraud Risk Guide which had been issued recently. The Director of Finance indicated that the Guide has been received and that the Director of Planning and Building Control had indicated that she will update the Planning Committee on the Guide.

**Audit and Risk Panel – Governance**

The Panel considered the following report:

**“1.0    Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

**1.1    The terms of reference for the Audit and Risk Panel, Audit Assurance Board and Audit, Governance and Risk Services are reviewed and updated annually. The purpose of this paper is to present the Audit and Risk Panel with these updated terms of reference for review and approval, along with the 2023 programme of business.**

**2.0    Recommendation**

**2.1    That the Audit and Risk Panel approves the:**

- **Audit and Risk Panel’s purpose and terms of reference statement (Appendix A)**
- **Audit Assurance Boards constitution and terms of reference (Appendix B)**
- **Audit Governance and Risk Services terms of reference (Appendix C)**

- Audit and Risk Panel's indicative programme of business for 2023 (Appendix D).

**3.0 Main report**

- 3.1** In line with good practice, the terms of reference for the Audit & Risk Panel and the Audit Assurance Board are reviewed on an annual basis.

**Audit & Risk Panel Terms of Reference**

- 3.2** An updated version of the 2018 CIPFA publication on 'Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police' and CIPFA 'Audit Committees Position Statement' was issued in October 2022, setting out guidance on the function and operation of audit committees and represents best practice. The updated guidance includes suggested terms of reference for audit committees in local authorities. The terms of reference of the Panel are important because they set out the role of the Panel in the context of the Council's governance structures. We have reviewed and updated the terms of reference for the Audit and Risk Panel in line with the updated guidance, tailored, where appropriate to Belfast City Council. The main changes are that the terms of reference have been broadened to include:

**Financial and governance reporting**

- To consider reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including compliance with *CIPFA's Financial Management Code*.
- To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met.

**Internal audit**

- To consider any impairments to the independence or objectivity of the head of internal audit arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing and to approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
- To provide free and unfettered access to the audit and risk panel chair for the head of internal audit,

including the opportunity for a private meeting with the panel.

**External audit**

- To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence
- To provide free and unfettered access to the audit and risk panel chair for the auditors, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the panel.

**Accountability arrangements**

- To publish an annual report on the work of the panel, including a conclusion on the compliance with the *CIPFA Position Statement*.

- 3.3 AGRS will support the Panel in being able to meet these new requirements. The terms of reference, with tracked changes, are set out at appendix A for information. The proposed changes do not represent a change from the usual work of the Panel, but rather to ensure that they accurately reflect this work and are in line with best practice issued by CIPFA.

**Audit Assurance Board Terms of Reference**

- 3.4 The Audit Assurance Board is chaired by the Chief Executive. The principal activity of the Audit Assurance Board over the years has been to review and consider reports from internal audit, external audit and management that are to be submitted to the Audit & Risk Panel - but from a top management / Accounting Officer perspective rather than a Member perspective. This process enables the Chief Executive and the Board to be assured (or otherwise) of current risk, control and governance arrangements and consider any issues that require management priority /attention / direction.
- 3.5 We have reviewed the terms of reference and have updated them in line with the updates made to the terms of reference for the Audit and Risk Panel (as set out at para. 3.2). We have also updated the membership of the Board taking account of the new structure of the Corporate Management Tier. The terms of reference are at appendix B.

**Audit and Risk Panel,  
Tuesday, 7th March, 2023**

**Audit, Governance and Risk Services Terms of Reference**

- 3.6 As AGRS has a role in supporting the implementation of the Risk Management, Business Continuity Management, Fraud and Bribery and Raising Concerns policies, and in line with a recommendation from the external quality assessment of AGRS, our terms of reference have now been updated to outline the safeguards that are in place to help preserve our independent and objectivity. The terms of reference are at appendix C.

**Audit & Risk Panel – Programme of Business 2023**

- 3.7 In line with good practice the quarterly meetings of the Panel have been aligned with an indicative programme of business, designed to ensure that the Panel demonstrably addressed / discharges its roles and responsibilities as set out in its purpose statement / terms of reference. The indicative programme of business is attached at Appendix D.

**Financial & Resource Implications**

- 4.0 None.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

- 5.0 None known at this time.”

The Panel adopted the recommendations.

**Date of Next Meeting**

The Panel noted that the date of the next meeting of the Panel would be scheduled following the Local Government Elections in May.

Chairperson

## **Belfast City Council**

### **Audit and Risk Panel**

#### **Statement of Purpose and Terms of Reference**

##### **Statement of Purpose**

1. The Audit and Risk Panel is a key component of Belfast City Council's corporate governance arrangements. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
2. The purpose of the Audit and Risk Panel is to provide independent assurance to those charged with governance (Members and senior management) on the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of the council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It will provide an independent scrutiny of the council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it exposes the council to risk and weakens the control environment. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

##### **Governance, Risk and Control**

3. To review the council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework and consider the local code of governance.
4. To consider the effectiveness of the Standards and Business Committee (established October 2021) as part of the annual governance review.
5. To consider the council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
6. To consider the council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.
7. To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the council, to include overseeing the council's risk, control and governance arrangements for health and safety.
8. To approve the council's risk management strategy and monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the Panel, including the corporate risk register and assurance information on the management of key corporate risks.
9. To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
10. To consider reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code.

11. To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.
12. To approve the council's fraud and whistleblowing (raising concerns) policies and monitor the implementation of these policies, including the counter-fraud strategy, actions and resources.
13. To oversee and monitor the Council's structures, processes, systems and related arrangements for performance management and to assure itself through receipt of regular reports on the planning, delivery, reporting and reviewing arrangements that appropriate plans and policies to support the performance management framework are in place and that its statutory responsibilities are being met.
14. To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

## **Financial and Governance Reporting**

### **Governance Reporting**

15. To review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, including the head of internal audit's annual opinion .
16. To consider whether the annual evaluation for the Annual Governance Statement fairly concludes that governance arrangements are fit for purpose, supporting the achievement of the authority's objectives.

### **Financial Reporting**

17. To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met.
18. To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council.
19. To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts

### **Arrangements for audit and assurance**

20. To consider the council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.

### **External audit**

21. To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence



22. To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.
23. To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
24. To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
25. To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.
26. To consider the external auditor's report on performance management, specifically the annual improvement assessment and to consider the adequacy of management responses / action taken to address issues arising from these reports.
27. To provide free and unfettered access to the Audit and Risk Panel Chair for the auditors, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the Panel.

#### **Internal audit**

28. To approve the internal audit charter.
29. To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.
30. To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
31. To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
32. To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
33. To consider any impairments to the independence or objectivity of the head of internal audit arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing and to approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
34. To consider reports from the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
  - a) Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work.
  - b) Regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.
  - c) Reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the Annual Governance Statement.

35. To consider the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services' annual report:

a) The statement of the level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the statement – these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit.

b) The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion – these will assist the Panel in reviewing the Annual Governance Statement.

36. To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.

37. To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Head of Audit, Governance and Risk Services has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.

38. To contribute to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme, both to the internal quality assessment of internal audit and in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.

39. To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the Annual Governance Statement, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

40. To provide free and unfettered access to the Audit and Risk Panel Chair for the Head of AGRS, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the Panel.

#### **Accountability arrangements**

41. To report to those charged with governance (Members and senior management) on the Panel's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions. The Panel will do this by reporting to the council's Strategic Policy & Resources Committee on a regular basis through reports and minutes of meetings. It may also report, with the approval of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, to other standing committees on matters that are of direct relevance to the responsibilities of these committees.

42. To report to full Council (through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee) on a regular basis on the Panel's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Panel in meeting its purpose.

43. To publish an annual report on the work of the Panel, including a conclusion on the compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement.

44. The Audit and Risk Panel shall consider any issue referred to it in relation to these terms of reference by the Council or any Standing Committee. Furthermore, the Audit and Risk Panel shall also consider any matter brought to its attention by the Chief Executive. Where any individual Member wishes to raise an issue under these terms of reference, the Member shall accordingly either raise the matter through the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee or in the case of urgency with the Chief Executive.



**Belfast**  
City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	Social Value Procurement Policy Delivery Report
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To update the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee following consideration by the Social Value Policy Working Group at their meeting in February on the delivery of social value outcomes via open tender competitions awarded in accordance with the Council's Social Value Procurement Policy 'SVPP'
1.2	The report also provides an update on tenders awarded by Physical Programmes where, due to project funding rules, social value has been considered and included in accordance with the CPD Buy Social Model.
1.3	It is intended that this report will be provided every 2 months in line with Social Value Working Group meetings. This report covers the reporting period 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2022 to 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2023.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the update provided in the report</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report/Background</b>
	<b>Background</b>
3.1	The SVPP was approved by Committee in April 23 with a 'Go Live' date of 1st June 2022.
3.2	SVPP applied to any new applicable open tender exercises with approval dated from 1st June 22.
3.3	To help Officers understanding the SVPP and how to apply this to applicable tender competitions, the Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team has developed a step-by-step guidance document which takes Officers through key considerations in line with the SVPP. This guidance was developed and communicated to Officers ahead of the 'Go Live' date in June 22.
3.4	As outlined in the guidance to Officers application of the SVPP is considered in 2 key parts:
3.5	<p><b>Part 1</b> – For all tender competitions valued over £30k, consideration by Officers about whether to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reserve the tender competition to a social enterprise/ VCSE sector taking into consideration levels of market competition in this sector</li> <li>Include organisational behaviours (i.e., ethical procurement, environmental and HR policies and procedures) taking into consideration relevance of these policies and procedures to the goods, services or works being purchased and relevance to the market. When selected for inclusion in the tender these social value organisational behaviours are mandatory pass/fail questions for suppliers to demonstrate rather than scored questions.</li> </ol>
3.6	<b>Part 2</b> – the inclusion of a social value weighting (10% or 15%) and scoring for tenders valued over £250k.
3.7	The social value offer made by suppliers using the list of social value initiatives and points is then evaluated and scored with a minimum scoring threshold required to be met.
3.8	<p>Note from April 23 for all tender competitions valued over £30k the following be included (in addition to the above in Part 1):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payment of the Real Living Wage by suppliers to their employees</li> </ol>

	<p>2. The prohibited use of zero hours contracts by suppliers</p> <p>3. The inclusion of a social value weighting (10% or 15%) and scoring</p> <p><b><u>CPD Buy Social Model</u></b></p>
3.9	<p>The CPD Buy Social Model is applied where external central government funding of 50% or greater is provided for a capital/ works project managed by Physical Programmes.</p>
	<p><b>Main Report</b></p>
3.10	<p>Appendix 1 of this report set out details of tenders valued over £30k which have been awarded during the Reporting Period and associated SVPP data/information</p>
3.11	<p>Appendix 1 includes:</p> <p><b><u>Table 1 - Tenders awarded during Reporting Period</u></b></p>
3.12	<p>This sets out details of tenders awarded during Reporting Period and whether SVPP was applied or not.</p>
3.13	<p>For ease of reporting this shows tenders awarded by Commercial and Procurement Services 'CPS' team and the Physical Programmes department.</p> <p><b><u>Table 2 – Summary of key data and findings associated with application of SVPP</u></b></p>
3.14	<p>This shows a summary of key findings from the tenders set out in Table 1; in particular a summary of the Part 1 SVPP considerations i.e. reserved contracts and social value organisational behaviours.</p> <p><b><u>Table 3 - Summary of Supplier's Social Value Offers (Scored submissions)</u></b></p>
3.15	<p>This shows a summary of the tenders that included a social value weighting (10/ 15%) and the social value offers put forward by suppliers for evaluation as explained under Part 2.</p>
3.16	<p>A summary of each applicable tender has been set out in a table.</p>

	<b><u>Lessons Learned and Continuous Improvement</u></b>
3.17	<p>A Social Value Review Team has been established to review how the SVPP is being implemented and any lessons learned that need to be applied following conclusion of tender competitions. Areas the team are currently reviewing include, but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Trends in the use of Reserved Contracts and any further guidance required for Officers on when these should be used</li> <li>2. Trends in the selection of Social Value Organisational Behaviours by Officers when using the Social Value Toolkit and any further guidance required for Officers on when these should be applied</li> <li>3. The quality of social value offers by suppliers (the scored submissions) and if further guidance is required in terms of how these are evaluated by Officers. In addition any further guidance required for suppliers to improve their understanding BCC expectations in line with Belfast Agenda aims and associated strategies.</li> <li>4. Updated changes to templates and guidance ahead of the upcoming changes in April 23 i.e. Social value weighting for all tenders and Real Living Wage and Zero Hours Contracts provisions.</li> </ol>
3.18	The Social Value Review Team will meet every 2 months in line with scheduled SPWG meetings and the production of this report.
3.19	The content/ format of this report will be reviewed with further information included as more social value data becomes available i.e. social value delivery by suppliers using SIB reporting database.
	<b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b>
3.20	The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets
	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.21	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table 1 - Tenders awarded during Reporting Period</li> <li>• Table 2 – Summary of key data and findings associated with application of SV</li> <li>Table 3 - Summary of Supplier’s Social Value Offers (Scored submissions)</li> </ul>

**Table 1: Tenders awarded during Reporting Period**

Table 1a: Tenders awarded by Commercial and Procurement Services Team 'CPS'

Ref	Contract Title	Contract Type	Value	Successful Supplier	SVPP applied (Y/N)	If No - Reason why?	Reserved Contract (Y/N)	Social Value Weighting % applied
T2150c	Delivery of Business Service Employment Academies (under ES DPS T2150)	Services	£900,000.00	GEMS NI Ltd*	Yes	N/A	No	15%
T2355	Independent evaluation of the PCSP programme of work from 2022 - 2025	Services	£75,000.00	Copius Consulting	Yes	N/A	No	NA
T2333	Provision of Curation, Co-ordination and Delivery of Belfast Imagining 2024 – Creative Commissions	Services	£125,000.00	Household CIC*	Yes	N/A	No	N/A
T2214	Enterprise and Business Growth FW Lot 2 Grow a Business	Services	£2,000,000.00	Full Circle	Yes	N/A	No	15%
T2214	Enterprise and Business Growth FW Lot 3 Social Economy	Services	£2,000,000.00	Work West*	Yes	N/A	No	15%
T2352	Appointment of a contractor to develop and deliver a number of sector specific projects supported by the Council under the Output Belfast brand	Services	£48,000.00	Score Draw Music	Yes	N/A	No	N/A
T2374	Regeneration Framework	Services	£200,000.00	Avison Young UK	No	External Framework Used	No	N/A
T2335	Procurement of a Local Area Energy Plan for Belfast and Queens Island (STA)	Services	£180,000.00	Energy Systems Catapult	No	STA	No	N/A
T2341	Supply and Delivery of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil bulk fuel (HVO)	Supplies	£6,000,000.00	Nicholl Oils	No	External Framework Used	No	N/A

## Appendix 1

T2362	SAP Annual licence support (STA)	Services	£53,000.00	SAP (UK) Ltd	No	STA	No	N/A
T2250	Delivery of the Gateway to Choices Service	Services	£2,000,000.00	GEMS NI Ltd*	Yes	N/A	No	15%
T2354	Provision of reusable period products scheme	Supplies	£150,000.00	Hey Girls CIC*	Yes	N/A	No	N/A
T2197	Supply, Delivery and Servicing of Tractors	Supplies	£147,645.70	Laird Grass Machinery Ltd	Yes	N/A	No	N/A
T2299	Manufacture supply and delivery of waste compactors	Supplies	£161,298.00	Gradeall International Ltd	Yes	N/A	No	N/A
T2350	Provision of Masternaut - Fleet GPS tracking/telematics (STA)	Services	£6,000.00	Masternuat Ltd	No	STA	No	N/A
T2386	Delivery of St Patricks Day 2023 commission as part of St Patricks Day Belfast Creative Development Award	Services	£100,000.00	Beat Trading Ltd*	No	Pre-dates SVPP implementation (Previous awarded Design Contest)	No	NA
T2150c	Delivery of St Patricks Day 2023 commission as part of St Patricks Day Belfast Creative Development Award	Services	£50,000.00	Féile an Phobail	No	Pre-dates SVPP implementation (Previous awarded Design Contest)	No	N/A
T2355	Delivery of St Patricks Day 2023 commission as part of St Patricks Day Belfast Creative Development Award	Services	£800,000.00	The Duncairn	No	Pre-dates SVPP implementation (Previous awarded Design Contest)	No	N/A



Table 1b: Tenders awarded by Physical Programmes

Ref	Contract Title	Contract Type	Value	Successful Supplier	SVPP applied (Y/N)	If No - Reason why?	Reserved Contract (Y/N)	Social Value Weighting % applied
ITT 36634	New Build Community Hub/Clubhouse at 341 Ravenhill Road, Belfast for Bredagh GAC	Services	£700,000.00	Hugh J O'Boyle	No	Pre-dates SVPP implementation	No	N/A
ITT 36571	Willowbank 3G Pitch Replacement	Services	£175,000.00	McAvoy Construction LLP	Yes	N/A	No	N/A
ITT 36820	City Centre - The 5C's 2D & 3D Treatments - Artworks	Services	£70,000.00	Daisy Chain	No	External funding– below CPD Buy Social threshold	No	N/A
ITT 36705	UV_Pitt Park FC - Main Contractor	Services	£900,000.00	CivCo Ltd	No	External funding– below CPD Buy Social threshold	No	N/A
ITT 36815	Paisley Park 3G Pitch Replacement	Services	£900,000.00	Tony Patterson Sportsgrounds	No	External funding– below CPD Buy Social threshold	No	N/A
ITT 36874	Replacement of metal railings at Victoria Park	Services	£128,000.00	NK Fencing	No	Pre-dates SVPP implementation	No	N/A
ITT 36880	Cherryvale GAA Fencing & Ancillary Works	Services	£90,000.00	Haffey Sportsgrounds Ltd	Yes	N/A	No	N/A
ITT 36881	Upgrade of Plant Room at Whiterock LC	Services	£75,000.00	WJM Building Services	No	Unknown	No	N/A

Appendix 1

ITT 36901	Replacement Roof covering at 3 Zoo Buildings	Services	£120,000.00	JPM Contracts Ltd	No	Pre-dates SVPP implementation	No	N/A
--------------	---	----------	-------------	----------------------	----	-------------------------------------	----	-----

**Table 2: Summary of key findings/ data**

Key area/ criteria	Summary/ Key Findings
Total number of tenders awarded during Reporting Period	27 tenders awarded
Total number of tenders awarded where SVPP was applied	10 out of 27 tenders  6 out of 27 <£250k so Part 1 considerations only i.e. Reserved Contracts and social value organisational behaviours 4 out of 27 >£250k so Part 1 considerations <b>plus</b> social value weighting and scoring
Summary of reasons why SVPP was not applied	6 out of 27 – Tender process was started before SVPP implementation in June 22 3 out of 27 – STAs/ Direct Awards 2 out of 27 – an external framework was used to award contract therefore restricted to framework evaluation criteria 1 out of 27 – externally funded project therefore CPD Buy Social policy applies but are below threshold to include social value 5 out of 27 'Unknown' – Dept have not provided a reason as to why SVPP was not applied.
Total number of tenders awarded where CPD Buy Social was applied	None
Number of Reserved Contracts	None.  Note – according to available records 6 tenders were awarded to social enterprises, although not reserved. These suppliers are indicated with a '*'  Social Value Review Team to consider if any further guidance is required about when/ what tenders should be reserved to social enterprises.
Social value organisational behaviours selected for inclusion in tenders.	Ethical Procurement Policies - included in 4 out of 10 tenders Environmental Managements Systems - included in 2 out of 10 tenders Single Use Plastics Policy - included in 4 out of 10 tenders Donating/recycling equipment to VCSE policy - included in 0 out of 10 tenders Equality and Diversity policy - included in 7 out of 10 tenders Employee development, health, and wellbeing policy - included in 7 out of 10 tenders  The Social Value Review Team will review guidance to ensure it is clear when to include these organisational behaviours in tenders; particular areas where there are low levels of inclusion i.e. environmental management systems and donating/ recycling equipment to VCSE sector policies.

**Table 3: Summary of Supplier's Social Value Offers (Scored submissions)**

Table 3a: T2150c - Delivery of Business Service Employment Academies (under ES DPS T2150)

Key area/ criteria	Data/ Outcome
Contract awarded to	GEMS NI Ltd
Contract Value	£900k
Contract Period	Up to 3 years
Social value % weighting	15%
Social value score achieved	15%
Social value offer – Employment Opportunities	None offered
Social value offer – Employability Initiatives	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups offered Initiatives to enhance employability of young people offered
Social value offer – Use of VCSE in supply chain	None offered
Social value offer – Social opportunities	None offered
Social value offer – Environmental	Strategies put forward to cover:  Action(s) to improve waste management including recycling, upcycling, supporting the circular economy

Table 3b: T2214 - Enterprise and Business Growth FW Lot 2 Grow a Business

Key area/ criteria	Data/ Outcome
Contract awarded to	Full Circle
Contract Value	£2m
Contract Period	Up to 4 years
Social value % weighting	15%
Social value score achieved	15%
Social value offer – Employment Opportunities	Employment weeks for Students offered
Social value offer – Employability Initiatives	Initiatives to enhance employability of young people offered
Social value offer – Use of VCSE in supply chain	None offered
Social value offer – Social opportunities	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation offered

## Appendix 1

Social value offer – Environmental	Strategies put forward to cover:  Action(s) to reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply Action(s) to reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation
------------------------------------	---

Table 3c: T2214 - Enterprise and Business Growth FW Lot 3 Social Economy

Key area/ criteria	Data/ Outcome
Contract awarded to	Work West
Contract Value	£2m
Contract Period	Up to 4 years
Social value % weighting	15%
Social value score achieved	15%
Social value offer – Employment Opportunities	None offered
Social value offer – Employability Initiatives	None offered
Social value offer – Use of VCSE in supply chain	Offered/ included
Social value offer – Social opportunities	None offered
Social value offer – Environmental	Strategies put forward to cover:  Action(s) to reduce carbon emissions associated with energy supply Action(s) to reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation Action(s) to improve waste management including recycling, upcycling, supporting the circular economy Action(s) to improve resource efficiency Action(s) to enhance environmental natural resources and biodiversity

Table 3d: T2250 - Delivery of the Gateway to Choices Service

Key area/ criteria	Data/ Outcome
Contract awarded to	GEMS NI Ltd
Contract Value	£2m
Contract Period	Up to 3 years
Social value % weighting	15%
Social value score achieved	15%

Appendix 1

Social value offer – Employment Opportunities	None offered
Social value offer – Employability Initiatives	Employability or skills initiatives to support Priority Groups offered Initiatives to enhance employability of young people offered
Social value offer – Use of VCSE in supply chain	None offered
Social value offer – Social opportunities	Initiatives to support VCSE organisation offered Initiatives to improve good relations between people from different religious, political, racial and ethnic backgrounds offered
Social value offer – Environmental	Strategies put forward to cover:  Action(s) to improve waste management including recycling, upcycling, supporting the circular economy



**Belfast**  
City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	Contracts Update
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Noleen Bohill, Head of Commercial and Procurement Services

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
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"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek approval from members for tenders and Single Tender Actions (STA) over £30,000</li> </ul>
1.2	And to ask members to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note contract modifications to contract term and retrospective Single Tender Actions (STAs)</li> <li>Note contract modification to contract value to a quotation</li> <li>Note the award of contracts by Arc 21 on behalf the council</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve the public advertisement of tenders as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 1</b>)</li> <li>Approve the award of STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 2</b>)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the modification of the contract as per Standing Order 37a detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 3</b>)</li> <li>• Note the award of retrospective STAs in line with Standing Order 55 exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1 (<b>Table 4</b>)</li> <li>• Note the award of contracts by Arc 21 on behalf the council (<b>Table 5</b>)</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Competitive Tenders</u>
3.1	Section 2.5 of the Scheme of Delegation states 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"> <li>• Contract for up to £140,000 (Budget ceiling figure to cover any unplanned advertising requirements), for up to 18 months, awarded to Clear Channel for advertising at bus stops. Advertising council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and areas of Northern Ireland as required. Clear Chanel is the only company that provides advertising at bus stops in Northern Ireland.</li> <li>• Contract for up to £140,000 (Budget ceiling figure to cover any unplanned advertising requirements), for up to 18 months, awarded to Global Outdoor for bus internal and external advertising. Advertise council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and in areas of Northern Ireland as required. Global Outdoor is the only company to provide advertising on Metro and Ulsterbus buses in Northern Ireland.</li> <li>• Contract for up to £165,000, for up to 3 years, awarded to Land and Property Services (LPS) for annual asset valuations. LPS are the only suitable provider of this service due to conflicts of interests that exist with other local agencies.</li> <li>• Contract for up to £64,271, for up to 3 years, awarded to Tricostar for a legal case management system. Continued use of the Tricostar case management system to support Legal Services including facilities for document management,</li> </ul>



	<p>communications and reporting. Continued use of proprietary system required whilst a strategy is developed to procure and implement replacement system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract for up to £154,000, for up to 2 years, awarded to Land &amp; Property Services (LPS) for NI agreement for proprietary mapping requirements and planning. LPS are the only provider of this service.</li> <li>• Contract for up to £62,000, for up to 1 year, awarded to NEC Systems, for Electronic Document and Records Management 'EDRM' for NI Housing Executive for hosting, maintenance and support. EDRM system used by NI Housing Executive to link to Housing Benefits System. Licences are perpetual. This is fully funded by NIHE. NEC Systems are the only suitable provider.</li> <li>• Contract for up to £33,000, one off purchase, awarded to The Foundation, for printing and delivery of ballot papers and associated documentation for local elections. Due to a change in election date, associated delay in ballot paper print specifications being issued and higher than anticipated costs there is insufficient time now to procure via an open tender competition.</li> </ul>
3.5	<p>The following retrospective STAs were awarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract for up to £64,500, for up to 12 months, awarded to Honeycomb Recruitment, for requirement for temporary Assistant Manager (Houses of Multiple Occupation). The existing contracted provider for T1792 Provision of Temporary Agency Resources: Matrix SCM have confirmed they are unable to fulfil this required role HMO assistant manager within the contractually agreed time period.</li> </ul> <p><u>Modification to Contract term</u></p>
3.6	<p>The following contract terms were modified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to a total of 12 months extension for contract T2213 - Bobbin Catering City Hall with Now Group. Approval was given verbally at Feb SP&amp;R for an initial 3 month extension. In line with legislation the Bobbin had to close numerous times because of the Covid pandemic which presented significant financial and operational challenges and changes to the hospitality industry. The re-tender of this contract will be delivered within the next 12 months.</li> <li>• A 4 month extension and additional £7,125 for contract T2291a Development and submission of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Community PEACE Action Plan - Locus Management. To facilitate ongoing work to develop the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan. Fully funded.</li> </ul>

3.7	<p>The following contract modifications are being reporting as retrospective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 1 month extension for contract T2201 Provision of an Activities Co-ordinator for Forth Meadow Community Greenway PEACE IV Programme Services with ArtsEkta Ltd. An extension is required to allow delivery partners to continue to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables.</li> <li>• A 6 month extension for contract T2084(b) A Key Deliverable of the PEACE IV Shared Space &amp; Services theme (Intergenerational project) with Mediation NI. An extension is required to allow delivery partners to continue to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables.</li> <li>• A 6 month extension for contract T1925 Peace IV On the Right Track; Good Relations through Sports with Active Communities Network. An extension is required to allow delivery partners to continue to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables.</li> </ul> <p><u>Modification to contract value</u></p>
3.8	<p>Reporting to Committee for information. An additional £11,944 was awarded to a quotation contract (CNS 22.10 - Quotation for Compliance Review of Funding Awards) with supplier, Cavanagh Kelly. Contract needed to be expanded to include additional funding awards that did not fall within the scope of the original exercise. This additional spend means the quotation now exceeds £30k limit (i.e. £34k).</p> <p><u>Award of contracts by Arc 21 on behalf the council</u></p>
3.9	<p>Arc 21 are in the process of completing the award of contract for the treatment and energy recovery/ disposal of residual waste arisings.</p>
3.10	<p>To facilitate the implementation of the above contract, the Committee is asked to note an extension of the current arc21 and BCC contracts until the new contract commences for the interim treatment and disposal of residual waste. Arc21 and the Council will commence negotiations with the current suppliers to extend the contracts until the commencement date of the new arc21, interim residual waste contract. CPS will continue to keep Committee up to date with the status of arc 21's award of contract on a quarterly basis or until the contract is awarded.</p>
	<p><b>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</b></p>
3.11	<p>The financial resources for these contracts are within approved corporate or departmental budgets</p>

	<b>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</b>
3.12	None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 Table 1 - Competitive Tenders Table 2 - Single Tender Actions Table 3 - Modification to Contract Table 4 - Retrospective Single Tender Actions

This page is intentionally left blank

**Table 1: Competitive Tenders**

Title of Tender	Proposed Contract Duration	Estimated Total Contract Value	SRO	Short description of goods / services
Window Cleaning across BCC sites	Up to 4 years	Up to £60,000	S Grimes	To clean and maintain the window at various locations across BCC
Mobile Catering Contracts across BCC park sites	Up to 3 years	Up to £53,000 (income)	D Sales	There is a need & expectation from park users to provide mobile catering services within parks to complement the park facilities
The supply and delivery of grounds maintenance plant and equipment	Up to 4 years	Up to £400,000	D Sales	Supply and delivery of grounds maintenance plant and equipment to enable the replacement of end of lift machinery servicing the Open Spaces and Streetscene operation
The distribution of City Matters (Belfast City Council's resident's magazine)	Up to 2 years	Up to £140,000	L Caldwell	Secure and effective delivery of City Matters is required for over 160k homes in Belfast and boundary areas within Belfast City Council district area

**Table 2: Single Tender Actions**

Title	Duration	Total Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Advertising at bus stops	Up to 18 months	Up to £140,000	L Caldwell	Advertising council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and areas of Northern Ireland as required. Clear Channel is the only company that provides advertising at bus stops in Northern Ireland. Value indicated is a budget ceiling figure to cover any unplanned advertising requirements.	Clear Channel

## Appendix 1

Bus internal and external advertising	Up to 18 months	Up to £140,000	L Caldwell	Advertise council initiatives to the citizens of Belfast and in areas of Northern Ireland as required. Global Outdoor is the only company to provide advertising on Metro and Ulsterbus buses in Northern Ireland. Value indicated is a budget ceiling figure to cover any unplanned advertising requirements.	Global Outdoor
Annual asset valuations	Up to 3 years	Up to £165,000	S Grimes	LPS are the only suitable provider of this service due to conflicts of interests that exist with other local agencies.	Land and Property Services (LPS) NI
Legal Case Management System	Up to 3 years	Up to £64,271	P Gribben	Continued use of the Tricostar case management system to support Legal Services including facilities for document management, communications and reporting. Continued use of proprietary system required whilst a strategy is developed to procure and implement replacement system	Tricostar
NI agreement for proprietary mapping requirements & planning	Up to 2 years	Up to £154,000	T Wallace	LPS are the only provider of this service	Land & Property Services (LPS) NI
Electronic Document and Records Management 'EDRM' for NI Housing Executive – hosting, maintenance and support (Fully Funded)	Up to 1 year	Up to £62,000	P Gribben	EDRM system used by NI Housing Executive to link to Housing Benefits System. Licences are perpetual. This is fully funded by NIHE. NEC Systems are the only suitable provider.	NEC Systems

## Appendix 1

T2414 - Printing and delivery of Ballot Papers and associated documentation	One off Purchase	Up to £33,300	N Largey	Due to a change in election date, associated delay in ballot paper print specifications being issued and higher than anticipated costs there is insufficient time now to procure via an open tender competition.	The Foundation
---	------------------	---------------	----------	--	----------------

Table 3: Modification to Contract

Title of Contract	Duration	Modification	SRO	Description	Supplier
T2213 - Bobbin Catering City Hall Reported verbally to Feb 2023 SP&R - approved for 3 months.	Up to 18 months	Up to a total of 12 months and up to £25,000 income (includes 3 months verbally approved)	N Largey	In line with legislation the Bobbin had to close numerous times because of the Covid pandemic which presented significant financial and operational challenges and changes to the hospitality industry. The re-tender exercise of this service will be delivered within the next 12 months.	Now Group
T2291a Development and submission of the Belfast PEACEPLUS Local Community PEACE Action Plan (STA) Fully Funded	Up to 1 year	Additional 4 months and £7,125	D Sales	A 4-months extension of Contract Period to facilitate ongoing work to develop the PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan	Locus Management
T2201 Provision of an Activities Co-ordinator for Forth Meadow Community Greenway PEACE IV Programme Services	Up to 4 years	Additional 1 month	D Sales	An extension is required to allow delivery partners to continue to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables.  Request is retrospective	ArtsEkta Ltd
T2084(b) A Key Deliverable of the PEACE IV Shared Space & Services theme (Intergenerational project)	Up to 22 months	Additional 6 months	D Sales	An extension is required to allow delivery partners to continue to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables.  Request is retrospective	Mediation NI

T1925 Peace IV On the Right Track; Good Relations through Sports	Up to 43 months	Additional 6 months	D Sales	An extension is required to allow delivery partners to continue to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables.  Request is retrospective	Active Communities Network
--	-----------------	---------------------	---------	--	----------------------------

**Table 4: Retrospective Single Tender Actions**

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
Requirement for temporary Assistant Manager (Houses of Multiple Occupation)	Up to 12 months	Up to £64,500	S Toland	The existing contracted provider for T1792 Provision of Temporary Agency Resources: Matrix SCM have confirmed they are unable to fulfil the required role of HMO assistant manager within the contractually agreed time period.	Honeycomb Recruitment

**Table 5: Contracts awarded by Arc 21 on behalf of the Council**

Title of Contract	Duration	Value	SRO	Description	Supplier
The supply of services relating to the treatment and energy recovery/disposal of residual waste arisings	Up to 7 years.  Initial 3 years with option to extend up to a further 4 years (2 + 2 year periods)	Up to £107m	C Matthews	Contract for the bulking, loading, transfer and processing of residual waste from the council's waste transfer station.	Contract managed by Arc 21





<b>Subject:</b>	Minutes of Shared City Partnership Meeting on 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Sales, Director of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nicola Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To report to committee on the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2023.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	That the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the minutes and recommendations from the Shared City Partnership Meeting held on 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 including:
2.2	<p><b><u>PEACEPLUS</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To note the high-level feedback from the public meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm in City Hall; and the updated process Stage 2 development of the Local Action Plan, including forthcoming Thematic Working Group meetings.</li> </ul>

	<p><b><u>PEACE IV</u></b></p>
2.3	<p><b>Secretariat</b></p> <p>To note the contents of the report and agree contract extensions for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ArtsEkta for the provision of activities for Forth Meadow Community Greenway to 31/10/2022;</li> <li>Mediation NI contract for the Intergenerational Shared Spaces project to 31 March 2023 and</li> <li>the Good Relations through Sports contract with Active Communities Network to 31 March 2023</li> </ol>
2.4	<p><b>CYP Theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To note the contents of the report and note that discussions with SEUPB have progressed and the further details presented as outlined in Appendix II Update NIHE position.</li> </ul>
2.5	<p><b>SSS Theme</b></p> <p>To agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That a request for a 3-month extension to 30 September 2023 is explored with SEUPB to enable the installation of signage;</li> <li>The target audience for the SSS narratives publication as the local community and visitors to the Forth Meadow Community Greenway; and</li> <li>The name of the bridge at Springfield Dam as the 'Foundry Bridge'.</li> </ul>
2.6	<p><b>BPR Theme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BPR 1 - NIHE- Cross Community Area Networks To note that discussions have progressed with SEUPB relating to proposed mitigations and next steps</li> <li>BPR 2 - Culture Unit - Creative Communities To note the quotation for an artist for the Short Strand/Walkway received nil submissions and therefore delivery of this project element is no longer viable.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BPR6 St Comgall's</li> </ul> <p>To agree the updated Educational Resources and Exhibition Materials as agreed by the Programme Board on 9 February 2023 via delegated authority. The exhibition materials (website) are to be approved, subject to SEUPB approval.</p>
	<p><b><u>GOOD RELATIONS</u></b></p>
2.7	<p><b>Good Relations Action Plan Q1 Expenditure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To agree to proceed with the delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan 23/24 under delegated authority of the Director of Neighbourhood Services, allocating up to 25% of the total Plan until a formal Letter of Offer had been received by TEO.</li> <li>• Approve the increase in the allocation of Grant Aid under BCC1, to incorporate an additional £23,000 from the BCC9 Strategic Intervention Programme in order to include projects that met the objectives of the programme.</li> </ul>
2.8	<p><b>Cultural Inclusion Programme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To note the contents of the report and the activities that were being delivered during March 2023 as part of this project, to which the Members were welcome to attend.</li> </ul>
2.9	<p><b>Update on the Belfast Agenda:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To agree that the feedback analysis template relating to the Good Relations priority would be circulated to Members with a deadline of receipt for feedback and comments by 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023, to allow for papers to be prepared in advance of the findings being brought to the Community Planning Partnership in March 2023;</li> <li>• To note that community planning partners would be asked to make a nomination to sit on a group which would oversee the delivery of the action to develop an inclusive Belfast intervention plan to address inequalities and support the inclusion of Minority Ethnic communities and to progress the delivery of the findings from the Report, launched in December 2022, 'Inequalities Experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast.' The Shared City Partnership would receive regular updates on progress; and</li> <li>• To agree that Ms. A. M. White and Ms. B. Arthurs be nominated from the Shared City Partnership to sit on the above group.</li> </ul>

2.10	<b>Storage Costs for donations to refugees and asylum seekers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To agree to allocate support costs to assist with storage for donations relating to the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme, of £300 for this financial year.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee which consists of Elected members and representatives from various sectors across the city. The minutes from the Partnership are brought before the Committee for approval on a monthly basis.
3.2	The key issues on the agenda at the March 2023 meeting were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on PEACE PLUS – Local Community Peace Action Plan</li> <li>PEACE IV Updates</li> <li>Update on PEACE IV Secretariat</li> <li>Update on PEACE IV CYP Theme</li> <li>Update on PEACE IV SSS Theme</li> <li>Update on PEACE IV BPR Theme</li> </ul>
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Relations Action Plan 2023/24 Quarter 1 Expenditure</li> <li>Update on BCC3 Cultural Inclusion Programme</li> <li>Update on Belfast Agenda Consultation Refresh – Good Relations</li> <li>Storage Costs Kiltonga for Refugee Donations</li> </ul> <p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the minutes of the meeting attached in Appendix 1.</p>
3.4	<u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u> All financial implications are covered through existing budgets
3.5	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> The recommendations of the Partnership promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 - Copy of the minutes of the Shared City Partnership of 6th March 2023

## **SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP**

**Monday 6th March, 2023**

### **MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillor Kyle (Chairperson);  
Councillors Bower, Duffy and McCullough.

External Members: Mr. J. Donnelly, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Ms. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Mr. I. McLaughlin, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Ms. A. Roberts, Community and Voluntary Sector;  
Ms. A. Tohill, Good Relations, TEO;  
Superintendent Ford, PSNI;  
Mr. A. Irvine, Faith Sector;  
Mr. A. Hannaway, NIHE;  
Ms. O. Barron, Belfast Trust;  
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority; and  
Ms. A. M. White, British Red Cross.

In attendance: Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE IV Programme Manager;  
Ms. N. Lane, Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager;  
Mr. S. Lavery, Programme Manager;  
Ms. L. Dolan, Good Relations Officer;  
Mr. D. Robinson, Good Relations Officer; and  
Ms. V. Smyth, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

Apologies were received on behalf of Mr. S. Hamilton and Ms. G. Duggan.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 6th February, 2023 were taken as read and signed as correct.

Councillor Duffy advised that his attendance had not been recorded at the previous meeting on 6th February but had been advised by the Democratic Services Officer that this had been amended.

The Chairperson welcomed Godfrey McCartney, the newly appointed Good Relations Manager who had taken up the role on 1st March.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

Mr. J. Donnelly declared an interest in the PEACE PLUS and Peace IV projects.

Ms. A. Tohill declared an interest in Item 2 PEACE PLUS and item 3 Peace IV Updates and left the meeting whilst the items were under consideration.

Mr. A. Hannaway declared an interest in CYP5 (item 3b) and BPR 1 (items 3d).

### **PEACE PLUS**

The Programme Manager provided Members with an update on recent activity and high-level feedback with regards to the development of the PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed Local Community Peace Action Plan for Belfast.

He provided an update on the public event which had been organised for all stakeholders who were involved in the Stage 1 process which he described as robust. The event was also open to any group or individual who did not attend previous engagement sessions. He advised the Members that, in the lead up to the event, the details were circulated widely via council contacts and social media. This worked well as approximately 100 participants attended the event, with some in attendance who were not involved in Stage 1.

The Programme Manager explained that the overall purpose of the event was to:

- 1) Provide a brief recap on Stage 1 findings; and
- 2) Provide an overview of the Stage 2 methodology.

He informed the Members that event participants received feedback on the following:

1. Stage 1 engagement which included:
  - Issues and challenges;
  - Emerging Concepts;
  - Programme Constraints; and
  - Indicative Assessment Criteria.
2. Key steps to develop Stage 2 development of the Local Action Plan which included:
  - Methodology and dates for thematic working groups;
  - Dates for thematic working;
  - Options available on how the programme will be delivered; and
  - The role of participants in developing the action plan via the thematic working groups.

The Programme Manager reported that following the presentation which was delivered by appointed consultants Locus Management and Blu Zebra, a discussion took place on the challenges that stakeholders identified that may prevent local community and voluntary groups from getting involved in developing and delivering the plan. Feedback from participants included:

- Administrative burden of delivering PEACE projects;
- Lack of lead partners at local level;
- Larger organisations being best placed to win tender;
- Different levels of capacity in local groups;

- Full cost recovery issue for groups who deliver PEACE projects; and
- Lack of support for local groups to tender for programme delivery.

As part of this discussion, the Programme Manager advised that the importance of developing solutions in relation to collaboration to develop the plan was explored. It was agreed that it was vital for larger organisations and local community and voluntary organisations to work together to develop and agree the strategic projects that would be included in the final plan submission. He informed the Members that participants advised that it was important that local groups should be involved in both the development and delivery of the Local Action Plan.

The Programme Manager acknowledged that there would be challenges in developing the plan and the parameters of PEACE PLUS would not enable all issues reported during Stage 1 Engagement to be addressed. However, at the event it was outlined that the ambition of the Shared City Partnership was to have meaningful engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to develop the plan and maximise the investment on offer and, while there were challenges to overcome, the Council would endeavor to address these during Stage 2. He added that, to help overcome some of the challenges as part of the Stage 2 process, participants were advised that the Council would work with participants to support them to get involved in developing and implementing the plan, which would include:

- Having an open process for involvement in the thematic working groups;
- Exploring options on providing capacity support to those involved in Stage 2;
- Exploring options on providing tendering / procurement support to those involved in Stage 2; and
- Whilst, ensuring work was carried out within the parameters of the programme, developing a delivery model that was far as possible would enable local organisations to be involved in implementing the plan.

## **Stage 2 Thematic Working Groups**

The Programme Manager outlined the next steps to developing the Local Action Plan which involved the facilitation of thematic working groups for the 3 themes within the plan.

1. Community Regeneration and Transformation
2. Thriving and Peaceful Communities
3. Building Respect for All Cultural Identities

The Programme Manager explained the process for the thematic working groups in that there would be up to 4 Thematic Working Group days held from March to June, with stakeholders having the option to be involved in all 3 Thematic Working Groups or choosing which themes were more appropriate for their organisation. He referred to the examples contained within the report as follows:

### **• Thematic Working Group Day One**

The first Thematic Working Group meetings for all 3 themes would take place on **Wednesday 22nd March, St Comgall's, with times, provisionally set 10.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.**

10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.	Theme 1 Community Regeneration and Transformation
12.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.	Theme 2 Thriving and Peaceful Communities
2.30p.m. to 4.30 p.m.	Theme 3 Building Respect for All Cultural Identities

He advised that these were indicative times for the forthcoming Thematic Working Group and that details would be confirmed and sent to relevant stakeholders.

Date	Venue
<b>Tuesday 18th April</b>	Skainos Centre – 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.
<b>Tuesday 16th May</b>	Agape Centre – 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.
<b>Wednesday 7th June</b>	Girdwood – 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

## - Stakeholder Involvement Stage 2

The Programme Manager advised that anyone who had been involved in the process to date could be involved in the Thematic Working Groups. The Members noted that participants at the event in City Hall on the 27th February had completed an Expression of Interest form and advised which Thematic Working Groups they wanted to be involved in. Further communication would be sent to all stakeholders (including those who did not attend the 27th February event) asking that they complete the Expression of Interest forms, and inviting them to the first Thematic Working Group meeting.

Discussion ensued, and the decision-making/governance process was queried with a request from a Member that clarification in relation to the process be clearly communicated during consultations. The Programme Manager and the Neighbourhood Services Manager clarified that it was not a funding application process. They acknowledged that work was needed around the communication piece about the process for Stage 2, and ultimately who would make decisions on which projects were submitted under the Local Action Plan and that plans for this were being drawn up.

The Programme Manager referred to the proposals in relation to the co-design parameters and principals around Theme 1. He advised that, due to the nature of developing capital projects and the tight timeframe with regards to submitting the plan as set by SEUPB, that this would be challenging. It was agreed that the communication around this was important and stakeholders should be advised of the constraints around Theme 1 on the 22nd March. He advised that work would be undertaken in advance of conversations on 22nd March to ensure the process was right and to manage expectations. In summary, the Programme Manager advised that some of the constraints with the development of capital projects for Theme 1 included:



- Belfast City Council would be responsible for delivering the capital projects agreed for theme 1, therefore these had to be prioritised within a tightly defined set of principles to ensure they are delivered;
- During Stage 1, participants advised that their preference would be to have a smaller area-based projects across the city rather than one large project;
- Any priority projects chosen would have to meet the principles / parameters that were agreed, proposed by Stakeholders and agreed by the Council; and
- When the action plan was being submitted to SEUPB, they would require detailed proposals, therefore projects which were at the emerging concept stage would be challenging to include.

There was further discussion around the Local Action Plan mechanisms, resources, delivery and community confidence and capacity building. The Neighbourhood Services Manager assured the Members that nothing would be ruled out at this point. She also advised the Members that, despite the elections in May, work would continue on the project over the next few months.

A Member relayed concerns around the Partnership's role in the process and acknowledged the complex nature of PEACE PLUS. The Neighbourhood Services Manager stated that the Partnership made recommendations to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee and then the Council made the ultimate decision. In response, a Member remarked that the Partnership's advisory role needed to be made explicitly clear to communities. Concerns around the co-design process and articulation, in relation to same, back to communities were also raised.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that it would be 6 months from the end of April/beginning of May from the call for PEACE PLUS, and she was conscious of the timeframe and new Members being appointed following the election. Therefore, nothing would be firmly agreed until it could be taken to Council in June/July aiming to submit in September/October.

The Programme Manager advised that the Belfast application would be approved via the Department of Finance given the budget of over £10 million with the assessment period being around 30 weeks, rather than 22.

The Chairperson acknowledged the concerns from the Members and stated it was an ongoing process and that officers would take the concerns expressed on board.

The Programme Manager advised that there would be more scope for co-design in Themes 2 and 3.

The Members noted the high-level feedback from the public meeting on 27th February at 2pm in City Hall; and noted the updated process Stage 2 development of the Local Action Plan, including forthcoming Thematic Working Group meetings.

## **Peace IV Updates**

### **Secretariat**

The Peace IV Programme Manager provided the Members with an update in respect of the Secretariat activity associated with the implementation of the Peace IV Local Action Plan. She advised that final project activity and progressing closure of projects remained a key focus.

She updated the Members on the On-the-Spot verification visits (OSV) for CYP1 Tech Connects delivery by GIGA Young and CYP3 Personal Change with Extern had been completed. Final clarifications were being sought to enable closure and final payment to progress.

Discussions were progressing with SEUPB on the level of achievement and closure for CYP3 On the Right Track, CYP5 Networks and BPR1 Cross Community Area Networks Project, and further information had been submitted to SEUPB for consideration.

In relation to claims reimbursement, the Peace IV Programme Manager advised that verification by SEUPB of the claims backlog had progressed, with Period 30 and 31 NIHE CYP claims totalling £27k now progressing to reimbursement. The submission of the Period 33 claim by the deadline of 28 February was a key priority that was currently progressing.

The Members were advised that the Project Support Assistant and the Project Development Officer had recently resigned. As such the PEACE IV team would be operating with 4 out of 9 staff and would undoubtedly increase the risks associated with resource pressures.

The Peace IV Programme Manager advised that expenditure across the programme remained as previously reported, with spend up to Period 32 totalling £8.6m and reimbursement of £6.2m to date.

There was discussion around delays in payment in relation to SEUPB funding and the continued challenges around filling vacant posts in the public and charity sectors.

The Peace IV Programme Manager advised the Members that a recent review of contracts identified that some PIV contracts had expired, although delivery partners continued to deliver activity in order to fulfil the deliverables. As such, the Members were requested to agree to extend the ArtsEkta contract for the provision of activities for Forth Meadow Community Greenway to 31st October 2022; the Mediation NI contract for the Intergenerational Shared Spaces project to 31st March 2023 and the Good Relations through Sports contract with Active Communities Network to 31st March 2023.

The Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it note the contents of the report and agree contract extensions for:

- i. ArtsEkta for the provision of activities for Forth Meadow Community Greenway to 31st October 2022;
- ii. Mediation NI contract for the Intergenerational Shared Spaces project to 31 March 2023; and

- iii. the Good Relations through Sports contract with Active Communities Network to 31 March 2023.

### **Children and Young People (CYP Update)**

The Partnership considered the undernoted report.

#### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

To provide the Shared City Partnership (SCP) with a progress report in respect of the Children and Young People’s (CYP) theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

The Partnership is requested to note the contents of the report and related appendices and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to:

##### **CYP5 NIHE**

- note that discussions with SEUPB have progressed and the further details presented as outlined in Appendix II Update NIHE position.

#### **3.0 Main report**

##### **Project Updates**

#### **3.1 CYP 1 - TECH CONNECTS, GIGA Training (Afterschool’s and Digital Arts Academies’ Camps) (6-11, 12-16 yr. olds)**

The on-the-spot verification visit took place on 10 February 2023. The delivery partner is to submit additional information in the end of project report and to return outstanding IT equipment. The project will then proceed to final closure and final payment will be processed.

##### **CYP 1 – TECH CONNECTS, Belfast Metropolitan College (Digital Insights Programme) (17-24 yr. olds)**

Belfast Metropolitan College now has 143 participants registered and participating in the project. Delivery of activity is ongoing, with two cohorts at Girdwood Community Hub. The project continues to encourage participants to build on their contact hours and will promote this further as part of the Festival of Learning in March. To date, 44 participants have achieved the required level of 26 contact hours.

The submission of monitoring data including registration and attendance details to evidence achievements has been progressed.

Total	143 from a revised target of 110	Exceeding target of 110 by 33 participants
-------	----------------------------------	--

### 3.2 CYP3 – On the Right Track – Sports and Personal Change elements

Sports Leaders training took place on the 8th & 9th February 2023 with 17 young people attending.

Final outstanding evidence to confirm participation is progressing. Indications are 647 participants completing the required contact hours threshold. Of these participants, 99 have completed an additional Sports Leaders Award.

Total	647 from a target of 1260 99 sports leaders from a target of 160	613 remaining to achieve target figure of 1260. 167 registered but have not achieved hrs of engagement
-------	---	---

As final wrap up activity has now progressed, the project will now progress to closure, based on the level of achievement outlined above.

### 3.3 Personal Change – Delivered by Extern

Final closure and payment are now progressing.

Total	43 from a target of 42	0 remaining – Progressing to Closure
-------	------------------------	--------------------------------------

### 3.4 CYP 4 – Cooperation Ireland (Young Advocates)

Point of clarity from the On-the-Spot Verification Site Visit are to be submitted to enable final closure to progress.

Total	87 from a target of 80	+ 7 achieved – Progressing to closure
-------	------------------------	---------------------------------------

### 3.5 CYP 5 – NIHE Local Area Network Partner Delivery

Discussions with SEUPB have progressed and proposed mitigations were outlined. SEUPB requested further details on all deliverables to ensure a full picture on impact, outputs and outcomes, as detailed in Appendix II Updated NIHE positional paper. The next steps and agreed actions will be advised and progressed with the delivery partner once formalised by SEUPB.

**Deliverables are summarised below:**

Targets CYP 5	Original targets	Amended	Achieved before applied mitigations	Current Position with mitigations applied	% Contract achieved with mitigations
6 Local area networks	Establish 6 local area networks	Reduced to 4 networks	3 of 6 established	<b>3 LAN</b>	50%
24 participants per CCAN numbers	24 per LAN	Unchanged	See breakdown below	<b>refer to table details below</b>	42%
Core Participants - Hrs-	144 Core 200 hrs	104 core 100hrs	<b>3/104</b>	<b>9/104</b>	9%
Peer Participants Hrs-	756 Peer 30hrs	200 Peer 24hrs	<b>101/200</b>	<b>170/200</b>	85%
					<b>% achieved 59%</b>

Network 6 modified to 4	Original target 24 per LAN (144 total)- levels of achievement before mitigations	Numbers moved to Peer- Mitigations applied	Participant no. remaining in LAN Core	Comments
SWB Core	32	20	12	
NB Core	56	36	20	
FCA Core	44	32	12	
Total	132	88	44	42% achieved

**SEUPB is open to the mitigations presented of reduced tolerances 60% and movement from Core to Peer participants. Although there may be impact on budget and expenditure which requires further discussions with all parties.**

**Members are requested to note the additional information as referenced in Appendix II. It should also be noted will be fully evaluated in March when all delivery has ceased.**

### **3.6 Financial and Resource Implications**

The financial position remains as previously reported, with claims totalling £2m submitted to SEUPB and £1.665m reimbursed to date. As such £340K remains outstanding from SEUPB.

Preparation for the submission of Period 33 claims by 28 February 2023 is now progressing.

### **3.7 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

The draft plan has been equality screened and discussed at the Equality Consultative Forum on 13 May 2015. The Equality Consultative Forum was further consulted on 18 Nov 2020.”

The Partnership noted the contents of the report.

### **Shared Spaces and Services (SSS Update)**

The Peace IV Programme Manager provided the Shared City Partnership with a progress update in respect of the Shared Spaces and Services (SSS) theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan. She reported that both the capital and programming elements of the Shared Space and Services theme were continuing to be implemented. Risks associated with delivery were highlighted in RAG Report (Appendix I).

- **Springfield Dam**

The public vote for the naming of the Bridge at Springfield Dam which had opened via the Council's website on Wednesday 18th January, with the following 4 short-listed names for consideration, had now closed.

1. The Cotty Bridge – 33.8% of votes
2. The Foundry Bridge – 44%
3. The Seven Cygnets Bridge – 9.6%
4. The Spring Bridge – 12.7%

The Members were advised that 75% of the responses received were from the communities surrounding Springfield Dam in BT12 and BT13.

On the basis of the outcome of the public voting, the Members were requested to agree the name of the bridge as 'The Foundry Bridge'.

- **PEACE IV Network Scheme – Capital Works**

As reported in February, works in Section 2, remained on track for completion by June 2023.

- **Signage**

As reported previously, a Council decision on the language approach for the signage was being progressed by the Physical Programmes department and no decision had been confirmed as yet. As such, the installation of the signage within the current Letter of Offer timeframe was uncertain as redesign of the signage may be necessary.

Therefore, the Members were requested to agree, in principle, that a request for a 3-month extension to 30th September 2023 was explored with SEUPB to enable the installation of signage. Resource implications for this extended timeframe may need to be met by the Physical Programmes department.

- **Public Art Pieces**

The finalisation of a long-term lease of land from Invest NI was being discussed between the respective legal teams. Upon finalisation, the flag-ship art piece would move towards installation, however due to delays, the artist had advised that installation would take place in April 2023.

- **Programming**

Implementation of the programming aspects are progressing.

- **Shared History, Heritage and Identity Content / Narratives for Shared Space**

<b>Deliverable targets</b>	<b>Targets achieved</b>
300 individuals	257 recruited
51 narratives (3 narratives x 17 panels)	52 draft narratives
12 contact hours per participant	152 participants (68%) achieved over 10 hours 200 participants (89%) achieved 6 hours+.
Compilation document of all stories	A draft copy submitted for initial review.

The Peace IV Programme Manager informed the Member that a draft compendium of the narratives was submitted by the delivery partner and reviewed by the PEACE IV team, with a timeline agreed for a final publication by week commencing 13th March 2023. The Programme Board considered the target audience for the publication as the local community and visitors to the Forth Meadow Community Greenway. The Members were requested to agree this approach, which would influence the format and language of the publication.

She continued that, as works were progressing in Section 2 (Springvale) and commencing in Section 5 (West Link), narratives for inclusion on the proposed information panels in these sections were considered by the Programme Board in paper of 9th February 2023 (Appendix III refers). The narratives were agreed subject to a grammar, spelling and a plain English review together with creative input from Communications. As such, the Members were requested to consider and agree the Section 2 and 5 narratives.

- **Resource Allocation**

Following SEUPB approval for the interim coordination of volunteering, contract letters had been issued to the relevant Volunteer Lead delivery partners.

Two responses had been received for a coordinated programme of activities / events with the assessment meeting having taken place on 10th February 2023. Approval of the quotation process had been received by SEUPB and Artsekta, as the successful applicant, had been contacted. The unsuccessful applicant had also been informed of the outcome.

The revised resource allocation documentation to support local community activity along the Greenway was approved by SEUPB on 16th February 2023. A call for applications would open in early March 2023, for community groups / organisations along the Forth Meadow Community Greenway.

- **Shared Space Volunteer Training**

<b>Deliverable targets</b>	<b>Targets achieved</b>
<i>Sustrans</i>	
30 volunteers (15 Walk & 15 Cycle Leads)	27 completers across 3 groups
<i>Volunteer Now Enterprise</i>	
15 volunteers (Local Ambassadors)	13 completers
<i>The Conservation Volunteers</i>	
15 volunteers (Nature Guides)	12 completers

Contract letters for the interim coordination of volunteering had been issued to Sustrans, Volunteer Now Enterprise and The Conservation Volunteers.

A further study visit to Cloughmills Community Action Team was being planned for March. The Volunteer Leads and volunteers had been contacted to gauge interest and availability.

- **Governance / Management Model**

The implementation of a suitable management and governance model was progressing with the delivery partners, MDL, facilitating further discussions with CNS Senior Managers and Council officers, regarding the resourcing and coordination of activities and services along FMCG, during a site visit to Belfast in early February 2023.

MDL had also facilitated an initial steering group workshop, during this visit, with interested community stakeholders. Due to the limited number of individuals involved at this stage, MDL had advised that subgroups were not an option as yet.

An interim report had been provided by MDL, on progress to date and the potential next steps, which would be presented to the late March Programme Board for review. The Members would be updated on feedback and comments.



- **Youth Engagement & Civic Education**

<b>Deliverable targets</b>	<b>Targets achieved</b>
280 young people	386 young people registered from Nubia, Blackmountain, Glencairn, Forthspring, St Peters, Ballysillan, Clonard, Corpus Christi, GVRT, Holy Trinity, Malone College, St Genevieve's, Belfast Boys Model and Youth Initiatives
60 contact hours per participants	265 young participants have achieved 60+ contact hours.

A total of 386 young people had participated or were participating on this project, with 265 achieving a minimum of 60 contact hours. Supporting registration forms and attendance tracker had been submitted.

A celebration event attended by approximately 60 young people had taken place in Crumlin Road Gaol, on 9th February. Certificates of Achievement were awarded to the participants by the Shared City Partnership Chairperson, Councillor John Kyle.

- **SSS Activities and Animation Programme**

Artsekta had submitted an end of project report, which was currently being reviewed prior to a final payment being processed.

The financial position remained as previously reported, claims for the SSS theme totalling £2.9m had been submitted to SEUPB, with £1.9m reimbursed to date. SEUPB verification of outstanding claims totally approximately £1m was progressing.

The submission of Period 33 claims by 28th February 2023 was a key priority and was progressing.

A Member questioned the accuracy of the Mackie's facts in the narrative compendium, and also requested detail on those who contributed to the narratives on page 74 of the report pack). The Peace IV Programme Manager advised that she would revert to Mediation NI to have the information fact checked with a further report to the Members for approval.

The Partnership noted the contents of the report and related appendices and recommended to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to agree:

- That a request for a 3-month extension to 30th September 2023 was explored with SEUPB to enable the installation of signage;
- The target audience for the SSS narratives publication as the local community and visitors to the Forth Meadow Community Greenway; and
- The naming of the bridge at Springfield Dam as the 'Foundry Bridge'.

## **Building Positive Relationships (BPR Update)**

The Partnership considered the undernoted report.

### **“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**

To provide the Shared City Partnership with an update on progress report in respect of the Building Positive Relations (BPR) theme of the PEACE IV Local Action Plan.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

The Partnership is requested to note the contents of the report and related appendices and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to:

#### **BPR 1 - NIHE- Cross Community Area Networks**

- note that discussions have progressed with SEUPB relating to proposed mitigations and next steps

#### **BPR 2 - Culture Unit - Creative Communities**

- note the quotation for an artist for the Short Strand/Walkway received nil submissions and therefore delivery of this project element is no longer viable.

#### **BPR6 St Comgall's**

- to consider and agree the updated Educational Resources (App III) and Exhibition Materials (App IV) as agreed by the Programme Board on 9 February 2023 via delegated authority. The exhibition materials (website) are to be approved, subject to SEUPB approval.

### **3.0 Main report**

#### **Key Issues**

As members are aware, projects are at various stages of delivery; some projects are completing, whilst activity is continuing with other projects. The status and progress of projects are outlined in Appendix I BPR Progress report.

### **3.1 BPR1 – Cross Community Area Networks (CCAN)**

Discussions have progressed with SEUPB regarding the proposed mitigations, and whilst positive, SEUPB has requested a detailed breakdown of all deliverables across both BPR 1 and CYP 5, which is outlined in Appendix II Updated NIHE positional paper. The next steps and agreed actions will be advised and progressed with the delivery

partner once formalised by SEUPB. Deliverables are summarised in the table below.

The mitigations were presented to SEUPB, specifically the reduced tolerances of 70% and movement from Core to Peer. Members should note that a recent update from NIHE has indicated there may be impact on budget and expenditure based on under delivery from NIHE's delivery agents, therefore there will be underspend in the external expertise budget line. A revised budget and final position from NIHE have been requested.

Targets BPR1	Original targets	Amended	Achieved before mitigations	Current Position with mitigations applied- 70% tolerances	% Contract achieved with mitigations	Rationale
6 Cross community area networks	6 achieved	no amendments made	5 of 6	3 of 6	50%	*East CCAN engaged but the cross-community group did not continue therefore group was identified as single identity and not viable going forward. With movement from Core to Peer groups- 3 of 6 CCAN remain with 80% participant levels- refer to tables below for breakdown
24 participants per CCAN numbers-	6 networks with 24 in each 144	Amended to 100 20 per CCAN	See breakdown below	refer to App II	50%	*Core networks established but due to engagement levels those that attended both Core and peer sessions

						were transferred to Peer to increase peer outputs
Core Participants Hrs	144 participants 200hrs	100 participants 120hrs	13/100*	25/100 completed 70% or above of engagement hrs	25%	*Before mitigations is with 80% tolerances applied for 13/100
Peer Participants Hrs	900 participants 30hrs	485 participants 30hrs	73/485	214/485 completed 70% or above of engagement hrs	44%	Move from Core to Peer increased outputs under Peer tolerances reduced also helped increase levels of achievement in Peer participants completing.
					% achieved 41%	

### 3.2 BPR2 – Creative Communities Project

Project progress has been re-established and activity within the Football cluster is on track to complete by mid-March.

Members are requested to note that the new cohort previously advised from Short Strand/Walkway is unable to progress as nil submissions were received from the quotation exercise to appoint an artist.

Feedback from those invited to quote indicated reasons for not submitting a quotation as: other work priorities, limited delivery timeframe, stringent outputs and impeding of artistic licence.

The opportunity and time scale to deliver this project element has passed, as all contracts are due to finish by 31 March 2023. Therefore, members should note that it is

no longer viable to go seek further quotations as both the market and appetite for this piece of work have been fully explored.

Target	Status
8 cohorts established ( reduced to 6)	5 achieved
144 participants registered (24 per cohort)	102
Participants completes 42 hrs (reduced from 60hrs)	78 (1 cohort still to complete)
8 publications completed	5 in progress

The draft publications from McCadden have been reviewed and are being progressed. The contract for McCadden managed by the internal delivery partner stipulates 8 booklets will be produced. However, given the number of cohorts this is now reduced to 5 outputs, revision of the contract has been advised to ensure payment aligns with outputs achieved and can be successfully processed through SEUPB claims.

### 3.3 BPR3 – Transform for Change Project

Project is closed and all activity complete. On the spot verification and subsequent report completed. The final verification of ILM qualifications has now been confirmed as 209 participants completing both the Transformative Leadership Programme and attaining an ILM level 3 qualification.

Final report from delivery partner and closure report are completed allowing progress to last stage of contract payment.

S3 Solutions have delivered on the final version of evaluation, pending last and agreed edits this is now complete and final stage of payment is underway.

Target	Status
45 cluster reports	48 submitted
15 case studies	13 submitted
45 TLP courses	42 achieved
634 participants	592 completed

### 3.4 BPR5 - LINC5 Project

The LINC5 project has completed and is in final stages of closure and progression of final payment is underway.

Target	Status
96 participants – to engage in 68 hrs of engagement	96 participants completed 68 hrs and over
1 Shared learning event per annum 2 Intercultural events per annum	3 achieved 14 achieved

### 3.5 **BPR5 – Traveller Project - Supporting Connected Communities**

Project activity has completed, and the project is progressing to final closure. An initial closure review and end report are now complete. Verification of all data and an inventory is being compiled.

Target	Status
40 participants – Traveller and Settled Communities	32 completed 26 hrs or more 3 completed between 23-25hrs
200 attendees at community events	135 people attended 3 community events and 1 festival.

### 3.6 **BPR5 – Roma Project - Supporting Connected Communities**

The Roma project has completed and is in final stages of closure and progression of final payment is underway.

### 3.7 **BPR6 – St. Comgall's**

Members are reminded that potential equality issues associated with the educational resources were highlighted and discussed with the delivery partner. As a result, further consultation was carried out with a cross-community group and the resources updated.

The updated educational resources and exhibition materials were considered as part of the Programme Board papers on 9 February 2023. The Programme Board has approved the materials under previously assigned delegated authority. Members are requested to consider and agree the updated Educational Resources (App III) and Exhibition Materials (App IV). The education resources have been approved by SEUPB. The exhibition materials (website) are being reviewed by SEUPB at present and so approval is subject to SEUPB approval.

All project workshops, seminars, and so on are now complete. The final level of completion is in the table below. The final celebration event took place on 31 January 2023 at the St Comgall's building, with a presentation of certificates to participants from the adult cohort.

Target	Status
20 core young people participants	27 completed target of 33 hrs
20 core adult participants	21 completed reduced target of 32 hrs
	<b>48 out of 40 target complete</b>

### **3.8 Cinematography Project**

Production of content capturing the Belfast Peace Journey is wrapping up. Filming was completed for BPR6, and a voiceover captured for the Programme Film in February. Clips were finalised for FMCG Sculpture artist, CYP5 peer mentoring, OTRT and BPR1 end of project clips and BPR Thematic clip. End of project clips for CYP5, SSS and BPR6 are in draft being finalised. The final overall programme clip is in production.

### **3.9 Financial and Resource Implications**

The financial position is as previously reported, claims for the BPR theme totalling £3.3m have been submitted to SEUPB, with £2.4m reimbursed to date. As such £965K remains outstanding from SEUPB, with verification of claims for Period 30 and 31 now being progressed by SEUPB.

Preparation for the submission of Period 33 claims by 28 February 2023 is underway.

### **3.10 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

The draft plan has been equality screened and discussed at the Equality Consultative Forum on 13 May 2015. The Equality Consultative Forum was further consulted on 18 November 2020.”

The Partnership noted the contents of the report.

### **Good Relations**

#### **Good Relations Action Plan** **2023/24 Quarter 1 Expenditure**

The Good Relations Officer reminded the Members that the Council received 75% of the costs for the delivery of its Good Relations Action Plan from The Executive Office. While the Council could expect to receive the same allocation as it did in 2022/23, no formal Letter of Offer would be received until April or May. The Council contributed a minimum of 25% and currently contributed £328,263 towards the overall delivery of the Action Plan as well as £59,500 towards the bonfire programme for

beacon related costs. The total Council contribution to staffing and programmes in the Good Relations Action Plan for the full year was £387,763.

The Good Relations Officer informed the Members that officers had assessed that, if the delivery of the Action Plan was to proceed as planned, a number of projects would need to commence in Quarter 1 (April – June). This included the small grants programme, intervention projects, mobilisation and procurement of some projects such as the Civic Engagement and Learning Programme, the Cultural Inclusion Programme, the Minority Ethnic Equality and Inclusion Programme, the allocation of beacons and the delivery of some events. He added that, if all desired projects were to commence, this would necessitate a commitment of roughly £300,000 to cover staffing and programmes for Quarter 1. This figure included a full commitment at 100% to any project allocated funding.

The Good Relations Officer explained that, as there would be reduced Shared City Partnership meetings over the months of Quarter 1, officers were seeking agreement to proceed with the delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan 2023/24 under Delegated Authority of the Director of Neighbourhood Services, allocating up to 25% of the total Plan until a formal Letter of Offer had been received by The Executive Office (TEO). This would enable projects to start in line with what was in the Action Plan already agreed by Council. This approach was consistent with what was agreed in 2022. Given that the Council had already allocated the monies to cover these elements, the Members were asked to approve the continuation of this approach. All expenditure and allocations of funding were reported on a quarterly basis to the Shared City Partnership and to TEO.

The Members were also requested to approve that, due to the high volume of applications for the Small Grants programme under BCC1, officers were seeking to add an additional £23,000 to the original £120,000 for grants to include projects that met the aims of the Strategic Intervention programme, BCC9, given the demand received. These projects met the objectives of the BCC9 programme and would be reported on through that programme.

Ms. A. Tohill relayed a request from TEO which asked that the TEO Planned Intervention Programme be communicated to community groups.

The Shared City Partnership agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee:

- To proceed with the delivery of the Good Relations Action Plan 2023/24 under delegated authority of the Director of Neighbourhood Services, allocating up to 25% of the total Plan until a formal Letter of Offer had been received by TEO; and
- Approve the increase in the allocation of Grant Aid under BCC1, to incorporate an additional £23,000 from the BCC9 Strategic Intervention Programme in order to include projects that met the objectives of the programme.

#### **Update on BCC3 Cultural Inclusion Programme**

The Good Relations Officer updated the Members on the ongoing work of the BCC3 Programme in the Good Relations Action Plan on Cultural Inclusion and Co-Design, within the broad Unionist Community.



He provided background to the project which was included in the Council's Good Relations Action Plan under BCC3, after it was highlighted in 2020 that there was a lack of applications coming to the Council's Culture/Arts/Heritage team for funding from a number of sectors and in particular, that there was significant under-representation in applicants from Unionist areas across the City. As reported to the Partnership in August 2022, as part of the Quarter 1 update on the Action Plan, this project got underway in June 2022 with the commencement of a co-design process with a number of groups across the City.

The Members recalled that, as part of the Good Relations Action Plan for 2022/23, provision was made for the development and delivery of a Cultural Inclusion project within the BCC3 Programme, which also included the provision of Beacons. The project focused on work with the broad Unionist Community, with activity including training, mentoring, capacity building and cultural events.

The Good Relations Officer outlined the programme goals and explained that a side-aim of the project was to increase the capacity within the broad Unionist community to be part of Belfast's year of culture, creativity and imagination in 2024. He explained, that as plans were being developed for this festival throughout 2024, one of the key elements of this programme was to create pathways for participation of the Unionist community in what would be developed for this significant year.

A core group of participants were invited to form part of the initial exploration group which met in June at 2 Royal Avenue. 15 participants attended and agreed to participate in a co-design process to explore how the project might develop and consider what relevant activities could be delivered. 7 further meetings were held in locations across the City to progress the project. The group had now agreed 2 strands of activity: capacity building and cultural activity. Within the capacity building strand, the following had been agreed and planned:

- Meet the Funders: East Belfast Networking Centre. Tuesday 14th March 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Making the Case for Support: Learn How to Say Clearly Why Funders Should Fund You. NICVA. Thursday 23rd March. 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Belfast 2024. What Is It and How Could It Support Your Community to Take Part. GVRT. Wednesday 22nd March. 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- One-to-One funding Support available by request
- Using Social Media Positively. Spectrum Centre. Tuesday 7th March. 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

For the Cultural Activity strand, the following had been created and planned:

- The creation of a short video to highlight positive cultural identity
- A Cultural Showcase Day event at 2 Royal Avenue on Friday 31st March from 11:00 a.m. This event would have the following activities:
  - The launch of the Cultural Identity video
  - A 'Living Library' event
  - A talk by historian and broadcaster, Dr David Hume
  - An exhibition of archival footage of cultural events by NI Screen

The Good Relations Officer and Ms. A. Roberts encouraged the Members to attend any or all of these events.

The Members noted the contents of the report and the activities that were being delivered during March 2023 as part of this project, to which the Members were welcome to attend.

### **Update on Belfast Agenda**

The Neighbourhood Services Manager updated the Members on the findings of the Belfast Agenda Refresh engagement programme in relation to the Good Relations and Shared Future priority and asked for comment on the feedback analysis template in Appendix 2.

The Members recalled that a significant co-design and consultation process to inform the “Refresh of the Belfast Agenda” took place in October/November 2022 through 10 workshops which had been attended by over 180 participants from 110 organisations, along with online forum discussion and feedback received.

She informed the Members that the findings had been analysed and cross-tabulated against the proposed strategic intentions, goals and actions which had been presented to the Living Here Board in January 2023. The presentation also outlined some of the next steps and key asks from convening leads/partners in terms of considering the key feedback and assessing what changes may (or may not) be appropriate. She referred to the analysis template attached at Appendix 2 which provided a RAG status and rationale.

She explained that the intention was to ensure that the Phase 2 engagement feedback was reflected in the draft strategy document and action plans which would be brought through the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) on 22nd March 2023 and supporting CPP Delivery Boards for consideration and approval in advance of being published for a 12-week formal consultation period.

The Partnership nominated Ms. A. M. White and Ms. B. Arthurs to sit on a group which would oversee the delivery of the action to develop an inclusive Belfast intervention plan to address inequalities and support the inclusion of Minority Ethnic communities and to progress the delivery of the findings from the Report, launched in December 2022, ‘Inequalities Experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast.’

### **The Members**

- (i) Agreed that the feedback analysis template relating to the Good Relations priority would be circulated to the Members with a deadline of receipt for feedback and comments by 15th March 2023, to allow for papers to be prepared in advance of the findings being brought to the Community Planning Partnership in March 2023;
- (ii) Noted that community planning partners would be asked to make a nomination to sit on a group which would oversee the delivery of the action to develop an inclusive Belfast intervention plan to address inequalities and support the inclusion of Minority Ethnic communities and to progress the delivery of the findings from the Report, launched in December 2022, ‘Inequalities Experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast.’ The Shared City Partnership would receive regular updates on progress; and
- (iii) Agreed that Ms. A. M. White and Ms. B. Arthurs be nominated from the Shared City Partnership to sit on the above group.

### **Storage Costs Kiltonga for Refugee Donations**

The Good Relations Officer advised the Members of a request from the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium, who had written to each of the 11 Councils seeking support costs for the storing of donations in relation to support for asylum seekers and refugees.

To maintain the space required the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium had written to the Council to request a donation of £300 towards the operation at Kiltonga Christian Centre. Therefore, the Members were asked to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to consider allocating support costs to assist with storage for donations relating to the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme, including £300 for this financial year.

She explained that the continued arrival of Asylum Seekers and Ukrainian Nationals had generated a significant expression of goodwill from the public. Many donations of food and essential household items were donated from across Northern Ireland. Over the past number of years, Councils had acted collaboratively to contribute to the costs of storing these donations and Kiltonga Christian Centre in Bangor was identified as an ideal space to collect, hold, sort and distribute the donations received.

The Members agreed to recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee to allocate support costs to assist with storage for donations relating to the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme, of £300 for this financial year.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>Subject:</b>	Equality & Diversity: Equality Screening and Rural Needs Outcome Report Q3 22-23
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, City Solicitor / Director of Legal & Civic Services
<b>Contact Officers:</b>	Sarah Williams, Governance & Compliance Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set out the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report of equality screenings and rural needs impact assessments for Quarter 3 2022-23
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	It is recommended that the Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the Quarterly Screening Outcome Report which will be published on the Council's website</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Background</u>
3.1	As Members will be aware, the Council has a duty to have, under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the nine equality categories; and</li> <li>• Regard to the desirability of promotion good relations</li> </ul> <p>In addition, under section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services</li> </ul> <p>To this end, the Council has a process to carry out equality screening and rural needs assessment of new and revised policies. This allows any impacts related to equality of opportunity, good relations or rural needs to be identified and addressed.</p>
3.2	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>An equality screening and rural needs impact assessment template is completed by the relevant officer, in collaboration with the Equality and Diversity Unit. On a regular basis, the Unit collates all completed templates into a screening outcome report and publishes onto the Council's website along with the relevant completed templates. The current screening outcome report for Quarter 2 22-23 is attached at <b>Appendix 1</b>.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This report contributes to the Council's compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Rural Needs Act 2016.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	<b>Appendix 1 – Screening Outcome Report for Q3 22-23</b>



**Belfast**  
**City Council**

**Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact  
Assessment from September to December 2022**

## Introduction

### Legislation – An Overview

#### Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Council, when carrying out its functions in relation to Northern Ireland, to have due regards to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories of persons, namely:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to its obligations above, the council must also have regards to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Council's Revised Equality Scheme was formally approved by the Equality Commission in March 2021. The revised Scheme outlines how we propose to fulfil our statutory duties under Section 75. Within the Scheme, the council gave a commitment to apply the screening methodology below to all new and revised policies and where necessary and appropriate to subject new policies to further equality impact assessment.

- What is the likely impact of equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy/proposal, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?
- Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within Section 75 equality categories?
- To what extent is the policy/proposal likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?



- Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

In keeping with the Council's commitments in its Equality Scheme, the Council has applied the above screening criteria to new policies and proposals. Screening identifies policies that are likely to have an impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Screening identifies the impact of the policy/proposal as major, minor or none.

- If major – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out.
- If minor – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.
- If none – screen out and give reasons.
- Ongoing screening – for strategies/policies that are to be put in place through a series of stages – screen at various stages during implementation.

The council also committed within its Revised Equality Scheme to prepare and publish for information regular reports on its screening exercises. This is screening report providing details on all screenings undertaken from the period October to December 2022.

### **Rural Needs Impact Assessments**

The Council also has a statutory duty under the Rural Needs (Northern Ireland) Act 2016 to consider rural needs in the development of new policies, plans or strategies or in any service design/delivery decisions. The Council must therefore engage with rural stakeholders in relation to policy development when it is relevant and appropriate. The Equality and Diversity Unit is responsible for reporting to the Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee and for ensuring that annual reporting returns are submitted to DAERA.

To further promote openness and transparency, there is a link to each completed screening and rural needs impact assessment template on the Council's website.

[www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)

The templates details all policies screened over this period and includes decisions reached.

## **Consultation**

The development of new policies and proposals will be supported by effective engagement processes to ensure that staff, service users and all interested parties are fully involved.

Planning for, and delivering safe and cost effective services requires close collaboration at many levels.

If you have any queries about this document, and its availability in alternative formats (including Braille, disk and audio cassette, and in other languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English) then please contact:

Lisa McKee  
Equality and Diversity Unit  
Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

Direct Line 02890 270555  
or 028 90 320202 ext 6310  
email: [equality@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:equality@belfastcity.gov.uk) or [McKeeL@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:McKeeL@belfastcity.gov.uk)

## **Screening Outcome**

The screening outcomes are outlined in the table below. Three possible outcomes are recorded:

If **Major** – an Equality Impact Assessment may be carried out. **EQIA** - subject to further scrutiny under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 to determine the impact upon

those directly affected, which in turn will require informal and formal consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

If **Minor** – consider mitigation or alternative policy and screen out.

If **None** – screen out and give reasons.

### Screening Outcome Options

Major= In

Minor= Out with mitigation

None= Out without mitigation

### Rural Needs Impact Assessment Options

Does the policy, plan, strategy or service design/delivery impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

### Belfast City Council Equality Screening Outcome Report and Rural Needs Impact Assessment

This report includes published screenings and Rural Needs Impact Assessments for the period October– December 2022. Copies can be found at:

<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/council/equality/eqia.aspx>

Description of Policy/Proposal	Rural Needs Impact Assessment	ECNI Screening Decision and Contact
Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund	This fund will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts)  Contact: Brian Carr
Pilot Workstyles Policy	This policy will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) Contact: Andrea Anderson
Change to Shift Rota in Security Unit	This shift rota will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – Mitigating Actions (minor impacts) Contact: John Terrett

Additional Leave Provision for Bereavement, Miscarriage and Fertility	The addition leave provision will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)  Contact: Sharon Steele
Age Friendly Belfast Plan 2022-2026	This plan will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)  Contact: Gillian McAvoy
Smart Belfast Innovation Framework 2022-2026	This framework will have no detrimental impact on rural area residents of Belfast	Screened Out – No EQIA necessary (no impacts)  Contact: Paula Fee

## **Minutes of Party Group Leaders Consultative Forum Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

### **Attendance**

#### **Members:**

Councillor Ciaran Beattie  
Councillor Michael Long  
Councillor Billy Hutchinson  
Alderman George Dorrian  
Councillor Donal Lyons  
Alderman Sonia Copeland  
Councillor Mal O'Hara

Alison Allen, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Local Government Association (for Item 1)

**Apologies:** Councillor Fiona Ferguson, Councillor Emmet McDonough-Brown,

#### **Officers:**

John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy  
John Greer, Director of Economic Development (for Item 2)  
Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance (for Item 3)  
Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services (for Items 4, 7 & 8)  
Siobhan Toland, Director City Services (for Item 8)  
Cathy Matthews Director, Resources and Fleet (for Item 8)  
Sinead Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes (for Item 8)

### **1. Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)**

Alison Allen, Chief Executive, NILGA was in attendance, she presented a briefing for Members outlining the key role of NILGA in providing advice and policy support to the sector, and in particular support provided for Belfast. She outlined some of the key programmes of work that NILGA has taken forward including an update on key actions for Elected Member Development, Policy, Communications and Representation. Members also noted the outlined priorities for potential future support for Local Government and Belfast given Belfast's regional leadership role. Members thanked Alison for the update provided.

### **2. UK & Ireland Bid to host UEFA EURO 2028**

The Director of Economic Development provided an update on the current status of the UK & Ireland Bid to host UEFA EURO 2028 which was previously considered at the February

Party Group Leaders Forum meeting. Members discussed the proposal, the requirement from Belfast and the challenging timescale involved in relation to the final bid submission to the Central Bid Team. There was detailed discussion in relation to the financial considerations and stadium provision and a report on the detail discussed will be submitted to March SP&R Committee for approval.

### **3. Finance Update**

The Director of Finance provided an update for Members on the current financial position for 2022-23. He advised that some funds have become available for potential re-allocation and whilst it had been agreed that reallocations of forecast departmental underspends would be considered as part of year end reporting, in this instance the underspend is from a specified reserve and not a departmental underspend and therefore members could consider to reallocate this for other purposes. A report will be presented to March SP&R with the detail of the funds available for Members consideration.

The Director also advised that a report would be submitted to March SP&R Committee providing an update on the proposed strategy to fund the 2023/24 budgetary gap and highlighting the need for a longer-term, forward-looking approach to rate setting.

### **4. Freedom of the City**

The City Solicitor outlined for Members a proposed request from a Member for the conferment of the Freedom of the City. There was consensus from all Party Group Leaders to support the proposal. Members noted the current process for considering requests for Freedom of the City and noted the next steps in the process, following which a report will be submitted to March SP&R recommending that the award be made and requesting to set a date for a special meeting of the Council to formally consider the proposal.

### **5. Belfast Agenda Refresh**

The Director of City & Organisational Strategy provided an update on the progress made to date on the development of the refreshed Belfast Agenda strategy document and action plan following the recent Continuing the Conversation engagement programme. He outlined the key engagement activity that will be taking place over the coming months in advance of the draft Belfast strategy being issued for formal consultation in early July 2023.

A report will be brought to Mach SP&R outlining the key next steps and timeframes along with a draft of the strategy document and action plan for Members consideration.

## **6. Chinese Ambassador Visit to Belfast**

The Director of City & Organisational Strategy provided an update on an upcoming visit to Belfast of Chinese Ambassador to the UK, Mr Zheng Zeguang. Members noted the dates of the visit and the Ambassador's programme which will be led by The Northern Ireland Executive Office. Members also noted the Lord Mayor's civic participation in the programme. A number of issues were raised by Members in relation to both the upcoming visit and other Ambassadorial visits. It was agreed clarity would be sought on the issues raised and an update will be brought back to Party Group Leaders.

## **7. Planning Update**

The City Solicitor updated the Forum on the live planning applications and informed the Forum of applications that were being presented to the Planning Committee in the coming months. She also advised that the Local Development Plan adoption date would be considered by the Planning Committee and it is anticipated that this would be in early May 2023. In relation to some queries raised by Members in relation to the implementation date and the impact for current applications already in the system the City Solicitor advised a report on the process will also be submitted to the Planning Committee on any potential implications.

A Member raised an issue in relation to city centre living and how this is considered within a strategic context. City Solicitor to follow up with the Director City Regeneration & Development.

## **8. AOB**

### **Freedom of the City**

Councillor Lyons outlined for Members a proposed request for a further conferment of the Freedom of the City. There was detailed discussion from Members and a general consensus that this request and any further requests would be considered in the new council term. Councillor Long also put forward a request for consideration which the City Solicitor noted.

Members also asked that further consideration was given for alternative options on how citizens could be recognised by the council. The City Solicitor to follow up and progress in advance of the new Council term.

### **City of Belfast School of Music – North Belfast**

Councillor O'Hara raised an issue in relation to the City of Belfast School of Music based in North Belfast. Councillor O' Hara advised he had previously written to Party Group Leaders on this issue and there was consensus from all Party Group Leaders that he take forward the next steps as discussed and outlined.

### **Illuminate Requests**

The City Solicitor outlined for Members a number of illumination requests received namely:

- **National Day of Reflection** - 23 March
- **Brain Tumour Awareness** - 30 March
- **Endometriosis Awareness Month** – date to be agreed in line with availability
- **Global Intergenerational Week** - 24 April

Members noted the requests would be agreed under the City Solicitors delegated authority. A member raised in query in relation to World Down Syndrome Day and the City Solicitor advised that this had already been actioned. The City Solicitor to review the process for illumination where possible repeated illuminations could be added to the schedule rather than being considered as separate requests annually.

### **Forth Meadow Community Greenway Signage**

The Director Physical Programmes advised that Members had been updated previously that a request had been received for Irish language signage to be installed at Forth Meadow Community Greenway. She advised that the request has now been reviewed in line with the letter of offer and equality screening process and she presented the proposed approach and shared some proposed models for the signage. There was detailed discussion on the proposed approach and some other alternative options suggested by Members. It was also requested that the Director provides a briefing for those elected representatives within the specific areas of the greenway being discussed. The Director to consider the options discussed and arrange a briefing for Members and an update will then be brought back to Party Group Leaders in due course



### **Port Health Update**

The Director City Services provided an update for Members in relation to the Port of Belfast operations and the ongoing engagement that is taking place with Belfast and other Councils following the publication of the UK Government published Windsor Framework. She also provided an update on the ongoing engagement that is taking place with DAERA, DEFRA and FSA. Members will be updated accordingly as this evolves.

### **Easter – Waste Collection Arrangements**

The Director Resources and Fleet provided an update for Members on the arrangements being put in place to ensure adequate staffing resources for bin collections for the upcoming next public holidays over the Easter period. She outlined the process to date and advised that final arrangements once confirmed would be circulated in a further written update for all Members in the coming weeks and in advance of the Easter holiday period.

### **Statues Update**

The Director Physical Programmes presented the outcome of the recent tender process on the commissioning for two City Hall Statues. She advised that the procurement process was now complete and the recommendation from the Installations City Hall/City Hall Grounds Working Group would be considered by March SP&R. Members noted the timeline for design, manufacture and installation and that regular updates will be considered by the working group as this progresses. The Director provided clarity on some queries raised in relation to the unveiling for these statues and other commissioned statues and also on the development of narrative for the new pieces.

### **Olympia Leisure Centre**

The City Solicitor provided an update on the EQIA process for bilingual signage at the Olympia Leisure Centre. It was noted that a report would be brought to March SP&R Committee outlining the proposed timeline.

### **Staff Car Parking**

The Director of City & Organisational Strategy updated the Forum on the current proposals for Raphael Street staff car park and the subsequent impact for staff and the interim measures that would be put in place for staff using the car park. He advised that discussions were ongoing with the Trade Unions and that a meeting would be held with JNCC next week in advance of communication being issued to staff.

**East Belfast GAA**

Councillor Long raised an issue in relation to East Belfast GAA and requested an update for Party Group Leaders. The City Solicitor to follow up.

**Bonfires**

Councillor Long raised a query in relation to Bonfires and asked for an update on the scheduling for a meeting which had been agreed at Council. The Director City Services provided clarity on the query raised and to follow up accordingly.

**Request for Use of City Hall**

The City Solicitor outlined a request that had been received for the use of City Hall in relation to the upcoming anniversary of the signing of the Good Friday Agreement which Members noted.



**Belfast**  
City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	Requests for use of the City Hall and the provision of Hospitality
<b>Date:</b>	24 March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Aisling Milliken, Functions and Exhibition Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	This paper, together with the attached appendix, contains the recommended approach in respect of each of the requests by external organisations for access to the City Hall function rooms received up to 10 March 2023.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<u>Background Information</u> The current criteria for use of the function rooms used to review external applications is Functions permitted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>functions which support other events in the city and which are of demonstrable economic benefit to Belfast whether organised by the council or not</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• functions which demonstrably enhance the city's image nationally or internationally as a desirable commercial, business or tourist destination</li> <li>• functions designed to celebrate or commemorate a notable achievement or significant anniversary (25, 50, 100 years) by an organisation or body with close links to the city or province</li> <li>• functions organised by recognised local community or voluntary sector groups for non-profit and non-political purposes</li> </ul>
3.2	<p>Functions not permitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conferences, meetings, seminars, performances, wedding receptions, private parties or receptions and similar booking requests in the prestige function rooms</li> <li>• functions, which have as their principal purpose the generation of commercial gain for the organisers. Charity-fundraising functions are managed by the Lord Mayor's Office.</li> <li>• functions which have no compelling links to the council or the city specifically and which could instead use local private sector facilities</li> <li>• functions which have as their primary purpose the advancement of any political or religious cause or campaign or are otherwise potentially contentious or involve significant reputation risks for the council.</li> <li>• functions which involve exceptionally large or disruptive set-ups or pose a real and tangible risk to the fabric of the building or grounds</li> </ul> <p><u>Key Issues</u></p>
3.3	<p>The existing revised criteria and scale of charges have been applied to the various requests received and the recommendations herein are offered to the Committee on this basis for approval.</p>
3.4	<p>The schedule attached at Appendix 1 covers 7 applications for functions, scheduled for 2023 and 2024.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 - Schedule of function requests received up to 10 March 2023.

## MARCH 2023 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNCTION DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	CRITERIA MET	ROOM CHARGE	HOSPITALITY OFFERED	CIVIC HQ RECOMMEND
<b>2023 EVENTS</b>						
Telugu Cultural Society of Northern Ireland	23 April 2023	<b>Ugadi 2023</b> – New Year Celebration event for the people of Deccan, India people living in Belfast including a cultural program.  Numbers attending 300	D	No charge as community group	No (There is no catering planned for this event)	Approve, No charge No hospitality
BTC - Belfast Tamil Community	29 April 2023	<b>BTC 10-year anniversary and Tamil New Year Celebration</b> - – an evening of food and entertainment to celebrate Tamil New Year  Numbers attending 300	C & D	No charge as community group	Yes, Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Soft Drink Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	7 June 2023	<b>Belfast Trust Staff Remembrance Service 2023</b> for staff and volunteers who have died.  Numbers attending – 300 - 400	C	Charge £825 <i>waived due to nature of the event</i>	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
Disasters Emergency Committee	20 June 2023	<b>Launch of Ukraine Exhibition</b> of photography depicting humanitarian assistance in Ukraine, the Pakistan Floods and the Turkey-Syria earthquakes. Launch will thank corporate and political supports of DEC's appeals.  Numbers attending 300	D	No charge as charity	Yes, Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Soft Drink Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>

## MARCH 2023 CITY HALL FUNCTION APPLICATIONS

OMNI (Organisation of Malayalees in Northern Ireland)	29 August 2023	<b>PONNONAM 2023</b> - A Cultural dinner and entertainment programme to celebrate Onam.  Numbers attending 400	D	No charge as community group	Yes, Soft drinks reception.	Approve No Charge Soft Drink Reception  <i>£500 given to their chosen caterer.</i>
British Society of Immunology	5 December 2023	<b>BSI Congress Speakers Dinner</b> for guests attending their 3-day congress taking place in ICC  Numbers attending - 150	A & B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality
<b>2024 EVENTS</b>						
Ulster University	17 June 2024	<b>SPEA12 12th European Conference Dinner</b> for guests attending their 4 day conference taking place in Ulster university on Solar Chemistry and Photocatalysis: Environmental Applications (SPEA).  Numbers attending - 250	A & B	No (Waiver as linked to Visit Belfast and Charity)	No hospitality	Approve No Charge No hospitality

## City Hall/City Hall Grounds Installations Working Group

Wednesday, 22nd February, 2023

### THE CITY HALL/CITY HALL GROUNDS INSTALLATIONS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

#### HYBRID MEETING IN THE CONOR ROOM

Members present: Councillor Beattie (Chairperson);  
Alderman Dorrian; and  
Councillor Lyons.

In attendance: Ms. S. Grimes, Director of Physical Programmes;  
Ms. K. Mullen, Project Sponsor;  
Mr. M. Doherty, Project Manager;  
Mr. C. Shields, Assistant Project Manager; and  
Ms. E. McGoldrick, Democratic Services Officer.

#### **Apologies**

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor O'Hara.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 14th December, 2022 were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **City Hall Statues Update on Moderation (Verbal Update)**

The Project Sponsor reminded the Members that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 28th March 2022, had agreed that the City Hall Statues – Winifred Carney and Mary Ann McCracken be moved to Stage 3; committed on the Capital Programme; and that the necessary procurement processes be initiated, as required with contracts to be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tenders and full commitment to deliver.

She advised the Working Group that, of the five artists which had been shortlisted to ITT (invitation to tender) stage, four of the artists had submitted their proposals and the moderation panel had considered the submissions against the following themes: Quality; Social Value and Price.

The Working Group were presented with maquettes and visual aids of each proposal for inspection. The Project Sponsor and Assistant Project Manager provided an

overview of the artist concepts, together with the feedback from the moderation panel and its recommendations.

During discussion, the Working Group provided feedback on each of the proposals. The Director of Physical Programme's reminded Members that the details of the proposals and outcome of the Moderation Panel was confidential, until the appointment of a selected artist had been made.

After discussion, the Working Group noted the information which had been provided and that the recommendations and feedback from the Moderation Panel and Working Group would be submitted to the Strategic and Policy Resources Committee for consideration.

### **Frederick Douglass Update**

The Working Group was reminded that Endeavour Art Studio (Alan Herriot Beattie) was appointed to manufacture and install a statue of Frederick Douglass.

It was reported that the design team visited Belfast in December 2022 for a site visit and the location had been agreed as the junction of Rosemary Street/Lombard Street. Manufacture of the piece was progressing with a mould of the finished statue ready for sign off in the foundry.

In relation to the public unveiling and an associated programme of events, the Project Sponsor highlighted that Professor Christine Kinealy (subject matter expert) would be in Ireland lecturing at a conference on 21st or 22nd June, and suggested that the public unveiling could take place on Friday, 23rd June or Monday, 26th June, subject to Professor Kinealy's availability.

The Project Sponsor outlined the initial proposals for the unveiling:

- Formal unveiling by Lord Mayor of Belfast and Minister for Communities (part funder);
- Number of Frederick Douglass walking tours (facilitated by Professor Kinealy);
- Update the Frederick Douglass walking tour brochure to include the location of the new statue;
- Lecture/talk/debate at City Hall or another venue with a direct link to Frederick Douglass, with a focus on how Frederick Douglass beliefs, views, campaigns were very much relevant in today's world, for example: the links to slavery, human trafficking, women's rights, poverty and education. Should funding be available there was the potential to seek a local media person to chair the panel.

With regard to invitations for the official unveiling, the Working Group were informed that it was proposed to extend an invitation to: the US Ambassador to Northern Ireland, Joe Kennedy III of Massachusetts; The US Consulate and Consul General Paul Narain; and the Council's Sister Cities connection.



The Project Sponsor advised that regular updates would be provided to the Working Group during this process, however, due to Local Government Elections, the next Working Group was scheduled for 7th June, 2023.

During discussion, one Member suggested the option of a Lord Mayors' reception for Professor Kinealy and highlighted the international interest in the statue.

After discussion, the Working Group:

- Noted the progress with the design and manufacture of the Frederick Douglass statue; and
- Noted the public unveiling arrangements and agreed to the proposed dates and associated programme of events, as outlined in the report.

### **Permanent Acknowledgement to Fire Service Belfast Blitz**

The Working Group was reminded that, at its meeting on 26th October, 2022, it had been agreed that further discussions would take place with a view to a permanent acknowledgement of all fire service efforts during the Belfast Blitz.

The Project Sponsor advised that the discussions had since taken place with representatives from the Fire Brigade Unions, both Belfast and Dublin, and it had been suggested that a permanent piece in the form of a resin cast of a fire brigade helmet be procured and installed. She highlighted that there had also been a request that such acknowledgement included the Auxiliary Fire Services for their efforts during the Belfast Blitz.

The Project Sponsor explained that the piece would be located initially in the Rotunda of the City Hall for a defined period of time and subsequently relocated to the City Hall exhibition.

The Working Group:

- Agreed to the installation of a permanent memorial to acknowledge all of the Fire Service efforts during the Belfast Blitz, as outlined; and
- Agreed that the project be included as an Emerging Project on Council's Capital Programme.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Castle, Cavehill, Zoo and North Foreshore Steering Group**

Monday, 27th February, 2023

### **CASTLE, CAVEHILL, ZOO AND NORTH FORESHORE STEERING GROUP MINUTES HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillor Whyte (Chairperson); and  
Councillors Hutchinson, Maskey,  
McCullough, Nelson and O'Hara.

In attendance: Mrs. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and  
Development;  
Ms. S. Kalke, Project Sponsor; and  
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

#### **Apologies**

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

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 6th February 2023 were agreed.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were reported.

#### **Access to the Hills - Presentation from ARUP**

Ms. M. McNamee (ARUP) attended in connection with this item and was welcomed by the Chairperson.

Ms. McNamee provided the background to the realisation of requirement to provide open space and outdoor recreation, given the indoor restrictions created by the Covid 19 pandemic. She referred to two notices of motion, which had been presented to Council in 2021, on the subject matter of providing increased access to the Belfast Hills.

To that end, she reported that specific routes had been identified and that the study undertaken had included both historical and new potential routes. As part of the delivery plan, she stated that a range of access agreements, providing access to the hills, would be required. Ms. McNamee referred to a longer-term objective of connecting the Belfast Hills to the Castlereagh Hills using the access conduit of the Lagan Valley.

In terms of the scoping exercise, Ms. McNamee reported that ARUP had commenced a stakeholder engagement programme to collect data and identify the main stakeholders and landowners relevant to the creation of a comprehensive and sustainable pathway network.

The Members were informed that, at the current stage of the engagement process, several refining workshops with active stakeholders who had been involved at stage one of the process were being organised. Ms. McNamee stated that ARUP had carried out a range of site visits in order to develop a comprehensive and detailed path audit which would assess gradients, viewpoints and identify potential constraints, including access, livestock and wildlife habitat.

As part of the refining process, the Steering Group was informed that a web-viewer software programme had been utilised to evaluate ecological and environmental constraints, including use made of publicly available web sites. Following completion of that process, the Members were informed that ARUP was able to create a list of constraints and opportunities, for the various routes, to cater for a range of ages and abilities and including constraints such as topography, traffic and land management.

Ms. McNamee reported that, as part of their pathway development proposals, ARUP had considered areas where they could achieve bio-diversity gain, including linkages to both communities and other greenways to promote active travel. The Steering Group was informed that they were currently in the process of identification and prioritisation of routes. Ms. McNamee reported that a comprehensive audit of all the various routes had been assessed, as part of a multi-criteria assessment tool, using a weighted score. She stated that this exercise had been undertaken in an endeavour to assess the routes, including the various opportunities and challenges associated with both.

The Steering Group was informed that ARUP had undertaken a high-level costing exercise, which included signage, steps and way finding. Ms. McNamee identified a range of potential routes providing the Members with a detailed map, as part of her presentation, which showed proposed linkages between the Belfast and Castlereagh Hills. It was reported that ARUP was now in the process of developing a range of concepts, for the various interventions, and was undertaking an economic appraisal in regard to a number of preferred routes.

The Members were informed that it was anticipated that a final report would be presented to the Council by the end of March 2023.

A Member raised a number of issues around access to the hills such as collaborative working, with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), to ensure adequate transportation and appropriate car parking facilities were provided at the appropriate access points to the hills in addition to alternative transport modes to provide access to the car parks. The Member enquired as to what measures could be included to minimise adverse environmental impact and restore the ecological balance to ensure net bio-diversity gain. The Member raised also the issue of using desire lines to develop and incorporate pathways into the Belfast Hills development proposals.

In response, Ms. McNamee stated that, as part of the promotion of active travel, ARUP had undertaken research on existing active travel infrastructure, as part of the MCA process, and that discussions had been undertaken with external landowners, including the National Trust. The Steering Group was informed that ARUP had been working with their ecology team to assess bio-diversity outcomes and the ecological impact associated with the Belfast Hills pathways programme. She stated that the use of desire lines to map out pathways had been used, in the past, to develop and formalise, both, pathways and mountain trails.

The Steering Group noted the information which had been provided and thanked Ms. McNamee for her detailed and informative presentation.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Steering Group agreed that its next scheduled meeting would be held on Monday, 7th August at 5.15 p.m.

Chairperson

This page is intentionally left blank

## Language Strategy Working Group

Thursday, 2nd March, 2023

### LANGUAGE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP MINUTES HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillors Walsh (in Chair), Long, O'Hara and Whyte.

In attendance: Ms. N. Largey, City Solicitor;  
Mrs. S. Williams, Governance and Compliance Manager;  
Mr. M. Johnston, Language Officer;  
Mr. R. Connolly, Policy, Research and Compliance Officer ;  
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer; and  
Mr. A. McMullan, Democratic Services Officer

#### **Apologies**

No apologies were noted.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were declared.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 11th November were taken as read and signed as correct.

#### **Language Strategy Action Plan - progress update**

The City Solicitor advised the members of the working group that the purpose of this report is to update the working group on the progress achieved in relation to the Draft Language Strategy Action Plan. She outlined a number of events that were being held to celebrate a number of cultural events, these included a Burns event that was organised in partnership with the Ulster-Scots Agency on Friday 27 January 2023 at the City Hall where over 400 school children attended from two different schools.

She outlined the plans for Seachtain na Gaeilge/Irish Language Week, and advised that the Council was planning to hold an event for primary schoolchildren in the City Hall in partnership with a local Irish-language author, Maire Zeyr on Tuesday 14 March. Belfast City Council would host the inaugural meeting of the Irish Language Stakeholder Forum on Thursday 9 March 2023 at which they would be presenting the draft Action Plan. She said they would be arranging a facilitated workshop to have detailed discussions about the draft Action Plan after that initial meeting before they would present an updated Action Plan to the Working Group.

To celebrate Sign Language Week, she advised members that they would be hosting an event in partnership with the British Deaf Association on Thursday 16 March 2023 at the City Hall. The theme for this event was 'Protecting BSL and ISL' which included a showcase of accessible health resources for Sign Language users.

In relation to the learning and development plan for Council staff, the City Solicitor advised Members of the working group that the Language Officer had held discussions with Autism NI, the Now Group and Deafblind UK on how the Council could become:

- An Autism NI Impact Champion
- A Jam Card Partner
- A Deafblind friendly service provider

Sign Solutions, a Sign Language training provider was also approached to deliver Sign Language courses for Council staff. She outlined to members that as a result of these discussions with the above disability organisations, training material had been received and the next step is to put a learning and development plan together for implementation as from April 2023. Members would be provided with further updates on this work. After discussion, members of the working group noted the contents of the report.

#### **Stakeholder Fora meetings - update**

The City Solicitor told the members of the working group that the purpose of the report was to update the working group on the progress in relation to stakeholders' consultations. She reminded members of the background to the consultations and said that arrangements were being made to hold meetings with each of the Language Strategy Stakeholder Fora in March 2023 with the exception of the Disabled Related Communications strand as the actions related to this workstrand were consulted on last year as part of the Disability Action Plan.

She advised that officers proposed to hold a facilitated workshop with each of the four fora to get feedback on the Council's draft Language Strategy Action Plan before reporting the matter back to the Working Group and SP&R Committee before issuing the draft plan for public consultation.

She said that it had been proposed to hold an inaugural meeting of the Irish Stakeholder Fora during Irish Language Week on Thursday 9 March which would be chaired by the City Solicitor and held in English. This would be followed by a second facilitated workshop session to get feedback on the draft Language Strategy Action Plan. Feedback from the various stakeholder forums would be brought to the next meeting of the Language Strategy Working Group.

After discussion, the working group noted the contents of the report.

Chairperson





<b>Subject:</b>	Attendance at Horizon 2020 UPSURGE in person meeting in Maribor Slovenia, 28 <sup>th</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John Tully, Director, City & Organisational Strategy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Alan Wardle – Project Support Officer (Climate Team)

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	Members are asked to note the Council's intention to send an officer to the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE Project Group Meeting taking place on 28 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup> March in Maribor, Slovenia which the Council is required to attend as a project partner.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Note that, as the project lead for the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project, Alan Wardle will be attending the Project Group meeting in 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> March in Maribor, Slovenia.</li> <li>II. Note that all costs associated with the attendance at the event are covered within the EU Horizon 2020 UPSURGE grant funding.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	Members will recall that in August 2020 Belfast City Council agreed to take part in the 'Upsurge Project' which focuses on testing nature-based solutions in partnership with four

	<p>other EU cities, with the aim of sharing learning and good practice. The site selected as the demonstrator for Belfast is the open ground at Lower Botanic Gardens, beside the Queen's PEC. Belfast City Council was subsequently awarded € 660,375 funding through Horizon Europe to deliver the demonstrator project which will include opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing across the city.</p>
3.2	<p>The UPSURGE project presents an innovative opportunity to develop an underused area of land within Belfast City Council's ownership, through a partnership with QUB, EU partners, and local community organisations. A project team has been established which includes Belfast City Council's Climate Team, Innovation Unit, City and Neighbourhood Services, Physical Programmes, City Regeneration, and Planning in addition to QUB representatives. The project will act as a hub, with the potential to support rewilding, enhanced local food production, stimulation of local circular economy, and will develop community education programmes in relation to climate, digital innovation, and community resilience.</p>
3.3	<p>As part of the delivery of the project, a number of Project Group Meetings are taking place at different host cities, where updates on the project will be provided, an opportunity to share learning and expertise on the effective delivery of the project is able to occur, and each of the 5 partner cities (Belfast, Breda, Budapest, Maribor, and Katowice) are asked to report on progress towards the delivery of their demonstrator project. At least one representative from each partner city is required to attend as per the funding agreement.</p>
3.4	<p>Belfast City Council has previously taken part in these meetings, with one previously taking place in Prato in October 2022. The benefits to the project from this meeting included building of relationships across project partners, learning on the various work packages, specifications and scope of works for the demonstrator development. It also created opportunities to identify risks, concerns and challenges between the 5 cities and communicate these to the other project partners so that the project can further support the cities to maximise the opportunities to deliver well on each of their demonstrator sites.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>
3.5	<p>There are no financial implications for Belfast City Council. All travel costs can be met within the EU Horizon 2020 funding of € 660,375.</p>

3.6	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>  None
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 - Link to the Horizon 2020 UPSURGE project page <a href="#">here</a> .

This page is intentionally left blank

## **All-Party Working Group on the City Centre**

Friday, 3rd March, 2023

MEETING OF THE ALL-PARTY WORKING GROUP ON THE CITY CENTRE  
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Members present: Councillor Long (Chairperson); and  
Councillors Dorian and McCullough.

In attendance:  
Ms. L. Toland, Head of Economic Development  
Ms. K. Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager;  
Mrs. D. Smith, Neighbourhood Service Integration  
Mr. J. Uprichard, Business and Research Development  
Manager ; and  
Mrs. G. Boyd, Democratic Services Officer.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was received from Councillors O'Hara and Hutchinson. Councillor Long agreed to act as chairperson for the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were reported.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 26th January, 2023 were agreed.

### **Presentation from BIDs on Purple Flag Accreditation**

The chairperson welcomed Chris McCracken from the Linen Quarter BID to the meeting of the working group. Mr McCracken then gave a presentation to update members on the Purple Flag accreditation for Belfast.

Mr McCracken said that Purple Flag accreditation was a UK wide accreditation system for the effective management of the night-time economy, the broad definition to include food and drink, arts and culture, family markets. The timeframe included activity from 5pm to 5am. As part of the accreditation there was help with problem identification and included a problem-solving process.

He continued that there were many benefits to purple flag accreditation that included a partnership approach to improved co-ordination of the night time economy, it raised standards and broadened the appeal of the City Centre. Wider patronage and increased expenditure, along with lower crime and anti-social behaviour were also associated with Purple Flag accreditation along with a more successful mixed-use economy in the longer term.

He went on to outline the 5 core standards of purple flag; the policy envelope, wellbeing, movement, appeal and place. Mr McCracken informed members of the background to Belfast's involvement as said that the 3 BID's had combined to deliver the Purple Flag scheme that had been awarded to Belfast in early 2020. Covid had disrupted activity for the next two years, but the public, private and 3rd sector steering group had reformed to renew 6-month renewal process using structured analytical process and independent evaluation. They had created a strategic action plan to support the night time economy and although the previous findings were still relevant, he said they would be retested in new 2023 perception survey. He gave members an overview of the public perception 2019 baseline survey and highlighted a number of the key findings.

He went on to outline work the BIDS were undertaking to support the night time economy that included enhanced policing, BID Clean Teams, City Centre Gift Card, Belfast Restaurant Week, Marketing initiatives throughout the year, Funding for additional Christmas Lighting, Delivery partner for regeneration alongside support for wider initiatives such as Ask for Angela, Night-Time Volunteers.

Mr McCracken concluded his presentation with 10 actions that would support Belfast city centre nighttime economy and which of the 5 themes they supported.

Members of the working group stressed the importance of assessing the work of the various groups working to revitalize the city centre and ensuring that the work was streamlined to ensure the key groups were involved to maximise impact. They asked officers to look at the various groups, their key priorities and how this information could be structured and then bring this information back to a future meeting of the working group.

After further discussion the Members of the working group noted the contents of the presentation.

Chairperson



<b>Subject:</b>	Update on dual language street signs
<b>Date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal & Civic Services Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ian Harper, Building Control Manager

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

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	This report is a further update to members on the dual language street signs applications.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the contents of the report.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
	<u>Applicants and current status</u>
3.1	The total number of live requests for dual language street signs received as of 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2023 is 458.

3.2	The first dual language street sign under the new policy was agreed by P&C Committee on the 7 <sup>th</sup> February and ratified by Council on 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2023, with a further 3 street signs agreed at P&C Committee on 7 <sup>th</sup> March.
3.3	There are currently 4 applications due to go to P&C Committee in April, subject to the results of the surveys. Officers expect that number to increase at future meetings once there is a full complement of staff in place.
3.4	The third member notification for the next 10 streets was issued on 24 <sup>th</sup> February and a further list will be issued at the end of March. Officers will review the frequency and number of applications on these lists once there is a full complement of staff.
3.5	Initial assessments to check for any potential adverse impacts on the grounds of equality or good relations were carried out on a further 20 streets on 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 and a further session for 20 streets is scheduled for the first week in April 2023. These assessments involve officers from across the council including Good Relations, Equality and Diversity Unit, Place and Economy and Building Control and include significant preparatory work and for decisions made to be fully documented.
3.6	<p><b><u>Workloads</u></b></p> <p>Survey work is the most labour-intensive part of the process. Analysis of the surveys carried out before the adoption of the new policy identified an average of 43 surveys per street. This was due to the fact that requests tended to be for smaller streets due to the requirement to get a third of residents to sign the initial request. As there is no longer a requirement to provide the initial petition, applications for larger streets have increased significantly. Currently the average surveys per street is 116, which is significant additional workload per street.</p> <p><b><u>Timeframe for the process</u></b></p>
3.7	Measures are in place to ensure that each stage of the process is progressing in a consistent manner, and bottlenecks are avoided. As many of the tasks as possible are being done in parallel to shorten the overall timeframe from application submitted to consideration by committee. However, given the multiple stages of the process and set timeframes, it does take at least 4 months to get through the process, from when we start to process an application through to reaching decisions and have the signs erected. Timeframes for each



	<p>application also vary due to the specific circumstances for each application. For example, the number of occupiers and therefore the numbers of surveys to be carried out. This makes it difficult to confirm a set number of surveys that will be processed in any month, but numbers will increase as resourcing is fully completed.</p>
3.8	<p>Officers also intend to reduce the time period for responding to the survey from the current 30 days to 14 days. While this would reduce the overall processing time for each application, it may not impact on the number of applications processed as the staffing resources to administer the process remain the same. However officers are keen to explore all possible options for reducing application processing times.</p> <p><b><u>Translations</u></b></p>
3.9	<p>Officers met with Queens University (QUB) in February regarding the translation of street names. QUB confirmed that additional staffing resource will be in place in March and May and will have a focus on carrying out the necessary research to provide the translations that we require.</p>
3.10	<p>The full list of 458 streets applied for has been provided to QUB, and we have agreed operational arrangements to ensure that we can progress applications in the order received and processed.</p>
3.11	<p>Some translations are more complex and where there is a delay in receiving these, surveys and Committee reports will be progressed without the translations seeking delegation to the Director to agree the translated street name once it is available.</p> <p><b><u>Electoral Office</u></b></p>
3.12	<p>The electoral register available at the Electoral Office is used to confirm that the applicant is a resident of the street, and also to identify the number of people who will be surveyed.</p>
3.13	<p>The current procedure is to arrange appointments with the Electoral Office and inform them of which streets are required for viewing. These are then provided to staff to view during the appointment.</p>

3.14	Discussions have previously taken place with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to look at easier ways of getting access to the register and reducing the time taken and the need for appointments to be made. This was done in conjunction with other local councils, through the Chair of Building Control Northern Ireland. In June 2021 the CEO confirmed that having liaised with her legal representatives, they were not aware of any other way to inspect the register except under supervision, in the current practice. Therefore, a data sharing agreement cannot be used. It was also confirmed that while the legislation permits the sale of the register to government departments, this does not apply to councils.
3.15	Building Control also sought the advice of the Council's legal services when having these discussions, who agreed with the legal advice provided to the CEO.
	<u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u>
3.16	In December, three additional staff members were recruited on a temporary basis to deal with the volume of applications received. However, as two of these posts were from within the existing team, the process for backfilling and covering their duties is still ongoing. While they are being trained and are processing dual language street sign applications, there are also other duties in their substantive posts to be undertaken. This includes processing property certificate applications, a key part of the conveyancing process, and the provision of street naming and numbering, which are important in terms of house sales progressing and allowing new homeowners to set up their utilities and amend address critical documentation. When these staff members are fully released to their new roles and training completed, this will allow for an increase in the number of applications being processed.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.17	The process for carrying out initial assessments on the ground of equality and good relations is in place. Where adverse impacts are identified, a further screening will take place and finding presented to Members. This work has been developed working with colleagues in our Equality & Diversity Unit together with an external consultant.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None