

Public Document Pack

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

13th December, 2023

MEETING OF STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following items will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.30 a.m. on Friday, 15th December, 2023.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

2. Restricted Items

- (f) Discretionary Payments (Pages 1 - 18)

4. Belfast Agenda/Strategic Issues

- (f) Update on Common Purpose – NI2035 Legacy Programme Sponsorship (Pages 19 - 30)

7. Equality and Good Relations

- (c) Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership (Pages 31 - 74)
- (d) Minutes of the Meeting of the All-Party Working Group on the City Centre (Pages 75 - 84)

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

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Subject:	Update on Common Purpose – NI2035 Legacy Programme Sponsorship
Date:	15th December, 2023
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City and Organisational Strategy
Contact Officer:	Geoff Dickson, Strategic Planning and Policy Manager Ryan Berry, Strategic Planning and Performance Officer

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

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

Insert number

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

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	To provide the Committee with an update on the Council’s sponsorship of the Common Purpose – NI2035 Legacy Programme.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the programme update and consider the potential opportunities for the Council to support and engage with the programme.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Common Purpose – NI2035 Legacy Programme.</p> <p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The Committee will recall that, at the meeting on 18th August, it approved the £10,000 sponsorship request from Common Purpose to support the delivery of the NI20235 Legacy Programme in Belfast.</p> <p>The programme aims to build on previous funding provided by Council in 2021 alongside other organisations such as Allstate Northern Ireland, Belfast Charitable Society, Belfast Met, Halifax Foundation for Northern Ireland and Power NI which enabled Common Purpose to engage 40 young leaders aged 18-25 from different communities, backgrounds, beliefs and experiences to consider "What will the legacy of our generation be?"</p> <p>The success of the previous programme has encouraged Common Purpose to extend its delivery in Belfast and the new NI2035 Legacy Programme aims to engage with a new cohort of up to 100 young leaders across the City.</p> <p>Update on NI2035 Legacy Programme</p> <p>3.2 The NI20235 Legacy Programme is currently being developed by Common Purpose with support from Council officers. Whilst some elements of the programme have yet to be confirmed, a brief overview is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Delivery Dates:</u> 24th and 25th January 2024 have been confirmed as the delivery dates for the programme (in person, over two full days). An introductory pre-programme session, lasting roughly 30 minutes will also be held online in advance of the programme to inform participants of the agenda and to discuss any questions or queries (date TBC). • <u>Venue:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 24 January 2024 – MCS Group, 10th Floor, The Ewart, 3 Bedford St, Belfast BT2 7EP - 25 January 2024 - Belfast City Hall, Belfast BT1 5GS

The City Hall will be used to host participants on the second day of the programme (25th January). The Banqueting Hall has been booked to accommodate the participants throughout the day whilst a tour of the council chamber has also been requested.

- Participants: The programme aims to recruit and engage up to 100 young people aged 18-25. Participants will stem from a range of areas, backgrounds, and cultures to provide opportunities to build relationships and understanding amongst those taking part. As a project sponsor, **Council will have the opportunity to refer a minimum of 10 young people to the project** (staff, community networks, and partners). Common Purpose will be responsible for managing participant registrations and updating on progress.
- Programme Overview: The Northern Ireland Legacy Programme will be an interactive and engaging initiative that will inspire young people to believe in the power of their ideas, the strength of their passions, and their potential to transform the place where they live and rewrite the narrative. Whilst the programme will focus on leadership activities and workshops it aims to provide a purposeful movement fueled by the energy and vision of young people to encourage them to ensure that their voices are heard to help shape a lasting change in Northern Ireland.
Participants will hear from and engage with a wide range of guest speakers and facilitators over the course of the 2-day programme. Activities and workshops will focus on highlighting key issues and challenges in today's society, visioning a future for NI and local communities, as well as identifying interventions that should be delivered to bring about positive social change. Participants will present their ideas, interventions, and visions to a panel of senior officers from Belfast City Council and partner organisations who will provide feedback and guidance to support young people to action their ideas and encourage them to develop ideas and interventions to address those issues. Please refer to Appendix 1 for full programme agenda.
- Council Involvement: In addition to assisting with logistical planning and recruitment of at least 10 participants, the Council will directly engage and support the delivery of the programme in several ways.
 - The Lord Mayor's availability has been confirmed for the morning of 25th January. Common Purpose has requested that the Lord Mayor welcome the participants to City Hall, engages with participants by sharing his leadership experience and participates in a short Q&A session with the young leaders. A photo opportunity with the Lord Mayor has also been requested.

	<p>- There will also be opportunities for senior Council officers to engage in discussions / workshops and sit on panels to provide feedback to participants on presentations and programme activities (officers TBC). This will also provide an opportunity for BCC officers to inform young people of the work that Council and partner organisations are delivering through the recently refreshed Belfast Agenda to improve outcomes for young people across the city.</p> <p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>3.3 NI20235 Legacy Programme Marketing Materials (Appendix 2) and FAQs (Appendix 3) are attached to this report. Members are asked to circulate the materials through their relevant networks to raise awareness of the programme and the opportunities available for participants.</p> <p>The registration link for eligible participants can be accessed here or through https://commonpurpose.org/legacy/northern-ireland-legacy</p> <p>A further update will be provided to the Committee in due course.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.4 The £10,000 funding has been sourced from in year departmental budgets thus there are no additional finance or resource implications contained within this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.5 There are no equality implications contained in this report as the initiative seeks to offer opportunities for young people of all communities and background.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – NI Legacy Programme Agenda</p> <p>Appendix 2 - NI Legacy Programme Marketing Materials</p> <p>Appendix 3 – NI Legacy Programme FAQs</p>

Northern Ireland Legacy Agenda

Day 1 -24th January

9:30	Welcome to Legacy Programme overview and how we will work together to make a change
10:00	The difference we all bring – taking a fresh perspective Exploring diversity and the differences of perspective and experience in the group
11:00	Our purpose Considering what drives us in our life and career, and the change you want to be a part of
11:45	Getting under the skin of big issues
12:30	Lunch
13:15	Immersion experience briefing What do you want to learn
13:30	Travel time
14:00	Making the difference Immersion experiences to explore how people have made positive contributions to a place
15:30	Travel time
16:00	Reflection focus What are you now thinking about your contribution?
16:45	What will tomorrow bring Preparing for day two
17:00	Close

Day 2 - 25th January

9:30 **Welcome to day 2**
Exploring what is top of mind as we start the day

10:00 **Lord Mayor**

11:00 **Break**

11:15 **Influencing across the generations**
Small group conversations to explore the importance of intergenerational leadership in the effort to change systems of practice

12:30 **Our City**
What needs to change and how can you make a difference?

13:15 **Lunch**

14:00 **Preparing to share**
Preparing presentations for panel

14:45 **Re-imagining the future**
Sharing your insights with a panel of key stakeholders from your city, region or country

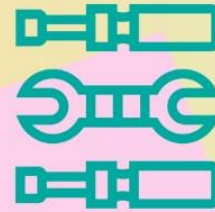
16:00 **Break**

16:15 **Reflection focus**
What are you now thinking about your contribution?

16:30 **Graduation**
Saying a thank you to your group

17:00 **Close**

Thinking that inspires, voices that resonate: Giving rise to a thriving generation of Legacy Leaders



Northern Ireland Legacy

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Have you ever felt a desire to make a real impact? To better understand what is happening in Northern Ireland right now, how priorities get set and things get done? To shape a future that connects more with you and your generation?

You're in the right place!

Northern Ireland Legacy is an opportunity to think bigger, get new perspectives, be challenged to think differently and understand the power of unexpected connections with people you might never normally meet who are playing a role in the big and small changes shaping the future of Northern Ireland. And your voice matters in that future. This isn't just a leadership programme; it's a purposeful movement fuelled by courage, energy, vision and others who share your commitment.

Get involved and be inspired to have more confidence and belief in the power of your ideas, the strength of your passions, and the potential within you to make change happen in the place where you live. Embark on an adventure where your thinking can take flight, your skills reach new heights, and your voice becomes a needed force to lasting change – rewriting the story for futures to come.

Proudly brought to you by:



Venue location for day one proudly sponsored by MCS group

What's in it for you:

Appendix 2



Take your place: Join a vibrant community of go-getters, and change-makers like you!



Unlock Your Potential: Discover your purpose, craft your identity, and level up your leadership skills.



Interactive Learning, Real Impact: Dive into engaging workshops, broaden your horizons, and gain practical skills.



Connect, Collaborate, Change: Learn from inspiring leaders and rewrite the rules together!

Dates:
24 and 25 January 2024

Duration
30 minutes
pre-programme online
2 days in person in Belfast

Who's it for?
Anyone living, working or studying in Northern Ireland aged 18 -25 years

Cost
Free – all places covered by local sponsorship

Join here: bit.ly/NorthernIrelandLegacy

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Northern Ireland Legacy – Frequently Asked Questions

Thinking that Inspires, Voices that Resonate: Giving rise to a thriving generation of Legacy Leaders

Who's it for?

Anyone living, working, or studying in Northern Ireland aged 18 -25 years

Dates

24 January 2024 at MCS Group, 10th Floor, The Ewart, 3 Bedford St, Belfast BT2 7EP

25 January 2024 at Belfast City Hall, Belfast BT1 5GS

Duration

30 minutes pre-programme online

2 days in person

Cost

Free – all places covered by local sponsorship

What is it?

Have you ever felt that burning desire to make a real impact? To shape a future that resonates more with you? Or have a desire to find out more about what is happening in your locality? You're in the right place! Northern Ireland Legacy is a place to believe in the power of your ideas, the strength of your passions, and the potential within you to transform the place where you live and rewrite the narrative. This isn't just a leadership programme; it's a purposeful movement fueled by your energy and vision. Get ready to embark on an adventure where your thinking takes flight, your skills reach new heights, and your voice becomes a needed force to lasting change in Northern Ireland.

How do I apply and do I have to pay to attend?

You can apply [here](#) by answering one simple question – *'Tell us why you should be part of Northern Ireland Legacy?'* You can answer in writing, poetry, video or art – we love to see your creativity! We review applications every Friday afternoon so get yours in as soon as you can to guarantee your place on this programme. The programme is free to attend, thanks to generous sponsorship from Belfast City Council, Danske Bank, Power NI, Translink and Queen's University Belfast.

Special thanks to our venue sponsor MCS Group for hosting day one.

How does it work?

You'll join a group of up to 100 young people (18-25-year-olds) from across Northern Ireland – some working, some unemployed, some studying, some campaigning, some volunteering. Over two days, you'll engage in a vibrant exploration of diverse perspectives within the



place where you live. Discover the richness of experiences that shape us, reflect on your driving forces, and learn to tackle significant challenges by asking impactful questions, enhancing your curiosity as your superpower.

You will also craft your personal brand and storytelling skills to captivate hearts and minds, navigate the complexities of intergenerational leadership, unlocking transformative change through collaboration. At the end of the programme you will share your vision in the interactive Marketplace, presenting your thoughts and blue sky thinking and getting real time feedback from leaders and peers.

Benefits to you....

Take your place:

Imagine being part of a vibrant community of go-getters, dreamers, and change-makers just like you! Northern Ireland Legacy brings together a diverse bunch of young minds – students, professionals, activists, and volunteers – all with one shared goal: to make a difference.

Unlock Your Potential:

This isn't just another development programme; it's your ticket to personal growth on your terms. Discover your purpose, craft your unique identity, and level up your leadership skills. We're here to help you unleash your full potential!

Interactive Learning, Real Impact:

No classrooms here! Dive into interactive workshops, engaging discussions, and real-life experiences. Challenge your limits, broaden your horizons, and gain practical skills that set you apart and help you thrive!

Connect, Collaborate, Change:

Ever wondered how your generation can change the world? You'll connect with experienced contributors, learn from their journeys, and understand the power of intergenerational collaboration. Together, we're rewriting the rules!

What past participants have to say:

"Thank you for the opportunity—it has pushed me out of my comfort zone, encouraged me to think differently and given me time to listen to speakers and to hear real life examples including opportunities and the present challenges they face." - Participant, Northern Ireland Legacy 2021



*"Interacting with people from such different backgrounds was great." - Participant,
Northern Ireland Legacy 2021*

Apply here: commonpurpose.org/legacy/northern-ireland-legacy

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Subject:	Minutes of the Meeting of the Shared City Partnership
Date:	15th December, 2023
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City Operations
Contact Officer:	Jim Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision After Council Decision Sometime in the future Never	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
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1.1	To report to the Committee the key issues discussed at the Shared City Partnership meeting held on 11th December and present the minutes for approval.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is requested to approve the minutes and recommendations from the meeting of the Shared City Partnership of 11th December 2023 including the recommendations:</p> <p><u>Shared City Partnership Membership (Verbal Update)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the verbal update and agree the approach provided by the Good Relations Manager. <p><u>Good Relations Action Plan 2024/25</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it agree to the submission of the accompanying Good Relations Action Plan to The Executive Office for delivery during 2024/25. <p><u>TEO Asylum Dispersal Funding Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the contents of the report and the risk that further funding through Home Office Dispersal Money has not been confirmed for 2024/25 <p><u>PEACEPLUS – Theme 1.1 - Local Action Plan Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that it notes the contents of the report. <p><u>AOB – Increased Levels of Hate Crime in the City</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the verbal discussion and agree the approach provided discussed by members of the SCP and officers.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The Shared City Partnership is a Working Group of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee consisting 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.</p>
3.2	<p>The key issues on the agenda at the meeting on 11th December meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a verbal update on SCP Membership • Good Relations Action Plan 2024/25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEO Asylum Dispersal Funding Update • Peaceplus – Theme 1.1 – Local Action Plan Update • AOB – Increased Levels of Hate Crime in the City <p>More details regarding the above issues and recommendations are included in the minutes of the meeting (Appendix 1) and the District Council’s Good Relations Action Plan 24/25 in (Appendix 2).</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>All financial implications are covered through existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>The recommendations of the Partnership promote the work of the Council in promoting good relations and will enhance equality and good relations impacts.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1 – Minutes of the meeting of the Shared City Partnership 11th December</p> <p>Appendix 2 - District Council’s Good Relations Action Plan 2024/25</p>

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Monday 11th December, 2023

**MEETING OF SHARED CITY PARTNERSHIP
HELD REMOTELY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Members present: Councillor Duffy (Chairperson) and
Councillor Lyons.

External Members: Mr. P. Anderson, Department for Communities;
Ms. B. Arthurs, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Mr. T. Burns, Faith Sector;
Mr. J. Donnelly, Community and Voluntary Sector;
Mr. M. McBride, Education Authority;
Ms. C. McMenamin, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
Ms. T. Mimna, Good Relations, TEO;
Mr. W. Naeem, Interfaith Forum; and
Ms. A. Roberts, Community and Voluntary Sector.

In attendance: Mr. G. McCartney, Good Relations Manager;
Ms. D. McKinney, PEACE Programme Manager;
Mr. J. Girvan, Neighbourhood Services Manager;
Mr. D. Robinson, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer;
Ms. L. Dolan, Acting Senior Good Relations Officer; and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were reported from Alderman Copeland, Councillors I. McLaughlin, McMullan and Smyth; and Ms. J. Irwin, Supt. G. Kirkpatrick, Mr. G. Walker and Ms. A. M. White.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 6th November, 2023, were taken as read and signed as correct.

Declarations of Interest

Ms. T. Mimna, declared an interest in respect of item 3, Good Relations Action Plan 2024/2025, and item 5, Peace Plus Local Action Plan, in that she worked for the Executive Office, and she left the meeting for the duration of those items.

SCP Membership Update

The Good Relations Manager advised the Members that two representatives from the Belfast Chamber of Commerce would hopefully be joining the Partnership in

the new year and that a new representative from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive would also join from January, 2024.

Good Relations Action Plan 2024/2025

(Ms. Mimna, having declared an interest, left the meeting for the duration of this item.)

Mr. D. Robinson reminded the Partnership that, each year, The Executive Office (TEO) invited Councils to submit a Good Relations Action Plan. He advised the Members that TEO assessed each Council Action Plan and provided 75% of the costs associated with its delivery. He outlined that the current Audit, which was developed for 2023/24, was still applicable for the 2024/25 Action Plan.

Together, Mr. Robinson and Ms. L. Dolan provided the Partnership with an overview of the nine Programmes of the Action Plan for 2024/25.

The Good Relations Manager advised the Partnership that the draft Action Plan had been based on previous Action Plans, rather than the one that had been agreed for 2023/24 which contained a 47% reduction in funding.

He highlighted that Programme six, Embedding Good Relations, would include capacity building to aid organisations in preparing for procurement exercises.

The Partnership was also advised that the Stena Line partnership with Programme eight would end in June 2024 and that the Council was in discussion with the Shared Education Team within the Education Authority about developing the programme further, beyond June 2024.

A Member stated that, while there were plenty of organisations carrying out important community work within East Belfast, there seemed to be a disconnect with the Council's Good Relations Programme compared to other areas of the City. The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer stated that they would be keen to look at ways of addressing that.

A further Member thanked the Good Relations Team for their hard work on the Action Plan.

The Partnership noted the contents of the Action Plan and recommended that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee would agree to its submission to The Executive Office for delivery in 2024/25.

The Executive Office **Asylum Dispersal Funding Update**

Ms. L. Dolan provided the Partnership with an update on the projects which had been funded through the Home Office Dispersal Funding.

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of Issues

11 To provide members with an update on the projects funded through the Home Office Dispersal Funding

2.0 **Recommendations**

2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report and the risk that further funding through Home Office Dispersal Money has not been confirmed for 2024/25.

3.0 **Main report**

Background

3.1 Members are reminded that in In March 2023, TEO awarded Council £406,228 to support proposals to enhance and/or develop support and services for asylum seekers, which could be funded by TEO through Home Office Dispersal Funding.

3.2 Proposals were submitted to TEO and projects have been delivered over the past 9 months.

3.3 Table 1 illustrates the projects and support costs that have been committed with most projects now mobilised.

Table 1.

Delivery Partner	Summary of project	Costs
Proposal 1: Red Cross Mobilised and delivering Due to complete in March 2024	Asylum Support & Triage Project, providing bilingual helpline and casework support.	£152,643
Proposal 2: Barnardos Mobilised and delivering Due to complete in March 2024	Family Help Project – Supporting parents and children coping with displacement through conflict, with a focus on school readiness, child development and parenting.	£85,000
Proposal 3: Conway Education Centre Mobilised and delivering	Language, mentoring, training befriending and integration programme	£41,125

Due to complete in March 2024		
Proposal 4: Lower Ormeau Residents Group Completed	Community Integration Programme and trauma therapy intervention	£14,728
Proposal 5: Belfast City Council Committed: procurement happening in Dec / January	Cultural Competence Programme	£20,000
Proposal 6: Belfast City of Sanctuary Winter integration and well-being proposal Procurement completed and awarded to Belfast City of Sanctuary Delivery commenced Due to complete in March 2024	This proposal will run weekly drop-in support service during the Winter months, to provide social, health and well-being initiatives to help alleviate the pressures on people confined to hotels, with the aim of also linking asylum seekers to wider council and community support networks as well as volunteering opportunities. Activity will be held in Sandy Row Community Centre and Ballynafeigh Community Centre	£12,000
Proposal 7: Immigration and Legal Advice Project Tender not awarded – re-tender being considered	Immigration and Legal Advice Project	£72, 732
Proposal 8: Belfast City Council	Project Management & Coordination Costs	£8,000

3.4 Members should note that TEO is not in a position, at this stage, to advise Council in relation to future dispersal money and consequently a lot of the above projects that have been mobilised and operating successfully will not be able to continue beyond March. This will leave a major gap in the provision of services to asylum seekers and put further pressure on wider services and integration initiatives.

4.0 **Financial & Resource Implications**

4.1 The proposals in this report are funded through Home Office Dispersal Funding, via the Executive Office as well as through the Belfast Health and Development Unit.

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

5.1 These proposals have strong good relations outcomes and complement the work being delivered through the Council's Good Relations Action Plan and the Belfast Agenda, as well as delivering on the recommendations arising from the research Council commissioned to examine the Inequalities experienced by Black, Asian, minority ethnic and Traveller communities in Belfast."

A Member stated that it was crucial that specialised support was provided to those seeking asylum, not least in respect of providing a bilingual advice service. She added that there were perhaps too many different services, which could be confusing, and that she felt better coordination was required.

In response to a Member's query, the Acting Senior Good Relations Officer confirmed that information on how the delivery partners had performed against the targets could be provided to the Partnership at a future meeting.

The Partnership noted the contents of the report.

Peace Plus Local Action Plan

(Ms. Mimna, having declared an interest, left the meeting for the duration of this item)

The PEACE Programme Manager presented the following report to the Partnership:

"1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

The purpose of this report is to provide Shared City Partnership members with an information update on the submission of PEACE PLUS 1.1. Co-designed Local

Community Peace Action Plan for Belfast, and note some key priorities following submission.

2.0 Recommendations

That Members note the contents of the report and recommend to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee that they too, note the contents of the report.

3.0 Main report

SCP members are aware that the development of the £15.1 million Local PEACE Action Plan is being delivered in three stages:

Stage 1 Co-design needs & opportunities
Stage 2 Co-design long list of priority projects
Stage 3 Action Plan submission

The plan will be delivered under the following 3 Thematic Areas

1. Community Regeneration & Transformation (Capital Projects)
2. Thriving & Peaceful Communities
3. Building Respect for All Cultural Identities

3.2 Current Status – Stage 3 Submission

Since the last SCP in November both the Officer Team and the Consultant's Team have been working to include the relevant detail required for both Belfast City Council's Local Peace Plus Local Action Plan and the Funding Application to the Special EU Programmes Body.

It is anticipated at this stage the application has been submitted and Officers have attached a copy of the Belfast City Council's Peace Plus Local Action Plan in Appendix 1.

As agreed at the SCP meeting in November 2023, officers, through delegated authority made minor amendments to the Action Plan, where necessary, to ensure compliance with the assessment and funding requirements.

To arrive at this position has taken a considerable amount of time in terms of Co-Design. Since June 22 officers have been engaged in: -

37 Workshops across the City (External and Internal)
5 Public Information Sessions
More than 55 Working Group Meetings

More than 25 Individual Stakeholder Meetings
More than 20 Governance Meetings
Internal Consolidation Meetings approx. 25

Two public information sessions were held on the 6th & 13th November to report back to the community on all initiatives included in the overall plan for submission to SEUPB, and the plan was well received.

- 3.3 The Plan shows clearly that through Belfast's Peace and Reconciliation Plan, Council will have the ability to meet Common Needs under the themes above and improve the quality of life for residents in Belfast; i.e. the plan concentrates on what brings communities together rather than what divides them.

Further to this the co-design process also agreed the best delivery mechanism for the programmes in Themes 2 and 3 was through a procurement process. Officers have committed to work with our colleagues in Place and Economy and Procurement to develop the skills and capacity of local community organisations to enable them to bid for such opportunities i.e., prepare to procure. This has the potential to showcase Community Wealth Building and Inclusive Growth in Belfast City.

- 3.4 There are a number of key things to now progress: -

1. Respond to any queries in relation to the Peace Plus Action Plan to SEUPB
2. In advance of any Letter of Offer be in a State of Readiness therefore Council will progress the recruitment of staff
3. With Colleagues in Procurement agree a timetable for issuing Tenders
4. In a State of Readiness work with colleagues in Place and Economy and Procurement to develop a programme 'Prepare to Procure' (Targeted at Local Community Organisations)

- 3.5 **Financial & Resource Implications**

Within existing budget to be claimed retrospectively from SEUPB.

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

The Plan, has been screened for equality and good relations implications along with completion of a rural

needs assessment, and forwarded to Council's Equality Team."

She updated the Members and advised that the Action Plan would be submitted in a few days.

A Member stated that she felt that there was a lack of investment in health for the South Belfast area. The PEACE Programme Manager advised that she was aware of the Member's concerns but that officers were following the data.

A number of Members thanked the Good Relations Team for the considerable amount of time and effort which had gone into producing the Local Action Plan.

After discussion, the Partnership noted the contents of the report and adopted the recommendations.

Rise in Race Hate Crime

With the Chair's permission, a Member raised the issue of the recent rise in race hate crime in Belfast, which had been highlighted in a recent BCC Spotlight documentary. He stated that the Shared City Partnership should be looking at how to challenge it.

A number of Members agreed and expressed concern at the recent coordinated attacks and of the alleged paramilitary involvement. They stated that a lot of the tension centred around access to social housing and that it was crucial to challenge the myths and inaccuracies. Members stated that the recent Open Botanic event had a solidarity stall which had been helpful and had received positive feedback.

A further Member stated that, as a Muslim who had lived in Northern Ireland for sixteen years, he had seen numerous changes throughout that time, many of which were positive. However, he added that some simple gestures, such as providing a room for prayer within the city centre, would be appreciated by those with a Muslim faith.

The Acting Senior Good Relations Officer advised the Partnership that, when the Good Relations Steering Panel had first been established in 2003, it was intended that it would challenge the Council to address such issues. He added that demonstrating the benefits of Good Relations to the economic, social, educational and health fabric of our society could be a useful part of taking the issue forward, along with some practical initiatives that could be delivered as part of the Council's Good Relations Action Plan.

In response to a suggestion that the Partnership could visit a number of the key faith-based organisations across the City, such as the Belfast Multi-Cultural Association (BMCA), a Member stated that the Belfast Islamic Centre was due to open in new, larger premises in the next month or so. He suggested that it would be happy to host a future meeting of the Shared City Partnership there.

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor Duffy,
Seconded by Councillor Lyons and

Resolved - that a report be submitted to a future meeting providing the Partnership with information on what the Council was currently doing to tackle hate crime through its Good Relations and Police and Community Safety Action Plans and that a Workshop be held with the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships early in the new year to examine the issues and to come up with a plan of action.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised the Partnership that he would be attending a PCSP meeting in the coming days and that he would raise the request for the participation of the PCSPs in a Workshop.

Chairperson

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DISTRICT COUNCIL GOOD RELATIONS PROGRAMME

2024/25 ACTION PLAN

District Council: Belfast City Council

Chief Executive Officer: Mr. John Walsh

Please read the guidance notes provided before completing the action plan.

Section 1

1.1 Programme information

Number of programmes	9
Name/role/contact details of all staff responsible for programme management	<p>To be appointed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior Good Relations Officer* <p>Godfrey McCartney, Good Relations Manager mccartneygodfrey@belfastcity.gov.uk</p> <p>Leish Dolan, Good Relations Officer dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk Mobile#: 07825 147712</p> <p>Danny Sweeney, Good Relations Officer sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk Mobile#: 07825 147713</p> <p>David Robinson, Good Relations Officer robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk Mobile#: 07920 187264</p> <p>Mark McCloskey, Partnership Support Officer mccloskeym@belfastcity.gov.uk Telephone#: 02890 320202 x6031</p> <p>Louise Reilly, Monitoring Officer reillyl@belfastcity.gov.uk Telephone#: 02890 320202 x3430</p> <p>*Leish Dolan and David Robinson are covering the tasks of the Senior Good Relations Officer.</p>

1.2 Financial information

Name/contact details for staff responsible for financial management of programme	<p>Mark McCloskey, Partnership Support Officer goodrelations@belfastcity.gov.uk 028 90270663</p>
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	100%	75%
Total cost	£757,864.36	£568,398.27
Total programme costs	£495,000.00	£371,250.00
Total staff costs	£262,864.36	£197,148.27
Staff cost breakdown	<u>Senior Good Relations Officer:</u> £56,645.28 <u>Good Relations Officers x 3 – annual salaries</u> £158,063.60: David Robinson £53,209.48 Leish Dolan £51,734.48 Danny Sweeney £53,119.64 <u>Partnership Support Officer: Mark McCloskey</u> £40,605.36 <u>Monitoring & Evaluation Officer:</u> Louise Reilly £33,180.48 <u>Total 6 above roles:</u> £288,494.72	<u>Good Relations Manager, acting Senior Good Relations Officer:</u> Full Time – TEO contribution 68.52% = £38,815.65 <u>Good Relations Officers x 3: Full Time – TEO contribution 68.52%</u> = £108,311.59 David Robinson £36,461.29 Leish Dolan £35,450.57 Danny Sweeney £36,399.73 <u>Partnership Support Officer: Full Time – TEO contribution 68.52%</u> = £27,824.43 <u>Monitoring & Evaluation Officer:</u> Full Time – TEO contribution 68.52% = £22,736.60

1.3 Claim deadlines

It is extremely important that all claims for expenditure are made promptly and that full expenditure is claimed for within six weeks of the end of the financial year. The claim deadlines for 24/25 are as follows:

- Quarter 1 to be with TEO no later than end of July 2024
- Quarter 2 to be with TEO no later than end of October 2024
- Quarter 3 to be with TEO no later than the end of January 2025
- Quarter 4 to be with TEO no later than 11th June 2025

Section 2

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME		2.02 CODE	
Good Relations Small Grants Programme		BCC1	
2.03 KEY WORDS	DIVERSE, URBAN, SHARED, YOUTH, ADULT		
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>Having a dedicated Good Relations Small Grants programme is an important part of our Action Plan and one that is of value to community and voluntary organisations throughout Belfast. This enables the Council to support local groups who develop local projects to deal with local issues as they see fit. The process is managed by the Council’s Central Grants Unit who manage the online application process. The Good Relations Grants are trawled alongside 11 other small grants, via this link: https://www.belfastcity-grants.com/</p> <p>An Open call for applications to the Good Relations Small grants programme was made on the 24th October 2023. Applications closed on January 12th 2024. Following this an assessment process will be undertaken with successful projects being notified in April. This process and timeline is dependent upon a successful allocation of funding from TEO for the DCGRP.</p> <p>In 2023/24, 45 groups were awarded funding, ranging from amounts between £2,000 and £5,000, with the full allocation being awarded. This allocation also included projects that were defined as ‘intervention projects’ which were included in the small grants programme due to budget restrictions which prevented the BCC9 Strategic Intervention Programme proceeding. In 2023/24, the overall allocation for small grants totalled £154,644. A similar amount and process is planned for 2024/25, based on last years figures. We also plan to reinstate the Strategic Intervention programme as well (BCC9)</p>		
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Leish Dolan: dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk Danny Sweeney: sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk David Robinson; robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk		
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£155,000.00		
2.07 Total target no. of participants	Direct	2,000	Indirect N/A
2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£77.50		
2.09 Targeted participant background analysis	40% CRN, 40% PUL, 20% BME		

2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	4-10 Linenhall Street	Postcode	BT2 8BP
2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Newtownards Road	Postcode	BT4 1AF
	Location	Ormeau Road	Postcode	BT7 2EW
	Location	Falls Road /Shankill Road	Postcode	BT12 6FD /BT13 3AA
	Location	Antrim Road	Postcode	BT14 6BP
2.12 T:BUC Key Aim	All 4 T:BUC Priorities			
2.13 Link to good relations audit	<p>Belfast City Council completed its tri-annual Good Relations Audit in 2022/23.</p> <p>In 22/23, the Council agreed to resume a dedicated and specific Good Relations small grants Programme, reversing the approach adopted during COVID restrictions. 45 groups were awarded funding under this programme, following an open call for applications that were then assessed against the pre-agreed scoring criteria. The full compliment of allotted funding of £154,644 was allocated in April, giving groups a full year to deliver their projects.</p> <p>In our current audit, there was a strong recognition of the Council's small grant programme for Good Relations projects and as such, the Audit recommends that the Council maintain a Good Relations small grants programme, to ensure good relations outcomes across all 4 T:BUC Themes. Audit references are found in pp 3-5, 31-33, 35, 37 Appendix C, pp 48-51 of Good Relations Audit.</p>			
2.14 Complementarity	<p>The Good Relations small grant scheme is part of a pool of 10 different grants that are administered by a multidisciplinary team of officers in a central grants team. The Good Relations Officers assess all Good Relations grants, but the benefit of this internal system is that the administration is undertaken centrally, which is a key factor in ensuring that there is no duplication of TEO funding with other small grant funding. Officers from relevant Units sit on the moderation panels for grants assessment for these other small grant programmes and this promotes information sharing and ensures complementarity between projects.</p>			

	<p>In addition, the Council’s PEACEPLUS and Good Relations teams sit within the Good Relations Unit. Good Relations Staff have been involved in the provision of advice, support and guidance in the development of the Council’s PEACEPLUS Plan, ensuring complementarity and cohesion within both Plans. The Good Relations and PEACEPLUS functions are both governed by the Shared City Partnership (a working group of Council).</p> <p>There are also links with the D/PCSPs ensuring that Good Relations staff are aware of the programmes currently being supported there. This ensures there is no duplication but more importantly, opportunities for collaboration on projects which realise mutually beneficial outcomes around issues such as interfaces and hate crime.</p> <p>Officers will also ensure they are made aware of those groups which are funded by the Minority Ethnic Development Fund and BCC has a list of current UV projects which will help to address duplication.</p>
<p>2.15 Capacity Building</p>	<p>As this is an open call to support local community groups, there will be capacity building elements to all projects, vis a vis planning projects, engagement with partners, financial and monitoring activity as well as improved knowledge of Good Relations issues at a local level. However, TEO should note the inclusion of a specific Capacity Building Programme within this Action Plan, (BCC6) which will be rolled out to groups across Belfast, depending on the level of funding awarded.</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME		2.02 CODE	
St. Patrick's Day Civic Events Programme		BCC2	
2.03 KEY WORDS	DIVERSE, SHARED, URBAN, YOUTH, ADULT, SENIOR		
2.04 Programme Summary	In 2024, the Council will allocate roughly £300,000 towards events around St. Patrick's Day. (In 2022, a number of large scale public events were delivered by 4 community arts groups within the City). The purpose of this programme will be to support the Carnival Parade promoter to deliver an event that is reflective of the make up of our City vis a vis, create a more diverse Carnival Parade. This will involve specific outreach, engagement and work with groups from our migrant and minority ethnic communities and from the broad Unionist Community		
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	David Robinson: robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk		
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£20,000		
2.07 Total target no. of participants	Direct	500	Indirect N/A
2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£40		
2.09 Targeted participant background analysis	65% CNR, 25% PUL, 10% BME		
2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Belfast City Council	Postcode BT2 8BP
2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	City Centre BT1 5GS	Postcode BT1 5GS
2.12 T:BUC Key Aim	Cultural Expression		
2.13 Link to good relations audit	<p>The Audit recognises that promoting positive Cultural expression is still important to people and that work is still required. It also notes that there is significant budget allocated to St Patrick's Day and that this could focus on supporting cultural inclusion and participation. Belfast will celebrate a year-long City of Culture, Imagination and Creativity in 2024.</p> <p>As such, the key element of the Audit for this programme reflects that delivery of cultural expression programmes could be reimaged within the needs identified in the audit. While many people feel their cultural identity is respected, there is still a need to support the building of capacity for</p>		

	<p>communities to engage on cultural issues on a single identity basis while providing pathways for cross-community engagement as a key part of this process.</p> <p>As such, the approach to this programme will be to enhance the Council led civic events by creating greater diversity from all cultural identities in the main flagship St. Patrick's Day Carnival Parade, ensuring that it is able to demonstrate a key role in promoting Good Relations.</p> <p>Audit references are found in pp 29, 31-33, 35, 37 Appendix C 48-51 of Good Relations Audit.</p>
<p>2.14 Complementarity</p>	<p>This programme seeks to embed Good Relations outcomes into the Council's flagship event around the St. Patrick's Day period. Many local and regional events, led by the Council take place annually, which have a cultural and artistic foundation to their core. However, the most visible and most public event is the annual Carnival Parade. As such, this years' Action Plan seeks to support the participation and inclusion of those communities within the City who may ordinarily not participate in the Parade. This is important from the point of view of promoting positive cultural expression in a diverse City. This programme will therefore complement the Council's civic complement for this period, ensuring that those events are focussed on achieving Good Relations outcomes and promoting positive cultural expression.</p>
<p>2.15 Capacity Building</p>	<p>This programme will continue to see the Council embedding Good Relations outcomes into its mainstream service delivery. This mainstreaming work will be key to ensuring that Good Relations is a key consideration in all aspects of the work of the Council.</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME		2.02 CODE	
Positive Cultural Expression Programme		BCC3	
2.03 KEY WORDS	SIN-ID, URBAN, YOUTH, ADULT, SKILLS		
2.04 Programme Summary	To support the deployment of at least 10 Beacons for July events that are staged as an alternative to traditional 11 th July bonfires.		
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Danny Sweeney: sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk		
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£20,000		
2.07 Total target no. of participants	Direct	2,000	Indirect 500
2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£25.00		
2.09 Targeted participant background analysis	100% PUL		
2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	4-10 Linenhall Street	Postcode BT2 8BP
2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Newtownards Road - Charter N.I	Postcode BT4 1HG
	Location	Donegall Road - GVRT	Postcode BT12 6FQ
	Location	Shankill Road – Spectrum Centre	Postcode BT13 3AA
	Location	Ballysillan Road – North Belfast Alternatives	Postcode BT14 6SL
2.12 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Cultural Expression		
2.13 Link to good relations audit	<p>The Audit recognises that promoting positive Cultural expression is still important to people and that work is still required. While many people feel their cultural identity is respected, there is still a need to support the building of capacity for communities to engage on cultural issues on a single identity basis while providing pathways for cross-community engagement as a key part of this process.</p> <p>Therefore, the approach to this programme will be to support people from the broad Unionist community in embedding a sense of confidence and pride and one’s own cultural identity particularly around the</p>		

	<p>most significant period of celebration within this community.</p> <p>The programme therefore will support communities in the positive expression of their cultural heritage and identity through the provision and deployment of up to 10 beacons that will replace a traditional bonfire.</p> <p>Audit references are found in pp 14, 24-25, 29, 32, 35, 37 Appendix C 48-51 of Good Relations Audit.</p>
<p>2.14 Complementarity</p>	<p>This programme supports the work of the Council's Good Relations, cleansing, community safety and community development goals. It seeks to also support other agencies such as DfI Roads, the NIHE, PSNI and the NIFRS. Through supporting better approaches to traditional bonfire events, there are not only operational benefits to agencies from this programme, but there are also significant cost savings to be made through this approach.</p>
<p>2.15 Capacity Building</p>	<p>The whole essence of this programme is about building the capacity, confidence, capability and leadership skills of individuals and groups within the broad Unionist community. The goal of this is to support local groups to improve their skills in the development and delivery of projects that support positive cultural expression. TEO should note the inclusion of a specific Capacity Building Programme within this Action Plan, (BCC6) which will be rolled out to groups across Belfast, depending on the level of funding awarded.</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME		2.02 CODE	
Civic Engagement and Learning Programme		BCC4	
2.03 KEY WORDS	DIVERSE, ADULTS, SENIOR		
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>Develop and deliver a programme of events and training on good relations/diversity.</p> <p>This will involve a programme of DiverseCity initiatives to sensitively celebrate and share our city stories of diversity and to provide opportunities to open conversations around inclusion.</p> <p>Events will include: Refugee Awareness Training, Living Library Events, Exploring aspects of the history and culture of faith, language and minority groups within the city. Providing opportunities for residents to visit places and spaces across Belfast that they may not traditionally visit. This will enhance participants understanding of the diversity of our society, contributing to a greater appreciation of diversity and increased use of shared space.</p> <p>This programme will also see the delivery of the now annual Day of Reflection, which aims to provide a space for citizens to reflect on the impact of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. It will also include events to mark Refugee Week, Black History Month, Eid, Good Relations Week, Holocaust Memorial Day as well as running workshops around addressing Anti-Muslim Sentiment and Anti-Semitism. This programme will involve delivery partners such as UK Pivot, Tell Mama, Faith Matters, Cultural Solutions and ASCONI.</p>		
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Leish Dolan; dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk David Robinson; robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk		
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£20,000		
2.07 Total target no. of participants	Direct	400	Indirect N/A
2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£50.00		
2.09 Targeted participant background analysis	40% CNR, 40% PUL, 20% BME		
2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Belfast City Council	Postcode BT2 8BP
2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	City wide	Postcode All post codes

2.12 T:BUC Key Aim	Shared Community
2.13 Link to good relations audit	<p>The most recent Audit identifies that the Council should maintain programmes on civic engagement and learning that works with staff, the public and elected members including on issues of cultural competence.</p> <p>Building on the feedback from the process undertaken as part of the development of the Audit, it strongly recommends that the inclusive approach around the Day of Reflection should be built on and developed further.</p> <p>Audit references are found in pp 4, 29, 36, 38, Appendix C, 48-51 of Good Relations Audit.</p>
2.14 Complementarity	<p>The proposals in this theme will support efforts within the City to build the knowledge of the diversity that exists within Belfast, with the additional aim of promoting the integration and inclusion of new Communities across Belfast.</p> <p>The proposals also compliment the results of the engagement that was undertaken on the development of the Council’s PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan as well as ongoing work within the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnerships to address hate crime. This also relates very strongly to the work on the Inequalities research and the Council’s Racial Equality Strategy.</p>
2.15 Capacity Building	<p>This programme supports the development of knowledge and understanding of the diversity that exists within the City of Belfast. It also affords residents an opportunity to engage in an event to mark those events of the recent conflict through the annual Day of Reflection.</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Minority Ethnic Equality and Inclusion Programme	BCC5
2.03 KEY WORDS	DIVERSE, ADULT, SENIOR, YOUTH
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>Over the past number of years, the Council has been committed to promoting the integration and inclusion of Minority Ethnic Communities and has developed strong links with these communities.</p> <p>This programme will build on this engagement and continue to support initiatives that seek to support the integration and inclusion of all Communities, through good relations related projects as well as supporting advice giving organisations.</p> <p>The following outlines activity included within this programme:</p> <p>Migrant Forum The programme will continue to develop the Migrant Forum that has now existed for over 14 years, providing a platform for organisations across Belfast to share information and network in relation to the integration and inclusion of Minority Ethnic communities facilitating partnership working.</p> <p>Integration and Orientation Support The programme will build on recommendations arising from Council commissioned research into the experiences of People from Minority Ethnic backgrounds in Belfast.</p> <p>It will support the delivery of a project to enhance befriending and integration opportunities for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, linking them with local befrienders, developing their leadership potential. This will build on and continue a project delivered by Conway Education as part of the Dispersal Funding.</p> <p>It will support an outreach integration and good relations project in Council Community centres enabling new Communities to access wider programmes and to link locally, delivered by Belfast City of Sanctuary.</p> <p>It will support a good relations related intervention to encourage the inclusion of Belfast’s Roma Community, delivered by Forward South.</p>

	Supporting Community Groups to develop integration initiatives It will also support small localised opportunities to promote positive relations between host and new communities.			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Leish Dolan; dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£80,000			
2.07 Total target no. of participants	Direct	1,000	Indirect	N/A
2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£80.00			
2.09 Targeted participant background analysis	70% BAME, 15%CNR and 15%PUL			
2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Belfast City Council	Postcode	BT2 8BP
2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	City wide	Postcode	All post codes
		South Belfast		BT7 1FY
2.12 T:BUC Key Aim	Safe Community			
2.13 Link to good relations audit	<p>The most recent Audit seeks to build on the work undertaken by the Council on supporting the participation and inclusion of minority ethnic residents over the last number of years. In making recommendations on how to progress this work further the Audit highlights the following as being key components for this Action Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop initiatives to address anti-Muslim hate. 2. Develop a programme focusing on minority ethnic leadership 3. Examine and explore the response of Council's and communities in Britain, Ireland and further afield regarding managing diversity and tackling systemic racism. <p>Audit references are found in pp 4, 10, 11, 13, 16, 23, 27, 29, 31-33, 36 - 38 Appendix C, pp 48-51 of Good Relations Audit.</p>			
2.14 Complementarity	The proposals in this theme will support efforts within the City to promote the integration and inclusion of new Communities across Belfast. The proposals also support the programmes submitted as part of the Council's PEACEPLUS Plan as well as ongoing work within the Belfast Policing and			

	<p>Community Safety Partnerships to address hate crime.</p> <p>The Migrant Forum provides a city-wide platform to encourage collaborative working between partners across the City. It has a membership of over 50 organisations and provides networking, information sharing and opportunities for joint projects across the city. It is also used as a means by which the Council can consult and co-design policies with those from Ethnic Minority Communities. This includes the work on the Inequalities research and the Council's Racial Equality Strategy.</p> <p>We are also working with the Council's Equality Officers to ensure the integration and inclusion of new communities supports the delivery of the Belfast Agenda and the Inclusive Growth Strategy.</p> <p>The proposals around the integration and inclusion of new communities fit with the overall themes of the Race Equality Strategy and will complement programmes funded under the Minority Ethnic Development Fund and other funds supporting this inclusion.</p>
<p>2.15 Capacity Building</p>	<p>This programme specifically seeks to increase the capacity of people from ethnic minority backgrounds to assume leadership roles within community and statutory organisations. Further, it will increase the capacity of organisations, such as the Council, to address issues of inequality and promote inclusion</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE		
Embedding Good Relations Programme	BCC6		
2.03 KEY WORDS	DIVERSE, ADULT, SHARED		
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>This programme seeks to develop an awareness of Good Relations and how it can support effective service and programme delivery.</p> <p>This is both an internal Council challenge but is also relevant for communities, civic society, city leaders and other public agencies. The programme will develop and deliver a series of workshops on how to ‘design in’ Good Relations in programme and project planning as well as building the Good Relations capacity of groups and organisations across the City.</p> <p>Further to the above, develop a cross departmental programme with colleagues in Place and Economy to develop a programme to promote Community Wealth Building. This will build the skills and create sustainable partnerships with local Community Organisations who will be able to position themselves to bid for the delivery of elements within the Belfast City Council’s Peace Plus Programme through a “Prepare to Procure Initiative”.</p>		
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	<p>Godfrey McCartney; mccartneygodfrey@belfastcity.gov.uk David Robinson; robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk</p>		
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£30,000		
2.07 Total target no. of participants	Direct	600	Indirect N/A
2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£40.00		
2.09 Targeted participant background analysis	40% CNR, 40% PUL, 20% BME		
2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Belfast City Council	Postcode BT2 8BP
2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Belfast Citywide	Postcode All Postcodes
2.12 T:BUC Key Aim	Shared Community		
2.13 Link to good relations audit	The Council’s most recent Audit highlighted two significant elements that are central to this programme being included in this particular Action Plan (p.36)		

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication on good relations work is important, especially in challenging some behaviours or promoting others. 2. Further work to engage staff, in a targeted way, on good relations work should be supported. This also may include some recommendations on how to support the political leads and staff. <p>Furthermore, it specifically recommends embedding good relations in Shared City Partnership research and discussions. The Audit is clear that the implementation of the good relations action plan should be the responsibility of the Shared City Partnership, through delegated authority, and on behalf of the whole Council. As such, Good Relations is Everyone’s Business.</p> <p>As part of this, building the capacity of groups and partner organisations within the City is equally important. Specifically, page 34 of the Audit references the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills development – including civic leadership – training and education initiatives – dialogues, talks, seminars and events; - Sensitive issues – realising the benefit of tackling contentious issues early and associated cost-saving – continuing to include some of the most difficult issues on the good relations agenda; <p>This programme will seek to achieve these outcomes.</p> <p>Additional audit references can also be found in pp 3, 7, 18, 24, 27-30, 33-36 of Good Relations Audit.</p>
<p>2.14 Complementarity</p>	<p>This programme complements the corporate direction of the Council. Internally, the goal is to provide advice and guidance to those seeking to ensure that Good Relations considerations are at the heart of their work. This is critical as one of the underpinning themes within the Belfast Agenda states: “BCC will work with the Shared City Partnership to deliver an integrated plan to improve good relations, develop a sustainable, transferable and scalable approach to management and promotion of shared spaces, while creating leadership and networking opportunities”.</p>

	<p>The reality however is that colleagues need the tools and skills to deliver this desired outcome. This programme will seek to do that.</p> <p>Externally, there is a need to support local groups and partner agencies in developing Good Relations considerations and outcomes within their routine service delivery. The Council's Good Relations Strategy seeks to ensure that 'no-one is left behind'. This programme will build the capacity of groups to make Good Relations central to what they do.</p>
<p>2.15 Capacity Building</p>	<p>This programme is a specific capacity building programme which seeks to embed Good Relations considerations within wider Council service delivery and within communities and partner agencies. Having Good Relations considerations as part of this compliment of service provision will be key to ensuring that Good Relations considerations and outcomes are 'designed in' to all future policies, programmes and initiatives.</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Interface Engagement and tackling sectarianism & racism	BCC7
2.03 KEY WORDS	WALLS, URBAN, YOUTH, ADULT
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>This programme will contain two distinct elements. We will work with a range of internal and external stakeholders to identify strategic projects that will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. develop and deliver a city-wide initiative on anti-sectarianism and anti-racism to include other agencies and government 2. support progress towards the softening, transformation and/or removal of interface barriers through Good Relations engagement. <p>As an example, below are those groups funded during 2023/24 for delivery of Good Relations projects and it would be envisaged that similar groups will continue to be our partners in ongoing delivery, however Council will want to adopt the common needs plus model; concentrating more on what are the common issues i.e. what combines communities rather than what divides communities: It would be anticipated that programmes could be developed around Cost of Living, Health and Well Being, Employment Opportunities, Education etc. The will result in Good Relations outcomes and improved quality of life.</p> <p>Belfast Interface Project Tackling Awareness on Mental Health Initiative Black Mountain Shared Space Westland FC and St Marys FC Westland FC and St Marys FC City East/Mural Arts engagement programme INTERCOMM/Duncairn Community Partnership Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum TASCIT/NBIN Colin Neighbourhood Partnership Dunmurry Community Association Suffolk Community Forum Holy Family community centre Finaghy Residents Group Limestone Utd project Lower Oldpark Community Association</p>
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Danny Sweeney; sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£80,000

2.07 Total target no. of participants	Direct	1,200	Indirect	5,000
2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£66.66			
2.09 Targeted participant background analysis	45% CNR; 45% PUL; 10% BME			
2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Belfast City Council	Postcode	BT2 8BP
2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Crumlin/Woodvale Road	Postcode	BT14 7EA/BT13 3BU
	Location	White City/Whitewell	Postcode	BT36 7JX
	Location	Falls Road /Shankill Road	Postcode	BT12 6FD /BT13 3AA
	Location	Antrim Road	Postcode	BT14 6BP
	Location	Black Mountain	Postcode	BT13 3TS
	Location	Thistle/Madrid Street	Postcode	BT54EE
	Location	Duncairn Gardens	Postcode	BT152GQ
2.12 T:BUC Key Aim	Safe Community			
2.13 Link to good relations audit	<p>The Audit highlights that much of the work of the good relations team has been successful and should be continued. This includes those projects that are flexible and allow for the Council to be able to respond to local events in developing interventions at some of the most contested interfaces in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>It further highlights interface engagement working to transform or remove peace barriers.</p> <p>The most prominent issue raised during the preparation of the audit was the continued existence of sectarianism and racism within our society. As such, the audit makes a strong recommendation that the Council develop initiatives to challenging sectarianism and racism, the influence of paramilitarism, hate incidents and crimes.</p> <p>Belfast City Council should be leading in delivering anti-sectarianism projects. This was identified as the most significant issue in the audit.</p> <p>Audit references are found in pp 3-5, 9-11, 22-23, 28-29, 31-33, 35-38 Appendix C 48-51 of Good Relations Audit.</p>			

<p>2.14 Complementarity</p>	<p>The Council’s approach to working on interface issues is built on developing a Good Relations approach which in essence centres on building relationships within and between communities living at interface areas. In the 2022/23 Action Plan, the Council supported 17 such local initiatives which included youth engagement, local events, cross community activity on interfaces as well as sporting activities with young people. This approach complements other NI Executive and T:BUC initiatives on interfaces, which includes transformation, removal and security issues.</p> <p>BCC also sits on the Interface Programme Board overseen by the Department of Justice and reports significant initiatives into this Board.</p> <p>A GRO sits on 5 of the 6 x IFI PBP funded Project Review groups as well as the over-arching IFI PBP Programme Review Board as the Council representative for interface working.</p> <p>This programme of activity also complements the current Peace IV capital shared space projects at both Black Mountain and Shankill Women’s Centre (Lanark Way).</p> <p>Officers work closely with statutory partners on this programme, including DoJ, NIHE and DfC and is continuing to develop relationships with community-based organisations.</p>
<p>2.15 Capacity Building</p>	<p>The significance of this programme will be in participants and wider residents, developing an increased awareness of the impact of sectarianism and racism on individuals and communities.</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME		2.02 CODE	
Shared Education Schools Programme		BCC8	
2.03 KEY WORDS	YOUTH, URBAN, DIVERSE		
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>This initiative is delivered in partnership with Education Authority and has received funding from Stena Line for the last 4 years. This Stena Line contribution has now ended. However, the programme will continue until the end of June 2024, to coincide with the academic year. As such, the programme will continue to support the engagement of 9 schools in 4 shared education partnerships across Belfast.</p> <p>The project will cement relationships between pupils and staff in schools from different sectors and also support cross community engagement between parents.</p> <p>Participating schools are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Malvern Primary School (BT13 1HW) and St Peters Primary School (BT12 4JD). 2. Donegall Rd Primary School (BT12 6HE) and St Brides' Primary School (BT9 6FP). (St. Bride's replaced St. Malachy's in 2022). 3. Springhill Primary School (BT13 3NH), St Clare's Primary School (BT13 2SE) and Springfield Primary School (BT12 7DJ). 4. Finaghy Primary School (BT10 0EF) and St John the Baptist Primary School (BT11 9EH). <p>The programme will continue to deliver pupil to pupil activities on Good Relations issues and will also continue to support the development of the teaching and wider school staff, for Shared Education delivery.</p>		
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	David Robinson: robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk		
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£30,000		
2.07 Total target no. of participants	Direct	220	Indirect N/A
2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£45.45		
2.09 Targeted participant background analysis	PUL – 45%, CNR – 45%, BME – 10%		
2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Council Offices	Postcode BT2 1FP

2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	West Belfast	Postcode	BT13 1HW BT12 4JD
	Location	West/South Belfast	Postcode	BT12 6HE BT7 2BJ
	Location	West Belfast	Postcode	BT13 3NH BT13 2SE BT12 7DJ
	Location	West/South Belfast	Postcode	BT10 0EF BT11 9EH
2.12 T:BUC Key Aim	Children and Young People			
2.13 Link to good relations audit	<p>This programme will complete it's fourth and final year. Indeed, the Audit recognizes that "While the schools programme has seen some great good relations outcomes, Stena Line's support for this will be ending in the next 12 months". This final year of this programme meets the expressed need within the Audit of "The need to involve young people in Good Relations initiatives".</p> <p>As such, the final spring term of this programme will cement the work done over the past 4 years with the young people who have participated, despite the disruption of COVID.</p> <p>There is also significant learning involved for both teaching staff, the whole school and parents.</p> <p>Audit references are found in pp 3, 11, 13, 21-22, 25, 28, 29, 31, 35, 37, 38 Appendix C, pp 48-51 of Good Relations Audit.</p>			
2.14 Complementarity	<p>This project will end in June 2024. The project has been successful in developing links between local schools and Council services as part of the overall project, which has complimented PEACE IV projects in the area as well as other Council initiatives on issues such as the environment.</p> <p>The Education Authority (EA) are our key delivery partner on this project. This link ensured that this project worked in schools that were not part of current Shared Education provision.</p>			
2.15 Capacity Building	<p>There has been significant capacity building within this programme for teachers and for the participating schools themselves, which has involved equipping schools and staff for effective delivery of Shared Education projects.</p>			

Section 2

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Strategic Connections & Support Programme	BCC9
2.03 KEY WORDS	URBAN, YOUTH, WALLS.
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>The aim of the Programme is to target resources through a Strategic Connections and Support Programme distributed on a themed basis for localised programmes, events and activities – across the City.</p> <p>This ensures that the approach can be targeted, strategic and proactive and will include work at interface areas on a common needs model. As previously stated in the Action Plan, it is important for Council to consider how it develops Good Relations while addressing a core social need which is impacting those in a specific area. If the data is considered for example on either side of an interface it will clearly demonstrate challenges in: Cost of Living, Health and Well Being, Education, Employability, Higher Mortality Rates, the Environment etc. Through the Good Relations Action Plan if Council concentrate on the elements of common need and develop opportunities with these at its core, the result will be sustainable Good Relations outcomes.</p> <p>To achieve this the Plan would be to progress an Expression of Interest for Programme Delivery for the following themes: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost of Living 2. Health and Wellbeing 3. The Environment and Climate Change 4. Animating Parks and Public Spaces 5. Education and Employment <p>This approach will be trialled in 24/25 and will be open to Community Organisations across the City.</p> <p>All activity will be required to meet at least one of the outcomes laid out in the T:BUC Strategy and align to the Council's Good Relations Strategy.</p>
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	<p>Leish Dolan; dolanl@belfastcity.gov.uk David Robinson; robinsondavid@belfastcity.gov.uk Danny Sweeney; sweeneyd@belfastcity.gov.uk</p>

2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£50,000			
2.07 Total target no. of participants	Direct	800	Indirect	N/A
2.08 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£75.00			
2.09 Targeted participant background analysis	40% CNR, 40% PUL, 20% BME			
2.10 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Belfast City Council	Postcode	BT2 8BP
2.11 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	All parts of the City	Postcode	All postcodes
2.12 T:BUC Key Aim	All four T:BUC Aims: Children & Young People, Safe and Shared Communities and Cultural Expression.			
2.13 Link to good relations audit	<p>Previously, as TEO brought Planned Intervention into line with the Programme Funding in 21/22, this gave the Council an opportunity to configure a programme that meets the Council's Strategic needs and those identified within our previous Audit; namely, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure there continues to be a city-wide, consistent approach to good relations while inputting at local area level. <p>Our most recent Audit highlights the success of this approach and further states:</p> <p>“The good relations agenda is an important part of the reconciliation process, therefore, which is more than just about cross community relationships. The impact of economic and social deprivation, changing structures that estranged people, encouraging a sense of belonging of all including those people and communities feeling estranged (before, during or after the conflict), acknowledgement and a common vision are all critical elements.”</p> <p>As such, this programme will be included as part of our Action Plan for 2024/25 and beyond.</p> <p>Audit references are found in pp 3, 21-22, 25, 28, 29, 31, 35, 37, Appendix C, pp 48-51 of Good Relations Audit.</p>			
2.14 Complementarity	This strategic approach to intervention work complements wider programmes aimed at Planned			

	<p>Intervention across the City and indeed the Region, most notably the T:BUC Summer Camps and the Intervention work of EA. The outcomes for this programme will continue to be the same as those for other planned intervention initiatives. In addition, the Council will have a number of grants which will supporting groups from a range of sectors to engage with good relations outcomes.</p> <p>It would also be our view that this Programme could complement work being undertaken through other Funds including Urban Villages etc.</p>
<p>2.15 Capacity Building</p>	<p>This programme will support local groups to develop a strategic approach to intervention work. As such, this programme will support them to assess things such as anti-social behaviour and hate crime on their impact on local Good Relations.</p>

Section 3

Action Plan Programme Outcome Summary Table 2023/24

Programme name (2.01)	Code (2.02)	Key Aim (2.12)	Key Words (2.03)	No. direct participants (2.07)	Total Cost (2.06)	Post Codes (2.11)
Good relations small grants programme	BCC1	All 4 T:BUC Aims	DIVERSE URBAN SHARED YOUTH ADULT	2,000	£155,000	BT2 8BP BT4 1AF BT7 2EW BT12 6FD BT13 3AA BT14 6BP
St. Patrick's Day Civic Events Programme	BCC2	Cultural Expression	DIVERSE SHARED URBAN YOUTH ADULT SENIOR	500	£20,000	BT1 (City Centre)
Positive Cultural Expression Programme	BCC3	Cultural Expression	SIN-ID URBAN YOUTH ADULT SKILLS	2,000	£50,000	BT4 1HG BT12 6FQ BT13 3AA BT14 6SL
Civic Engagement and Learning Programme	BCC4	Shared Community	DIVERSE ADULTS SENIOR	400	£20,000	City-wide. All postcodes. Activities open to the public.
Minority Ethnic Inclusion Programme	BCC5	Safe Community	DIVERSE ADULT SENIOR YOUTH	1,000	£80,000	BT2 8BP BT7 1FY
Embedding Good Relations Programme	BCC6	Shared Community	WALLS URBAN YOUTH ADULT	500	£20,000	Within Belfast City Council: BT1 5GS City-wide
Interface Engagement and tackling sectarianism & racism	BCC7	Safe Community	WALLS URBAN YOUTH ADULT	1,200	£80,000	BT2 8BP BT14 7EA BT13 3BU BT36 7JX BT12 6FD BT13 3AA BT14 6BP BT13 3TS

						BT5 4EE BT15 2GQ
Shared Education Schools Programme	BCC8	Children and Young People	YOUTH URBAN DIVERSE	220	£10,000	BT13 1HW BT12 4JD BT12 6HE BT7 2BJ BT13 3NH BT9 6FP BT13 2SE BT12 7DJ BT10 0EF BT11 9EH
Strategic Intervention Programme	BCC9	All four T:BUC Aims	URBAN, YOUTH, WALLS	800	£60,000	City-wide. All postcodes

Section 4

T:BUC Strategic Outcome

Note: two programmes cover all 4 T:BUC aims, therefore a quarter of these two programmes has been apportioned to the table below.

	C&YP	Shared community	Safe community	Cultural Expression	DCGRP Total
Total no. of programmes	1 (plus two quarters)	2 (plus two quarters)	2 (plus two quarters)	2 (plus two quarters)	9
Total no. of direct participants	920	1,600	2,900	3,200	8,620
Unit cost of programme activity	£69.29	£58.59	£73.70	£38.67	£57.42
Total cost of programmes	£63,750	£93,750	£213,750	£123,750	£495,000

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All-Party Working Group on the City Centre

Friday, 1st December, 2023

MEETING OF THE ALL-PARTY WORKING GROUP ON THE CITY CENTRE

Members present: Councillor de Faoite (Chairperson); and
Aldermen McCullough and Rodgers; and
Councillors Maskey, Long and Smyth.

In attendance: Ms. C. Reynolds, Director of City Regeneration and
Development;
Mr. J. Greer, Director of Economic Development;
Mr. S. Dolan, Senior Development Manager;
Ms. D. Kelly, Programme Manager;
Mr. J. Uprichard, Business and Research Development
Manager;
Mr. S. Leonard, Neighbourhood Services Manager; and
Ms. C. Donnelly, Democratic Services Officer.

Apologies

An apology for inability to attend was reported for Councillor Groogan, Councillor Smyth attended on her behalf.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 8th September, 2023 were agreed.

Proposed External Presentations to Future Meetings of the Working Group

The Director of City Regeneration and Development outlined the following proposals for receiving external parties into future meetings of the Working Group:

- Cross Cutting Enablers: Purple Flag Steering Group;
- Business and Investment Proposition: Belfast City and Region Place Partnership focusing on pillared programme and alignment to Council objectives; and
- FCC Programme: Business Improvement Districts focusing on their annual business plans and alignment to Council objectives.

She explained that, given the change in the meeting schedule from November to December, and the need to ensure timely updates to the Working Group, it was proposed that the 2024 meetings schedule would be updated, and that the next meeting would take place at the end of January, followed by a meeting at the end of March, and another at the end of May, 2024.

Members of the Working Group suggested that officers consider additional organisations to invite to a future meeting, including Belfast Chamber, city centre welfare and homelessness organisations.

The Working Group agreed to the proposals for external parties to attend future meetings of the Working Group and that consideration of extending invites to external groups would be a standing item on the Working Group's agenda.

The Working Group further agreed that it would meet on a monthly basis, until the annual meeting of Council, July, 2024.

Updates from Governance Groups

The Director of City Regeneration and Development and the Neighbourhood Services Manager provided the Working Group with an update on the following three city centre governance groups:

- Future City Centre Leadership Group (Future City Centre Programme);
- Multi-Agency Operational (Tasking) Group (Clean, Green, Inclusive and Safe)
- Strategic Leadership Group (Complex Lives/Vulnerability)

The Director of City Regeneration and Development explained that, given the nature and focus of the governance groups, and consideration to the longevity of some of the priorities and issues, that future updates would be brought to the Working Group on a six monthly basis.

The Working Group noted the updates from across the three city centre governance groups.

City Centre Market Update

The Director of City Regeneration and Development delivered a presentation to the Working Group to provide an update on the city centre retail market. She highlighted the following key issues:

- **First to island brand openings:** Deichmann (The Keep), Accessorize (Donegall Place), River Island's concept store 'River Studios' (Donegall Place)
- **First to market (NI) brands opening:** Dylan Oaks' (Castle Lane), Sculpted by Aimee (Victoria Square), The White Company (Victoria Square)
- **Brands relocating:** H&M (The Keep), Rituals (Victoria Square)

- **Expansions:** Bread Street Bakery Café (Great Northern Mall), Bob and Berts (Ann Street)
- **General performance:** a number of stores were reportedly performing particularly well against their UK counterparts including Belfast's Rolex store, JD Sport, Stradivarius and Lush, with a number of large fashion retailers indicating interest to expand/extend their store space/offer.
- **Market demand:** There was significant demand for space from hot food/cafe/restaurant offers and it was reported, vacant units that were “turn key”, with planning permission for hot food would receive immediate interest from this market.

She referred the Working Group to the city centre footfall figures and reported that, in comparison to the previous year, 2023 figures had shown a 7.5% increase in footfall and that the average weekly footfall had increased by 50,000 since 2022.

She referred the Members to a map which illustrated the footfall change between September/October 2023 compared with the same period in 2022 and highlighted the ongoing trend that the city centre had been attracting more visitors from neighbouring communities, with an average increase of 80% more visits from areas within a 2km radius.

The Working Group noted the update.

Future City Centre Programme

Regeneration and Connectivity

The Senior Development Manager provided an overview of the undernoted report, together with a short presentation:

“1.0 Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues”

1.1 To provide the All Party Working Group with an update on the Vacant to Vibrant Programme.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The All Party Working Group is asked to:

- I. Note the update in relation to the city centre Vacant to Vibrant Programme and that a short presentation will be provided with an overview on successful Vacant to Vibrant applicants to date.**

3.0 Main Report

Vacant to Vibrant Background

- 3.1 Following the successful Expression of Interest stage in early 2022 for the Vacant to Vibrant Capital Grant Scheme, the City Growth & Regeneration Committee in April 2022 agreed to open the grant application process. The grant scheme, a key project within the Future City Centre Programme and in response to the high levels of vacancy in the city centre, opened in July 2022 to incentivise both property owners and potential occupiers to bring vacant Belfast city centre spaces back into use while supporting the city centre's revitalisation and in the context of the need to ensure sustainable rates growth.
- 3.2 It is worth noting that the Council received £47m from the city centre in non-domestic rates in 2022, £10.2m of this was from the retail sector. The Vacancy Rate has seen on average a 2% increase within the Primary Retail Core (PRC) every year since 2019, and in 2021 the analysis provided a PRC vacancy rate of c24%, with the rest of the city centre (outside the PRC) currently at 22%. This level of vacancy would be considered significantly higher than the UK average vacancy rate of 14.5% and has a wide-ranging impact on the city as a whole. The Institute for Place Management considers a vacancy rate of 25% as a critical tipping point in terms of the sustainable viability of a vibrant city centre. It should be noted that Belfast City Centre's vacancy rate is also heavily influenced by those vacancies which are considered 'persistent' and associated with stalled regeneration schemes, many of which have planning but have yet to progress. Positively, recent findings from the Council's Retail Study (July 2023) show that the vacancy rate is currently 21%. This can be attributed to the opening of the Ulster University, new entrants to the market and the impact of the Vacant to Vibrant Scheme.
- 3.3 The Institute of Place Management provides strategic advice to government on supporting sustainable place making models and developing internationally recognised standards on the performance of place management. On review of the Vacant to Vibrant Programme IPM identified that the scheme is an exemplary project in terms of its inception, design and delivery. In April this year, IPM worked with Officers to publish the Vacant to Vibrant Programme within a High Streets Task Force Best Practice Case Study for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Members can access the case study for further details:
<https://www.placemanagement.org/news/posts/2023/april/ipm-case-study-belfast-city-council-vacant-to-vibrant-pilot-capital-grant-scheme/>
- 3.4 Council approved £1million of capital funding to the Vacant to Vibrant programme to support SME's, independent retailers, social enterprises and cultural and voluntary organisations to make our city centre offering more diverse and to transform vacant spaces to become vibrant once again. The grant is also designed to sustain jobs, help create new employment opportunities, improve individual properties, contribute to higher quality streetscapes, add to the vibrancy of the city centre and assist with issues of

safety and ASB, and help protect heritage buildings. The programme also offers wrap around support services to assist applicants to develop business plans, social media and marketing training and advice through linking businesses with potential units. A short presentation will be provided to Members with an overview of some of the successful applicants to date.

3.5 Vacant to Vibrant Update

Promotion of the Vacant to Vibrant scheme has received significant coverage across both print and social media platforms since it was first launched and has been picked up by a number of business support websites and online resources. Further coverage of the scheme has been highlighted in the media by successful applicants that have used (or are using) the grant to regenerate vacant premises and bring forward unique offers for the city centre. To date, the scheme has received over 300 requests for applications with a number of applicants currently receiving support from Officers and the wrap around business support services to develop their proposal, find suitable locations and to advance through the grant process.

3.6 The grant is being allocated across three main categories, up to £2.5k of support for pop-up ground floor use (over 4mths), up to £15k for active floor usage of up to 150sqm, and up to £25k for active floor usage over 151sqm.

3.7 It should be acknowledged that providing the level of detail required for the application evaluation process represents a significant time and effort investment from the applicants and can take over 3 months to gain agreement with landowners and to acquire the relevant quotes and business plan information. The assessment process also includes a detailed assessment of the applications in conjunction with an independent, expert business case analysis prior to officers making recommendations to CGR Committee to approve funding.

3.8 Appendix A of this report provides an overview of the status of current applicants in the system including the 15 (1 pending Council ratification 4 December) applicants who have previously been approved. These 15 applications represent a capital grant investment of £286,136.25 to date (with a number of additional applications ongoing) resulting in approximately 56 employment opportunities, and an estimated Rates Value of £ 808,769 (subject to LPS assessment) over the course of the lease periods. This means that for every £1 invested in the grant, at least £2.80 will be returned in rates income due to the activation of vacant properties.

3.9 In addition, the 15 applications as above represent 56 additional employment opportunities created in the city centre, providing an estimated Full-Time Employee Uplift of £1.56m per annum. Of the projects led by occupiers, the assessment of their business plan was an integral element of the wider application assessment. The total output of businesses/organisations through the scheme

(based on sales for Year 1 and Year 2) is £6,627,344.50 which will be a significant boost for the local independent businesses and organisations coming through the scheme that are investing in the city centre, and will also have a significant impact on the wider supply chain and city economy (with an estimated Direct & Indirect Impact of £9.7m), strengthening the attractiveness of Belfast as a place to invest, live and visit.

- 3.10 The grant scheme is also designed to encourage the reactivation of historical buildings and buildings of interest. Of the 15 applications as above, 75% are for properties that are historic buildings or considered to be a building of interest.
- 3.11 The grant scheme primarily targets the occupation of ground floor units in the city centre however, of the 15 applications as above, over half of these will activate not only ground floor, but upper floors as well, adding additional vibrancy to the area and bringing whole properties back into use.
- 3.12 Appendix A also provides details of further applicants that are currently at the pre-application stage and who actively engaging with Officers to finalise their applications with an expectation that these will be submitted in the coming months. These are classified as applicants that are working towards elements of the application such as securing an agreement for their proposed premises, developing their business cases for submission, gaining quotes for the capital works, and developing their financial plans for independent expert assessment, with an expectation that these applications will progress through the assessment process with future recommendations to be brought to CGR Committee. Following recent comms and promotion of the scheme there has been a renewed uplift in interest for the scheme with a number of businesses following up with Officers to enquire and request further information of the programme.
- 3.13 **Matchmaking Service**
- To support the wider vacancy programme and to complement the capital grant scheme, officers are also delivering a 'Matchmaking' service, with the assistance of a commercial agent, Frazer Kidd. The 'matchmaking' service includes identifying and collating a database of vacant units that exist within the city centre. This will help to identify possible units To Let to assist new and emerging businesses to source the right property for their needs.
- 3.14 This work also includes a detailed analysis and monthly updates of the city centre ground floor vacancy levels as well as insights into the movements or relocations within the market. A monthly database of vacant units/properties is provided, alongside market knowledge of new occupiers, property interest and occupiers relocating or expanding. This helps us to understand the vacancy picture within the city centre by identifying units that may be eligible for the Vacant to Vibrant scheme as well as properties

earmarked for redevelopment that will hopefully become occupied at a later date once development is complete.

- 3.15 At present, the matchmaking service is currently supporting 8 applicants to find properties eligible for their unique needs. As part of this service, it includes advice by the commercial agent on lease negotiations and the provision of support available to the applicant when liaising with landlords, and engagement with landlords and developers to support occupation of both long term and meanwhile use opportunities.

4.0 **Financial and Resource Implications**

None

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

Equality, Good relations implications / rural needs assessments are ongoing.”

During Discussion, the Director of City Regeneration and Development agreed to explore the possibilities of short-term alcohol licences that would enable pop-up art venues to sell alcohol, and report back to the Working Group.

The Working Group noted the update.

Animation and Distinctive Offering

The Director of Economic Development outlined the undernoted report to the Working Group:

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

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on Christmas animation to date.

2.0 **Recommendation**

- 2.1 The All Party Working Group is asked to:

I. Note the update on Christmas animation.

3.0 **Main Report**

3.1 **Let’s Glow Belfast**

The Let’s Glow Belfast Christmas Lights Switch-On event successfully took place on Saturday 18 November, with a celebration of local music, theatre and dance, compered by the Cool FM Breakfast Team with Lord Mayor and special invited guest Dáithí Mac Gabhann officially switching on the lights. In excess of 10,000 citizens and visitors gathered to enjoy the event. The City Events Team engaged extensively with stakeholders to coordinate

the build, event delivery and de-rig with as minimal impact as possible to normal business.

The event passed off without major incident. Stewarding provision and Traffic Management Plan worked well, with no event related medical incidents. Feedback from stakeholders on the planning has been positive. To date there has been one complaint. The City Hall Christmas Market opened at 12 noon the same day.

3.2 Winters Den at 2 Royal Avenue

The Winters Den will operate at 2 Royal Avenue from Saturday 18 November 2023 to Sunday 7 January 2024. The Winters Den season features a selection of free entry festive activities including twilight, pottery and craft markets, family-friendly performances, tea dances, silent discos, sustainable Christmas craft activities and even a doggie fashion show. On Saturday 18th, outdoor animation was provided by Firepoise. Also returning to 2 Royal Avenue is the popular Belfast One Santa Post Office.

3.3 City Centre Festive Lighting Scheme

The City Centre Festive Lighting Scheme and City Hall lighting went live on Saturday 18 November. The 2023 scheme largely replicates previous years, with the addition of Ann St. However, a small number of cross street features could not be erected due to construction in Castle Lane.

A full Christmas debrief will be reported to City Growth and Regeneration Committee in January 2024.

4.0 Financial and Resource Implications

None

5.0 Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

Equality, Good relations implications / rural needs assessments are ongoing.”

The Working Group noted the update.

Cross Cutting

The Director of City Regeneration and Development provided the Working Group with an overview of work that had been undertaken and progress in the following key areas:

- Regeneration and connectivity;
- Business and investment;
- Animation and distinctive offering;
- Clean, Green, Inclusive and Safe; and
- Cross-cutting enablers.

She highlighted that the Council was seeking a development partner to boost the city population through £630million housing led regeneration opportunity, four new hotels were being created to meet market demand, Belfast Harbour was commencing work on £3million first phase of City Quays Gardens, Belfast had received an A rating on its climate action work for the second year in a row and that the Council had announced proposals for a Smart District that would harness digital innovation to support the transformation of Belfast city centre.

The Working Group noted the update.

Chairperson

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